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

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Abstract: *This chapter argues that “the scriptural triad of faith, hope, and charity should be understood as something more than a general set of personal attributes that must be developed in order for disciples to become like Christ. Instead, as part of the ‘guarded tradition of the Apostle’ [Paul] that is transmitted to readers in 1 Corinthians and elsewhere in scripture, these terms have been used to describe a distinct progression of ‘stages in a Christian’s earthly experience.’ The three stages that correlate to faith, hope, and charity were described by Joseph Smith as the ‘three principal rounds’ of a ladder of heavenly ascent. Each round marks a chief juncture in priesthood ordinances and on the pathway to eternal life.”*

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See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Faith, Hope, and Charity: The ‘Three Principal Rounds’ of the Ladder of Heavenly Ascent,” in *“To Seek the Law of the Lord”: Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 59–112. Further information at <https://interpreterfoundation.org/books/to-seek-the-law-of-the-lord-essays-in-honor-of-john-w-welch-2/>.]

¹ For more on this and related subjects, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Keys and Symbols of the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, forthcoming).

Within the prodigious scriptural writings of John W. Welch can be found delightful explorations of the wondrous ways in which Joseph Smith’s literary legacy serves as a bridge between the ancient and modern religious worlds. The prophetic recovery of key doctrines and ordinances, cherished in ancient times but unknown to most contemporary believers, remains one of the most stunning — and still underappreciated — facets of the latter-day “marvelous work and a wonder”² that unfolds with increasing momentum every hour since the beginning of the Restoration. Each of us who has been mentored by Jack — both directly and through his writings — has been awakened by the generosity of his spirit and the keenness of his intellect to see extraordinary reflections of the Restored Gospel in places that we “never had supposed.”³

In this chapter, I will argue, in the spirit of Jack’s example, that the scriptural triad of faith, hope, and charity should be understood as something more than a general set of personal attributes that must be developed in order for disciples to become like Christ.⁴ Instead, as part of the “guarded tradition of the Apostle”⁵ that is transmitted to readers in 1 Corinthians⁶ and elsewhere in scripture,⁷ these terms have been

2 2 Ne. 27:26. Cf. Isa. 29:14.

3 Moses 1:10.

4. See *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 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. Dean Garrett. “Light in Our Vessels: Faith, Hope, and Charity.” In *Fourth Nephi through Moroni: From Zion to Destruction*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1995), 81–93. 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 argue here and elsewhere that they are of a different and higher order than the others. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “‘He That Thrusteth in His Sickle with His Might’: Doctrine and Covenants Section 4 and the Reward of Consecrated Service,” in *D&C 4: A Lifetime of Study in Discipleship*, ed. Nick Galieti (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016), 161–278.

5. Archibald M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1961), 22–23.

6. See, e.g., 1 Cor. 7:10; 11:23–25; 15:3ff. See also *ibid.*, pp. 118–120.

7. See Rom. 5:1–5; Gal. 5:5–6; Eph. 4:2–5; Col. 1:4–5, 23; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8; Titus 2:2; Heb. 6:10–15; 10:19–26. See also 1 Pet. 1:2–8, 21–23; 2 Ne. 31; Jacob 4:6, 11; Alma 7:24; 13:29; 22:16; 25:16; 32:21; 58:11; Ether 12:3–37; Moro. 7:1–48; 8:14; 10:20–21; D&C 4:5–6; 6:19; 12:8; 18:19; 84:33–48; Articles of Faith 1:13. See, e.g., Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. The Anchor Bible 37 C*, ed. William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman (New York City: Doubleday, 1993), 154–55 for a discussion of the Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian background of such chains of virtues and their varied appearance and sequence in biblical passages.

used to describe a distinct progression of “stages in a Christian’s earthly experience.”⁸ The three stages that correlate to faith, hope, and charity were described by Joseph Smith as the “three principal rounds”⁹ of a ladder of heavenly ascent. Each round marks a chief juncture in priesthood ordinances and on the pathway to eternal life.

The arguments in the present chapter are structured somewhat like a jigsaw puzzle: three group of pieces will be described separately before they are assembled into a whole. First, I will introduce the idea of the ladder of heavenly ascent as it appeared anciently in various religious traditions. Second, I will discuss descriptions of similar ladders in the revelations and teachings of Joseph Smith, including his characterization of faith, hope, and charity as rungs corresponding to the three kingdoms of glory. Third, I will survey scripture references that relate faith, hope, charity, and “the doctrine of Christ.” Finally, I will show how an understanding of faith, hope, and charity as stages in a disciple’s experience can illuminate the layout and ordinances of the temple. In the magnificent word pictures of faith, hope, and charity painted in the prophetic corpus of Joseph Smith, we recover the lost essence of potent doctrines and symbols once found at the heart of Judaism and early Christianity.¹⁰

8. Writes Joseph A. 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.” *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 501. Below, I will cite other scriptural passages where faith, hope, and charity are associated with *three* stages in the progression of the Christian toward eternal life.

9. Joseph Smith, Jr. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 21 May 1843, 305.

10 For a discussion of the challenges of mining the many relatively untapped veins of inspiration in the teachings of Joseph Smith, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Now That We Have the Words of Joseph Smith, How Shall We Begin to *Understand* Them? A Modest Example of the Challenges Within the Prophet’s 21 May 1843 Discourse on 2 Peter 1,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 20 (2016): 47-150.

So far as I am aware, the meaning of faith, hope, and charity in relation to the ladder of heavenly ascent and the thirteenth Article of Faith has not been explored previously by LDS scholars. For example, James E. Talmage entitles a chapter on the thirteenth Article of Faith “Practical Religion” and emphasizes the wholesome and generous practices of LDS in everyday life. *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 389–412. Neither the explicit use of the language of 1 Cor. 13:7 nor the implicit allusion to faith, hope, and charity is mentioned. In a similar approach to this article of faith,

The Ladder of Heavenly Ascent in Ancient Tradition

Already a religious symbol in Egypt¹¹ and Babylon,¹² the biblical ladder of heavenly ascent first appears in the story of Jacob, who beheld “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.”¹³

The story is later referenced in the Gospel of John. Alluding to the multiple deceits practiced in the story of Jacob/Israel and Laban, Jesus praised the approaching Nathanael at their first meeting, saying, “Behold an Israelite [i.e., a descendant of Jacob]...in whom [unlike Jacob himself] is no guile!”¹⁴ Then, referring to the ladder in Jacob’s dream on which angels had ascended and descended, He solemnly asserted 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.”¹⁵



Figure 1. *Jacob's Ladder*, Bath Abbey, England, 1520.
Photograph by Stephen T. Whitlock (1951-), 9 October 2004.

Bruce R. McConkie entitles his chapter “Pure Religion and Undefined” and briefly discusses the commitment of the Saints to moral principles that is “a natural outgrowth of believing the eternal truths that save.” *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 701. For more on this topic, see the discussion of the thirteenth Article of Faith at the end of this chapter.



Figure 2. *The Ladder of the Cross.* Notre Dame Cathedral, Strasbourg, France, 1276–1439.¹⁶

Later, John records a similar declaration: “I am the *way*, the truth, and the life: *no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”¹⁷

¹⁶ Photograph by Annie B. Schaeffer, 21 February 2016. With kind permission.

¹⁷ John 14:6, emphasis mine. D. A. Carson notes that in this verse, “*way* gains a little emphasis over *truth* and *life.*” *The Gospel According to John.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), Kindle Ed., 103110. The phrase “but by me” further specifies the meaning of the initial assertion, making it clear that He is the only One “that gives access to the Father” (Ridderbos, *John*, Kindle ed., 12147). Cf. 2 Ne. 9:41.



Figure 3. *The Ladder of Virtues of St. John Climacus*, north façade, Sucevita Monastery, Romania, 1602–1604.¹⁸ Note the sequence of virtues that label each rung of the ladder.

In the tympanum above the central portal of the Strasbourg Cathedral, we see the “ladder” of the Savior’s cross, first as overcoming death and then as opening the way to life eternal. The composition shows three levels: 1. The body of Adam lying in hell with the crucified Christ poised on earth directly above him. The wooden cross, corresponding to a branch of the Tree of Knowledge that (in tradition) was planted in Adam’s grave and became an oil-bearing Tree of Mercy,¹⁹ is the axis that links the worlds of the dead and the living; 2. The cross fleury borne by the victorious Jesus, near a flourishing tree and Adam and Eve clasping hands, provides access to heaven; 3. Jesus ascended, the forerunner of those who are “lifted up” by His cross.²⁰

I will not take space here to trace the trajectory of Jacob’s ladder in Christian tradition,²¹ including the well-known elaborations on the

¹⁸ Public Domain. With thanks to Everett Potter, <http://www.everettpotter.com/tag/sucevita/>

¹⁹ See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve. God’s Image and Likeness 1* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 166–167, 340, 462, 595, 614, 615, 640–641, 749.

²⁰ Elaborated from Michel Bouttier, *Cathédrales : Leur Symbolique*. Vol. 2 (Le Mans, France: Centre du Patrimoine, Association Création et Recherche, 1990), 8.

²¹ For an overview, see René Guénon, *Symboles fondamentaux de la Science sacrée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 336–39. Cf. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 7

subject by theologians such as John Climacus (i.e., John “of the ladder”), Saint Augustine, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Suffice it to say that faith, hope, and charity — the “three theological virtues” — became important symbols of the process of spiritual progression and were identified frequently with the three principal rungs on this ladder. As Christians made their climb, some, sadly, as in Lehi’s vision of the Tree of Life, “after they had tasted of the fruit...fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.”²²

The Ladder of Heavenly Ascent in Joseph Smith’s Teachings

In this section I will explore three instances of Joseph Smith’s teachings about the ladder of heavenly ascent. These instances demonstrate how his prophetic gifts allowed him to reach back beyond the religious speculations of the immediately preceding centuries to conceptions that are in harmony with more pristine religious traditions and the Bible. More specifically, Joseph Smith’s teachings, translations, and revelations about the ladder of exaltation are not close cousins of late elaborations that had replaced descriptions of literal and ritual heavenly ascent with abstruse metaphors and allegories. Instead, like the expression of supernal reality contained in the ten “building blocks”²³ of the *sefirot* in mystic Judaism, the Prophet’s explanations of the principles that govern the eternal worlds (and the temple ordinances that reflect them) embody truths that are “quite far from the world of divine ‘attributes’ of which the medieval philosophers wrote with such caution and precision, and

April 1844, 346–48, 354; M. Catherine Thomas, “The Brother of Jared at the veil,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 388–98; M. Catherine Thomas, “Hebrews: To Ascend the Holy Mount,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 479–91; Nahum M. Sarna, “The mists of time,” in *Genesis: World of Myths and Patriarchs*, ed. Ada Feyerick (New York City: New York University Press, 1996), 82.

22 1 Ne. 8:28. Thanks to Steve Whitlock for this suggestion.

