

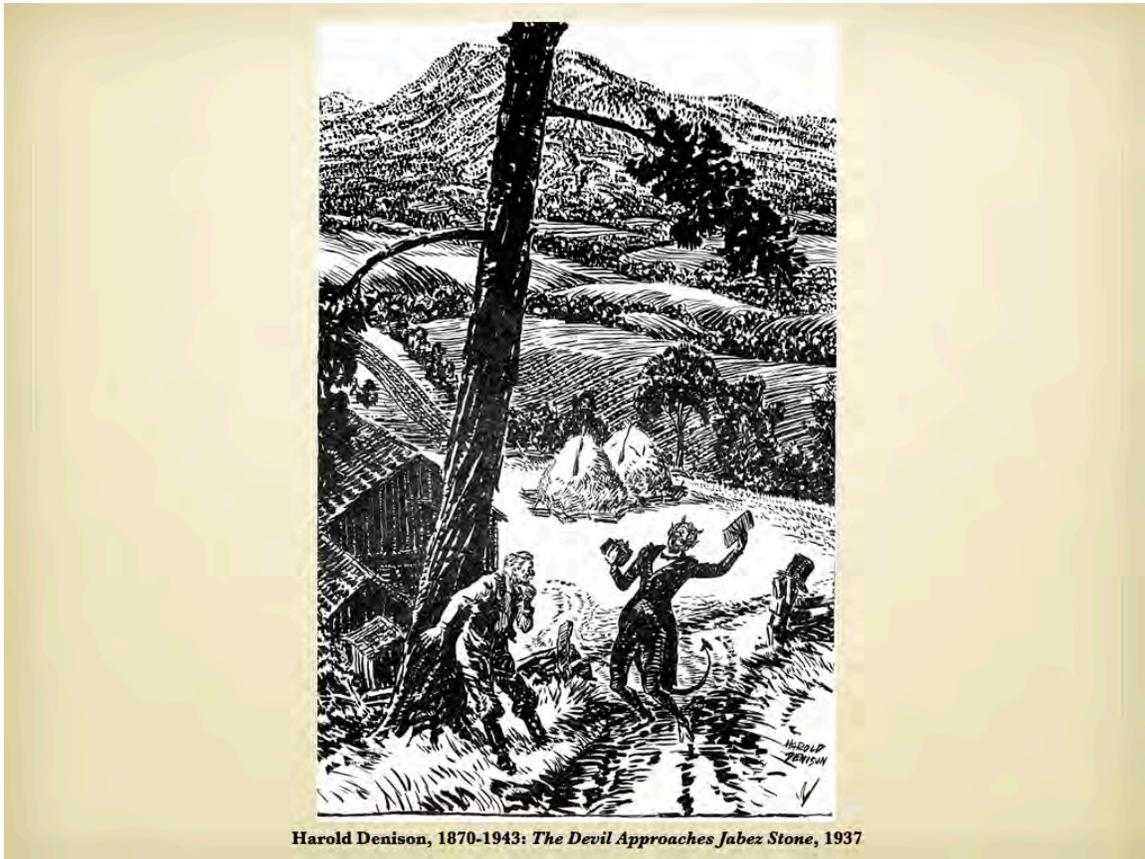
Adam, Eve, and the New and Everlasting Covenant

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While the importance of account of the Creation and the Fall in Moses 1-4 cannot be overstated, a careful reading of Moses 5-8 is required to see the prior material in its overall context.¹ Reeves observes:

Most modern students of Bible fail to discern the pivotal significance which [the tale of Cain and Abel] plays in the present narrative structure of Genesis because of the enormous religious significance with which ancient, medieval, and modern Christian interpreters have invested the immediately preceding story of Adam and Eve in the Garden... I would like to suggest that while admittedly the episode of disobedience in the Garden was not a good thing, the story of Cain and Abel introduces something far worse into the created order... It represents a critical turning point in antediluvian history, and is... the key crime which leads ineluctably to the Flood.²

Foreseeing the similar rise of alluring wickedness in our own time, the Savior warned that “as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man.”³



The illustration above is taken from Stephen Vincent Benét’s 1936 story *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, made into a popular film in 1941. Piazza characterizes the latter as “a fascinating allegory, filmed on the eve of World War II, of a society gone mad with

materialism, a premonition of the opportunities and dangers awaiting the United States as it recovered from the Great Depression.”⁴ Old Scratch is portrayed as polite, refined, and soft-spoken—and as usual, he “gets the best lines” as he preaches his gospel of cold cash to a down-on-his-luck New Hampshire farmer. Warned Benét: “[I]f a smooth-spoken and businesslike stranger should appear at your door and offer you all that money can buy in exchange for your freedom of soul, it might be well to look him over rather carefully. I seem to have heard that there are such people abroad in the world, even today.”⁵



Advertisement at a men's clothing store at the Amsterdam Schipol Airport, January 2009

And, indeed, I recently saw the advertisement above in the Schipol airport depicting just such a person, decked in his fashionable new suit with an adoring woman kneeling at his feet and piles of money scattered everywhere. Can anyone question the identity of the real sponsor behind such degrading and patently ridiculous imagery?

