

## Chivalry And Freemasonry

Barely does one connect Chivalry with Freemasonry, yet there is one branch of the fraternity that places greatest stress on Chivalry and those virtues that go to make up a chivalric character.

We refer to that as that great Order known as Knights of the Temple, or Knights Templar.

The original Knights of the Temple were Christian warriors. They were men of faith, inspired with love of God and the Church. The story of their exploits, their adventures, their self-sacrifice, and their accomplishments read as a page from a story book.

There is nothing so appealing in all of history as the story of the great Crusades, fostered by the Catholic Church, but, actually carried on through the great chivalric orders of the day. The object of the Crusades was to wrest the Holy Land and the sacred spots of Christian history from the Moslems.

The Crusade period marked a new era in the life of the world. It brought together the eastern and the western worlds. The evils and virtues of the east were brought to the west and vice-versa. But the greatest thing that emerged through these conflicts of Christian and Saracen was the virtue of charity. The Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller were the American Red Cross organization of that day. For the first time in the history of war, men began to think of aiding others. Many are the deeds of charity recounted, not only between those of the Christian faith, but extending from Christian to Moslem.

Thus did this era usher in the homely virtues of Charity, Hospitality, and Universal Benevolence.

Today the warlike character of the Knights Templar has disappeared. No more is it thought necessary to engage in useless struggles over holy sites and places. No more is it believed necessary to fight men of other nations in order to convert them to our religious way of thinking.

But the same feelings of Love, and Truth, and Charity, and Hospitality, and Universal Benevolence still remain in the human heart, and the world at large is benefited by any group which encourages such essential needs of man.

Thus has grown the Order of the Temple. The Knights Templar of today claim no direct legal descent from these ancient knights of old, yet they do claim to carry on the virtues for which they fought, bled and died. No longer is it necessary to fight with material weapons, for today, "The pen is mightier than the sword", and the weapon of a knight today is the influence of a good life, carried out as set forth in the New Dispensation – "That we love one another".

And you asked, "Just what place does the Templar Order hold in respect to the other branches of Freemasonry"? And we reply, "A most important place". To the Christian Freemason it represents the summit of the teachings of the Craft. While in no way minimizing the teachings of the symbolic degrees, **to the Christian, the Order of the Temple conveys the essence of Masonic teachings and is the Christian interpretation of Ancient Craft Masonry.**