23. Arthur Green, *A Guide to the Zohar* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 35.



Figure 4. Herrad of Hohenbourg: *The Ladder of Virtues*, late 12th century CE. The figure of Charity, representing those who have had their election “made sure,” is depicted as having reached the summit of the ladder. Her hand is extended toward the hand of the Lord, shown emerging from a cloud and holding the Crown of Life. Other personages below Charity fall short as they are attracted by one thing or another. The hermit is too busy cultivating his garden and neglects his prayers; the recluse monk longs for sleep; the alms-seeking monk falls for a large basket filled with pieces of silver — what his heart treasures most; the priest’s attention is not occupied by his church but rather by friends, good food and drink, lusts of the flesh, and simony (i.e., the selling of ecclesiastical privileges for money); and the nun chatting with the priest is seduced by the pleasures of the world and by family wealth. Meanwhile, the lay woman (attracted to jewels and beautiful lodgings) and the soldier (tempted by horses, arms, and other soldiers to command) have hardly begun the climb. At the bottom of the ladder, the Devil, whose temptations have ensnared all except Charity herself, appears in the form of a dragon, while his minions take steady aim at their victims with bow and arrow. The caption on the ladder bears a message of encouragement, proclaiming that all those who have fallen will have the opportunity, through sincere penitence, to begin their climb anew. Elaboration of Rosalie Green, Michael Evans, Christine Bischoff, and Michael Curschmann, eds. *The Hortus Deliciarum of Herrad of Hohenbourg* (London: Warburg Institute, 1979), 2:352-353.

with which later apologists sought to identify them.”²⁴ Indeed, it might be said that Joseph Smith’s teachings about the ladder of heavenly ascent, “gave his believing [followers] a sense of what was experientially real, not merely philosophically true.”²⁵

Step-By-Step Ascent on the Ladder of Exaltation

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:*²⁶ 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:*²⁷ Here, then, is eternal life — to know the only wise and true God;²⁸ and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God,²⁹ the same as all Gods have done before you, namely by going from one small degree³⁰ to another, and from a small capacity to a great one,³¹ from grace to grace,³² from exaltation to exaltation,³³ until you attain to the resurrection of the dead,³⁴ and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings,³⁵ and

24 Green, *Guide*, 33.

25 Kathleen Flake, “Translating Time: The Nature and Function of Joseph Smith’s Narrative Canon,” *Journal of Religion* 87, no. 4 (October 2007): 525.

26 Joseph Smith, Jr., *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. A. F. Ehat and L. W. Cook (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), Thomas Bullock Report, 7 April 1844, 350.

27 Smith, *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, 346–47, 348. For a summary of the challenges that early church historians faced in reconstructing Joseph Smith’s teachings for the published *History of the Church* from fragmentary sources, see Bradshaw, “Now That We Have,” 53–55.

28 John 17:3; cf. D&C 132:24.

29 Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; D&C 76:56–57.

30 D&C 131:1–3.

31 2 Cor. 3:18.

32 D&C 93:13.

33 D&C 132:19, 22–23.

34 Phil. 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.”

35 Isa. 33:14.

to sit in glory,³⁶ as do those who sit enthroned³⁷ in everlasting power.³⁸ ...

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 veil³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

As Joseph Smith linked ladder imagery with the principles of eternal life and exaltation, his words incorporated the terminology of temple ordinances and the model they provide for the life beyond.

Faith, Hope, and Charity Within Peter’s Verbal Ladder

In his 21 May 1843 discourse on the doctrine of election,⁴¹ Joseph Smith expounded on the first chapter of 2 Peter. In verses 5–7, faith, hope, and charity form the backbone of a verbal ladder that is consistent with the Prophet’s other teachings about the process of exaltation:

*Original Notes from Joseph Smith’s Journal:*⁴² 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]]

36 Mark 10:37.

37 D&C 132:29.

38 Alma 36:29.

39 Heb. 10:20.

40 Italics in original. Cf. Brigham Young, “Remarks by President Brigham Young, made in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, Sunday p.m., 31 July 1859.” In *Journal of Discourses*, Reprint Ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 6:349.

41 For a full analysis of this sermon, see Bradshaw, “Now That We Have,” 55–80.

42 *The Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rogers (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2015), 21 May 1843, 21.

how did he obtain all things? — th[r]ough the knowledge of him who hath call'd him. — there could not any be given pertain[ing] 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:*⁴³ 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.”⁴⁴ Now, however, this passage of scripture is generally accepted as “fundamentally Pauline”⁴⁵ and, hence, thoroughly consonant with ideas found among the earliest Christians. The emphasis of these verses is on the finishing and refining process of *sanctification*, not the initiatory process of *justification*.⁴⁶

43 Smith, *Words*, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, 206–7.

44 James Starr, “Does 2 Peter 1:4 Speak of Deification?” in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, ed. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 81.

45 Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*. *Oxford Early Christian Studies*, ed. Gillian Clark and Andrew Louth (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 151.

46 Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 21–23. See also Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, *The Contrite Spirit*:

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 these words: that the Saints may “come to share in the very being of God.”⁴⁷ 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.”⁴⁸ In other words, according to Joseph Smith’s exposition of the logic of Peter, the additional “knowledge of the Lord” disciples will receive once they have qualified themselves through the cultivation of all these virtues and enter into God’s presence will be sufficient to 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,”⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ In Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian literature this rhetorical form is called *sorites*, *climax*, or *gradatio*.⁵¹ Harold Attridge explains the ladder-like property of the

How the Temple Helps Us Apply Christ’s Atonement (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 222–23.

47 Samuel M. Jack Suggs Sandmel and Arnold J. Tkaclik, eds., *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford Study Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 2 Pet. 1:4. See also Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 159–60.

48 D&C 107:31; cf. 2 Pet. 1:8.

49 2 Pet. 1:5.

50 Elder Bruce R. McConkie also concluded that there is “an additive order to the attaining of these attributes.” Cited in *Revelations of the Restoration: A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Revelations*, ed. Joseph F. McConkie and Craig J. Ostler (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 68.

51 Henry A. Fischel, “The Uses of *Sorites* (*Climax*, *Gradatio*) in the Tannaitic Period.” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973): 119–51.

An earlier, Israelite form of *sorites* was used, e.g., in Joel 1:3; Gen. 36:31–43; 1 Chron. 1 and 2. Matt. 1:1–17 and Moshe Lieber, *The Pirkei Avos Treasury: The Sages Guide to Living with an Anthologized Commentary and Anecdotes* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1995) 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 Rom. 5:3–5 and 2 Pet. 1:5–7 in Jewish and Roman literature, see Herbert Marks, Gerald Hammond, and Austin Busch, *The English Bible: King James Version, A Norton Critical Edition* (New York City: W. W. Norton, 2012), Wisdom 6:17–20, p. 2:739; *The Mishnah: A New Translation*, ed. Jacob Neusner (London: Yale University Press, 1988), Sotah,

personal qualities given in such lists: “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*.”⁵²

Joseph Neyrey further 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.⁵³ The table below summarizes key words in scriptural passages from Romans 5, 2 Peter 1, 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] ⁵⁴	<i>patience</i>	<i>patience</i>
	godliness	

9:15:III:MM, 466; Lucius Annaeus Seneca (ca. 5 BCE – 65 CE), *Ad Lucilium, Epistulae Morales* 2, trans. Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, 1962), 85:2, pp. 286–87; Cicero, “De Legibus,” in *On the Republic; On the Laws*, trans. Clinton W. Keyes (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 1:7:22–23, pp. 320–23. 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. See Dominic Hyde, “*Sorites* Paradox,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/sorites-paradox/>. (accessed 3 June 2017).

52 Harold W. Attridge, Wayne A. Meeks, Jouette M. Bassler, Werner Lemke, Susan Niditch, and Eileen M. Schuller, eds. *The HarperCollins Study Bible, Fully Revised and Updated* (New York City: HarperOne, 2006), 2068 n. 1:5–7.

53 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 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.

54 The relationship between hope and patience is complex and multivalent. See 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Tim. 3:10; Titus 2:2; Heb. 6:12; 2 Pet. 1:6; Rev. 2:19; Alma 7:23; D&C 4:6; 6:19; 107:30 where patience either complements hope or replaces it. Rom. 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 D&C 122:7). Bailey writes the following about *hupomene*:

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* [longsuffering] is the patience of the powerful, *hupomene* is the *patience of the weak* who unflinchingly endure suffering.... Jesus... is the supreme example of [this] virtue. Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press Academic, 2011), 368.

Romans 5:1–5

love

2 Peter 1:5–7

brotherly kindness

charity

D&C 4:6

brotherly kindness

godliness

charity

humility

diligence

Though the secondary virtues within the three lists differ,⁵⁵ the reward for disciples who cultivate faith, hope, and charity is essentially the same. In 2 Peter 1:4, 8, 10, they are promised that they will become “partakers of the divine nature” and that ultimately they will be fruitful “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” — thus, in Joseph Smith’s reading, making their “calling and election sure.” Likewise, 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.”⁵⁶ Finally, in D&C 4:7 the promise given to

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” (Bowen, pers. comm., 7 March 2016; cf. footnote 214 below). He suggests that this may reflect the process of preparation and trial as one approaches the veil (cf. D&C 136:31). Note that to “endure to the end” means to complete the path that leads to eternal life or, in other words, to come to the point where the personal oath of the Father, the sure promise of calling and election, is received. See 2 Ne. 31:15, 20; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Ne. 13:37; 22:31; 2 Ne. 9:24; 33:4; 3 Ne. 15:9; Mormon 9:29; Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2007), 2:445–446; Hafen and Hafen, *Contrite Spirit*, 57–58.

In the New Testament and modern scripture, the quality of “longsuffering” (Greek *makrothymia*) is often mentioned, typically in conjunction with patience. Cf. Eph. 4:2; 1 Cor. 13:4; 2 Cor. 6:6; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 3:12; 2 Tim. 3:10; Alma 7:23; 13:28; 17:11; 38:3; Moro. 7:45; D&C 107:30; 118:3; 121:41.

55 Neyrey points out that 2 Pet. 1:5–7, unlike Rom. 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, “On the Special Laws,” in *Philo*, ed. F. H. Colson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 2:211–213, pp. 438–41, 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.” Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 154–55.

56 James E. Faulconer, *Life of Holiness: Notes and Reflections on Romans 1, 5–8* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2012), 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

faithful Saints evokes 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”⁵⁷ — a threefold promise that Matthew L. Bowen correlates to faith, hope, and charity. He also 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.”⁵⁸ Jack Welch has argued

in Rom. 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.”

57 Matt. 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 Pet. 1:5–7 (*The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, ed. Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley, Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer [Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2011], 3:2, p. 21 [p. 9]), so D&C 4:7 contains a truncated version of Matt. 7:7 (cf. Luke 11:9; 3 Ne. 14:7; 3 Ne. 27:29).

