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THE RELIGIOUS WARS OF FRANCE

There could be no greater fallacy than the theory that underground conspiracies are carried on only by poor, the downtrodden, and revolutionaries. The French Royal war against the Huguenots began as an underground movement.

*Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*¹

The Religious Wars of France started after the reign of King Henry II of Valois (r.1547-1559) and during the regency of his placable queen, Catherine. The underlying cause of the Religious Wars was not the Reformation; nor was it a conflict between Sion and the Templars. It was an internal struggle between competing Merovingians. This chapter will focus on the intrigues surrounding the second and third Religious Wars, which plunged the Holy Grail royalty into a bloodbath that lasted from 1562 to 1594.

The Merovingian "Great Plan"

As noted in chapter 1, the Merovingians had a "Secret Doctrine" (also called the "Great Plan"), which in part called for the creation of a Universal Throne in Europe. Three esoteric properties would be required for the holder of the Universal Throne to be legitimate: (1) he must possess the Spear of Destiny, as described in chapter 1; (2) he must also be the Holy Roman Emperor; and (3) he must hold the title, "King of Jerusalem." The Merovingian king with these three properties in his possession would not only be the ruler of the world, he would be the Lost King of the Merovingians, or in Holy Grail eschatology - the Messiah of Israel.

The Plan began in earnest at Gisors shortly after the Priory of Sion officially separated from the Templars in 1188. To initiate the Plan, the existing Carolingian thrones of Europe were to be subverted or otherwise overthrown. This not only involved marriage with Carolingian royalty, but sometimes necessitated covert political intrigue, assassination, or an overt seizure of power. Once the Carolingians were

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removed, the Merovingians would cooperate in combining, through intermarriage, various Holy Blood families to create in one line the three esoteric properties required to establish world government.²

Planning the Destruction of the Church

To maintain political legitimacy and esoteric control, the Merovingians initially relied on the Church. Eventually, however, Rome proved a liability and had to be weakened or removed. The Merovingians planned to diminish the influence of the Church through psychological warfare - a clandestine tradition intended to erode the spiritual hegemony of Rome - a tradition that found expression in Hermetic and esoteric thought, such as in Rosicrucian and Freemasonic secret societies.³

Manipulating Bourbon Protestants and Guise Catholics: Civil War for a Merovingian Universal Throne

History tells us that the Reformation in the 16th century divided old France between Protestants and Catholics. The accepted historical consensus is that a group of warlike Protestants, calling themselves Huguenots, precipitated the events that ended with their massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572. We are not told of the Priory of Sion conspiracy that manipulated both sides of the conflict - a conflict that was fought to create for the Merovingians a Universal Throne.

Players in the Drama

Conspiring for dominance, or survival, in the midst of France's Religious Wars were three royal families: (1) the pro-Protestant House of Bourbon; (2) the ardent Catholic House of Guise (subordinate to the House of Lorraine); and (3) the amiable Catholic House of Valois. The Houses of Valois and Guise were Merovingian,

whereas the Bourbons were not. Not yet.

Bourbon royalty, protecting the Huguenots, ruled southwest France under a loose form of republicanism. The House of Guise, fighting viciously to annihilate the Huguenots, were the cadet branch or military arm of the Merovingian House of Lorraine, then ruling the Netherlands. Most powerful was the House of Valois, ruling northern France. Valois

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kings, more or less, desired peace rather than civil war between Protestants and Catholics. Their attitude only weakened an already rapidly eroding dominant Catholic position.

The Valois dynasty began with Charles of Valois (1328-1350), nephew of Merovingian Philip iv; also known as Philip the Fair. He was the same Philip who attempted the destruction of the Knights Templar and had Jacques de Molay burned at the stake in 1314.~ Charles of Valois became King Philip VI and held the Merovingian title *King of Jerusalem*.⁵ In 1483 the title passed to the House of Lorraine through marriage, remaining there until 1735.

