

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY: THE “THREE PRINCIPAL ROUNDS” OF THE LADDER OF HEAVENLY ASCENT¹

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Abstract: In this chapter, I will argue that the scriptural triad of faith, hope, and charity, is often meant to be understood as something more than a general set of personal attributes that must be developed in order for disciples to become like Christ.² Indeed, like the expression of supernal reality contained in the ten “building blocks”³ of the sefirot in mystic Judaism, these terms, as used by the Prophet Joseph Smith in his explanations of the principles that govern the eternal worlds and the temple ordinances that reflect them, may represent concepts that are “quite far from the world of divine ‘attributes’ of which the medieval philosophers wrote with such caution and precision, and with which later apologists sought to identify them.”⁴ Instead, as part of the “guarded tradition of the Apostle”⁵ that is transmitted to readers in 1 Corinthians⁶ and elsewhere in scripture⁷ and religious tradition, these terms are sometimes used to describe a distinct progression of “stages in a Christian’s earthly experience.”⁸ The three stages correlating to the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are sometimes symbolized as the “three principal rounds”⁹ (i.e., rungs) of a ladder of heavenly ascent that mark key transitions on the pathway to eternal life. Within the translations, revelations, and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, these same three qualities correspond to the general sequence of ordinances and blessings described in scripture as “the doctrine of Christ.”¹⁰ In the magnificent word pictures of faith, hope, and charity painted in the prophetic corpus of Joseph Smith, we discover, as in so many other contexts, the astounding recovery of the essence of potent doctrines and symbols from the heart of Judaism and early Christianity.

Within this chapter, I will attempt a preliminary exploration of something I “never had supposed”¹³ — something that opened up to my understanding as a cluster of concepts from scripture and tradition converged in my mind with a brief passage in one of the Prophet’s sermons.

First, I will give a brief introduction to the ladder of heavenly ascent in ancient religious tradition. Then I will follow with a discussion of the ladder of exaltation in the teachings of Joseph Smith, highlighting in particular the ideas of faith, hope, and charity and the three kingdoms of glory as the principal rounds of this ladder. Finally, I will show how the Prophet’s use of the imagery of a ladder can be correlated to scriptural statements about faith, hope, and charity and “the doctrine of Christ.” Such examples provide a glimpse of the many rich veins of untapped meaning that may be mined through careful study of the Prophet’s translations, revelations, and teachings.¹⁴

The Ladder of Heavenly Ascent in Ancient Religious Tradition

Already a religious symbol in Egypt¹⁶ and Babylon,¹⁷ the stairway or ladder of heavenly ascent first appeared in biblical tradition within the story of Jacob: “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”¹⁸

The story is later referenced in the Gospels. Alluding to the multiple deceits practiced in the story of Jacob/Israel and Laban, Jesus praised Nathanael at his approach, saying, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”²¹ Then, referring to imagery from the ladder in Jacob’s dream, He solemnly avowed His preeminence over the revered patriarch, declaring that *He* was the ladder of heavenly ascent personified: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending *upon the Son of man*.”²²

Later in John, when Thomas asked Jesus how His disciples would know the way to His Father’s House, Jesus replied: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”²³



Figure 1. Stephen T. Whitlock, 1951-: *Jacob's Ladder*, Bath Abbey, 9 October 2004.¹⁵

Explaining the symbolism of the central portal of the west façade of the Strasbourg Cathedral, Michel Bouttier explains how the “ladder” of the Savior’s cross first overcomes death and hell, and then opens the way to exaltation: “The composition shows the three levels: The body of Adam in hell, Christ crucified on earth, and His ascension to heaven. The cross is the axis that links the worlds of the dead and the living, and which provides access to heaven.”²⁰



Figure 2. *The Ladder of the Cross*. Notre Dame Cathedral, Strasbourg, France.¹⁹



Figure 3. *The Ladder of Virtues of St. John Climacus*, north façade, Sucevita Monastery, Romania, 1602–1604.²⁴

I will not take the space here to trace the trajectory of Jacob’s ladder in Christian tradition,²⁵ including the well-known teachings on the subject by John Climacus (i.e., John “of the ladder”), Saint Augustine, and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Suffice it to say that in many of these descriptions, faith, hope, and charity — what later came to be known as the three theological virtues — became associated with the three principal rungs on this ladder, a symbol of the process of spiritual progression by which the disciple, enabled by the grace of God, climbs to perfection. As in Lehi’s vision of the Tree of Life, some, “after they had tasted of the fruit ... fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.”²⁶

The Ladder of Exaltation in the Teachings of Joseph Smith

As is typical in others of Joseph Smith’s translations, revelations, and teachings, his prophetic understanding allowed him to reach back beyond the religious speculations of the preceding centuries to the more ancient versions of these concepts found in earlier tradition and in the Bible. His teachings about the ladder did not merely reflect some of the later, watered-down imagery that replaced the idea of the virtues reflecting steps in a literal heavenly ascent with metaphors and allegories “of which the medieval philosophers wrote with such caution and precision, and

with which later apologists sought to identify them.”²⁷ Indeed, it might be said that Joseph Smith’s teachings about the ladder of heavenly ascent, like others of the temple-related doctrines that came through him, “gave his believing [followers] a sense of what was experientially real, not merely philosophically true.”²⁸

The ladder of exaltation in the King Follett Discourse. Within the King Follett discourse, arguably the greatest doctrinal sermon given by the Prophet, Joseph Smith used the general imagery of a ladder to describe the process of learning the principles of exaltation step-by-step:

*Original Notes Recorded from a Sermon Delivered on 7 April 1844 in Thomas Bullock Report:*²⁹ you thus learn the first prin of the Gospel when you climb a ladder you must begin at the bottom run[g] until you learn the last prin of the gospel for it is a great thing to learn Saln. Beyond the grave & it is not all to be com in this world.

*Expanded Version from Joseph Smith’s History:*³⁰ Here, then, is eternal life — to know the only wise and true God;³¹ and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God,³² the same as all Gods have done before you, namely by going from one small degree³³ to another, and from a small capacity to a great one,³⁴ from grace to grace,³⁵ from exaltation to exaltation,³⁶ until you attain to the resurrection of the dead,³⁷ and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings,³⁸ and to sit in glory,³⁹ as do those who sit enthroned⁴⁰ in everlasting power.⁴¹ ...

*When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel — you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil⁴² before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.*⁴³

In his explicit linking of the ladder imagery to the ordinances of eternal life and exaltation, it is clear that Joseph Smith was using these terms in a way that reflected the temple ordinances and the model they provide for the life beyond.

Faith, hope, and charity as the principal rounds of the ladder of heavenly ascent. Within a 21 May 1843 discourse on the doctrine of election,⁴⁴ which Joseph Smith discussed in conjunction with the “more sure word of prophecy” mentioned in 2 Peter 1:19, the Prophet returned the imagery of a ladder three times:

1. A remark captured in the original notes as “ladder and rainbow,”⁴⁵ which may parallel a statement he made in another sermon about a month later: “I wou[l]d make you think I was climbi[n]g a ladder when I I was climbing a rainbow”;⁴⁶
2. A mention of Peter’s “ladder of virtues,” discussed below.
3. In the reconstructed version of the sermon published in the *History of the Church*, Joseph Smith is remembered as saying that Paul “ascended into the third heavens, and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder — the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms.”⁴⁷

I will now explain how the words of 2 Peter themselves form a sort of verbal ladder relating to the qualities of faith, hope, and charity that correspond to the Prophet’s teachings in the King Follett sermon about the process of exaltation:

Original Notes from Joseph Smith’s Journal:⁴⁸ like precious faith with us ... — add to your faith virtue &c ... another point after having all these qualifictins [qualifications] he lays this injutin [injunction]. — but rather make your calling & election sure — after adding all. this. virtue knowledge &. make your cal[l]ing &c Sure. — what is the secret, the starting point. according as his divine power which hath given unto all things that pertain to life & godliness. [p. [214]]

how did he obtain all things? — th[r]ough the knowledge of him who hath calld him. — there could not any be given pertain[in]g to life & ~~knowledge~~ & godliness without knowledge

wo wo wo to the Ch[r]istendom. — the divine & priests; &c — if this be true.

Original Notes in Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:⁴⁹ The Apostle says, unto them who have obtained like precious faith with us the apostles through the righteousness of God & our Savior Jesus Christ, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory & virtue add faith virtue &c. &c. to godliness

brotherly kindness — Charity — ye shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He that lacketh these things is blind — wherefore the rather brethren after all this give diligence to make your calling & Election Sure Knowledge is necessary to life and Godliness. wo unto you priests & divines, who preach that knowledge is not necessary unto life & Salvation. Take away Apostles &c. take away knowledge and you will find yourselves worthy of the damnation of hell. Knowledge is Revelation hear all ye brethren, this grand Key; Knowledge is the power of God unto Salvation.

The list of personal qualities from 2 Peter 1:3–11 discussed by the Prophet have long been suspected by scholars such as Käsemann to be a “clear example of Hellenistic, non-Christian thought insidiously working its way into the New Testament.”⁵⁰ Now, however, this passage of scripture is generally accepted as “fundamentally Pauline”⁵¹ and, hence, thoroughly consonant with the ideas of early Christianity. The emphasis of these verses is on the finishing and refining process of *sanctification*, not the initiatory process of *justification*.⁵²

2 Peter 1:4 sounds the keynote of the biblical list of the personal qualities of the perfected disciple, reminding readers of the “exceeding great and precious promises” that allow them to become “partakers [= Greek *koinonos*, ‘sharer, partaker’] of the divine nature.” The *New English Bible* captures the literal sense of this latter phrase: namely, the idea is that the Saints may “come to share in the very being of God.”⁵³ To those in whom the qualities of divine nature “abound,” there comes the fulfillment of a specific “promise”: namely, that “they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord.”⁵⁴ In other words, according to Joseph Smith’s exposition of the logic of Peter given above, the additional “knowledge of the Lord” disciples will receive after they have qualified themselves through the cultivation of all these virtues and after they have entered into God’s presence will make their “calling and election sure” in order that they may “obtain all things.”

Importantly, these qualities, to which Christian disciples are exhorted to give “all diligence,”⁵⁵ are not presented in 2 Peter 1 as a randomly assembled laundry list but rather as part of an ordered progression leading to a culminating point,⁵⁶ a rhetorical form in Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian literature called *sorites*, *climax*, or *gradatio*.⁵⁷ Harold Attridge explains the ladder-like property of the personal qualities given in lists of this form: “In this ‘ladder’ of virtues, each virtue is the means of producing the next (this sense of the Greek is lost in translation). All

the virtues grow out of *faith*, and all culminate in *love*.⁵⁸ Joseph Neyrey observes that the Christian triad of faith, hope, and charity in 2 Peter 1:5–7 “forms the determining framework in which other virtues are inserted” in such lists.⁵⁹ The table below summarizes key words in scriptural passages from Paul, Peter, and D&C 4 that illustrate this idea:

Romans 5:1–5	2 Peter 1:5–7	D&C 4:6
<i>faith</i>	<i>faith</i>	<i>faith</i>
	virtue	virtue
peace	knowledge	knowledge
	temperance	temperance
<i>hope</i> [patience, experience] ⁶⁰	<i>patience</i>	<i>patience</i>
	godliness	
	brotherly kindness	brotherly kindness
		godliness
<i>love</i>	<i>charity</i>	<i>charity</i>
		humility
		diligence

Though some elements of the three lists differ,⁶¹ the reward of divine fellowship for the disciples is the same. In 2 Peter 1:4, 8, 10, they are promised that they will become “partakers of the divine nature” and that they will ultimately be fruitful “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” thus, in Joseph Smith’s reading, making their “calling and election sure.” In Romans 5:2 they are told that they will “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” This means they can look forward with glad confidence, knowing they “will be able to share in the revelation of God — in other words, that [they] will come to know Him as He is.”⁶² The promise given to faithful Saints in D&C 4:7 echoes the words of the Savior: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”⁶³ — a threefold promise that Matthew Bowen correlates to faith, hope, and charity. He notes that “‘ask’ and ‘seek’ correspond to the Hebrew verbs *sh’l* and *bqsh*, which were used to describe ‘asking for’ or ‘seeking’ a divine revelation, often in a temple setting.”⁶⁴ Likewise, Jack Welch has argued that the symbolism of knocking is best understood “in a ceremonial context.”⁶⁵ However, it should be remembered that the temple ordinances also foreshadow actual events in the life of faithful disciples who endure to the end.⁶⁶

The expansion of 2 Peter’s list of virtues in D&C 4 warrants further discussion. It is worth noting that the “three principal rounds” of faith, hope, and charity/love are specifically highlighted in verse 5 and then repeated as part of the longer list of virtues given in verse 6. Intriguingly, the list of eight qualities found in 2 Peter 1 is expanded in section 4 of

the Doctrine and Covenants to ten in number.⁶⁷ In an insightful article, John W. Welch has shown how the number ten in the ancient world — which conveys the idea of perfection, especially divine completion — relates to human ascension into the holy of holies or highest degree of heaven.⁶⁸

“The rabbinic classification of the ten degrees of holiness, which begins with Palestine, the land holier than all other lands, and culminates in the most holy place, the Holy of Holies, was essentially known in the days of High Priest Simon the Just, that is, around 200 BCE.”⁶⁹ Echoing these ten degrees on earth were ten degrees in heaven. In the book of *2 Enoch*, Enoch has a vision in which he progresses from the first heaven into the tenth heaven, where God resides and Enoch sees the face of the Lord, is anointed, given clothes of glory, and is told “all the things of heaven and earth”⁷⁰ ...