58 Matthew L. Bowen, “‘Thy Will Be Done’: The Savior’s Use of the Divine Passive,” in *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture*, ed. Gaye Strathearn, Thomas A. Wayment, and Daniel L. Belnap (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 230–48. Bowen (“Thy Will Be Done,” 243) comments:

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” (John A. Tvedtnes, “Temple Prayer in Ancient Times,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999], 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 Ne. 9:41–42). See John Gee, “The Keeper of the Gate,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, 233–73.

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 Ne. 32:4). 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 Num. 6:24–27), a full reception of the blessings of the Atonement or the royal “adoption” (Rom. 8:15–23), the greatest possible “revelation.”

Regarding revelation, Bowen (*ibid.*, 248 n. 41) continues:

The word “revelation” from Latin *revelatio* originally connoted “a taking away of the veil” (compare Greek *apokalyptein*, “uncover”). This idea is depicted in



Figure 5. A new bishop knocks three times with a mallet on the door of the Cathedral as part of a Roman Catholic entrance ritual.

likewise that the symbolism of knocking is best understood “in a ceremonial context.”⁵⁹ However, it should be remembered that the temple ordinances foreshadow actual events in the life of faithful disciples who endure to the end.⁶⁰

The expansion of 2 Peter’s list of virtues in D&C 4 warrants further discussion. In that revelation, 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 D&C 4 to ten in number.⁶¹ Jack Welch has shown how the number ten in Jewish tradition — which conveys the idea of perfection, especially divine completion — relates to human ascension into the holy of holies or highest degree of heaven:⁶²

2 Cor. 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 Cor. 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” (Rom. 8:19, 21).

⁵⁹ John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 72. Figure 5 depicts Bishop Brian Joseph Dunn on 25 January 2010, when he was installed as the Ordinary of the Antigonish, Nova Scotia diocese. Matthew B. Brown, “Cube, Gate, and Measuring Tools: A Biblical Pattern.” In *Ancient Temple Worship*, ed. M. B. Brown, J. M. Bradshaw, S. D. Ricks and J. S. Thompson (Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2014), 6 writes: “He knocks three times and recites part of Psalm 24 — which is an ancient Israelite temple entrance text. This triple knocking and Psalm citation ceremony can be traced back among normative Christians to a very early period [see *ibid.*, 16–17]. For example, if Luke 13:22–30 is compared with chapters 21 and 22 of the book of Revelation a clear set of parallels materializes [see *ibid.*, 14–16].” Cf. Alonzo L. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2011), 230–232.

⁶⁰ See 1 Cor. 13:12; D&C 93:1. Cf. John A. Widtsoe, “Work for the Dead.” *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 6 (1915): 33. Also cited in Alan K. Parrish, *John A. Widtsoe: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 307–08.

⁶¹ See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “He That Thrusteth in His Sickle,” 190–91.

⁶² John W. Welch, “Counting to Ten,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 2 (2003): 57.

“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.”⁶³ 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”⁶⁴...

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.⁶⁵

Though the verbal ladders of Romans, 2 Peter, and D&C 4 make no explicit mention of rites inculcating the divine pathway of virtues, a lecture based on these teachings would be a fitting summary of the process of progression embodied in Latter-day Saint temple ordinances.⁶⁶

The Three Degrees of Glory as the Main Rungs of the Ladder

An additional reference to the ladder of heavenly ascent appears in the reconstructed version of Joseph Smith’s 21 May 1843 discourse on election that was published in the *History of the Church*. There the Prophet 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.”⁶⁷ The three kingdoms of glory, of course, naturally correlate

63 Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 134. Cf. Donald W. Parry, “Demarcation between Sacred Space and Profane Space: The Temple of Herod Model,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 413–14.

64 F. I. Andersen, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 1:140.

65 In an unpublished manuscript, “The Kabbalistic *Sefirot*: Overlooked Prototypes in First- and Second-Century Christian Literature,” Samuel Zinner has shown that in several ancient Christian writings, what later surfaced as the Jewish Sefirot appear as Christian virtues.

66. With regard to D&C 4, see Bradshaw, “He That Thrusteth in His Sickle.”

67 Smith, *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, 305. Because early 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 these

to symbolic representations of these three differing glories within the temple.⁶⁸ Already in 1832, Joseph Smith had equated the “mysteries of godliness”⁶⁹ to Jacob’s ladder.

Assuming the gist of Joseph Smith’s statement correlating the “three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder” to the three kingdoms of glory is reported accurately, it would be, along with the “rough stone rolling”⁷⁰ anecdote, a second wordplay in the discourse that might have been recognized by the Prophet’s fellow Freemasons. Significantly, within the first degree of Masonry, the ladder is 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.”⁷¹ Like the reconstructed statement of Joseph Smith, Masonic sources correlate these three “principal rounds” with three different worlds or states of existence, beginning with the physical world and ending with the Heavens. All these culminate in a fourth level, associated with “Divinity.”⁷² Putting this ancient imagery

individuals correctly intuited the gist of the Prophet words in this context. Elsewhere, I argue that this statement was not made up from whole cloth (Bradshaw, “Now That We Have,” 61–66). I adduce evidence from a source not available to the compilers of Joseph Smith’s manuscript history that something like this statement was mistakenly transposed from its original place near the end of the discourse and then erroneously conflated with an earlier reference to a ladder.

68 James L. Carroll, “The Reconciliation of Adam and Israelite Temples.” *Studia Antiqua* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 83–101, in particular, 95 n. 18.

69 Smith, *Teachings*, August 1832, 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 Tim. 3:16; D&C 19:10; 84:19–21. Speaking of Jacob’s dream of the heavenly ladder in Gen. 28, 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.” Marion G. Romney, “Temples — the gates to heaven,” in *Look to God and Live* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 239–40. See also Hugh W. Nibley, “On the Sacred and the Symbolic,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 579–81.

70 In the same sermon, Joseph Smith characterized himself as a “rough stone roling down hill.” Smith, *Journals*, Vol. 3, 21 May 1843, 20. The comparison of the polishing of a rough stone to the moral education of the Prophet would not have been unfamiliar to fellow Freemasons in his audience since it related to the imagery of the “rough ashlar” that was to be made perfect. See, e.g., W. Kirk MacNulty, *Freemasonry: Symbols, Secrets, Significance* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 160.

71 Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences* (New York City: The Masonic History Co., 1913) s.v., Jacob’s Ladder, 361.

72 MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, 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

in Masonic terms already familiar to many of the Nauvoo Saints might have served a pragmatic purpose, favoring acceptance and understanding of the scriptural ladder of exaltation better than if a new and foreign vocabulary had been used.⁷³

Of course, it must be understood that Freemasonry is not a religion and, in contrast to Latter-day Saint temple ordinances, does not assert divine sanction for its rites.⁷⁴ Unlike the allegories of Masonic ritual, which include beautiful moral truths while eschewing salvific claims, LDS temple doctrines and ordinances purport a power in the priesthood that imparts sanctity to their simple forms, making earthly symbols holy by connecting them to the divinely delegated authority of the living God.⁷⁵ Thus, when Joseph Smith taught the Saints about charity, he was not merely speaking in general, philosophical terms about the desirability

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.

73 See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Freemasonry and the Origins of Modern Temple Ordinances,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 181. <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/freemasonry-and-the-origins-of-modern-temple-ordinances/> (accessed May 20, 2016). As Jason Lindquist puts it:

[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 that is contrary to their traditions” (Smith, *Teachings*, 20 January 1844, 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. “Keywords: Joseph Smith, Language Change, and Theological Innovation,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 36.

74 Hugh W. Nibley, “What Is a Temple?” In *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, ed. Todd M. Compton and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 369. On the topic of Freemasonry and the origins of modern temple ordinances, see, more generally, Bradshaw, “Freemasonry,” 159–237.

75. For a discussion of the significance of apostolic succession in the Restored Church, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “‘There’s the Boy I Can Trust’: Dennison Lott Harris’ Account,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 47–51.

of renouncing sinful habits and acquiring a Christlike character. Rather, he believed that charity was a literal perfecting and protecting attribute of divine power that became fully operative only in connection with the sealing blessings of earthly and heavenly priesthood ordinances. In 1831, the Prophet taught:

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.⁷⁶

A Survey of Scripture References to Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Doctrine of Christ

With Joseph Smith's teachings about the ladder of heavenly ascent as background, I will now survey scripture references to faith, hope, charity, and the general sequence of ordinances and blessings known as "the doctrine of Christ."⁷⁷ Then I will examine four exemplary passages of scripture in more detail. Two of these passages weave faith, hope, and charity directly into discussions of the doctrine of Christ, thus joining two seemingly disparate terminologies into a single, rich description of the ladder of heavenly ascent.

Faith, Hope, and Charity

Although the biblical triad of faith, hope, and charity is, strictly speaking, a New Testament construct, David Calabro has suggested that in the context of ancient covenants, faith was understood "as faithfulness (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."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 23; Smith, *Teachings*, 25 October 1831, 9; 2 Pet. 1:5–11, Moro. 8:25–26.

⁷⁷ Heb. 6:1; 2 John 1:9; 2 Ne. 31:2; 32:6; Jacob 7:2, 6; 3 Ne. 2:2

⁷⁸ David Calabro, pers. comm., 9 March 2016. Regarding love in such treaties, which encompasses the commandment to "love God" in Deut. 6:5, see Moshe Weinfeld, "The Common Heritage of Covenantal Traditions in the Ancient World," in *I Trattati nel Mondo Antico Forma Ideologia Funzione*, ed. Luciano Canfora, Mario Liverani, and Carlo Zaccagnini (Rome: "L'ERMA" di Bretschneider and the Istituto Gramsci, Seminario di Antichistica, 1990), 81–82.

Calabro⁷⁹ 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, to the reification of *hope* as a representation of the glorified Christ in Hebrews 6:18–20, and to the personified description of eternally enduring *charity* in 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 and Moroni 7:44–46.⁸⁰ The significance of this comparison with Proverbs 8 is enhanced in remembering that Wisdom — like faith, hope, and charity (as argued in the present chapter) — was associated anciently with knowledge of the mysteries received in the temple.⁸¹

In addition, Joseph Neyrey has observed 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.”⁸² One might also note in this connection 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.⁸³

Psalm 15 lists ten qualifications — including, significantly, the three previously mentioned divine attributes of truth, righteousness, and uprightness — for those who would “abide in [the] tabernacle.”⁸⁴ Similar lists of commandments were displayed outside ancient temples.⁸⁵ Second-temple Judaism, like later Christianity, produced long lists of

79 David Calabro, 9 March 2016.

80 On the eternal nature of charity, see 1 Cor. 13:8 and Moro. 7:47. Cf. the personified description of Alma 42:24: “mercy claimeth all which is her own.”

81 Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, 516–18.

82 Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 155.