A century after the Valois dynasty was born, the Bourbon dynasty to the south joined the Protestant movement. Valois kings, already trying to contain the nominally Protestant Bourbons, were also having difficulty outside their borders. Austria's House of Habsburg (or Hapsburg) had sons on the thrones surrounding France. The Habsburg goal was to capture the French throne, then force a marriage with the House of Lorraine to obtain in one or two generations the "King of Jerusalem" title. Already the title of Holy Roman Emperor was attached to the Austrian throne, which throne also possessed the Spear of Destiny. The Habsburgs were well on their way to fulfilling the conditions of the Secret Doctrine for the Merovingians long-desired one-world empire!

Not willing to surrender the title "King of Jerusalem," the House of Lorraine conspired with their cadet House of Guise to take the powerful French throne for themselves, hoping thereby, to curb the Habsburg plan. Their strategy was to weaken the Valois dynasty through civil war, which meant exacerbating the existing strife between Protestants and Catholics.

To preserve their kingdom against this turmoil, the House of Valois was forced to continual appeasement when wars broke out between the Bourbon Protestants and Guise Catholics. These conflicts became known as the Religious Wars of France.

Priory of Sion and the Religious Wars: Sion's Grand Masters Back Bourbon Huguenots

Substantial evidence confirms that the Priory of Sion was manipulating both sides in the Religious Wars. The dukes of Lorraine, holding the title "King of Jerusalem," deployed two Grand Masters to France, both from the Guise clan. They were Ferdinand de Gonzague, better known as Ferrante de Gonzaga (GM 1527-1575), and Louis de

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Nevers, also known as Louis de Gonzaga (GM 1575-1595). Louis was the nephew of Ferrante. Their apparent assignment, which met with partial success, was to exterminate the Merovingian House of Valois in favor of the Merovingian House of Guise.⁶

Evidence supports the claim that to accomplish their task, the two Grand Masters of Sion backed the Bourbon Huguenot armies in order to weaken both the Valois dynasty and the Catholic Church. According to *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, during the second and third quarters of the 16th century, Grand Master Ferrante "seems to have been covertly in league with the duke of Guise, who [in 1563] came within a hair's breadth of seizing the French throne."⁷ In the last quarter of the 16th century, Grand Master Louis de Nevers "effectively exterminated the old Valois dynasty of France and nearly obtained the throne for the [House of Guise]."⁸

Nostradamus: Prophet or Secret Agent of Sion?

According to the "Priore documents," the Guises and the Lorraines found an ally in a Jew named Nostradamus (1503~1566).~ Nostradamus was well aware of the history of the Priory of Sion and the Knights Templar. As the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* note, many of his writings "referred, quite explicitly, to the past - to the Knights Templar, the Merovingian dynasty, the history of the house of Lorraine... to the Razes - the old comte of Rennes-le-Chateau.... In any case there is abundant evidence to suggest that Nostradamus was

indeed a secret agent working for Francois de Guise and Charles, cardinal of Lorraine."⁰

The House of Valois, in ignorance, hired Nostradamus as court physician and astrologer. Not surprisingly, one of his first prophecies was that the Valois dynasty would soon be extinct.

Before embarking on his career as prophet to the French throne, however, Nostradamus spent considerable time in Lorraine where he was initiated into some portentous secret. An arcane book on which to base his prophecies was supposedly presented to him at the Abbey of Orval, the same Abbey where the Priory of Sion got its start in 1070.

Holy Blood, Holy Grail claims that "as late as the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, books of prophecies purportedly authored by Nostradamus were [still] issuing from Orval."¹¹ *Holy Blood* concludes: "Many of Nostradamus' prophecies, in short, may not have been prophecies at all. They may have been cryptic messages, ciphers, schedules, timetables, instructions, blueprints for action."¹²

Implementing these coded messages was one of the assignments of the Grand Masters of Sion. Francois, Duke of Guise, and his brother

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Charles (Cardinal of Lorraine) were related to both Grand Masters and may well have taken their orders directly from them. For example, the reputedly Catholic Guises and Lorraines funded the Protestants from time to time, while the Cardinal himself secretly gave money to certain Protestant groups. Again, on March 7, 1560, the Cardinal proposed amnesty for the Huguenots.¹³

