

Bro. Knights, when approached to give a talk on K.T.'s. I found that as a very young Knight I should have to look up one or two of the books on the subject, and see what I could find. And this talk concerns what I was able to pick up in the time I had available, ~~not~~ so that I do hope that those knights who are more experienced than myself will bear with me and think of the younger knights ~~as~~ like myself who may not have read anything other than the ritual.

We find that the Holy City of Jerusalem having been captured by the Crusaders in 1099, a band of French knights led by Hugh de Payens and Godefroi de Saint-Omer formed themselves into an order to protect pilgrims on their way to the Holy Sepulchre. In 1118 King Baldwin II presented them with a house near the site of King Solomon's Temple, from which they took their name. In 1128 the Order was sanctioned by the Council of Troyes and by the Pope, and a code of rules framed by Saint Bernard pledged with the Knights to poverty, chastity and obedience. They were thus a combined ~~religious~~ religious and military Order devoted at first to good works and fighting for the Cross. In time the order attracted many knights from all over Europe and with numbers its order, its influence spread far and wide. The order became rich, powerful, domineering and unmindful of the high ideals which had originally inspired them. Eventually this led to antagonism of those in high places, both in Church and State, to say nothing of the intense dislike in which they were held by the common people. In 1305 the Pope influenced by Philippe le Bel, denounced and disowned the order. In 1307 the King banned the order and arrested all the knights upon whom he could lay his hands. Under torture some knights confessed to such misdeeds, among them certain high dignitaries of the Order. It is true that many recanted and withdrew their confessions, which obtained under torture were worthless in any case. But the damage had been done and, although the many interrogations lasted for many years, finally the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake in 1314. The Order of the Temple was completely and permanently destroyed.

In England the King was slow to act and although many knights were arrested none were put to torture and the penalties were not severe. It is impossible to form any real judgement as to the truth of the allegations made against the Templars. It is possible that there was an element of truth in them. The fact remains that the Order made itself so universally detested that it was not surprising that it inspired reprisals.

Before 1723 AD all Freemason's Lodges were Christian T^hinitarian ~~as~~ ~~as~~ a matter of course. As the Antient Charges put it "The first Charge is that you be

true to God and Holy Church and use no error of heresy."

Now Andersons first charge in the 1723 Book of Constitutions opened wide the door to all good men and true provided that "They were not stupid athiests nor irreligious libertines." This proclaimed a degree of toleration and freedom of thought quite incompatible with Roman Catholic Doctrine and from then on the priest took a more hostile attitude to Fremasonry. As a result of this and the Charge in the 1738 Book of Constitutions going further Pope Clement the XII on April 27th, 1738 issued the Bull denouncing Freemasonry.

This sentenced all Catholic Freemasons and those who sheltered them to ~~excommunication~~ excommunication, unless they objured their ellegiance to Freemasonry. Many choose the latter course, but a considerable number remained active Freemasons and defied the displeasure of the Vatican. In this a Protestant Country Catholics followed their own conscience and remained loyal Freemasons. The full force of the Bull was naturally felt by those countries nearest to Rome, especially France, where Masonry was strongly entrenched.

The Frenchmen, regretting the loss of their esoteric interests, sought to find a way round the Papal edict. This was done by fabricating degrees with a Christian background. As a result a number of degrees began to appear in France starting in 1740 among which two were especially prominent viz - A Masonic Templar Rite and a Rose Croix Degree. These two orders (the Rose Croix later to become the A @ A Rite 33^o) ran a parallel course.

It is not possible to know when a chivalric knightly ritual was first introduced. The years 1730 - 1750 are mentioned as likely times for such a degree to have become known in France, but there is no reliable evidence. A wealthy landed Nobleman of West Germany, claimed to have been made a Knight Templar in Paris in 1743 and in 1751 he erected at Unweiler the first Templar Chapter on his own estate.

It is not known when and how the K.T. and K.M. rite arrived in England. We know that in the earliest days of English Templarism encampments were found concentrated in the vicinity of the Ports. The N.W. from the first was a Templar stronghold, the degree having come from France via Ireland. Starting in Liverpool the degree fanned out into the surrounding countryside, so that we find, that of the first 40 numbered encampments 10 were in Lancashire. In a similar way Bristol had a close connection with Munster, and from Bristol the the degree spread South West to the West Country and from Plymouth and Penzance North West to the same area.

It is claimed that the English Preceptory of Observance of 7^o T.I. originated from the French Chapter of Clermont in 1764, but there is no evidence of this.

It was a London Preceptory, and was formally warranted by Dunkerley in 1791, having worked for possibly 124 years it ceased to exist in 1888.

