

Where Are the All-Seeing Eyes?

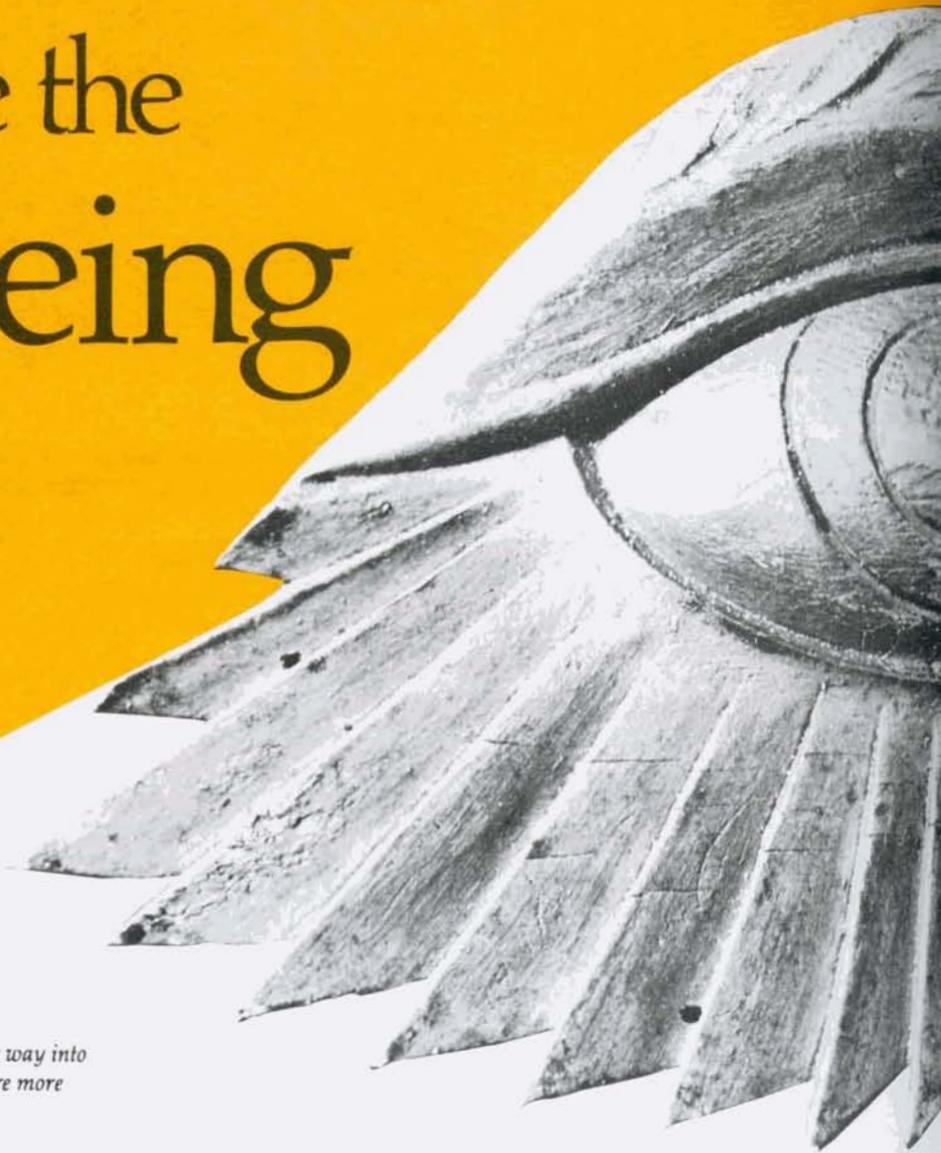
by Allen D. Roberts

"We cannot argue with symbols; they find their way into our hearts immediately or not at all. Symbols are more powerful than words."¹

The year was 1852. For the last time William Ward lifted his small finishing chisel to the face of the two by three foot limestone block he had been laboring on for weeks. With a few deft taps of his mallet he coaxed away the final bits of Sanpete oolite and left the crisp edges of a diminutive square marking a period after the inscription, "DESERET." Rubbing his aching fingers between his palms to ease the stiffness, he stepped back to inspect his work. His eyes traveled from left to right across the finished surface. At the upper left corner, within a triangular recess, were two hands in a shaking grip. In the opposite corner, a similar triangle was overgrown with the luxuriant contents of a cornucopia. Next came the central element of his composition: a large, semi-circular panel which featured under its arch a rope beehive, sitting on a squat bench, and above it, an all-seeing eye. Cutting through the rays emanating from the eye was the motto, "Holiness to the Lord." An assortment of delicately carved flowers, leaves, and vines provided ornamental borders without detracting from the major emblems, nor from the "DESERET" established in bold Roman letters along the bottom of the warm-colored stone. Ward did not bask long in his accomplishment. Covering the stone with a woolen tarpulin, he sent a young apprentice to fetch President Young.

In a few minutes the president arrived, accompanied by a few of the leading brethren. They formed a tight semi-circle around Ward's stone. Slowly lifting the covering from the bottom up, the artisan dramatically unveiled his work. Broad smiles all around immediately rewarded the mason for his untiring efforts. President Young stepped forward and, adjusting his spectacles, thoughtfully fingered the tooling, moving his hand over the beehive, the hands, and finally, the almost real eye. He too smiled and nodded his approval. "Well done, Brother Ward. This suits our kingdom perfectly. See that you put it on the first ox train going east," he remarked. A few days later the carefully packaged treasure began its long journey to the nation's capitol where it was eventually laid up in the monolithic shaft of the Washington Monument along with carved stones from the other states and territories.²

The fact that Ward's emblematic stone is still extant in the Washington Monument and that his experience as a symbol maker was not uncommon among the Mormon artisans between 1840 and the early twentieth century raises some interesting questions for Mormons today. What were the major LDS symbols? What were their origins and purposes? What did they intend to signify in terms of doctrine and values? What role did they play in the formation and



The Origin, Use and Decline of Early Mormon Symbolism



*All-seeing eye once on the Ogden Tabernacle, 1856
(courtesy of Pat King)*

understanding of Mormon theology and/or culture? And, most importantly, is there value in symbolism and if so, how does one account for the seeming absence of significant symbols in contemporary Mormonism?

Purposes and Value of Symbolism

Lewis Mumford has remarked that "By the act of detachment and abstraction, man gained the power of dealing with the non-present, the unseen, the remote and the internal: not merely his visible lair and his daily companions, but his ancestors and his dependents and the sun and the moon and the stars: eventually the concepts of eternity and infinity. . . he reduced a thousand potential occasions in all their variety and flux to a single symbol that indicated what was common to them all."³ Thus have groups or individuals attempted to invest material objects, emblems or designs with a symbolic character, intended by their creators to represent meanings, principles, or ideas not inherent in the things themselves. So, to the early American gravestone artist a trumpet may represent the day of judgment, to the Roman Catholic painter an equilateral triangle may symbolize the Trinity, and to the Jewish engraver the six-pointed star may refer to God's attributes of power, wisdom, majesty, love, mercy, and justice.

Similarly, nineteenth-century Mormons felt the need to express their shared values in iconographic symbolism, ranging from the didactic, institutionally sponsored sun, moon, stars and all-seeing eye on early temples and ZCMI signs to quasi-religious symbols such as the beehive and clasped hands whose function was primarily ornamental. Early Mormons under Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were a heterogeneous lot. Diverse backgrounds and varying levels of understanding and commitment presented a

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most perplexing problem: how to make persons who had migrated to unfamiliar surroundings feel as at ease as possible, to feel a part of the whole. One of the most straightforward ways of effecting the desired acculturation was to display instructive visual symbols, so apparent as to be comprehended by everyone, regardless of backgrounds. These symbols, in an immediate and uniform way, conveyed essential messages and reminders of community



Utah's stone for the Washington Monument, described at the beginning of this article, 1852 (courtesy of LDS Church Historical Archives)

The ornamental trappings planned for the Salt Lake Temple demonstrated a continuing implementation of Joseph's selected Masonic symbols.

qualities to all viewers. Said Brigham Young: "I will do my best to break down everything that divides. I will not have disunion and contention, and I mean that there shall not be a fiddle in the Church but what has 'Holiness to the Lord' upon it, not a flute, nor a trumpet, nor any other instrument of music."⁴

The symbolic messages conveyed covered the spectrum from implorings to deal honestly with man and God (His all-seeing eye watches everyone) to reminders that the faithful would meet Christ and inherit his kingdom (clasped hands through the veil). One observer aptly summarized the Mormon view of didactic symbolism:

Mormons had a predilection for symbolism. As millennialists, they regarded the visible world as a metaphor for religious truths, and saw in all objects in nature and events in society the workings of divine purpose.⁵

Symbolist F. L. Brink suggests that Joseph Smith successfully created an "innovative and intricate symbology" that suited well the psychic needs of his followers.⁶ Following Smith's lead, scores of LDS artisans were guided by the principle that "If one is an artist, he is often a symbol maker and uses his talents to propagate his ideas."⁷

A further objective of Mormon symbolism was to express the uniqueness (and, by implication, truth) of the restored Church. The Lord instructed Joseph Smith to build the Kirtland Temple "not after the manner of the world."⁸ Truman Angell wrote of the Salt Lake Temple: "The whole structure is designed to symbolize some of the great architectural works above."⁹ Clearly Brigham Young and Angell, Joseph Smith and William Weeks understood the dual value of symbols as a means of graphically expressing

the distinctiveness of the LDS community while at the same time summarizing certain truths important to Mormon belief.