The House of Guise has been stigmatized by historians as "rabidly bigoted and fanatic Catholics, intolerant, brutal, and bloodthirsty."¹⁴ Yet, as the authors of *Holy Blood* state, "there is substantial evidence to suggest that this reputation is to some extent unwarranted, at least so far as adherence to Catholicism is concerned. Francois and his brother appear, quite patently, to have been brazen, if [not] cunning opportunists, courting both Catholics and Protestants in the name of their ulterior design."¹⁵

Trouble in the Merovingian Bloodline: The Valois stigma

In 1533, young Henry de Valois (Henry U) was wed to Catherine de Medicis, of the old royal Medici family of Italy. Both were age fourteen. Catherine was the niece of Pope Clement VII. Rumors of disease and mental illness started when for ten years no children were born to this young royal couple. Some blamed an inherent disability in Catherine, since both her parents had died of syphilis within twenty-two days of her birth. Yet, after ten years, children came almost annually - ten in all. Three died at an early age. Three became kings. Two were queens. Although Catherine outlived her husband and three successive royal sons, her children were all diseased or mentally ill.¹⁶

French Throne for the House of Guise

Disease in a Merovingian dynasty could not be tolerated by the Priory of Sion, whose duty it was to keep pure the so-called "Holy Bloodline." Consequently, there was added justification to terminate the Valois dynasty in behalf of the House of Guise.

Sion Attempts to Enthroned the House of Guise

When Henry died in 1559, Catherine's son, Francis II, was crowned at age sixteen. Within a year he died. Her second son, Charles IX, upon

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ascending the throne in 1560 at age 10, accepted the regency of his mother.

The historians Durant comment on Charles: "The sickliest of the sons, Charles IX, might have been a lovable youth except for occasional fits of cruelty and temper that blazed out at times into a passion verging on insanity. Between such storms he was a reed in the wind, seldom having a mind of his own."¹⁷

With the ascension of Charles IX, Ferrante de Gonzaga, Grand Master of Sion, gave orders to the House of Guise that now was the time to capture the weakened French throne. Anticipating a change of administration from the House of Valois to the House of Guise, the Council of Trent was convened in 1562 in preparation for

bringing peace to France. Ferrante also intended for the Council to weaken the power of Rome in France, using the Cardinal of Lorraine to launch "an attempt to decentralize the papacy - to confer autonomy on local bishops and restore the ecclesiastical hierarchy to what it had been in Merovingian times."⁸

Grand Master Ferrante gave Francois, Duke of Guise, covert aid to seize the throne. In 1563 Francois was preparing to declare himself king of France when he fell to an assassin's bullet. On September 15 of that year, Charles IX, who was not yet fourteen, was declared of age. Catherine, while surrendering her regency, did not, however, give up her leadership.

Moving Against the Huguenots Coligny and Conde: Protestant Warriors

In 1564 pressure began mounting on the Crown to use forcible measures against the Protestant Huguenots, whose leaders were Admiral Gaspard de Coligny and Prince of Conde' (Louis I of the House of Bourbon).

Prince Conde' had converted to Protestantism as a means of gaining support from his Huguenot subjects. Coligny, on the other hand, was a devout Christian, who studied Scripture and prayed every morning and evening. He detested the worldliness of the Catholic Church and was uneasy with the pomp of Royalty, yet found no difficulty in his political lobbying with a Catholic monarchy. He did not drink, was opposed to dancing, and lived a virtuous life. His only weakness was his military disposition, which lured him into many bloody battles with Catholics for the right to worship in peace. John Calvin warned him against such action.

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Conde' controlled southwestern France. Coligny, presumptuous and fearful of no man, roamed all France. Fortunately for both, Catherine had often used her influence to protect them against the duplicitous House of Guise. She continued to do so now, even under great pressure.

To aid in constraining the Guise opposition, Catherine hired mercenaries from Switzerland. Misunderstanding her motives, the two Huguenot leaders, with armed followers, tried in September, 1567, to seize the young king and the queen mother. Although the queen mother foiled their attempt, Catherine now feared the two men she once protected.

