

mittee to revise the Constitution and report such alterations and amendments thereto as they shall find necessary to be made.

"The next day, January 10th, 1799, Webb, as chairman, the committee submitted their report, which was adopted as reported. In article iv. of the constitution we find the forms for constituting new Chapters and installing High Priests fully laid down and provided for.

"In those forms, after certain ceremonies had been gone through with, all the companions, except High Priests and Past High Priests, are requested to withdraw while the new High Priest is solemnly bound to the performance of his duties; and after the performance of other necessary ceremonies, not proper to be written, they are permitted to return. Now, right here the question naturally arises, what were those other ceremonies not proper to be written?

"A few lines further on we find this language laid down: 'In consequence of your cheerful acquiescence with the charges and regulations just recited, I now declare you duly installed *and anointed* High Priest of this new Chapter!' Now, do not the words '*and anointed*,' as here used, fully answer the question as to what those other 'necessary ceremonies' were? It seems so to me. Upon this theory, then, we have Thomas Smith Webb and his associates on the committee, Benjamin Hurd, Jr., and James Harrison, as the authors of the Order. It was adopted by the General Grand Chapter, on the 10th day of January, 1799, when it became a part of the constitutional requirements of Royal Arch Masonry, so far at least as the authority of the General Grand Chapter extended. Following this matter out, we find that this provision of the constitutions was retained until the Triennial Communication held in the city of Lexington, Kentucky, on the 19th of September, 1853, when on motion of Companion Gould the section was repealed, thus leaving the Order of High

Priesthood the exclusive property of those who were in possession of it.

"Where these excellent Companions got the original thought or germ out of which the Order was formed will have, perhaps, to be left to conjecture. Yet even here I think we may find some data upon which to found a conclusion.

"In setting about the formation of an order suitable for the office of High Priest, what could be more natural or appropriate than to take the scriptural history of the meeting of Abraham with Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High God; the circumstances which brought that meeting about; and bringing forth the bread and wine; the blessing, etc.; and the anointing of Aaron and his sons to the Priesthood under the Mosaic dispensation?

"It does seem to me that these would be the most natural sources for any one to go to for facts and circumstances to work into an order of this kind.

"We can illustrate this point farther by a note found in an old ritual of the 'Mediterranean Pass,' as then—and perhaps it may be so now—conferred under the Grand Priory of England and Wales, preparatory to the Order of Malta.

"That note read as follows: "In some Priories the candidate partakes of bread from the point of a sword, and wine from a chalice placed upon the blade, handed to him by the prelate."

"Again, in an old manuscript of the ritual of the Royal Grand Conclave of Scotland, now also lying before me, I find similar language used in the ritual of the Templars' Order. How well the thoughts contained in these extracts have been worked into the Order of High Priests, every well-informed High Priest must very well understand. But the question now comes up, were Webb and his associates in possession of these rituals at the time they originated the Order of High Priesthood? I think they were, and for these reasons: In these rituals to which I have referred I find these expressions used: 'That I will not shed the blood of a Knight