Happily, however, the story of Adam and Eve and their family after the Fall:

... is not an account of sin alone but [also] the beginning of a drama about becoming a being who fully reflects God's very own image. Genesis is not about the origins of sin; it is also about the foundations of human perfection. The work that God has begun in creation he will bring to completion.... [E]arly Jewish and Christian readers [were] aware of this while most of their modern counterparts have not been.⁶

The clarity with which the fundamental doctrines, laws, and ordinances of the gospel begin to unfold in Moses 5 fully justifies Hugh Nibley in calling it “the greatest of all chapters” in scripture.⁷

In this article, I will summarize Hugh Nibley’s overviews of pseudepigraphal traditions that relate Satan’s attempts to derail Adam and Eve’s efforts to remain faithful to God’s commandments after their separation from His presence. I will then outline some of the countermeasures taken by God as He began to reveal the New and Everlasting Covenant to mankind by means of heavenly messengers.

The Way of Satan

As a summary of the sudden downward pull exercised on newly fallen mankind, Nibley succinctly summarizes the stock story of Satan’s efforts to supplant God’s plan of dominion with his own—a sequence of scenes that has been reenacted countless times since Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden:⁸

The story is told not only of Adam but of the other great patriarchs as well. Noah was confronted by the same party with the same proposition while he was working in his garden after the Flood.⁹ Abraham too had an Eden and an altar, and while he was once calling upon God in prayer, Satan suddenly showed up with an insolent, “Here I am!” and proceeded with his sales pitch.¹⁰ Moses like Christ was tempted on a mountain, by the same person and with the same proposal: “If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”¹¹ Adam is thus only the first; the elements of the story that follow are found in various combinations among the many texts of the growing Adam literature that is coming to light in our generation. The texts often take dramatic form indicative of ritual origin.

As Adam was praying one day, runs the story, a distinguished gentleman appeared on the scene and engaged him in conversation... [H]e was well-dressed, and came to Adam with “cunning and smooth talk, as a true friend genuinely concerned for his welfare.”¹² He began with some harmless generalities — the weather and the scenery: it was, he observed, a most glorious and beautiful world. This, however, by way of leading up to his next point, which was that he happened to be the owner and proprietor of it all.¹³ Yes sir, as far as the eye could see it was all his, and he tolerated no nonsense in it: nobody dared make trouble where he was in charge. This was all hokum, of course; “Satan never owned the earth; he never made a particle of it,” said Brigham Young, “his labor is not to create, but to destroy.”¹⁴ But to demonstrate his authority, when three strangers (usually described as angels)¹⁵ appeared on the scene at this moment, he at once challenged them as trespassers, asking them if they had any money. He explained to Adam that everything in his world could be had for money,¹⁶ and then got down to business. For the fellow was all business, a person of integrity, ready to keep his part of an agreement (the agreement always turns out to be a trap for the other party), pious and God-fearing, dedicated to hard work — he works, in fact, “like a demon.” He was there to offer Adam the chance of a lifetime to buy in on a scheme that would give him anything he wanted in this world. It was an ingenious and simple self-financing operation in which one would buy power with wealth and then more wealth with the power, until one might end up owning and

controlling everything. The initial capital? It was right under their feet! You begin by taking the treasures of the earth, and by exchanging them for the services of important people in key positions; you end up running everything your way. What if your rule is one of blood and terror? Better to rule in hell, as Milton's Satan puts it, than to be ruled in heaven!¹⁷

The most widely-known extracanonical account of Adam and Eve's experiences after they leave the Garden of Eden is the *Life of Adam and Eve* (hereafter *Life*), which exists in Greek, Latin, Armenian, and Georgian recensions¹⁸ as well as in several later texts derived in part from it.¹⁹ A major theme of this series of stories concerns the unsuccessful attempts of Satan to deceive Adam and Eve, who become increasingly immune to his wiles through the knowledge and protective power provided by angelic visitations, and the knowledge and covenants received through ordinances.



