
CONCLUSION

Yes, there may be some similarities in the rituals of the Mormons and the Masons, but those few likenesses in a vast realm of ritual cannot be explained by the fact that Joseph Smith attended a few meetings of the Masonic fraternity. In the light of the evidence supplied by Masonic historians, the conclusion is forced upon us that some of the features of the ritual once administered in Solomon's Temple have persisted in Masonry.

No institution has a monopoly on truth. The divine truths that were revealed to the early Hebrew prophets have filtered into all the nations of the world, later to be altered and corrupted as they descended from one generation to the next. Many agnostics have rejected the Savior of the world because His teachings contained nothing new. In 1875, Kersey Graves published his book, *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors*, which is merely indisputable evidence to the fact that the ancient prophetic teachings concerning the divine mission and atonement of Jesus Christ had been changed and corrupted during the years.

Other scholars reject the Pentateuch as a divine collection of literature because they find much of its basic truth in the Code of Hammurabi and other ancient sources.

In the revelation to Joseph Smith concerning the Temple endowment it was promised that things would be

restored which had been lost. In the early instructions given to Joseph Smith concerning this important subject it was also explained that the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon were built for the same purpose as the Nauvoo Temple.¹ It was further explained in that document that the Lord designed to "restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fullness of the priesthood."

It is evident that sacred ceremonies had been administered in Solomon's Temple, many of which did not persist during the early Christian centuries. In many of the Christian churches a baptismal font, such as was used in Solomon's time, was superfluous at a time when sprinkling or pouring were acknowledged as the proper methods of baptism.

Since some of the Masonic ritual has descended from Solomon's time, altered and corrupted by the passing centuries, should one be surprised to find a few similarities when the Temple ritual is again established?

One Masonic historian, defending the tradition that their ritual is linked to Solomon's Temple, declares that if their legends had been inscribed on parchment or printed in books, these documents might have been destroyed, but when the divine secrets were thoroughly stamped on man's mind it is not subject to decay or destruction. In this way mankind became the custodian of God's secret plans, passing it on from one generation to the next.²

Many of the cherished Masonic "traditions" were perpetuated in other societies not associated with the Masons. In the days of Jesus, the Essenes administered many secret ceremonies resembling certain Masonic practices. Josephus (II, 8) states that upon admission to their secret order they

¹ *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 124.

² Milton A. Pottinger, *Three Master Masons*, p. 64.

received as symbolical gifts, "an axe, an apron, and a white robe, and bound themselves by awful oaths."

Dr. Albert G. Mackey recognizes many striking similarities, insisting that no women were admitted to the society, and that they had particular signs for recognizing each other "which had a strong resemblance to Freemasonry." Lowrie considered them to be an association of "architects connected with the building of Solomon's Temple." The Essenes had three degrees of initiation and were bound by a solemn oath to love God, to be just to all men, to practice charity, maintain truth, and to conceal the secret of the society. Some authorities consider them as the "guardians of King Solomon's Temple."

The Essenes certainly received none of their ritual from Freemasonry, though there may have been countless similarities. It is not unlikely that both societies descended from the parent institution—Solomon's Temple.

If the facts were available and the original sources extant, it would doubtless be apparent that everything in the ritual of the Mormons that the Masons say was taken from their ceremonies, dates back to Solomon's time. It has always been the teachings of the Church leaders that many features of the Temple services are as Solomonic as the baptismal font. Since Joseph Smith was instructed to follow the pattern of the Temple of Solomon regarding the font room, should one be surprised if many other aspects of the Temple service were revealed to him much as they had been administered at an earlier time?

From the meager history that has come to us from that ancient time, it is evident that most of the "similarities" we hear about are strictly biblical, while many of them are definitely associated with the Temple of Solomon. Dr. Mackey assures us that the ephod was a distinctive symbol of the priesthood, and that the robe worn by the High

Priest in a Royal Arch Chapter is intended to be a representation of the ephod.³

The Druids had many secret ceremonials resembling Freemasonry. The ruins in Central America and Mexico bear testimony to the fact that the "Masonic" secrets were well known to them. Should we argue that when Dr. Anderson, in 1717, collected all the Masonic records, and after using them for his purpose had them all burned, that he borrowed what material he wanted from the Essenes, Druids, and other ancient sources? To the contrary, we would prefer saying that all those traditions, though widely separated by time and space, sprang from the same ancient source.

The Jewish Talmud furnishes many illustrations of the Masonic system. Many of the traditions and legends, especially of the higher degrees, are either found in or are corroborated by the Talmud. The veil in the Masonic temple is a representation of the veil in the Temple of Solomon. Much of their ritual is as biblical as the Tabernacle of Moses.

The Masonic ritual goes back to the Temple of Solomon so much that one should not be surprised at a few similarities when the Solomonic ritual is restored in its purity.

Dr. Mackey assures us that the High Priest represents Joshua. He wears a robe and is decorated with a breastplate and mitre. On the front of the mitre are inscribed the words *Holiness to the Lord*.

There are almost countless features of the Masonic ritual that are definitely biblical and specifically associated with the Temple of Solomon. When the Temple service was restored to Joseph Smith, we should not be surprised to find

³ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 257.

it bearing a few marks of resemblance to the few traditions from Solomon's time that have persisted in Freemasonry.

The Mormons, the American Indians, the ancient Esenes, and the early Druids are not the only ones who have "Masonic" symbols and practices in their rituals. The five points of friendship, for instance, are certainly not restricted to Masonry. It is an old Oriental custom of receiving and transmitting valuable secret information. It has been a prominent feature of several ancient societies that had their origin in Oriental lands. To this day it is used in the ceremony of the Rosicrucians exactly as it is practiced by the Masons.

