



# HISTORY OF THE TEMPLARS KNIGHTS

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CONGREDIMUS NOS  
AC CONSECRAMUS

CHARLES G. ADDISON

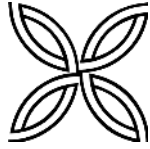


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# PREFACE.

THE extraordinary and romantic career of the Knights Templars, their exploits and their misfortunes, render their history a subject of peculiar interest.

Born during the first fervour of the Crusades, they were flattered and aggrandized as long as their great military power and religious fanaticism could be made available for the support of the Eastern church and the retention of the Holy Land, but when the crescent had ultimately triumphed over the cross, and the religio-military enthusiasm of Christendom had died away, they encountered the basest ingratitude in return for the services they had rendered to the christian faith, and were plundered, persecuted, and condemned to a cruel death, by those who ought in justice to have been their defenders and supporters. The memory of these holy warriors is embalmed in all our recollections of the wars of the cross; they were the bulwarks of the Latin

kingdom of Jerusalem during the short period of its existence, and were the last band of Europe's host that contended for the possession of Palestine.

To the vows of the monk and the austere life of the convent, the Templars added the discipline of the camp, and the stern duties of the military life, joining

"The fine vocation of the sword and lance,  
With the gross aims, and body-bending toil  
Of a poor brotherhood, who walk the earth  
Pitied."

The vulgar notion that the Templars were as wicked as they were fearless and brave, has not yet been entirely exploded; but it is hoped that the copious account of the proceedings against the order in this country, given in the ninth and tenth chapters of the ensuing volume, will tend to dispel many unfounded prejudices still entertained against the fraternity, and excite emotions of admiration for their constancy and courage, and of pity for their unmerited and cruel fate.

Matthew Paris, who wrote at St. Albans, concerning

events in Palestine, tells us that the emulation between the Templars and Hospitaliers frequently broke out into open warfare to the great scandal and prejudice of Christendom, and that, in a pitched battle fought between them, the Templars were slain to a man. The solitary testimony of Matthew Paris, who was no friend to the two orders, is invalidated by the silence of contemporary historians, who wrote on the spot; and it is quite evident from the letters of the pope, addressed to the Hospitaliers, the year after the date of the alleged battle, that such an occurrence never could have taken place.

The accounts, even of the best of the antient writers, should not be adopted without examination, and a careful comparison with other sources of information. William of Tyre, for instance, tells us that Nassr-ed-deen, son of sultan Abbas, was taken prisoner by the Templars, and whilst in their hands became a convert to the Christian religion; that he had learned the rudiments of the Latin language, and earnestly sought to be baptized, but that the Templars were bribed with sixty thousand pieces of gold to surrender him to his enemies in Egypt, where certain death awaited him; and that they stood by to see him bound hand and foot with chains, and placed in an iron cage, to be conducted across the desert to

Cairo. Now the Arabian historians of that period tell us that Nassr-ed-deen and his father murdered the caliph and threw his body into a well, and then fled with their retainers and treasure into Palestine; that the sister of the murdered caliph wrote immediately to the commandant at Gaza, which place was garrisoned by the Knights Templars, offering a handsome reward for the capture of the fugitives; that they were accordingly intercepted, and Nassr-ed-deen was sent to Cairo, where the female relations of the caliph caused his body to be cut into small pieces in the seraglio. The above act has constantly been made a matter of grave accusation against the Templars; but what a different complexion does the case assume on the testimony of the Arabian authorities!

It must be remembered that William archbishop of Tyre was hostile to the order on account of its vast powers and privileges, and carried his complaints to a general council of the church at Rome. He is abandoned, in everything that he says to the prejudice of the fraternity, by James of Vitry, bishop of Acre, a learned and most talented prelate, who wrote in Palestine subsequently to William of Tyre, and has copied largely from the history of the latter. The bishop of Acre speaks of the Templars in the highest terms, and declares that they were universally loved by all men for their piety and humility. "Nulli

molesti erant!" says he, "sed ab omnibus propter humilitatem et religionem amabantur."

The celebrated orientalist Von Hammer has recently brought forward various extraordinary and unfounded charges, destitute of all authority, against the Templars; and Wilcke, who has written a German history of the order, seems to have imbibed all the vulgar prejudices against the fraternity. I might have added to the interest of the ensuing work, by making the Templars horrible and atrocious villains; but I have endeavoured to write a fair and impartial account of the order, not slavishly adopting everything I find detailed in antient writers, but such matters only as I believe, after a careful examination of the best authorities, to be true.