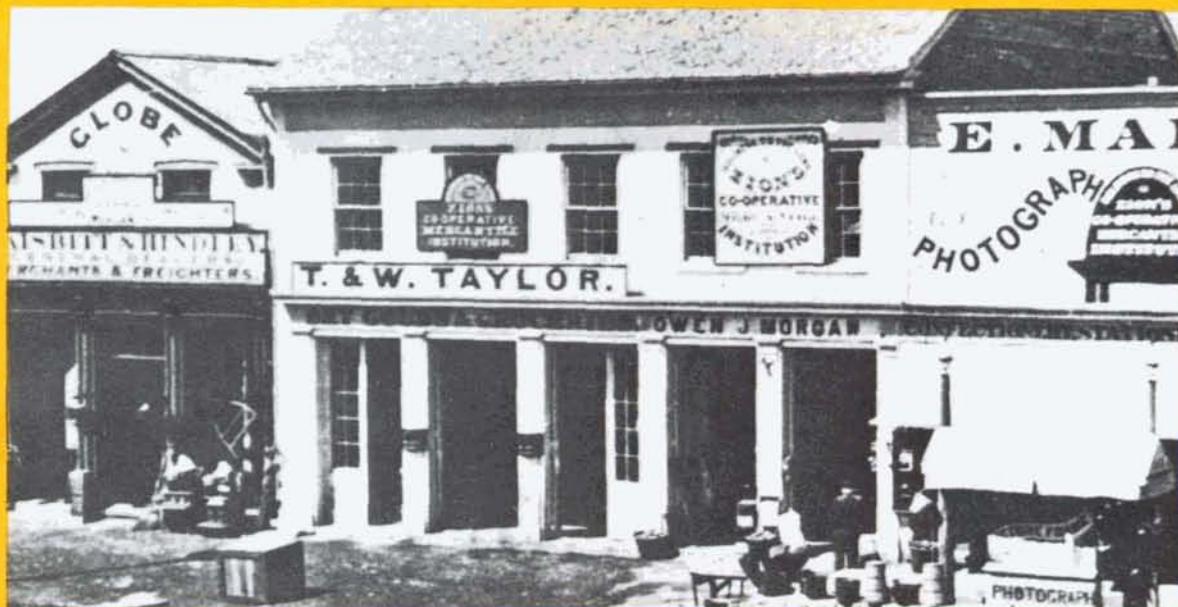
Origins of Mormon Symbolism

From the organization of the Church in 1830 through the years in Kirtland, there is little if any evidence in the temple, bank notes, furniture, stationery, publications, and building signs of self-conscious concrete symbolism. Yet clearly the ideas which were to find expression in physical symbols in Nauvoo developed in Kirtland. Among them were the concepts of millennialism and the three degrees of glory. Even more important was the reinstatement of the ancient concept of the temple.¹⁰ As Joseph Smith approached the building of the first Mormon temple in Kirtland he saw his building as a legitimate successor to Solomon's Temple, described in the Old Testament. Even his descriptive terminology, perhaps influenced by writings in I Kings, linked the building to ancient scripture. Nevertheless, it was a temple without ostensible symbols.

Why, then, within a space of ten years, was a second temple built that differed so greatly, not only in style, but in the presence of a symbolic decorative vocabulary?¹¹ It is very likely because in Kirtland neither Joseph Smith nor the temple's principal designers, superintendents, and builders—Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Artemus Millet—were yet involved in Freemasonry, an institution which, in Nauvoo, provided the primary graphic language for Mormon symbolism.

While Mormonism's official connection with Masonry began 15 March 1842 when a lodge was founded in Nauvoo, many Mormons had been Masons before joining the Church. Joseph Smith himself had some familiarity with the society previous to Nauvoo. Hyrum had received the first three degrees of Masonry while the family was living in Palmyra and Joseph may have known Masonic martyr, Captain William Morgan, as he was one of the signers of a petition asking relief for the widow.¹²

Despite this earlier involvement with Masonry, the full impact of the secret society was not felt by collective



ZCMI signs
with all-seeing
eyes on Main Street,
Salt Lake City, c. 1870.
(courtesy of Utah
State Historical Society)

Mormonism until the Nauvoo period. Within three months after the founding of the first lodge, eleven of the twelve apostles had joined, including Brigham Young. In a short time, five Mormon lodges had been formed, claiming 1366 adherents. By 1844 a three-story Masonic temple had been constructed. About the same time Joseph became immersed in Egyptian and Hebrew studies, both interests of Freemasonry. Even at their martyrdom both Joseph and Hyrum were wearing Masonic jewelry.¹³ One Mormon scholar has been moved to make this controversial assertion: "I believe that there are few significant developments in the Church that occurred after 15 March 1842 which did not have some Masonic interdependence."¹⁴ The remarkable similarities between the Masonic temple ceremony and the Mormon endowment have led others to accuse Smith of plagiarism, denying any divine inspiration in his work.

It is true that the artwork, particularly in the literature of the two groups, is sometimes amazingly indistinguishable. Masonic handbooks clearly show that the three most important Masonic symbols (three great lights) are the Bible, square and compass. Next in importance (three lesser lights) are the sun, moon and stars.¹⁵ All of these have place in the Mormon symbolic vocabulary as well (although the Bible is rarely depicted symbolically by the Mormons). In addition, the all-seeing eye, clasped hands, and even little-used symbols of Mormonism such as the mitre, crown, clouds, dove and heart, may be found on frontpieces of Masonic books.¹⁶

Although Joseph Smith freely admitted relating Masonry and Mormonism, to assert that Joseph's Mormonism was simply the direct product of borrowed Masonry is too naive and incomplete a conclusion by itself. Joseph's Masonry was not a conventional one. He attempted to restore it in much the same way the gospel was restored. That is, he saw Masonry, like Christendom, as possessing some important truths which could be beneficially extracted from what was otherwise an apostate institution. Mormons, with the restored priesthood, had the "true Masonry," even "Celestial Masonry." Joseph claimed to have received some of the "lost keys" which would permit him to purify Masonry and

Mormon ambivalence toward symbolism has penetrated the intellectual community as well.

return it to its state of ancient perfection. His free use of Masonic symbols, then, reflects Smith's feeling that he had a legitimate right to employ these divine emblems of antiquity.¹⁷

Furthermore, the question of origins is virtually impossible to fathom. The beginnings of Masonry can be traced back to at least the early 18th century when several lodges were operating in Europe. Some Masonic historians allege that Masonry was founded by King Solomon about the time his temple was built and that the 133,000 masons who worked on the project later disseminated a knowledge of the brotherhood throughout the civilized world. Masons further claim (obviously without documentation) that Adam created Masonry and that it was modified into its sectarian Jewish form by Moses; that Noah, the Essenes and other important persons and groups of antiquity were Masons; that the Bible was written by Masons and is therefore a Masonic book. Masons especially rely on literary references and art from ancient Egypt for their symbolism.¹⁸ Clearly, the Mormons, too, trace their origins to Adam and the Hebraic nation which for centuries was closely intertwined with the Egyptian race (Solomon and Sheba, etc.). Thus the question of which symbols were created by which groups is indeterminable historiographically.

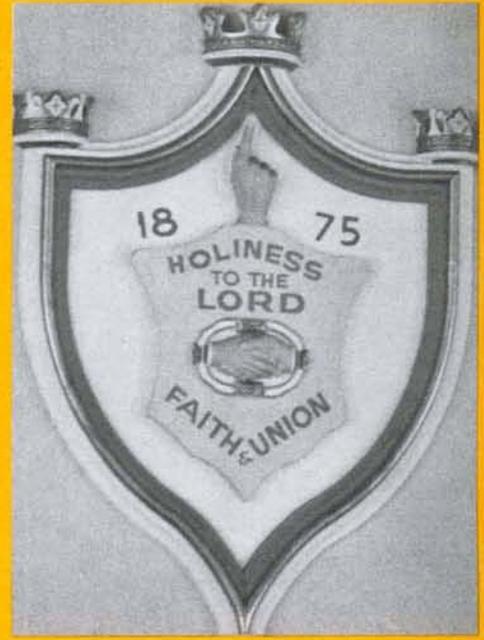
The Development of Symbols

"...we see no incompatibility between believing that LDS authorities benefit from divine inspiration and recognizing that they also have their eyes open to what is going on in the world generally."¹⁹ Supplementing revelations with material pulled from his immediate environment, Smith, through a process we might call *synthetic eclecticism*, created a potpourri of beliefs and practices, accompanied by didactic instruments—symbols—to visibly remind the Saints of their identity, goals, and commitments.



Joseph H. Fisher's carved wood pulpit with doves, clasped hands and rose bush, Meadow, Utah, c. 1884

St. George Tabernacle plaque with three crowns, clasped and pointing hands, 1875



He attempted to restore Masonry in much the same way the gospel was restored.

Symbols on buildings, in literature, stamped on manufactured goods, etc. were not endemic to Mormons and Masons but were common throughout all of mid-nineteenth century American society (as even a cursory inspection of books, posters, buildings and photos of the periods will bear out.) So, assuming Smith felt a need to communicate specific principles to his Saints, he might naturally develop a set of easily understood symbols as were already in familiar use about him. The choice of Masonic references may have been self-conscious, expedient, or may have been a deliberate shunning of Christian symbols. Laurel Andrew explains: "Since Mormons did not embrace conventional Christian theology, normative architectural forms and symbols necessarily underwent some transformation or were entirely supplanted by those having more appropriate associations for Latter-day Saints."²⁰ Unfortunately, Smith's appropriation of Masonic designs may have confused both LDS Masons, who had to distinguish between two sets of meanings for the same symbols, and newcomers, who hadn't the American background to comprehend them at all.