In 1780 there came the first attempt to form an organised ruling body for Templarism in England. In 1772 K.T. was active in Bristol and in 1780 it had become a flourishing Encampment known as the Camp of Baldwyn, being described by Sir Charles Cameron as "Probably the best known encampment in England".

Acting in consent with Antiquity No.1. of Bath it issued a Charter of Compact which it circulated to as many encampments as it could reach inviting them to join Baldwyn in supporting the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in England (a title they had taken onto themselves). This met with no response for two probable reasons.

1. Encampments had been working under the shelter of Lodges and Chapters under the Grand Lodge of the Antients and were averse from ~~XXXXXX~~, severing their contacts with men they knew in exchange for coming under the rule of those they did not know.
2. They had no desire to submit to the jurisdiction of Baldwyn whom they regarded as too autocratic. Moreover they suspected that they would be required to adopt the Baldwyn ritual, which was very different from their own.

Lastly in 1780 it is known that the Grand Lodge of All England at York was working K.T. and had been doing so for sometime.

In 1791 Thomas Dunkerley was approached to form a Grand Encampment of K.T. for England and Wales. He was successful in attracting the adhesion of eight encampments. Three years later this number had increased to 28.

In 1812 the Duke of Sussex accepted the leading roll in the Order of the Temple in England. One year later he was Installed as the First Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England. When in 1817 Grand Lodge and the newly formed Grand Chapter took their stand upon the first sentence of Article II. "that genuine Freemasonry consists of the ~~Three~~ Degrees with the Royal Arch, thereby repudiating the extra Craft degrees, the Duke was placed in a most embarrassing position. He could hardly show ~~ix~~ his disagreement and disapproval by resigning from the U.G.L. He was left ~~to~~ with several courses open to him, but he remained quiet and unostentatiously took unofficial action to keep the Temple alive until more settled and favourable times might arise, as a result he was accused of neglecting the Order.

In 1836 The Duke erected the first Provincial Priory without reference to Grand Conclave, that of Dorset and Wiltshire.

By 1850 several other Provincial Priorities had been constituted. In 1864 the Statutes allowed Knights to dispense with the Apron. In the same year it was suggested that the Royal Arch qualification should no longer be required, but this was defeated and R.A. remains obligatory. The practise arose from the fact that when the K.T. was introduced into England it was always shown first to Royal Arch Chapters, but there is no logical reason for its retention. ~~xxxxxxx~~ The same illogical practise obtains in the Red Cross of Constantine. In 1866 Grand Conclave considered that the Order had attained such a stable organisation that it was justified in allocating numbers to Preceptories and these numbers have never been changed.

The only discordant note in this period of consolidation came from the Baldwyn Encampment at Bristol always a law unto itself. At sometime during the Sussex era, Baldwyn had broken away from the Grand Conclave, and in 1857 - 58 warranted five new Encampments. This was gross provocation and was met by energetic action on the part of Grand Conclave. Sufficient pressure was brought to bear that a "Charter of Compact" was signed in 1862. On the face of it Baldwyn appears to have dictated the terms, for under the Compact it was agreed that:

1. The City and County of Bristol should be a self contained Province.
2. Baldwyn to take precedence over all encampments on the Roll.
3. The other five to rank according to their warrant dates.
4. The existing members to be registered without fee.
5. They should continue to work the special Baldwyn Ritual.

Once the Baldwyn Controversy had been settled, ~~they continued to work~~ the progress of the order up to 1872 was satisfactory. There were 130 encampments on the roll, most of them in a reasonably flourishing condition. Friendly relations had been established with sister Jurisdictions and with ruling bodies of other Orders, and the Grand Encampment of the U.S.A. had opened negotiations for a treaty. Ever Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter, if not exactly enthusiastic, were at last beginning to turn a blind eye. Then a blow fell from within which nearly wrecked the order.

Between 1869-72 a number of Knights conferred together to suggest it would be an advantage to amalgamate the Grand Conclave of England, Ireland and Scotland. Scotland withdrew at an early stage of the discussions, but England and Ireland went ahead. The draft was ratified in 1872 and the first meeting of the new Convent General was held in 1873 when H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was elected and Installed Grand Master of the United Orders of England and Ireland. There was a flood of protest from Provinces and Preceptories.

The Principle Objections were:-

1. The omission of the word "Masonic" in the title of the Order, which would have brought it within the scope of the Secret Societies Act of 1799.
2. The Claim that the modern Order derived directly from the Mediaval Military Knights Templar.
3. The wholesale changes in nomenclature, e.g., Encampments into Preceptories, Commander into Preceptor, etc.
4. The abolition of "Past Ranks," which meant a Great or Provincial Officer reverted to Knight or Preceptor at the end of his term of office, to say nothing of the expense of his regalia being altered twice.
5. The creation of Knights Grand Cross and Knights Commander being in the sole discretion of the Grand Master.
6. The effect of concentrating all executive power in a small caucus in London.
7. The failure to indicate that the new Constitution was to be presented, passed and put into operation on December 13th 1872 without opportunity for discussion and consideration.