It is a subject of congratulation to us that we possess, in the Temple Church at London, the most beautiful and perfect memorial of the order of the Knights Templars now in existence. No one who has seen that building in its late dress of plaster and whitewash will recognize it when restored to its antient magnificence. This venerable structure was one of the chief ecclesiastical edifices of the Knights Templars in Europe, and stood next in rank to the Temple at Jerusalem. As I have performed the

pilgrimage to the Holy City, and wandered amid the courts of the antient Temple of the Knights Templars on Mount Moriah, I could not but regard with more than ordinary interest the restoration by the societies of the Inner and the Middle Temple of their beautiful Temple Church.

The greatest zeal and energy have been displayed by them in that praiseworthy undertaking, and no expense has been spared to repair the ravages of time, and to bring back the structure to what it was in the time of the Templars.

In the summer I had the pleasure of accompanying one of the chief and most enthusiastic promoters of the restoration of the church (Mr. Burge, Q.C.) over the interesting fabric, and at his suggestion the present work was commenced. I am afraid that it will hardly answer his expectations, and am sorry that the interesting task has not been undertaken by an abler hand.

P.S. Mr. Willement, who is preparing some exquisitely stained glass windows for the Temple Church, has just drawn my attention to the nineteenth volume of the "MEMOIR ES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE DES

ANTIQUAIRES DE FRANCE," published last year. It contains a most curious and interesting account of the church of Brelevennez, in the department des Cotes-du-Nord, supposed to have formerly belonged to the order of the Temple, written by the Chevalier du FREMANVILLE. Amongst various curious devices, crosses, and symbols found upon the windows and the tombs of the church, is a copper medallion, which appears to have been suspended from the neck by a chain. This decoration consists of a small circle, within which are inscribed two equilateral triangles placed one upon the other, so as to form a six-pointed star. In the midst of the star is a second circle, containing within it the LAMB of the order of the Temple holding the banner in its fore-paw, similar to what we see on the antient seal of the order delineated in the title-page of this work. Mr. Willement has informed me that he has received an offer from a gentleman in Brittany to send over casts of the decorations and devices lately discovered in that church. He has kindly referred the letter to me for consideration, but I have not thought it advisable to delay the publication of the present work for the purpose of procuring them.

Mr. Willement has also drawn my attention to a very distinct impression of the reverse of the seal of the

Temple described in page 106, whereon I read very plainly the interesting motto, "TESTIS SVM AGNI.

# CHAPTER I.

*"Yet 'midst her towering fanes in ruin laid,  
The pilgrim saint his murmuring vespers paid;  
'Twas his to mount the tufted rocks, and rove  
The chequer'd twilight of the olive-grove:  
'Twas his to bend beneath the sacred gloom,  
And wear with many a kiss Messiah's tomb."*

THE extraordinary and romantic institution of the Knights Templars, those military friars who so strangely blended the character of the monk with that of the soldier, took its origin in the following manner:--

On the miraculous discovery of the Holy sepulchre by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, about 298 years after the death of Christ, and the consequent erection, by command of the first christian emperor, of the magnificent church of the Resurrection, or, as it is now called, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, over the

sacred monument, the tide of pilgrimage set in towards Jerusalem, and went on increasing in strength as Christianity gradually spread throughout Europe. On the surrender of the Holy City to the victorious Arabians, (A.D. 637,) the privileges and the security of the christian population were provided for in the following guarantee, given under the hand and seal of the Caliph Omar to Sophronius the Patriarch.

"From OMAR EBNO 'L ALCHITAB to the inhabitants of ÆLIA."

"They shall be protected and secured both in their lives and fortunes, and their churches shall neither be pulled down nor made use of by any but themselves." \*

Under the government of the Arabians, the pilgrimages continued steadily to increase; the old and the young, women and children, flocked in crowds to Jerusalem, and in the year 1064 the Holy Sepulchre was visited by an enthusiastic band of seven thousand pilgrims, headed by the Archbishop of Mentz and the Bishops of Utrecht, Bamberg, and Ratisbon. † The year following, however, Jerusalem was conquered by the wild Turcomans. Three

thousand of the citizens were indiscriminately massacred, and the hereditary command over the Holy City and territory was confided to the Emir Ortok, the chief of a savage pastoral tribe.

