
THE TEMPLE ENDOWMENT INTRODUCED

It is evident that Joseph had been fully instructed in the Temple ritual long before he administered the sacred ceremony to his brethren. It was his prayerful anticipation that the House of the Lord would be completed and the endowment ritual administered within its holy walls before the mob thirsted for his blood, but because of the poverty of the Saints and the increasing bitterness of his enemies, he became fearful lest his life would be taken before that necessary ceremony was given to the Church.

On January 19, 1841, the Prophet recorded a revelation upon this subject which explained the Temple ritual to the world as fully as it has ever been described to the public. From this revelation, we quote:

For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood. . . .

Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the

glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name.

And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.

And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the priesthood thereof, . . .¹

If our Temple ritual had been filched from the Masons, how dare Joseph Smith at that early date predict that “things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world” would soon be revealed, and that certain symbols which were also possessed by the Masons were “to be had in the Holy Temple of God,” as was expressed in the Book of Abraham? These promises or prophecies were uttered before the Mormons ever applied for fellowship in the Masonic fraternity. The Prophet did not wait until their application for membership had been approved before promising these blessings that were to be revealed in the House of the Lord. Because of the opposition from Masons in neighboring towns, it was a distinct surprise to the Mormons when a charter was granted to their city.

The reader will recall that this important revelation was given on January 19, 1841, yet the citizens of Nauvoo did not request membership in the society of Freemasons for several months after that date.

“Early in the summer of 1841,” writes Goodwin, “these Masons addressed a communication to Bodley Lodge No. 1, located at Quincy, in which they asked for the usual recommendation in order that they might establish a lodge at Nauvoo.”²

For months prior to the installation of the Nauvoo lodge, President Smith had proclaimed from the pulpit

¹ *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 124:28, 39-42.

² S. H. Goodwin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, p. 8.

many of the ceremonies that would be administered in the Temple as soon as it was erected. At the general conference of the Church held at Nauvoo October 3, 1841, the clerk records that:

President Joseph Smith, by request of the Twelve Apostles, gave instructions on the doctrine of baptism for the dead, which were listened to with intense interest by the large assembly . . . The principal subject brought before the people at this Conference was the redemption of the dead, and building the Temple. This matter appeared to impress itself upon the mind of Joseph with great force, and nothing, apparently, gave him more delight than to explain its importance to the Saints. . . He presented baptism for the dead as the only way that men can appear as saviors on Mount Zion.

The clerk further quotes the Prophet as saying:

There is never a time when the spirit is too old to approach God. All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin, which hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. There is a way to release the spirits of the dead; that is by the power and authority of the Priesthood—by binding and loosing on earth. This doctrine appears glorious, inasmuch as it exhibits the greatness of divine compassion and benevolence in the extent of the plan of human salvation.

THE ENDOWMENT PROMISED

On the 15th of November, 1841, a general epistle from the Twelve Apostles encouraged the Saints to labor diligently that the Temple might be completed in which they would be “endowed with power from on high.” From this document we quote:

The Saints are growing in faith, and the intelligence of heaven is flowing into their understanding, for the Spirit of the Lord is with them, and the Holy Ghost is instructing them in things to come. . . God requires of his Saints to build Him a house wherein His servants may be instructed, and endowed with power

from on high, to prepare them to go forth among the nations, and proclaim the fullness of the Gospel for the last time, and bind up the law, and seal up the testimony, leaving this generation without excuse, and the earth prepared for the judgments which will follow. In this house all the ordinances will be made manifest, and many things will be shown forth, which have been hid from generation to generation.³

On the first day of December, 1841, the Twelve Apostles prepared a general epistle on the subject of baptism for the dead. The following paragraphs are taken from this interesting letter:

The children of Israel were commanded to build a house in the land of promise; and so are the Saints of the last days, as you will see in the Revelation given to Joseph the Seer, January 19, 1841, wherein those ordinances may be revealed which have been hid for ages, even their anointings and washings, and baptisms for the dead; wherein they may meet in solemn assemblies for their memorials, sacrifices, and oracles in their most holy places; and wherein they may receive conversations and statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundations of Zion, and the glory and honor and adornment of all her municipalities through the medium which God has ordained.

One of those privileges which is particularly attracting the notice of the Saints at the present moment, is baptism for the dead, in the font which is so far completed as to be dedicated, and several have already attended to this ordinance by which the sick have been made whole, and the prisoner set free; but while we have been called to administer this ordinance, we have been led to inquire into the propriety of baptizing those who have not been obedient, and assisted to build the place for baptism; and it seems to us unreasonable to expect that the Great Jehovah will approbate such administration; for if the Church must be brought under condemnation, and rejected with her dead, if she fail to build the house and its appurtenances, why should not individuals of the Church, who thus neglect, come under the same condemnation? For if they are to be rejected, they may as well be rejected without baptism as with it; for their baptism can be of no avail before God, and the time to baptize them may be appropriated to building the walls of the house, and this is according to

³ *History of the Church*, IV, 449.

the understanding which we have received from him who is our spokesman.

