

CHALLENGES TO THE ... OF PEACE  
Moriah Lodge at Palmyra, New York. Others with Masonic experience included John C. Bennett, John Smith (the Prophet's uncle), Heber C. Kimball, Newel K. Whitney, George Miller, and Lucius N. Scovil.<sup>32</sup>

A few Latter-day Saints had actively contested the movement, including William W. Phelps, who had published opposition newspapers in New York and helped form the state's anti-Masonic political party. Martin Harris, who did not join the Saints in Nauvoo, had been a member of an anti-Masonic vigilance committee in Palmyra. Other opponents were George W. Harris, expelled from the Batavia Lodge in New York for renouncing the fraternity, and Ebenezer Robinson, who became editor and publisher of the *Times and Seasons*.<sup>33</sup>

Two Illinois leaders during the period of Masonic rejuvenation in the 1840s played a central role in expanding Latter-day Saint involvement in Masonry. One of these was James Adams, probate judge in Sangamon County and a Latter-day Saint convert.<sup>34</sup> The other was Abraham Jonas, a Kentucky transplant who headed the Columbus Lodge. Joseph Smith befriended Adams during a stopover in Springfield while en route to Washington, D.C.<sup>35</sup> This friend of the church helped secure the Nauvoo charter, served as a trustee of the University of Nauvoo,<sup>36</sup> and became half-owner of the *Maid of Iowa*.<sup>37</sup> Appointed probate judge in Hancock County, Adams died of cholera in August 1843 just before a planned move to Nauvoo.<sup>38</sup>

With the encouragement of James Adams, in June 1841 Lucius N. Scovil and other Freemasons in Nauvoo submitted a request for a lodge. Proponents sought a required endorsement from the Bodley Lodge at Quincy, Illinois, the state's oldest group and the closest to Nauvoo. When Bodley's members declined,<sup>39</sup> Abraham Jonas and his Columbus Lodge brethren stepped forward as sponsors.<sup>40</sup>

Joseph Smith was not directly involved in these requests but was well acquainted with the organization. He had grown up with Freemasons in his family and community and had lived through the anti-Masonic fury in New York. Through his Masonic friends, he would have understood that Freemasonry held values cherished by religious persons of every faith.<sup>41</sup> Through ethical and moral obligations, Freemasonry aspired toward a universal brotherhood, justice, learning, and character development. Abraham Jonas, a Jew who spoke out against all religious persecution, emphasized Freemasonry's role "as a universal and social platform, upon

which all good men . . . may meet on a ground of *equality* and *brotherhood*, irrespective of diversity and peculiarity of religious and political opinions."<sup>42</sup>

Some Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo who embraced Freemasonry and also participated in the temple endowment wondered about the relationship between the two ceremonies. An understanding of Masonic beginnings was one approach; however, historians of Freemasonry disagree about the origins of the Masonic order and its ritual. Organized Freemasonry likely began in medieval England, where craftsmen in the building trades organized guilds (later called lodges) to further their economic aims. By 1717, the order was essentially an educational self-improvement and benevolent association for men. The guilds used symbolism from their work as stonemasons. Over time, they adapted rituals and other ideas from Christianity and esoteric fraternities. Illinois Masons in the 1840s were among those who traced Freemasonry's past this way. Some adherents used this amalgam of ideas to claim a mythical origin with Solomon's temple, or even as far back as Adam.<sup>43</sup>

Latter-day Saints accepted the temple ceremony as a revelation from God to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who held the keys to the last gospel dispensation. The Lord had promised a restoration of "things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times." In addition, the Prophet taught in 1840 that all of the sacred ordinances and priesthood duties of past dispensations would again be present on the earth, "bringing to pass the restoration spoken of by the mouth of all the Holy Prophets."<sup>44</sup>

The Prophet told Benjamin F. Johnson that "freemasonry, as at present, is the apostate endowment, as sectarian religion is the apostate religion." Latter-day Saints came to believe that ancient priesthood rituals first revealed to Adam and to successive Old Testament prophets had been dispersed widely, with portions imperfectly preserved among ancient Egyptians, Coptic Christians, Freemasons, and Israelites, and in the liturgies of Christian churches. Participants in these groups often wore special clothing and used symbolic gestures and dramatizations along with specific instructions and covenants dealing with creation and stages of life.<sup>45</sup>

The nineteenth-century makeup, teachings, and objectives of Freemasonry differed substantially from the Latter-day Saint endowment. Beyond a few actions and words, which the two groups interpreted