Under the iron yoke of these fierce Northern strangers, the Christians were fearfully oppressed; they were driven from their churches; divine worship was ridiculed and interrupted; and the patriarch of the Holy City was dragged by the hair of his beard over the sacred pavement of the church of the Resurrection, and cast into a dungeon, to extort a ransom from the sympathy of his flock. The pilgrims who, through innumerable perils, had reached the gates of the Holy City, were plundered, imprisoned, and frequently massacred; an aureus, or piece of gold, was exacted as the price of admission to the holy sepulchre, and many, unable to pay the tax, were driven by the swords of the Turcomans from the very threshold of the object of all their hopes, the bourne of their long pilgrimage, and were compelled to retrace their weary steps in sorrow and anguish to their distant homes. \* The melancholy intelligence of the profanation of the holy places, and of the oppression and cruelty of the Turcomans, aroused the religious chivalry of Christendom; "a nerve was touched of exquisite feeling, and the sensation vibrated to the heart of Europe."

Then arose the wild enthusiasm of the crusades; men of all ranks, and even monks and priests, animated by the exhortations of the pope and the preachings of Peter the Hermit, flew to arms, and enthusiastically undertook "the pious and glorious enterprize" of rescuing the holy sepulchre of Christ from the foul abominations of the heathen.

When intelligence of the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders (A.D. 1099) had been conveyed to Europe, the zeal of pilgrimage blazed forth with increased fierceness; it had gathered intensity from the interval of its suppression by the wild Turcomans, and promiscuous crowds of both sexes, old men and children, virgins and matrons, thinking the road then open and the journey practicable, successively pressed forwards towards the Holy City, with the passionate desire of contemplating the original monuments of the Redemption. \* The infidels had indeed been driven out of Jerusalem, but not out of Palestine. The lofty mountains bordering the sea-coast were infested by bold and warlike bands of fugitive Mussulmen, who maintained themselves in various impregnable castles and strongholds, from whence they issued forth upon the high-roads, cut off the

communication between Jerusalem and the sea-ports, and revenged themselves for the loss of their habitations and property by the indiscriminate pillage of all travellers. The Bedouin horsemen, moreover, making rapid incursions from beyond the Jordan, frequently kept up a desultory and irregular warfare in the plains; and the pilgrims, consequently, whether they approached the Holy City by land or by sea, were alike exposed to almost daily hostility, to plunder, and to death.

To alleviate the dangers and distresses to which these pious enthusiasts were exposed, to guard the honour of the saintly virgins and matrons, † and to protect the gray hairs of the venerable palmer, nine noble knights formed a holy brotherhood in arms, and entered into a solemn compact to aid one another in clearing the highways of infidels, and of robbers, and in protecting the pilgrims through the passes and defiles of the mountains to the Holy City. Warmed with the religious and military fervour of the day, and animated by the sacredness of the cause to which they had devoted their swords, they called themselves the Poor Fellow-soldiers of Jesus Christ. They renounced the world and its pleasures, and in the holy church of the Resurrection, in the presence of the patriarch of Jerusalem, they embraced vows of perpetual chastity, obedience, and poverty, after the manner of

monks. \* Uniting in themselves the two most popular qualities of the age, devotion and valour, and exercising them in the most popular of all enterprises, the protection of the pilgrims and of the road to the holy sepulchre, they speedily acquired a vast reputation and a splendid renown.

At first, we are told, they had no church and no particular place of abode, but in the year of our Lord 1118, (nineteen years after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders,) they had rendered such good and acceptable service to the Christians, that Baldwin the Second, king of Jerusalem, granted them a place of habitation within the sacred inclosure of the Temple on Mount Moriah, amid those holy and magnificent structures, partly erected by the christian Emperor Justinian, and partly built by the Caliph Omar, which were then exhibited by the monks and priests of Jerusalem, whose restless zeal led them to practise on the credulity of the pilgrims, and to multiply relics and all objects likely to be sacred in their eyes, as the Temple of Solomon, whence the Poor Fellow-soldiers of Jesus Christ came thenceforth to be known by the name of "the Knighthood of the Temple of Solomon." †

A few remarks in elucidation of the name Templars, or Knights of the Temple, may not be altogether

unacceptable.

By the Mussulmen, the site of the great Jewish temple on Mount Moriah has always been regarded with peculiar veneration. Mahomet, in the first year of the publication of the Koran, directed his followers, when at prayer, to turn their faces towards it, and pilgrimages have constantly been made to the holy spot by devout Moslems. On the conquest of Jerusalem by the Arabians, it was the first care of the Caliph Omar to rebuild "the Temple of the Lord." Assisted by the principal chieftains of his army, the Commander of the Faithful undertook the pious office of clearing the ground with his own hands, and of tracing out the foundations of the magnificent mosque which now crowns with its dark and swelling dome the elevated summit of Mount Moriah. \*

This great house of prayer, the most holy Mussulman Temple in the world after that of Mecca, is erected over the spot where "Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Oman the Jebusite." It remains to this day in a state of perfect preservation, and is one of the finest specimens of