83 Brown, “Cube, Gate, and Measuring Tools, 3–14. Cf. 1 Kings 3:6; Ps. 15:1–2; Rev. 21:27. See also Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Standing in the Holy Place: Ancient and Modern Reverberations of an Enigmatic New Testament Prophecy,” in *Ancient Temple Worship*, ed. Matthew B. Brown, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Stephen D. Ricks and John S. Thompson (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 75–78, 81 and Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Keys and Symbols of the Priesthood*.

84 Ps. 15:1. Thanks to David Larsen for this suggestion.

85 Moshe Weinfeld, “Instructions for Temple Visitors in the Bible and in Ancient Egypt,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 28 (1982):224–50; Moshe Weinfeld, “The Decalogue: Its Significance, Uniqueness, and Place in Israel’s Tradition,” in *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives*, ed. Edwin B. Firmage, Bernard G. Weiss and John W. Welch (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 11–12, 17, 24–25, 34–36; John W. Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 82. Thanks to Jack Welch for this suggestion.

virtues and vices that are related to a greater or lesser extent with temple themes and the idea of heavenly ascent.⁸⁶



Figure 6. Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and William Morris (1835-1896): *Spes, Caritas, and Fides* (*Hope, Charity, and Faith*), Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, England. These three martyred saints, whose common mother was named Sophia (Wisdom) in some accounts, were said to have lived during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (2nd century CE).⁸⁷

Within the New Testament, faith, hope/patience,⁸⁸ and charity/love⁸⁹ are mentioned together in fifteen passages, but appear only four times in

⁸⁶ E.g., Marks, *English Bible*, Wisdom 6:17–20, 2:739; Neusner, *Mishnah*, 9:15:III:MM, 4p. 66. Philo, *On the Giants*, 19–39, pp. 107–23 gives detailed portraits of the opposites of Virtue and Pleasure, which include among the descriptions long lists of adjectives describing one (see pp. 110–13) or the other (see pp. 116–19).

⁸⁷ Copyrighted photograph by Jules Meredith. Used with kind permission.

⁸⁸ See footnote 54 above.

⁸⁹ See footnote 285 below.

that order.⁹⁰ Twelve of these instances are within writings traditionally attributed to Paul, two are found in 1 and 2 Peter, and one is within the book of Revelation. Within the Book of Mormon, faith, hope, and charity are mentioned together by Nephi, Alma, Mormon, and Moroni in eight places, and in the Doctrine and Covenants they are referenced six additional times.⁹¹ Significantly, within modern scripture the themes of faith, hope, and charity are discussed in the same specific order for every instance but one.⁹²

The Doctrine of Christ

The term “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 31–32,⁹³ twice in Jacob 7,⁹⁴ and once in 3 Nephi 2:2.

So far as I have been able to determine, Joseph Smith’s sermons never directly addressed the relationship among faith, hope, and charity as they appear in the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants, except within the 21 May 1843 discourse on

90 Rom. 5:1–5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5–6; Eph. 4:2–5; Col. 1:4–5, 23; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8; 2 Thess. 1:3–4; 2 Tim. 3:10; Titus 2:2; Heb. 6:10–12; 10:22–24; 1 Pet. 1:21–22; 2 Pet. 1:5–8; Rev. 2:19. The virtues are mentioned in the order of faith, hope, and charity in these verses or passages: Rom. 5:1–5; 1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Pet. 1:21–22; and 2 Pet. 1:5–8. In addition the following verses mention faith and charity only: 1 Thess. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2:15. The following verses mention charity only: 1 Cor. 8:1; 14:1; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 4:8; 5:14; 3 John 1:6; Jude 1:12.

91 2 Ne. 31:19–20; 33:7–9; Alma 7:24; 13:29; Ether 12:3ff. (esp. v. 28); Moro. 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 Cor. 13:7.

Responding to critics of the Book of Mormon who see its passages on faith, hope, and charity as having been lifted directly from 1 Cor. 13:13, Nibley notes Paul’s fondness for “quoting from old Jewish and Greek sources.” Hugh W. Nibley, “Howlers in the Book of Mormon,” in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 254; cf. Archibald M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961); Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 112, 455–56 nn. 2–4. Nibley 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. Nibley, “Howlers,” 254, 257 n. 23.

92 I.e., 2 Ne. 33:7–9.

93 2 Ne. 31:2, 21; 32:6.

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

the first chapter of 2 Peter that was discussed previously.⁹⁵ Moreover, his only references to the “doctrine of Christ” occurred when he directly quoted Hebrews 6:1–2 without elaboration. The absence of commentary by Joseph Smith on relevant passages from the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants is consistent with his general propensity to draw almost exclusively from the Bible and biblical language in his teachings. In light of the Prophet’s silence on the teachings of modern scripture in this regard, it would seem difficult to sustain arguments that would require Book of Mormon passages that describe sophisticated relationships among faith, hope, charity, and the doctrine of Christ to have originated in the mind of Joseph Smith himself.

Connecting Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Doctrine of Christ

Scriptural teachings that relate faith, hope, and charity to the doctrine of Christ can be summarized in two paragraphs:

- All who are determined to become followers of Christ must first begin by *repenting* and exercising *faith* in Him, which brings about a justificatory⁹⁶ remission of their sins through *baptism*⁹⁷ — a preparatory ordinance of the Aaronic Priesthood. 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 the bestowal of the right, through worthiness, to receive and enjoy *the gift of the Holy Ghost*.
- Keeping the covenants associated with ordinances endows disciples of Christ with the increased knowledge and strength

⁹⁵ Apart from the Prophet’s discussions of 2 Pet. 1, his increasingly frequent teachings on “charity” in Nauvoo were based on a conventional understanding of its importance as an essential personal quality, without explicit reference to how it relates to faith, hope, the doctrine of Christ, the temple, or the process of exaltation. See Smith, *Words*, 3 October 1841, 78; 7 November 1841, 80; 1 May 1842, 119–120, 9 June 1842, 12 May 1844, 371; “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” in *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society*, ed. Jill M. Derr, Carol C. Madsen, Kate Holbrook and Matthew J. Grow (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2016), 17 March 1842, 104; 28 April 1842, 117–119; 17 March 1842, 31; 28 April 1842, 57–59; 9 June 1842, 78–79; 28 April 1842, 119; 123–124; Smith, *Journals*, Vol. 2, 28 April 1842, 52.

⁹⁶ Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 166; David A. Bednar, “Clean Hands and a Pure Heart,” *Ensign*, November 2007, 80–83; Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *D&C Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 104; D. Todd Christofferson, “Justification and Sanctification,” *Ensign*, June 2001, 18–25; Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood,” 164–72; Rom. 5:1; D&C 20:30.

⁹⁷ 2 Ne. 31:9, 17–18.

they need to remain patient and steadfast through the testing process of sanctification.⁹⁸ As they continue to “press forward”⁹⁹ with “*unshaken faith*”¹⁰⁰ on this path, they develop “*a perfect brightness of hope*,”¹⁰¹ and a *love of God and of all men*¹⁰² that enables them to consecrate their all to the building up of the kingdom of God.¹⁰³ Then, if they continue to “*endure to the end*, in following the example of the Son of the living God,”¹⁰⁴ having been “chastened and tried, even as Abraham,”¹⁰⁵ and being “filled”¹⁰⁶ with *charity*, “*the pure love of Christ*,”¹⁰⁷ they will be prepared to hear the Father’s sure oath: “Ye shall have eternal life.”¹⁰⁸

Although most scripture references to faith, hope, and charity or the doctrine of Christ consist only of brief allusions to the wider picture just described, in a few instances these concepts are explained in greater detail. I will now examine four such instances more closely.

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

Of the four instances examined below, two center on faith, hope, and charity (Ether 12 and Moroni 7) and the other two 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) artfully and deliberately weave faith, hope, and charity into their instruction.

Significantly, the three exemplars chosen from the Book of Mormon are not random or obscure selections; each plays a prominent role in

98 Smith, *D&C Commentary*, 104; Hel. 3:35; D&C 20:31; Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood,” 172–183.

99 2 Ne. 31:20.

100 2 Ne. 31:19, emphasis added.

101 Cf. Heb. 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: “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).

102 2 Ne. 31:20, emphasis added.

103 See Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses*, 213–15.

104 2 Ne. 31:16.

105 D&C 101:4.

106 Moro. 7:48.

107 *Ibid.*, 7:47, emphasis added. See also v. 48. Compare 1 Pet. 1:22; Jacob 3:2.

108 2 Ne. 31:20.

the overall teaching scheme of its author (Nephi, Mormon, Moroni). Likewise, Hebrews 5:11–6:20 is not a simple digression in the doctrinal arguments of its author but rather a key to the interpretation of the entire epistle.

Finally, in anticipation of the final section of this chapter, we note that these four passages might be seen as excerpts from larger “temple texts,” standing alongside other temple texts that have been brilliantly described by Margaret Barker, Jack Welch, and others.¹⁰⁹

- *Hebrews 6*. The chapter begins by distinguishing between “the [first] principles of the *doctrine of Christ*”¹¹⁰ and the higher way of “perfection”¹¹¹ that has been opened by Jesus Christ, the “sure and stedfast” object of our hope¹¹² and, in the role of “an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec,”¹¹³ our “forerunner”¹¹⁴ “within the veil.”¹¹⁵

According to one Bible scholar, Hebrews 6:1–8 “may be the most difficult passage to interpret in the entire epistle.”¹¹⁶ Happily, Joseph Smith returned to these verses often in his teachings, relying on the summary of the first principles of the Gospel

109. According to Welch, a text can be seen as a “temple text” if it “contains the most sacred teachings of the plan of salvation that are not to be shared indiscriminately, and that ordains or otherwise conveys divine powers through ceremonial or symbolic means, together with commandments received by sacred oaths that allow the recipient to stand ritually in the presence of God.” John W. Welch, “The Temple in the Book of Mormon: The Temples at the Cities of Nephi, Zarahemla, and Bountiful,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 300–01.

110 Heb. 6:1, emphasis added.

111. Heb. 6:1.

112 Heb. 6:19.

113 Heb. 6:20.

114 Ibid.

115 Heb. 6:19.

116 David L. Allen, *Hebrews. The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2010), 339.

given in verses 1–2¹¹⁷ and on the description of specific aspects of the doctrine of election in verses 4–8.¹¹⁸

Significantly, the transition between the first and last part of chapter 6 introduces faith, hope/patience, and charity into the discussion in reverse order. Elsewhere, such reversals portray these three qualities as the *fruits* of divine knowledge gained through experience:¹¹⁹ “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*

117 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 misreading of Heb. 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...’” (Smith, *Teachings*, 15 October 1843, 328, emphasis added; cf. Smith, *Words*, 15 October 1843, 256. See also JST Heb. 6:1–2; Smith, *Teachings*, 1 September 1835, 82–83; *ibid.*, December 1835, 99). Joseph Smith’s reading is consistent with modern scholarship (e.g., Allen, *Hebrews*, 339–40).