For example, the *Life* tells of how Adam and Eve, following their transgression and expulsion from Eden, spent a time of penance standing, respectively, in cleansing waters of the Jordan and Tigris Rivers. During Eve's penance, Satan appears as an angel of light to persuade her to leave the river prematurely. Robinson notes the significant warning that Adam had previously given her:

“Take great care of thyself. Except thou seest me and all my tokens, depart not out of the water, nor trust in the words, which are said to thee, lest thou fall again into the snare.” Thus, properly equipped, Eve does not succumb to Satan the second time.²⁰

Since the Atonement covers the offenses of the innocent and unwittingly deceived, as well as temporarily shortsighted individuals who repent and prepare themselves to receive the gift of the Savior's great sacrifice, there is a happy ending for Adam and Eve. However, Moses 5 has a different message about the fate of those who unrepentantly "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."²¹ Of such was Cain who, had he "fulfilled the law of righteousness as did Enoch... could have walked with God all the days of his life and never failed of a blessing."²² Instead, he "sinned with his eyes open," "was cursed,"²³ and became known not merely as one of the "sons of perdition"²⁴ but rather, in similitude of Satan, as "Perdition" itself, it having been prophesied that Cain, if he did not repent, would be so preeminent in evil that he would "rule over" Satan himself.²⁵

Nibley describes the approach by which Satan "plans to put the world under his bloody and horrible misrule." He appeals to anyone willing to consecrate their time and efforts to adopt his agenda—namely to "murder and get gain"²⁶—as their own:

He will control the world economy by claiming possession of the earth's resources; and by manipulation of its currency—gold and silver—he will buy up the political, military, and ecclesiastical complex and run everything his way. We see him putting his plan into operation when he lays legal claim to the whole earth as his estate, accusing others of trespass, but putting everything up for sale to anyone who has the money. And how will they get the money? By going to work for him. He not only offers employment but a course of instruction in how the whole thing works, teaching the ultimate secret: "That great secret"²⁷ of converting life into property. Cain got the degree of Master Mahan, tried the system out on his brother, and gloried in its brilliant success, declaring that at last he could be free, as only property makes free, and that Abel had been a loser in a free competition.²⁸

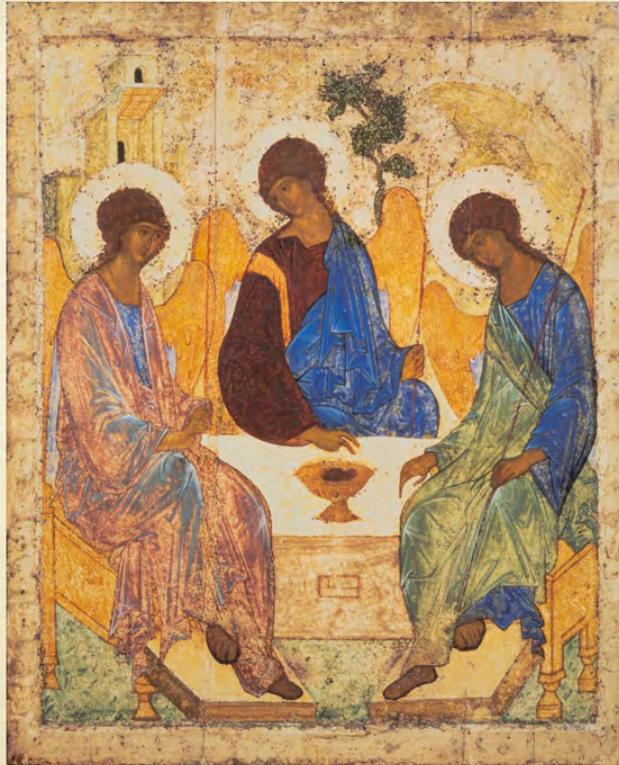
The Three Messengers

Moses 5 not only describes the way that leads to spiritual death, but also reveals the way back to eternal life and the presence of the Lord.²⁹ Jacob explained that this "way is prepared from the fall of man... And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil."

D&C 29:42-43 affirms that Adam and Eve received knowledge of all these things through specially appointed messengers:

But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son.