Saracenic architecture in existence. It is entered by four spacious doorways, each door facing one of the cardinal points; the Bab el D'jannat, or gate of the garden, on the north; the Bab el Kebla, or gate of prayer, on the south; the Bab ib'n el Daoud, or the gate of the son of David, on the east; and the Bab el Garbi, on the west. By the Arabian geographers it is called Beit Allah, the house of God, also Beit Almokaddas, or Beit Almacdes, the holy house. From it Jerusalem derives its Arabic name, el Kods, the holy, el Schereef, the noble, and el Mobarek, the blessed; while the governors of the city, instead of the customary high-sounding titles of sovereignty and dominion, take the simple title of Hami, or protectors.

On the conquest of Jerusalem by the crusaders, the crescent was torn down from the summit of this famous Mussulman Temple, and was replaced by an immense golden cross, and the edifice was then consecrated to the services of the christian religion, but retained its simple appellation of "The Temple of the Lord." William, Archbishop of Tyre and Chancellor of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, gives an interesting account of this famous edifice as it existed in his time, during the Latin dominion. He speaks of the splendid mosaic work, of the Arabic characters setting forth the name of the founder, and the cost of the undertaking, and of the famous rock

under the centre of the dome, which is to this day shown by the Moslems as the spot whereon the destroying angel stood, " with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem." \* This rock he informs us was left exposed and uncovered for the space of fifteen years after the conquest of the holy city by the crusaders, but was, after that period, cased with a handsome altar of white marble, upon which the priests daily said mass.

To the south of this holy Mussulman temple, on the extreme edge of the summit of Mount Moriah, and resting against the modern walls of the town of Jerusalem, stands the venerable christian church of the Virgin, erected by the Emperor Justinian, whose stupendous foundations, remaining to this day, fully justify the astonishing description given of the building by Procopius. That writer informs us that in order to get a level surface for the erection of the edifice, it was necessary, on the east and south sides of the hill, to raise up a wall of masonry from the valley below, and to construct a vast foundation, partly composed of solid stone and partly of arches and pillars. The stones were of such magnitude, that each block required to be transported in a truck drawn by forty of the emperor's strongest oxen; and to admit of the passage of these trucks it was necessary to widen the roads leading to

Jerusalem. The forests of Lebanon yielded their choicest cedars for the timbers of the roof, and a quarry of variegated marble, seasonably discovered in the adjoining mountains, furnished the edifice with superb marble columns. \* The interior of this interesting structure, which still remains at Jerusalem, after a lapse of more than thirteen centuries, in an excellent state of preservation, is adorned with six rows of columns, from whence spring arches supporting the cedar beams and timbers of the roof; and at the end of the building is a round tower, surmounted by a dome. The vast stones, the walls of masonry, and the subterranean colonnade raised to support the south-east angle of the platform whereon the church is erected, are truly wonderful, and may still be seen by penetrating through a small door, and descending several flights of steps at the south-east corner of the inclosure. Adjoining the sacred edifice, the emperor erected hospitals, or houses of refuge, for travellers, sick people, and mendicants of all nations; the foundations whereof, composed of handsome Roman masonry, are still visible on either side of the southern end of the building.

On the conquest of Jerusalem by the Moslems, this venerable church was converted into a mosque, and was called D'jamé al Acsa; it was enclosed, together with the

great Mussulman Temple of the Lord erected by the Caliph Omar, within a large area by a high stone wall, which runs around the edge of the summit of Mount Moriah, and guards from the profane tread of the unbeliever the whole of that sacred ground whereon once stood the gorgeous temple of the wisest of kings. \*

When the Holy City was taken by the crusaders, the D'jamé al Acsa, with the various buildings constructed around it, became the property of the kings of Jerusalem; and is denominated by William of Tyre "the palace," or "royal house to the south of the Temple of the Lord, vulgarly called the Temple of Solomon." † It was this edifice or temple on Mount Moriah which was appropriated to the use of the poor fellow-soldiers of Jesus Christ, as they had no church and no particular place of abode, and from it they derived their name of Knights Templars. \*

James of Vitry, Bishop of Acre, who gives an interesting account of the holy places, thus speaks of the Temple of the Knights Templars. "There is, moreover, at Jerusalem another temple of immense spaciousness and extent, from which the brethren of the knighthood of the Temple derive their name of Templars, which is called

the Temple of Solomon, perhaps to distinguish it from the one above described, which is specially called the Temple of the Lord. " † He moreover informs us in his oriental history, that "in the Temple of the Lord there is an abbot and canons regular; and be it known that the one is the Temple of the Lord, and the other the Temple of the Chivalry. These are clerks, the others are knights."  
‡

The canons of the Temple of the Lord conceded to the poor fellow-soldiers of Jesus Christ the large court extending between that building and the Temple of Solomon; the king, the patriarch, and the prelates of Jerusalem, and the barons of the Latin kingdom, assigned them various gifts and revenues for their maintenance and support, § and the order being now settled in a regular place of abode, the knights soon began to entertain more extended views, and to seek a larger theatre for the exercise of their holy profession.