Symbolism continued in Utah through the efforts of Brigham Young who caused its usage to expand—both as to variety and frequency. While Young had been a Mason and personally owned Masonic handbooks, after Nauvoo troubles with Gentile Masons (including their probable participation in the martyrdom and subsequent persecution and expulsion of the Saints), he had no love for the group. Yet the ornamental trappings planned for the Salt Lake Temple (originally extensive but much diluted after his death in 1877) demonstrated a continuing implementation of Joseph's selected Masonic symbols. Even more dramatic was Young's extensive use of the all-seeing eye motif on signs of

ZCMI stores during and after 1868.²¹ Though the parallel with Masonry is obvious, some say Brigham could have obtained his ideas from the Egyptian *Book of Breathings*. Orson Pratt and W. W. Phelps have also been considered possible sources for symbolism of the astrological type.²² Whatever the actual source, Young, like Joseph, was open in his use of symbols and did not feel that he was borrowing from Masonry (which did not exist in Utah for several years after 1847) but was rather employing metaphors belonging to the universal body of truth.

Truman O. Angell, in response to an inquiry by Franklin D. Richards as to why the Salt Lake Temple had Masonic symbols on it, wrote that they had nothing to do with the Masons but were derived by President Brigham Young after an intensive study of scripture, particularly the Old Testament.²³ Although many Mormon symbols *can* be related to the Old Testament (see the captions accompanying the photographs) the influences of Freemasonry are clear and were felt in connection with the design of the Salt Lake Temple as late as 1886.

That year as the temple was being pushed to completion, Elder Richards observed two things which disturbed him. Firstly, basic architectural changes had been made apparently without authorization, i.e. leaving out windows which appeared in the original design. More bothersome were certain symbols seemingly of Masonic design. Richards took the matter up with Truman O. Angell, Sr., the original architect, who by then was an old man in failing health. Angell defensively responded that all changes had been authorized by Brigham Young (who had died in 1877.) To justify the simplification of certain symbols, he explained that "by order of President Young, the original plan contemplated adobe walls trimmed with freestone (easily carved sandstone), accordingly the plan shows more enrichment in the trimmings than practicable with granite to which walls and trimmings were subsequently changed."²⁴ He did not explain why certain symbols were left off entirely and denied that Freemasonry had anything to do with the designs. In a letter to John Taylor, Angell then denied even discussing Masonry with Richards, "I made no



IT IS BETTER TO REPRESENT OURSELVES, THAN TO BE REPRESENTED BY OTHERS

—NO. 15.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1856.

PRICE FIVE C.

[The following text is a reproduction of the masthead's content, including the title and introductory text.]

Masthead of The Mormon, with an all-seeing eye, eagle, beehive and various mottoes, 1856.

reference to Free Masonry when conversing with Brother Richards on the subject.²⁵ Richards, however, mentions in a letter to President Taylor that part of Angell's reason for omitting certain windows was "that it was not Masonic for light to be received from the North."²⁶ Taylor, upon receiving that remark, clearly expressed his view that Masonic considerations should have no part in the temple's design: "It may be true, as he (Angell) says, that in Free Masonry the light comes from the East, but we can scarcely recognise that as a reason why our Temple built for the administration of the Ordinances of the Most High God should be erected according to its rules."²⁷ Taylor instructed Richards to instruct Angell to follow faithfully the design in the 1850s steel engraving and not to make changes without prior approval. It was, however, too late to return to the earlier design. Ironically, such a reversion would have resulted in more, not less, Masonic symbolism (compass and square, saturn stones, etc. were planned) and consequently greater confusion as to origins.

Later Attitudes Toward Early Mormon Symbolism

It seems ironic that later church leaders looked back upon the symbols of earlier generations of Saints with embarrassment, suspicion, even disdain. In this regard the writings of Anthony W. Ivins may be characteristic. In his book, *Mormonism and Freemasonry*, Ivins attacked a book written by a Mason entitled, *Mormonism and Masonry*. His comments are terse and defensive. Of the All-seeing Eye he said: "That the Lord sees us, that his eye is constantly upon us, and to keep us reminded of this, the symbol of the All-seeing Eye was, in certain instances, placed over the doors of business houses, a place, all will agree that it is needed."²⁵ However, concerning the claim that the symbol appeared "over the doors of several of the business establishments conducted by the Church, and over the entrances of the Church tithing offices, and on (Church) stationery," Ivins responds, "They were at no time in general use. . . It (the Eye) was never used generally over the entrances of the Church tithing office houses. . . nor on Church stationery. . ." He continues, "The use of the symbol of the All-seeing Eye and clasped hands,

The most convincing reason for the disappearance of symbols related to the changing needs of the Mormons as a group.

emblems of faith and fraternity which existed among the people at the time when they were in use, have long since become obsolete. They have no other meaning than that stated. . . There are not in the Salt Lake Temple, or any other temple of the Church, a series of stones in emblematical and significant designs."²⁹

Ivins denies the prominence of the Eye symbol, fails to explain why the symbols of faith and fraternity could have become obsolete, and makes one wonder if he had ever looked closely at the Salt Lake Temple, close enough to see the still extant clasped hands and All-seeing Eye.

Furthermore, Ivins claims that the "astrological figures" represent "groups of heavenly bodies" but that these symbols "are without significance to Church members." If they were meaningless, why were they included in the temple's design for all humankind to see? He concludes, "While these are small matters, and of no real importance, the fact that they are so misrepresented in 'their' relationship to Mormonism makes reference to them necessary. They may be similar to Masonic symbols; if so the writer is not aware of the fact."³⁰

Ivins' mildly paranoid attitude is not isolated and other attempts to disassociate Masonry from Mormonism are not wanting. In front of the restored Masonic Hall in Nauvoo is the inscription, "Cultural Hall," an attempt to conceal the original use of the building. Leaders had the symbols of the square and compass defaced from the Spring City "Endowment House," a building not owned by the Church.³¹ On a model of the Nauvoo Temple in the Nauvoo Visitor's Center, a weathervane depicting an angel, holding a square and compass in Masonic fashion, was removed the day after the Center opened (although the bronzed version on the

Salt Lake Temple Platter
featuring all-seeing eye, beehive
and temple, c. 1893



Contemporary symbols seem intentionally naive, safe, and lack depth and vitality when compared to theologically provocative earlier symbols.

temple grounds, constructed by the late T. Edgar Lyon, faithfully displays the controversial emblems.)³² Guides on Temple Square, when asked to explain the meaning of the star of David in the east wall of the Salt Lake Assembly Hall, respond that the star has no significance. All-seeing Eyes have been painted out of the St. George Tabernacle, Salt Lake Assembly Hall, and other Church buildings.

Mormon ambivalence toward symbolism has penetrated the intellectual community as well. In his booklet, "What is a Temple?" Hugh Nibley suggests that the purity of temple rituals is dependent on the fact that "no moral, allegorical or abstruse symbolism has been read into these rites."³³ Yet in the same document he uses the reverse argument by insisting that, on the exterior of true temples, symbolism is essential. Equally confusing is his statement that the architecture of the world is "an exotic jumble, a bewildering complex of borrowed motifs, a persistent effort to work back through the centuries to some golden time."³⁴ Observers familiar with the evolution of LDS architecture and Mormon/Mason connections have used language very similar to Nibley's in describing Mormon Temples.

Disappearance of Symbols

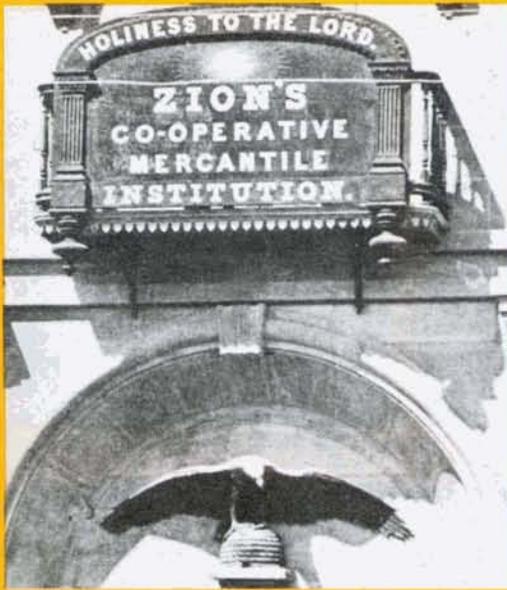
Although conscious attempts to eliminate graphic symbols undoubtedly contributed to their demise, no single cause can be held responsible for the loss. For despite early efforts to phase them out, Mormons continued to employ symbols until the early twentieth century. Their disappearance occurred gradually, and roughly corresponded to such historical events as the death of Brigham Young, the end of Mormon isolationism and the beginning of standardized architectural plans. Symbols were absent in St. George, Manti, and Logan temples, for example, but continued to

appear on tabernacles and meetinghouses until modern styles and the new church building committee caused their discontinuance after about 1910.

With the decline of the ZCMI movement in the 1870s, the all-seeing eye signs were removed from storefronts in downtowns of LDS communities. The 1921 policy of housing all church organizations under the roof of one multipurpose meetinghouse ostensibly did away with Relief Society halls, tithing offices, stake office buildings, granaries, prayer circle buildings, social halls and other early types of Mormon buildings which had frequently displayed decorative symbols.

The funerary use of symbols continued but with designs of a more contemporary nature. Of the many original symbols, most have totally disappeared. The beehive has best been able to survive as a symbol and, though used ubiquitously on signs, stationery, flags, bedsteads, building plaques, logos, newspaper mastheads, governmental seals, ad infinitum, its symbolic message has changed from a religious to a secularized or popular folkway one.

