

Chapter 1

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

The Masons have been telling the world that there are many similarities between the temple ritual of the Masons and the ceremonies administered in Mormon temples. A few extracts from Masonic writers and others who accept their conclusions reveal their feelings on this subject. In a recent publication, the old charge was repeated in these words:

The Prophet's attitude upon being expelled from Masonry was apparently that he had been kicked out of better places, and he promptly transferred the ceremonies of his clandestine lodge to Mormonism, adding all the new frills and furbelows he had received from Yahveh. He converted the Masonic apron to a union suit, and from Masonry appropriated its grips, five points of fellowship, much of its symbolism, and almost the exact phraseology of certain Masonic passages.¹

In 1925, Past Grand Master S. H. Goodwin wrote his book *Mormonism and Masonry*, from which we quote:

Not infrequently the question is asked, "Does the Mormon church make use of the Masonic ritual in its Temple ceremonies?" For obvious reasons no attempt will be made here to give a categorical answer to this question; nor is it the writer's purpose to point out, or to label any "resemblances" that may be discovered

¹ Charles Kelley and Hoffman Birney, *Holy Murder*, p. 79.

along the way. What purports to be facts will be presented—the reader will be left free to make his own deductions.

The observant Craftsman cannot be long among the Mormon people without noting the not infrequent use made of certain emblems and symbols which have come to be associated in the public mind with the Masonic fraternity. And now and again he will catch expressions and phrases in conversation, and meet with terms in literature, which are suggestive, to say the least. If he should continue his residence in Utah, he will sometimes be made aware of the fact, when shaking hands with a Mormon neighbor or friend, that there is a pressure of the hand as though some sort of a "grip" is being given.

Visitors and residents of Utah often remark upon the extensive use made of certain emblems, as, for example, the conventional beehive. This familiar figure occupies the center of the great seal of the state; a model of immense size rises upon the roof of the beautiful "Hotel Utah," and one of smaller proportions crowns the platform on the cupola of the "Beehive House," once, and for many years, the official residence of the president of the church. It is noticeably prominent on the great bronze doors which guard the entrance to the sacred precincts of the Salt Lake Temple, as well as on doors of commercial and other buildings. It crowns newel posts of cement steps which lead to the entrance of meeting houses and tabernacles, and public buildings, and frequently appears with effect in the decorative schemes of interiors and lobbies of hotels.

Other emblems, with which the public is more or less familiar, are used extensively, more especially in and about the Salt Lake Temple, and, presumably, in all other temples of the Mormon church. On the interior of this building, we learn from an unquestioned authority, there are in the walls several series of stones of emblematical design and significance, representing the earth, moon, sun and stars. On the east central tower is an inscription, the letters deep cut, lined with gold, which reads: "Holiness to the Lord." This inscription, it might be noted, appears over the doorways of some of the business establishments conducted by the church and over the entrance to the church tithing houses, and it is given place on the stationery used in the official correspondence conducted by church authorities. Immediately beneath this inscription, over the central casement of the east tower of the temple, is the emblem of the clasped hands. On the corresponding stones, above the upper windows, in each of the central towers, is carved the All Seeing Eye. Covering the plate glass double doors

on the east and west sides of the Temple, each of which is four by twelve feet, are bronze grills of intricate pattern which carry medallions of the beehive, while an escutcheon cut in relief shows the clasped hands circled by a wreath. In the "Garden Room" of the Temple the ceiling is embellished with oil paintings to represent clouds and the sky, in which appear the sun, moon and stars. In the center of this room, and against the south wall, is a platform which is reached by three steps. On the platform is an altar upon which rests the Bible. In the "Terrestrial Room" at the east end, is a raised floor, reached by three steps.

