

Now That We *Have* the Words of Joseph Smith, How Shall We Ever *Understand* Them? A Modest Example of the Challenges within the Prophet's 21 May 1843 Discourse on 2 Peter 1

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Abstract: In this article, I explore some of the opportunities and challenges that lie before us as we try to reach a better understanding of the prophetic corpus that has come to us from Joseph Smith. I turn my attention to specific instance of these opportunities and challenges: a 21 May 1843 sermon on the doctrine of election, which Joseph Smith discussed in conjunction with the “more sure word of prophecy” mentioned in 2 Peter 1:19.

Recovering Lost Dimensions of Meaning in the Records of the Restoration

Now that we enjoy an unparalleled ease-of-access to the original manuscripts of the history, translations, revelations, and teachings of the Joseph Smith,¹ we are in a position not only to explore the many lost dimensions of ancient religion that we can see and appreciate because of what the Prophet restored, but also — and of no less importance — to recover lost dimensions of meaning in the records of the Restoration themselves.²

Why should that be difficult? Don't we now have access to the original records? Unfortunately, access to the papers of Joseph Smith only addresses the problem of transmission, and accurate transmission “need in no way imply ‘understanding.’”³ For modern readers to understand the legacy of what Joseph Smith left for us, it is clear that some amount of “translation” also must be done, even for English-speakers. As Hugh Nibley points out: “A translation must ... be not a matching of dictionaries but a meeting of minds, for as the philologist William Entwistle puts it, ‘there are no ‘mere words’ ... the word is a deed’; it is a whole drama with centuries of tradition encrusting it, and that whole drama must be passed in review every time the word comes up for translation.”⁴

Interpretive Challenges

The challenge of replicating Joseph Smith's range of experience. In an insightful presentation by John C. Alleman, he described several examples of difficulties that still plague translators when they are required to render the teachings of Joseph Smith in a form that can be understood by “every nation, and kindred and tongue, and people.”⁵ In the course of his discussion of specific issues in vocabulary, syntax, culture, scripture citations, and foreign phrases, Alleman summarized the one major proposition that underlies all translation:⁶ “namely, that *one cannot translate that which one does not understand*. ... The problems [in translating the teachings of Joseph Smith require] ... a range of experience equal to that which the Prophet himself had, almost, to understand some of his writings.”⁷

A range of experience equal to that which the Prophet himself had? This, the man whose mind⁸ “stretch[ed] as high as the utmost heavens, and search[ed] into and contemplate[d] the deepest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity”— indeed, one who “commune[d] with God”!⁹ What greater range of experience could be imagined than that?

The challenges of decoding imagery and overcoming our lack of familiarity with scripture. Even if we thought ourselves capable of fully grasping the plain sense of Joseph Smith’s most straightforward statements, most of us will still struggle to decode his pervasive imagery, which was so often loaded with localisms, creative allusions, and scriptural wordplay.¹⁰ Moreover, the frequent allusions of Joseph Smith to scripture and other texts will never be recognized, let alone understood, unless we are familiar with these texts ourselves.¹¹ One of Joseph Smith’s frequent teaching methods was to take an obscure or misunderstood passage of scripture and unfold new meanings to his listeners, drawing on both his familiarity with an astonishing number of scriptural passages¹² and also on the prophetic insights he had gained firsthand through divine revelation. Sadly, however, scriptures are not the staple of literary and religious life in our day that they were to those who lived in Joseph Smith’s time.



Figure **. “The Simses of Old Greenwich, Conn., gather to read after dinner. Their means of text delivery is divided by generation. Nichole Bengiveno/The New York Times”¹³

The challenges of vocabulary and reading skills. At the most basic level, many scriptural terms such as “endow,” “seal,” “mystery,” “key,” “sign,” “token,” “calling,” and “election” have significantly changed in meaning and association since the early days of the Restoration.¹⁴ In other cases, the words have completely dropped out of our everyday vocabulary. Besides these challenges at the lexical level, some early evidence seems to indicate that those of us who feed largely on media may read differently than those of previous generations.¹⁵ For one thing, we have become accustomed to a kind of reading that consists of facile skimming for rapid information ingestion — what the great Jewish scholar Martin Buber went so far as to term “the leprosy of fluency.”¹⁶ For another, even if one had the time and patience to read more reflectively, many today lack the *capacity* to follow the logic of passages that are longer than a sound bite, treating complex descriptions or lines of argument as grab bags of simple, unordered, atomic associations rather than as linear structures that were carefully composed by divinely inspired authors of scripture to serve specific literary, expository, or revelatory purposes.¹⁷

The challenge of doctrinal ignorance. It cannot be doubted that our difficulties in grasping the larger logic of scripture that binds single verses together into coherent passages, especially within doctrinal expositions, are at least partly behind what Prothero calls a widespread “religious amnesia” that has dangerously weakened the foundations of faith.¹⁸ When scripture is consulted at all, it is too often “solely for its piety or its inspiring adventures”¹⁹ or its admittedly “memorable illustrations and

contrasts” rather than the “deep memories” of spiritual understanding that provide context for the imagery and are woven throughout the stories themselves.²⁰ Harold Bloom concludes that since the current “American Jesus can be described without any recourse to theology” we have become, on the whole, a post-Christian nation.²¹ Similarly, Herberg characterized our national “faith in faith” as a “strange brew of devotion to religion and insouciance as to its content.”²² Little wonder that the teaching of the central doctrines of the Gospel has been a significant focus of church leadership in our day.²³

The challenge of personal revelation. The written record of what the Prophet translated, revealed, and taught is an initial “means of helping those to understand who are unable to get the Spirit for themselves.”²⁴ In other words, we might say it is a set of training wheels that aid readers to understand, through their own personal revelation,²⁵ what “God [already] revealed”²⁶ to him. Understanding what has already been revealed prepares us in turn to receive additional, needed revelation on matters that concern our own lives and stewardships. In this connection, Elder Neal A. Maxwell once remarked: “God is giving away the spiritual secrets of the universe,” and then asked: “but are we listening?”²⁷

The challenges of reluctance to share sacred events and of deliberately concealed meaning. A further difficulty that hinders our understanding of Joseph Smith’s words is his reluctance to share details of sacred events and doctrines publicly. Consider, for example, Joseph Smith’s description of the Book of Mormon translation process. While some of the Prophet’s contemporaries gave detailed descriptions of the size and appearance of the instruments used and the procedure by which the words of the ancient text were made known to him, Joseph Smith demurred when asked to relate such specifics himself even in response to direct questioning in private company from believing friends.²⁸ The only explicit statement he made about the translation process is his testimony that it occurred “by the gift and power of God.”²⁹ Moreover, on at least one other occasion — following the practice of Jesus when He taught in parables³⁰ — the Prophet gave a sermon with a meaning that was deliberately concealed to all but one — or perhaps a few — of his listeners.³¹ This leads one to wonder just how much we might be missing when we read the record of Joseph Smith’s teachings.³²

The challenge of understanding the ancient context of scripture. Of course, all I have mentioned above is only the beginning of the challenge in understanding what Joseph Smith revealed and taught. Not only are we handicapped in our personal preparation to close the *revelatory* gap of prophetic experience with that of a nineteenth-century seer, we also live on the near side of a great *historical* divide that separates us from the religious, cultural, and philosophical perspectives of previous ages.³³ Joseph Smith was far closer to this lost world than we are — not only because of his personal involvement with the recovery and revelatory expansion of ancient religion, but also because in his time many archaic traditions were still embedded in the language and daily experience of the surrounding culture.³⁴ Margaret Barker describes the challenges this situation presents to contemporary students of scripture:

Like the first Christians, we still pray “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,”³⁵ but many of the complex system of symbols and stories that describe the Kingdom are not longer recognized for what they are.³⁶

It used to be thought that putting the code into modern English would overcome the problem, and make everything clear to people who had no roots in a Christian community. This attempt has proved misguided, since so much of the code simply will not translate into modern English. ... The

task, then, has had to alter. The need now is not just for modern English, or modern thought forms, but for an explanation of the images and pictures in which the ideas of the Bible are expressed. These are specific to one culture, that of Israel and Judaism, and until they are fully understood in their original setting, little of what is done with the writings and ideas that came from that particular setting can be understood. Once we lose touch with the meaning of biblical imagery, we lose any way into the real meaning of the Bible. This has already begun to happen and a diluted “instant” Christianity has been offered as junk food for the mass market. The resultant malnutrition, even in churches, is all too obvious.³⁷

Consistent with Barker’s observations, many observers have documented a worldwide trend toward a religious mind-set that prizes emotion³⁸ and entertainment³⁹ as major staples of worship. Even when undertaken with evident sincerity, religious gatherings of this sort scarcely rise above the level of a “weekly social rite, a boost to our morale,”⁴⁰ with exhortations on ethics thrown in for good measure.

The challenge when ancient scripture is applied to modern contexts. A factor that complicates the statement by Margaret Barker above is that Joseph Smith not only interpreted scripture by “enquiring” about the particulars of the situation which “drew out the answer”⁴¹ of a given teaching in its ancient context, but also, like Nephi, reshaped his interpretations in order to “liken them”⁴² to the situation of those living in the latter-days. Thus, Ben McGuire argues that in contrast to the traditional view that our job in reading scripture is simply to uncover an absolute, “true” meaning that was meant to be grasped by the original audience, Joseph Smith frequently “ignores the increasing gap between the cultural and societal contexts of the past and present, and re-inscribes scripture within the context of the present.”⁴³ McGuire observes that Nephi’s reading strategy, like that of Joseph Smith, is quite foreign to the traditional way of thinking about scripture interpretation: “He is consistently re-fashioning his interpretation of past scripture through the lens of his present revelations, and the outcome is something that [might have been] ... unrecognizable to the earlier, original audience.”⁴⁴

The challenge of pragmatically adapting the language of scripture and revelation. Though Joseph Smith was careful in his efforts to render a faithful translation of the Bible, he was no naïve advocate of the inerrancy or finality of scriptural language.⁴⁵ For instance, although in some cases his Bible translation attempted to resolve blatant inconsistencies among different accounts of the Creation and the life of Christ, he did not attempt to merge these sometimes divergent perspectives on the same events into a single harmonized version. Of course, having multiple accounts of these important stories should not be seen a defect or inconvenience. Differences in perspective between such accounts — and even seeming inconsistencies — composed “in [our] weakness, after the manner of [our] language, that [we] might come to understanding,”⁴⁶ can be an aid rather than a hindrance to human comprehension, perhaps serving disparate sets of readers or diverse purposes to some advantage.

For example, in translating the Bible, Joseph Smith’s criterion for the acceptability of a given reading was typically pragmatic rather than absolute. For example, after quoting a verse from Malachi in a letter to the Saints, he admitted that he “might have rendered a plainer translation.” However, he said that his wording of the verse was satisfactory in this case because the words were “sufficiently plain to suit [the] purpose as it stands.”⁴⁷ This pragmatic approach is also evident both in the scriptural passages cited to him by heavenly messengers and in his preaching and translations. In these instances, he often varied the wording of Bible verses to suit the occasion.⁴⁸

Historiographical Challenges

The challenge of obtaining qualified and reliable scribes. If all I have described thus far were not enough, there is the reality “that almost all of what we have of Joseph Smith’s sayings and writings come to us not through his own pen, but via scribes and recorders who could not possibly have been 100% accurate in everything they wrote down of the Prophet’s words.”⁴⁹ Consider that Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo sermons were neither written out in advance nor taken down by listeners verbatim or in shorthand as they were delivered. Rather, they were copied as fragmentary notes and reconstructions of his prose (sometimes retrospectively) by a small number of individuals, often — but not always — including one or more official recorders.⁵⁰

It was an almost impossible job for Joseph Smith to find qualified and reliable scribes, and to manage their frequent turnover: “More than two dozen persons are known to have assisted the Prophet in a secretarial capacity during the final fourteen years of his life. ... Of these scribes, nine left the Church and four others died while engaged in important writing assignments.”⁵¹ The arduous culmination of the trial-and-error effort that eventually produced Joseph Smith’s *History of the Church* was successful only after eight previous attempts to write the history had been abandoned.⁵²

The challenge of complex and divergent sources. Notes kept by various individuals were shared and copied by others.⁵³ Later, as part of serialized versions of history that appeared in church publications, many (but not all) of the notes from such sermons were gathered,⁵⁴ expanded, amalgamated, and harmonized; prose was smoothed out; and punctuation and grammar were standardized. Elaborations on the original notes were made not only to complete a thought but also to include additional material not now available in extant sources.⁵⁵ Sometimes the wording of related journal entries from scribes and others was changed to the first person and incorporated into the *History of the Church*⁵⁶ in order to fill gaps in the record, an accepted practice at the time.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, this approach masked the provenance of sources and the hands of several editors within the finished manuscript.

