

# THE CANADIAN CRAFTSMAN,

AND  
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## THE GREAT PRIOR'S REPLY TO "LONDON FREEMASON."

To the Editor of the London Freemason:

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,—I trust you will permit me to occupy some little space in the columns of the *Freemason* to reply to the very cutting criticism on my last allocution, delivered before the Great Priory of Canada, which appeared in your issue of the 25th of August, 1888, and only very lately seen by me.

The writer, presumably Rev. Dr. Woodford, better known as "Masonic Student," has thought proper to indulge in the most dogmatic assertions and has severely taken me to task for disseminating my ideas on what I consider the origin of Freemasonry in its connection with the Templar Order. Now, if I recollect aright, "Masonic Student" was quite as fierce and dictatorial with the theories advanced by our esteemed and talented brother, T. B. Whytehead, of York, England, when he first began to write on Christian Masonry, but has lived to see his error and change his mind.

The history of Masonry is necessarily hard to find. The snows of time having obliterated the foot-prints of our ancient brethren, and the only chance we have of recovering the "back track" is by careful inquiry and co-operation in suggestive thoughts. This, however, "Masonic Student"

does not appear to consider at all necessary, looking upon his own deductions as all that is required, and condemning everything not in accord with them, quite ignoring the host of authors of the German, French and even English schools as valueless, although some of them have been engaged during a fair life-time in close investigation and research, and have given the result of their labors long years ago in voluminous works. Yet all these seem nothing in his eyes, having fully convinced himself that his *ipse dixit* in the pages of the *Freemason* will make complete revolution in all Masonic history. Surely this dictatorial and one-sided view is not the way to bring to light the hidden secrets of the past. With all due deference to his opinions, and being fully aware that we live in a Masonic age where nothing speculative is "historically" admissable, I feel strongly that it is right to push forward speculations and theories in every possible direction. It is only by doing this that we have the least chance of hitting the right track, now nearly totally obliterated.

The theories of Bro. Carson, of Ohio, U. S. A., appear to me to commend themselves very closely indeed to my mind, and for the following reasons, viz: "The earliest publish-