A Second Religious War

To add more tension to the conflict, the young and vigorous Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), founded only thirteen years earlier had entered France in 1564. Although this new military priesthood was pledged and devoted to the papacy, it did not take up arms as did the Templars five centuries earlier. Jesuit sermons were, to the House of Guise at least, a welcome match to the warlike Huguenots. Agitated by Jesuit messages of hate, the Catholics repeatedly violated the edicts of toleration signed by the House of Valois, and barbarity reigned. Coligny felt that another attempt on the Throne was needed to restore the limited rights of the Huguenots. France subsequently entered her Second Religious War.¹⁹

Pius V

In 1566 62-year-old Antonio Ghislieri, Dominican friar and Grand Inquisitor, became Pope Pius V. Historian Will Durant describes his personality: "He excommunicated Elizabeth of England and released the English Catholics from her allegiance. He urged Charles IX of France and Catherine de Medicis to prosecute war against the Huguenots till these should be utterly and mercilessly destroyed."²⁰

Toleration and Peace with the Huguenots

The religiously tolerant Catherine refused. Peace was made with the Huguenots on March 23, 1568, restoring modest toleration. But the

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Catholic Guises, realizing the Protestants were becoming too powerful, denounced the treaty and refused to implement it. Coligny protested to Catherine, but remembering his earlier attempts on her life, she turned a deaf ear.

Third Religious War and Terms of Religious Peace

In May, 1568, Pope Pius finally convinced the House of Valois to assassinate both Coligny and Conde'. When the two Protestant leaders received this information, they formed a new Huguenot army. A fleet was assembled. Sympathetic Rosicrucian Englishmen offered their private vessels to serve under Conde's command.

The Durants explain Catherine's reaction to these events: "Catherine looked upon this Third Religious War as revolution, as an attempt to divide France into two nations, one Catholic, the other Protestant." ²¹ On March 3, 1569, the Third Religious War broke out. The Huguenots were defeated and Conde' died of wounds.

Catherine next offered Coligny a renewal of the original treaty. He refused it as inadequate and continued his advance. Then suddenly on August 8, 1570, the youthful Charles IX asserted his authority and signed a peace treaty. The treaty gave the oft-defeated Huguenots more than they had ever bargained for. They were granted "freedom of worship except in Paris or near the court, full eligibility to public office, and, as a guarantee that these terms would be honored in practice, the right to hold four cities under their independent rule fortwoyears." ²²

In September, 1571, Coligny joined the Valois court at Blois. Charles IX clung to him as weakness clings to strength, but Coligny began making strong demands of him. Catherine was warned of the King's secret councils with Coligny and took Charles aside to reproach him for having surrendered his mind to Coligny. He asked her forgiveness and promised obedience to her.

Dynastic Marriage of Catholic to Protestant Foils Sion

That same year, Catherine made her last and boldest attempt to bring peace to France, a plan which ultimately could foil Sion's plan of establishing the House of Guise on the French throne. She decided to offer her daughter Marguerite in marriage to Henry III, Protestant

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King of Navarre, of the House of Bourbon, who, following the death of Conde', was head of the Huguenot empire. The marriage took place August 18, 1572, six days before St. Bartholomew's Day. This union, if Henry lived, would effectively bury Sion's plan for a speedy universal monarchy.

Little did Catherine realize the far-reaching consequences, destructive and beneficial, of this alliance. It was destructive to her royal House because it would end the Valois dynasty, as prophesied by Nostradamus. It would be destructive to all of France two centuries hence, since the marriage linked the House of Bourbon to Philip the Fair, the murderer of Jacques de Molay - an event which was an underlying cause of the French Revolution. It was beneficial to France because Henry III of Navarre would become Henry IV, the first Bourbon king to unite all France - and ultimately he would bring religious tolerance and peace to France for nearly a century, by signing the Edict of Nantes in 1598.

