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The United Religious & Military Orders of the Temple & Hospital

Brothers I have written this paper with the idea of giving some explanation of how the Order of Knights Templars came into existence.

Those Brothers present who are Knights of Malta will recognise some of my references & certain dates are associated with that Order.

Any Brothers present who are Knights of the Red Cross of Constantinople, & Knights of the Holy Sepulchre will also recognise references to these Degrees.

How many present ~~to night~~ are acquainted with the several Military & Religious Orders in Freemasonry.

They are Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine Rhodes & Malta, The Knights of St Paul or the Mediterranean Pass The Knights of the Red Cross of Constantinople, The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, The Knights of Constantinople, The Knights of the Rosy Cross The Knights of the Eastern West & Knight Templar Knights each of which I am a member & entitled to speak. One of the most important of these is the Knights Templar ~~Order~~ & yet the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre is a very Religious & beautiful Degree & so very different from the Knights Templar of which I hope to interest you.

From very early times devout Christians have desired to visit the land which had been the scene of Christ's life on earth & any journey undertaken for that purpose was considered an act of supreme piety.

One of the most famous of early Christians to do this journey was St Helena the daughter of Caylus King of Britain, consort of Constantius & mother of Constantine the great. In the year 329 she journeyed to the Holy Land in search of the cross of our Blessed Redeemer & claimed to have identified all the places mentioned in the Holy Gospels including the site of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. With the assistance of her son Constantine the great, that magnificent church of the Resurrection was built which was afterwards called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At this period she also claimed to have discovered the 3 crosses used at the crucifixion.

Jerusalem was re-built in the Second Century A.D. by one of the Emperors of Rome Publius Aemilius Had. & then given over to the Christians in the 5th Century. The Arabs captured it from the Christians in the Seventh Century & were very kind & tolerant to all pilgrims. And so from every country in Europe crowds of pilgrims with nothing more than a staff, wallet & scabbard shell continued to journey to Jerusalem.

As no doubt you will immediately recognise this as our custom to clothe the Candidates as a Pilgrim with the staff or cross

a wallet & scallop shell on the left hand side of the hat worn as a pilgrim.

Later Jerusalem was taken over by the Moslems of Central Asia. These fanatical & cruel conquerors treated the Christians with violence & extortion which gave rise to a wave of spiritual indignation & masses of the common people under various leaders set out for Palestine. Many died on the way or perished at the hands of the Turks.

Then followed the first crusade about the year 1095 A.D. & Godfrey de Bouillon unfurled the banner of the cross in the year 1099 & expelled these Moslem invaders. Thus was founded the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem with Godfrey de Bouillon as its first Ruler. He declined to be crowned King of Jerusalem refusing to wear a Royal crown of earthly pomp. When our Blessed Redeemer had worn a crown of thorns.

It was at this period that nine noble knights led by a Burgundian knight named Hugh de Payens & Godfrey de St Omer formed themselves into a Holy Brotherhood of Arms & entered into a solemn vow to clear out all infidels & to protect pilgrims on their way to the Holy City.

These knights renounced all earthly ambitions & elected to live as ecclesiastics embracing the three fold vow of Chastity, Poverty & Obedience & to fight for the true King Jesus Christ.

Baldwin the Second King of Jerusalem granted these knights a place of residence within the precincts of the Temple on Mount Moriah & close to the site of the ancient Temple of King Solomon.

Henceforth the Order was known as the Knights of Christ & of the Temple of King Solomon.

Thus was founded in the year 1118 the famous Brotherhood of the Knights of the Temple or as we are now called, "The Knights Templar".

The early days of this Brotherhood was very difficult & so great was their poverty that the two original founders of the Order Hugh de Payens & Godfrey de St Omer had but one horse between them.

When the Order became more wealthy & prosperous the present design on the seal for Knights Templar was adopted which as many of you know is two knights mounted on one horse. This present seal is on the certificates of all Knights Templar.

Their Banner was of Black & White Stripes called in Old French "BAUSEANT" meaning in old French A Rebelled Horse & this word "BAUSEANT" became then was BEUCEANT Cry.

How many of us present are conversant with how the salutes in this Order had their origin.

This is what I have endeavoured to explain in the word "BAUSEANT" or the war cry of our early Knights

As I read it in the History Brethren it is not Ah's... as we often here it but just "BAUSEANT"

Their Black & White ^{Banner} ~~flag~~ was called "BAUSEANT" & was always borne before them into battle.

Black & White proclaiming to the friends of Christ that they were radiant & kindly but to his enemies dark & terrible.

~~By the year 1118~~ The Order found its self in possession of extensive estates in Europe & Asia & richly flowed to them in the Hospital of St John, ~~of Jerusalem~~.

At this period the Order assumed a knightly & Military character & established their first English Priory in Clerkenwell.