Over the years, various compilations drew directly from the published accounts of the *History of the Church*⁵⁸ while, more recently, transcriptions of contemporary notes (including sources that were unavailable to historians who produced the standard amalgamated versions) were also collected and published.⁵⁹ Translations of these accounts into different languages sometimes has created new difficulties.⁶⁰

The challenge of assessing the reliability of a given teaching of Joseph Smith. An important point in assessing the reliability of a given teaching of Joseph Smith is that while each of the published accounts of the Prophet’s Nauvoo sermons has been widely used to convey his teachings to church members on his authority, it seems likely that none of these accounts was written or reviewed by him personally.⁶¹ Moreover, not quite two hundred years after these sermons were delivered, multiple variants in their content and wording — none of which completely reflect the actual words spoken — are in common circulation. In some cases, imperfect transcriptions of Joseph Smith’s words led to misconstruals of doctrine by early Church leaders and, in consequence, have been explicitly corrected by later Church leaders. One need look no further than the March 2014 edition of the *Ensign* for an apostolic correction of this sort.⁶² In light of these historical circumstances, it becomes clear how easily divergence in our understanding of Joseph Smith’s teachings can happen, even in the best case where like-minded scribes, recording events more or less as they occurred, are doing the best they can to preserve the original words of the Prophet. This phenomenon also helps explain the great lengths that Joseph Smith

went to, in compliance with the commandments of the Lord, in order to preserve an accurate written record of the doings of his day.⁶³

With these considerations in mind, I will undertake a close look at the 21 May 1843 discourse of Joseph Smith. The detailed accounts of that sermon come to us from Elders Willard Richards⁶⁴ (the keeper of Joseph Smith’s Journal), from the Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook,⁶⁵ and from the expanded and polished version prepared for publication by Church historians in the 1850s.⁶⁶ Shorter summaries of the sermon are also provided by Franklin D. Richards, James Burgess, Wilford Woodruff, and Levi Richards.⁶⁷ In addition to these, I will also quote relevant passages from discourses delivered on other occasions, including material from the diaries of Wilford Woodruff⁶⁸ and William Clayton.⁶⁹

Synopsis of Joseph Smith’s 21 May 1843 Sermon: “The More Sure Word of Prophecy”

On the morning of Sunday, May 21, 1843, Joseph Smith “pressed his way through the crowd”⁷⁰ to the stand on the floor of the unfinished Nauvoo temple.⁷¹ After singing by the congregation, he read the text he had selected as the subject of his sermon, the first chapter of 2 Peter. After a prayer by William Law, more singing, and a few introductory remarks, he opened his sermon.



Figure 1. Carl Heinrich Bloch, 1834-1890: *The Transfiguration*⁷²

What Could Be “More Sure” Than Hearing the Voice of God Bearing Testimony of His Son?

Original Notes from Joseph Smith’s Journal: we have a more sure word of prophecy. whereunto you do well to take heed — as unto a light that shineth in a dark place

we were eyewitnesses of his maje[s]ty and heard the voice of his excellent glory — &. what could be more [p. [212]] sure? transfigu[re]d on the mou[n]t &c what could be more sure? Divines have been quarreeelig [quarreling] for ages about the meaning. of this.

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith's History: “We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.⁷³ We were eye witnesses of his majesty and heard the voice of his excellent glory.”⁷⁴ And what could be more sure? When He was transfigured on the mount, what could be more sure to them? Divines have been quarreling for ages about the meaning of this.

*Original Notes in Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*⁷⁵ we were eye witnesses of his Majesty we have also a more sure word of Prophecy.

The first topic taken up by the Prophet in this discourse is the meaning of the reference in 2 Peter 1:19 to the “more sure word of prophecy.” Continuing his effort to “stir... up” the Saints “in remembrance of these things” (vv. 13, 12), Peter reminds his readers of his firsthand experience at the Mount of Transfiguration. The overall account is cryptic, and translators have struggled, in particular, with the reference to the “more sure word of prophecy” in verse 19—a “*crux interpretum*” for the entire book according to Neyrey.⁷⁶

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter and his companions had become “eyewitnesses of [the] majesty”⁷⁷ of the glorified Jesus Christ and had heard the voice of God the Father declare: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”⁷⁸ Joseph Smith asked his hearers, “What could be *more* sure” than that? He gave the answer to that question near the end of the sermon.

The “more sure word of prophecy” is a topic to which the Prophet returned again and again, especially in the last two years of his life.⁷⁹ He had made the first chapter of 2 Peter the subject of a sermon the previous Sunday, May 14,⁸⁰ and preached on it again to a different audience on May 17.⁸¹ He elaborated on the same principles and doctrines on August 13⁸² and 27⁸³ and again on March 10⁸⁴ and May 12,⁸⁵ 1844. Since our record of his sermons is incomplete, he may have addressed the topic on additional occasions as well. His sermon of the 21 May 1843 was not a simple exposition of doctrine. Rather, it was an urgently enjoined plea for the Saints to “go forward and make [their] calling and ... election⁸⁶ sure”⁸⁷ “for in this way entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly added to you.”⁸⁸

Polishing the Rough Stone

Original Notes from Joseph Smith's Journal: rough stone roling down hill.

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith's History: I am like a huge, rough stone rolling down from a high mountain; and the only polishing I get is when some corner gets rubbed off by coming in contact with something else, striking with accelerated force against religious bigotry, priestcraft, lawyer-craft, doctor-craft, lying editors, suborned judges and jurors, and the authority of perjured executives, backed by mobs, blasphemers, licentious and corrupt men and women—all hell knocking off a corner here and a corner there. Thus I will become a smooth and polished shaft in the quiver of the Almighty, who will give me dominion over all and every one of them,

when their refuge of lies shall fail, and their hiding place shall be destroyed, while these smooth-polished stones with which I come in contact become marred.

*Notes from a Sermon Recorded on 11 June 1843 in Joseph Smith's Diary:*⁸⁹ I a rough stone. The sound of the hammer and chisel was never hea[r]d on me, nor never will be. I desire the learning & wisdom of heaven alone

*Notes from a Sermon of Heber C. Kimball recorded by Wilford Woodruff on 9 September 1843:*⁹⁰ We are not Polished stones like Elder Babbit Elder Adams, Elder Blakesley & Elder Magin &c. But we are rough Stones out of the mountain, & when we roll through the forest &nock the bark of from the trees it does not hurt us even if we should get a Cornor nocked of occasionally. For the more they roll about & knock the cornors of the better we are. But if we were polished & smooth when we get the cornors knocked of it would deface us.

This is the Case with Joseph Smith. He never professed to be a dressed smooth polished stone but was rough out of the mountain & has been rolling among the rocks & trees & has not hurt him at all. But he will be as smooth & polished in the end as any other stone, while many that were so vary poliched & smooth in the beginning get badly defaced and spoiled while they are rolling about.

The self-characterization of Joseph Smith as a “rough stone rolling” was made famous by the title of Richard Bushman’s biography of the Prophet.⁹¹ Starting out as a rough stone was a badge of honor in the rough culture in which Joseph Smith was raised⁹² — and the fact no one but God could take credit for the polishing only added to that honor: “The sound of the hammer and chisel was never hea[r]d on me, nor never will be. I desire the learning & wisdom of heaven alone.”

The comparison of the polishing of a rough stone to the moral education of Joseph Smith would have been familiar not only to students of the Bible but also to fellow Freemasons in Joseph Smith’s audience. According to Masonic historian W. Kirk MacNulty:⁹³

The Rough Ashlar is a stone fresh from the quarry that must be cut to the appropriate shape before it can be placed in the building. It represents the Apprentice who has started his journey, and who must work to improve himself.

The Perfect Ashlar is a stone that has been cut and polished to its proper form and is ready to be placed in the building. It represents the Apprentice who has completed his work and is ready to advance to the Second Degree.

Joseph Smith’s version of the thought emphasizes that his polishing was not so much the result of efforts at ordinary self-improvement as it was of “the learning & wisdom of heaven.” This is consistent with the biblical ethos of Exodus 20:25:⁹⁴ “And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.” The imagery is also reflected in Daniel’s interpretation of the vision of the stone that was “cut out of the mountain without hands”⁹⁵ and Jesus’ prophecy that contrasted the “temple that is made with hands” (i.e., Herod’s temple) to the temple that would be made “within three days ... without hands”⁹⁶ (i.e., Jesus’ resurrected body).

Why would one want to polish stones for building purposes *before* they are brought out of the mountain quarries and onto the construction site? An answer is provided in the description of how such stones were to be prepared for use in Solomon’s Temple:⁹⁷

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

The brevity of the note on this passage that Elder Richards made in Joseph Smith’s Diary suggests that he may have heard similar comments on other occasions and only required a few words to remind him of the gist.⁹⁸ Note the accounts of similar imagery used on 11 June and 9 September 1843 as given above.

“By Virtue of the Knowledge of God in Me”

Original Notes from Joseph Smith’s Journal: 3 grand secrets lying in this chapter which no man can dig out. which unlocks the whole chapter.

what is writtn are only hints of things which ex[is]ted in the prophets mind. which are not written. concer[n]ing eternal glory.

I am going to take up this subj[e]ct by virtue of the knowledge of God in me. — which I have received fr[o]m heaven. [p. [213]]

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith’s History: There are three grand secrets lying in this chapter, [2 Peter 1] which no man can dig out, unless by the light of revelation, and which unlocks the whole chapter as the things that are written are only hints of things which existed in the prophet’s mind, which are not written concerning eternal glory.

*Original Notes in Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*⁹⁹ Now brethren who can explain this no man be [but] he that has obtained these things in the same way that Peter did. Yet it is so plain & so simple & easy to be understood that when I have shown you the interpretation thereof you will think you have always Known it yourselves — These are but hints at those things that were revealed to Peter, and verily brethren there are things in the bosom of the Father, that have been hid from the foundation of the world, that are not Known neither can be except by direct Revelation

In light of the Prophet’s reticence to share all the details of his sacred experiences openly, he was certainly commenting as much on his personal practice as Peter’s when he explained that “what is written [is] only hints of things which existed in the prophet’s mind.”¹⁰⁰ The secrets hinted at by Peter in this chapter could be discovered by no man except through direct revelation. Thus, of necessity, he would explain the passage “by virtue of the knowledge of God in me. — which I have received fr[o]m heaven.”

No doubt, Joseph Smith saw the “hints” given in this chapter as pointing to knowledge and keys received by Peter, James, and John on the Mount,¹⁰¹ including the firm “promise from God,” received personally for themselves, that they should “have eternal life. That is the more sure word of prophecy.”¹⁰² The comment that these things were “hid from the foundation of the world” also suggests that they had to do with the highest blessings of the priesthood.¹⁰³

“The Opinions of Men ... Are to Me as the Crackling of the Thorns Under the Pot”

Original Notes from Joseph Smith's Journal: the opinions of men. so far as I am ~~possessed~~ concerned. are to me as the crackling of the thorns under the pot.¹⁰⁴ or the whistle[n]g of the wind,

Columbus and the eggs. —

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith's History: I am going to take up this subject by virtue of the knowledge of God in me, which I have received from heaven. The opinions of men, so far as I am concerned, are to me as the crackling of thorns under the pot, or the whistling of the wind. I break the ground; I lead the way like Columbus when he was invited to a banquet, where he was assigned the most honorable place at the table, and served with the ceremonials which were observed towards sovereigns. A shallow courtier present, who was meanly jealous of him, abruptly asked him whether he thought that in case he had not discovered the Indies, there were not other men in Spain who would have been capable of the enterprise? Columbus made no reply, but took an egg and invited the company to make it stand on end. They all attempted it, but in vain; whereupon he struck it upon the table so as to break one end, and left it standing on the broken part, illustrating that when he had once shown the way to the new world nothing was easier than to follow it.