House of Guise and Slaughter of the Huguenots

Meanwhile, the Netherlands revolted against the House of Lorraine. This pleased Coligny, who began pressing King Charles to give open aid to the revolting Netherlands. While Coligny anticipated approval of his request, the hammering of anvils throughout France revealed the hurried forging of weapons. Seeing a chance to forever rid France of Coligny and his Protestant followers, the House of Guise warned Catherine that the battle preparations were another attempt to kidnap her and the boy king. Catherine gave her consent to assassinate Admiral Coligny. Approval by King Charles was desirable, but not necessary.

Catherine and her Guise counselors surrounded the young ruler. According to the Durants, the insecure sovereign was informed that thirty thousand Huguenots were planning to seize him on the morrow and carry him off to some Protestant stronghold, where he would be captive and impotent; had they not twice before attempted such a move? Charles became agitated with them, and Catherine recognizing her son's hesitation, threatened to withdraw to Italy and leave him to his fate. His agitation turned to excitement, bringing him close to insanity. The boy king of 23 was told to choose between his mother and Coligny. If he refused his mother, he would be set aside as a coward and a fool. Finally, in a fit of nerves and rage, Charles shouted, "Kill them all! Kill them all!" Cursing, he fled and shut himself up in his room. ²³ The Durants conclude:

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If the conspirators had plotted to kill only a few, they now took advantage of the King's mad order to make the slaughter of the Huguenots as thorough as possible. Catherine insisted on protecting [her new son-in-law], Henry of Navarre...word was sent out to the district captains of Paris to arm their men and be ready for action at the tolling of church bells at three o'clock in the morning August 24, St. Bartholomew's Day. Carte blanche was given the Guises to execute their long-delayed revenge upon the Admiral. Henry of Guise sent word to the officers of the militia that at the tocsin's sound their men were to slay every Huguenot they could find.²⁴

Nearly the entire race of Huguenots became extinct. Seventy thousand were killed during the weeks following August 24, 1572. Many thousands escaped and sailed to the New World, settling in America. All in all - and in the name of God - about 100,000 Protestants were slain in different parts of the kingdom.

House of Bourbon vs. House of Guise

The twenty years of civil war which followed determined what noble house would replace the House of Valois in France. Would it be the House of Bourbon or the House of Guise?

In 1584 a fresh assault against the throne was attempted by the new duke of Guise and new cardinal of Lorraine. At their side was Louis de Gonzaga, Duke of Nevers, Grand Master of Sion since 1575. The banner of the conspirators was now the Cross of Lorraine, a Rosicrucian symbol.

Holy Blood records the results of this battle: "The feud continued. By the end of the century the Valois were at last extinct. But the house of Guise had bled itself to death in the process and could put forward no eligible candidate for a throne that finally lay within its grasp."²⁵

Toleration and Flexibility

Henry III, King of Navarre, who had wed Marguerite of Valois, daughter of Catherine, at last gained the throne through a succession of wars. He became King Henry IV of all France in 1593. Henry was the first of a long line of Bourbon kings, whose dynasty would span two centuries.

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France remained Catholic, but Henry persuaded Parlement (French spelling) to accept six Huguenots into their assembly. Toleration was restored, and the terror subsided.

Toleration was maintained, however, only so long as a lenient sovereign was persuasive of Parlement, and politically nimble enough to accept advice from it, while maintaining his power. Unlike the elected English Parliament, the French Parlement was appointed by the king. Should the sovereign be displeased with or threatened by this assembly, he simply disbanded it. Thus, Parlement could only be as tolerant as the king.

Henry displayed flexibility with his court of justice. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes was approved by Parlement and signed by the king bringing peace to France for nearly a century. After Henry's death, however, Parlement became a volatile institution.

Sion Against the Stuarts

With the extinction of the Valois dynasty a fate accompli, Sion looked across the channel to the Scottish Templar Stuarts in line to ascend to the English throne (see chapter 2). Queen Elizabeth was old and childless. On her deathbed in 1603 she formally acknowledged James VI of Scotland her successor. James VI of Scotland became King James I of England.

A Templar throne in England was a more serious problem for Sion than the new Merovingian Bourbon throne in France. Hence, the next five Grand Masters of Sion concentrated on deposing the Templar Stuarts - a goal which took nearly a century to accomplish.