And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation—that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe



Andrei Rublev, ca. 1360-70-ca. 1427-30: *The Holy Trinity*, ca. 1408-1425

A parallel account involving three divine messengers can be found in the story of Abraham.³⁰ In the Orthodox Church, the famous icon by representing this event is used as a symbol of the oneness of the Godhead, and the “beginning of the promise of Redemption” which reached “its fulfillment on the day of the Pentecost,” binding together the Old Testament and New Testament Churches.³¹

With reference to accounts of visits of divine messengers to Adam and Eve, Alonzo Gaskill observes that:³²

Peter, James, and John, whether appearing to Adam and Eve or serving as the head of the postresurrection Church in the meridian of time, are symbols of something much greater than themselves, namely, the Godhead... as [are] all subsequent First Presidencies. Whether these three brethren, or any set of tripartite messengers had physical contact with Adam and Eve (or any other Old Testament figure) makes no difference. What is of importance is what they brought and whom they represented.

“Many scholars consider Rublev’s *Trinity* the most perfect of all Russian icons and perhaps the most perfect of all the icons ever painted.”³³ The basic form of the icon is a circle: “Passing through the upper part of the nimbus of the central Angel and partly cutting off the bottom of the pedestals, this circle embraces all three figures, showing very faintly through their outlines... In this way the central Angel, though taller than the others, does not overwhelm or dominate them... The icon... has action, expressed in gestures, communion, expressed in the inclining of the heads and the postures of the

figures, and a silent, motionless peace... [T]he gestures of the hands are directed towards the eucharistic chalice, with the head of a sacrificial animal, which stands on the white table as on an altar. Symbolizing the voluntary sacrifice of the Son of God, it draws together the gestures of the Angels, indicating the unity of will and action of the Holy Trinity, Who entered into a covenant with Abraham.”

The Father, represented at left, is dressed differently than the other two. He wears “a pale pink cloak with brown and blue-green lights” of “sober and indefinite hue” that covers both shoulders. The Son, depicted in the middle and embodying the fulfillment of the ordinances of sacrifice performed by the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood,³⁴ “has the customary colors of... a purple *chiton* [= a draped, belted tunic] and a blue cloak” draped over His left shoulder, the color of the cloak symbolizing incarnation.³⁵ Behind Him grows a Tree of Life, born of His sacrificial death. The “principal color” of the Holy Spirit is green, represented in the cloak draped over His right shoulder. Here, the color green “signifies ‘youth, fullness of powers.’ This specifically indicates the properties of... renewing all things and giving them life.”³⁶ The symbolism recalls the promise made to those who are to be “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.”³⁷

The New and Everlasting Covenant

God’s motivation in instituting laws is, as the Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “to instruct the weaker intelligences,” allowing fallen humanity to gradually “advance in knowledge” so that eventually they “may be exalted with [God] himself.”³⁸ The Syriac version of the *Testament of Adam* expresses the belief of early Christians who taught that the Savior Himself revealed the plan of salvation to Adam, bringing the eventual possibility of godhood within the reach of fallen mankind.³⁹

And on this account [God] taught me in the midst of Paradise when I picked the fruit in which death was hiding. And he said to me, “Adam, do not fear. A god you desired to be; a god I will make you. However, not right now but after a space of [many] years. Right now I am going to drive you from paradise, and I will bring you down into the earth of thorns. Your back I will bend [and] your knees will quake from old age overtaking you. I am delivering you up to death. The maggot and worm will devour your body.

And after a short time my mercy [will be] revealed to you: I will go down to you... For your sake, Adam, I become an infant... For your sake, Adam, I ascend the cross... For your sake, Adam, I open the tomb.”

The set of laws and ordinances that were given to Adam and Eve are known collectively as “The New and Everlasting Covenant.” This comprehensive covenant includes the baptismal and temple covenants as well as covenants made at other times. Because God is everlasting, the covenant is also “everlasting”: it was first given to Adam, and later to all subsequent prophets.⁴⁰ Because it is given anew each time the gospel is restored, the Lord also describes it as “new.”⁴¹ Riddle summarizes the two basic parts of the covenant:

Part one is the covenant of baptism, being born of water and of the Spirit. The covenant of baptism is our pledge to seek after good and to eliminate all choosing and

doing of evil in our lives, and it is also our receiving the power to keep that promise. Part two of the New and Everlasting Covenant is to receive the power and authority of God and to become perfect in using that power and authority to minister to other beings to bring about their happiness.⁴²

Elder Bruce R. McConkie's name for the first part of the New and Everlasting Covenant is the "Covenant of Salvation." It is "accepted by men in the waters of baptism"⁴³ and is confirmed by the laying on of hands. Adam and Eve were the first mortals to receive this covenant, as Enoch recounts.⁴⁴