Who shall say that this ceremony is not one of the many that the Masons insist hark back to Solomon's time? It is significant that in the Masonic ritual employing the five points of fellowship, the grand omnific word is said to be "Mah-hah-bone," which means "marrow in the bone."

Likewise, the vow of chastity is not restricted to Masonry. Almost every fraternity and secret society in the world has the pledge of chastity. In most societies, however, it is such a weak pledge that it is a solemn mockery to associate it with the hallowed name of virtue. Most societies employing it are merely content to pledge its members to abstain from sexual intercourse with "any good or true woman." In some fraternities they pledge themselves to restrain from illicit intercourse with the wife, mother, sister, or daughter of fellow members of the brotherhood.

The Odd Fellows and other fraternal orders have their secret signs, grips, tokens, and passwords. The Masons certainly have no monopoly on that vast field of ritual and symbolism that arose during the childhood of the human race and spread into all countries. Much of this spiritual symbolism and ceremony may have been freely employed in Solomon's Temple, a meager portion of it being preserved

by people who migrated to other lands. When the ancient order was restored to Joseph Smith, we should not be utterly amazed because a few rudimental features of the ritual were known by other separated groups, even in a corrupted form.

It is evident that the Masonic ritual embraces a few features that resemble the rudimental ceremonies of the Temple endowment, yet these few points of similarity are largely restricted to the rituals pertaining to the Aaronic priesthood. There are numerous features of the elaborate, inspiring ritual of the Melchizedek priesthood that are entirely unknown to them. The Temple endowment so far transcends the Masonic ritual that it is scarcely worth while to consider the limited number of initial features that may be said to be similar.

If one were to enumerate the differences—the numerous ceremonies of the endowment that do not have the faintest counterpart in Masonry—the list would be so extensive that one would soon overlook the few points of similarity that might be detected. The more we consider the explanation offered by Masonic historians, the easier it is to account for the presence of these limited likenesses.

Dr. Anderson summarized the Masonic theory in these words:

After the destruction of Solomon's Temple, the Masons who had been engaged in it dispersed over all nations of Asia and Europe, where they taught the art to many eminent persons. Kings, princes, and potentates became Grand Masters, each in his own territory.⁴

Furthermore, William Hutchinson and other erudite scholars of the fraternity have declared that Masonry never was merely a body of architects, concerned with the erection of buildings of stone. He was convinced that the buildings of stone were simply emblematical of the spiritual and re-

⁴ Mackey, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

ligious tenets. This theory represents the fraternity as the custodian and guardian of ancient truth of a spiritual nature not associated with the building profession. This view of Speculative Freemasonry does not regard them as builders by profession any more than we should consider Abel, Noah, Abraham, and other early patriarchs as masons because they erected altars which, "like the Temple, were works of piety and devotion."

In speaking of the apostasy following the death of Solomon, Dr. Hutchinson assures us that:

The reverence and adoration due to Divinity was buried in the filth and rubbish of the world. Persecution had dispersed the few who retained their obedience, and the name of the true God was almost lost and forgotten among men. The guide to Heaven was lost and the Master of the works of righteousness was smitten.

True religion has fled. Those who sought her through the wisdom of the ancients were not able to raise her; she eluded their grasp, and their polluted hands were stretched forth in vain for her restoration. . . .

The great Father of All, commiserating the miseries of the world, sent His only Son, who was innocence itself, to teach the doctrine of salvation, by whom man was raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness.

This explanation is not out of harmony with the Mormon belief. There certainly was a time of apostasy, a departure from the divine truths that were administered in the Temple of Solomon and elsewhere. Many of those divine principles were restored by the Savior during His ministry, yet after His crucifixion there was another departure from the truth. Among the many divine truths revealed to Joseph Smith was the endowment, much of which had been administered in holy temples centuries ago, while some humble features of it may have persisted through the years among people who did not claim it as an expression of religious devotion.

During the years, many corruptions were made in the few traditions that may have reached back to Solomon's time. The Masons say much about the lost key word, yet they have lost far more than a mere word.

If we manifested the belligerent spirit that many of the Masons display, we might say that Masonry is a spurious system descending from Solomon's Temple. Numerous changes and corruptions have crept in, yet enough of the original remains to bear a few humble resemblances to the true endowment. During the years, it has lost its spiritual and religious significance. Though it is surrounded with biblical and spiritual symbols and ritual, it is permeated with a temporal atmosphere that is restricted wholly to the realm of mortality.

In the diary of Benjamin F. Johnson, an intimate friend and associate of Joseph Smith, it is recorded that "Joseph told me that Freemasonry was the apostate endowment, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion." Elder Heber C. Kimball, who had been a Mason for many years, related that after Joseph Smith became a Mason, he explained to his brethren that Masonry had been taken from the priesthood.⁵

This bold and daring conclusion is forced upon any unbiased mind that will thoroughly investigate the subject. Every item of symbolism that has the faintest resemblance is entirely biblical. It is not farfetched to say that the other likenesses may be more similar to Solomon's ritual than to anything Joseph Smith administered.

No, not a single feature of the Temple endowment was taken from Masonry. It might just as well be argued that it was taken from the religious rituals of the American Indians, the early Druids, or the ancient Essenes, all of whom preserved fragments of truth that were anciently adminis-

⁵ *Woman's Exponent*, XII, 26.

tered within the sacred institutions of ancient Israel. Even in early times, no one had a monopoly on the symbolism and ritual that evolved among the prophets and patriarchs of Israel.

We frankly admit that there are a few similarities in the ritual of the Mormons and the Masons, but the evidence demands that we look higher than Masonry for the inspiration that called into being the inspiring ceremony that is administered in Mormon Temples.