Brethren, you have as great an interest at stake in this thing as we have, but as our Master, even the Master-builder of the Temple, whose throne is on high, has seen fit to constitute us stewards in some parts of His household; we feel it important for us to see to it that our Master is not defrauded, and especially by those who have pledged their word, their time, their talents, to His services; and we hope this gentle hint will suffice, that we may not be compelled to publish the names of those referred to.⁴

In January, 1841, an epistle from the Church authorities said of this subject:

The Temple of the Lord is in progress of erection here, where the Saints will come to worship the God of their fathers, according to the order of His house and the powers of the Holy Priesthood, and will be so constructed as to enable all the functions of the Priesthood to be duly exercised, and where instructions from the Most High will be received, and from this place go forth to distant lands.

The subject of baptism for the dead was not the only feature of the Temple ceremony which had been revealed to Joseph Smith before 1842. A careful study of Section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants will reveal that he then knew the ceremony that would be administered in the House of the Lord. When the Kirtland Temple was completed in 1836, he had a partial conception of the magnitude of the Temple-building program of the Church and the significance of the same.

In that first Temple there was a remarkable spiritual endowment similar to that enjoyed by the ancient Saints on the day of Pentecost, yet the endowment promised in the Nauvoo Temple was a different and greater blessing. It was the administration of sacred ordinances which are necessary for celestial glory. It is more of a personal endowment required for a fullness of glory in the eternal world. It was

⁴ *History of the Church*, IV, 472-474.

this — and nothing less than this endowment — that the Prophet always had in mind respecting the Nauvoo Temple.

Elder Wilford Woodruff wrote of the Prophet at the time the first temple was completed:

The Prophet Joseph arose and addressed the congregation for the space of three hours. He was clothed with the power, spirit, and image of God. He presented many things of great importance to the elders of Israel. O, that the record could be written as with an iron pen, of the light, principles, and virtue that came from the mouth and heart of the Prophet Joseph, whose soul, like that of Enoch, seemed as wide as eternity! That day strikingly demonstrated that he was, indeed, a prophet of God raised up for the deliverance of Israel. . .

He seemed a fountain of knowledge from whose mouth streams of eternal wisdom flowed. As he stood before the people, he showed clearly that the authority of God was upon him. . . There is not so great a man as Joseph standing in his generation. The Gentiles look upon him, and he is like a bed of gold concealed from human view. They know not his principle, his spirit, his wisdom, his virtue, his philanthropy, of his calling. His mind, like Enoch's, expands as eternity, and God alone can comprehend his soul.⁵

Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote of the spiritual endowment in the Kirtland Temple:

The ordinances of the priesthood were revealed to a greater extent than had been known among men since the prophets and Apostles of old fell asleep; and many were anointed to their holy calling, and were instructed in principles which were great and glorious in themselves, and calculated to enlarge the mind and prepare the chosen servants of God for the great work before them.⁶

Yet the remarkable public endowment in the Kirtland Temple was simply preparatory to the glorious personal endowment administered in Nauvoo.

⁵ M. F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, pp. 66-68.

⁶ *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, p. 141.

On January 6, 1842, two months before the Mormons were admitted into the Masonic fraternity, the Prophet in his diary expressed his New Year thoughts in these words:

The new year has been ushered in and continued thus far under the most favorable auspices, and the Saints seem to be influenced by a kind and indulgent Providence in their dispositions and (blessed with) means to rear the Temple of the Most High God, anxiously looking forth to the completion thereof as an event of the greatest importance to the Church and the world, making the Saints in Zion to rejoice, and the hypocrite and sinner to tremble. Truly this is a day long to be remembered by the Saints of the last days,—a day in which the God of heaven has begun to restore the ancient order of His kingdom unto His servants and His people,—a day in which all things are concurring to bring about the completion of the fullness of the Gospel, a fullness of the dispensation of dispensations, even the fullness of times; a day in which God has begun to make manifest and set in order in His Church those things which have been, and those things which the ancient prophets and wise men desired to see but died without beholding them; a day in which those things begin to be made manifest, which have been hid from before the foundation of the world, and which Jehovah has promised should be made known in His own due time unto His servants, to prepare the earth for the return of His glory, even a celestial glory, and a kingdom of Priests and kings to God and the Lamb, forever, on Mount Zion.

In view of the many revelations that had been given to Joseph Smith many years before, how can one maintain that he had anything else in mind except the Temple endowment? Furthermore, persons familiar with the Temple ritual will recognize at once certain expressions in the above quotations which are positive evidence that the Temple ceremony had been revealed and doubtless recorded at that time.

On the 6th day of April, 1841, the cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid, yet the complete plan of the building had been given before that date. One reason that

the exiled Saints were unable to sell the Temple, when they knew they must seek a domicile in a distant land, was because of its peculiar style of architecture. Gregg explains: "As a house of worship it was ill-adapted. It was not suited for a church for any other denominations; it was not convenient for a manufactory; and it was not well adapted to educational purposes."⁷

At the time the cornerstones were laid, Joseph Smith had a very definite idea of how the building should be constructed, and soon after that date he certainly knew what ceremony would be conducted in each room, else why did he construct such a novel edifice?

During the course of construction the architect, William Weeks, had an interview with the Prophet respecting the size and shape of the windows between the stories. The architect objected to making the small circular windows that had been called for in the plans. He argued that the round windows in the broad side of a building were a violation of all the known rules of architecture, contending that they should be semi-circular — that the building was too low for round windows.