Sion against the Bourbons:

Sion Encourages the House of Guise to Topple the Bourbons

The deposition of the Bourbons, however, would wait two hundred years, although one attempt at subversion was made during Robert Fludd's reign as Grand Master of Sion in England. In 1602, one year before James Stuart I ascended the British throne, Fludd made a lengthy trip to France. He had received a

commission "to Marseilles to act as personal tutor to the sons of Henry of Lorraine, particularly Charles, the young duke of Guise. His association with Charles appears to have continued as late as 1620."²⁶

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Although there is no record as to what his tutoring entailed, it would certainly have included the history of Sion and the Merovingian dynasty in connection with Sion's attempt to capture the French throne for the House of Guise during the Religious Wars. It even possibly included a scheme for an overt seizure of the Bourbon throne. This theory is lent credence by the later actions of the Duke of Guise. For example, in 1610 the Duke married Henriette-Catherine de Joyeuse, whose possessions included Couiza at the foot of the mountain on which Rennes-le-Chateau is situated. In 1631 the Duke of Guise unsuccessfully conspired against the French throne and went into voluntary exile.²⁷

Cardinal Richelieu: A Policy Suited to Rosicrucian Tastes

From 1610 to 1643 the throne of France was occupied by Louis XW, who was married to Anne of Austria. Louis paid little attention to his queen, who was lonely and desirous of male companionship.

The real power behind the throne was Cardinal Richelieu, the king's prime minister. Richelieu, if not a member of the Priory of Sion, was definitely a hireling. While the rest of Europe flamed in the throes of the Thirty Years War, Richelieu established an unprecedented stability in France - until 1633. Prior to 1633, the Protestants in Germany were being financed by Sionist Rosicrucians from England and the Continent. Richelieu continued a precedent set by Sion during the Religious Wars of France: in 1633 he began financing the German Protestants.

Holy Blood explains this apparently bizarre policy: "In 1633 Cardinal Richelieu embarked on an audacious and seemingly incredible policy. He brought France into the Thirty Years War - but not on the side one would expect.... A Catholic cardinal, presiding over a Catholic country, dispatch[ing] Catholic troops to fight on the Protestant side - against other Catholics.... No historian has ever suggested that Richelieu was a Rosicrucian. But he could not possibly have done anything more in keeping with Rosicrucian attitudes, or more likely to win him Rosicrucian favor." ²⁶

Louis XIV Ascends the Throne

Louis XIII (r.1610-1643) and Anne remained childless. Suddenly, in 1638, after twenty-three years of sterile marriage, Anne produced a child. Few people at the time believed he was legitimate. Gossip had

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the child's father Cardinal Richelieu, or perhaps a surrogate employed by Richelieu, maybe Cardinal Mazarin, Richelieu's protégé' and successor. Both Louis XIII and Richelieu died in 1642. Some historians claim that Cardinal Mazarin afterwards secretly married the Queen Mother Anne.²⁹

After the death of Louis XIII, the boy king ascended the throne in 1643. Louis XIV was age five. The queen mother took the regency for her son. Cardinal Mazarin was prime minister. At the queen mother's behest, the young king embraced Catholicism.

Sion's "Company": Precursor of Freemasonry

According to the "Priore documents," the Priory of Sion dedicated itself to deposing both Mazarin and the young king.³⁰ To accomplish this task, Sion founded a highly organized and efficient secret society named "The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement." The Compagnie (or Company), meeting only with marginal success, was headquartered at Saint Sulpice, and established an intricate network of provincial branches. Similar to the operations of the Illuminati a century later, its members remained ignorant of their directors' identities. In short, the Company comprised a hydra-headed organization with a "hidden hand."