Their first aim and object had been, as before mentioned, simply to protect the poor pilgrims, on their journey backwards and forwards, from the sea-coast to Jerusalem; \* but as the hostile tribes of Mussulmen, which everywhere surrounded the Latin kingdom, were

gradually recovering from the stupifying terror into which they had been plunged by the successful and exterminating warfare of the first crusaders, and were assuming an aggressive and threatening attitude, it was determined that the holy warriors of the Temple should, in addition to the protection of pilgrims, make the defence of the christian kingdom of Jerusalem, of the eastern church, and of all the holy places, a part of their particular profession.

The two most distinguished members of the fraternity were Hugh de Payens and Geoffrey de St. Aldemar, or St. Omer, two valiant soldiers of the cross, who had fought with great credit and renown at the siege of Jerusalem. Hugh de Payens was chosen by the knights to be the superior of the new religious and military society, by the title of "The Master of the Temple;" and he has, consequently, generally been called the founder of the order.

The name and reputation of the Knights Templars speedily spread throughout Europe, and various illustrious pilgrims from the far west aspired to become members of the holy fraternity. Among these was Falk, Count of Anjou, who joined the society as a married

brother, (A.D. 1120,) and annually remitted the order thirty pounds of silver. Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, foreseeing that great advantages would accrue to the Latin kingdom by the increase of the power and numbers of these holy warriors, exerted himself to extend the order throughout all Christendom, so that he might, by means of so politic an institution, keep alive the holy enthusiasm of the west, and draw a constant succour from the bold and warlike races of Europe for the support of his christian throne and kingdom.

St. Bernard, the holy abbot of Clairvaux, had been a great admirer of the Templars. He wrote a letter to the Count of Champagne, on his entering the order, (A.D. 1123,) praising the act as one of eminent merit in the sight of God; and it was determined to enlist the all-powerful influence of this great ecclesiastic in favour of the fraternity. "By a vow of poverty and penance, by closing his eyes against the visible world, by the refusal of all ecclesiastical dignities, the Abbot of Clairvaux became the oracle of Europe, and the founder of one hundred and sixty convents. Princes and pontiffs trembled at the freedom of his apostolical censures: France, England, and Milan, consulted and obeyed his judgment in a schism of the church: the debt was repaid by the gratitude of Innocent the Second; and his successor, Eugenics the

Third, was the friend and disciple of the holy St. Bernard." \*

To this learned and devout prelate two knights templars were despatched with the following letter:

"Baldwin, by the grace of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, King of Jerusalem, and Prince of Antioch, to the venerable Father Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, health and regard.

"The Brothers of the Temple, whom the Lord hath deigned to raise up, and whom by an especial Providence he preserves for the defence of this kingdom, desiring to obtain from the Holy See the confirmation of their institution, and a rule for their particular guidance, we have determined to send to you the two knights, Andrew and Gondemar, men as much distinguished by their military exploits as by the splendour of their birth, to obtain from the Pope the approbation of their order, and to dispose his holiness to send succour and subsidies against the enemies of the faith, reunited in their design to destroy us, and to invade our christian territories.

"Well knowing the weight of your mediation with God and his vicar upon earth, as well as with the princes and powers of Europe, we have thought fit to confide to you these two important matters, whose successful issue cannot be otherwise than most agreeable to ourselves. The statutes we ask of you should be so ordered and arranged as to be reconcilable with the tumult of the camp and the profession of arms; they must, in fact, be of such a nature as to obtain favour and popularity with the christian princes.

"Do you then so manage, that we may, through you, have the happiness of seeing this important affair brought to a successful issue, and address for us to heaven the incense of your prayers." \*

Soon after the above letter had been despatched to St. Bernard, Hugh de Payens himself proceeded to Rome, accompanied by Geoffrey de St. Aldemar, and four other brothers of the order, viz. Brother Payen de Montdidier, Brother Gorall, Brother Geoffrey Bisol, and Brother Archambauld de St. Amand. They were received with great honour and distinction by Pope Honorius, who warmly approved of the objects and designs of the holy fraternity. St. Bernard had, in the mean time, taken the