He was definitely instructed to carry out the original plan if he had to make the Temple ten feet higher than it was originally calculated. He was assured that the circular window would admit sufficient light for the room. "I wish you to carry out my designs," he was instructed. "I have seen in vision the splendid appearance of that building illuminated, and will have it built according to the pattern shown me."

An editorial in the *Times and Seasons*, July 15, 1842, declared that the architectural designs of the Temple at Jerusalem, together with its ornaments and beauty, were revealed by God. The same paper, one year earlier, ex-

⁷ Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, p. 383.

pressed the hope that the Nauvoo Temple would be constructed according to the pattern that had been revealed to Joseph Smith.

IN AN UPPER ROOM

On May 4, 1842, the Prophet administered the Temple ritual which had been announced in the revelation of January 19, 1841. Rooms in the upper story of his brick store near the Mississippi were improvised for the purpose. In his journal of that date we read:

I spent the day in the upper part of the store . . . In council with General James Adams, of Springfield, Patriarch Hyrum Smith, Bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, and President Brigham Young and Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments, and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days. And the communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritual minded; and there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints; therefore let the Saints be diligent in building the Temple, and all houses which they have been, or shall hereafter be, commanded of God to build; and wait their time with patience in all meekness, faith, perseverance unto the end, knowing assuredly that all these things referred to in this council are always governed by the principle of revelation.

On the following day the Prophet recorded: "General Adams started for Springfield. and the remainder of the council of yesterday continued their meeting at the same

place, and myself and Brother Hyrum received in turn from the others, the same that I had communicated to them the day previous."

The reader's attention is called to these words used in the above quotation: "instructing," "made known to these men," "council," "communications," etc. Yet Joseph Smith, who had been a Mason for six weeks and had attended only three short meetings of the lodge, was addressing a body of men, several of whom had been Masons for years. How could he possibly make things known to these men if he relied wholly upon Masonry for his information?

These brethren, with whom he "spent the day instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood," had been Masons for years. There is no reason to doubt that the brethren familiar with the Temple ceremony and also the Masonic ritual considered the two in this manner:

The fraternity sought for in that organization (Masonry) was superseded by a more perfect fraternity found in the vows and covenants which the endowment in the House of God afforded members of the Church. Besides, the world was opposed to the mission of Joseph Smith and his followers. Those who seek their highest guidance in precedence quote the circumstances as an argument for the return to the condition of those times. The Church, however, rests upon the rock of revelation and must follow divine guidance rather than precedence.⁸

The Prophet was not given to boasting. When he asserts that he "instructed" his brethren, we have every reason to believe that he actually presented an abundance of new material. When a malarial plague descended upon the camps of the Saints at Commerce, the Prophet went forth in mighty power and called many back from the gates of death. The description of those miraculous incidents are related by others, for the modest Joseph simply wrote of these events: "Many of the sick were this day raised up

⁸ M. F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff*, p. 160.

by the power of God," and "the sick were administered unto with great success."⁹

At the time the Temple endowments were given to these brethren, the Nauvoo lodge had been in operation for six weeks. During that time, the lodges in neighboring towns maintained a constant communication with the Grand Lodge of the state, demanding the revocation of the dispensation to the Nauvoo lodge. It is not likely that within this short period Joseph was convinced that Masonry would not afford the protection he had anticipated, and since the lodge "brethren" had become his bitter enemies instead of his loyal friends whose lives should have been pledged for the protection of all brethren in that benevolent fraternity, he deemed it wisdom to administer the Temple ceremony before the Temple was completed, lest his life be taken and his brethren not endowed?

THE GROVES WERE GOD'S FIRST TEMPLES

The poverty of the Saints, together with the tremendous expense of constructing such a large building as the Nauvoo Temple, made it impossible to complete the edifice as soon as the Prophet had anticipated. When he realized that the building program was not going forward as rapidly as he had expected, yet the spirit of mob violence was becoming as alarming as it had been in Missouri, he became convinced that his life's blood would likely be shed before the Temple was completed. The vast building required the expenditure of about \$1,000,000, at a time when the poverty-stricken people were trying to lay the foundations of a new commonwealth and retrieve the fortune lost in Missouri.

Since the Prophet knew that his days were numbered and that the Temple could not be completed as soon as he had hoped, he proceeded to administer the Temple endow-

⁹ *History of the Church*, IV, 4.

ment which had been revealed to him many months before, but which he wished to reserve until the House of the Lord was finished.

Elder Orson Hyde wrote of the endowment the Prophet gave to the Twelve:

Before I went east on the 4th of April, last, we were in council with Brother Joseph almost every day for weeks. Says Brother Joseph, in one of those councils, "There is something going to happen; I don't know what it is, but the Lord bids me to hasten, and give you your endowment before the temple is finished." He conducted us through every ordinance of the holy priesthood, and when he had gone through with all the ordinances he rejoiced very much, and says, "now if they kill me you have got all the keys, and all the ordinances, and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up; and now," says he, "on your shoulders will rest the responsibility of leading this people, for the Lord is going to let me rest a while." Now why did he say to the Twelve "on your shoulders will this responsibility rest," why did he not mention Brother Hyrum? The spirit knew that Hyrum would be taken with him, and hence he did not mention his name; Elder Rigdon's name was not mentioned, although he was here all the time, but he did not attend our councils.¹⁰

Elder Wilford Woodruff wrote of a further endowment the Prophet gave to his brethren a short time before his death:

Has the Prophet Joseph found Elder Rigdon in his councils, when he organized the quorum of the Twelve a few months before his death, to prepare them for the endowment? And when *they received their endowment, and actually received the keys of the Kingdom of God, and oracles of God, keys of revelation, and the pattern of heavenly things*, and thus addressing the Twelve, exclaimed: "Upon your shoulders the kingdom rests, and you must round up your shoulders and bear it, for I have had to do it until now. But now the responsibility rests upon you. It matter-

¹⁰ *Millennial Star*, V, 104.

eth not what becomes of me." I say, has this been the case with Elder Rigdon in any wise?¹¹

Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote of the same incident:

This great and good man was led, before his death, to call the Twelve together, from time to time, and to instruct them in all things pertaining to the kingdom, ordinances, and government of God. He often observed that he was laying the foundation, but it would remain for the Twelve to complete the building. Said he, "I know not why; but for some reason I am constrained to hasten my preparations, and to confer upon the Twelve all the ordinances, keys, covenants, endowments, and sealing ordinances of the priesthood, and so set before them a pattern in all things pertaining to the sanctuary and the endowment therein."

Having done this, he rejoiced exceedingly: "for," said he, "the Lord is about to lay the burden on your shoulders and let me rest awhile; and if they kill me," continued he, "the Kingdom of God will roll on, as I have now finished the work which was laid upon me, by committing to you all things for the building up of the kingdom *according to the heavenly vision, and the pattern shown me from heaven.*" With many conversations like this, he comforted the minds of the Twelve, and prepared them for what was soon to follow.

He proceeded to confer on Elder Young, the President of the Twelve, the keys of the sealing power, as conferred in the last days by the spirit and power of Elijah, in order to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth should be smitten with a curse.

This last key of the priesthood is the most sacred of all, and pertains exclusively to the first presidency of the church, without whose sanction, and approval or authority, no sealing blessing shall be administered pertaining to things of the resurrection and the life to come.

After giving them a very short charge to do all things according to the pattern, he quietly surrendered his liberty and his life into the hands of his blood-thirsty enemies, and all this to save the people for whom he had so long laboured from threatened vengeance.¹²

¹¹ *Ibid.*, V, 109.

¹² *Ibid.*, V, 151.

President John Taylor later said of this event:

Joseph Smith, before his death, was much exercised about the completion of the Temple in Nauvoo, and the administering of ordinances therein. In his anxiety and for fear he should not live to see the Temple completed, he prepared a place over what was known as the brick-store—which many of you who lived in Nauvoo will recollect—where to a chosen few he administered those ordinances that we now have today associated with Endowments, so that if anything should happen to him—which he evidently contemplated—he would feel that he had then fulfilled his mission, that he had conferred upon others all the keys given to him by the manifestations of the power of God.¹²

Whenever Joseph Smith spoke to his brethren about this subject, he was talking to members of the Masonic fraternity, hundreds of whom were active workers in the lodge, yet he never attended more than six meetings of the lodge after receiving the third degree of Masonry on March 16, 1842. He never took an active part in the fraternity and never received a higher degree than that conferred upon him by Grand Master Jonas at the time the Nauvoo lodge was installed.

It is sheer presumption to maintain that the signs, tokens, keys, and blessings of the Temple ritual, that he frequently spoke about, were to be taken from Masonry. Though he spoke to men who had been active Masons for years, he imparted to them much information which was not available in the lodge. If he had tried to build up a mysterious ceremony to be instituted in the Temple, taking it from Masonry, those brethren who knew it would have deserted him the moment they detected his theft. The men who knew Masonry best were the ones who realized the true source of his wisdom.

¹² *Journal of Discourses*, XXV, 183.

A WITNESS FROM WITHOUT THE FOLD

From the pen of Ebenezer Robinson, we get an interesting testimony in support of the theory that the Temple endowment was administered in Nauvoo under the personal direction of Joseph Smith. Mr. Robinson had been editor of the *Times and Seasons*, and was well informed on the secret practices of the leading brethren of the Church. In later years he drifted from the Church, refusing to go to the West with Brigham Young and the pioneers. Even though he had no interest in the Church that had removed to the West, he became thoroughly disgusted with certain elements in Missouri and elsewhere who were insisting that Joseph Smith never introduced the Temple ritual in Nauvoo. In reply to these critics he published a periodical called the *Return*. From volume II, page 252, published in April, 1890, we quote the following:

Notwithstanding the cloud of witnesses testifying that polygamy existed in Nauvoo in 1843 and 1844, yet the editors of the *Saints' Herald* persist in representing that polygamy, and its attendant evils, including the endowment house, robes, &c., were introduced by Brigham Young and his associates, and that Joseph and Hyrum Smith were innocent in the matter.

We here state a few facts which came under our personal observation. As early as 1843 a secret order was established in Nauvoo, called the HOLY ORDER, the members of which were of both sexes, in which, we were credibly informed, scenes were enacted representing the garden of Eden, and that the members of that order were provided with a peculiar under garment called a robe. "It was made in one piece. On the right breast is a square, on the left a compass, in the centre a small hole, and on the knee a large hole." This was the description of that garment as given to the writer in Nauvoo, in Joseph Smith's life time. It was claimed that while they wore this "robe" no harm could befall them.