118 See Smith, *Words*, 10 March 1844, 330, 335; *ibid.*, 7 April 1844, 361.

119 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” (Guénon, *Symboles*, 339, my translation). A clear example of the descending degrees of “fruits” can be found in Gal. 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. Heb. 6:10–12. The idea of the double ladder of ascent and descent finds a parallel in Gen. 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. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “The Ezekiel Mural at Dura Europos: A tangible witness of Philo’s Jewish mysteries?” *BYU Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010): 4–49. See also account of descent followed by ascent described in chapter 1 of the book of Moses. See Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses*, 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.” “Seven mysteries of knowledge: Qumran *e/sotericism* recovered,” in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 213.

unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through *faith* and *patience* inherit the promises.”¹²⁰

Chapter six concludes with a description of the sure promise of eternal life vouchsafed anciently by God to Abraham and the equally “sure and stedfast” “anchor to the soul”¹²¹ that is made available to all the Saints by the Savior, the object of their hope, who entered “within the veil” as a “forerunner...for us.”¹²² The Prophet Joseph Smith explicitly associated the imagery of these verses in Hebrews with the “more sure word of prophecy” described in 2 Peter 1:19.¹²³

- 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*”¹²⁴ “that he has selected out of a lifetime of vivid events and important theological concepts.”¹²⁵

Nephi exhorts his readers to “follow the Son, with full purpose of heart”¹²⁶ 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] in order to receive “a remission of... sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.”¹²⁷

Then, he weaves the one and only mention of faith, hope, and charity in chapters 31 and 32¹²⁸ 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 [i.e., through the gate]

120 Heb. 6:10–12.

121 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.”

122 Heb. 6:19–20.

123 Joseph Smith, Jr., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 26 September 1833, 323; Smith, *Words*, 14 May 1843, 201; Smith, *Teachings*, 14 May 1843, 298–99.

124 2 Ne. 31:2, emphasis added. Cf. 2 Ne. 31:21; 32:6.

125 Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:432.

126 2 Ne. 31:13.

127 2 Ne. 31:17.

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

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 [cf. consecration at the altar of incense that stood just in front of the veil]. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ [cf. the temple shewbread¹²⁹], and *endure to the end* [cf. the veil that conceals the Holy of Holies], behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life”¹³⁰ [cf. the personal oath of the Father].

In 2 Nephi 33:9, having just expressed the *charity* he has for all people, Nephi reiterates that there is no other way besides the one he has just outlined: “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 has led them to repent and be baptized], and walk in the strait path [of *hope*] which leads to life [i.e., eternal life, conferred at the veil], and continue in the path *until the end* of the day of probation [cf. 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.¹³¹ It provides much in the way of instruction and examples of faith,¹³² while also mentioning hope in five places¹³³ and enjoining charity six times.¹³⁴

Following his initial focus on faith in the first part of the chapter, Moroni acknowledges his “weakness in writing”¹³⁵ and expresses his “fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at [his] words.”¹³⁶ (Note that Moroni expresses this concern immediately after describing the awe-inspiring experience of the brother of Jared at the veil — which took place on a mountain called Shelem

129. For more on the significance of the temple shewbread in connection with the sacrament, the law of consecration, and the eschatological heavenly feast, see Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified,” 183–92.

130 2 Ne. 31:19–20.

131 Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:287–88.

132 Ether 12:6–22.

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

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

135 Ether 12:23.

136 Ether 12:25.

“because of its exceeding height”¹³⁷ and perhaps also because the name relates to the Semitic root for “ladder.”¹³⁸) The Lord replied comfortingly to Moroni’s concern by making it clear that His “grace is sufficient for the meek”¹³⁹ and that in order for “weak things [to] become strong”¹⁴⁰ the Gentiles must be shown that it is “*faith, hope and charity* [that] *bringeth unto me* — the fountain of all righteousness.”¹⁴¹ “Bringeth unto me,” of course, may be interpreted both ritually and literally.

In the verses that follow, Moroni expands upon the topics of *faith*,¹⁴² *hope*,¹⁴³ and *charity*,¹⁴⁴ in that specific order, before closing the chapter with moving words of farewell.¹⁴⁵

- *Moroni 7*. Following a summary of liturgical information in chapters 1–6, Moroni records his father Mormon’s sermon “concerning *faith, hope, and charity*”¹⁴⁶ as a prime example of the preaching and exhorting that took place in the Nephite Church at that time.¹⁴⁷

Mormon begins by reminding his hearers that it is not merely their actions but also the sincerity of their hearts that matters to God¹⁴⁸ — in other words, unless they “do that which is good...with real intent it profiteth...nothing.”¹⁴⁹ Then he shows them how they can “know good from evil”¹⁵⁰ “with a perfect knowledge”¹⁵¹ through diligent search “in the light of Christ.”¹⁵²

137 Ether 3:1.

138 Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Pearl of Great Price* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 196.

139 Ether 12:26.

140 Ether 12:27.

141 Ether 12:28. See Ether 8:26, where “the fountain of all righteousness” also appears to refer to Christ. cf. 1 Ne. 2:9, which “could be a metaphorical reference to Christ.” Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004–2009), 6:3831.

142 Ether 12:29–31.

143 Ether 12:32.

144 Ether 12:33–37.

145 Ether 12:38–41.

146 Moro. 7:1.

147 Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:366.

148 Moro. 7:5–13.

149 Moro. 7:6.

150 Moro. 7:15, emphasis added.

151 Moro. 7:16.

152 Moro. 7:19.

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*?”¹⁵³ The answer is: through *faith*,¹⁵⁴ *hope*,¹⁵⁵ and *charity*.¹⁵⁶ Mormon defines charity, “which is the greatest of all,”¹⁵⁷ as “the pure love of Christ.”¹⁵⁸ He further explains that this gift is the key to divine sonship, being “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.”¹⁵⁹

A beautiful instance of *gradatio* in Moroni 8:25–26 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”:¹⁶⁰ “And the first fruits of repentance is baptism [cf. the 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 [cf. the lamp], which Comforter filleth with *hope* and *perfect love*, which love *endureth* by diligence unto prayer [cf. the altar of incense near the veil], until the end shall come [cf. the veil itself], when all the saints shall dwell with God [cf. the Holy of Holies].”

Significant passages that link instruction on faith, hope, and charity with the doctrine of Christ sometimes 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*

153 Moro. 7:20.

154 Moro. 7:21–39.

155 Moro. 7:40–42.

156 Moro. 7:43–48.

157 Moro. 7:46.

158 Moro. 7:47.

159 Moro. 7:48.

160 Thanks to Matthew L. Bowen and John S. Thompson for this suggestion (pers. comm., 7 March 2016). David Richins posits a ladder-like structure for the entire chapter in “The Hidden Message in Moroni 7,” *The Lunch is Free*, 27 and 31 August 2016, <https://thelunchisfree.wordpress.com/2016/08/27/the-hidden-message-in-moroni-7/comment-page-1/#comment-64> (accessed 31 September 2016).

the Lord, from this time henceforth until [they would] rest with him in heaven.”¹⁶¹ Similarly, the disciples addressed by Paul¹⁶² 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*.”¹⁶³ Moreover, just as Paul chided his readers because he had to teach them again about the “first principles of the oracles of God”¹⁶⁴ when he expected them to be qualified already as teachers themselves,¹⁶⁵ so Alma, prior to his brief exhortation about faith, hope, and charity,¹⁶⁶ sought to awaken his hearers to a sense of their “duty to God”¹⁶⁷ so they could “walk after the holy order of God, after which [they had *already*] *been received*.”¹⁶⁸

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

In this section, I relate faith, hope, and charity to a journey through the temple. The succession of three primary sacred spaces of increasing holiness found in Israelite temples is usually followed in the physical layout of modern LDS temples.

Preparing to Leave the Telestial World: Faith and the First Principles and Ordinances of the Gospel

The journey of the high priest 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 humankind’s fallen state of existence in a place of telestial glory.¹⁶⁹ In the courtyard of the

161 Moro. 7:3, emphasis added.

162 See Terrence L. Szink, “Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *How the New Testament Came to Be*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 243–59 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.*, 253. See also Kevin L. Barney, ed. *Footnotes to the New Testament for Latter-Day Saints*, 2007 <http://feastupontheword.org/Site:NTFootnotes>, 3:53–55).

163 Heb. 5:12, 14.

164 Heb. 5:12.

165 Heb. 5:12. See Allen, *Hebrews*, 333, 334.

166 Alma 7:24.

167 Alma 7:22.

168 *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

169 James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1912), 187–88.

Israelite temple were located the altar of sacrifice¹⁷⁰ and the laver of water used by priests for purification before they entered the temple proper.¹⁷¹ 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 6.¹⁷² John S. 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."¹⁷³

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 proposition¹⁷⁴ but as "the moving cause of all action."¹⁷⁵ 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."¹⁷⁶ Throughout 2 Nephi 31, Nephi also emphasizes the specific

170 Lev. 1:2; 2:1, 13; 23:13.

171 Exod. 30:17–21.

172 David Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016), 163–79, in particular 171–72. Calabro elaborates:

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. *Ibid.*, 172.

See also Bradshaw, "LDS Book of Enoch," 57–58; Bradshaw and Bowen, "By the Blood," 144.

173 John S. Thompson, "How John's Gospel Portrays Jesus as the Way of the Temple," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, 312.

174 See Wilfred C. Smith, *Belief and History* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1977); Weinfeld, "Common Heritage." Thanks to David Calabro.