*Original Notes Recorded from a Sermon Delivered on 17 May 1843 in Wilford Woodruff's Diary:*¹⁰⁵ I will make every doctrine plain that I present & it shall stand upon a firm bases And I am at the defiance of the world for I will take shelter under the broad ~~shelter~~ cover of the wings of the work in which I am engaged. It matters not to me if all hell boils over. I regard it ownly as I would the Crackling of thorns under a pot.¹⁰⁶

Expressing his disregard for the skepticism of unbelievers about his mission and teachings, Joseph Smith compared their opinions to “the crackling of the thorns under the pot” or “the whistle[n]g of the wind.” “By virtue of the knowledge of God in [him],” he was in a position to lead out in his teachings rather than follow the shallow views of others. As with the previous reference to the rough stone rolling, Church historians confidently expanded the brief note about “Columbus and the eggs” into a polished version of the well-known anecdote.¹⁰⁷



Figure 2. Stephen T. Whitlock, 1951-: *Jacob's Ladder*, Bath Abbey, 9 October 2004.¹⁰⁸

Ladder and Rainbow

Original Notes from Joseph Smith's Journal: Ladder and rainbow.

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith's History: Paul ascended into the third heavens,¹⁰⁹ and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder¹¹⁰ — the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms,¹¹¹ where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter.¹¹² I could explain a hundred fold more¹¹³ than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision,¹¹⁴ were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.¹¹⁵

The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent¹¹⁶ with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways¹¹⁷ as they can bear it.¹¹⁸ The inhabitants of this earth are asleep;¹¹⁹ they know not the day of their visitation.¹²⁰ The Lord hath set the bow in the cloud¹²¹ for a sign that while it shall be seen, seed time and harvest, summer and winter shall not fail; but when it shall disappear, woe to that generation, for behold the end cometh quickly.¹²²

*Original Notes in the Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*¹²³ There are some things in my own bosom that must remain there. If Paul could say I Knew a man who ascended to the third heaven

& saw things unlawful for man to utter, I more. There are only certain things that can be done by the Spirits and that which is done by us that is not done with a view to eternity is not binding in eternity.

*Original Notes Recorded from a Sermon Delivered on 17 May 1843 in William Clayton's Diary:*¹²⁴ Paul had seen the third heavens and I more.

*Original Notes Recorded from a Sermon Delivered on 11 June 1843 in Joseph Smith's Diary:*¹²⁵ I wou[l]d make you think I was climbi[n]g a ladder when I ƒ was climbing a rainbow.

*Original Notes Recorded from a Sermon Delivered on 10 March 1844 in Joseph Smith's Diary:*¹²⁶ The bow has been seen in the cloud & in that year that the bow is seen seed time and harvest will be. but when the bow ceases to be seen look out for a famine. [5 lines blank] [p. [30]]

The most obvious sense of the words “ladder and rainbow” might be something like the statement made by Joseph Smith few weeks later: “I wou[l]d make you think I was climbi[n]g a ladder when I ƒ was climbing a rainbow.” Though the point of the allusion is not entirely clear, it seems possible from the context of the June 11 discourse that Joseph Smith was “commenting on the misleading use of theological terms.”¹²⁷ With respect to the conjectured application of a similar phrase during the May 21 sermon, Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook see it as an anecdotal comment on the general “theme of reluctance — the reluctance of others to accept Joseph Smith’s teachings”¹²⁸ as also expressed in the previous anecdotes of the rough stone rolling and Columbus and the egg. A third possibility is raised by Ben McGuire, who matches up Joseph Smith’s reference to a statement by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), the Congregationalist theologian:¹²⁹

Part of this bow is on earth, and part in heaven, so it is with the church. The bow gradually rises higher and higher from the earth towards heaven, so the saints from their first conversion are travelling in the way towards heaven, and gradually climb the hill, till they arrive at the top. So this bow in this respect is a like token of the covenant with Jacob’s ladder, which represented the way to heaven by the covenant of grace, in which the saints go from step to step, and from strength to strength, till they arrive at the heavenly Zion.

Comments McGuire: “I don’t know if Joseph Smith was aware of the material of Edwards, and so I cannot say with any sort of conviction that this was the case. But it makes me wary of the idea that Joseph was simply ‘commenting on the misleading use of theological terms’ — especially in a context where we can trace many of these ideas and anecdotes and allusions to existing contemporary material and sources.”¹³⁰

Regardless of exactly how this phrase should be understood, it appears later Church historians were incorrect in the interpretation and expansion of “ladder and rainbow” into the passage shown above. In further support for the view that the historians’ expansion failed to capture the intent of the Prophet is the fact that “ladder” and “rainbow” seem to be joined as a single idea in the original notes, which seems inconsistent with their later rendering as two disjoint — and seemingly out-of-place — paragraphs. But if it is true that the brief note was incorrectly filled out by later Church historians, where did the additional material they used for the published version come from?

With respect to the paragraph that expands on the mention “rainbow,” a plausible conjecture is that Church historians borrowed, not only from their memories of the event, but also from Joseph Smith’s prophetic statements about the sign of the rainbow in his 10 March 1844 discourse. Though the passage does not really fit the context of the 21 May 1843 discourse where it was placed, it seems consistent with the more extensive notes taken of the Prophet’s words on the later occasion.

With respect to the paragraph that expands on the “ladder,” parallels to the statements about Paul’s — and Joseph Smith’s — ascensions in the account of the May 21 sermon are recorded in the Coray notebook as well as in the record of William Clayton for May 17. In addition, sentiments similar to the statements of Joseph Smith about how little of what he knew he was able to share with the Saints can be found elsewhere in his Nauvoo teachings¹³¹ as well as in the Book of Mormon.¹³²

However, there is one idea in this same paragraph that has no other direct attestation in the other teachings of Joseph Smith, namely his statement that Paul “could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder — the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms.” How did the historians come up with it? Three possibilities come to mind:

1. *The statement was made up by later historians from whole cloth.* This possibility seems remote since nothing in its immediate context would have required inventing a statement this sort, either to complete the rest of the thought or to enhance its readability. Had the historians simply left the statement out, no one would have noticed its absence. Additionally, according to Elder George A. Smith, inventing new material was something that he and his fellow historians strenuously avoided doing — and indeed there is nowhere else in this sermon where the polished prose they provided is not plausible. Of his work on the *History of the Church*, Elder Smith said that “the greatest care has been taken to convey the ideas in the Prophet’s style as near as possible; and in no case has the sentiment been varied that I know of; as I heard the most of his discourses myself, was on the most intimate terms with him, have retained a most vivid recollection of his teachings.” In addition, Elder Smith felt his own careful editorial work was enhanced by promised inspiration¹³³ in his calling and the fact that he verified his work by reading each compiled discourse with members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, many of whom also had heard the original discourses.¹³⁴ Moreover, we know that Joseph Smith used related imagery about a ladder on at least two other occasions.¹³⁵ Finally, this statement, if authentic, it would be, along with the “rough stone rolling” anecdote, a second direct play on words in the same discourse that would have been recognized by the Prophet’s fellow Freemasons. Although Freemasonry is not a religion and, in contrast to Latter-day Saint temple ordinances, does not claim saving power for its rites,¹³⁶ within the first degree of Masonry, the ladder is also said to have “three principal rounds, representing Faith, Hope, and Charity,” which “present us with the means of advancing from earth to heaven, from death to life — from the mortal to immortality.”¹³⁷ Similar to the reconstructed statement of Joseph Smith, Freemasonry correlates these three “principal rounds” with three different worlds or states of existence, beginning with the physical world and ending with the Heavens. These culminate in a fourth level, associated with “Divinity.”¹³⁸ Putting this ancient imagery in Masonic terms already familiar to many of the early Saints would have served a pragmatic purpose, favoring their acceptance and understanding of specific aspects of the scriptural idea better than if a new and foreign vocabulary had been introduced.¹³⁹

2. *The statement was derived from something Joseph Smith said elsewhere at one time or another.* This possibility seems more plausible than #1 above. Indeed, as a prime example of such a practice, the expanded prose associated with the “rainbow” was arguably created in part from material the historians found in the 10 March 1844 sermon. But if Joseph Smith’s teaching about the ladder and the three kingdoms came from elsewhere, where did it come from?
3. *The statement was derived from something Joseph Smith said elsewhere within the 21 May 1843 sermon.* This is, of course, a more specific version of #2 above, so any arguments that favor it will also favor this third possibility. I believe that the best explanation for where the “ladder” material came from is that it was transposed and then expanded, along with related material about Paul’s vision, from a later portion of the 21 May 1843 sermon to its current, earlier position. The idea of such a transposition becomes all the more believable in the realization that in the symbolic vocabulary of many ancients the rainbow was no less a means of heavenly ascent than the ladder¹⁴⁰ — perhaps making Joseph Smith’s statement on confusion between the “ladder and rainbow” more than just a frivolous comparison. Is there any specific evidence for a mistaken transposition of material by later Church historians? Just this: The material in the Coray Notebook about Paul’s visit to the third heavens, to which the Church historians did not have access,¹⁴¹ occurs at a later point in the record of the sermon than it does in the historians’ expanded version of this material. Moreover, at the very point in the sermon corresponding to the mention of Paul’s visit to the third heavens in the Coray account there seems to be a lacuna in the account of Elder Richards.¹⁴² Is it possible that one of the historians, remembering Joseph Smith’s statements about Paul’s visit and Jacob’s ladder and erroneously associating it with the cryptic reference to “ladder” in Elder Richards’ brief notes, could have mistakenly inserted the filled-out prose in the wrong place? A second line of argument supporting this possibility is that the material in Coray’s Notebook, although paralleling some of the material in the expanded version,¹⁴³ cannot have been a source for it. Thus, the Coray notes provide an independent corroboration both for a significant part of the gist of the expansion and also for where it *should* have been located in the polished version of the sermon.

Elsewhere, I discuss in more detail the equating of the three kingdoms of glory as the “three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder,” an idea which now appears less likely to have been made up from whole cloth by later church historians.¹⁴⁴ Let’s now turn our attention to another ladder, Peter’s so-called “ladder of virtues,” that appears in the next passage from Joseph Smith’s 21 May 1843 sermon.

Peter’s “Ladder of Virtues”

Original Notes from Joseph Smith’s Journal: 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 &e Sure. — what is the secret, the starting point. according as his divine power which hath given unto all things that pertain to life & godliness. [p. [214]] how did he obtain all things? — th[r]ough the knowledge of him who hath calld him. — there could not any be given pertain[in]g to life & knowledge & godliness without knowledge wo wo wo to the Ch[r]istendom. — the divine & priests; &c — if this be true.

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith’s History: Contend earnestly¹⁴⁵ for the like precious faith¹⁴⁶ with the Apostle Peter “and add to your faith virtue,” knowledge, temperance, patience,

godliness, brotherly kindness, charity; “for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁴⁷ Another point, after having all these qualifications, he lays this injunction upon the people “to make your calling and election sure.”¹⁴⁸ He is emphatic upon this subject — after adding all this virtue, knowledge, etc.,¹⁴⁹ “Make your calling and election sure.”¹⁵⁰ What is the secret — the starting point? “According to his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.”¹⁵¹ How did he obtain all things? Through the knowledge of Him who hath called him.¹⁵² There could not anything be given, pertaining to life and godliness,¹⁵³ without knowledge.