Kabbalah, a late form of Jewish mysticism, teaches that the ten Sefirot were emanations and attributes of God, part of the unfolding of creation, and that one must pass through them to ascend to God’s presence.⁷¹

Though it is true that no explicit mention is made in the Bible of the performance of rites inculcating this divine pathway of virtues, it is equally true that a lecture based on 2 Peter 1:3–11 would not in the least be out of place as a summary of progression through LDS temple ordinances.

The three degrees of glory as the principal rounds of the ladder of heavenly ascent. I have argued elsewhere that the gist of Joseph Smith’s statement equating the “three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder” with “the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms,”⁷² though not explicitly included in notes by witnesses of the 21 May 1843 discourse, should not be dismissed simply as an unwarranted elaboration by later Church historians. The three kingdoms of glory, of course, naturally correlate to symbolic representations of these three differing glories within the temple,⁷³ what Joseph Smith described in an 1832 statement about Jacob’s ladder as equating to the “mysteries of godliness.”⁷⁴

Joseph Smith’s statement about the “three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder,” if authentic, would be, along with the “rough stone rolling”⁷⁵ anecdote, a second direct wordplay in the same discourse that would have been recognized by the Prophet’s fellow Freemasons. Although

Freemasonry is not a religion and, in contrast to Latter-day Saint temple ordinances, does not claim saving power for its rites,⁷⁶ within the first degree of Masonry, the ladder is also said to have “three principal rounds, representing Faith, Hope, and Charity,” which “present us with the means of advancing from earth to heaven, from death to life — from the mortal to immortality.”⁷⁷ Similar to the reconstructed statement of Joseph Smith, Freemasonry correlates these three “principal rounds” with three different worlds or states of existence, beginning with the physical world and ending with the Heavens. These culminate in a fourth level, associated with “Divinity.”⁷⁸ Putting this ancient imagery in Masonic terms already familiar to many of the early Saints would have served a pragmatic purpose, favoring their acceptance and understanding of specific aspects of the scriptural idea better than if a new and foreign vocabulary had been introduced.⁷⁹

However, unlike the allegories of Masonic ritual, which contain beautiful truths while eschewing salvific claims, modern temple doctrines and ordinances purport a power in the priesthood that imparts sanctity to their simple forms, making earthly symbols holy through connecting them to the living God. When Joseph Smith taught the Saints about the perfecting and protecting power of charity, he was not speaking merely about the renunciation of sin and the acquisition of a Christlike character but also about the means by which blessings promised in priesthood ordinances could be confirmed definitively upon those who endure in faithful covenant-keeping to the end: “Until we have perfect love we are liable to fall, and when we have a testimony that our names are sealed in the Lamb’s Book of Life we have perfect love, and then it is impossible for false Christs to deceive us.”⁸⁰

Scriptural References to Faith, Hope, and Charity and the Doctrine of Christ

In this section, I will show how the Prophet’s use of the imagery of a ladder can be correlated to scriptural statements about faith, hope, and charity. I will also show how, within the translations, revelations, and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, these same three qualities may be seen as corresponding to the general sequence of ordinances and blessings described in scripture as “the doctrine of Christ.”⁸¹

The connection between faith, hope, and charity and the doctrine of Christ can be summarized briefly as follows: All who are determined to become followers of Christ must first begin by *repenting* and exercising *faith* in Him, which brings about a justificatory⁸² remission of their sins

through *baptism*⁸³ — a preparatory ordinance of the Aaronic Priesthood that enables those who have received it to leave the telestial world of sin and death (corresponding to the courtyard in the Israelite temple), and to enter the transitional terrestrial world (corresponding to the Holy Place). Baptism prepares disciples for the work of *hope*. The work of *hope* is to receive and keep all the additional ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, beginning with the ordinance that bestows the right to receive and enjoy, through worthiness, the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Keeping the covenants associated with the ordinances endows disciples of Christ with the increased knowledge and strength they need to remain patient and steadfast through the testing process of sanctification.⁸⁴ As they continue to “press forward”⁸⁵ with “*unshaken faith*”⁸⁶ on this path, they will develop “*a perfect brightness of hope*,”⁸⁷ and a *love of God and of all men*⁸⁸ that enables them to consecrate themselves and everything they possess to the building up of the kingdom of God.⁸⁹ Then, if they have proven themselves able to bear, believe, hope, and endure in *all things*⁹⁰ and continue to “endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God,”⁹¹ having been “chastened and tried, even as Abraham,”⁹² and being “filled”⁹³ with *charity*, “the *pure love of Christ*,”⁹⁴ they are prepared to advance to the threshold of the celestial world — the veiled entry to the Holy of Holies — and to hear the Father’s sure declaration: “Ye shall have eternal life.”⁹⁵

I will now provide a brief survey of scriptural references to faith, hope, and charity and the doctrine of Christ. Then I will compare four selections from scripture in an attempt to show how various descriptions of the ladder of heavenly ascent (i.e., as three degrees of glory; as faith, hope, and charity; as the doctrine of Christ) appear to be connected as different expressions of similar ideas.

Faith, Hope, and Charity. Although the biblical triad of faith, hope, and charity is, strictly speaking, a New Testament construct, David Calabro suggests that in the concrete context of ancient covenants, faith can be understood “as faithfulness (as an expression of loyalty), hope as expectation for deliverance by the protecting suzerain, and charity as the stipulation of love for the suzerain (like a son to a father) as required in ancient vassal treaties.”⁹⁶

Calabro⁹⁷ also compares Proverbs 8 — with its preexistent and coeval personification of Wisdom, by whose power God created the world — to the mention of the framing of the world by faith in Hebrews 11:3, the reification of hope as a representation of the glorified Christ in Hebrews 6:18–20, and the personified description of eternally enduring

charity in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 and Moroni 7:44–46.⁹⁸ The significance of this comparison is enhanced in remembering that Wisdom — like faith, hope, and charity, as argued here — was anciently associated with knowledge of the mysteries received in the temple.⁹⁹

Neyrey observes that in the Hebrew Bible, “love” and “faith” were already linked “in terms of *hesed* and ‘*emet*, that is, ‘steadfast kindness’ in a covenant relationship.”¹⁰⁰ One might also compare the biblical symbolism of the three divine throne attributes of truth (‘*emet*), righteousness (*tsedaqah*), and uprightness (*yashar*) that enabled individuals to pass through veiled gates to stand in the Lord’s presence within His temple throne room.¹⁰¹

Psalms 15 lists ten qualifications — including the three previously mentioned divine attributes of truth, righteousness, and uprightness — for those who would “abide in [the] tabernacle.”¹⁰² Similar lists of commandments were found outside of other ancient temples.¹⁰³ Second-temple Judaism, like later Christianity, also produced long lists of virtues and vices that are related in a greater or lesser degree to temple themes and the idea of heavenly ascent.¹⁰⁴

Within the New Testament, faith, hope/patience/experience,¹⁰⁵ and charity/love¹⁰⁶ are mentioned together in fifteen passages, but only four times do they appear in that order.¹⁰⁷ Twelve of these instances are attributed traditionally to Paul, two are found in 1 and 2 Peter, and one is within the book of Revelation. Faith, hope, and charity are mentioned together by Nephi, Alma, Mormon, and Moroni in eight places in the Book of Mormon and are referenced six additional times in the Doctrine and Covenants.¹⁰⁸ Significantly, in modern scripture the themes of faith, hope, and charity are taken up in the same specific order in every instance but one.¹⁰⁹

The Doctrine of Christ. The “doctrine of Christ” is mentioned explicitly in two places in the New Testament: Hebrews 6:1 and 2 John 1:9. In the Book of Mormon, it is mentioned three times in 2 Nephi 31–32,¹¹⁰ twice in Jacob 7,¹¹¹ and once in 3 Nephi 2:2.

So far as I have been able to determine, Joseph Smith never directly addressed in his teachings the subject of faith, hope, and charity as they appear in the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants, except in those instances when he quoted from the first chapter of 2 Peter that were discussed previously.¹¹² The only mentions he makes in his teachings of the “doctrine of Christ” occur as part of quotations of Hebrews 6:1–2. The absence of commentary by the Prophet on the Book of Mormon chapters relating to these topics is consistent

with his general propensity to draw almost exclusively from the Bible and from biblical language in his teachings. In light of all this, any arguments that can be sustained for relating Book of Mormon discussions of faith, hope, and charity to priesthood ordinances and the ladder of divine ascent cannot rely with any confidence on the theory that the book was authored in modern times by Joseph Smith.

Although most of the scriptural references to “faith, hope, and charity” or “the doctrine of Christ” consist only of brief mentions, in a few instances they are explained or elaborated. Below we will focus primarily on two of these instances that center on faith, hope, and charity (Ether 12 and Moroni 7) and two others that explicitly describe the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6 and 2 Nephi 31–32). Notably, both of the chapters that contain detailed discussions of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6, 2 Nephi 31–32) also contain key verses that weave faith, hope, and charity into their instruction. It is also significant that the three chapters chosen from the Book of Mormon are not random or obscure selections; each plays a prominent role in the overall teaching scheme of its author (Nephi, Mormon, Moroni). Likewise, Hebrews 5:11–6:20 is neither a simple digression in the doctrinal arguments of its author nor a mere warning to backsliding disciples but rather a key to the interpretation of the entire epistle.

Comparison of Four Scriptural Passages on Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Doctrine of Christ

Overview of the Four Primary Selections. A brief overview of each of the four primary scriptural selections will provide needed context for the analysis that follows:

- *Hebrews 6*. This chapter begins by distinguishing between “the [first] principles of the *doctrine of Christ*”¹¹³ and the higher way of “perfection”¹¹⁴ that has been opened by Jesus Christ, the “sure and stedfast” object of our hope¹¹⁵ and, in the role of “an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec,”¹¹⁶ our “forerunner”¹¹⁷ “within the veil.”¹¹⁸ According to one Bible scholar, Hebrews 6:1–8 “may be the most difficult passage to interpret in the entire epistle.”¹¹⁹ Joseph Smith returned to these verses often in his teachings, relying on the summary of the first principles of the Gospel given in verses 1–2¹²⁰ and on the description of specific aspects of the doctrine of election in verses 4–8.¹²¹ Significantly, the transition between the first and last part

of chapter 6 weaves the terms faith, hope, and charity into the discussion in reverse order. Elsewhere, such reversals seem to be intended to portray the three qualities as the fruits of divine knowledge gained through experience:¹²² “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of *love*. . . . And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of *hope* unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through *faith* and patience inherit the promises.”¹²³ Chapter six concludes with a description of the sure promise of eternal life vouchsafed by God to Abraham and the equally “sure and stedfast” “anchor to the soul”¹²⁴ provided by the Savior, the object of our hope, who entered “within the veil” as a “forerunner . . . for us.”¹²⁵ The Prophet Joseph Smith explicitly associated the imagery of these verses in Hebrews with the “more sure word of prophecy” described in 2 Peter 1:19.¹²⁶

- 2 *Nephi* 31–32. In these chapters, presumably authored near the end of his ministry, Nephi has chosen to write, “according to the plainness of [his] prophesying,” “a few words . . . concerning the *doctrine of Christ*”¹²⁷ “that he has selected out of a lifetime of vivid events and important theological concepts.”¹²⁸ Nephi exhorts his readers to “follow the Son, with full purpose of heart”¹²⁹ and enter the gate of “repentance and baptism by water” [cf. the altar of sacrifice and the laver that sit in the courtyard, outside the temple door] to receive “a remission of . . . sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.”¹³⁰ Then, he weaves the one and only mention of faith, hope, and charity in chapters 31 and 32¹³¹ into a beautiful description of the culminating sequence of the pathway to eternal life: “And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken *faith* in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save. Wherefore, ye must press forward [i.e. along the high priestly way of the temple] with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of *hope* [cf. the lamp in the Holy Place], and a *love* of God and of all men [i.e., consecration at

the altar of incense in front of the veil]. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ [cf. the shewbread], and endure to the end [i.e., the veil that conceals the Holy of Holies], behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life”¹³² [i.e., the personal oath of the Father]. In 2 Nephi 33:9, following an expression of charity for all people, Nephi reiterates that there is no other way than the one he has outlined before: “But behold, for none of these can I hope except they shall be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate [through the faith that leads to repentance and baptism], and walk in the strait path [of hope] which leads to life [eternal life, conferred at the veil], and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation [the requirement to endure to the end].”