175 Smith, *Published Revelations*, Lectures on Faith 1:10, 316.

176 The list in Heb. 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" (Smith, *Words*, 27 June 1839, 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 Smith, *Words*, 15 October 1843, 256; Smith, *Teachings*, 16 May 1841, 72–73; 10 March 1844, 330; 7 April 1844, 343). Although the Prophet appears not to have considered these doctrines

ordinances that accompany faith. More pointedly, it might be said that “faith *produces* ordinances.”¹⁷⁷ 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.”¹⁷⁸

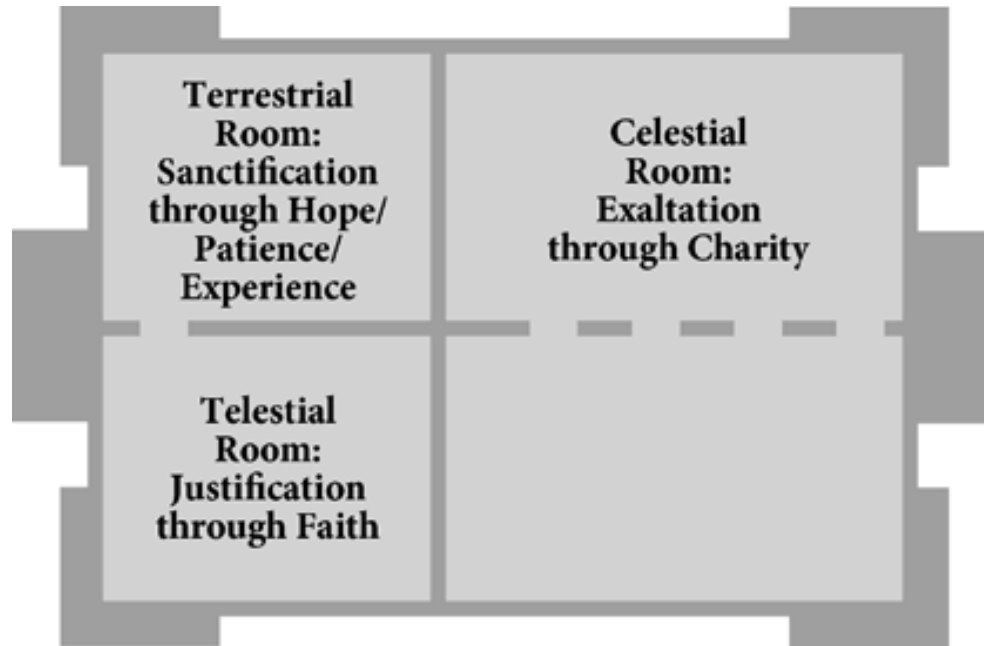


Figure 7. The Ladder of Heavenly Ascent Superposed on the Layout of Ordinance Rooms on the Second Floor of the Salt Lake Temple ¹⁷⁹

Visualizing a movement from the temple courtyard to the temple proper makes Nephi’s words about repentance and baptism (corresponding

as an actual *part* of the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4; Smith, *Words*, 15 October 1843, 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.

177 Monte S. Nyman, “Hope, Faith, and Charity (Moro. 7–8),” in *Alma 30 to Moroni*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1988), 296–97, emphasis added.

178 Joseph F. McConkie, “The Promise of Eternal Life,” in *1 Nephi to Alma 29*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 163.

179. Ordinance room layout adapted by Samuel H. Bradshaw (1990–) from a photograph of the original plans in C. Mark Hamilton, *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People* (Salt Lake City, UT: University Services Corporation, 1983), 78. See different but related figures and explanations in Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood,” 167–168 and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 106–09.

to the temple altar and laver) as “the gate”¹⁸⁰ (corresponding to the temple door) that is entered “with unshaken faith”¹⁸¹ in Christ more vivid and meaningful:¹⁸²

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* [i.e., justification].

18 And then are ye in this strait and narrow path [of sanctification] which leads to eternal life [i.e., exaltation]; 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 [i.e., through the gate] 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”¹⁸³ to judge “with a perfect knowledge”¹⁸⁴ “every thing which inviteth to do good”¹⁸⁵ and which “is of God”¹⁸⁶ from “whatsoever persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God”¹⁸⁷ — which things are “of the devil.”¹⁸⁸ He emphasizes

180 On this theme, see Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:439.

181 2 Ne. 31:19.

182 2 Ne. 31:17–19.

183 Moro. 7:19.

184 Moro. 7:15.

185 Moro. 7:16.

186 Moro. 7:16.

187 Moro. 7:17.

188 Moro. 7:17.

that it is through *faith* that the children of men are called to *repentance*¹⁸⁹ in “divers ways”¹⁹⁰ by God’s messengers — for example, both through “angels”¹⁹¹ and through “prophets.”¹⁹² By this means “men began to *exercise faith* in Christ”¹⁹³ and, by virtue of keys restored to the earth by divine messengers and exercised by mortal priesthood holders, they may be *baptized*.¹⁹⁴ Thus each disciple may be enabled to “lay hold upon every good thing”¹⁹⁵ up to and including the ability to “become the sons of God,”¹⁹⁶ being “saved by *faith in his name*.”¹⁹⁷

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 of repentance and spiritual cleansing from sin.¹⁹⁸ The Holy Place can be compared to the “Terrestrial Room” in modern LDS temples,¹⁹⁹ 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 [i.e., Melchizedek Priesthood] ordinance.”²⁰⁰ 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.”²⁰¹ In that ritual and actual state of existence, they participate in further covenant-making and testing connected with the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood to see whether they will “hold fast the profession of [their] faith [= Greek *elpis*, literally *hope*] without

189 Moro. 7:31.

190 Moro. 7:24.

191 Moro. 7:22.

192 Moro. 7:23. Cf. Moro. 7:31–32.

193 Moro. 7:25.

194 Note that baptism is the central subject of chapters 6 and 8 of Moroni. See also 2 Ne. 31:4–13.

195 Moro. 7:19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 28. Cf. Moro. 10:30: “every good gift.”

196 Moro. 7:26.

197 Moro. 7:26

198 Heb. 10:22. For more on the symbolism of spiritual rebirth by repentance and baptism, see Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified,” 138–64.

199 Talmage, *House of the Lord*, 188–89.

200 Moses 5:59.

201 Hel. 3:35.

wavering.”²⁰² For those who continue to the end of the high priestly way, the Terrestrial Room provides a transition to the Celestial Room. This transition, symbolizing the resurrection, takes place through the Veil of the Temple,²⁰³ “that is to say, [the] flesh [of the Jesus Christ, the Redeemer].”²⁰⁴

The *hope* experienced in the Terrestrial 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.”²⁰⁵ Moreover, Christian hope is a palpable divine gift, not simply a vague and wistful longing. Those who have proven faithful are chosen or elected to inherit the kingdom “according to a preparatory redemption”²⁰⁶ and obtain an initial *hope* of attaining it when God grants them the “earnest of the Spirit in [their] hearts.”²⁰⁷ By receiving and keeping all the laws and ordinances of the Gospel, this first, dim hope will be replaced by a “*perfect brightness of hope*”²⁰⁸ (as described by Nephi), “*a more excellent hope*”²⁰⁹ (as described by Mormon), or “*the full assurance of hope*”²¹⁰ (as described by Paul). Thus, step by step, disciples are brought “unto the *end*,”²¹¹ at which point, according to Moroni, they “receive an inheritance in the place which [the Lord has] prepared.”²¹²

Moroni 7:41 explains that the ultimate hope of receiving an inheritance in the presence of God is manifested in the resurrection, as also it is symbolized in the temple endowment: “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*.”²¹³ With startling specificity, Hebrews 6:18-20 associates sacred ordinances

202 Heb. 10:23.

203 Talmage, *House of the Lord*, 189.

204 Heb. 10:20.

205 Faulconer, *Life of Holiness*, 207.

206 Alma 13:3. For more on the meaning of Alma 13:3, see Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified,” 158–59, 172–73, 268–69 n. 260.

207 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5. Cf. Eph. 1:14. Just as a purchaser pledges eventual full payment by the initial deposit of an earnest money, God gives a first installment of hope to believers through the confirmation of His Spirit, promising that He will provide their full inheritance as sons and daughters of God if they endure to the end.

208 2 Ne. 31:20, emphasis added.

209 Ether 12:32, emphasis added.

210 Heb. 6:11, emphasis added.

211 Heb. 6:11.

212 Ether 12:32.

213 Moro. 7:41.

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.”²¹⁴ Continuing the description, he writes: “That *hope* we hold. It is like an anchor for our lives, an anchor safe and sure.”²¹⁵ 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.”²¹⁶

Alluding to the blessings of the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,²¹⁷ Paul wanted to assure the Saints of the firmness and unchangeableness of God’s promises symbolized in “grasp[ing] the hope set before [them].”²¹⁸ The “two irrevocable acts” that provide that firm assurance to disciples are “God’s promise and the oath by which He guarantees that promise.”²¹⁹ By these verses, 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.”²²⁰

214 Sandmel and Tkaclk, *New English Bible*, Heb. 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 Josh. 2:15, which was the “true token” between Rahab and the Israelite spies (Bowen, pers. comm., 7 March 2016. Cf fn. 54 above). One is also reminded of the iron rod in the vision of the Tree of Life recorded by Lehi and Nephi (1 Ne. 8:19–20, 24, 30; 11:25; 15:23) and its ancient analogues that were used in the ascent of holy mountains (see Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, 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 *Midrash Rabbah*, ed Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon (London: Soncion Press, 1983). Eccles. 9:10:1–2, 8:240–241; *The Zohar: An English Translation*, ed. Harry Sperling Maurice Simon, and Paul P. Levertoff (London: The Soncino Press, 1984). However, the plausibility of this tradition has been strongly disputed (e.g., Ari Zivotofsky, “What’s the Truth About...the Kohen Gadol’s Rope?” in *Jewish Action: The Magazine of the Orthodox Union*, 12 August 2009, https://www.ou.org/jewish_action/08/2009/whats_the_truth_about_-_the_kohen_gadols_rope/). See also *The Zohar*, ed. Daniel C. Matt (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 7:444–45 n. 266; 8:52–54 nn. 279, 280.

215 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.” Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, 155 reads “steadfastness” as “hope” in 1 Thess. 1:3 and Titus 2:1.

216 Sandmel and Tkacik, *New English Bible*, Heb. 6:18–20.

217 D&C 84:33–48. See also Marion G. Romney, “The oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood,” *Conference Report*, April 1962, 17 and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*.

218 Sandmel and Tkacik, *New English Bible*, Heb. 6:18.

219 Barney, *NT Footnotes*, 3:82; See also Romney, *Oath*, 17.

220 John 14:3. See also Heb. 4:14; Harold W. Attridge, *Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 118–19.



Figures 8a, 8b, 8c. *a: Greek Orthodox Icon Depicting the Ladder of Virtues*, Thessaloniki, Macedonia;²²¹ *b: The Woman at the Tomb and the Ascension*, ca. CE 400;²²² *c: Anastasis*, Daphni Monastery, near Athens, Greece, CE 1080–1100.²²³ 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 Himself 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 stedfast”²²⁴ 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,”²²⁵ an equally indissoluble union, “the conjugal harness by which both parts are yoked together.”²²⁶ 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.²²⁷

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.”²²⁸ 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

221 Licensed from Alamy.com. Image ID: BM2KC6.

222 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reidersche_Tafel_c_400_AD.jpg

223 Nicoletta Isar, *Choros, The Dance of Adam: The Making of Byzantine Chorography* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Alexandros Press, 2011), plate 65.

224 Heb. 6:19., see vv. 18–20.

225 Isar, *Choros*, 73.

226 *Ibid.*, 73. Cf. “Like the arm of the groom over the bride/So is my yoke over those who know me” (J. H. Charlesworth, “Odes of Solomon,” 42:8, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:725–71.