Perhaps the most convincing reason for the disappearance of symbols relates not to pressure from Church leadership nor to changes in architectural policies, but rather to the overall changing needs of the Mormons as a group. Klaus Hansen has observed that the twenty years after 1900 "marked Mormon history. . . conclusively and permanently because they witnessed the decline and virtual disappearance of the idea of the political Kingdom of God."³⁵ An original purpose of symbolism was to achieve community solidarity in the Kingdom through a sense of shared values. A second objective was to demonstrate that the Kingdom was unique and other-worldly as expressed by its distinctive means of decorating buildings and other elements in the Mormon's manufactured environment. Thus, as the initial survival needs of the Kingdom were met, and its philosophical basis was forcibly altered in the post-isolation years after 1890, the perceived need for symbolism diminished. With the gradual integration of the Mormon and American societies, newer churchmen looked to new mediums of communication to express emerging needs and challenges associated with their times.



Eagle Emporium, home of the first ZCMI store. Above the Emporium's eagle and beehive is a ZCMI sign with an all-seeing eye, c. 1868 (courtesy of Utah State Historical Society)



Manti Tabernacle plaque with all-seeing eye and rays of light, clasped hands and perhaps a carpenter's level, 1879

The Value of Symbolism Today

Though it was claimed that Brigham Young developed his symbolism through a systematic study of the Old Testament, no uniform, internally consistent system of symbols emerged. Instead we find an odd assortment, gathered, as suggested previously, from Masonic and other sources by a method of synthetic eclecticism. If there were a method involved in the collection, it is not readily apparent. For example, why were traditional Jewish and Christian symbols, e.g. geometric shapes (triangle=Trinity, circle=eternity), numbers, the cross, fish, and others passed over?³⁶ And why were theologically obscure motifs such as the mitre, compass and square included? With the exception of the sun, moon, and stars and beehive, most early symbols had little basis in LDS theology. Considering their significance and excellent possibilities for graphic imagery, why were the liahona, iron rod, olive tree, rainbow, Urim and Thummim and tree of life not employed symbolically? One wonders what may have resulted had a uniform approach to developing a program of didactic symbols been attempted. If, for example, using all scriptures and the corpus of authoritative teachings, the most important Mormon doctrines, practices, or events had been identified and a symbol developed for each, what legacy of graphic imagery would we be left with today?

It is futile to look back with an eye to what might have been. We may more profitably look to our present symbols and examine their successes or failures. Firstly, it is apparent that we have few visual symbols today. The Salt Lake Temple, depicted either in elevation or perspective, is the most prominent image identified with Mormonism.³⁷ Along with the trumpeting Angel Moroni, mini-models of the temple have found their way into stationery, church pamphlets, Christmas cards, retail packaging and tie tacks. The bas-relief worlds on the mammoth Church Office Building may also be considered symbols of the burgeoning international Church.

All of these symbols, however, seem intentionally naive, safe, and lack depth and vitality when compared to the theologically provocative all-seeing eye, clasped hands, and sun, moon and stars, all of which, scripturally founded,

If there is a uniqueness which binds us, it ought to be expressed graphically.

beckon us to search for truth and to improve the quality of our lives. Our symbols of today are not intended to remind fellow Saints of our common worship and heritage as much as to display a particular image to those outside the faith. Our art, music, architecture, graphics, books, periodicals, advertisements, and television spots are programmatically designed to put forth a corporate image of Mormons as clean, happy, unique, superlative, "All-American" yet "World-wide." The attempt is to underscore Mormon orthodoxy and inspire conformity.

Saints of 1979 have needs quite different from those of a struggling colony of Kingdom builders. Mormonism is an established religion; we are greater in number and are geographically diverse. Yet if there is a uniqueness which binds us, it ought to be expressed graphically. A symbology based on LDS scripture, history, beliefs and practices, and directed towards the actual needs of present Latter-day Saints holds promising possibilities. How better might we encourage faithfulness and personal inspiration than through the liahona symbol, or trueness to the word of God than through an iron rod symbol? The depth of our spiritual heritage could be well represented by the olive tree; Joseph Smith used his ring to signify eternity and the rainbow to symbolize our covenantal relationship with God. The Urim and Thummim point to divine insight. The tree of life, seagull, and appropriate older symbols from pioneer times could be called upon.

As long as collective Mormonism has need to improve and beautify itself, symbolism will be valuable as it has been from the beginning of recorded history. It will be there, trying to turn man to God.

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The following capsules give brief historical and interpretive overviews of several important Mormon symbols. Unfootnoted quotations are largely taken from the reference books on symbolism listed at the end of this article.

Sun, Moon, and Stars

Hugh Nibley is among the proponents of the idea that Mormons created for their early temples an integrated system of cosmological symbols. The "cosmic plan," i.e., the symbolic concept that the earthly temple is an "intellectual image of the celestial pattern, the earthly exemplification of celestial regions in their revolutions, the supernal Jerusalem. . .," is to Nibley essential to the true "temple idea."³⁸ The Salt Lake Temple, says Nibley, "perfectly embodies the temple idea" because of its three levels, orientation as the center of Zion, monumental battlemented architecture, the North Star, font on the back of twelve oxen, and series of sun, moon and star stones. As Solomon's temple presented "a rich cosmic symbolism which was largely lost in later Israelite and Jewish traditions,"³⁹ so must the valid temple of the restoration by requisite provide sun, moon, and stars, etc.

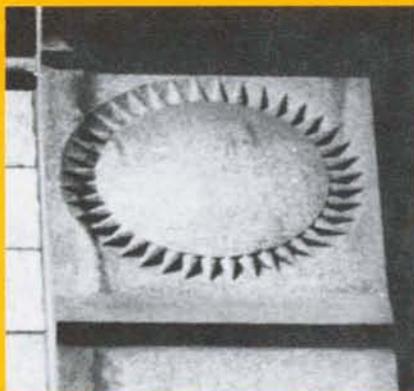
To Mormons, the sun, moon, and stars together represent the three degrees of glory in the resurrection.⁴⁰ The individual symbols also have didactic meanings of their own, the sun, for example, signifying the Celestial Kingdom. The sun has universally represented God, and to Christians, both God the Father and Christ the Son.

In Mormon rhetoric, the moon stands for the Terrestrial Kingdom. The moon was one of two primary deities worshiped by the ancient Egyptians and also played an important role in Hebrew festivals and holidays. By withdrawing its light, the moon presages important events. In some cultures, the moon has figuratively represented mothers or the passage of time.

Stars have signified children, and, to Mormons, the Telestial Kingdom. The stars forming the Ursa Major on the west central tower of the Salt Lake Temple represent the priesthood. Why the five pointed stars point downward on the east and west facades and upward on north and south walls has never been explained.

Earth, Clouds, and Saturn

Other cosmological symbols occupying key positions on the Salt Lake Temple are earth and cloud stones. In 1874, Truman Angell offered that the earth stones reflected that "the Gospel has come for the whole earth,"⁴¹ a non-cosmological explanation that seems unrelated to the religious meanings associated with the other planetary symbols. From their positions in the lower buttresses, the



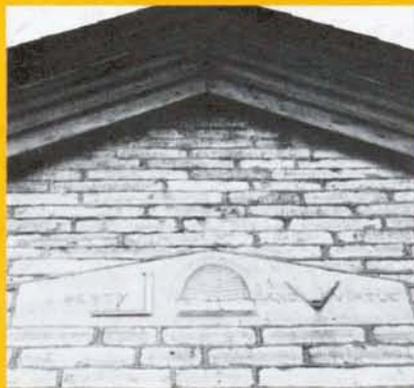
Sunstone, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



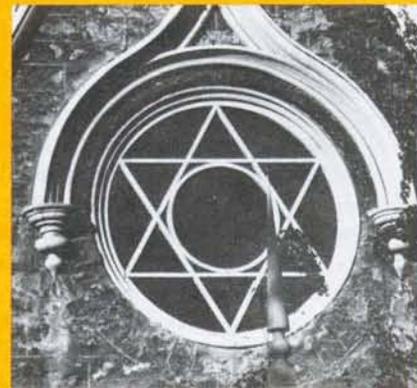
Cloud stones with rays of light, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



Sun face, once over the entry to the old Salt Lake Tabernacle, 1851



Square, compass and beehive, Spring City Endowment House, 1876



Shield or Star of David, with enclosed circle, Salt Lake Assembly Hall designed by Obed Taylor, 1876

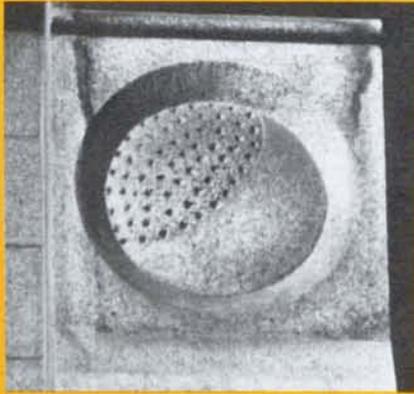
earth stones seem more a reference to the lowly, unglorified state of our worldly realm. The cloud stones (with what appears to some to be rain beneath) are said to actually represent "rays of light streaming from the midst of clouds, indicating gospel light dispels the clouds of error which had enshrouded the world."⁴²

Clouds are mentioned frequently in scripture, usually symbolizing an obscuring veil of some type. Two principal ideas conveyed by clouds are: 1) the presence of God who, not showing himself fully, meets man or converses with him from a hidden medium between the terrestrial and celestial realms (thus

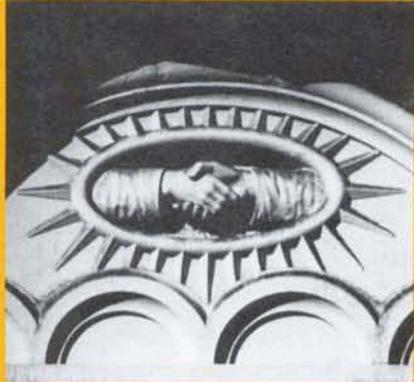
we are told the Lord will come in clouds, the Saints will meet him in clouds, angels and Christ have descended and ascended in clouds, and clouds came into the temple); and 2) the dark veil of ignorance, sin, disbelief and disobedience which covers the mind of man. The Salt Lake Temple clouds seem to depict both of these meanings.