It is not only improbable, but incredible that the Mormon prophet alone, of all the people of that region, escaped unaffected by the Anti-Masonic upheaval. That he did not constitute an exception in this respect, the *Book of Mormon* itself, more particularly the first edition, furnishes most conclusive proof. And the fact is significant that church apologists admit, as necessarily they must, the very great influence of environment upon the "boy prophet," and they do not challenge the testimony offered in support of this fact, save in a single particular—Freemasonry! "The *Book of Mormon* says nothing of freemasonry," declares one of the leading teachers of the church. According to him all references to secret societies found in the *Book of Mormon* relate to societies which existed among the Jaredites and the Nephites—ancient American nations! One inclined to be a little skeptical, and the student who seeks to discover facts connected with the period and events, here being passed under review, are certain to find difficulty in accepting such an explanation. They will find that this does not adequately account for the inclusion in the *Book of Mormon*—as a part of the history of those "ancient secret societies"—practically every charge laid at the doors of Freemasons by their enemies during the Anti-Masonic persecution of the time we are considering, and this with a most significant and remarkable fidelity to detail!

In many passages in the *Book of Mormon*, which deal with the doings of an alleged ancient secret society, the influence of the author's environment is plainly visible.

This course will leave no room for doubt that, to say the least—and however the fact may be accounted for—the secret society which is alleged to have operated among the ancient Americans, strangely and unmistakably paralleled, in principle and practice, and with remarkable accuracy in detail, all that fanatical hatred, inflamed by popular passion, asserted was characteristic of Freemasonry at the time when Joseph Smith was

dictating the contents of the *Book of Mormon*. The conviction that the excoriation of Gadianton and his followers is a reflection of the Anti-Masonic conditions in western New York, in the midst of which the prophet did all his work, will be greatly strengthened by an examination of the evidence, furnished by this "American Bible," of other palpable points of contact with, and admitted reminiscences of, environment.

J. H. Beadle has written of the temple ritual of the Mormons:

The general outline is evidently modeled upon the *Mysteries or Holy Dramas* of the Middle Ages. Much of it will be recognized as extracts from Morgan's *Freemasonry Expose*, by those familiar with that work; and the origin of this is quite curious. . .

Smith's *New Translation of the Old Testament* is full of anti-Masonry; the fifth chapter of Genesis as he has it, which is added entire to our version, is devoted entirely to the condemnation of secret societies, and sets forth particularly how they were the invention of Cain after "he fled from the presence of the Lord . . ."

Some years after, however, the Mormons all became Masons, and so continued till they reached Nauvoo; there Joseph Smith out-Masoned Solomon himself and declared that God had revealed to him a great key-word, which had been lost, and that he would lead Masonry to far higher degrees, and not long after their charter was revoked by the Grand Lodge. How much of Masonry proper has survived in the Endowment, the writer will not pretend to say; but the Mormons are pleased to have the outside world connect the two and convey the impression that this is Celestial Masonry.²

Another misinformed writer expressed himself thus:

Even the endowment scene in the Temple ceremonies is not original, as some readers may have noticed. Over and over again one is confronted with situations and incidents in the ceremony which bear a strong resemblance to those used in Masonry; and it has been stated that when Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were beginning their crusade they were not sure what to preach, but were influenced not a little by an anti-Masonry campaign

² J. H. Beadle, *The Mysteries of Mormonism*, p. 409.

which was then very popular in America. The general outline of the endowment ceremony, and the signs used therein, are closely connected with Masonry; and, in spite of Mormon denials, it is easily established that a certain amount of the early Masonry which was used freely in the Temple ceremony still survives.³

Mr. S. A. Burgess, Historian of the Reorganized Church, in a letter to the author says of this subject, "The Utah Church, on one hand, denies the connection between their Temple ceremonies and Free Masonry, yet several who were Masons before entering the Temple have noted a marked similarity. Also, some at least, tell that Joseph Smith perceived that the purity of the ritual had been restored, and that is what is used in the Temples in Utah."

In a recent publication of the Reorganized Church we read this assertion:

It is evident to any reader, from a description of the ceremonies used in the Mormon temples (and so many have told of them they are no longer a secret), that they are adopted largely, if not altogether, from the Masonic Lodge. The Masonic Lodge of Utah has issued pamphlets denouncing the Utah temple ceremonies as clandestine Masonry, and giving that as a principal reason for denying the right of any Mormon to join the Masonic Lodge in Utah.

Brigham Young was a Mason in Nauvoo, and it appears that he introduced the Masonic ritual into his temple ceremonies.