*Original Notes in Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*¹⁵⁴ 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.”¹⁵⁵ Now, however, this passage of scripture is generally accepted as “fundamentally Pauline”¹⁵⁶ and, hence, thoroughly consonant with the ideas of early Christianity. The emphasis of these verses is on the finishing and refining process of *sanctification*, not the initiatory process of *justification*.¹⁵⁷

2 Peter 1:4 sounds the keynote of the biblical list of the personal qualities of the perfected disciple, reminding readers of the “exceeding great and precious promises” that allow them to become “partakers [= Greek *koinonos*, ‘sharer, partaker’] of the divine nature.” The *New English Bible* captures the literal sense of this latter phrase: namely, the idea is that the Saints may “come to share in the very being of God.”¹⁵⁸ Unlike the LDS, who are comfortable with the idea of sharing “the very being of God,” Eastern Orthodox proponents of the doctrine of *theosis* are wary of the straightforward interpretation of “divine nature” in its cultural context, and are quick to point out that: “We are gods in that we bear His image, not His nature [i.e., His essence].”¹⁵⁹ That said, apart from this important ontological difference, there are many similarities between the doctrine of *theosis* and LDS teachings about exaltation, as Catholic scholar Jordan Vajda has so competently detailed.¹⁶⁰

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.”¹⁶¹ In other words, according to Joseph Smith’s exposition of the logic of Peter given above, the additional “knowledge of the Lord” disciples will receive after they have qualified themselves through the cultivation of all these virtues and after they have entered into God’s presence will make their “calling and election sure” in order that they may “obtain all things.”

Importantly, these qualities, to which Christian disciples are exhorted to give “all diligence,”¹⁶² 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,¹⁶³ a rhetorical form in Hellenistic, Jewish, and Christian literature called *sorites*, *climax*, or *gradatio*.¹⁶⁴ Harold Attridge explains the ladder-like property of the personal qualities given in lists of this form: “In this ‘ladder’ of virtues, each virtue is the means of producing the next (this sense of the Greek is lost in translation). All the virtues grow out of *faith*, and all culminate in *love*.”¹⁶⁵ Joseph Neyrey observes that the Christian triad of faith, hope, and charity in 2 Peter 1:5-7 “forms the determining framework in which other virtues are inserted” in such lists.¹⁶⁶ The table below summarizes key words in scriptural passages from Paul, Peter, and D&C 4 that illustrate this idea:

Romans 5:1-5	2 Peter 1:5-7	D&C 4:6
<i>faith</i>	<i>faith</i>	<i>faith</i>
	virtue	virtue
peace	knowledge	knowledge
	temperance	temperance
<i>hope</i> [patience, experience] ¹⁶⁷	<i>patience</i>	<i>patience</i>
	godliness	
	brotherly kindness	brotherly kindness
<i>love</i>	<i>charity</i>	godliness
		<i>charity</i>
		humility
		diligence

Though some elements of the three lists differ,¹⁶⁸ the reward of divine fellowship for the disciples is the same. In 2 Peter 1:4, 8, 10, they are promised that they will become “partakers of the divine nature,” and that they will ultimately be fruitful “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” thus, in Joseph Smith’s reading, making their “calling and election sure.” In Romans 5:2, they are told that they will “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” This means that they can look forward with glad confidence, knowing that they “will be able to share in the revelation of God — in other words, that [they] will come to know Him as He is.”¹⁶⁹ D&C 4:7 echoes the words of the Savior: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”¹⁷⁰ — a threefold promise that Matthew Bowen correlates to faith, hope, and charity. He notes that “‘ask’ and ‘seek’ correspond to the Hebrew verbs *sh’l* and *bqsh*, which were used to describe ‘asking for’ or ‘seeking’ a divine revelation, often in a temple setting,”¹⁷¹ and Jack Welch has argued that the symbolism of knocking is best understood “in a ceremonial context.”¹⁷² However, it should be remembered that the temple ordinances also foreshadow actual events in the life of faithful disciples who endure to the end.¹⁷³

The expansion of 2 Peter’s list of virtues in D&C 4 warrants further discussion. It is worth noting that the “three principal rounds” of faith, hope, and charity/love are specifically highlighted in verse 5, and then repeated as part of the longer list of virtues given in verse 6. Intriguingly, the list of eight qualities found in 2 Peter 1 is expanded in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants to ten in number.¹⁷⁴ In an insightful article, John W. Welch has shown how the number ten in the ancient world — which conveys the idea of perfection, especially divine completion — relates to human ascension into the holy of holies or highest degree of heaven.¹⁷⁵

“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.”¹⁷⁶ 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”¹⁷⁷ ...

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.¹⁷⁸

Though it is true that no explicit mention is made in the Bible of the performance of rites inculcating this divine pathway of virtues, it is equally true that a lecture based on 2 Peter 1:3-11 would not in the least be out of place as a summary of progression through LDS temple ordinances.¹⁷⁹

For sake of brevity, we will pass over the next part of the sermon, which describes how salvation from one’s enemies, including most pointedly the Devil and those spirits that followed him, is rooted in “knowledge of the priesthood.”¹⁸⁰

“Some Things in My Own Bosom ... Must Remain There”

Original Notes from Joseph Smith’s Journal: design of the great God. in sending us into this world. and organize[n]g us to prepare us for the Eternal world. — I shall keep in my own bosom.

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith’s History: The design of the great God in sending us into this world, and organizing us to prepare us for the eternal worlds, I shall keep in my own bosom at present. ... Paul ascended into the third heavens,¹⁸¹ and he could understand the three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder¹⁸² — the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms,¹⁸³ where Paul saw and heard things which were not lawful for him to utter.¹⁸⁴ I could explain a hundred fold more¹⁸⁵ than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision,¹⁸⁶ were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them.¹⁸⁷

*Original Notes in the Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*¹⁸⁸ There are some things in my own bosom that must remain there. If Paul could say I Knew a man who ascended to the third heaven & saw things unlawful for man to utter, I more.

The Prophet declares that he has witnessed even “more” than Paul saw when the latter “ascended to the third heaven,” but he refrains from sharing everything he knows about the “design of the great God ... to prepare us for the eternal worlds” because he is not permitted and because the people are not ready to hear it.

Note that I have inserted the expansion of the Church historians about Paul’s ascent that was discussed above into what appears to be its proper place so that the three accounts of this section of the sermon can be compared more easily.

Our Actions and Contracts Must Be Done with a View to Eternity

Original Notes from Joseph Smith's Journal: we have no claim in our eternal compact. in relation to Eternal thi[n]gs [p. [216]] unless our actions. & contracts & all thi[n]gs tend to this end. —

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith's History: We have no claim in our eternal compact, in relation to eternal things, unless our actions and contracts and all things tend to this end.

*Original Notes in the Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*¹⁸⁹ There are only certain things that can be done by the Spirits and that which is done by us that is not done with a view to eternity is not binding in eternity.

The principle expressed here is similar to one given in D&C 132:13:

And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

Summary of the Three Keys Hidden in 2 Peter 1

Original Notes from Joseph Smith's Journal: after all this make your calling and election sure. if this injuncti[o]n would lay lageley [largely] on those to whom it was spoken. how much more those to who th[e]m of the 19. century. —

<1 Key> Knowledge in [is] the power of Salvati[o]n

<2 Key> Make his calling and Election Sure

3^d — it is one thing to be on the mount & hear the excellent voice &c &c. and another <to hear the> voice de[c]lare to you you have a part & lot in the kingdom. — [4 lines blank] [p. [217]]

Expanded Version from Joseph Smith's History: But after all this, you have got to make your calling and election sure. If this injunction would lie largely on those to whom it was spoken, how much more those of the present generation!

1st key: Knowledge is the power of salvation. 2nd key: Make your calling and election sure. 3rd key: It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, &c., &c., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom.

*Original Notes in the Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook:*¹⁹⁰ Oh Peter if they who were of like precious faith with thee were enjoined to make their Calling & Election sure, how much more all we There are two Keys, one key knowledge. the other make you Calling & election sure, for if you do these things you shall never fall for so an entrance shall be administered unto you abundently into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ. We made known unto you the power & coming of our Lord & S. J. Christ were Eye witnesses of his Majesty when he received from God the Father honor & glory when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy Mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto give heed until the day Star arise in your hearts this

is It is one thing to receive knowledge by the voice of God, (this is my beloved Son &c.) & another to Know that you yourself will be saved, to have a positive promise of your own Salvation is making your Calling and Election sure. viz the voice of Jesus saying my beloved thou shalt have eternal life. Brethren never cease struggling until you get this evidence. & Take heed both before and after obtaining the more sure word of Prophecy.

Joseph Smith concludes by answering the question he raised at the beginning of the sermon: What could be “more sure” than hearing the voice of God bearing testimony of His Son? The Prophet summarizes the three linked keys that are hidden in the first chapter of 2 Peter. He urgently enjoins the Saints to do all that is necessary to make their calling and election sure so they will receive the divine knowledge that is the power of salvation. This knowledge does not come merely by hearing the voice of God speak, as when Peter heard the Father’s testimony of the Son, but through the “more sure” promise of eternal life made with a personal oath that was given afterward by the Father to Peter.

Though non-LDS commentators understandably fail to grasp the full nature and import of Peter’s experience on the Mount of Transfiguration, some at least clearly sense the implication of his subsequent words¹⁹¹ for readers of the epistle. According to the editors of the *ESV* “believers are admonished to ‘pay attention’ to the certainty of the ‘prophetic word.’ In the contrast between ‘we have’ and ‘you will do well,’ Peter is apparently emphasizing that the interpretation of the apostles (‘we’) is to be regarded as authoritative for the church (‘you’)”¹⁹² — while striving themselves, meantime, to obtain the same “prophetic word” that Peter possessed (i.e., “take heed [unto *our* more sure word], as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in *your* hearts).”¹⁹³ Not only Jesus and Peter, but every one who keeps “all the commandments” and obeys “all the ordinances of the house of the Lord”¹⁹⁴ can look forward to hearing the Father’s declaration that they have become as His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased.

Conclusions

Having spent much of my life in focused study of translations, revelations, and teachings of Joseph Smith, I have been astonished with the extent to which they reverberate with the echoes of antiquity — and, no less significantly, with the deepest truths of my personal experience. Indeed, I would not merely assert that the words of Joseph Smith hold up well under close examination, but rather that, like a fractal whose self-similar patterns become more wondrous upon ever closer inspection, the brilliance of their inspiration shines most impressively under bright light and high magnification: there is glory in the details. My great hope is that this glory will be more fully revealed and appreciated as we take advantage of our unparalleled access to the words of the Prophet by seeking to more fully *understand* and *apply* them.

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Endnotes

1 See, e.g., J. Smith, Jr., Papers 2008-; R. Skousen, Analysis; S. H. Faulring *et al.*, Original Manuscripts; B. M. Hauglid, Textual History; M. D. Rhodes, Hor; M. D. Rhodes, Books of the Dead; J. Smith, Jr., Words; J. W. Welch *et al.*, Book of Mormon Central.

2 Of course, even our efforts to *understand* the words of Joseph Smith are only the beginning. I am fully conscious of the fact that an understanding of "the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77) does not come by mere "study" alone, but "also by faith" (D&C 88:118. See also D. A. Bednar, Seek) as we are asked to give loving and whole-hearted expression in our lives of what we feel and believe. I concur with Elder Marion G. Romney that: "One cannot fully learn the gospel without living it" (M. G. Romney, Oath, p. 19; M. K. Jensen, Anchors, p. 59. See also J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image 1, Endnotes P-18 and P-19, pp. xxxiv-xxxv). Indeed, as Elder Dallin H. Oaks has said about the most common way that we receive spiritual understanding: "revelation comes most often when we are on the move" (Oaks, 2001 #1969, p. 7. See also B. C. Hafen, Anchored, pp. 3-5). Such learning "by faith" is the supreme test—and among the sweetest rewards—of discipleship during this mortal "season of unanswered questions" (L. B. Wickman, But If Not, p. 30).