- *Ether 12*. Ether 12 is a significant excursus by Moroni that was inspired by Ether’s historical record.¹³³ It provides instruction and examples of faith¹³⁴ while also mentioning hope in five places¹³⁵ and enjoining charity six times.¹³⁶ Following the initial focus on faith in the first part of the chapter, Moroni acknowledges his “weakness in writing”¹³⁷ and expresses his “fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at [his] words.”¹³⁸ (Note that Moroni expresses his concern immediately after describing the experience of the brother of Jared at the veil — which took place on a mountain named Shelem “because of its exceeding height.”¹³⁹ Nibley points out the resemblance in this name to the Semitic root for “ladder.”¹⁴⁰) The Lord replied to Moroni’s concern by making it clear that His “grace is sufficient for the meek”¹⁴¹ and that in order for “weak things [to] become strong”¹⁴² the Gentiles must be shown that it is “*faith, hope and charity* [that] bringeth unto me — the fountain of all righteousness.”¹⁴³ In the verses that follow, Moroni expands upon the topics of faith,¹⁴⁴ hope,¹⁴⁵ and charity,¹⁴⁶ in that order, before closing the chapter with moving words of farewell.¹⁴⁷
- *Moroni 7*. Following a summary of liturgical information in chapters 1–6, Moroni records his father Mormon’s sermon “concerning *faith, hope, and charity*”¹⁴⁸ as a prime example of the preaching and exhorting that took place

in the Nephite Church at that time.¹⁴⁹ Mormon begins by reminding his hearers that it is not merely their actions but also the sincerity of their hearts that matters to God¹⁵⁰ — in other words, unless they “do that which is good ... with real intent it profiteth ... nothing.”¹⁵¹ Then he shows them how they can “*know* good from evil”¹⁵² “with a perfect knowledge”¹⁵³ through diligent search “in the light of Christ.”¹⁵⁴ But *knowing* what is good is not enough — Mormon also asks: “how is it possible that [the members of the Church] can *lay hold upon* every good thing?”¹⁵⁵ The answer is: through faith,¹⁵⁶ hope,¹⁵⁷ and charity.¹⁵⁸ Charity, “which is the greatest of all,”¹⁵⁹ “is the pure love of Christ.”¹⁶⁰ It is a gift that is “bestowed upon all who are true followers of [God’s] Son, Jesus Christ; that [we] may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him.”¹⁶¹ Note also this beautiful instance of *gradatio* in Moroni 8:25–26, which directly links faith, hope, and love (charity) to the successive areas of the ancient temple that bring individuals step-by-step to the point where they can “dwell with God”:¹⁶² “And the first fruits of repentance is baptism [altar of sacrifice and laver]; and baptism cometh by *faith* unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost [lamp], which Comforter filleth with *hope* and perfect *love*, which love *endureth* by diligence unto prayer [altar of incense near the veil], until the end shall come [veil], when all the saints shall dwell with God [Holy of Holies].”

Audience. At least some of these significant passages of instruction on faith, hope, and charity and the doctrine of Christ seem to have been directed specifically toward those who had already received the higher ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. In Moroni 7, Mormon’s hearers are specifically said to be “the peaceable followers of Christ” who already had “*obtained a sufficient hope by which [they could] enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until [they would] rest with him in heaven.*”¹⁶³ Similarly, the disciples addressed by Paul¹⁶⁴ in Hebrews were not novices in need of “milk” but such as had been prepared and should have been ready to feast on “strong meat.”¹⁶⁵ Moreover, just as

Paul chided his readers because he had to teach them again about the “first principles of the oracles of God”¹⁶⁶ when he expected them to be qualified already as teachers themselves,¹⁶⁷ so Alma, prior to his brief exhortation about faith, hope, and charity,¹⁶⁸ sought to awaken his hearers to a sense of their “duty to God”¹⁶⁹ so they could “walk after the holy order of God, after which [they had *already*] *been received*.”¹⁷⁰

Faith, Hope, and Charity and the Journey through the Temple and Its Ordinances

Preparing to Leave the Telesstial World: Faith and the First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel. The journey through the Israelite temple began in the temple courtyard. This courtyard can be compared with the “World Room” in the Salt Lake Temple, a representation of the fallen state of existence or telesstial glory.¹⁷¹ In the courtyard of the Israelite temple were located the altar of sacrifice¹⁷² and the laver of water used by priests for purification before they entered the temple.¹⁷³ David Calabro has compared the function of the temple altar of sacrifice to the description in Moses 5 of the obedience of Adam and Eve and their attentiveness to the ordinance of sacrifice after they were driven from the Garden of Eden. Likewise, he has linked the function of the laver to the account of Adam’s baptism that is given in Moses 6.¹⁷⁴ John Thompson observes: “As one ascends to the Holy of Holies, there appears to be an expectation of participating in preparatory rites and laws of an Aaronic order associated with the courtyard that give one access to the temple, wherein further rites and laws of a higher order will be manifest, allowing one to enter into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies.”¹⁷⁵

Consistent with such a picture, Hebrews 11, Ether 12, and Moroni 7 emphasize the undergirding quality of *faith*, not as mere belief in the truth or falsity of some proposition¹⁷⁶ but as “the moving cause of all action.”¹⁷⁷ As such, faith necessarily accompanies every righteous striving to follow the Savior Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 6:1–2, Paul describes “the [first] principles of the doctrine of Christ,” which include “repentance from dead works, ... faith toward God, ... baptisms, and ... laying on of hands.”¹⁷⁸ Throughout 2 Nephi 31, Nephi also emphasizes the specific ordinances that accompany faith: More pointedly, it might be said that “faith *produces* ordinances.”¹⁷⁹ Joseph Fielding McConkie notes that “in establishing these principles [of the doctrines of salvation] relative to baptism, Nephi established principles that apply with equal force to all ordinances of salvation. Salvation [in the celestial kingdom of God] ... is Nephi’s subject — baptism is but the illustration.”¹⁸⁰

Visualizing a movement from the temple courtyard to the temple proper makes Nephi's words about repentance and baptism (analogous to the temple altar and laver) as "the gate"¹⁸¹ (corresponding to the temple door) that is entered "with unshaken faith"¹⁸² in Christ more vivid and meaningful.¹⁸³

17 Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. *For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.*

18 And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, *ye have entered in by the gate*; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for *ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him*, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

Moroni 7 provides an excellent summary of the way faith provides a basis for the entire process of salvation from beginning to end. Mormon opens by exhorting listeners to exercise the discerning power of the "light of Christ"¹⁸⁴ to judge "with a perfect knowledge"¹⁸⁵ "every thing which inviteth to do good"¹⁸⁶ and which "is of God"¹⁸⁷ from "whatsoever persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God"¹⁸⁸ — which things are "of the devil."¹⁸⁹ He emphasizes that it is through *faith* that the children of men are called to *repentance*¹⁹⁰ in "divers ways"¹⁹¹ by God's messengers — for example, both through "angels"¹⁹² and through "prophets."¹⁹³ By this means "men began to *exercise faith* in Christ"¹⁹⁴ and by virtue of keys restored to the earth by divine messengers and exercised by mortal priesthood holders they may be *baptized*.¹⁹⁵ Thus each disciple may be enabled to "lay hold upon every good thing"¹⁹⁶ up to and including the ability to "become the sons of God,"¹⁹⁷ being "saved by *faith in his name*."¹⁹⁸

Transitioning Through the Terrestrial World: Hope and the Ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The journey into the Israelite temple proper commenced as the high priest left the courtyard to “draw near” to God in the Holy Place with “full assurance of faith,” having been cleansed through both the outward ordinances of sacrifice and washing and the inner transformations produced through repentance and purification from sin.¹⁹⁹ The Holy Place can be compared to the “Terrestrial Room” in modern LDS temples,²⁰⁰ a representation of the greater glory that Adam and Eve experienced as they began the process by which “all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance.”²⁰¹ It is a place where disciples are meant to “wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts.”²⁰² In that state of existence, they participate in further covenant-making and testing to see whether they will “hold fast the profession of [their] faith [= Greek *elpis*, hope] without wavering.”²⁰³ For those who prove themselves faithful in continuing to the end of the high priestly way, the Terrestrial Room provides a transition symbolic of the resurrection to the Celestial Room through the Veil of the Temple,²⁰⁴ “that is to say, [the] flesh [of our Redeemer].”²⁰⁵

The *hope* experienced in this state of existence is not a “natural hope” for “bodily and worldly matters — the hope that our job will be rewarding, that our children will do well in school, that we will get a raise. Christian hope is the hope for salvation.”²⁰⁶ Those who prove themselves ready through their faithfulness to the Gospel are chosen or elected to inherit the kingdom “according to a preparatory redemption”²⁰⁷ and they obtain a hope of attaining it through the “earnest of the Spirit in [their] hearts.”²⁰⁸ Through continued faithfulness and receiving and keeping all the ordinances of the Gospel, this initial, dim hope will be replaced by a “*perfect brightness of hope*”²⁰⁹ (as described by Nephi), “*a more excellent hope*”²¹⁰ (as described by Mormon), or “*the full assurance of hope*”²¹¹ (as described by Paul). In this manner, faithful disciples are brought “unto the *end*,”²¹² where, according to Moroni, they “receive an inheritance in the place which [the Lord has] prepared.”²¹³

Moroni 7:41 explains that the ultimate goal of receiving an inheritance in the presence of God is the central theme of these additional covenants and ordinances found in the temple: “And what is it that ye shall *hope* for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have *hope* through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, *to be raised unto life eternal*.”²¹⁴

With startling specificity, Hebrews 6:18-20 associates sacred ordinances with the quality of *hope* in great detail. Paul addresses as his audience all those of us who “have claimed his protection by grasping the *hope* set before us.”²¹⁵ Continuing the description, he writes: “That *hope* we hold. It is like an anchor for our lives, an anchor safe and sure.”²¹⁶ It enters in through the veil, whose Jesus has entered on our behalf as a forerunner, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”²¹⁷



Figures 4a, b, c: a: *Greek Orthodox Icon Depicting the Ladder of Virtues*, Thessaloniki, Macedonia;²¹⁸ b: *The Woman at the Tomb and the Ascension*, ca. AD 400;²¹⁹ c: *Anastasis*, Daphni Monastery, near Athens, Greece, AD 1080–1100.²²⁰

In many depictions of the ladder of virtues, Christ is positioned at the top of the ladder taking the ascending disciple by the wrist (a). A similar gesture is shown in (b), where Christ is welcomed to heaven after His ascension. In (c), Nicoletta Isar brilliantly concludes that the gesture of the hand of Christ grasping the wrist of Adam, “an anchor . . . sure and steadfast”²²¹ that binds them together in unbreakable fashion, represents not only the “meeting ground of both life and death,” but also serves as a “visual metaphor of the . . . nuptial bond,”²²² an equally indissoluble union, “the conjugal harness by which both parts are yoked together.”²²³ This metaphor is visually highlighted by the stigma on the hand of the Savior that is carefully positioned at the exact center of the image to overlay precisely both the cross of Christ and the wrist of Adam.²²⁴

Alluding to the blessings of the *ath* and Covenant of the Priesthood,²²⁵ Paul assures the Saints of his time of the firmness and unchangeableness of God’s promises as they “grasp the hope set before [them].”²²⁶ The “two irrevocable acts” that provide firm assurance to disciples are “God’s promise and the oath by which He guarantees that promise.”²²⁷ By this scripture, we are meant to understand that so long as the we hold fast to the Redeemer, who has entered “through the veil on our behalf . . . as a forerunner,” we will remain firmly anchored to our heavenly home, and

the eventual realization of the promise “that where I am, there ye may be also.”²²⁸ According to Margaret Barker, there is also undoubtedly the sense that “Jesus, the high priest, [stands] behind the veil in the Holy of Holies to assist those who [pass] through.”²²⁹ According to Harold Attridge: “The anchor would thus constitute the link that ‘extends’ or ‘reaches’ to the safe harbor of the divine realms ... providing a means of access by its entry into God’s presence.”²³⁰ David Moffitt argues that just as Jesus was “exalted ... above the entire created order — to the heavenly throne at God’s right hand,” so “humanity will be elevated to the pinnacle of the created order.”²³¹ And as the Son received “all the glory of Adam,”²³² so “His followers will also inherit this promise if they endure ... testing.”²³³

In comments relating to these verses, the Prophet Joseph Smith equated the hope described in Hebrews 6:18–20 — a “sealing”²³⁴ that is promised and anticipated within the endowment — with the “more sure word of prophecy”²³⁵ as described by Peter and discussed earlier in this chapter.²³⁶ Significantly, the following passage from a letter that Joseph Smith wrote in his own hand to his uncle, Silas Smith, on 26 September 1833, demonstrates the Prophet’s thorough comprehension of these matters long before the temple ordinances were given to the Saints in Nauvoo:²³⁷

Paul wrote to his Hebrew brethren that God being more abundantly willing to show unto the heirs of his promises the immutability of his council “confirmed it by an oath.”²³⁸ He also exhorts them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.²³⁹

“Notwithstanding we (said Paul) have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”²⁴⁰ Yet he was careful to press upon them the necessity of continuing on until they as well as those who inherited the promises might have the assurance of their salvation confirmed to them by an oath from the mouth of Him who could not lie, for that seemed to be the example anciently and Paul holds it out to his brethren as an object attainable in his day. And why not? I admit that, by reading the scriptures of truth, saints in the days of Paul could learn beyond the power of contradiction that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the promise of eternal life confirmed to them by an oath of the Lord, but that promise or oath was no assurance to them of *their* salvation. But they could, by walking in the footsteps and continuing in the faith of their

fathers, obtain for themselves an oath for confirmation that they were meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light.