227 Cf. Isar, *Choros*, 52.

228 Margaret Barker, *King of the Jews: Temple Theology in John’s Gospel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2014), 42–43. See also Gregory Nazianzen. ca. CE 350–363. “Oration 39: Oration on the Holy Lights,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004) vol. 7, 358; Origen. ca. CE 234–240. *Homilies on Luke: Fragments on Luke*, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 103; 1 Cor. 3:13.

entry into God’s presence.”²²⁹ 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.”²³⁰ And just as the Son received “all the glory of Adam,”²³¹ so “His followers will also inherit this promise if they endure...testing.”²³²

In comments relating to these verses, the Prophet Joseph Smith equated the hope described in Hebrews 6:18–20 — a “sealing”²³³ that is promised and anticipated within the endowment — with the “more sure word of prophecy”²³⁴ as described by Peter and discussed earlier in this chapter.²³⁵ Significantly, the following passage from a letter that Joseph

229 Attridge, *Hebrews*, 184; cf. 185, 222–24. See also Luke T. Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 172–73. Comparing the symbol of the anchor to an image in Virgil, Ben Witherington, III concludes that he was “thinking no doubt of an iron anchor with two wings rather than an ancient stone anchor.” *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 225. The shape of the anchor with two wings would recall God’s two assurances: i.e., the covenant and the oath by which it is “made sure” (2 Pet. 1:10).

230 David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 300–1.

231 This phrase, applied by Moffitt to Jesus Christ and His followers, originated with the Jews in Qumran. See Rule of the Community (1QS), 4:22–26 in *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, ed. Geza Vermes, (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 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 Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002).

232 Moffitt, *Atonement*, 301.

233 See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*, 48.

234 2 Pet. 1:19.

235 On at least one occasion, the Prophet explicitly cited relevant passages from 2 Peter and Hebrews together (Smith, *Teachings*, 14 May 1843, 298–299; cf. Smith, *Words*, 14 May 1843, 201):

Though [the Saints addressed by Peter (2 Pet. 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 Pet. 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 Pet. 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 (Heb. 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...

Smith wrote in his own hand to his uncle, Silas Smith, on 26 September 1833, demonstrates the Prophet's comprehension of these matters long before the temple ordinances were given to the Saints in Nauvoo:²³⁶

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."²³⁷ He also exhorts them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.²³⁸

"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."²³⁹ 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 concise encapsulation of how the qualities of faith and hope associated with earthly temples prepare disciples to enter the presence of God in the heavenly temple: "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,

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.

236 Smith, *Writings*, 323, spelling and punctuation modernized, emphasis added.

237 Heb. 6:17.

238 Heb. 6:12.

239 See Heb. 6:18–19.

always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God.”²⁴⁰ It must be understood, of course, that priesthood ordinances received in earthly temples provide only an initial, anticipatory “*hope* for a better world,” and not a firm guarantee of entrance into it.²⁴¹

Words of Warning to the Elect

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 31:14²⁴² deliver words of warning to the elect, reminding them of the peril they face if they break their covenants and deny what they will sooner or later come to know with absolute certainty.²⁴³ This is consistent with an idea reportedly expressed by Hyrum Smith that terrestrial glory is a transitory state culminating either in progress or regress:²⁴⁴

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.”

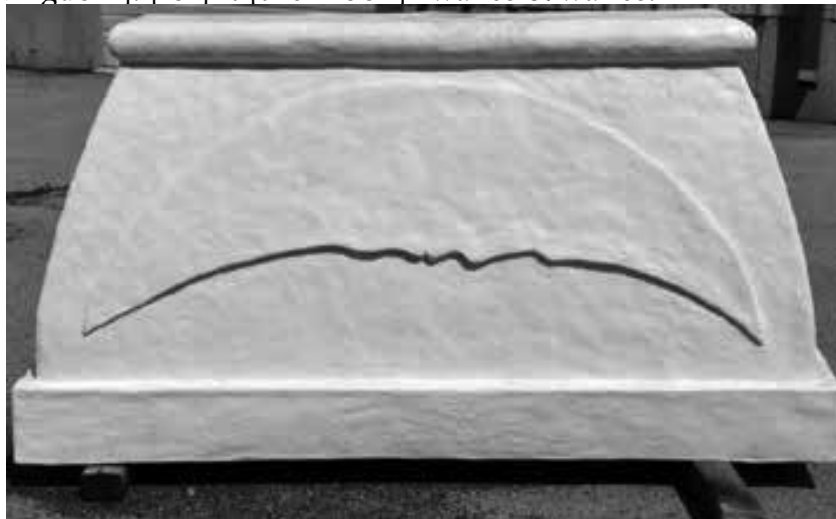


Figure 9. Facsimile of a Moonstone from the Nauvoo Temple. Each crescent featured a carved face in profile, perhaps meant to represent those of the Terrestrial glory²⁴⁵ who, according to a statement attributed to Hyrum Smith, must either wax or wane.

240 Ether 12:4, emphasis added.

245. See Lisle G. Brown, *Nauvoo Temple Exterior Symbolism*, 1999. <http://users.marshall.edu/~brown/nauvoo/symbols.html>. (accessed 31 August 2014). Photo: https://www.locateauctions.com/uploaded_files4/ade4d6eb797b489f878fb71f23204bda.jpg (accessed 1 June 2017). Public Domain.

Of the “very elect”²⁴⁶ who suffer irreparable regression, the Prophet said: “awful is the consequence.”²⁴⁷ On two known occasions, he used language from Hebrews 6:6 to explain that such individuals “can’t [be] renew[ed] to repentance”²⁴⁸ and to describe why their sin (i.e., “crucifying the Son of God afresh & putting him to an open shame”²⁴⁹) could not be forgiven. The Prophet taught that no power in earth or heaven can protect an individual against committing the unpardonable sin.²⁵⁰ Indeed, he taught that to have the “heavens... opened” (i.e., to experience, in the words of Ehat and Cook, “a direct heavenly vision on the order of the blessings attending the visitation of the Second Comforter”²⁵¹) and then to “deny Jesus Christ”²⁵² is precisely what it means to become one of the “sons of perdition.”²⁵³

246. Matthew 24:24; JS — Matthew 1:22.

247. Smith, *Words*, 7 April 1844, 361; cf. Heb. 10:31: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

248. *Ibid.*, William Clayton Report, 7 April 1844, 361. See also Heb. 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 Smith, *Teachings*, 7 April 1844, 358. The original notes from have been published in Smith, *Journals*, Vol. 3, 7 April 1844, 17–18, 221 and 221 nn. 971, 974; Smith, *Words*, 342, 346–47, 353, 361.

249. Smith, *Words*, Franklin D. Richards “Scriptural Items,” 10 March 1844, 335. Cf. *ibid.*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 10 March 1844, 330.

250. See Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*, 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 only to those whose calling and election has been made sure.

251. Ehat and Cook, in Smith, *Words*, 396 n. 52.

252. See Smith, *Words*, Thomas Bullock Report, 7 April 1844, 353.

253. See *ibid.*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 7 April 1844, 347. See John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3; Heb. 10:39; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 17:8, 11; 3 Ne. 27:32; 29:7; D&C 76:26, 32, 43; Moses 5:24.



Figure 10. John Bunyan (1628-1688), *The Pilgrim's Progress*: “There [is] a way to hell, even from the gate of heaven”²⁵⁴ Artist unknown.

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 similar solemn warning:²⁵⁵

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.*

On the surface, Nephi’s reference to the “tongue of angels” looks like a parallel to the statement in 1 Corinthians 13:1 that mentions the “tongues of men and of angels.” The phrase as used in 1 Corinthians clearly alludes to the gift of tongues discussed in chapter 12 that was seen as “nothing” when compared with charity. However, there is a better interpretive possibility that suggests itself for the similar phrase in 2 Nephi.

In this connection, it should be noted first 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”²⁵⁶ experienced

254. John Bunyan, 1678, in *The Annotated Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. Warren W. Wiersbe (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 181.

255. 2 Ne. 31:14, emphasis added.

256. 2 Pet. 1:19.

at the heavenly veil — the equivalent of the symbolic veil of temple ritual — an event described as “the end” by both authors.²⁵⁷

With this context in mind, Nephi’s reference to speaking “with the tongue of angels”²⁵⁸ evokes Jewish accounts of Abraham and Moses, who were portrayed as reciting angelic words (described as a “song,” recalling Alma’s “song of redeeming love”²⁵⁹) as they ascended and entered within the heavenly veil.²⁶⁰ The words of Abraham’s song were said to have been taught him by the angel who accompanied him during his heavenly ascent.²⁶¹ The text relates that while he “was still reciting the song,” he heard a voice “like the roaring of the sea”²⁶² and was brought through the veil into the presence of the fiery seraphim surrounding the heavenly throne.²⁶³ Similarly, an account by Philo describes the great and final song of thanksgiving²⁶⁴ that Moses sang “in the ears of both mankind and ministering angels”²⁶⁵ as part of his heavenly ascent.²⁶⁶ 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 striking representation of the sun with its depiction of laddered rays, recalling the ubiquitous symbolism of the “divine ladder that connects man to God.”²⁶⁷

257 Heb. 6:11; 2 Ne. 31:20.

258 2 Ne. 31:14.

259 Alma 5:26. David Richins relates Alma’s song of redemption (Hebrew *Shir HaGeulah*) to biblical songs of redemption and the eschatological “new song” in Isaiah 42:10, Revelation 5:8–10, and D&C 84:98–102. “The Song of Redeeming Love,” *The Lunch Is Free*, 4, 6 August 2016, <https://thelunchisfree.wordpress.com/2016/08/04/the-song-of-redeeming-love/> (accessed 3 September 2016).

260. Neal Rappleye reached the same conclusion from complementary lines of evidence. See “‘With the Tongue of Angels’: Angelic Speech as a Form of Deification.” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016): 303–23.

261 R. Rubinkiewicz, “Apocalypse of Abraham,” 17:4, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:696.

262 Cf. “voice of many waters” (ibid., 17:1, 696). See also Ezek. 43:2; Rev. 1:15; 14:2; 19:6; D&C 133:22; Moses 1:25.

263 Ibid., 18:1–14, 698. For a more complete description of this event, along with parallels to Moses 1, see Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses*, 44.

264 Cf. 2 Ne. 31:13: “and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.”

265 Philo, “On the Virtues (*De Virtutibus*),” in *Philo*, ed. F. H. Colson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 8:207.

266 Erwin R. Goodenough, *Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue* (New York City: Pantheon Books, 1964), 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 Bradshaw, “Ezekiel Mural,” 17–19.

267 Goodenough, *Dura Synagogue*, 9:115.



Figure 11. *Heavenly Ascent of Moses (detail), Showing Laddered Sun with Moon and Stars.*²⁶⁸

Entering the Celestial World: Charity and Consecration

The Holy of Holies in the Israelite temple can be compared to the area associated with celestial glory in the Salt Lake Temple, including the apartments bordering the Celestial Room proper where additional ordinances are performed.²⁶⁹ It represents the highest kingdom of glory where those who, in likeness of their Savior, have “overcome all things”²⁷⁰ and are heirs of eternal life and exaltation may dwell forever and ever. All this, however, is dry recital without an understanding of the eternal, enduring²⁷¹ flame that provides light, life, warmth, and glory to this place of supernal joy: *charity*.