As originally drawn in 1854, Truman Angell's clouds were shown with emergent hands holding trumpets, a feature also associated with sunstones in Nauvoo.⁴³ It is commonly believed that the trumpets signify the day of judgment.

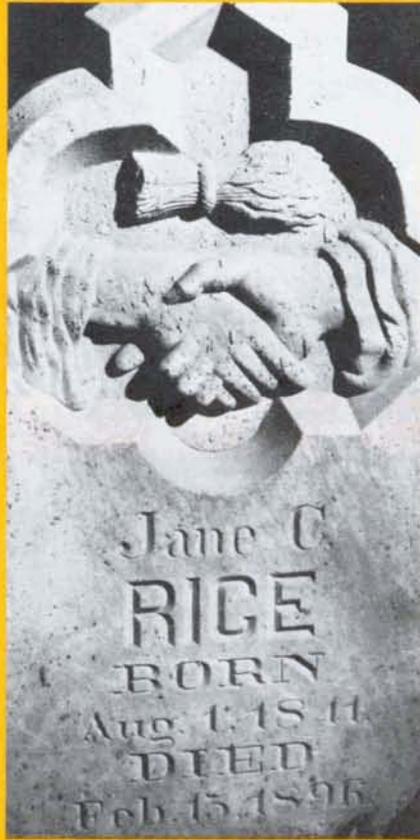
A mysterious symbol—the planet Saturn and its rings—was originally designed to



Moon stone in one of its phases, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



Clasped hands and rays of light, Salt Lake Temple, 1853-93



Fallen wheat sheave and clasped hands, typical in American funerary art, 1896



Bas-relief world on LDS Church Office Building, 1972

occupy a high position on the buttresses above the sunstones on the south wall of the Salt Lake Temple. These stones were never implemented and we are left without information as to why. Saturn has no apparent significance to Mormon theology. It was, however, an object of great interest to Thomas Dick, a philosopher contemporary with and possibly influential on Joseph Smith. For what reason were the Saturn symbols planned to occupy places higher on the temple than the other symbolic stones? Laurel Andrew conjectures that Saturn may have been intended as a reminder of "the ultimate destiny of man, which was to become a god himself and rule over his kingdom. . . ."⁴⁴

Compass and Square

The compass and square, particularly as shown together in Masonic fashion, were infrequently used by the Mormons and then mostly in connection with exterior temple decoration. Early elevational drawings of the Salt Lake Temple show that Masonic arrangements of compass and square were planned to appear along the lower sides of the elliptical windows along the second and fourth floors.⁴⁵ The same symbols appeared on part of Joseph Smith's temple robes in Nauvoo and were prominently displayed on the angel weathervane on the temple's tower.⁴⁶ The Utah use of the compass and square is nearly non-existent, the Spring City "Endowment House" providing a rare

example, albeit one wherein the two symbols appear separately and on opposite ends of the carved stone inscription plaque.

Masons relate their derivation of the compass and square symbol to Solomon's Temple where architect Hiram Abiff employed the instruments to exact accuracy in masonry craftsmanship. The tools also point allegorically to God, "The One Great Architect of the Universe," to the act of creation, and the building principles of geometry and architecture. To Masons, the square and compass as describers of lines and implements of proof also stand for morality and judgment. The square teaches Masons to "square our actions and to keep them within bounds." The compass, which draws a perfect circle, also serves to remind that the passions should be bound. The circle, long a symbol of divinity, also suggests eternity without beginning or end, and the infinite, perfect, limitless mind.

Thousands of years ago the square represented the "seat of Osiris" in the Egyptian Judgment Hall. It reminded the judges "to bring the material into perfect form, and to reject that which was not perfect." It also signified Ptah, the great Egyptian mason-builder. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, speaks of the church as a building, as he metaphorically compares the apostles to the foundation and Jesus Christ to the "chief corner stone" of the church.⁴⁷

Mormon literature about temples and physical symbols leaves us guessing as to the meaning of the compass and square to Latter-day Saints. The endowment ceremony and temple garment, however, still symbolically apply to the compass and square as separate elements, each reminding the devout Mormon of important gospel principles.

Clasped Hands

Abundant mentions of hands are made in the scriptures. The "hand of God," "right hand," "clean hands," "putting on of hands;" each has its own symbolic meaning. Shaking hands or hands clasped in particular grips are also described.⁴⁸ Among the most archaic symbols, joined hands have come to suggest union, virile fraternity and solidarity in the face of danger. Friendship, trust, and, in theological contexts, the leading of the righteous by God, are also common meanings.

Truman O. Angell's 1854 description of the Salt Lake Temple explained that the linked hands located in a first-floor archway on the eastern wall represented the "extending of the right hand of fellowship."⁴⁹ Said Joseph F. Smith, "The clasped hands are emblematic of the strong union and brotherly love

characteristic of Latter-day Saints, through which they have been enabled to accomplish so much both at home and abroad."⁵⁰

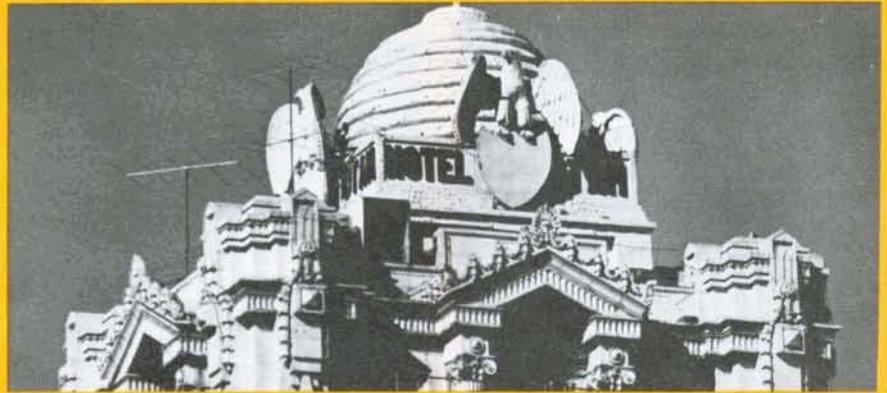
The shaking hand symbol also appears on an old banner of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Wards, with the inscription, "Union is Strength." Artist Dan Weggeland featured the same symbol, connected with the words, "Blessings follow sacrifice" on a painting of the pioneers of 1847. Hands gripped in a handshake were featured on the obverse sides of all Mormon gold pieces starting in 1849 and, in 1852, William Ward placed a pair shaking hands on his carved stone for the Washington Monument. The symbolic hands were a favorite motif of Meadow woodcarver, Joseph H. Fisher and are also found on the carved stone plaque in the tower of the Manti Tabernacle. These latter hands appear to extend from the arms of temple garments.

While joined hands are hardly endemic to Mormons, their dressing in funerary art is unusual. As found on old gravestones in the Mormon cultural region, clasped hands often portray one person in temple clothing (the Lord) and the other in ordinary popular clothing (the deceased). Sometimes the hands are reaching through the veil, represented in stone as a parting curtain. Of significance is the fact that although shaking hands, as well as hands linked in certain grips, were used by all Freemasons, and were freely illustrated in their literature, few if any old Mormon tombstones depict anything other than the predictable handshake grips.

Individual hands often appear alone in Mormon funerary art, usually signifying the receiving or instructing hand of God, or reunion in the next life. In the Manti cemetery, one stone displays an undressed hand with its index finger pointing heavenward, while another gravestone has a hand, apparently in temple clothing, with its index finger pointing downward. One is left to conjecture as to possible meanings.

All-seeing Eye

Holy writ is replete with references to the eye of God which is described as "pure" and "piercing." The idea that his eye is all-seeing or "all-searching" is well expressed: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."⁵¹ Power is also implied: "With one glance of His eye he can smite you to the dust."⁵² God's meting out of salvation or judgment, and His communication with man are other scripturally derived meanings related to the eye. In the scriptural writings of Joseph Smith, another dimension is added—that of the eye surrounded with light or flame,—an image portrayed in LDS-made all-seeing eyes.⁵³



Beehive and eagles atop the Hotel Utah, 1909-11



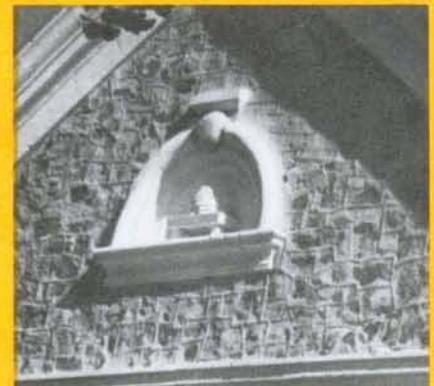
Gravestones in Manti cemetery with hands pointing up



and down



Beehive on cupola of Beehive House, 1854-56



Beehive plaque on Providence Ward meetinghouse, 1868

The all-seeing eye has been in popular use for thousands of years. From the Egyptians to the Masons and Odd Fellows, it has represented the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent nature of God. An eye enclosed by a triangle is a symbol of the Trinity and originated in 16th century Christendom. On the great seal of the United States, the all-seeing eye appears as a reminder of the many times Providence has come to the aid of the American people.