Moroni provides a beautiful and concise encapsulation of how the qualities of faith and hope associated with the blessings of the temple prepare disciples to enter the presence of God: “Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety *hope* for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which *hope* cometh of *faith*, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.”²⁴¹ It must be understood, of course, that priesthood ordinances received in earthly temples provide only an initial “hope for a better world,” and not the actual entrance into it.²⁴²

Words of Warning. Before continuing with their descriptions of the culminating events by which one’s calling and election are made sure, both Hebrews 6:4–8 and 2 Nephi 31:14²⁴³ deliver words of warning to the elect, reminding them of the peril in transgressing their covenants and in denying what they will eventually come to know with absolute certainty.²⁴⁴ This is consistent with what seems to be Joseph Smith’s concept of terrestrial glory as a transitional state, where both progress and regress were possible. This idea is found in Elder Franklin D. Richards’ record of a statement by Hyrum Smith:²⁴⁵

Hiram [Smith] said Aug 1st [18]43 Those of the Terrestrial Glory either advance to the Celestial or recede to the Telestial [or] else the moon could not be a type [i.e., a symbol of that kingdom]. [for] it [the moon] “waxes & wanes.”

Of the very elect who suffer irreparable regression, the Prophet said: “awful is the consequence.”²⁴⁶ On two known occasions, he used language from Hebrews 6:6 in explaining that such individuals “can’t [be] renew[ed] to repentance”²⁴⁷ and to describe why their sin (i.e., “crucifying the Son of God afresh & putting him to an open shame”²⁴⁸) would be unpardonable. Here is additional context from Hebrews 6:4–6:

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

The Prophet taught that no power in earth or heaven can protect an individual against committing the unpardonable sin.²⁴⁹ Indeed, he taught that to have the “heavens ... opened” (i.e., to experience “a direct heavenly vision on the order of the blessings attending the visitation of the Second Comforter”²⁵⁰) and then to “deny Jesus Christ”²⁵¹ is precisely what it means to become one of the “sons of perdition.”²⁵²

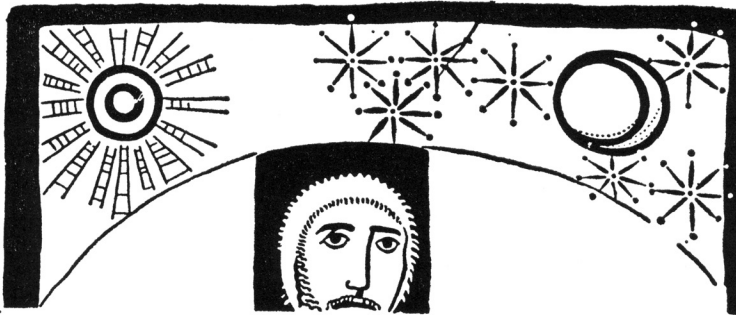
2 Nephi 31 contains a similar advisory. Before proceeding to his final summation of the doctrine of Christ and his description of the end of the path of eternal life, Nephi writes the following, by way of solemn warning:²⁵³

But, behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying: After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the *tongue of angels*, and *after this should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me.*

The statement in 1 Corinthians 13:1 about the “tongues of men and of angels” is very similar to Nephi’s reference to the “tongue of angels.” In 1 Corinthians 13:1, the phrase doubtless refers to the gift of tongues discussed in 1 Corinthians 12 that was seen by Paul, like the other gifts of the Spirit he described, as “nothing” when compared with charity. However, there is a different interpretive possibility that suggests itself for the similar phrase in 2 Nephi 31:14.

In this connection, it should first be noted that the pointed warnings to the elect in Hebrews 6:4–8 and 2 Nephi 31:14 both precede by a few verses a description of the “more sure word of prophecy”²⁵⁴ experienced at the heavenly veil — an event described as “the end” by both authors.²⁵⁵ With this context in mind, Nephi’s reference to speaking “with the tongue of angels”²⁵⁶ evokes Jewish accounts of Abraham and Moses, who are portrayed as reciting angelic words (described as a “song,” recalling Alma’s “song of redeeming love”²⁵⁷) as they ascended and entered within the heavenly veil. The words of Abraham’s song were taught him by the angel who accompanied him during his heavenly ascent.²⁵⁸ The text relates that while he “was still reciting the song,” he heard a voice “like the

roaring of the sea”²⁵⁹ and was brought through the veil into the presence of the fiery seraphim surrounding the heavenly throne.²⁶⁰ Similarly, an account by Philo describes the great and final song of thanksgiving²⁶¹ that Moses sang “in the ears of both mankind and ministering angels”²⁶² as part of his heavenly ascent.²⁶³ As illustrated in a mural from Dura Europos, Moses is shown standing on the earth with the sun, moon, and seven stars (i.e., planets) above his head. Erwin Goodenough took special note of the unique representation of the sun with its depiction of laddered rays, recalling the ubiquitous symbolism of the “divine ladder that connects man to God.”²⁶⁴



Figures 8. Detail of the Heavenly Ascent of Moses, Showing Laddered Sun with Moon and Stars.²⁶⁵

Entering the Celestial World: Charity and Consecration. The Holy of Holies in the Israelite temple can be compared with the area associated with celestial glory in the Salt Lake Temple, including the bordering apartments that are connected to the Celestial Room proper.²⁶⁶ It represents the highest of the three kingdoms of glory, where those who, in the likeness of their Savior, have “overcome all things”²⁶⁷ and are heirs of eternal life and exaltation may dwell forever and ever. All this, however, is dry recital without an understanding of the enduring²⁶⁸ flame that provides light, life, and warmth — and glory — to this place of supernal joy: *charity*.

On this point the scriptures are very clear. Although Moroni affirms that the joint effects of “faith, hope and charity bringeth unto”²⁶⁹ Christ, Paul describes charity alone as “the bond of perfectness”²⁷⁰ and therefore “the greatest of these”²⁷¹ three virtues. Indeed, Mormon calls charity “the greatest of *all*,”²⁷² without which we are “nothing.”²⁷³ More specifically, Moroni teaches that “except men shall have charity they cannot inherit

that place which [Jesus Christ has] prepared in the mansions of [His] Father.”²⁷⁴

Moroni affirms that “ye receive no witness” — meaning the sure witness that came when Christ personally “showed himself unto our fathers”²⁷⁵ — “until after the trial of your faith.”²⁷⁶ “And there were many whose faith was so exceedingly strong ... who could not be kept from within the [heavenly] veil,²⁷⁷ but truly saw with their eyes the things which they had beheld [previously] with an eye of faith, and they were glad.”²⁷⁸ It is in serving God and their fellow man “at all hazards,”²⁷⁹ having obtained a “fulness of the priesthood of God ... in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it ... by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of God,”²⁸⁰ and having reached the point where their “bowels [are] full of charity,”²⁸¹ the “pure love²⁸² of Christ,”²⁸³ that His disciples are prepared to have their calling and election made sure. Whether in this life or the next, disciples of Christ will be sealed up to eternal life and exaltation — if they remain faithful.²⁸⁴ According to Nephi, “a love of God and of all men” is the final requirement of all those who “endure to the end”²⁸⁵ and receive the promise of “all that [the] Father hath.”²⁸⁶

Charity is, as Hugh Nibley affirms, the “essence of the law of consecration, ... without which, as Paul and Moroni tell us, all the other laws and observances become null and void.”²⁸⁷ President Ezra Taft Benson has described the law of consecration as being “that we consecrate our time, talents, strength, property, and money for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God on this earth and the establishment of Zion.”²⁸⁸ Like Nibley, he notes that all the covenants made up to this point are preparatory, explaining that: “Until one abides by the laws of obedience, sacrifice, the gospel, and chastity, he cannot abide the law of consecration, which is the law pertaining to the celestial kingdom.”²⁸⁹ Nibley explained that the law of consecration is “the consummation of the laws of obedience and sacrifice, is the threshold of the celestial kingdom, the last and hardest requirement made of men in this life”²⁹⁰ and “can only be faced against sore temptation.”²⁹¹

In compensation for the supreme effort in life to acquire the “pearl of great price,”²⁹² President Harold B. Lee avers that to the “individual who thus is willing to consecrate himself, [will come] the greatest joy that can come to the human soul.”²⁹³ Indeed, it is through our willingness to pay the painful price of experience that we come to know God.²⁹⁴ And knowing God *is* eternal life, as we read in John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ,

whom thou hast sent.”²⁹⁵ Thus, consecration is, as Jack Welch expressed it, the step that precedes perfection.²⁹⁶

In our strivings to be “filled with charity”²⁹⁷ and to live the law of consecration to the full extent of its meaning, Jesus Christ provides a peerless, perfect prototype. The law of consecration is not foremost an economic law, but one in which we first give ourselves, our time, and our toil²⁹⁸ — our will, like the Savior’s, “being swallowed up in the will of the Father.”²⁹⁹ “Wherefore, my beloved brethren,” concludes Mormon in his sermon on faith, hope, and charity, “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him,³⁰⁰ for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure.”³⁰¹

The supreme manifestation of charity and consecration was that the Savior offered Himself fully for our sake: “And again, I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world.”³⁰² In the agonies of His Atonement, Jesus Christ trod “the wine-press alone, . . . and none were with [Him].”³⁰³ Yet He was with *us* — *fully* with us in that moment — turning outward in charity to relieve us from our suffering in in the midst of the unspeakable depths of His own distress.³⁰⁴ He pressed forward on our behalf in the torments of complete compassion, not permitting Himself in the slightest degree to become “weary in well-doing”!³⁰⁵

For the Savior to accomplish His “infinite and eternal”³⁰⁶ sacrifice, His consecration of self had to be whole and complete. Had there been but one particle of selfishness in His soul, it would have been sufficient to undermine the purity of integrity and the totality of commitment needed to sustain the completion of His mission to save us through His suffering. And here is why God gives *us* the opportunity to learn the meaning of consecration and sacrifice in mortality: It is because someday, if we are to follow the Son back to the presence of the Father, each of us must likewise extinguish the last crumb of selfishness from our souls, being willing to submit to the Father in *all* things He may require of us,³⁰⁷ “yea, *every* sacrifice which . . . the Lord, shall command,”³⁰⁸ even if it be a sacrifice like that of Abraham.³⁰⁹

Although Abraham previously had received the blessings of patriarchal marriage and then had been made a king and a priest under the hands of Melchizedek,³¹⁰ Abraham’s “election sure” came only afterward, when he demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice his

son Isaac.³¹¹ In Hebrews 11:19, the evidence of Abraham's absolute consecration in the sacrifice of his son and the form of the blessing he received are described respectively using the language of death and resurrection. In trying to make sense of this idea, we might remember that in some Jewish³¹² and early Christian³¹³ creedal formulations bearing on accounts of Abraham's sacrifice, one finds the idea that Isaac actually died, ascended to heaven, and was resurrected — though it should be remembered that these eschatological ideas fit equally well in ritual context. Harold Attridge concludes that "Isaac's rescue from virtual death³¹⁴ on the sacrificial pyre is symbolic of the deliverance that all the faithful can expect."³¹⁵ Likewise, Abraham's recovery of what he had once thought lost is symbolic of the reward of eternal life that comes through wholehearted consecration of all things.