The scriptures clearly assert the supremacy of charity over its two companion virtues. Although Moroni affirms that the joint effects of “faith, hope and charity bringeth unto”²⁷² Christ, charity alone is described as “the bond of perfectness”²⁷³ and therefore “the greatest of these”²⁷⁴ three. Indeed, Mormon calls charity “the greatest of *all*,”²⁷⁵ without which one is “nothing.”²⁷⁶ Specifically, he teaches that “except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which [Christ has]

268 Fig. 61 in Carl H. Kraeling C. C. Torrey, C. B. Welles, and B. Geiger, *The Synagogue. The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters: Final Report VIII, Part I.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), 236.

269 Talmage, *House of the Lord*, 189–94. See also Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*, 106–09.

270 D&C 50:35; 75:16, 22; 76:60.

271 Moro. 7:47: “charity...endureth forever”; 1 Cor. 13:8: “Charity never faileth.”

272 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.”

273 Col. 3:14.

274 1 Cor.13:13.

275 Moro. 7:46, emphasis added.

276 Moro. 7:44.



Figure 12. *Relief Society Seal.* In 1913, Relief Society President Emmeline B. Wells adopted a phrase from 1 Corinthians 13:8 and Moroni 7:46 as a motto for the organization. On 27 April 1842, Joseph Smith had read from 1 Corinthians 13 to the founding sisters.

prepared in the mansions of [His] Father.”²⁷⁷

Further elaborating, Moroni affirms that “ye receive no witness” — meaning the sure witness that came when Christ personally “showed himself unto our fathers”²⁷⁸ — “until after the trial of your faith.”²⁷⁹ “And there were many whose faith was so exceedingly strong...who could not be kept from within the [heavenly] veil,²⁸⁰ but truly saw with their eyes the things which they had beheld [previously] with an eye of faith, and they were glad.”²⁸¹ It is in serving God and their fellow man “at all hazards,”²⁸² 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,”²⁸³ and having reached the point where

277 Ether 12:34.

278 Ether 12:7.

279 Ether 12:7. cf. 1 Pet. 3:7.

280 Cf. Ether 3:19.

281 Ether 12:19. See also vv. 20–21.

282 Smith, *Teachings*, 27 June 1839, 150.

283 *Ibid.*, 11 June 1843, 308.

their “bowels [are] full of charity,”²⁸⁴ the “pure love²⁸⁵ of Christ,”²⁸⁶ that His disciples are prepared to have their calling and election made sure. Whether in this life or the next, they will be sealed up to eternal life and exaltation — if they remain faithful.²⁸⁷ According to Nephi, “a love of God and of all men” is the final requirement of all those who “endure to the end”²⁸⁸ and eventually qualify to receive “all that [the] Father hath.”²⁸⁹

According to Hugh Nibley, charity is 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.”²⁹⁰ President Ezra Taft Benson 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.”²⁹¹ 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.”²⁹² Nibley likewise affirmed that the law of consecration is “the consummation of the laws of obedience and

284 D&C 121:45.

285 Note that “charity” and “love” are equated four times in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 26:30; Ether 12:34; Moro. 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)” (Smith, *Teachings*, 4 January 1833, 16; J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Documents*, July 1831-January 1833, 4 January 1833, 354). “Charity, which is love” (Smith, *Teachings*, 23 July 1843, 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*, Vol. 3, 23 July 1843, 66. It was added retrospectively by Church historians. The original notes include the words “love” and “friendship,” but not “charity.” However, there may be an allusion to 1 Pet. 4:8 (“charity shall cover the multitude of sins”) in Elder Richards’ record (“covered all the faults among you”).

286 Moro. 7:47.

287 Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*, 59–65.

288 See 2 Ne. 31:20.

289 D&C 84:38.

290 See 1 Cor. 13:1–3; Moro. 7:44.

291 Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 121. Cf. Gordon B. Hinckley, *The Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1997), 147; Harold B. Lee, *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 318.

292 Benson, *Teachings*, 121; D&C 78:7.

sacrifice, is the threshold of the celestial kingdom, the last and hardest requirement made of men in this life”²⁹³ and “can only be faced against sore temptation.”²⁹⁴ Similarly, Jack Welch has argued that consecration is the step that precedes perfection.²⁹⁵

In compensation for the supreme effort in life to acquire the “pearl of great price,”²⁹⁶ 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.”²⁹⁷ Indeed, it is through consecration that we come to know God.²⁹⁸ And knowing God and Jesus Christ *is* eternal life.²⁹⁹

In our strivings to be “filled with charity”³⁰⁰ to the point where we are able to fully live the law of consecration, 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 toil³⁰¹ — our will, like the Savior’s, “being swallowed up in the will of the Father.”³⁰² “Wherefore, my beloved brethren,” Mormon concluded 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,³⁰³ for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this *hope*; that we may be purified even as he is pure.”³⁰⁴

The supreme manifestation of charity and consecration was in the Savior’s offering of Himself for our sake: “And again, I remember that

293 Hugh W. Nibley, “How Firm a Foundation! What Makes It So,” in *Approaching Zion*, ed. D. E. Norton (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 168.

294 Nibley, *Sacred and Symbolic*, 34.

295 Welch, *Sermon*, 60–61.

296 Matt. 13:46.

297 Lee, *Teachings*, 318.

298 See D&C 122:1–8; O. Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 6 October 1853, 1:125; Chad M. Orton “Francis Webster,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 140.

299 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., *History of the Church*, 1 May 1842, 4:608.

300 Moro. 8:17.

301 “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, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*, vol. 3 (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 18 Feb. 1954, 429.

302 Mosiah 15:7.

303 In order to be *with* Him, one must be *like* Him. See Hafen and Hafen, *Contrite Spirit*, 27; Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, 35 fig. 1-4.

304 Moro. 7:48; cf. 1 John 3:1–3.

thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world.”³⁰⁵ In the agonies of His Atonement, Jesus Christ trod “the wine-press alone, . . . and none were with [Him].”³⁰⁶ Yet He was with *us* — *fully* with us in that moment — turning outward in charity to relieve us from our suffering in the midst of the unspeakable depths of His own distress.³⁰⁷ He pressed forward on our behalf in the torments that accompanied His exercise of complete compassion, not permitting Himself in the slightest degree to become “weary in well-doing”!³⁰⁸

For the Savior to accomplish His “infinite and eternal”³⁰⁹ 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. 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,³¹⁰ “yea, *every* sacrifice which . . . the Lord, shall command,”³¹¹ even if it be a sacrifice like that of Abraham.³¹²

305 Ether 12:33. Cf. John 15:13.

306 See Eugene England, *The Quality of Mercy* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), 52–53.

307 See Isa. 53:4–5; Mosiah 3:7; Alma 7:11–13. See David A. Bednar, *Act in Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 10.

308 D&C 64:33. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Be Not Weary in Well-Doing,” *Meridian Magazine* (3 October 2016). <http://lds.org/magazine/be-not-weary-in-well-doing/>. (accessed June 10, 2017).

309 Alma 34:10, 14.

310 See Mosiah 3:19.

311 D&C 97:8.

312 See D&C 101:4–5; Bradshaw and Bowen, “By the Blood,” 183–85. 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” (*The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*, ed. Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU 1990], 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).

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,³¹³ Abraham’s “election sure” came only afterward, when he demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac.³¹⁴ 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 Jewish³¹⁵ and early Christian³¹⁶ 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 a ritual context.³¹⁷ Harold Attridge concluded that “Isaac’s rescue from virtual death³¹⁸ on the sacrificial pyre is symbolic of the deliverance that all the faithful can expect.”³¹⁹ Likewise, Abraham’s recovery of what he had once thought lost is emblematic of the reward of eternal life that comes through whole-souled consecration.

313 Gen. 14:17–24 and JST Gen. 14:25–40.

314 See Ehat and Cook in Smith, *Words*, 305 n. 29.

315 See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 335, n. 25; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 363.

316 See Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 362.

317. See Bradshaw, “Ezekiel Mural,” 11–12.

318 Pamela M. Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998). Eisenbaum observes that the motif of a “near-death experience” of the hero appears more than once in Heb. 11 (*ibid.*, 162). 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.*, 163.

319 Attridge, *Hebrews*, 335. Cf. Johnson, *Hebrews*, 295, explaining the Greek behind the phrase stating that Abraham receive Isaac “in a figure” (i.e., “figuratively speaking”). John Dunnill states: “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.” *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 178. On the connection between Heb. 11 and Rom. 4, see L. D. Hurst, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 121.



Figure 13. *Temple of Isis, Philae, Egypt, 380–362 BCE.* Photograph by Stephen T. Whitlock (1951-), 2015. Passage through an ascending sequence of spaces of increasing holiness by means of a series of narrow doors or gateways is a near-universal feature of ancient temples. The degree of sacredness and the difficulty of access increases as one approaches either the innermost or topmost space.

In his careful paraphrase of Paul’s description of faith, hope, and charity³²⁰ within the thirteenth Article of Faith,³²¹ Joseph Smith pointedly distinguished between the early Saints’ previous attainments with respect to the first ladder rungs of faith (“We believe *all things*”) and hope (“we hope *all things*”), and their unfulfilled aspirations as they climbed toward the last, hardest rung of charity:³²² “we have endured *many things*, and *hope to be able to endure all things*.”³²³

In this regard, Jack Welch observed that the Nauvoo Saints’ yearning for perfection was expressed in “the highest ambitions of the building of the City Beautiful, with the construction of the splendid Nauvoo Temple already underway.”³²⁴ However, just as they had 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.” With happy anticipation, the last Article of Faith looks forward to the brighter day when the Saints will be able to endure *all things* — to complete the climb of the ladder of heavenly ascent “by the patience of hope and the labor of love.”³²⁵

320 See 1 Cor. 13:7; cf. Moro. 7:45–47. Note that Conzelmann argues for a correlation between the admonition of Paul in 1 Cor. 13:7 and the mention of faith, hope, and charity in 1 Cor. 13:13: “Verse 7 is formally speaking a conclusion, but in content a verbal description of the triad of v. 13.” Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 224.

321 Articles of Faith 1:13.

322 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. Daniel Rupp, *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States* (Philadelphia: J. Y. Humphreys, 1844), 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 Cor. 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.

323 Emphasis added. The godlike capacity to “endure *all things*” is the result of charity, not mere grit. See, e.g., Ether 12:33. Note that in 1 Corinthians, it is *charity* that bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things, whereas in the thirteenth Article of Faith, the “we” makes the Latter-day Saints the subject of the phrase.

324 John W. Welch, “The Articles of Faith and the Life of Joseph Smith,” *Ensign*, 2013, 75.

325 “Come, Let Us Anew,” *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), 217: stanza 1. See 1 Thess. 1:3.

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