Commenting on James' comparison of the Word of God to a mirror (James 1:23-24), S. Kierkegaard, *Self-Examination*, pp. 25-29 compares scholarship that is concerned only with the preliminary, technical aspects of the process of interpretation of scripture and not with wholehearted reading and personal implementation of its message to a lover who meticulously reconstructs the meaning of a letter from his beloved in a foreign language with a dictionary at his side and then, once the meaning is clear, casts the letter aside without regard to what it means *for himself* (D. R. Law, Cheap Grace, pp. 106-107):

Only when the translation is finished, does the lover begin truly to read the letter.

Reading the letter means more, however, than merely extracting its “objective” meaning. To illustrate this point, Kierkegaard asks us to imagine that this letter “contained a wish, something the beloved wished her lover to do. It was, let us assume, much that was required of him, very much” (S. Kierkegaard, *Self-Examination*, p. 27). Having at last translated the letter, the lover does not hesitate but immediately rushes off to fulfill his beloved’s wish.

Thus, for each of us who love to study the scriptures, there is both encouragement and a warning in the wise words of Kierkegaard (*ibid.*, 12:318, pp. 28-29):

When you read God’s word eruditely — we do not disparage erudition, far from it — but remember that when you read God’s word eruditely, with a dictionary, etc., you are not reading God’s Word ... If you are a learned man, then take care lest with all your erudite reading (which is not reading God’s Word) you forget perchance to read God’s Word. If you are not learned — ah, envy the other man not, rejoice that you can at once get to the point of reading God’s Word! And if there is a desire, a commandment, an order [that you read], ... then be off at once to do accordingly. “But,” you perhaps would say, “there are so many obscure passages in the Holy Scriptures, whole books which are almost riddles.” To this I would reply, “I see no need of considering this objection unless it comes from one whose life gives expression to the fact that he has punctually complied with all the passages which are easy to understand.” Is this the case with you? [Thus a godly man must act:] if there were obscure passages, but also clearly expressed desires, he would say, “I must at once comply with the desire, then I will see what can be made of the obscure passages. Oh, but how could I sit down to puzzle over the obscure passages and leave the desire unfulfilled, the desire which I clearly understood?” That is to say: When you read God’s Word, it is not the obscure passages which impose a duty upon you, but that which you understand and with that you must instantly comply. If there were only a single passage you did understand in Holy Scripture — well, the first thing is to do that; but you do not first have to sit down and puzzle over the obscure passages. God’s Word is given in order that you shall act in accordance with it, not in order that you shall practice the art of interpreting obscure passages.

3 G. d. Santillana *et al.*, *Hamlet's Mill*, p. 120.

4 H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 52. Nibley illustrates his point as follows (*ibid.*, pp. 51-52. Cf. S. B. Morrow, *The Dawning Moon of the Mind: Unlocking the Pyramid Texts*, pp. 271-274):

The hardest question of all for the Egyptologist, according to Gundlach and Schenkel, is whether Egyptian writings can really be understood by anyone but an Egyptian. Go up to the man in the car (it used to be the man in the street) when he stops at a red light and deliver this sober message to him: “Osiris shall be towed toward the interior of the great pool of Khonsu,” which is the first line of Joseph Smith Papyrus XI. If the man gives you a blank look or starts an ominous muttering, explain to him that the great lake of Khonsu is “probably a liturgical designation of the portion of the Nile that has to be crossed in order to reach the Theban cemetery on the west bank” and that Khonsu, or Khons, is a youthful moon-god. When the light changes, your new friend may proceed on his way knowing as much about the first line of our Book of Breathings as anybody else does — namely, nothing at all. Though as correct and literal as we can make it, the translation ... is not a translation. It is nonsense.

Though the superficial student of Joseph Smith may disagree, acquiring even a rudimentary understanding of some of the Prophet’s writings and teachings may be no less challenging — and,

frankly, no less error prone— than rendering a competent translation of the Book of Breathings for an untrained modern reader.

5 Revelation 14:6. Cf. D&C 133:36-37.

6 J. C. Alleman, *Problems in translating the language of Joseph Smith*, pp. 22, 26, 28.

7 Continuing with *ibid.*, p. 22:

Some of the problems encountered in understanding Joseph Smith's writings can be anticipated from what we know of his life and the conditions under which his words were recorded and have come down to us.

In the first place, Joseph Smith wrote and spoke more than a hundred years ago, and, while a hundred years is not a long time in the history of a language, it is sufficient for noticeable changes to occur. Second, the Prophet was almost entirely self-educated, a circumstance which is reflected in his writing by a style which is a combination of the most elevated rhetoric, with complicated, yet often beautiful constructions and images, interspersed with common expressions from the language of the people he grew up with, and not altogether free from what we would call outright grammatical errors. Third, he was above all a religious leader, and in speaking of religious subjects consciously or unconsciously used a type of language which the people of his day associated with prophets and apostles, namely the language of the King James version of the Bible.

Ben McGuire comments ({McGuire, 2016 #5269}):

I am always reminded in these sorts of discussions about understanding that scene in *Star Trek* after Spock has come back from the dead, where Bones wants to talk about it with Spock, and Spock essentially tells him that until they have a common point of reference, they can't discuss it, to which Bones responds by asking: "So, I have to die before you can discuss it with me?"

[The issue is in] having access to the texts as opposed to understanding them. ... [W]e have the original papers, we have a history of interpretation — and even with all of this, we still have difficulty getting to the mind of Joseph Smith, because of course, neither later interpretation or the original texts convey that to us.

8 J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 20 March 1839, 3:295; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 20 March 1839, p. 137. For a typescript of the original letter, see J. Smith, Jr., *Writings 2002*, Letter to the Church at Quincy, Illinois, 20 March 1839, p. 436.

9 Cf. *Hymns* (1985), *Hymns* (1985), Praise to the Man, #27: "Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!"

10 See examples of culture-related imagery in J. C. Alleman, *Problems in translating the language of Joseph Smith*, pp. 23, 25-26 such as: "closely whispered by the bear" (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, p. 140), "flat as a pancake" (*ibid.*, p. 292), "stuffed me like a cock-turkey" (*ibid.*, p. 294), "hunt ... as Pat did for the woodchuck" (*ibid.*, p. 310), and "splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle" (*ibid.*, p. 331).

With respect to scriptural allusions by Joseph Smith, Alleman concludes that "quoting from the Bible came as naturally to [the Prophet] as speaking itself." However he notes that the occurrence of scriptures in the writings of Joseph Smith can be a problem for translators because "frequently, whether intentionally, or by oversight, the quotation differs from the original. The example ... shows an extreme case in which eight different passages are worded into a single sentence. Some are quoted

accurately but others are not. In one case ... the difference is so great that one cannot really speak of a quotation; rather we give the translator a reference to the scripture which contains similar words, so that he can have a source for selecting the vocabulary items he will use, but he will have to put them into a completely different structure to translate the sense of the original” (J. C. Alleman, Problems in translating the language of Joseph Smith, p. 26).

11 “By definition,” writes Ben McGuire, “an *allusion* is recognizable only by someone who is familiar with the text to which it alludes. This awareness of the source text is often referred to as the ‘competence’ of the reader. ... A reader who is familiar with the referent text is considered competent while a reader who is unfamiliar with the referent text (and by extension unable to recognize the reference or allusion) is not” (B. L. McGuire, *Nephi and Goliath*, p. 17 and p. 29 n. 7)

12 See, e.g., Richard C. Galbraith’s introductory essay in J. Smith, Jr., *Scriptural Teachings*, pp. 1-11. Galbraith writes (*ibid.*, pp. 1-2, 3):

Ironically, of all Joseph Smith’s great accomplishments in the work of the Restoration, the one perhaps least appreciated was his immense knowledge of the scriptures. The scriptures were the brick and mortar of all his sermons, writings, and other personal communications; he quoted them, he alluded to them, he adapted them in all his speaking and writing.

The Prophet’s extensive use of the scriptures may not be obvious to the casual reader. In the book *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, for example, the Prophet appears to cite fewer than one passage of scripture every other page... But that figure misses the mark. A more careful reading of this book reveals some *twenty* scriptures for every one actually cited. When I discovered that, I began to ask, not “When is the Prophet quoting scripture,” but rather “What might he be quoting that is *not* scripture?”

Of course, as Ben McGuire observes, we have to be cautious when we draw parallels using a computer-aided search (B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016):

Finding scriptural phrases in a text is *not* the same thing as finding scriptural citations. A citation is an intentional movement of text, and computer algorithms are, for the most part, not capable of distinguishing between such an intentional borrowing and coincidental usage or echoes. This is particularly true in the time of Joseph Smith, where the King James Bible was arguably the most influential literary work available. And because of this, the use of King James language cannot be automatically considered to be a citation of the biblical text. I am not sure that this needs much clarification in the chapter, but it is a problematic issue. The problem is that it tends to create an opposite swing (and perhaps one just as great) as the original identified problem. If we weren’t identifying all of the citations before, we may be identifying too many now. And reading allusion where none was intended may well provide us with deep insight, it certainly doesn’t represent the message intended by the author (Joseph Smith in this case). At best computer assisted search only helps us identify potential citations which then need to be eyeballed by a human being with a solid method.

13 M. Rich, *Literacy Debate*.

14 Citing U. Eco, *Kant*, pp. 280ff., Ben McGuire describes the problem as follows: “when we refer to things (and these things are the sorts of things that Joseph Smith is referring to in his sermons ...) ... the meaning of these expressions that make these references should come with ... general directions about their use. And the problem is that for us, as modern readers, we have simply lost those general directions.”

15 E.g., M. Rich, Literacy Debate:

Clearly, reading in print and on the Internet are different. On paper, text has a predetermined beginning, middle and end, where readers focus for a sustained period on one author's vision. On the Internet, readers skate through cyberspace at will and, in effect, compose their own beginnings, middles and ends. ...

Critics of reading on the Internet say they see no evidence that increased Web activity improves reading achievement. "What we are losing in this country and presumably around the world is the sustained, focused, linear attention developed by reading," said Mr. Gioia of the N.E.A. "I would believe people who tell me that the Internet develops reading if I did not see such a universal decline in reading ability and reading comprehension on virtually all tests."

Nicholas Carr sounded a similar note in "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" in the current issue of the *Atlantic* magazine (N. Carr, Is Google. See also, e.g., N. Carr, Shallows; N. Carr, Glass Cage; N. Carr, Juggler's Brain; N. Romeo, Is Google). Warning that the Web was changing the way he — and others — think, he suggested that the effects of Internet reading extended beyond the falling test scores of adolescence. "What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation," he wrote, confessing that he now found it difficult to read long books. ...

Neurological studies show that learning to read changes the brain's circuitry. Scientists speculate that reading on the Internet may also affect the brain's hard wiring in a way that is different from book reading.

"The question is, does it change your brain in some beneficial way?" said Guinevere F. Eden, director of the Center for the Study of Learning at Georgetown University. "The brain is malleable and adapts to its environment. Whatever the pressures are on us to succeed, our brain will try and deal with it."

Some scientists worry that the fractured experience typical of the Internet could rob developing readers of crucial skills. "Reading a book, and taking the time to ruminate and make inferences and engage the imaginal processing, is more cognitively enriching, without doubt, than the short little bits that you might get if you're into the 30-second digital mode," said Ken Pugh, a cognitive neuroscientist at Yale who has studied brain scans of children reading.