Conclusion

In his carefully-worded paraphrase of Paul's description of faith, hope, and charity³¹⁶ within the thirteenth Article of Faith,³¹⁷ Joseph Smith pointedly distinguished between the early Saints' previous attainments with respect to faith ("We believe all things") and hope ("we hope all things"), and their as yet unfulfilled aspirations with respect to charity.³¹⁸ Note that Joseph Smith changes the subject of the description — in 1 Corinthians, it is charity that bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things, whereas in the thirteenth Article of Faith, the "we" implicitly makes the Latter-day Saints into the subject of the phrase.

The phrase captures not only the culminating blessings of exaltation, as argued in this chapter, but also, as Jack Welch points out, "the highest ambitions of the building of the City Beautiful, with the construction of the splendid Nauvoo Temple already underway."³¹⁹ However, just as the Saints suffered a period of trial, apostasy, and eventual abandonment of Kirtland after the dedication of the earlier temple, so Joseph Smith "prophetically looked forward to yet further trials and trails of tears moving westward, hoping [that his people would] be able to endure all things."³²⁰

In the early Saints' current state, their strivings for charity could accurately be characterized only in terms of a partial attainment and a yearning for the necessary strength to realize, eventually, its perfection: "we have endured *many* things, and *hope* to be able to endure *all* things."³²¹ Modern Saints are in the same position — each one of us must complete the climb of the ladder of virtues "by the patience of hope and the labor of love."³²²

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Endnotes

- 1 An expanded manuscript of this chapter can be found at www.templethemes.net and in J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*.
- 2 See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Preach My Gospel* (2004), pp. 115–118, where faith, hope, charity, and love (see D&C 4:5) are presented as part of an unbroken sequence with the ten attributes listed in D&C 4:6. See also the similar approach presented in H. D. Garrett, *Light*. While agreeing that faith, hope, charity, and love, as enumerated in D&C 4:5, belong in the company of the ten essential personal attributes listed in D&C 4:6, I will argue that they are of a different and higher order than the others.
- 3 A. Green, *Guide*, p. 35.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 5 A. M. Hunter, *Paul*, pp. 22–23.
- 6 See, e.g., 1 Corinthians 7:10; 11:23–25; 15:3ff. See also *ibid.*, pp. 118–120.
- 7 See Romans 5:1–5; Galatians 5:5–6; Ephesians 4:2–5; Colossians 1:4–5, 23; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8; Titus 2:2; Hebrews 6:10–15; 10:19–26. See also 1 Peter 1:2–8, 21–23; 2 Nephi 31; Jacob 4:6, 11; Alma 7:24; 13:29; 22:16; 25:16; 32:21; 58:11; Ether 12:3–37; Moroni 7:1–48; 8:14; 10:20–21; D&C 4:5–6; 6:19; 12:8; 18:19; 84:33–48; Article of Faith 1:13. See, e.g., J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, pp. 154–155 for a discussion of the Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian background of such chains of virtues and their varied appearance and sequence in biblical passages.
- 8 E.g., Joseph Fitzmyer: “Others maintain that Paul is thinking rather of two stages in a Christian’s earthly experience. In 2:6–3:4 Paul has already spoken of these stages, using the vocabulary, *nēpios* and *teleios*, of an “immature” and “mature” Christian, or referring to the “fleshy” and “spiritual” aspects of the earthly Christian life. Now he has contrasted *ek merous* and *to teleion* in vv. 10 and 12, and the *arti* and the *tote* in v. 12 would refer to these two stages of such earthly life” (J. A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, p. 501). By way of contrast, the Book of Mormon seems to associate

the three theological virtues with *three* stages in the progression of the Christian toward eternal life.

- 9 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, p. 305.
- 10 Hebrews 6:1; 2 John 1:9; 2 Nephi 31:2; 32:6; Jacob 7:2, 6; 3 Nephi 2:2.
- 11 2 Nephi 27:26. Cf. Isaiah 29:14.
- 12 Moses 1:10.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 For a discussion of the challenges of mining the many relatively untapped veins in the teachings of Joseph Smith, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*.

So far as I am aware, the possibility of a richer view of the meaning of faith, hope, and charity in relation to the ladder of heavenly ascent rather than simply as personal attributes has not been explored previously by LDS scholars. In particular, the implications of Joseph Smith's appropriation of these ideas as used in 1 Corinthians 13:7 within the thirteenth Article of Faith (i.e., "we *believe* all things [faith], we *hope* all things [hope], we have *endured* many things [charity]") has not been appreciated. For example, in his *Articles of Faith*, Elder James E. Talmage entitles his chapter on the thirteenth Article of Faith "Practical Religion" and emphasizes the wholesome and generous practices of LDS in everyday life (J. E. Talmage, *Articles* 1984, pp. 389–412). Neither the explicit use of the language of 1 Corinthians 13:7 nor the implicit allusion to faith, hope, and charity is mentioned. In a similar approach to this article of faith, Elder McConkie entitles his chapter "Pure Religion and Unfiled" and briefly discusses the commitment of the Saints to moral principles that is "a natural outgrowth of believing the eternal truths that save" (B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 701). See additional discussion of the thirteenth Article of Faith later in this chapter.

- 15 With permission. Image References: BathAbbey-9Oct2004.jpg; BathAbbeyDetail-9Oct2004.JPG.
- 16 See, e.g., this reference in the Egyptian Pyramid Texts (J. P. Allen, *Pyramid Texts of Unis*, 178, p. 50): "Stand up, you two uprights, and descend, you crossbars, that Unis may go up on the ladder that his father the Sun has made for him."

- 17 See J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, pp. 382–384 for an overview of the structure and function of Mesopotamian ziggurats.
- 18 Genesis 28:12. For a good summary of Jewish traditions relating to this event, see M. Zlotowitz et al., *Bereishis*, 2:1216–1249.
- 19 Photograph by Annie Schaeffer, 21 February 2016. Image ID: 2016–02–21-DétailsCathédraleStrasbourg-2210065. Used in gratitude with permission.
- 20 M. Bouttier, *Cathédrales: Leur Symbolique*, p. 8, my translation.
- 21 John 1:47.
- 22 John 1:51, emphasis added. According to Samuel Zinner, Jesus' mention of the Son of Man in this verse may refer not only to Jesus but also to others, such as Enoch (see, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *LDS Book of Enoch*, pp. 65–71), who had also ascended to heaven (S. Zinner, 9 February 2016). For further discussion of Jesus as Jacob's ladder and other ancient precedents for this idea, see, e.g., M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, pp. 185–187; C. S. Keener, *John*, 1:488–491; H. N. Ridderbos, *John*, pp. 92–95.
- 23 John 14:6, emphasis added.
- 24 Public Domain. With thanks to Everett Potter, <http://www.everettpotter.com/tag/sucevita/> (accessed January 23, 2016).
- 25 R. Guénon, *Symboles*, pp. 336–339; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, pp. 346–348, 354; M. C. Thomas, Brother of Jared; M. C. Thomas, *Hebrews*; N. M. Sarna, *Mists*, p. 82.
- 26 1 Nephi 8:28. Thanks to Steve Whitlock for this reference.
- 27 A. Green, *Guide*, p. 33.
- 28 K. Flake, *Translating Time*, p. 525.
- 29 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Thomas Bullock Report, 7 April 1844, p. 350.
- 30 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, pp. 346–347, 348.
- 31 John 17:3. Cf. D&C 132:24.
- 32 Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; D&C 76:56–57.
- 33 D&C 131:1–3.
- 34 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- 35 D&C 93:13.
- 36 D&C 132:19, 22–23.

- 37 Philippians 3:11. Cf. Jacob 4:12, my emphasis: “attain to a perfect knowledge of him [i.e., Christ], as to attain to the *knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come.*”
- 38 Isaiah 33:14.
- 39 Mark 10:37.
- 40 D&C 132:29.
- 41 Alma 36:29.
- 42 Hebrews 10:20.
- 43 Italics in original. Cf. B. Young, 31 July 1859, p. 349.
- 44 For a more complete analysis of this sermon, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*.
- 45 J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1843–1844*, 21 May 1843, p. 21.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 11 June 1843, p. 33. See *ibid.*, p. 21 n. 69 and Ehat and Cook’s comment in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 283 n. 9.
- 47 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, p. 305. Because Church historians later expanded the relevant allusion in the original notes of the discourse into a full paragraph of polished prose, modern scholars raise the legitimate question as to whether those historians correctly intuited the gist of the Prophet words in this context. Elsewhere, I argue that this statement was not made up from whole cloth by later Church historians who compiled Joseph Smith’s manuscript history (J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*). I adduce evidence from a source not available to them that something like this statement may have been mistakenly transposed from its original place near the end of the discourse and then erroneously conflated with the first instance, “ladder and rainbow,” above.
- 48 J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1843–1844*, 21 May 1843, p. 21.
- 49 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, pp. 206–207.
- 50 J. Starr, *Partakers*, p. 81.
- 51 N. Russell, *Deification*, p. 151.
- 52 J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 21–23. See also B. C. Hafen et al., *Contrite Spirit*, pp. 222–223.

- 53 S. Sandmel et al., *New English Bible*, 2 Peter 1:4, p. 299. See also J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, pp. 159–160.
- 54 D&C 107:31. Cf. 2 Peter 1:8.
- 55 2 Peter 1:5.
- 56 Elder Bruce R. McConkie affirmed that there is “an additive order to the attaining of these attributes” (J. F. McConkie et al., *Revelations*, p. 68).
- 57 H. A. Fischel, *Uses of Sorites*. An earlier, Israelite form of sorites was used, e.g., in Joel 1:3; Genesis 36:31–43; 1 Chronicles 1 and 2. Matthew 1:1–17 and M. Lieber, *Pirkei Avos*, 1:1, pp. 6–11 are famous examples of the classic form of sorites in use during the Hellenistic period as applied to lists of genealogy and transmission of authority. As to the use of ethical or ethico-metaphysical sorites similar to Romans 5:3–5 and 2 Peter 1:5–7 in Jewish and Roman literature, see, e.g., H. Marks et al., *English Bible*, Wisdom 6:17–20, 2:739; J. Neusner, *Mishnah*, Sotah, 9:15:III:MM, p. 466; L. A. t. y. c. B.-C. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 2, 85:2, pp. 286–287; M. T.-B. Cicero, *De Legibus*, 1:7:22–23, pp. 320–323. For an example of sorites in modern revelation, see D&C 84:6–17. Sorites arguments have been studied extensively by philosophers since the late nineteenth century because of logical paradoxes that can arise in some formulations (D. Hyde, *Sorites Paradox*).
- 58 H. W. Attridge et al., *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 2068 n. 1:5–7.
- 59 J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, p. 155. I have substituted the kjv terms for these virtues where they differ from Neyrey’s list. I have also corrected the ordering of these lists where it differed from scripture.
- 60 The relationship between hope and patience is complex and multivalent. Matthew Bowen observes that the Hebrew word for hope (*tiqvah*), often equated with “patience” in the New Testament, comes from a root that means to “wait” (M. L. Bowen, 7 March 2016). He suggests that this may reflect the process of approaching the veil and being prepared in all things into enter the presence of the Lord (cf. D&C 136:31). Romans 5:3–4 defines hope as the result of “patience/endurance” (= steadfastness; Greek *hupomene*) and “experience” (= character, proof, testing; Greek *dokime*), developed in tribulation. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 3:10; Titus 2:2; Hebrews 6:12;

2 Peter 1:6; Revelation 2:19; Alma 7:23; D&C 4:6; 6:19; 107:30 where patience either complements or replaces “hope” in the list. Bailey writes the following with respect to the Greek verb for “endure”: “Paul uses a compound word. In this case the term he chooses is *hupo-meno*. *Hupo* has to do with ‘under’ and *meno* means ‘to remain.’ As a compound, this word describes ‘The affliction under which one remains steadfast.’ If *makrothumia* is the patience of the powerful, *hupomene* is the *patience of the weak* who unflinchingly endure suffering. The example of Mary standing silently at the foot of the cross is a matchless demonstration for every Christian of this crucial form of patient love. Mary can do nothing to change the horrible events taking place around her. Her only choice is to exercise *hupomene* and at great cost remain rather than depart that scene of suffering. Jesus Himself is the supreme example of the same virtue (K. E. Bailey, *Paul*, p. 368). Elsewhere in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, the similar quality of “longsuffering” (Greek *makrothymia*) is mentioned, often in conjunction with patience. Cf. Ephesians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 13:4; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11; 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:10; Alma 7:23; 13:28; 17:11; 38:3; Moroni 7:45; D&C 107:30; 118:3; 121:41.