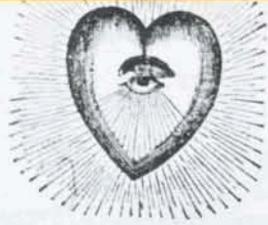
Because the all-seeing eye depicts certain aspects of God's character, as well as an actual part of His physical person, the symbol proved useful to the Mormons. LDS symbolists created imposing eyes on

early ZCMI signs, gold pieces, Nauvoo Legion flags, *The Mormon* and *The Seer* (newspapers), diplomas and certificates, Salt Lake Temple platters, plaques on the Manti, St. George and Ogden tabernacles, and the Washington Monument Stone. Mason W. H. Cunningham has described the eye as "sovereign inspection whom Sun, Moon and Stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits."⁵⁴

Beehive

The beehive is undoubtedly the most enduring of Mormon symbols. Mormons

THE



SEER.

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, See Ye, when He
lifteth up an Ensign on the Mountains.—Isaiah XVIII, 3.

VOL. I.

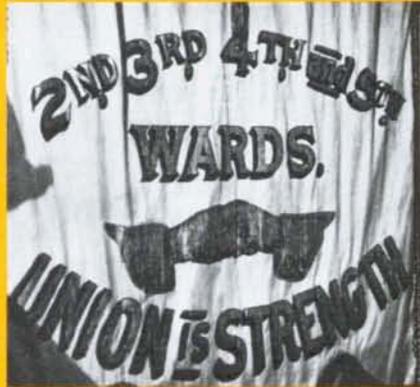
AUGUST, 1853.

No. 8.

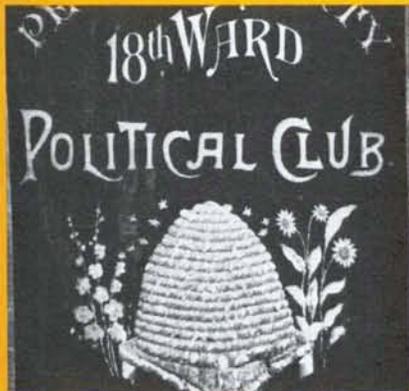
The Seer with heart, all-seeing eye and emanating light, 1853



Nauvoo Legion Flag with all-seeing eye



Clasped hands and "Union is Strength" legend, Salt Lake 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th ward banners, c. 1890s



Salt Lake 18th Ward Political Club Banner with beehive, c. 1890s



Brigham Young mirror with wood-carved beehive, c. 1870s

point to a single verse in the Book of Mormon as reason for their use of this symbol: "And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees. . ."⁵⁵ Consequently, the word "deseret" is generally associated with the beehive symbol. Don L. F. Nelson has documented scores of uses of the beehive and "deseret" in connection with company names, buildings, songs, associations, societies, clubs, an alphabet, and so forth.⁵⁶ Hugh Nibley has offered that "deseret" was an Egyptian word, transcribed without vowels, but represented phonetically by sounds corresponding to our "d," "s," "r," and

"t."⁵⁷ The word referred to the "Red Crown," a symbol of the bee which itself was considered too sacred to be written or described literally. To the Egyptians and the nations they influenced, i.e., the Hittites, Assyrians (and perhaps Jaredites), the bee represented "the agent through which the dead king or hero is resurrected from the dead." Thus royalty and the resurrection were characterized by the red crown and honey bee or "dsrt," all interrelated symbols. Among the Greeks, the bee was a symbol of obedience and purity. In Orphic teachings the bee also represented the soul of man. The Hebrews also utilized the beehive symbol, according to the

Mishna, including it in the design of the vestments of Jewish priests. Too, bees and their hives have come to represent such diverse ideas as the laws of nature, farsightedness, receiving the word of God, eloquence and exaltation.

The less mystic idea of industry and diligence now associated with bees is a relatively recent concept, one that may have been developed by the Christians during the Romanesque period. The same meanings, along with connotations of regeneration, are expressed in Masonic ritual and literature.

In Utah, Mormons also related their "deseret" symbol to industry and related pioneer virtues of thrift and perseverance. Usually pictured on a small bench or stool, the beehive or skep was chosen as emblem of the State of Deseret in 1848 and was maintained on the seal of the State of Utah when it was created in 1896. An official pronouncement later explained: "In founding this state, the pioneers, encompassed by a desert, had very few implements with which to work, but had unlimited industry coupled with their faith. The honeybee seeks its maintenance from the air, soil and water, so likewise our pioneers took from the resources around them material with which to build their homes and villages. Utah is called the 'Beehive State' (meaning industry)."⁵⁸

Brigham Young made extensive use of the beehive symbol. It appears on the cupola of his "Beehive House," on his French-made mirror, bedstead, on the Eagle Gate and Utah's stone in the Washington Monument. He may have been aware of another meaning connected with the symbol, one held by general Christendom, that of community, obedience and unity. To a man responsible for the lives of thousands of dependents, these principles were essential and needed to be emphasized continually.

Visual reminders on church buildings (Spring City Endowment House; Levan, Providence and Provo 6th meetinghouses; St. George Temple; Logan Tabernacle; Ephraim United Order Co-op and Relief Society Hall, to name a few) had a utilitarian value beyond the surface of the decoration. Territorial certificates, stationery, newspaper mastheads, Salt Lake Temple platters, political banners, street markers, book covers, the top of the Hotel Utah, ad infinitum—the beehive was found everywhere a person turned. Although its deeper symbolism (i.e. resurrection, the word of God, exaltation and so forth) is lost on contemporary Mormons, we are still subtly cajoled to good works by ever-present beehive symbols.

Mitre and Crown

Mormons today may be surprised that the mitre, a tall, flat cap with two points, was ever an important Mormon symbol. Yet it appeared on the reverse sides of all Mormon coins minted in Salt Lake City beginning in 1849. In each case, the mitre appeared above an all-seeing eye.

The mitre played an important role among the Hebrew priests of the Old Testament and was sometimes connected with a crown.⁵⁹ At his ordination, Aaron wore the "Urim and Thummim, breastplate and. . . (Moses) put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefronts did he put the golden plate."⁶⁰ On the plate was inscribed "Holiness to the Lord." This motto appears with the mitre in Mormon usage also, and appears in variety of ways with several other Mormon symbols.

If Brigham Young extracted his system of Mormon symbols from the Old Testament as Angell suggested, Mormon usage of the mitre would appear essential, particularly because it links the priesthood of the Old Testament with that of the current dispensation. Mormons view the Presiding Bishopric, overseers of such temporal affairs as minting mitre-faced coins in pioneer times, as roughly equivalent in priesthood authority and role to the bemitred Aaron and the ancient priests of the tribe of Levi.

Other religions have also utilized the mitre symbolically. Roman Catholic bishops wear the mitre, believing its two points suggest the two rays of light that reputedly appeared from the head of Moses when he received the Ten Commandments.

Generically related to the mitre, the crown is a common Christian emblem of victory, honor, human sovereignty, royalty, and victory over death. Although the crown is frequently mentioned in scriptures, it was rarely used symbolically by Mormons. The best example features three crowns in a plaque on the western interior wall of the St. George Tabernacle.

Angels

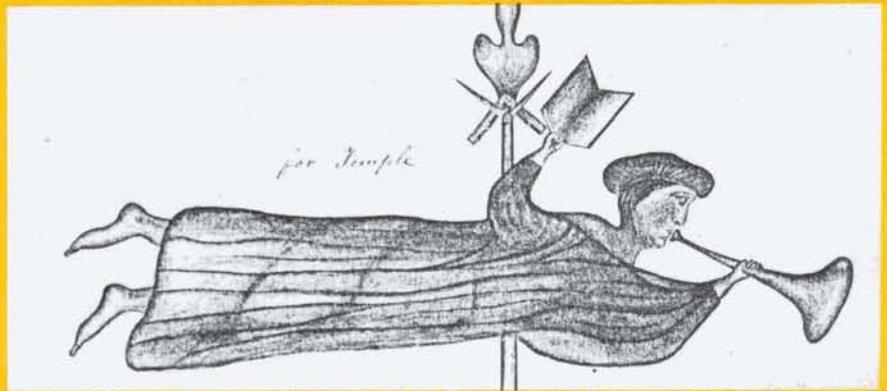
A church which was ushered in amidst angelic visitations, received its new scriptures through an angel and its priesthood authority through angelic representatives, would likely make good use of the angel symbol. Angel symbols are rare among Mormons, however. While there is a statue of Angel Moroni on the Salt Lake Temple, it is more referential than symbolic, intending to remind viewers of the angel mentioned by John in Revelations 14:7. Two angels found by this author—the horizontal angel weathervane on the Nauvoo Temple and a similarly prone angel on an 1885 Seventies License—are both

blowing long trumpets and are wingless. If they are not Moroni, they may stand for the other angels in Revelations which announce the Second Coming and Day of Judgment. The idea that contact with divine beings is an important reality in the Church is also implied.

Angels are symbols of great antiquity and are represented in the artwork of virtually all historic civilizations. They appeared, for example, in Solomon's Temple. Traditionally shown with wings, angels are messengers, bearers of tiding, supernatural beings which provide a communicative link between God and man.