It is a well-known fact that he made the Bee Hive a prominent emblem in his work, even making it the state emblem. The bee hive, the garments, the apron, the All-Seeing Eye, the constellation, and the square and compass on the garments and in the temples were all taken bodily from the Masonic Lodge. The grips, signs, and penalties are similar.⁴

LaRue is convinced that after the charter was revoked from the Nauvoo Lodge, that "Smith then denounced Masonry as an unholy institution of the Priesthood and proceeded to invent his endowment rite which he called the

³ Stuart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism*, p. 308.

⁴ H. Calvin Rich, *Some Differences in Faith*, p. 31.

true Masonry known to Seth and Solomon. He began to administer these rites over his brick store in a room he had prepared at Nauvoo.”⁵

In a recent publication it was related that:

On March 15, 1842, the Mormon leaders joined the Masonic lodge, in spite of Masonry being bitterly condemned in their scriptures. That event changed the essential nature of Mormonism by converting it into a mystery cult. The Masonic emblem and ritual were converted into what the Mormon historian frankly calls the “Masonic sacred drama of the fall of man.” A Mormon temple is not a church but a “grand Masonic fabric,” in which religious truth is presented in symbolism. Further the principle of Masonic hierarchy was adopted. Joseph preached: “The keys are certain signs and words by which the false spirits and personages may be detected from the true, which cannot be revealed to the Elders till the Temple is completed . . . There are signs in heaven, earth and hell; the Elders must know them all, to be endowed with power, to finish their work and prevent imposition. The devil knows many signs but does not know the sign of the Son of Man, or Jesus.” On February 9, 1843, Joseph revealed “three grand keys,” for detecting the nature of a heavenly being, but left some “keys” unrevealed, since he died before the temple was completed. About seven weeks after joining the lodge Joseph began to give instructions on the ancient order of the keys, washings, anointings, and endowments, and it appears that twelve thousand Mormons went through those rites in Nauvoo. This Masonic ritual, it was explained, was revealed by an angel, and the Prophet only joined the lodge to see to what extent it had degenerated from its Solomonian purity. Furthermore, there is best evidence for believing that Joseph taught that Masonic principles and practices operated among the gods as well as on earth. His followers in Utah were taught, that there is a sort of divine Masonry among the angels who hold the priesthood, by which they can detect those who do not belong to their order. Those who cannot give the signs correctly are supposed to be impostors. . .

Smith’s love of parade was not unrelated to his membership in the Masonic lodge, and if he went a little farther than the small-town lodgeman, it must be remembered that he was less hampered by criticism. . .⁶

⁵ C. A. LaRue, *The Foundations of Mormonism*, p. 101.

⁶ G. B. Arbaugh, *Revelation in Mormonism*, p. 159.

Stuart Martin insists that:

There is no doubt that the endowment ceremonies have undergone considerable changes . . . yet some readers will doubtless recognize certain resemblances in oaths and signs and garments to Masonry and it seems probable that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young copied part of their ceremony from anti-Masonic books. . .

Edward Tullidge suggests this explanation for the Prophet's interest in Masonry:

He understood that the chain of Masonry is the endless chain of brotherhood and priesthood, linking all the worlds—the heavens and the earths—but he believed that this earth had lost much of its purpose, its light, its keys, and its spirit,—its chief loss being the key of revelation. For instance, his conception might be expressed in the statement that the Masonic Church on earth ought to be in constant communion with the Masonic Church in the heavens, notwithstanding its many nations, races, religions, civilizations, and law-givers.⁷

Practically every book written against the Mormons has repeated this false accusation until it has become a popular opinion that all these charges are true. In 1878, Grand Master J. M. Orr of Utah was so convinced of the validity of these complaints that he issued this ultimatum:

We say to the priests of the Latter-day Church, you cannot enter our lodge rooms—you surrender all to an unholy priesthood. You have heretofore sacrificed the sacred obligations of our beloved Order, and we believe you would do the same again. Stand aside; we want none of you. Such a wound as you gave Masonry in Nauvoo is not easily healed, and no Latter-day Saint is, or can become a member of our Order in this jurisdiction.

In the following pages we shall show the falsity of these charges and offer the Mormon explanation of the presence of "Masonry" in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses. We shall also explain the reason for the similarities that are said to exist between the Temple ritual of the Masons and the Mormons.

⁷ E. W. Tullidge, *Life of Joseph the Prophet*, p. 391.