- 61 Neyrey points out that 2 Peter 1:5–7, unlike Romans 5:1–5, supplements the group-specific qualities of faith, hope, and charity with more properly Greco-Roman virtues. He compares the combination of vertically and horizontally oriented virtues within the list to the division in the Ten Commandments between the laws that govern relationship with God and fellow man. Moreover, citing Philo, *Special Laws*, 2:211–213, pp. 438–441, he sees the numerical count of eight virtues as “suggesting a certain wholeness or completeness. ... All of the specifically Christian virtues are joined with the more popular ones to suggest a completeness of moral response. ... Wholeness, moreover, is found in attention to virtues in regard to body (self-control) and spirit, as well as thought and action. In this wholeness, then, holiness is urged, a completeness of moral excellence to all” (see J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, pp. 154–155).
- 62 J. E. Faulconer, *Life of Holiness*, p. 209. Cf. 1 John 3:2; D&C 38:8; 50:45; 76:94; 93:1. Faulconer continues: “Since the word ‘glory’ can also be taken to mean ‘perfection,’ as in Romans 3:23, Jesus Christ has brought us into a place where we can rejoice in a hope that we

will see the perfection of the Father in its brightness and majesty. We will see the Father in the Son, and we will see Him by being in His presence.”

63 Matthew 7:7. Just as the verse in the 1833 *Book of Commandments* corresponding to D&C 4:6 originally contained a truncated version of the list of virtues from 2 Peter 1:5–7 (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Published Revelations, Book of Commandments* 3:2, p. 21 (p. 9)), so D&C 4:7 contains a truncated version of Matthew 7:7 (cf. Luke 11:9; 3 Nephi 14:7; 3 Nephi 27:29).

64 Matthew Bowen comments (M. L. Bowen, *Thy Will Be Done*, p. 243): The Greek verbs meaning “ask” and “seek” correspond to the Hebrew verbs *sh’l* and *bqsh*, which were used to describe “asking for” or “seeking” a divine revelation, often in a temple setting. [Tvedtnes] detects a further temple echo in “knock” (J. A. Tvedtnes, *Temple Prayer*, p. 90), which should resonate with Latter-day Saints. The two divine passive reward clauses “it shall be given you” and “it shall be opened to you” also may suggest a temple situation with Jesus as “keeper of the gate” (2 Nephi 9:41–42. See J. Gee, *Keeper*).

These suppositions are supported by Nephi’s assertion, “If ye cannot understand, ... it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, *ye are not brought into the light*, but must perish in the dark” (2 Nephi 32:4, emphasis added). A person’s being “brought into” a place seems to imply the presence of a keeper-of-the-gate figure or *paralempstor*, as when Jesus promised the disciples, “I will come and receive [*paralempsomai*] you to myself” (John 14:3). The “light” would then be that part of the temple where God’s full presence shines as represented by the Holy of Holies. ... Granted, there are additional senses in which one might understand this reward clause. However, if the temple is the locus par excellence of inquiring, asking, and seeking revelation from the Lord (see Psalm 27:4), then the divine passive to be “brought into the light” probably connotes being brought into the light of the Lord’s countenance (see Numbers 6:24–27), a full reception of the blessings of the Atonement or the royal “adoption” (Romans 8:15–23), the greatest possible “revelation.”

Regarding “revelation,” Bowen continues (M. L. Bowen, *Thy Will Be Done*, p. 248 n. 41):

The word “revelation” from Latin *revelatio* originally connoted “a taking away of the veil” (compare Greek *apokalyptein*, “uncover”). This idea is depicted in 2 Corinthians 3:14–18, where Paul connects “liberty” (Greek *eleutheria*; Greek *aphesis*, “release”) to revelation and beholding the Lord’s glory with “open face” and being transformed into His glory (see 2 Corinthians 3:15–19). We note again Paul’s declaration that creation anxiously awaits the “revelation [*apokalypsin*] of the sons of God” and being “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty [*eleutherian*] of the children of God” (Romans 8:19, 21).”

- 65 J. W. Welch, *Sermon*, p. 72.
- 66 See, e.g., 1 Corinthians 13:12; D&C 93:1. Cf. J. A. Widtsoe, *Work*, p. 33. Also cited in A. K. Parrish, *Widtsoe*, pp. 307–308.
- 67 See J. M. Bradshaw, *He That Thrusteth in His Sickle* for the temple themes woven throughout D&C 4 and a brief history of the evolution of the list of virtues in that revelation.
- 68 J. W. Welch, *Counting to Ten*, p. 57.
- 69 E. J. Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 134. Cf. D. W. Parry, *Demarcation*, pp. 413–414.
- 70 F. I. Andersen, 2 Enoch, 1:110–161, p. 140.
- 71 In an unpublished manuscript, Samuel Zinner has shown that in several ancient Christian writings, what later surfaced as the Jewish Sefirot appear as Christian virtues (S. Zinner, *The Kabbalistic Sefirot*).
- 72 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, p. 305.
- 73 J. L. Carroll, *Reconciliation*, p. 95 n. 18.
- 74 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, August 1832, pp. 12–13: “They are they who saw the mysteries of godliness ... they saw angels ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached from earth to heaven.” Cf. 1 Timothy 3:16; D&C 19:10; 84:19–21. Speaking of Jacob’s dream of the heavenly ladder in Genesis 28, a modern apostle, Elder Marion G. Romney, said: “Jacob realized that the covenants he made with the Lord were the rungs on the ladder that he himself would have to climb in order to obtain the promised blessings — blessings that would entitle him to enter heaven and associate with the Lord” (M. G. Romney, *Temples*, pp. 239–240. See also H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, pp. 579–581).

- 75 In earlier part of the sermon, Joseph Smith had characterized himself as a “rough stone roling down hill” (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1843–1844*, 21 May 1843, p. 20). The comparison of the polishing of a rough stone to the moral education of Joseph Smith would have been familiar to fellow Freemasons in Joseph Smith’s audience as it related to the imagery of the “rough ashlar” that was to be made perfect (W. K. MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, p. 160).
- 76 H. W. Nibley, *What*, p. 369. On the topic of Freemasonry and the origins of modern temple ordinances, see, more generally, J. M. Bradshaw, *Freemasonry*.
- 77 A. G. Mackey et al., *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, s.v., Jacob’s Ladder, p. 361.
- 78 W. K. MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, p. 160 gives the following description:

In both the Macrocosm and the Microcosm there are four levels. The lowest of these is the physical world, symbolized in the Macrocosm by the Chequered Pavement and in the Microcosm by the theological virtue Faith. The second level up is that of the psyche which is represented in Macrocosm by the central area of the board with most of the symbols, and in the Microcosm by the theological virtue Hope. The third level up is the Spirit, represented by the Heavens and by the theological virtue Charity. The fourth level is Divinity. It is represented in the Heavens by the Star that contains the “All-Seeing Eye” of the Deity; and It, the Source of all things, is the fourth level and the Source of both the Macrocosm and the Microcosm.

- 79 See J. M. Bradshaw, *Freemasonry*, p. 181. As Lindquist puts it (J. H. Lindquist, *Keywords*, p. 36):

[Joseph] Smith regularly found ways to make productive and pedagogic use of the Saints’ “traditions” by harnessing words and concepts already available to his listeners and then gradually modifying them in an effort to better explain complex and original — even radical — doctrines. If the Prophet was correct in the Saints’ tendency to “fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes tht is contrary to their traditions” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 20 January 1844, p. 331), then introducing the endowment ceremony in wholly unfamiliar terms would have been extremely difficult. [For example, t]he deployment of “key” [in discussing] the

temple was one strategy that allowed the Saints to understand the endowment as both an extrapolation of already familiar doctrines and the expression of new truths in a new way.

- 80 D. Q. Cannon et al., *Far West*, 25 October 1831, p. 23; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 25 October 1831, p. 9; cf. 2 Peter 1:5–11, Moroni 8:25–26.
- 81 Hebrews 6:1; 2 John 1:9; 2 Nephi 31:2; 32:6; Jacob 7:2, 6; 3 Nephi 2:2
- 82 B. C. Hafen, *Broken*, p. 166; D. A. Bednar, *Clean Hands*; H. M. Smith et al., *Commentary*, p. 104; D. T. Christofferson, *Justification*; Romans 5:1; D&C 20:30.
- 83 2 Nephi 31:9, 17–18.
- 84 H. M. Smith et al., *Commentary*, p. 104; Helaman 3:35; D&C 20:31.
- 85 2 Nephi 31:20.
- 86 2 Nephi 31:19, emphasis added.
- 87 Cf. Hebrews 6:11: “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the *full assurance of hope* unto the end” (emphasis added); Ether 12:32: “And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have *a more excellent hope*; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared” (emphasis added).
- 88 2 Nephi 31:20, emphasis added.
- 89 See J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 213–215.
- 90 See 1 Corinthians 13:7; Moroni 7:48. Compare Articles of Faith 1:13.
- 91 2 Nephi 31:16.
- 92 D&C 101:4.
- 93 Moroni 7:48.
- 94 Moroni 7:47, emphasis added. See also v. 48. Compare 1 Peter 1:22; Jacob 3:2.
- 95 2 Nephi 31:20.
- 96 D. Calabro, 9 March 2016. Regarding love in such treaties, which encompasses the commandment to “love God” in Deuteronomy 6:5, see M. Weinfeld, *Common Heritage*, pp. 181–182.

- 97 D. Calabro, 9 March 2016.
- 98 On the eternal, enduring nature of charity, see 1 Corinthians 13:8 and Moroni 7:47. Compare the personified description of Alma 42:24: “mercy claimeth all which is her own.”
- 99 J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Excursus 2 – Ancient Concepts of Wisdom, pp. 516–518
- 100 J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, p. 155.
- 101 M. B. Brown, *Cube*, pp. 3–14. Cf., e.g., 1 Kings 3:6; Psalm 15:1–2; Revelation 21:27. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Standing in the Holy Place*, pp. 75–78, 81; J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Keys and Symbols*.
- 102 Psalm 15:1. Thanks to David Larsen for this suggestion.
- 103 M. Weinfeld, *Instructions for Temple Visitors*; M. Weinfeld, *Decalogue*, pp. 11–12, 17, 24–25, 34–36; J. W. Welch, *Light*, p. 82. Thanks to Jack Welch for this suggestion.
- 104 E.g., H. Marks et al., *English Bible*, Wisdom 6:17–20, 2:739; J. Neusner, *Mishnah*, Sotah, 9:15:III:MM, p. 466. Philo, *Giants*, 19–39, pp. 107–123 gives detailed portraits of the opposites of Virtue and Pleasure, which include among the descriptions long lists of adjectives describing one (see esp. pp. 110–113) or the other (see esp. pp. 116–119).
- 105 See note 48 above.
- 106 See note 265 below.
- 107 Romans 5:1–5; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:5–6; Ephesians 4:2–5; Colossians 1:4–5, 23; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:3–4; 2 Timothy 3:10; Titus 2:2; Hebrews 6:10–12; 10:22–24; 1 Peter 1:21–22; 2 Peter 1:5–8; Revelation 2:19. They are mentioned in the order of faith, hope, and charity in these verses or passages: Romans 5:1–5; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Peter 1:21–22; and 2 Peter 1:5–8. In addition the following verses mention faith and charity only: 1 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:5; 2:15. The following verses mention charity only: 1 Corinthians 8:1; 14:1; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 4:8; 5:14; 3 John 1:6; Jude 1:12.
- 108 2 Nephi 31:19–20; 33:7–9; Alma 7:24; 13:29; Ether 12:3ff. (esp. v. 28); Moroni 7:1ff; 8:25–26; 10:20ff; D&C 4:5, 6; 6:19; 12:8; 18:19; 107:30. In addition the following verses mention faith and hope

only: Jacob 4:6, 11; Alma 22:16; 25:16; 32:21; 58:11. See also Articles of Faith 1:13| 1 Corinthians 13:7.

Responding to critics of the Book of Mormon who see its passages on faith, hope, and charity being lifted directly from 1 Corinthians 13:13, Nibley notes Paul's fondness for "quoting from old Jewish and Greek sources" (H. W. Nibley, *Howlers*, p. 254; cf. A. M. Hunter, *Paul*; H. W. Nibley, *Since*, pp. 112, 455–456 nn. 2–4). He gives an example of "a much older and unknown source" that demonstrates the possibility that both the Book of Mormon and the New Testament were drawing on common antecedents (H. W. Nibley, *Howlers*, pp. 254, 257 n. 23).

109 2 Nephi 33:7–9.

110 2 Nephi 31:2, 21; 32:6.