Although concerns about differences between reading on paper and reading from a screen are probably overdone, there is no doubt that, in general, different media exploit different sensory and cognitive strengths and weaknesses. Already in 1937, the prescient Paul Valéry ruminated on the various consequences of "broadcasting and the gramophone" on literature (P. Valéry, *Our Destiny*, pp. 148-150, 152. See also J. Mander, *Four Arguments*; J. Mander *et al.*, *Nancho Consults Jerry Mander*):

We can already begin wondering whether a purely spoken and auditive literature will not fairly soon replace written literature. That would be a return to the most primitive times, and the technical consequences would be immense. What would happen if writing died out? First of all — and this would be an advantage — the voice and the needs of the ear would regain, in matters of form, the capital importance which whose conditions of the senses had until a few hundred years ago. Immediately, the structure and dimensions of literary works would be strongly affected; but the author's work would be much less easy to reconsider. Certain poets would no longer be able to remain so complicated as they are made out to be, and readers, transformed into listeners, would

hardly be able to return to a passage, read it over, go more deeply into it through enjoyment or criticism as they can do with a text they can hold in their hands.

There is another point. Suppose television develops (and I admit I do not welcome it), then immediately the entire descriptive parts of works could be replaced by visual representation; landscapes and portraits would no longer be the province of men of letters, and they would elude the means of language. One can go further. The sentimental parts would also be reduced, if not entirely abolished, thanks to the intervention of tender pictures and appropriate music released at the psychological moment. ...

And there is, finally, another possible and perhaps more serious consequence of the introduction of all these new methods: What happens to abstract literature? So long as it is a question of amusing, touching, or seducing men's minds one might agree, at a pinch, that broadcasting would be adequate. But science and philosophy demand quite another rhythm of thought than reading aloud could allow, or rather, they impose an absence of rhythm. Reflection stops or breaks its impulsion every second, it introduces uneven tempos, returns, and detours which demand the physical presence of a text and the possibility of handling it at leisure. All this is cut out by audition. Listening is inadequate for the transmission of abstract works. ...

But all this is rather clumsily derived from our present physical potentialities. We must go a little farther. To think of the destiny of letters is to think at the same time and above all of the destiny of the mind. At this point everyone is at a loss. We can only too freely imagine this future as we wish, and we can arbitrarily suppose either that things will continue to be fairly like those we know, or that in the age to come there will be a depression of intellectual values, a lowering or decadence comparable to what happened at the close of classical antiquity; culture almost abandoned, works becoming incomprehensible and being destroyed, production abolished, all of which is unfortunately quite possible and even possible by two methods we already know: either through the use of powerful weapons of destruction, decimating the populations of the most cultured regions of the globe, ruining monuments, libraries, laboratories, and archives, and reducing the survivors to a misery exceeding their intelligence and suppressing all that elevates the mind of man; or else that not these means of destruction but those of possession and enjoyment, the incoherence imposed by the frequency and facility of impressions, the rapid vulgarization and application of industrial techniques to the productions, evaluations, and consumption of the mind's fruits, will end in impairing the highest and most important intellectual virtues — concentration, meditative and critical powers, and what one may call thought in the grand style, thorough research directed towards the most exact and most powerful expression of its object.

We are living under the perpetual régime of intellectual disturbance. Intensity and novelty have in our time become good qualities, which is a rather remarkable symptom. I cannot believe that this system is good for culture. Its first result will be to make unintelligible or insupportable all the works of the past which were composed in quite different conditions and which were meant for minds that were formed entirely differently.

16 Cited M. Fishbane, *Spirituality*, p. 12. Buber goes on to describe this as:

... a disease of the spirit that can lead us to imagine that we already know what we are reading, causing us to blithely and triumphantly read past the text... The spiritual task of interpretation ... is to affect or alter the pace of reading so that one's eye and ear can be addressed by the text's words and sounds — and thus reveal an expanded or new sense of life and its dynamics. The pace of

technology and the patterns of modernity pervert this vital task. The rhythm of reading must, therefore, be restored to the rhythm of breathing, to the cadence of the cantillation marks of the sacred text. Only then will the individual absorb the texts with his or her life breath and begin to read liturgically, as a rite of passage to a different level of meaning. And only then may the contemporary idolization of technique and information be transformed, and the sacred text restored as a living teaching and instruction, for the constant renewal of the self.

17 For good examples of how to read in a way that tries to take full advantage of the richness of scripture, see D. Packard *et al.*, *Feasting*.

18 S. Prothero, *Literacy*, pp. 105-112.

19 J. E. Seaich, *Ancient Texts* 1995, p. vii.

20 M. Barker, *Hidden*, p. 34.

21 H. Bloom, *Names Divine*, p. 104. Since at least the time of Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), a parade of quasi-religious books have, in the words of Prothero (S. Prothero, *Literacy*, pp. 113, 117. See also C. Lasch, *Revolt*, p. 216ff.):

... preached therapy more than theology, happiness rather than salvation. Then, as today, debating (or even discussing) religious doctrines was considered ill-mannered, a violation of the cherished civic ideal of tolerance, so it was difficult for children to learn or for adults to articulate what set their religious traditions apart from others.

Current interest in contemplative practice has caused "spiritual but not religious" folks to rediscover such neglected resources inside Christianity and Judaism as centering prayer and Kabbalah. But it has also led them to Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and other Asian religions in search of various forms of meditation, yoga, and tai chi... Here too, however, the trend is toward religion stripped down to its "essentials"—essentials that in this case are confined almost entirely to the experiential or moral dimensions. This development is well advanced in the American Buddhist community, where some have argued that Buddhism can get along just fine without such staples as karma and reincarnation. "Buddhism Without Beliefs," as this movement has been called, aims to distill the Buddhist life down to nothing more than one's favorite sitting or chanting practice, and then to put that practice at the service of such American preoccupations as happiness. The tendency to shirk from doctrine is particularly pronounced in the "multi-religious America" camp. Here even the minimal monotheism of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic model must be sacrificed since many Buddhists don't believe in God and many Hindus believe in more than one. The only common ground here seems to be tolerance itself. When pluralists gather for interreligious dialogue, their discussions always seem to circle back to ethics... [without] a whisper of theology.

22 Cited in S. Prothero, *Literacy*, p. 113. As an example, Prothero cites a statement by Eisenhower to a Soviet official in a December 1952 meeting that "our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is" (*ibid.*, p. 113). The same fierce loyalty to an abstract "idea" of God divorced from any particulars is expressed more prosaically in an off-the-street comment made to a sociologist by a high-school student in the Middle West, "Yeah, we smoke dope all over, in our cars, walking around before class, anytime, but that doesn't mean we don't believe in God or that we'll let anybody put God down" (P. Fussell, *Class*, p. 150).

23 See, e.g., H. B. Eyring, *Power*; S. D. Nadauld, *Principles*, pp. 88-89; B. K. Packer, *Plan of Happiness*; B. K. Packer, *Children*, p. 17; B. K. Packer, *Do Not Fear*, p. 79; B. K. Packer, *Errand*, pp. 307-312; M. K.

Jensen, Anchors; D. A. Bednar, Increase, pp. 151-174; D. A. Bednar, Teach Them; B. K. Packer, Principles; M. R. Ballard, Opportunities and Responsibilities. President Boyd K. Packer, among others, has often noted the fact that “God gave unto [men] commandments, *after* having made known unto them the plan of redemption” (Alma 12:32, emphasis added. See, e.g., B. K. Packer, Plan of Happiness; D. A. Bednar, Increase, p. 154).

24 H. W. Nibley, Message 2005, p. 99. Cf. Moroni 7:31-32. D&C 88:118 exhorts the Saints to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” The implication of scripture, however, is that learning spiritual matters from book study is ultimately a poor cousin to learning by faith — i.e., study “out of the best books” is only necessary because “all have not faith.” Though himself a great advocate of schools for the teaching of practical subjects in Kirtland and Nauvoo, on matters of learning for the eternities Joseph Smith wanted the Saints to gain knowledge by direct revelation — to come to the point where they could throw away their crutches, take up their beds, and walk: “The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching” (J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 3 October 1841, p. 191). Note that the original source for this quote actually reads “the *only* way” (J. Smith, Jr., Words, 3 October 1841, p. 77, emphasis added).

B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016 notes that this is precisely the message also of 1 Nephi 15:8-9 (see B. L. McGuire, Nephi, 61-64): “And I said unto them: Have ye inquired of the Lord? And they said unto me: We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us.” McGuire observes that Joseph sees this not only “in a personal way ... but also on a larger magnitude. We have a cultural attitude in the Christianity that he was experiencing that said that we had all the revelation we were going to get (which is a larger societal expression of this same sort of thing) and against which he (and the Book of Mormon) become the counterexample. The Church in some ways becomes the example for other Christian churches” (B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016).

25 “To put it bluntly,” writes Nibley, “short of revelation, no real translation of [scripture — or, for that matter, any other inspired teaching —] is possible” (H. W. Nibley, Message 2005, p. 55. See also Joseph Smith’s teachings about the necessary qualifications for understanding the parables of Jesus in J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, December 1835, p. 96**). The Prophet taught: “Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. ... Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject” (ibid., Funeral of James Adams, 9 October 1843, p. 324). Cf. Moroni 7:31-32 and Elder Willard Richards’ original notes of the sermon published in J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 9 October 1843, p. 109.

Joseph Smith was democratic in his desire that every Saint to receive the privilege of personal communion with the heavens and a revelatory unfolding of the meaning of scripture, decrying those who supposed that the plain truths of scripture were “mystery ... and, therefore, are not to be understood” (J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, December 1835, p. 96). He taught that “is the privilege of every Elder to speak the things of God” (D. Q. Cannon *et al.*, Far West, 25 October 1831, p. 20, spelling and capitalization modernized) and that every Saint could come to a personal knowledge of the Father Himself (see, e.g., D&C 67:10; 88:68; 93:1). On one occasion, Joseph Smith said: “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him ... from the least to the greatest [see Jeremiah 31:34]” (J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 27 June 1839, p. 149. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Words, 27 June 1839, p. **; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1832-1839, 27 June 1839, p. **).

26 Articles of Faith 1:9.

27 N. A. Maxwell, *Cosmos*, p. 2.

28 In response to a request in 1831 by his brother Hyrum to explain the translation process more fully, Joseph Smith said that “it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and ... it was not expedient for him to relate these things” (J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Documents, July 1831-January 1833, General Conference Minutes, Orange Township, Cuyahoga Co., Ohio, 25-26 October 1831, p. 84, capitalization modernized). For more on the Prophet’s reluctance to share details of sacred events, see R. O. Barney, *Joseph Smith's Visions*; R. Nicholson, *Cowdery Conundrum*. As a specific illustration of the sacred regard in which the Prophet held the temple ordinances, Andrew Ehat reminds us that none of the nine participants who were present when the Nauvoo endowment was first bestowed on 4 May 1842 recorded the events of that day in their personal reminiscences. In explanation of this fact, Ehat observes (A. F. Ehat, *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 49):

The Prophet Joseph Smith had asked each participant not to record the specifics of what they had heard and seen that day. Six weeks later, in a letter to his fellow apostle Parley P. Pratt, Heber C. Kimball wrote that these favored few had received “some precious things through the Prophet on the priesthood that would cause your soul to rejoice.” However, he added, “I cannot give them to you on paper for they are not to be written” (Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, *Heber C. Kimball Papers*, LDS Church History Library). They were just too sacred.

29 J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Documents, July 1831-January 1833, Letter to Noah C. Saxton, 4 January 1833, p. 354, in a parallel to the wording found in Omni 1:20 that was also taken up by Oliver Cowdery in a 9 December 1829 letter (O. Cowdery, Letter to Cornelius Blatchly, 9 November 1829) and in the published account and testimony of the Three Witnesses (J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Histories*, 1832-1844, pp. 318-323). See also D&C 1:29, 20:8. B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016 observes:

It seems quite obvious to me that Omni 1:20 (which was translated just before we get the testimonies of the various witnesses) is the source of all of these statements. And it provides a useful context in trying to come to terms with Joseph’s limited descriptions. That is, Joseph sees in his use of the Nephite Interpreters exactly the sort of thing he reads about in Omni. And his use of this phrase is very much to also say all of the things that this connection suggests as well (that Joseph was a prophet like King Mosiah, that his use of the interpreters was like that given in the Book of Mormon with the Jaredite record, and so on). ... [W]hen he talked about the translation of the Book of Mormon, ... he did so using a scriptural passage that he first encounters near the end of the translation. And while we often point to this statement as a description of the translation process, because we rarely connect it to an intentional citation of scripture, we miss all that this statement is really being used to tell us about the translation process, and what Joseph Smith wanted to convey through this use of scripture.