The Company was in fact a precursor of Freemasonry. As far as its lower level initiates were concerned, it was ostensibly devoted to charitable work, especially in regions devastated by the wars of religion. "It is now generally accepted," say the authors of *Holy Blood*, "that this 'charitable work' was merely a convenient and ingenious facade, which had little to do with the compagnie's real purpose. The real purpose was twofold - to engage in what was called pious espionage, gathering intelligence information, and to infiltrate the most

important offices in the land, including circles in direct proximity to the throne"³¹

The Company's Revolutionary Influence

By the mid-1600s the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement wielded power through the aristocracy, the French Parlement, the judiciary, and the police - so much so, that on a number of occasions these bodies openly defied the king.³² Actually, the Compagnie desired to control the monarchy through Parlement, but found an absolute monarchy

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resistant to parliamentary control. For example, in 1648 Parlement addressed several demands to the King and his mother that must have seemed to them revolutionary. At the Queen Mother's rebuff, thirteen months of civil war, called the *Fronde*, broke out.

Louis' Initial Toleration

On September 8, 1651, when Louis XIV was thirteen, he announced that he was ending the regency of his mother and taking the government into his own hands. Even at this young age, Louis' justice, leniency, generosity, and self-control impressed the court. In 1652 Louis confirmed the Edict of Nantes. He expressed his appreciation of Huguenot loyalty and allowed them to hold their synods in peace.

Although King Louis was willing to open his reign to some tolerance, he was still an absolute monarch. He forcefully acted as such when in 1665, Parlement wishing to discuss some of his unsatisfactory decrees, he immediately ordered the disbanding of the assembly and outlawed the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement.

Louis Abandons Toleration: Revokes the Edict of Nantes

Meanwhile, as part of the Counter-Reformation of the Catholic Church, the Jesuits had maneuvered themselves into royal courts all over Europe as king's confessors. In reality they also functioned as advisors, as did the ancient Knights Templar.

King Louis too had his Jesuit confessors. This boy King was grieved that France was not united under Catholicism. When distress turned to distrust, his Jesuit advisors saw their chance to fuel the king's misgivings, suggesting the Huguenots were subversive - that they defied him in the Compagnie. Over the next two decades (from 1665 to 1685) freedoms were gradually taken from the Protestants. On October 17, 1685, 104 years before the Masonic French Revolution, Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes - the very document he had once confirmed.³³ *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* details the consequences:

Instantly the dragoons were quartered upon the Protestants throughout the realm, and filled all France with the like news, that the king would no longer suffer any Huguenots in his kingdom, and therefore they must resolve to change their

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religion. Hereupon the intendants in every parish (which were popish governors and spies set over the Protestants) assembled the reformed inhabitants, and told them they must, without delay, turn Catholics, either freely or by force. The Protestants replied, that they "were ready to sacrifice their lives and estates to the king, but their consciences being God's they could not so dispose of them."

Instantly the troops seized the gates and avenues of the cities, and placing guards in all the passages, entered with sword in hand crying, "Die, or be Catholics!" In short, they practiced every wickedness and horror they could devise to force them to change their religion.

They hanged both men and women by their hair or their feet, and smoked them with hay until they were nearly dead; and if they still refused to sign a recantation, they hung them up again and repeated their barbarities, until, wearied out with torments without death, they forced many to yield to them.

Others, they plucked off all the hair of their heads and beards with pincers. Others they threw on great fires, and pulled them out again, repeating it until they extorted a promise to recant.

Some they stripped naked, and after offering them the most infamous insults, they stuck them with pins from head to foot, and lanced them with penknives; and sometimes with red-hot pincers they dragged them by the nose until they promised to turn. Sometimes they tied fathers and husbands, while they ravished their

wives and daughters before their eyes. Multitudes they imprisoned in the most noisome dungeons, where they practiced all sorts of torments in secret. Their wives and children they shut up in monasteries.

Such as endeavored to escape by flight were pursued in the woods, and hunted in the fields, and shot at like wild beasts; nor did any condition or quality screen them from the ferocity of these infernal dragoons; even members of parliament and military officers, though on actual service, were ordered to quit their posts, and repair directly to their houses to suffer the like storm. Such as complained to the king were sent to the Bastille, where they drank the same cup. The bishops and the intendants marched at the head of the dragoons, with a troop of missionaries, monks, and other ecclesiastics to animate the soldiers to an execution so agreeable to their Holy Church, and so glorious to their demon god and their tyrant king.