111 Jacob 7:2, 6. It is also mentioned in the preface to the book of Jacob.

112 Apart from the Prophet's discussions of 2 Peter 1, his increasingly frequent teachings on "charity" in Nauvoo were based on the conventional understanding of it as a simple, very desirable personal quality, without explicit reference to teachings about the temple or the process of exaltation. See, e.g., J. Smith, Jr., *Words, Times and Seasons*, 3 October 1841, p. 78, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 7 November 1841, p. 80, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 17 March 1842, p. 104, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 28 April 1842, pp. 117–119, Manuscript History of the Church, 28 April 1842, p. 119; J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841–1843*, 28 April 1842, p. 52; E. R. Snow, Nauvoo Relief Society, Remarks of Joseph Smith, 17 March 1842, p. 31, 28 April 1842, pp. 57–59, 9 June 1842, pp. 78–79; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 1 May 1842, pp. 119–120, 9 June 1842, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, pp. 123–124, Samuel W. Richards Record, 12 May 1844, p. 371.

113 Hebrews 6:1, emphasis added.

114 Hebrews 6:1.

115 Hebrews 6:19.

116 Hebrews 6:20.

117 Ibid.

118 Hebrews 6:19.

119 D. L. Allen, *Hebrews*, p. 339.

- 120 For example, speaking of errors in the Bible, Joseph Smith specifically contrasted his understanding of the first principles of the Gospel (i.e., “faith, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, with the promise of the Holy Ghost”; cf. *Articles of Faith* 1:4) with a common-sense interpretation of Hebrews 6:1 that would understand “leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ” as meaning “abandoning the principles of the doctrine of Christ.” Then he said, “I will render it ... — “Therefore *not* leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ ...” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 15 October 1843, p. 328. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Joseph Smith Diary by Willard Richards, 15 October 1843, p. 256. See also jst Hebrews 6:1–2; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 1 September 1835, pp. 82–83; *ibid.*, December 1835, p. 99). Joseph Smith’s reading is consistent with modern scholarship (e.g., D. L. Allen, *Hebrews*, pp. 339–340).
- 121 See, e.g., J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 10 March 1844, pp. 330, 335; *ibid.*, 7 April 1844, p. 361.
- 122 According to Guénon: “Sometimes the symbol of a double ladder is found. This suggests the idea that the climb should be followed by a descent. Thus, one goes up one side by the steps that represent increasing ‘knowledge’ — in other words, degrees of understanding corresponding to the realization of some number of states — and one descends on the other side by steps that are ‘virtues’ — that is, the ‘fruits’ of these same degrees of knowledge applied to their respective levels” (R. Guénon, *Symboles*, p. 339, my translation). A brief New Testament example of the descending degrees of “fruits” can be found in Galatians 5:22 — note the listing of the theological virtues of faith, hope/longsuffering, and charity in reverse order: “But the fruit of the Spirit is *love*, joy, peace, *longsuffering*, gentleness, goodness, *faith*.” Cf. Hebrews 6:10–12. The idea of the double ladder of ascent and descent finds a parallel in Genesis 28:12, where Jacob’s ladder is said to have had “the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

A visual example of the concepts of heavenly ascent followed by descent in the traditions of Second Temple Judaism can be found in the Dura Europos Mural of Ezekiel (J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*). See also account of descent followed by ascent described in chapter 1 of the book of Moses (J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes* (2014), pp. 23–50). Eliot Wolfson has perceptively observed that the result of this ascent-descent pattern “renders what is

above within and what is within above. ... From this perspective heavenly ascent and incarnational presence may be viewed as two ways of considering the selfsame phenomenon” (E. R. Wolfson, *Seven Mysteries*, p. 213).

Hebrews 6:1; 2 John 1:9; 2 Nephi 31:2; 32:6; Jacob 7:2, 6; 3 Nephi 2:2.

123 Hebrews 6:10–12.

124 Cf. Ether 12:4: “whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast.”

125 Hebrews 6:19–20.

126 J. Smith, Jr., *Writings*, To Silas Smith, 26 September 1833, p. 323; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 14 May 1843, p. 201; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 14 May 1843, pp. 298–299.

127 2 Nephi 31:2, emphasis added. Cf. 2 Nephi 31:21; 32:6.

128 B. A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:432.

129 2 Nephi 31:13.

130 2 Nephi 31:17.

131 In Nephi’s closing words, he uses the terms faith, hope, and charity for a second and final time in his writings (2 Nephi 33:7–9).

132 2 Nephi 31:19–20.

133 B. A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:287–288.

134 Ether 12:6–22.

135 Ether 12:4, 8, 9, 28, 32.

136 Ether 12:28, 34 (twice), 35, 36, 37.

137 Ether 12:23.

138 Ether 12:25.

139 Ether 3:1.

140 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, p. 196.

141 Ether 12:26.

142 Ether 12:27.

- 143 Ether 12:28. See Ether 8:26, where “the fountain of all righteousness” also appears to refer to Christ. Cf. 1 Nephi 2:9, which “could be a metaphorical reference to Christ” (R. Skousen, *Analysis*, 6:3831).
- 144 Ether 12:29–31.
- 145 Ether 12:32.
- 146 Ether 12:33–37.
- 147 Ether 12:38–41.
- 148 Moroni 7:1.
- 149 B. A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:366.
- 150 Moroni 7:5–13.
- 151 Moroni 7:6.
- 152 Moroni 7:15, emphasis added.
- 153 Moroni 7:16.
- 154 Moroni 7:19.
- 155 Moroni 7:20.
- 156 Moroni 7:21–39.
- 157 Moroni 7:40–42.
- 158 Moroni 7:43–48.
- 159 Moroni 7:46.
- 160 Moroni 7:47.
- 161 Moroni 7:48.
- 162 Thanks to Matthew Bowen and John S. Thompson for this suggestion (M. L. Bowen, 7 March 2016; J. S. Thompson, 7 March 2016).
- 163 Moroni 7:3, emphasis added.
- 164 See T. L. Szink, Authorship for an LDS perspective on the question of the authorship of the book of Hebrews. While some of the Joseph Smith’s statements about the book of Hebrews indicate his belief that it was authored by Paul, Szink nevertheless is sympathetic to the likelihood that, based on a range of other evidences, the book was written by a disciple of Paul rather than by Paul himself (*ibid.*, p. 253. See also K. L. Barney, *NT Footnotes*, 3:53–55).
- 165 Hebrews 5:12, 14.

- 166 Hebrews 5:12.
- 167 Hebrews 5:12. See D. L. Allen, *Hebrews*, pp. 333, 334.
- 168 Alma 7:24.
- 169 Alma 7:22.
- 170 *Ibid.*, emphasis added.
- 171 J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, pp. 187–188.
- 172 Leviticus 1:2; 2:1, 13; 23:13.
- 173 Exodus 30:17–21.
- 174 D. Calabro, Joseph Smith and the architecture of Genesis, pp. 171–172. See also J. M. Bradshaw, LDS Book of Enoch, pp. 57–58. Calabro further clarifies (D. Calabro, Joseph Smith and the architecture of Genesis, p. 172):
- While there is no evidence that the temple laver was used as a baptismal font, it was definitely large enough to suggest such a use, and Joseph Smith’s specifications for a baptismal font modeled after the Solomonic laver for the Nauvoo Temple show that he understood it in this connection.
- 175 J. S. Thompson, How John’s Gospel portrays Jesus as the Way of the temple, p. 312.
- 176 See, e.g., W. C. Smith, *Belief and History*. See also M. Weinfeld, *Common Heritage*. Thanks to David Calabro for these suggestions.
- 177 J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Published Revelations*, Lectures on Faith 1:10, p. 316 (p. 6).
- 178 The list in Hebrews 6:2 also includes “resurrection of the dead” and “eternal judgment.” On 27 June 1839, Joseph Smith taught: “The doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead & eternal Judgment are necessary to preach among the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Willard Richards Pocket Companion, 27 June 1839, p. 4). Ehat and Cook note that the Prophet “repeatedly referred to and amplified this theme in discourses during the Nauvoo period. See also D&C 19:4, 8–9, 21–22 (1–24)” (see *ibid.*, p. 17 n. 5. See *ibid.*, before 8 August 1839 (3), p. 15; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 16 May 1841, pp. 72–73; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 15 October 1843, p. 256; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 10 March 1844, p. 330; *ibid.*, 7 April 1844, p. 343. Although the Prophet appears not to have considered these doctrines as an actual *part* of the first

- principles and ordinances of the Gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 15 October 1843, p. 256), in light of scriptural passages such as D&C 19:1–24, an understanding of the doctrines of the resurrection and judgment can be seen as useful adjunct to the missionaries’ call to repentance, highlighting the urgency of their message.
- 179 M. S. Nyman, *Hope*, pp. 296–297, emphasis added.
- 180 J. F. McConkie, *Promise*, p. 163.
- 181 On this theme see B. A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:439.
- 182 2 Nephi 31:19.
- 183 2 Nephi 31:17–19.
- 184 Moroni 7:19.
- 185 Moroni 7:15.
- 186 Moroni 7:16.
- 187 Moroni 7:16.
- 188 Moroni 7:17.
- 189 Ibid.
- 190 Moroni 7:31.
- 191 Moroni 7:24.
- 192 Moroni 7:22.
- 193 Moroni 7:23. Cf. Moroni 7:31–32.
- 194 Moroni 7:25.
- 195 Note that baptism is the central subject of chapters 6 and 8 of Moroni. See also 2 Nephi 31:4–13.
- 196 Moroni 7:19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 28. Cf. Moroni 10:30: “every good gift.”
- 197 Moroni 7:26.
- 198 Ibid. 7:26.
- 199 Hebrews 10:22.
- 200 J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, pp. 188–189.
- 201 Moses 5:59.
- 202 Helaman 3:35.
- 203 Hebrews 10:23.

- 204 J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, p. 189.
- 205 Hebrews 10:20.
- 206 J. E. Faulconer, *Life of Holiness*, p. 207.
- 207 Alma 13:3.
- 208 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; cf. Ephesians 1:14.
- 209 2 Nephi 31:20, emphasis added.
- 210 Ether 12:32, emphasis added.
- 211 Hebrews 6:11, emphasis added.
- 212 Ibid.
- 213 Ether 12:32.
- 214 Moroni 7:41.
- 215 S. Sandmel et al., *New English Bible*, Hebrews 6:18, emphasis added. Matthew Bowen observes that there is a pun on Hebrew *tiqvah* (“hope”) in the word for “cord” (*tiqvah*) hung from the window in Joshua 2:15, which was the “true token” between Rahab and the Israelite spies (M. L. Bowen, 7 March 2016). One is also reminded of the iron rod in the vision of the Tree of Life recorded by Lehi and Nephi (1 Nephi 8:19–20, 24, 30; 11:25; 15:23) and its ancient analogues that were used in the ascent of holy mountains (see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 143, 473). Further afield, Bowen also notes that late Jewish traditions describe how a rope or gold chain was tied to the ankle of the high priest in case he died in the Holy of Holies (e.g., from an irruption of the glory of God) so that his body could be pulled out (see H. Freedman et al., *Midrash*, Ecclesiastes 9:10:1–2, 8:240–241; H. Sperling et al., *Zohar*, Ahare Moth, 67a, 5:60; *ibid.*, Emor, 102a, 5:132). However, the plausibility of this tradition has been strongly disputed (e.g., A. Z. Zivotofsky, *What’s the Truth*). For more on this tradition, see D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 7, pp. 444–445 n. 266; D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 8, pp. 152–154 nn. 279–280.
- 216 Cf. Ether 12:4 (emphasis added): “which *hope* cometh of *faith*, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast.” J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, p. 155 reads “steadfastness” as “hope” in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and Titus 2:1.
- 217 S. Sandmel et al., *New English Bible*, Hebrews 6:18–20.

- 218 Licensed from Alamy.com. Image ID: BM2KC6.
- 219 Public Domain. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reidersche_Tafel_c_400_AD.jpg (accessed 21 December 2015).
- 220 N. Isar, *Choros*, plate 65, IMG_2104. With permission.
- 221 Hebrews 6:19. See vv. 18–20.
- 222 N. Isar, *Choros*, p. 73.
- 223 Ibid., p. 73. Cf. “Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride So is my yoke over those who know me” (J. H. Charlesworth, *Odes*, 42:8).
- 224 Cf. N. Isar, *Choros*, p. 52.
- 225 D&C 84:33–48. See also M. G. Romney, *Oath*, p. 17 and J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*.
- 226 S. Sandmel et al., *New English Bible*, Hebrews 6:18.
- 227 K. L. Barney, *NT Footnotes*, 3:82 n. d. See also M. G. Romney, *Oath*, p. 17.
- 228 John 14:3. See also Hebrews 4:14; H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, pp. 118–119.
- 229 M. Barker, *Risen*, pp. 42–43. See also Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 39, 16, p. 358; Origen, Luke, *Homily 24 on Luke 3:15–16*, p. 103; 1 Corinthians 3:13.
- 230 H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, p. 184; cf. pp. 185, 222–224. See also L. T. Johnson, *Hebrews*, pp. 172–173. Comparing the symbol of the anchor to an image in Virgil, Witherington concludes that he was “thinking no doubt of an iron anchor with two wings rather than an ancient stone anchor” (B. Witherington, III, *Letters*, p. 225). The shape of the anchor with two wings would recall both the covenant and the oath by which the former is “made sure” (2 Peter 1:10).
- 231 D. M. Moffitt, *Atonement*, pp. 300–301.
- 232 This phrase, applied by Moffit to Jesus Christ and His followers, originated with the Jews in Qumran. See, e.g., G. Vermes, *Complete, Rule of the Community (1QS)*, 4:22–26, p. 103. For a more detailed study of the meaning of this concept in the context of

the theology of the Qumran Community and of early Christians, see C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*.