30 Summarizing the Savior’s answer to the disciples who asked him why He taught in parables, Elder James E. Talmage wrote that (J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 275):

while it was their privilege to receive and understand the deeper truths of the gospel, “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” as He expressed it, with people in general, who were unreceptive and unprepared, such fulness of understanding was impossible.

Gordon C. Thomasson further elaborated (cited in *The directions of Mormon language: Panel discussion*, *The directions of Mormon language: Panel discussion*, p. 85):

When Jesus spoke in parables, he was precisely speaking on multiple levels. Intentionally, he was saying different things to different people. I don't think that we can give meat to babes; I think that they need milk [see 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:12]. ... For instance, someone could be preaching repentance in a sermon. The ninth through the fourteenth chapters of Alma is an interesting one. People read it for years and just thought that it was a nice repentance sermon. One day, when I was working with Hugh Nibley, I walked into the office, sat down, and he kicked me in the pants and I kicked him in the pants. We realized that Alma was calling to repentance a people who had already had the temple endowment. Because people never expected to find the temple there, they never saw the temple there, but it's all through those chapters of Alma [cf. H. W. Nibley, *Message* 2005, p. 54, citing Giorgio de Santillana: "every translation is a mere function of the translator's expectation"). The general authority in conference might, as it were, call people to repentance and it looks like the straightforward call to repentance, but it has special relevance to those who have been through the temple.

31 For example, on 2 April 1843, Joseph Smith preached a sermon that included a discussion of Jesus' Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27) and His nighttime encounter with Nicodemus (see John 3:1-5). In the notes of the sermon recorded in Joseph Smith's *Diary* by Elder Willard Richards, it reads (J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals, 1841-1843*, p. 326):

What is the meaning of the scriptures he that is faithful over a few thi[n]gs shall be made ruler over many? & he that is faithful over many shall be made ruler over many more?

What is the mea[n]ing of the Parable of the 10 talents? [blank] Also [blank] conversation with Nicodemus. except a man be born of water & of the spi[r]it. —

I shall not tell you? —

According to a late recollection of Benjamin Johnson, the Prophet had explained the doctrine of plural marriage to him not long before. Benjamin was reluctant to embrace the principle and said (B. F. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, pp. 83-84):

"Brother Joseph, this is all new to me; it may all be true, — you know but I do not, to my education it is all wrong; but I am going, with the help of the Lord to do just what you say, with this promise to you — That if ever I know you do this to degrade my sister I will kill you, as the Lord lives." He looked at me, oh, so calmly, and said, "Br. Benjamin, you will never see that day, but you shall see the day you will know it is true, and you will fulfill the law and greatly rejoice in it." And he said, "At this morning's meeting, I will preach you a sermon that no one but you will understand. And furthermore, I will promise you that when you open your mouth to your sister, it shall be filled."

At the meeting he read the parable of the Talents, and showed plainly that to him that hath shall be given more, and from him that had but one should be taken that he seemed to have, and given to him who had ten. This, so far as I could understand, might relate to families, but to me there was a horror in the idea of speaking to my sister upon such a subject, the thought of which made me sick. But I had promised, and it must be done. I did not remember his words and have faith that light would come, — I only thought "How dark it all looks to me." But I must do it, and so told my sister I wished to see her in a room by herself, where I soon found her seated. I stood before her trembling, my knees shaking like Belteshazzar's. But I opened my mouth and my heart opened to the light of the Lord, my tongue was loosened and I was filled with the Holy Ghost. I preached a sermon that forever converted me and her also, to the principle, even though her heart was not yet won by the Prophet. And so I had great joy after my tribulation [see D&C 58:4].

32 Of course, the same is true in reading from the scriptures. Speaking of the Book of Mormon, John L. Sorenson said it this way (in *The directions of Mormon language: Panel discussion*, *The directions of Mormon language: Panel discussion*, p. 86): “Let me ... speak as a specialist on Mesoamerica and say that while reading the Book of Mormon may ring true some truths of importance, I would say that only a few of us know what we’re missing. In other words, we are vastly ignorant of a great deal that is in there. Yet we suppose we understand. Thank goodness we understand what we do.”

33 C. S. Lewis, *Descriptione*; G. d. Santillana *et al.*, *Hamlet's Mill*, p. 10. Specifically regarding the ancient view of the temple, Mark Smith writes: “The idea of divine presence barely resonates in our culture. We stand at such a massive distance from the ancient traditions of the Jerusalem temple ... As the decades pass, our culture seems increasingly removed from the Christian and Jewish religious traditions that drew upon the experience of temple” (M. S. Smith, *Priestly Vision*, p. 36).

34 A. H. King, *Joseph*, pp. 287-288.

35 Matthew 6:10.

36 M. Barker, *Hidden*, p. 128.

37 M. Barker, *Earth*, pp. 1-2.

38 B. C. Hafen, *Anchored*, p. 3.

39 On the origins of today’s “praise and worship” services, “patterned after the rock concert of secular culture,” see F. Viola *et al.*, *Pagan Christianity*, pp. 164-166.

40 P. Tillich, cited in R. Coles, *Secular Mind*, p. 5. See also *ibid.*, p. 18.

41 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 29 January 1843, pp. 276-277**. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 29 January 1843, p. **; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals, 1841-1843*, 29 January 1843, p. **.

42 1 Nephi 19:24. See also 1 Nephi 19:23; 2 Nephi 11:2, 8.

43 B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016.

44 *Ibid.*. For more on this topic, see B. L. McGuire, *Nephi*, pp. 58-59 n. 21, 68-71, 77.

45 For example, Gerrit Dirkmaat gives examples of Joseph Smith’s efforts to revise and update his Doctrine and Covenants revelations as they were prepared for publication (G. Dirkmaat, *Great*, pp. 56-57).

46 D&C 1:24.

47 D&C 128:18.

48 Perhaps the most striking example is found in citations of Malachi 4:5-6, a key prophecy relating to the restoration of the priesthood:

Malachi 4:5-6 (cf. Luke 1:17; 3 Nephi 25:6; D&C 27:9; 110:15; 128:17. See also J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 160, 20 January 1844, p. 330, 10 March 1844, p. 337, 7 April 1844, p. 356. ***Journals*):

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Joseph Smith-History 1:38-39 (1838; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Histories, 1832-1844*, History Drafts 2 and 3, pp. 224-225; J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 1:12):

38 ... Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 39 ... And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 27 August 1843, p. 323:

Elijah shall reveal the covenants to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.

Ibid., 20 January 1844, p. 330:

Now, the word “turn” here should be translated “bind,” or “seal.”

Ibid., 10 March 1844, p. 337:

He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children.

49 J. C. Alleman, *Problems in translating the language of Joseph Smith*, p. 22. See G. Dirkmaat *et al.*, *Prophets Have Spoken* for a well-crafted exposition of the process and results of George D. Watt’s efforts to record the sermons of Church leaders from 1851 onwards in shorthand and subsequently to create the sometimes highly amended published versions that appeared in the *Deseret News* and the *Journal of Discourses*. Of course, those who recorded the sermons of Joseph Smith faced even greater challenges, as they had no skills in shorthand and were often challenged by delays of years before the notes from the sermon could be filled out into finished prose. Another blow was the untimely death of Elder Willard Richards, who had been a primary scribe for his Nauvoo sermons. He passed away on 11 March 1854, having been able to complete a draft of the *History* only to the date of 1 March 1843. After Elder Richards’ death, the direction of this work fell to Elder George A. Smith who, by 1856, had overseen its completion up through the June 1844 death of the Prophet. For a more complete account of the writing of Joseph Smith’s *History*, see D. C. Jessee, *JS History*; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Histories, 1832-1844*, pp. xiii-xxxiii.

50 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, pp. xvii-xviii.

51 D. C. Jessee, *Reliability*, p. 29.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 31.

53 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. xvii.

54 In an “Epistle to the Saints,” Elder Willard Richards, hoping “soon to start on a mission towards some Island in the Pacific ocean,” urgently enjoined the Saints to contribute to the effort of gathering historical records (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 16 November 1845, 7:526):

All those who have letters, or documents of any kind in their possession, which in any way relate to the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are requested to leave them with the historian before tomorrow evening.

All elders who have been out on special missions within two years, and have not reported themselves in writing, are requested to do so before tomorrow evening.

Every individual who may be in possession of any fact, circumstance, incident, event, or transaction which they wish recorded in the *General History of the Church* will report it in writing before tomorrow evening.

The historian wants all books, maps, charts, papers, documents of every kind, name, and nature, and all information that may relate to, or have a bearing in any wise upon the History of the Church, before him, in his office within twenty-four hours.

55 See, e.g., the passage in one of Joseph Smith's sermons about the rounds of Jacob's ladder added by later Church historians and discussed below (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, pp. 304-305).

56 J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*.

57 D. C. Jessee, *Reliability*, p. 47 explains:

To further complicate the question of authorship, since Joseph Smith's diary did not provide an unbroken narrative of his life, gaps were bridged by using other sources, changing indirect discourse to direct as if Joseph had done the writing himself. Not uncommon according to the editorial practices of the day, this method of supplying missing detail had the effect of providing a smooth-flowing, connected narrative of events.

For examples of these difficulties, see *ibid.*, pp. 37-41.

58 E.g., J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings* 2007; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings* 1997.

59 E.g., J. Smith, Jr., *Words*; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1841-1843; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1843-1844.

60 E.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, pp. 643-644, 750; J. C. Alleman, *Problems in translating the language of Joseph Smith*.

61 According to D. C. Jessee, *JS History*, p. 441, Joseph Smith and his scribes had only progressed to the date of August 5, 1838 in the history by the time of the Prophet's death.

62 See D. A. Bednar, *Faithful Parents*, pp. 30-33.

63 “[D]espite the long list of impediments in history writing, Joseph Smith showed sustained interest in documenting the church's rise and progress, and his repeated efforts to do so bore fruit. ... Near the end of his life, Joseph Smith gave high priority to his history, and he was finally able to devote the resources to make it a substantial production. In May 1843, he told William W. Phelps of a message that came to him in a dream: ‘The history must go ahead before any thing’ [J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1843-1844, 19 May 1843, pp. 18-19]. ... Under Richards's direction, the enterprise made substantial progress. Addressing the Saints in Nauvoo a month before he was killed, Joseph Smith noted with satisfaction that during the past three years his ‘acts and proceedings’ had been recorded by ‘efficient Clerks in constant employ,’ who had accompanied him everywhere and ‘carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been & what I have said’ [see J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 26 May 1844, pp. 374, 406 n. 1. Cited in J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Histories*, 1832-1844, p. xxxi n. 47 as “‘Sermon of Joseph the Proph[et],’ 26 May 1844, p. 2, JS Collection, CHL”]” (*ibid.*, p. xiv, xxxi).

64 According to Donald Q. Cannon (D. Q. Cannon, *King Follett Discourse*, p. 182):

Willard Richards ... served the Prophet Joseph Smith as “private secretary” and historian. In that position, he kept Joseph Smith's daily journal for the years 1842–44, and recorded his summary of the King Follett Discourse in that journal. Of Richards' abilities as a scribe, Orson Spencer wrote that he “was eminently gifted. He chronicled events, dates, circumstances, and incidents with rare accuracy of judgment and rare tenacity of memory.”

Stan Larson gives the following description of Elder Richards' style as he took notes of the King Follett Discourse, which seems consistent with his general method of recording Joseph Smith's other sermons (S. Larson, King Follett, p. 193):

Willard Richards left a quite sketchy account, often with disjointed sentence fragments. He seems to have merely taken down various points during the discourse that he felt were particularly important. He often leaves spaces or inserts dashes to indicate he is not taking down every word. His report is "minutes" in the strict sense of the word since the sermon, which lasted a little over two hours, has been reduced to be read in just a few minutes.