As an element of the process of repentance, sacrifice is both a necessary precursor to baptism and a requirement for renewal of that covenant.⁴⁵ The ordinance of sacrifice given to Adam and Eve⁴⁶ corresponds in our day to the sacrament.⁴⁷ Thus, as Elder McConkie explained, three ordinances (baptism, sacrifice, sacrament) are associated with one and the same covenant.⁴⁸

Jesus taught Nicodemus that "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."⁴⁹ Although this commandment is often understood to be completely fulfilled through baptism and confirmation, in reality these first ordinances are only the "gate" through which we begin our journey down the "strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life."⁵⁰ Additional ordinances—along with the development of perfect faith, hope, and charity—are a necessary part of the process of spiritual rebirth that ultimately results in sanctification.⁵¹

And now... after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay... Wherefore, ye must press forward... and if ye press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.⁵²

Speaking plainly on this topic, the Prophet declared that being "born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances"⁵³—with the understanding that the bestowal of these ordinances and keys will continue even in the next life.⁵⁴ Joseph Smith explicitly linked the manner in which all the higher ordinances were given to the Saints to the figure of Adam, calling it the "order pertaining to the Ancient of Days."⁵⁵

Elder McConkie calls the second part of the New and Everlasting Covenant "The Covenant of Exaltation." He explains how it is related to the oath and covenant of the Priesthood:⁵⁶

When we receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, we enter into a covenant with the Lord. It is the covenant of exaltation. In it, we promise to magnify our callings in the priesthood, to keep the commandments, "to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life,"⁵⁷ to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God,"⁵⁸ and to enter the patriarchal order, which leads to a continuation of the family unit in the realms ahead.⁵⁹

Eventually, those who keep this oath and covenant are promised "all that [the] Father hath."⁶⁰ When they are fully prepared, greater light and knowledge about the covenant will be given them through personal communion with the Father:

And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.

And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you...⁶¹

Conclusions

The additional light and knowledge that Adam and Eve sought did not come immediately. We are told that it was only “after many days”⁶² of faithfulness to the covenants of obedience and sacrifice that the angel first appeared. Then, through continuing to follow the light they had already received, that light gradually grew “brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”⁶³ So with us. One of the most comforting lessons of Moss 5 is that, as Hugh Nibley said: “[The Lord] doesn’t keep you waiting forever. Give your test sufficient time, enough to show your integrity, and you will get your answer.”⁶⁴ And what an answer we have already received in the loving mercy made both plain and operable through the New and Everlasting Covenant!

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Endnotes

- 1 C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, pp. 2-3.
- 2 J. C. Reeves, *Flowing Stream*.
- 3 JS-Matthew 1:41.
- 4 T. Piazza, *Devil*.
- 5 S. V. Benét, *Author*.
- 6 G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 8.
- 7 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 19, p. 231.
- 8 H. W. Nibley, *Dominion*, pp. 13-14.
- 9 M. J. B. bin Gorion *et al.*, *Mimekor*, 13, 1:24; J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* 2, 36:3, p. 29.
- 10 D. C. Allison, *Testament*, 16:6-10, pp. 319, 328-331; L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:270-272; E. P. Sanders, *Testament of Abraham*, 16:6-10, p. 892; cf. M. J. B. bin Gorion *et al.*, *Mimekor*, 22, 1:58-59.

Islamic sources also associate a deceitful appearance of Satan with the act of sacrifice. As part of the *hajj*, pilgrims go to Mina “to throw stones at Satan and to sacrifice some animal in the Name of God.” The explanation of this ritual is that “Satan tried to deceive Abraham and Ishmael, but they realized who he was and threw stones at him” (S. A. Ashraf, *Inner*, p. 122). Note that Muslims generally see Ishmael rather than Isaac as the son who Abraham was commanded to sacrifice (see Genesis 22 and *Qur’an* 37:102).

In Egyptian literature, this same character appears as the “false Horus” “preserved in Spell 312 of the *Coffin Texts* (R. O. Faulkner, *Coffin*, pp. 229-233) and the 78th chapter of the *Book of the Dead*” (R. O. Faulkner *et al.*, *Book of the Dead*, pp. 74-78):

The scene opens with the King as Osiris lying helpless on the lion couch, calling upon the Most High God to deliver him from his plight; in reply to his prayer a Messenger (angel) appears in the form of a hawk [see book of Abraham Facsimile 1] and offers to save him; but the messenger has neither the power nor the authority—he must go up to heaven to get the proper authorization from the Lord of All. While he is away a false Horus—a comic character according to some—appears and boasts of his power and glory, offering to deliver the victim on the couch. A few questions dealing with the mysteries of the veil soon expose him as an ignoramus and a fraud, and the real Horus appears, while a voice from heaven attests his *bona fides*, and the hero on the bed is delivered. (H. W. Nibley, *The Three Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham*, p. 4. See also H. W. Nibley, *New Look*, August 1969, pp. 76-80; H. W. Nibley *et al.*, *One Eternal Round*, pp. 136-138; H. W. Nibley, *Approach to Abraham*, pp. 279-287).