During the next ten years, many drastic amendments were forced through National Great Priory, but the machinery of Convent-General was so cumbersome that there was the greatest delay in getting the necessary confirmation. Moreover it may well be imagined that England would be irritated by having to obtain the consent of Ireland to a ~~minor~~ purely domestic change and vice versa. An example of the contempt in which the Preceptories held Convent-General was the reception given to its official ritual. In England it was entirely cold shouldered and each Preceptory continued to use the ritual to which it was accustomed.

In spite of the widespread opposition and of the many protests some of the unpopular changes suggested by the Convent-General were adopted and have so remained. The word Masonic was dropped and surprisingly has never been restored, and the term encampment is now no longer used. As a result of the confusion, Preceptories were working under great difficulties, and many were kept alive only by the three or four loyal members. In 1895 Convent-General quietly expired and was heard of no more. Finally out of this debacle there grew a move for closer co-operation between the Great Priorities of England, Ireland and Scotland. In addition a Cordat between the three ruling bodies was signed in 1930.

In the year 1805 on the 5th Day of August an Encampment of the Knights Templar was founded in the City of Coventry, from which has emanated the existing Preceptories in the Province of Worcestershire. For the First Constituted Encampment of Knights Templar was held at Dudley Arms Hotel, and was entitled the Encampment of Richard de Vernon, it was consecrated on 10th June 1857. After which Sir Knight Henry Charles Vernon was Installed Commander of the County and Province of Worcestershire, he held the appointment until December 1886. He was followed by Em. Knight Augustas Frederick Godson. ~~In 1906 the Province ceased to exist as a separate Province~~
Province

In November 1861 we find the Preceptory of St. Amand (or Encampment as it was originally known), being the second to be founded in the Province. It was duly dedicated to perpetuate the name of ~~St. Amand~~ Ode de St. Amand, he was the 8th Grand Master of the Order from 1171 to 1180 the last two years of which he was ~~confined~~ confined in the dungeons of Damascus. This Preceptory or Encampment which was started under the auspices of the Three Provinces of Dorset, Staffordshire and Worcestershire, whose Provincial Grand Commanders exercised a powerful influence on High Degree Masonry and its recreeance in the Middle of the nineteenth Century.

It is interesting to note that the early Encampments called their Knights Sir instead of Brother, this was also the case in Scotland. I cannot or at least have not been able to find any period when this was changed to Bro. Knights, though even today, St. Amand Preceptory still refer to Sir Knights. In 1874 we find a communication from the St. Amand Preceptory to Grand Conclave against the proposed alteration to the Statutes whereby it was proposed to repeal the law requiring candidates for Installation to be Royal Arch Masons'. Its interesting to note the terms of this communication:- This ~~Encampment~~ Encampment respectfully urges upon Grand Conclave that should ~~it~~ it be determined to make such an alteration some period of probation as well as increased fees (except for Royal Arch Masons) may be wisely exacted, thus giving every candidate time for deliberation, and maintaining that guard and protection to which our interesting order is entitled.

In 1907 the ^Provincial Priorities of Worcestrshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire were amalgamated. It is said that this may have been due to the lamented death of the Provincial Prior pf Worcs. V.E. Knight A.F. Godson. It may also have been due to the poor support that the order was having at this period, when a few were keeping the Preceptories going.

However in 1924 on Feb. 22nd, a petition for the Provincial Priory of

Worcestershire to be severed from Staffordshire and Warwickshire and meet again as a separate Province was presented. This petition was signed by the Em. Preceptors, Constables and Registrars' of the three Preceptories meeting in Worcestershire, namely:

1. 52 Richard De. Vernon.
2. 68 St. Amand.
3. 212 Richard Coeur De Lion Preceptory.

Since this date six other Preceptories have been consecrated, Temple being 4th on the list. So this order has gone from strength to strength, and long may it continue to do so. I cannot better end this talk than by reminding you once again of the petition from St. Amand to Grand Conclave, that we must give every candidate time for deliberation, and maintaining that guard and protection to which our interesting order is entitled.

St. Amand Precet. 1861 - 1961

Order of the Temple and Hospital Prov. Worcs. 1857 - 1911

The K.T.'s. and St. J. of Jerusalem. Richard woof.

Chivalric Freemasonry in the British Isles Sir Charles Cameron.

Pour La Foy George S. Draffen.

The Origin and History of the United Religious and Military Orders of the Temple and of St. J. of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta in England Wales and Dominions and Dependencies of the British Crown.

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