Eagle

The eagle was an ancient military ensign, having served emblematically for the Roman, Persian and Assyrian armies. A symbol of Jupiter, employed personally by Napoleon, the eagle signifies victory, authority and power. The majestic bird aptly represents early Mormonism, a revolutionary movement which had many militaristic aspects. Considering its generals, legions, battlemented temple architecture and Old Testament-inspired militaristic terminology, it is not surprising to find eagles on Nauvoo Legion drums, the logo of *The Mormon* (an 1850s newspaper), the Eagle Gate, the top of Hotel Utah, the territorial and state



Drawing of Nauvoo Temple weathervane (probably by William Weeks) with angel dressed in temple clothing, carrying a trumpet and open book. Of interest is the compass and square motif on the pole, c. 1846



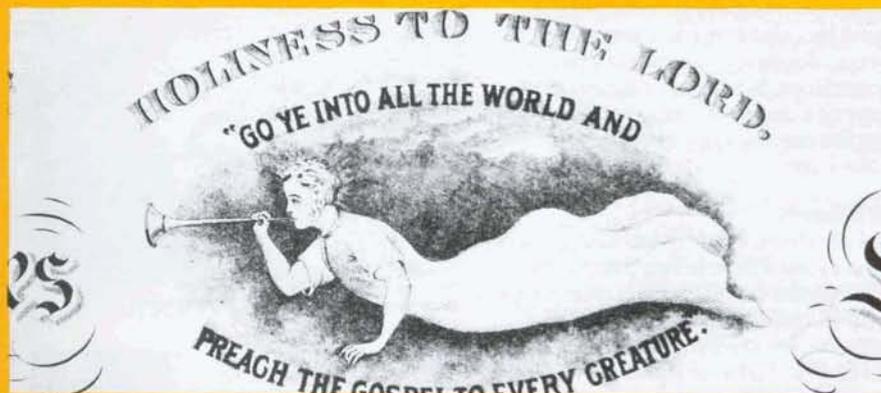
Mormon gold pieces showing clasped hands, mitre over an all-seeing eye (1849) and lion, eagle and beehive (1860)



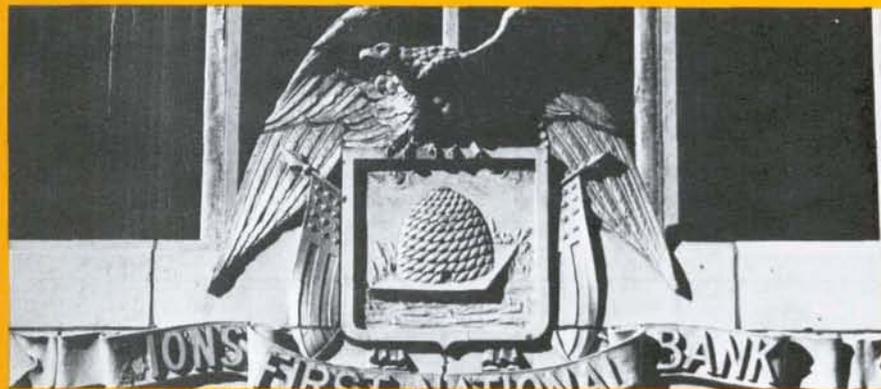
Nauvoo Legion Drum with beehive, eagle and military insignia, no date (courtesy of Pat King)



Eagle Gate, eagle perched on beehive, original built in 1856



Seventies License with prone angel and trumpet, 1885



Logo of Zion's First National Bank with eagle and beehive, 1916



Lion reposing over the entrance of Brigham Young's Lion House, 1856. Note the signature of William Ward

seals of Utah, the logo of Zion's 1st National Bank, and even on Brigham Young's carved bedstead.

For many governments, ancient and recent, the eagle has been a nationalistic emblem. After becoming the official symbol of the United States of America in 1782, the eagle appeared on many state seals and certificates, including those of the State of Deseret and Utah. Remembering the tremendous conflicts between Mormondom's theocracy and the federal government, the frequent positioning of an eagle (the national symbol) on top of a beehive (the Mormon kingdom symbol) in pre-accommodation

years is ironic. Perhaps the eagle was perceived as a dual symbol, representing the Kingdom of God on earth and, only incidentally, the faraway, unprofitable national government. The earthly Kingdom of God has been viewed by many groups in Christian history as having militaristic qualities (even responsibilities). In this role, the eagle may have been apropos.

Mormon symbol makers may have been aware of some of the Biblical passages referring to eagles in literal and figurative ways. Particularly significant is the Eagle, one of the four beasts or "living creatures (along with the ox, lion and man)

mentioned in Ezekiel 1:10 and Revelations 4:7, and interpreted in Doctrine and Covenants 77.

In reality, the eagle of the Bible was probably a griffon vulture. Nonetheless, in Christian art, the eagle became a symbol of St. John, denoting "insight into heavenly truths. . .because he was allowed to mount in spirit into heavenly places." The soaring bird has also come to represent the Resurrection among some Christian groups. Although no mention of eagles appears in the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith appreciated the bird in a metaphorical sense.⁶¹

Lion

Best known as the "King of Beasts," to John, the lion represented Christ;⁶² and for Mormons, Brigham Young was "the Lion of the Lord." The lion, with its majestic bearing and qualities of strength, fortitude, valor and courage may be considered the early counterpart of the eagle. Lions are thought to be always on guard; vigilant protectors as expressed in statuesque symbols at entrances to public buildings, churches, and, in a Mormon usage, Brigham Young's Lion House. When seated, the lion suggests that the "King is in," an idea perhaps appropriate to Brigham Young.

For the Egyptians, the lion was the "natural lord and master," and was used to represent those "in possession of strength and the masculine principle." The context was important in terms of whether the lion was young, old, bold or tame. An old or infirm lion represented one's "setting sun."

The Greeks, Assyrians, Hittites and Chinese in various ways used lions as symbols of power, superiority or glory.

In addition to William Wards's carved lion couchant over the Lion House entry, Mormon gold pieces featured a reposing lion on their reverse sides in 1860. The idea of the lamb and lion lying peacefully together in not represented in LDS symbolism.

Dove

The dove was in wide use among those of Judeo-Christian persuasion long before its adaptation by the Saints. The mild mannered bird was commissioned by Noah to find land after the flood and returned with the proverbial olive leaf. Representing the purity of the future Messiah, the dove has been offered in sacrifices by the Jews for millennia. It was "like a dove" that the "Spirit of God" descended upon Jesus following his baptism.⁶³ The dove has since been associated with the Holy Ghost, as well as the human soul and the spirit of the body leaving at death. In this last sense, the dove is frequently found in early

American funerary art and on Mormon gravestones, sometimes flying horizontally, other times pointed directly downward, and sometimes fallen and crumpled. As a symbol of peace and love, doves were employed, along with roses and shaking hands, as an emblematic motif in pulpit fronts and plaques made by Mormon woodcarver, Joseph H. Fisher in Meadow, Utah.

Lamb

Considering the profuse references to lambs in the Bible, it is surprising that the lamb symbol does not occur more frequently among the Mormons. The ideal Christian symbol, spotless young male lambs were used as sacrificial offerings in the Old Testament and represented Christ and His sacrifice. Christ was "the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."⁶⁴ In Christian symbolism, the reclining lamb represented wounded flesh. This usage appears frequently on Mormon gravestones. Symbolic of the death of an innocent one, this emblem usually marked

the departure of a baby or young child. The lamb has also come to represent innocence, docility, temperance, charity and providence. It may be in connection with one of these principles that the lamb became the central symbol in the seal of Salt Lake City.

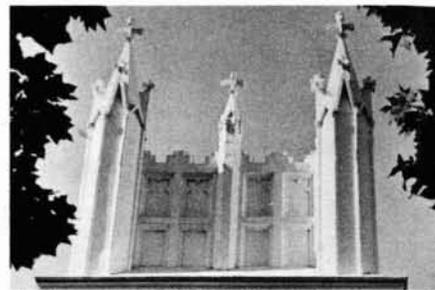
Wheat Sheaves

A sheaf of wheat, bound and falling, was a common symbol in America during the placid Victorian era. Although rarely seen in Mormon country, two interesting extant examples are the cornerstone of the Levan Ward Meetinghouse (1904) and the tombstone of Jane Rice (1896). In the first instance, the sheaf seems to signify the bounty of the earthly harvest and, implicitly, God's goodness to man. In funerary use, the sheaf is depicted in a fully fallen position and represents the divine harvest of mortals, and, in a broader sense, the passage of time.

Bread, the byproduct of wheat, has not proved artistically suitable as a symbol. Thus, wheat has become a substitute



Oak cluster on Levan Ward Meetinghouse, 1904 (courtesy of Pat King)



Stylized model of the Salt Lake Temple atop the Logan 6th Ward meetinghouse, 1906

Footnotes

¹Steven G. Covey, *The Revelation Monument Building: A Proposal*, Salt Lake City, 1960, p. 18.

²A letter from Brigham Young to John Bernhisel in Washington, D.C., read in part: "We expect to send by the Elders who go down to the states a block of Sanpete stone to the Washington Monument, engraved 'Holiness to the Lord,' with a Beehive, Horn of Plenty and the word Deseret in letters across the base. The stone will be 3 ft. long, 2 ft. broad and 8 inches thick." *Journal History*, 28 August 1852.

³Lewis Mumford, *The Conduct of Life*, London, 1951 (as quoted in *Symbols, Signs and Their Meaning* by Arnold Whittick, London, 1960).

⁴Women's Exponent, XII, p. 57. The idea of imprinting didactic messages on goods was also reiterated by this statement of Brigham Young: "We will build a city of righteousness where even the bells on the horses shall bear the inscription 'Holiness to the Lord.'" (*Messenger and Advocate*, 1836)

⁵Laurel Blank Andrew, "The Nineteenth-Century Temple Architecture of the Latter-day Saints," University of Michigan, Ph.D. Diss., 1973, p. 176.

⁶T. L. Brink, "The Rise of Mormonism: A Case Study in the Symbolology of Frontier America," *International Journal of Symbolology*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1975, p. 4.

⁷Carl Landus Christensen, "History of Symbols," Brigham Young University, Master's Thesis, 1959, p. 87.

⁸*Doctrine and Covenants* (hereafter cited as *D&C*) 95:13

⁹"Deseret News," Salt Lake City, Aug. 17 1854

¹⁰A thorough explanation of the historic concept of the temple is given in Hugh W. Nibley's *What is a Temple? The Idea of the Temple in History*, Provo, Brigham Young University Press, 1970.