233 D. M. Moffitt, *Atonement*, p. 301.

234 See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, p. 48.

235 2 Peter 1:19.

236 In this discourse, the Prophet explicitly cites relevant passages from Peter and Paul together (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 14 May 1843, pp. 298–299. Xf. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 14 May 1843, p. 201):

Though [the Saints addressed by Peter (2 Peter 1:21)] might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure (2 Peter 1:10), that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. Then they would want that more sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19), that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Then, *having this promise sealed unto [us is] an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast* (Hebrews 6:19). Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble, and tribulation. Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ...

Then I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it.

237 J. Smith, Jr., *Writings*, p. 323, spelling and punctuation modernized, emphasis added.

238 Hebrews 6:17.

239 Hebrews 6:12.

240 See Hebrews 6:18–19.

241 Ether 12:4, emphasis added.

242 Emphasizing the anticipatory nature of temple ordinances, Brigham Young explained that “a person may be anointed king

- and priest long before he receives his kingdom” (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 6 August 1843, 5:527).
- 243 There is also a hint of a similar warning in Ether 12. After Moroni describes the brother of Jared’s experience in passing through the heavenly veil (Ether 3), he expresses his concern to the Lord that the “the gentiles will mock at these things, because of our weakness in writing” (Ether 12:23). In response, the Lord warned: “Fools mock, but they shall mourn” (Ether 12:26). Similarly, Moroni 7:14 warns against judging “that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil,” and then repeats in v. 18: “see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged.”
- 244 See also Hebrews 10:26–31; D&C 84:40–42. Compare W. Clayton, *Diaries*, 23 June 1843.
- 245 Franklin D. Richards, entry dated 1 August 1843, “Scriptural Items, Words of the Prophet,” 24. Church Historian’s Office call number in 1975, Ms/d/4409. This statement was discovered by Andrew F. Ehat among the Wilford Woodruff Papers, in the first diary of Franklin D. Richards (A. F. Ehat, 31 October 2012). In light of the fact that some Church authorities have spoken against the idea of progression (and, implicitly, regression) among kingdoms after the resurrection (e.g., B. R. McConkie, *Seven Deadly Heresies*, pp. 105–106), this statement by Hyrum Smith might be understood as applying to those who have not completed their probation and are “quickened by a portion” of one of the three glories prior to the resurrection (see D&C 88:29–31).
- 246 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, William Clayton Report, 7 April 1844, p. 361. Cf. Hebrews 10:31: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- 247 *Ibid.*, William Clayton Report, 7 April 1844, p. 361. See also Hebrews 10:26. This is the same situation described in D&C 84:41, when it says that “whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come.” The published version of the relevant passage can be found in J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, p. 358. The original notes from have been published in J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1843–1844*, general Church Minutes, Clayton copy, 7 April 1844, 17–18, p. 221 and p. 221 nn. 971, 974; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, pp. 342, 346–347, 353, 361.

- 248 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Franklin D. Richards “Scriptural Items,” 10 March 1844, p. 335. Cf. *Ibid.*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 10 March 1844, p. 330.
- 249 See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 63–64. D&C 132:26 is sometimes interpreted to mean that the blessings of the marriage sealing ordinance are unconditional. However, it is clear in the context of D&C 88:3–4 that this verse is meant to apply, not to those who merely have been sealed in marriage, but rather to those whose calling and election has been made sure.
- 250 Ehat and Cook, in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 396 n. 52.
- 251 See *ibid.*, Thomas Bullock Report, 7 April 1844, p. 353.
- 252 See *ibid.*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 7 April 1844, p. 347. See John 17:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; Hebrews 10:39; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 17:8, 11; 3 Nephi 27:32; 29:7; D&C 76:26, 32, 43; Moses 5:24.
- 253 2 Nephi 31:14, emphasis added.
- 254 2 Peter 1:19.
- 255 Hebrews 6:11; 2 Nephi 31:20.
- 256 2 Nephi 31:14.
- 257 Alma 5:26.
- 258 R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 17:4, p. 696.
- 259 Cf. “voice of many waters” (*ibid.*, 17:1, p. 696). Cf. Ezekiel 43:2; Revelation 1:15; 14:2; 19:6; D&C 133:22; Moses 1:25.
- 260 *Ibid.*, 18:1–14, p. 698. For a more complete description of this event, along with parallels to Moses 1, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, p. 44.
- 261 Cf. 2 Nephi 31:13: “and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.”
- 262 Philo, *Virtues*, 8:207.
- 263 E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:116. For a more complete description of this and other murals in the synagogue of Dura Europos in the context of early forms of mystical Judaism, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*, pp. 17–19.
- 264 E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:115.

- 265 A. Detail from *ibid.*, 11, Plate V. B. *Ibid.*, 9, text figure 11, p. 115, originally from C. H. Kraeling et al., *Synagogue*, Figure 61, p. 236.
- 266 J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, pp. 189–194.
- 267 D&C 50:35; 75:16, 22; 76:60.
- 268 Moroni 7:47: “charity ... endureth forever”; 1 Corinthians 13:8: “Charity never faileth.”
- 269 Ether 12:28. Cf. Alma 13:29: “Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest.”
- 270 Colossians 3:14.
- 271 1 Corinthians 13:13.
- 272 Moroni 7:46, emphasis added.
- 273 Moroni 7:44.
- 274 Ether 12:34.
- 275 Ether 12:7.
- 276 Ether 12:7. Cf. 1 Peter 3:7.
- 277 Cf. Ether 3:19.
- 278 Ether 12:19. See also vv. 20–21.
- 279 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 27 June 1839, p. 150.
- 280 *Ibid.*, 11 June 1843, p. 308.
- 281 D&C 121:45.
- 282 Note that “charity” and “love” are equated four times in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 26:30; Ether 12:34; Moroni 7:47; 8:17). On the other hand, D&C 4:5 specifically adds “love” to the triad of “faith, hope, and charity.” However, despite the temptation to read a difference between “charity” and “love” in that verse it seems wisest to understand the two terms as synonyms. The purpose of the change may be primarily stylistic, allowing the foursome of “faith, hope, charity and love” to stand alongside “heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2) as a rhetorical parallel.
- Elsewhere in the published words of Joseph Smith, “charity” and “love” are specifically equated: “charity (or love)” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 4 January 1833, p. 16; J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Documents*,

- July 1831-January 1833, 4 January 1833, p. 354); “Charity, which is love” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 23 July 1843, p. 316). Note that “Charity, which is love” is missing from the official record of the 23 July 1843 discourse (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1843–1844*, 23 July 1843, p. 66). It was added retrospectively by Church historians. The original notes made at the time include the words “love” and “friendship,” but not “charity.” However, it is easy to see a possible allusion to 1 Peter 4:8 (“charity shall cover the multitude of sins”) that is paralleled in Elder Richards’ record (“covered all the faults among you”).
- 283 Moroni 7:47.
- 284 See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 59–65.
- 285 See 2 Nephi 31:20.
- 286 D&C 84:38.
- 287 See 1 Corinthians 13:1–3; Moroni 7:44.
- 288 E. T. Benson, *Teachings*, p. 121; cf. G. B. Hinckley, *Teachings*, p. 147; H. B. Lee, *Teachings*, p. 318.
- 289 E. T. Benson, *Teachings*, p. 121 and D&C 78:7.
- 290 H. W. Nibley, *Foundation*, p. 168.
- 291 H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, p. 34.
- 292 Matthew 13:46.
- 293 H. B. Lee, *Teachings*, p. 318.
- 294 See D&C 122:1–8.
- 295 Cf. D&C 132:23–24. The Prophet Joseph Smith further explained: “No one can truly say he knows God until he has handled something, and this can only be in the holiest of holies” (J. Smith Jr., *Documentary History*, 1 May 1842, 4:608).
- 296 J. W. Welch, *Sermon*, pp. 60–61.
- 297 Moroni 8:17.
- 298 “Giving money is only *one* way of showing charity; to give time [and] toil is far better and (for most of us) harder” (C. S. Lewis, *Letters* 3, 18 Feb. 1954, p. 429).
- 299 Mosiah 15:7.

- 300 Elder Bruce C. Hafen has likewise observed, in order to be *with* Him, we need to be *like* Him (B. C. Hafen et al., *Contrite Spirit*, p. 27).
- 301 Moroni 7:48. Cf. 1 John 3:1–3.
- 302 Ether 12:33.
- 303 See E. England, *Easter*, pp. 52–53.
- 304 See Isaiah 53:4–5; Mosiah 3:7; Alma 7:11–13.
- 305 D&C 64:33.
- 306 Alma 34:10, 14.
- 307 See Mosiah 3:19.
- 308 D&C 97:8.
- 309 See D&C 101:4–5. The case of Abraham highlights the reciprocal nature of knowledge and faith: the exercise of faith leads to increased knowledge (Alma 32:34–35) and the confirming knowledge that comes from the exercise of faith increases faith itself (Alma 32:29–30). While such incremental increases in faith do not yet amount to a “perfect knowledge” (Alma 32:21, 26, 29, 34, 35), the experience of the brother of Jared at the veil demonstrates that individuals of “exceeding faith” (Ether 3:9) may reach the point where they cannot “be kept from beholding within the veil,” having “faith no longer,” having instead a “perfect knowledge of God,” “nothing doubting” (Ether 3:19–20). Such knowledge, coupled with the assurance, attained through “the sacrifice of all things” (L. E. Dahl et al., *Lectures*, 6:7, p. 92) “that they were pursuing a course which was agreeable to the will of God” (*ibid.*, 6:3, p. 91), “will enable them to exercise that confidence in Him necessary for them to overcome the world and obtain that crown of glory which is laid up for them that fear God” (*ibid.*, 6:4, p. 92).
- 310 Genesis 14:17–24 and jst Genesis 14:25–40.
- 311 See Ehat and Cook in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 305 n. 29.
- 312 See, e.g., H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, p. 335 n. 25; W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 363.
- 313 See, e.g., W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, p. 362.
- 314 P. M. Eisenbaum, *Hebrews 11*, p. 162 observes that the motif of a “near-death experience” of the hero appears more than once in

- Hebrews 11. In the case of Isaac: “What is stressed is that from one who was almost never born, and who after being born was almost killed, the descendants of Abraham, the descendants of God’s faithful ones, are born” (ibid., p. 163).
- 315 H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, p. 335. Cf. L. T. Johnson, *Hebrews*, p. 295, explaining the Greek behind the phrase stating that Abraham receive Isaac “in a figure” (i.e., “figuratively speaking” (J. Dunnill, *Covenant*, p. 178)): “The phrase *en parabole* points in two directions. Abraham received Isaac ‘back’ literally, when God stopped the sacrifice and Isaac was able to accompany his father home ... As in the use of the same phrase in 9:9, however, the author may also imply another symbolic dimension, namely the resurrection from the dead that occurred in Christ and is anticipated by believers.” On the connection between Hebrews 11 and Romans 4, see L. D. Hurst, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 121.
- 316 See 1 Corinthians 13:7. Cf. Moroni 7:45–47. Conzelmann argues for a correlation between the admonition of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:7 and the mention of faith, hope, and charity in 1 Corinthians 13:13: “Verse 7 is formally speaking a conclusion, but in content a verbal description of the triad of v. 13” (H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, p. 224).
- 317 Articles of Faith 1:13.
- 318 Although it is not known whether Joseph Smith was involved in directing or reviewing the punctuation of the original 1844 publication of the thirteenth Article of Faith in I. D. Rupp, *History*, p. 410, the placement of the quotation marks (even though the contents of the quote are not a word-for-word parallel) highlights the contrast between Joseph Smith’s view of the Saints’ limited capacity to endure and the exact parallel in the descriptions of the three qualities as they are listed in 1 Corinthians 13:7 (i.e., “believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things”):
- ... indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul; “we believe all things: we hope all things:” we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things.
- 319 J. W. Welch, *Articles of Faith and the Life*, p. 75.
- 320 Ibid., p. 75.
- 321 Emphasis added.

322 Hymns (1985), Come, Let Us Anew, #217, stanza 1. See
1 Thessalonians 1:3.