In confirmation of this idea, we quote the 2nd verse of the 113th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, Plano Edition, speaking of the Providential escape of Willard Richards, who was in the jail with Joseph and Hyrum Smith at the time they were murdered.

"John Taylor and William (Willard) Richards, two of the Twelve, were the only persons in the room at the time; the former was wounded in a savage manner with four balls, but has since recovered: the latter, through the promises of God escaped "without even a hole in his robe."

It was stated that Willard Richards was the only one of the four, who had on his "robe" at the time, therefore the statement that he escaped through the promise of God, "without a hole in his robe." . . .

President Joseph Smith attended the meetings of that "Order," which were held in the large room in the second story of his brick store building. One day in June, 1844, the "Order" was in session from morning until evening. At the adjournment for dinner we saw Joseph Smith come from there, and again after dinner, he returned back to the same place, as in returning from dinner President Smith and the writer walked by ourselves, side by side in intimate conversation, but parted at the store.

Not long after parting with President Smith, wishing to speak with him we ran hastily up the stairs to call him out when to our amazement we encountered John Taylor, one of the twelve Apostles, in a long white garment, with a white turban on his head, and a drawn sword in his hand, evidently representing the "cherubims and flaming sword which was placed at the east of the garden of Eden, to guard the tree of life." He informed us Brother Joseph was in the room.

Here, we understand, and firmly believe, the ceremony originated, as practiced in the endowment house in Utah, including the signs, tokens, grips, garments, girdles and key words used therein; and that the twelve in Utah conscientiously believe in this and other matters, they are carrying out the measures of Joseph Smith, and that he gave them their endowment, and rolled the burden of the church and kingdom upon their shoulders.

The following extracts from the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham¹ Young show that they had important information to impart and sacred ordinances to reveal that were as superior to Masonry as the heavens are above the earth:

To his followers in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith said on June 11, 1843:

Why gather the people together in this place? For the same purpose that Jesus wanted to gather the Jews—to receive the ordinances, the blessings, and glories that God has in store for His Saints.

I will now ask this assembly and all the Saints if you will now build this house and receive the ordinances and blessings which God has in store for you; or will you not build unto the Lord this house, and let Him pass by and bestow these blessings upon another people?

On April 8, 1844, he said at a conference of the Church:

The declaration this morning is, that as soon as the Temple and baptismal font are prepared, we calculate to give the Elders of Israel their washings and anointings, and attend to those last and more impressive ordinances, without which we cannot obtain celestial thrones. But there must be a holy place prepared for that purpose. There was a proclamation made during the time that the foundation of the Temple was laid to that effect, and there are provisions made until the work is completed, so that men may receive their endowments and be made kings and priests unto the Most High God. . . . Every man who wishes to save his father, mother, brothers, sisters, and friends, must go through all the ordinances for each of them separately, the same as for himself, from baptism to ordination, washings and anointings, and receive all the keys and powers of the Priesthood, the same as for himself.

Before the Mormons left Illinois, there were hundreds of the brethren who became Masons. Many of them became very active and spent much time in the lodge. If Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, neither of whom ever took an active part in Masonry, had tried to fashion the Temple ceremony on what little knowledge they had of Masonry, they would have found themselves without a flock.

In the light of these facts, it is presumptuous to say that the endowment Joseph Smith gave his brethren six weeks after he became a Mason, was borrowed from Masonry. Though there may be a few rudimental principles that are slightly similar, there are numerous ordinances and cere-

monies in the House of the Lord that are certainly not a feature of the Masonic ritual.

If we are to accept the conclusions of certain Masons, that there is a pronounced similarity between the temple ritual of the Masons and the Mormons, let us minimize that similarity and seek elsewhere for its explanation. It is positively ridiculous to assume that Joseph Smith plagiarized from Masonry, thereby developing a system which has become one of the greatest agencies and institutions of the Church.

After more than a century of Temple-building, the Latter-day Saints have erected ten elaborate Temples wherein thousands of faithful workers have labored without any monetary remuneration for their years of toil. Such a system as this is not the outgrowth of deception or theft. The Temple ceremony of the Mormons arose in the keen mind of a spiritual expert to whom the will of God was made known.

THE VOICE OF THE ENEMY IS HEARD IN THE LAND

At this time when the Temple ceremony of the Church was being established and most of the male members of the Church were Masons, it never even appeared to the ones who apostatized that Joseph Smith was a plagiarist. There were several men who were familiar with both rituals and later left the Church, but they never made this complaint against Joseph Smith.

Some of these apostates wrote books against the leaders of the Church, but none of them complained that he had stolen the secrets of Masonry and incorporated them in the Temple ceremony, though they were familiar with both rituals.

The notorious John C. Bennett was in a position to have known these facts, yet in all his bitter, slanderous writings

against the Mormon leaders he never suggested such a probability. At the time he was excommunicated from the Church, he was expelled from the Masonic lodge, and the many public notices of this which appeared in the Church publications requested that all editors throughout the land publish the same so that he would not go to another state and be affiliated with the Masons, yet he never brought the charge of plagiarism against Joseph Smith.

Typical of what a few disgruntled apostates were saying about the subject, we may consider a publication called *Spiritual Delusions*, written by Increase Van Deusen and his wife. This pamphlet was notarized December 13, 1847, and the first edition was likely printed soon after that date. Subsequent editions appeared in America and England. Though sixty pages were devoted to the subject of the Temple endowment, it is silent on the subject of Masonry.