¹¹Good descriptive accounts of the various Mormon temples are found in four traditional works: James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord, a Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971; N. B. Lundwall (compiler), *Temples of the Most High*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968; Wallace A. Raynor, *The Everlasting Spires*, Salt Lake City: Bureau of Information, Temple Block, 1912. Two recent scholarly analyses by non-Mormon authors are: Dolores Hyden, "Eden versus Jerusalem," *Seven American Utopias, The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975*, Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1976; and Laurel B. Andrew, *The Early Temples of the Mormons, The Architecture of the Millennial Kingdom in the American West*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978.

¹²Reed C. Durham, Jr., "Is there no Help for the Widow's Son?" an

address delivered 20 April 1974 to the Mormon History Association in Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded by Mervin B. Hogan as "An Underground Presidential Address," Research Lodge of Utah, F. & A. M., Masonic Temple, Salt Lake City. See "Mormon Miscellaneous," Vol. I, No. 1, Nauvoo: The New Nauvoo Neighbor Press, 1975, pp. 11-16.

¹³At Carthage, Joseph wore a Jupiter Talisman, an emblem of significance to Masons (see Lewis Spense's *An Encyclopedia of Occultism*, New York: Strathmore Press, 1959) and Hyrum wore a Masonic lapel pin. He also had a dagger, pouch and three parchments, all encribed with Masonic symbols (see Pearson H. Corbutt's *Hyrum Smith, Patriarch*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978, p. 453. Also, see photographs of the talisman in "Mormon Miscellaneous" (op. cit.).

¹⁴Op. cit., Durham, p. 4.

¹⁵Op. cit., Andrew, p. 85.

¹⁶Among the Masonic handbooks and reference works consulted were: Joshua Bradley, A. M., *Beauties of Freemasonry*, Albany, 1821 (this was one of Brigham Young's books on Masonry); A. T. C. Piersen, *Traditions of Freemasonry*, 1865; William T. Anderson, 32nd, *The Masonic Token*, New York, 1868; Albert G. Mackey, M.D., *The Book of the Chapters on Monitorial Instructions*, New York, 1865; Will M. Cunningham, A.M., 33rd, *Craft Masonry, Ancient New York Rite*, New York, 1874; J. Finlay Finlayson, *Symbols and Legends of Free Masonry*, London, 1910; Daniel Sickels, 33rd, *General Ahiman Region and Freemason's Guide*, New York, 1868; Charles W. Moore, *New Masonic Trestle-Board*, Boston, 1870; Robert Macoy, *Masonic Manual*, 1861.

¹⁷Andrew, thesis, p. 175.

¹⁸Dr. Albert Churchward, *Signs and Symbols of Primordial Man: The Evolution of Religious Doctrine from the Eschatology of the Ancient Egyptians*, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910.

¹⁹Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience, A History of the Latter-day Saints*, New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1979, p. xiv.

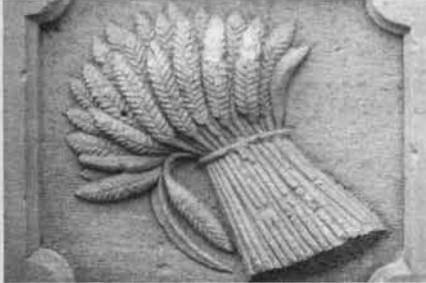
²⁰Andrew, book, p. 27.

²¹Brigham Young, for example, directed that ZCMI bylaws require signs which contained the legend, "Holiness to the Lord" arched over the All-seeing Eye of Jehovah. See *Journal History*, 29 October 1868, and a letter from Brigham Young to Albert Carrington, *Journal History*, 18 November 1868.

²²Orson Pratt's lecture series in the 1850s and his designs for the Salt Lake Temple's moon stones based on the phases for the year 1878 reflect his propensity for things astrological. The *Deseret Almanacs*, published annually in the 1850s and '60s by W. W. Phelps, are replete with cosmological references and charts.



Salt Lake City Seal with standing lamb, 1850s



Falling wheat sheaves on Levan Ward meetinghouse cornerstone, 1904

symbol for the body of Christ. Figurative metaphors such as Christ's "I am the bread of life,"⁶⁵ would seem to endear the wheat symbol to Mormons. Aside from the use of bread in sacramental rites, however, little symbolic use is made of wheat.

Unleavened bread signifies sincerity and truth to the Jews.

Miscellaneous Symbols

Symbols which appear infrequently in Mormon cultural art include the rose (and other flowers), open book, temple, cornucopia, heart, oak cluster and the tree of life. Most of the symbols are in universal use outside of Mormonism and are more ornamental than didactic. Their meanings are quite transparent, and, because their existence is incidental to Mormonism, appear to convey no religious precepts unique to the Saints. The possible exception is the temple symbol. Models or depictions of temples, however, are symbols of symbols. They serve to remind the Mormon viewer of the value of the temple idea and its

concomitant principles of salvation. To the non-Mormon, the Salt Lake Temple represents Mormonism itself. A most interesting mimic is the stylized Salt Lake Temple atop the truncated tower of the Logan 6th Ward meetinghouse.

Among the reference books on symbolism are:

- Duval, Francis Y. and Ivan B. Rigby
Early American Gravestone Art, New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1978
- Lehrer, Ernst
The Picture Book of Symbols, New York: William Penn Publication Corp., 1956
- Lewis, Ralph M.
Behold the Sign: Ancient Symbolism, San Jose: AMORC Printing and Publishing Department, 1944.
- Koch, Rudolph
The Book of Signs, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1930
- Raphaelian, H. M.
Signs of Life: A Pictorial Dictionary of Symbols, New York, Anatol Aivas, 1957
- Sill, Gertrude Grace
A Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art, Great Britain: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1976
- Smith, William, LL.D. and F. N. and M. A. Peloubet
A Dictionary of the Bible, Chicago: The John C. Winston Co., 1884

²³April, 1886, John Taylor Letter Book, letter from Truman O. Angell to President John Taylor, LDS Church Historical Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

²⁴Ibid., letter of 29 April 1886.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., letter of 23 April 1886.

²⁷Ibid., letter 16 April 1886.

²⁸Anthony W. Ivins, *The Relationship of "Mormonism" and "Freemasonry,"* Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1934, p. 91.

²⁹Ibid., p. 92

³⁰Ibid., p. 93

³¹Allen D. Roberts, "The 'Other' Endowment House," *Sunstone*, Volume 3 Number 5, 1978, pp. 9-10.

³²A drawing of the angel weathervane, with Masonically arranged compass and square (probably drafted by William Weeks) is in the Nauvoo Temple Drawings Collection, LDS Church Historical Archives.

³³Op. cit., Nibley, p. 247.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Klaus J. Hansen, "The Metamorphosis of the Kingdom of God: Toward a Reinterpretation of Mormon History," *Dialogue*, 1:3, 1966.

³⁶An attempt to demonstrate that numbers are of symbolic importance to Mormons is found in Kenneth M. Sundberg: "The Morning Star, A Study of the Symbolism and Design Inherent in the Holy Priesthood as Administered in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," unpublished manuscript, LDS Church Historical Department, 1972.

³⁷In analyzing the meanings and uses of several "pilot symbols," Christensen concludes that in Mormon publications, the most frequently employed symbol is the Salt Lake Temple. Among those not used or infrequently used are the eye, stars, dove, Star of David and (surprisingly) the beehive. Also see Monte B. DeGraw, "A study of Representative Examples of Art Works Fostered by the Mormon Church with an Analysis of the Aesthetic Value of the Works" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959).

³⁸Op. cit., Nibley, p. 230.

³⁹W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1942, pp. 154-5, 88-99, 167 (as quoted by Nibley).

⁴⁰I Corinthians 15: 40-42; D&C 76: 70-71, 81.

⁴¹Journal History, 1874, description of the Salt Lake Temple.

⁴²Joseph F. Smith, *The Great Temple*, Salt Lake City: Bureau of Information, Temple Block, 1912, p. 10.

⁴³Salt Lake Temple and Nauvoo Temple Drawings collections, LDS Church Historical Archives, Salt Lake City.

⁴⁴Andrew, thesis, p.171.

⁴⁵Op. cit., temple drawings.

⁴⁶Ibid. Also see weathervane drawing in Nauvoo Temple Drawings Collections, footnote 29.

⁴⁷Ephesians 2:19-21.

⁴⁸"Stretch forth thine hand unto thy brethren, and they shall not wither before thee." (1 Nephi 17:53);

"But his hand is stretched out still" (2 Nephi 15:25)

"When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you. If he be an angel, he will do so, and you will feel his hand." (D&C 129:4-5)

"I took them by the hand. . ." (Jeremiah 31:32)

⁴⁹Op. cit., Angell, 1854.

⁵⁰Op. cit., Joseph F. Smith, p. 10.

⁵¹Proverbs 15:3.

⁵²D&C 121:24.

⁵³D&C 110:3.

⁵⁴W. H. Cunningham, *Cross' Masonic Chart*, p. 69, as quoted in McGavin's *Mormonism and Masonry*, p. 62.

⁵⁵*Book of Mormon*, Ether 2:3

⁵⁶Daniel F. Nelson, "Deseret," *Mormon History*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1969, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁷Hugh W. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952, pp. 184-190.

⁵⁸"Seal of the State of Utah," pamphlet, Utah State Historical Society, 1960.

⁵⁹Leviticus 8:9.

⁶⁰Exodus 28:36-37.

⁶¹D&C 124:18.

⁶²Revelations 5:5.

⁶³Matthew 3:16.

⁶⁴John 1:29.

⁶⁵I Corinthians 5:8.