11 Moses 1:12-19; Luke 4:9.

12 K. Kohler, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 7, 1895, p. 589; see also D. C. Allison, *Testament*, 16:5, pp. 319, 328; E. P. Sanders, *Testament of Abraham*, 16:5, p. 892.

13 G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, 33-34.1-35-37.1, p. 6E.

14 B. Young, *BY* 31 July 1864, p. 320.

15 See references in H. W. Nibley, *Since*, pp. 460-461.

16 Cf. R. A. Kraft, *Job*, 23:3b, p. 45: “Pay the price and take what you want.” See also R. A. Kraft, *Job*, 6-7, pp. 27-29; H. W. Nibley, *Prayer Circle*, p. 63; H. W. Nibley, *Consecration*, p. 439.

17 Cf. J. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1:261, p. 22.

18 G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*.

19 E.g., E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*.

20 S. E. Robinson, *Book of Adam*, p. 142; see also B. T. Ostler, *Clothed*, p. 6.

21 D&C 10:21.

22 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 5 October 1840, p. 41.

23 *Ibid.*, 5 October 1840, p. 40.

24 D&C 76:32-35.

25 See D&C 76:26; Moses 5:23-24.

26 Moses 5:31.

27 Moses 5:49-50.

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- 28 H. W. Nibley, *Foundation*, pp. 165-166.
- 29 2 Nephi 21:30-31.
- 30 Genesis 18.
- 31 L. Ouspensky *et al.*, *Icons*, p. 200. See also G. Bunge, *Rublev Trinity*, pp. 45-57.
- 32 A. L. Gaskill, *Lost*, p. 302. See also A. L. Gaskill, *Lost*, pp. 303-306. Cf. Nibley: "When Peter spoke to Adam, which Peter was it? The Peter of Adam's day? No, the timeless Peter" (H. W. Nibley, *Consecration*, p. 439).
- 33 *The Holy Trinity*, *The Holy Trinity*.
- 34 Cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image*, p. 573.
- 35 W. Williams, *Shadow*.
- 36 L. Ouspensky *et al.*, *Icons*, p. 202.
- 37 D&C 84:33.
- 38 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, p. 354.
- 39 S. E. Robinson, *Testament of Adam*, 3:2-3, pp. 97, 99; cf. M. D. Gibson, *Rolls 2006*, p. 117; E. P. Sanders, *Testament of Abraham*, 3:2-3, p. 994.
- 40 E.g., JST Genesis 9:21-23, 13:13; JST Deuteronomy 10:2; cf. D&C 49:9, 66:2, 88:133.
- 41 *Gospel Principles*, *Gospel Principles*, p. 98. See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 37:26.
- 42 C. C. Riddle, *New*, p. 228.
- 43 B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 293.
- 44 Moses 6:64-65.
- 45 D&C 20:37, 59:9-12.
- 46 Moses 5:5-9.
- 47 D&C 59:8-14.
- 48 B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 293.
- 49 John 3:5.
- 50 2 Nephi 31:17-18.
- 51 E. T. Benson, *Teachings 1988*, p. 337; B. C. Hafen, *Disciple's Journey*, pp. 292-301.

52 2 Nephi 31:19-20; cf. Jacob 6:11.

53 {Smith, 1969 #46, 2 July 1839, p. 162}; cf. D&C 84:19-22.

54 {Kimball, 1977 #1927}B. Young, BY 14 August 1872, pp. 136-139.

55 J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 4 May 1842, p. 237.

56 D&C 84:33-48.

57 D&C 84:43.

58 D&C 84:44.

59 B. R. McConkie, New Witness, pp. 312-313; see D&C 132:19-24.

60 D&C 84:38.

61 D&C 88:47-48; cf. John 14:16, 23; D&C 88:3-4, 130:3 J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 27 June 1839, 3:381.

62 Moses 5:6.

63 D&C 50:24.

64 H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the PGP, 19, p. 234.