Though this publication was a vicious tirade, we shall quote a characteristic section about the Temple endowment. This would have been a very suitable time and place to have told the world of the plagiarism of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, but these writers said nothing about Masonry, though this was written after the Mormons had been expelled from Nauvoo. We quote:

When the foundation of the great Mormon Temple was laid, at Nauvoo, Illinois, Joseph Smith the then acknowledged Mormon prophet, issued a written proclamation or revelation to all his subjects on this and on the Asiatic continent, in which he stated that God had revealed to him certain mysteries, ordinances, ceremonial observations, etc., and commanded the people through him to build a temple, the object of which was to reveal the nature of those mysteries, the observation of which was essential to man's salvation.

After relating how Brigham Young became the leader of the Church, they continued:

He prepared and issued a new proclamation, in which he stated that the former prophet, previous to his death, had revealed to him the true nature and objects of the "Endowment," and if they would finish the temple he would faithfully reveal all that the prophet Joseph would have done had he lived. The doors of the attic story were closed and a secret preparation made by a few selected individuals for the great secrets which were to be disclosed, which were revealed by Brigham Young to about 12,000 persons during a period of three months in the winter of 1846, and said to be a reward to those who assisted in the completion of this splendid edifice.

He related much of the Temple ceremony, describing "seven separate degrees," but he does not associate it with Masonry.

His chief objection was to the fact that too many members were admitted to the Temple. His fears in this regard were thus expressed:

Now the man that led twelve or fifteen thousand through this farce, has gone with the main body of the Mormons, to California, with the express understanding, to my certain knowledge, of carrying out these principles among the Western Indians, and all whom he has influence over. He told others that were at Nauvoo, those who were not let into these Temple Mysteries, (for all did not go in for want of time and opportunity,) that when they got to California, there would be a tent pitched in the wilderness for the Indians' benefit and all others that had not an opportunity at the Temple at Nauvoo. The idea is if they had not been driven from Nauvoo, all the Mormons in all the world would have gone there in their turn, and received their great anticipated blessing.

Van Deusen was a Mason and had received the endowment in the Temple, yet he did not say that Joseph Smith had borrowed a thing from Masonry.

After John C. Bennett was excommunicated from the Church, he wrote a bitter book against Joseph Smith, yet his *History of the Saints* does not charge him with filching the secrets of Masonry. Bennett had been a Mason for

years before going to Nauvoo. If he could have made an issue of this, he would gladly have done so.

He devoted several pages to a discussion of the "mysterious rites," which he also called the "Order Lodge." His book included a few pictures showing how the rooms were decorated with twigs and branches, and the people wore long, loose, white robes. He did not hesitate to write that the "mysterious rites" were an outgrowth of "a special revelation from heaven." "None but the very elite of the Mormons," he continues, "are admitted into this lodge, as the mysteries of the Holy priesthood are there, more fully than elsewhere, explained to the members who are initiated only after they have bound themselves by a most solemn oath to profound and inviolate secrecy."

Bennett's book was published in 1842, the year the dispensation was granted to the Nauvoo lodge, so he knew that Joseph Smith did not have time to draw upon Masonry for the endowment ceremony. "After the precious ointment has been poured upon the candidate," he declared, "a hole is cut in the bosom of his shirt. . . . They believe these shirts will preserve them from death and secure them an earthly immortality."¹⁴

Another apostate who was in a position to have known if the Temple ceremony had been borrowed from Masonry was George W. Harris, who had married the widow of William Morgan after Morgan's strange disappearance in 1826. Mr. Harris and his wife were converted to Mormonism, spending a few years in Nauvoo where he became a prominent leader. After the exodus, he was in favor of making Kaneshville, Iowa, the gathering place of the Mormons. They both apostatized and remained there as the pioneers pushed westward. In 1856, she divorced him, yet

¹⁴ John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints*, p. 272.

neither of them ever accused the Mormons of using Masonry for any ulterior purpose.

After mentioning certain "signs, tokens, grips of the hands, key words, etc.," he affirms that "they are peculiar to this secret organization."

Others wrote similar books against the Church and its secret ceremonies, yet they all failed to see enough similarities to bring the charge that it had been taken from Masonry.

The Masonic officials at the time of the conflict with the Mormons in Nauvoo never brought this charge against them. This false accusation was made by misinformed people, yet the falsehood has persisted.

The Temple ritual was not given in its fullness at the meeting on the 4th of May, but enough was administered to convince those men who had been Masons for years that Joseph Smith was imparting to them a wealth of information they had not known before. On subsequent occasions these same men were called together to receive further instruction on the endowment.

Before the Kirtland Temple was dedicated, similar meetings were held and instructions given on the rudimental principles of the endowment. In November, 1835, Joseph Smith said to his leading brethren, "The endowment you are so anxious about you cannot comprehend now, nor could Gabriel explain it to the understanding of your dark minds; but strive to be prepared in your hearts—The order of the house of God has been and ever will be the same—you need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things."

THE SHADOW ACROSS THE THRESHOLD

The Prophet was anxious to impart all the Temple ritual before his enemies should silence his tongue. He had

hoped that the Temple would be completed before his mission was ended, but at the very time he was admitted to the Masonic fraternity, he had a lingering premonition that his days were numbered. This is likely one strong reason for seeking membership in that fraternal society.

