

# "Mormonism" and Freemasonry

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY

It will not be denied that the origin of Freemasonry is shrouded in mystery. Mackey, in his "History of Freemasonry," with addendum by McClenachan, a book of more than one thousand pages, says: "The origin and source whence first sprang the institution of Freemasonry, such as we now have it, has given rise to more difference of opinion and discussion among Masonic scholars than any other topic in the literature of the institution. Writers on the history of Freemasonry have, at different times, attributed its origin to the following sources: 1. To the patriarchal religion. 2. To the ancient pagan mysteries. 3. To the Temple of King Solomon. 4. To the Crusaders. 5. To the Knights Templars. 6. To the Roman Colleges of Artificers. 7. To the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages. 8. To the Rosicrucians of the sixteenth century. 9. To Oliver Cromwell, for the advancement of his political schemes. 10. To the Pretender for the restoration of the House of Stewart to the British throne. 11.

To Sir Christopher Wren, at the building of St. Paul's Cathedral. 12. To Dr. Desaguliers and his associates, in the year 1717.

"Each of these twelve theories has been, from time to time, and the twelfth within a recent period, sustained with much zeal, if not always with much judgment, by their advocates."

Kraus, in his work, endeavors to prove that Masonry originated in the association of operative Masons, who in the middle ages traveled through Europe, and by whom the cathedrals and castles were built.

Mackey says: "I confess that I cannot find any incontrovertible evidence that would trace Masonry as now organized beyond the building corporations of the middle ages. But Freemasonry must be looked at also from another standpoint. Not only does it present the appearance of a speculative science, based on an operative art, but it also very significantly exhibits itself as the symbolical expression of a religious idea. In other and plainer words, we see in it the important lesson of eternal life.

"But whence came this legend? Did the operative Masons of the middle ages have a legend also? The evidence is that they did. We know what that legend was, and we know that its character was similar, although not in all details precisely the same, as the Masonic legend. It was, however, connected with the Temple of Solomon.

"This legend of the third degree as we now have

it and as we have had it for a certain period of two hundred and fifty years is intended by symbolical representations to teach the resurrection from death, and the divine dogma of eternal life. All Masons know its character, and it is neither expedient nor necessary to dilate upon it.

"But can we find such a legend elsewhere? Certainly we can."

The author here refers to Egypt, Balbos, an ancient city of Phenicia, chief seat of the worship of Adonis; to Eleusis, ancient city of Greece, celebrated as the seat of worship of Ceres, whose temple was the largest sacred edifice in Greece. Ceres was the idolatrous goddess of agriculture. To Samothrace, an island in the Aegean Sea, seat of worship of the Cabiri, whose sacred mysteries are supposed to have been derived from the Pelasgians. These people worshipped all the gods at Dodona, without giving a name to any. The idolatrous worship of these people had the tradition of eternal life in their creed, differently taught and understood, but all containing the same idea.

The author here says: "It is this legend, and this legend alone, that connects speculative Freemasonry with the ancient mysteries of Greece, Syria and Egypt."

J. W. S. Mitchell, a recognized authority, in his history of Freemasonry, quoting Priest, says: "From the commencement of the world we may trace the foundation of Masonry."

With this statement Mitchell takes direct issue. He says: "There is no ancient craft degree that does not point to the temple. There is not a lecture that does not go back to the temple. There is not a ceremony that does not lead the mind back to that beloved spot. King Solomon was our first great teacher; he it was who conceived the plan and brought the beautiful system into being."

Some authors attribute the origin of Freemasonry to the Essenes and first Christians. Thomas Payne, and those of his school say that the Druids were the fathers of the craft.

In Germany in pre-Reformation times the Independent Stone Masons arose, coming out from the monastic orders, as the zeal for building magnificent edifices under ecclesiastical patronage declined.

Some years later, however, the revival of Masonry in England spread over all Europe, and this organization was disbanded, and, as Masonry had been developed in England, became popular in that country.

The Encyclopedia Americana says: "It is within the range of possibility that a connection existed between the chivalric order of Knights Templars, and the fraternity of operative Masons of medieval times, because bodies of skilled workmen erected Templar strongholds in the Holy Land, and built their preceptories and priories and round churches in Europe."

"The famous Temple Church in London is an example. What was more natural than that the

Knights Templar, in the fourteenth century, proscribed, persecuted and despoiled of all things, should seek their perpetuation among the affiliated bodies of mechanics, of whose universality and antiquity they had abundant evidence? On the other hand, no historical doubt exists that every Freemason living since the revival of 1717 A. D. can trace his pedigree only to Great Britain."

As stated, the foregoing definitely proves that the origin of Freemasonry is shrouded in mystery, that the origin of the craft is based largely upon legends which are not authenticated by reliable evidence. If true, they take us back to the idolatrous worship and pagan practices of Egypt, Greece, and other semi-heathen nations of antiquity.