The Order of the Temple had quite a different origin to that of the Hospital.

It was founded in the year 1118 A.D. by Hugo de Payens & 8 other crusading knights who called themselves "Poor fellow soldiers of Christ Jesus"

Hugo de Payens was chosen as the first Master of the Temple.

Headquarters was established in Europe under a Prior of the Temple who was charged with the duties as Vice Gerant of the Master.

Masters succeeded one another, the seventh one being Brother Odo de St Amand & whose name was taken for the St Amand Preceptory No 68 meeting in Worcester.

It was during his Masterhip that the Bull "Omne datum optimum" of 1172 was published in England by Pope Alexander III confirming the privileges of the Templars & granting them additional ones.

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It required from all Candidates a probationary period of a year & the administration of an oath. It also permitted the admission to the Fraternity of "Honest & godly clergymen & priests."

By the end of the 12th century, the Templars in addition to acquiring property on the continent of Europe, had acquired property in England & established the chief house of the Order in London at Holborn Bar ~~Street~~, adjoining the present Southampton Buildings. They subsequently purchased the site of the property now known as the Temple which was then called the New Temple.

The Temple Church was consecrated on January 10th 1185 by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. It was completely destroyed by enemy action during the last war but has since been re-built substantially to the old design & is well worth a visit by any Knight who finds himself in London. ~~You can find it on the banks of the river Thames.~~

By the year 1240 the Order possessed, in all, churches & Chapters to the number of 1050 & their revenues were estimated at not less than £6 million sterling, a very large sum of money for those days. All these possessions needed elaborate organisation. The Supreme authority rested with the Master of the Order in Palestine who ruled with unlimited power & was regarded as the equal in status & dignity of any of the sovereigns in Europe.

Let us now turn to the Hospitallers. Whilst maintaining the Hospital, the Knights of St John also became a fighting force engaging in many successful undertakings. As late as 1237 300 Knights left Clerkenwell for wars in the Holy Land. Quarrels between the Templars & the Hospitallers developed & ended in open war. The Templar forces being completely destroyed & those

of the Hospital sadly weakened.

By the year 1241 however the quarrels of the two orders had been patched up & in that year their combined forces re-occupied Jerusalem only to be forced out again in 1244.

In 1267 The Pope nominated the first Grand Master of the Temple in the person of Hugh de Revel.

In 1299 The Temple forces entered Jerusalem for the last time only to be driven out again & this time to retire finally to the Island of Cyprus. This ended the work of both the Orders in Palestine.

In the year 1307^{Pope} Clement V at the instigation Philip le Bel, King of France summoned the Grand Masters of the Hospital & Temple to Avignon ostensibly to discuss yet another crusade. The Grand Master of the Hospital being suspicious of treachery excused himself on the grounds that he was actively engaged in the siege of Island Rhodes. The Master of the Temple however obeyed the summons & on October 13th 1307 was arrested by Philip's orders with 60 of his knights on accusations of heresy, idolatry & degrading vices. On the same day nearly all the members of the Order in France were arrested.

In Germany, Castile & Aragon the Knights Templars were dispersed but for the main part escaped un-harmed although without their property. In England their lot was not so easy. Edward II was at first content to sequester their property, the Temple in London being granted in 1313 to the Earl of Pembroke who afterwards transferred it to the Earl of Lancaster in whose hands it played a prominent part in English History. Other property was given to others of the King's favourites whilst some eventually found its way to the Knights Hospitallers.

It was not until 1324 that the order was finally suppressed by statute.

Here it must be recalled that the Order of the Temple had consisted of Three Grades; The Knights themselves

that by some time fairly early in the 18th Century the Knights Templar had become firmly associated with the Masonic Fraternity through the Royal Arch Degree.

There is a legend, one of the least credible, which ascribes to the Knights Templar when they rebuilt the Temple in 1241 the discovery of a vault & the secrets it contained as described in the Royal Arch ritual & that it was from them that the Masons obtained this information which they embodied in the Royal Arch Degree.

How far this story was based on fact & how far it was pure invention we shall probably never know.

Eventually on the 24th of June 1791 the Masonic Order of the Knights Templar was definitely established in England as a separate organisation under a governing body known as the Grand Encampment for England & Wales of which Thomas Dunsterville was the first Grand Master. This body lasted although undergoing many strains for just over a century & until on the 13th of December 1892 the National Great-Priory of England & Wales was formed as part of a wider Organisation for the order aiming at bringing under the control of what was styled a "Covenant General" the Encampments of England, Scotland & Ireland. The new body had a short existence, the Covenant General expiring & the English Grand Encampment handing over its authority on the 19th July 1895 to the present controlling body "The Great Priory of England & Wales of the United Religious and Military Orders of the Temple & of St John of Jerusalem Palestine, Rhodes & Malta.

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