One month after the Masonic dispensation had been granted to Nauvoo, he preached a sermon to the members of the Relief Society, informing them that the Church was not fully organized in its proper order and would not be until the Temple was completed "where places will be provided for the administration of the ordinances of the Priesthood."

He further explained that he would not have many opportunities of instructing his people on these important items "as they would be left to themselves; they would not long have him to instruct them." He spoke of delivering the keys of the Priesthood to his colleagues, and promised the women of the Church that they should receive those coveted blessings in connection with their husbands. He concluded by saying that God had appointed him elsewhere.

Within a month after the lodge was set up in Nauvoo, he preached at the funeral service of Ephraim Marks, again speaking as if he knew his mission was soon to end. "Some have believed that Brother Joseph could not die," he said, "but this is a mistake. It is true there have been times when I had the promise of my life to accomplish such and such things. I have not at present any lease on life. I am as likely to die as other men."

This lingering premonition goaded him to give the endowment to his brethren before the Temple was completed.

One year later, he called together most of the brethren who received the initial endowment on the fourth day of May, giving additional information about the endowment

“and instructions in the Priesthood on the new and everlasting covenant.”

It is obvious that if he intended developing some form of spurious Masonry, he would not repeatedly be giving the instructions to the men who had been members of the lodge for several years. At this second meeting, he even had Judge James Adams make the journey from Springfield, in order to share in the endowment.

Two days later, he met with the same brethren in the upper room of his store “to attend to ordinances and counseling.” The following day, he was in session with the same brethren “in conversation, instructions, and teaching concerning the things of God.”

Judge Adams, a prominent authority and official in the Masonic fraternity, would have known in a moment if Joseph Smith were stealing any secrets from Masonry, yet his admiration for Joseph Smith was increased by every opportunity he had to receive his counsel.

It is significant that at the close of the last session of the endowment, Judge Adams gave to the Trustee-in-trust a deed to eleven quarter-sections of land on the Illinois prairie.

On December 2, 1843, the endowment was given to Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, Wilford Woodruff, and other leaders. Thirty-five persons were present on that occasion.

Though the Masonic Temple was completed and dedicated before the martyrdom, it was regarded as entirely inadequate for the Temple endowment. Though it was built according to Masonic specifications and plans, it was certainly not suitable for the administration of the Temple ceremony.

AN ALTAR OF STONE IN THE WILDERNESS

President Brigham Young once said that if the enemy prevented them from completing the Temple in Nauvoo, "We will receive our endowments, if we have to go into the wilderness and build an altar of stone." Despite their anxiety to receive that coveted blessing which, in an emergency, could be administered at an altar of stone, they never considered using the Masonic temple for that purpose, though their dispensation had been denied and the Masons in Illinois had refused to fraternize with them.

Though an altar of stone in the wilderness might provide a suitable place to administer the Temple ritual, during an emergency, the Masonic temple in Nauvoo was definitely inadequate. At least one person did receive his endowments in the wilderness at an altar of stone. The occasion was this:

Early in 1843, Addison T. Pratt left Nauvoo for a mission in the South Pacific. In the autumn of 1848, he returned to America by way of San Francisco. He never received any of the endowment in Nauvoo. He was called upon another mission to the Society Islands, but was anxious to receive the endowment which many of his brethren had received in Nauvoo. On July 21, 1849, President Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, Erastus Snow, Charles C. Rich, and a few other brethren assembled on Ensign Peak, north of Salt Lake City, where the endowment was administered to Elder Pratt. The spot had been dedicated for the purpose.

During the last two years of the Prophet's life, he preached much in public about the keys of the priesthood and the Temple endowment. This vital information was expounded in public, as the full plan of the Gospel was unfolded to his mind and because he seemed to sense that his life's span was drawing to a close.

On the first day of May, 1842, he declared in a sermon that the keys of the priesthood are certain signs and words

by which false spirits and messengers could be detected. He promised that the full details of this necessary information would be revealed to the Elders when the Temple was completed. "The devil knows many signs," he explained, "but does not know the sign of the Son of Man. None can truly say he knows God until he has handled something, and this can only be in the Holiest of Holies."

His mention of keys, tokens, and signs at this time was not because he had suddenly learned it from attending three meetings of the Masonic lodge. His association with the lodge for three brief meetings and the realization that many of his brethren would soon be initiated made the occasion an opportune one for discussing the subject of the keys of the priesthood. The Sunday following his initiation, he spoke of the key words and signs belonging to the priesthood, "yet years earlier he had received that information. Six years before his membership in the fraternity, he spoke at length about that subject, explaining that Elijah and other heavenly messengers had restored the various keys of the priesthood. He said the same in 1829, when angels restored the keys of the priesthood before the Church was organized."

At the time the cornerstones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid, he seems to have known the full plan and purpose of the building. At the April conference in 1841, he assured his people that great blessings would be given to them when the building was finished. A few months later he explained that in the Temple the Elders would be endowed with power from on high, receiving blessings which had been hid "from generation to generation." Those prominent Masons who were the first to receive the endowment were definitely convinced that he was imparting valuable information to them that was not to be found in Masonry.

An epistle from the Church authorities, written in Au-

gust, 1840, described the proposed Temple as a "house of prayer, a house of order, a house for the worship of our God, where the ordinances can be attended to agreeable to His divine will."