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Later this dreadful example of bigotry employed the pen of Voltaire (1694-1778) in deprecation of the horrors of superstition; and though an infidel himself, his essay on toleration does honor to his pen, and has been a blessed means of abating the rigor of persecution in most European states.³⁴

Voltaire, Sion and Freemasonry

Voltaire (1694-1778) was a revolutionary whose liberal philosophy helped prepare the French mind to revolt. Born nine years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Voltaire grew up with these horrors impressed upon his young mind. With pen in hand he became embroiled in rebellion against Crown and Church.

Dr. George E. Dillon provides a brief childhood history of Voltaire: "His real name was Francis Mary Arouet, but, for some reason which has never been clearly explained, he chose to call himself Voltaire. He was the son of good parents, and by position and education should have been an excellent Catholic. He was trained by the very Jesuits whom he afterwards so hated and persecuted."³⁵

Voltaire was age 20 when the Templar Stuarts were exiled to France and age 32 when he himself was "exiled" to England from France. From 1726 to 1728, while residing in London, Voltaire met nearly every prominent citizen in English letters or politics, including King George I, England's first Masonic king. From then on Voltaire believed that the best prospect for social reform would be through an "enlightened monarchy," meaning a monarchy whose king was a Mason.³⁶

Voltaire's mentor in England was Freemason Alexander Pope,³⁷ the famous English poet, who was a member of a rather obscure institution called the Gentleman's Club of Spalding.³⁸ This club was comprised of Rosicrucians, including Freemason Desaguliers, who helped organize the Grand Lodge, and Sir Isaac Newton, Grand Master of the Priory of Sion.

Voltaire was introduced to Newton when he met members of Sion's Royal Society. He attended Newton's funeral a year later. Afterward he read all the late Grand Master's work, as well as the books of Freemason John Locke,³⁹ who before his death in 1704, had been intimate both with Newton and the previous Grand Master of Sion Robert Boyle. Finally, in 1728, just before returning to France, Voltaire joined English Masonry.⁴⁰

There is no record of what transpired in Voltaire's two-year association with Sion's Masonic hierarchy - though, it appears Voltaire

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was an agent of the Priory of Sion. For example, when he returned to France from his English exile, he praised and imitated Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*. He carried the books of the English deists home with him, including those of Isaac Newton and John Locke. All supplied him with ammunition he was to use in his war against the infamous French throne.⁴¹

Voltaire returned to France in 1728, the year after Charles Radcliffe (already in France) became Grand Master of the Priory of Sion. Although there is no evidence that Voltaire and Radcliffe knew each other, both were working for the Sionist conspiracy. Radcliffe's assignment was to make sure that the Templar Stuarts would not return to England. Voltaire's assignment was to foment revolution in the minds of Frenchmen.

As an English Freemason, Voltaire had the credentials to enter French Masonic Lodges, where he was protected. His writings also inflamed the Templars, who longed to avenge the murder of Jacques de Molay, a murder ordered by a French king, a king whose blood now flowed in the veins of the Bourbons.

Voltaire also became a confidant of the head of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, 32nd degree Frederick the Great, King of Prussia - a Templar king. Voltaire's commitment to a Masonic monarchy was so overpowering that when sent to Frederick's court in 1750, he spent three years there, encouraging the king to destroy not only the

Catholic Church, but all Christianity. Voltaire continued correspondence with Frederick as late as 1767. Just before his death Voltaire was initiated into French Freemasonry.⁴²

A Conspiracy Mystery: Allies or Enemies?

Strangely, Voltaire and Radcliffe were both involved with the Templars and the Priory of Sion. For example, while Radcliffe was a Knights Templar fighting on the side of the Stuarts, he was appointed Grand Master of the Priory of Sion upon the death of Isaac Newton. Likewise, Voltaire had joined Sionist English Freemasonry, yet collaborated with Frederick the Great, the Templar King of Prussia. Either Sion and the Temple had reconciled to unite their efforts in dethroning the Bourbons, or Radcliffe and Voltaire both were double-agents for the Priory of Sion.