The following January, a similar epistle spoke of the Temple as a house in which all the functions of the priesthood would be duly exercised and where instructions from the Most High would be received.

Numerous, indeed, were the early references to the Temple ritual in the sermons and writings of Joseph Smith. Though a few rudimental principles may have been similar to the Masonic ritual, he opened a vast, new field of wisdom that had certainly been "hidden for generations."

From the teachings of President Brigham Young on the purpose of temples and the meaning of the endowment, we quote these significant instructions:

Soon after, the Church, through our beloved Prophet Joseph, was commanded to build a Temple to the Most High in Kirtland, Ohio, and this was the next House of the Lord we hear of on the earth, since the days of Solomon's Temple. Joseph not only received revelation and commandment to build a Temple, but he received a pattern also, as did Moses for the Tabernacle, and Solomon for his Temple; for without a pattern, he could not know what was wanting, having never seen one, and not having experienced its use.

Without revelation, Joseph could not know what was wanting, any more than any other man, and, without commandment, the Church were too few in numbers, too weak in faith, and too poor in purse, to attempt such a mighty enterprise. But by means of all these stimulants, a mere handful of men, living on air, and a little hominy and milk, and often salt or no salt when milk could not be had; the great Prophet Joseph, in the stone quarry, quarrying rock with his own hands; and the few men in the Church, following his example of obedience and diligence wherever most needed; with laborers on the walls, holding the sword in one hand to protect themselves from the mob, while they placed the stone and moved the trowel with the other, the Kirtland Temple, the second House of the Lord that we have any

published record of on the earth, was so far completed as to be dedicated. And those first Elders who helped to build it, received a portion of their first endowments, or we might say more clearly, some of the first, or introductory, or initiatory ordinances, preparatory to an endowment.

The preparatory ordinances there administered, though accompanied by the ministration of angels, and the presence of the Lord Jesus, were but a faint similitude of the ordinances of the House of the Lord in their fullness; yet many, through the instigation of the devil, thought they had received all, and knew as much as God; they have apostatized, and gone to hell. But be assured, brethren, there are but few, very few of the Elders of Israel, now on earth, who know the meaning of the word endowment. To know, they must experience; and to experience, a Temple must be built.

Let me give you the definition in brief. Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.

Who has received and understands such an endowment in this assembly? You need not answer. Your voices would be few and far between, yet the keys to these endowments are among you, and thousands have received them, so that the devil, with all his aids, need not suppose he can again destroy the Holy Priesthood from the earth, by killing a few, for he cannot do it. God has set his hand, for the last time, to redeem His people, the honest in heart, and Lucifer cannot hinder Him.

Before these endowments could be given at Kirtland, the Saints had to flee before mobocracy. And, by toil and daily labor, they found places in Missouri, where they laid the corner stones of Temples, in Zion and her Stakes, and then had to retreat to Illinois, to save the lives of those who could get away alive from Missouri, where fell the Apostle David W. Pattern, with many like associates, and where they were imprisoned in loathsome dungeons, and fed on human flesh, Joseph and Hyrum, and many others. But before this had transpired, the Temple at Kirtland had fallen into the hands of wicked men, and by them polluted, like the Temple at Jerusalem, and consequently it was disowned by the Father and the Son.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Journal of Discourses*, II, 31-32.

The following brief extracts from the *Journal of Discourses* contain some of Brigham Young's philosophy on this subject.

We wish a temple, not for the public congregation, but for the Priesthood, wherein to arrange and organize fully the Priesthood in its order and degrees, to administer the ordinances of the Priesthood to the Saints for their exaltation. (IX, 240).

It is absolutely necessary that the Saints should receive the further ordinances of the house of God before this short existence shall come to a close, that they may be prepared and fully able to pass all the sentinels leading into the celestial kingdom and into the presence of God. (XII, 163).

Then go on and build the temples of the Lord, that you may receive the endowments in store for you, and possess the keys of the eternal Priesthood, that you may receive every word, sign and token, and be made acquainted with the laws of angels, and of the kingdom of our Father and our God, and know how to pass from one degree to another and enter fully into the joy of your Lord. (II, 315).

The temple will be for the endowments—for the organization and instruction of the Priesthood. . . . When the temple is built here, I want to maintain it for the use of the Priesthood. If this cannot be, I would rather not see it built, but go into the mountains and administer therein the ordinances of the holy Priesthood, which is our right and privilege. I would rather do this than to build a temple for the wicked to trample under their feet. (VIII, 203).

At Nauvoo, Joseph dedicated another temple. . . . He knew what was wanted, for he had previously given most of the prominent individuals there before him their endowment. He needed no revelation then, of a thing he had long experienced, any more than those now do, who have experienced the same things. (II, 30).

It is evident that the Prophet Joseph Smith had a full and complete vision of the Temple, its design, and purpose at the time the cornerstones were laid. Because he did not reveal all these facts to the public at that time, we need not assume that he was obliged to wait until he attended three short meetings of the lodge before he was given the

necessary information. At one time, he said that the design the Lord had in sending us into the world and the means by which we might work our way back into His presence "I shall keep in my own bosom at present." That was his policy regarding the endowment that was designed for the Temple as soon as it was completed.

Long before he took that initial step in Masonry, he was in possession of a wealth of information regarding the endowment that was to be administered in the Temple.