Describing the difficulties he faced in trying to create a complete narrative of the last four days of Joseph Smith's life from the notes of Elder Richards, Elder Wilford Woodruff, Assistant Church Historian, wrote: "Dr. Richards wrote but little, and that in detached sentences, expecting to make it out himself, but died before doing it" (Letter of Wilford Woodruff to John Bernhisel, 30 June 1856, quoted in D. C. Jessee, *Reliability*, p. 36). This summary aptly describes the challenge that is faced by anyone trying to flesh out Elder Richards' notes of Joseph Smith's sermons.

65 Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, who taught school with her husband Howard in Nauvoo, recorded detailed, literate notes of several of Joseph Smith's discourses. With assistance from her husband, she served as a scribe to Lucy Mack Smith as the latter dictated her memoirs, and later created a fair (finished) copy of the manuscript (see L. M. Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History*, pp. xviii-xxiii; L. M. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, pp. 67-68; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 419 n. 2).

66 The transcript of Elder Willard Richards' notes, made during the sermon, are from J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1843-1844, 21 May 1843, pp. 20-22. The notes of Richards, who was present for the original discourse, were later filled out under the direction of Elder George A. Smith, who continued the compilation of Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*) in the 1850s after the death of Elder Richards (J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1843-1844, 21 May 1843, p. 21 n. 68; D. C. Jessee, *JS History*, p. 470). The original notes by Elder Richards, along with additional accounts of this sermon and helpful notes, were published in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 21 May 1843, pp. 204-209. I have drawn the expanded account of the sermon originally compiled in the 1850s by Church historians as later edited and published by Elder B. H. Roberts on behalf of the Church (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 21 May 1843, 5:401-403. See also J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, pp. 303-306). Volumes in the "Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* ... make available the manuscript behind B. H. Roberts's widely used publication, and ... identify, in turn, the sources behind the manuscript itself, thereby facilitating more informed use of the history" (J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Histories*, 1832-1844, p. xxxii).

Specifically describing the challenges in filling out Joseph Smith's history and teachings for the final years of the Nauvoo period, Dean C. Jessee wrote (D. C. Jessee, *Reliability*, p. 41):

The task of preparing Joseph Smith's discourses for publication was particularly difficult in the later stages of the history when it became necessary to reconstruct word sequences more than a decade after they were spoken, from notes that in some instances were very brief. In summarizing his work on this crucial phase of the history, George A. Smith wrote: "I have filled up all the reports of sermons by Prest. Joseph Smith and others from minutes or sketches taken at the time in long hand ... which was an immense labor, requiring the deepest thought and the closest application, as there were mostly only two or three words (about half written) to a sentence." But he assured his reader that "the greatest care has been taken to convey the ideas in

the Prophet's style as near as possible; and in no case has the sentiment been varied that I know of; as I heard the most of his discourses myself, was on the most intimate terms with him, have retained a most vivid recollection of his teachings, and was well acquainted with his principles and motives" (Smith to Woodruff, 21 April 1856).

In addition to George A. Smith's own careful editorial work, which he felt was enhanced by an 1831 revelation that promised the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to those who functioned in the office of Church historian (D&C 47:4), was the additional verification that came from reading the finished compilation of each discourse in the hearing of members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, some of whom had also heard the original addresses. But while these measures no doubt guaranteed the doctrinal accuracy of Joseph Smith's discourses, they obviously would not reflect his personality as accurately as a verbatim report would have done.

67 See J. Smith, Jr., Words, 21 May 1843, pp. 208-209.

68 According to Donald Q. Cannon (D. Q. Cannon, King Follett Discourse, p. 182):

Wilford Woodruff ... had received no formal stenographic training, but had a strong desire to write a history of the Church. Consequently, he recorded not only his own activities, but also the sermons, teachings, and prophecies of Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. He chose to record most of this material in his personal journal, which has been characterized as "careful and painstaking." Woodruff developed a unique note-taking method which one writer described in this manner:

He had a gift from God. It was this, that when he did not have pencil or paper with him, he could, after hearing the Prophet Joseph Smith preach a sermon, go home and write it word for word and sentence for sentence, but after completing the writing ... the sermon would pass from his mind, as though he had never heard it.

Stan Larson gives the following description of Elder Woodruff's style as he took notes of the King Follett Discourse, which seems consistent with his general method of recording Joseph Smith's other sermons (S. Larson, King Follett, pp. 193-194):

Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal a more nearly complete account, but only after a formal introduction in which he described the sermon in terms that could only be known after it was finished. Though Woodruff claimed in 1877 to have recorded the King Follett Discourse "on the crown of his hat, standing in the congregation," he must have meant no longer extant notes which he later transferred to, and expanded in, his journal since his neatly-printed journal account has no abbreviated words, no gaps in the recording, and no unclearly written words. This transfer could have occurred that same day, or as much as a week or two later. Often the Woodruff account has synonyms and a slightly different word or phrase order when compared to the other accounts, but it is compatible to the other three versions in terms of the basic sense of the message. These considerations seem to indicate the need for a slightly different use of the Woodruff account.

69 According to Donald Q. Cannon (D. Q. Cannon, King Follett Discourse, pp. 181-182):

William Clayton ... served as a private secretary to Joseph Smith. According to one biographer, Clayton "received a good common-school education" and was "a clear writer" with a "love for order."

The popularity and versatility of his missionary and pioneer journals bear witness of his ability as a recorder of historical events.

70 J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 21 May 1843, p. 20.

71 *Ibid.*, 21 May 1843, p. 20 n. 58, citing Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 21 May 1843.

72 Public Domain. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/Transfiguration_bloch.jpg (accessed 21 December 2015).

73 2 Peter 1:19.

74 See 2 Peter 1:16-17.

75 J. Smith, Jr., Words, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, p. 206.

76 J. H. Neyrey, 2 Peter, Jude, pp. 178-179.

77 2 Peter 1:16.

78 2 Peter 1:17.

79 For related teachings on the doctrine of election during the 1830s, see, e.g.,

- J. Smith, Jr., Writings 2002, To Silas Smith, 26 September 1833, p. 323: “Yet [Paul] 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 ~~cannot~~ could not lie.”
- *Ibid.*, To Hezekiah Peck and others, 31 August 1835, p. 366: “let us be wise in all things, and keep all the commandments of God, that our salvation may be sure.”
- J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 22 January 1834, pp. 54-55, 64: “all the commandments contained in the law of the Lord, have the sure promise annexed of a reward to all who obey”; “Have you a promise of receiving a crown of righteousness from the hand of the Lord with the Church of the Firstborn?” (cf. 2 Timothy 4:8)
- J. Smith, Jr., Words, Willard Richards Pocket Companion, 27 June 1839, pp. 4-5: “let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering & thirsting after Righteousness. & living by every word of God & the Lord will soon say unto him Son thou shalt be exalted. &c When the Lord has thoroughly proved him & finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazard. then the man will find his calling & Election made sure.” (Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 27 June 1839, 3:380; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 27 June 1839, p. 150)

80 Original source in Wilford Woodruff's Journal, as published in J. Smith, Jr., Words, 14 May 1843, pp. 200-202. See also the expanded versions of the sermon prepared for publication by Church historians in J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 14 May 1843, 5:387-390; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 14 May 1843, pp. 297-299; W. Woodruff, Life, pp. 175-176.

81 Original source in William Clayton Diary, as published in J. Smith, Jr., Words, 17 May 1843, p. 202. See also J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 17 May 1843, 5:392; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 17 May 1843, p. 301.

82 Original source in Willard Richards' notes for the Joseph Smith Diary, as published in J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 13 August 1843, pp. 75-77 — see also J. Smith, Jr., Words, 13 August 1843, pp. 238-239; Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, as published in *ibid.*, 13 August 1843, pp. 240-241; Franklin D. Richards, “Scriptural Items,” as published in *ibid.*, 13 August 1843, p. 241; William Clayton Diary, as published in *ibid.*, 13 August 1843, pp. 241-242.

83 Original source in Willard Richards' notes for the Joseph Smith Diary, as published in J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 27 August 1843, pp. 85-87. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Words, 27 August 1843, pp. 243-245.

84 Original source in Willard Richards' notes for the Joseph Smith Diary, as published in J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 10 March 1844, p. 200. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Words, 10 March 1844, p. 335. Additional contemporary sources can be found in *ibid.*, 10 March 1844, pp. 327-336. See also the expanded versions of the sermon prepared for publication by Church historians in J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 10 March 1844, 6:249-254; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 10 March 1844, pp. 335-341.

85 Thomas Bullock Report, J. Smith, Jr., Words, 12 May 1844, p. 368. This sermon is summarized in J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, p. 248 n. 1124.

86 The Greek term for "election" in the underlying New Testament text is *ekloge*.

87 Thomas Bullock Report, J. Smith, Jr., Words, 12 May 1844, p. 368. See 2 Peter 1:10. The Greek term for "sure" in the underlying New Testament text is *bebaios*, meaning reliable, unshifting, firm.

88 J. H. Neyrey, 2 Peter, Jude, 2 Peter 1:11, p. 106.

89 J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 11 June 1843, p. 31.

90 W. Woodruff, Woodruff, 9 September 1843, 1:297. Cf. Note 8 for Joseph Smith's 21 May 1843 sermon in the online version of J. Smith, Jr., Words. In the front matter of R. L. Bushman, *Rough Stone*, the author erroneously attributes the statement of Elder Kimball to Brigham Young.

91 R. L. Bushman, *Rough Stone*. In R. L. Bushman, *On the Road*, pp. 3, 8, the author describes the events around his selection of a title, but says nothing about his rationale for its selection.

92 During a fireside that Bushman gave following the appearance of the biography, he was asked: "Would Joseph Smith be embarrassed that we would try to polish this rough stone?" Bushman answered: "He grew up in a rough culture with deep passions. He was penitent because he wanted unity above all. His love was so great that they [i.e., the Saints] loved him" (R. L. Bushman, *Salt Lake Ensign Stake Fireside* (26 February 2006). Personal notes of Jeffrey M. Bradshaw. See the reference to this fireside in R. L. Bushman, *On the Road*, p. 107).

93 W. K. MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, p. 160.

94 Cf. Deuteronomy 27:6; Joshua 8:31.

95 Daniel 2:45. B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016 notes that in Joseph Smith's day, this stone was commonly understood by members and non-members alike to be the Church of Christ, which would roll down the mountain and eventually destroy the kingdoms of the earth that were represented as the components of a statue within Nebuchadnezzar's dream (E. Smith, *Discourse Delivered*, p. 27):

This kingdom, set up more than seventeen hundred years ago, has been dreaded by kings ever since, and while they have seen it rolling down from the mountain, they have feared lest it should roll on them. This stone has been rolling nearer and nearer to the image, but it never struck it, till the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. In that year, this stone struck one of the great toes of the image, which was the British kingdom; this kingdom, and France, were the two great toes of the image.

First Presidency counselor Heber C. Kimball used similar imagery in 1860 (January 1**):

Though the kingdom that was to be set up in the last days, according to the Prophet Daniel, was compared by him to a stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands, we cannot suppose that temples can be built without hands. The Prophet had reference, no doubt, in this comparison to a block of rock detached by an invisible power from a mountain side, which commenced in its rough and unpolished state to roll down to the plains beneath.

In contrast to the more common idea expressed by Elias Smith and President Heber C. Kimball, it appears that Joseph Smith did not intend to equate the idea of Daniel's "stone ... cut out without hands" (Daniel 2:34; D&C 65:2) with the imagery of a rough stone rolling down a mountain, as one might naturally suppose. In an 1838 entry in the *Journal of Henry W. Bigler*, the Prophet gave the following portrait of the stone described in chapter 2 of Daniel (R. N. Moon, *Lost Sermon*):

The first Sunday I was in Far West I went to [a] meeting held in an unfurnished frame building hoping to hear the Prophet preach but how disappointed I was when he called a beardless boy to the stand to preach — but I soon found there was preach in him. He took a text in the second chapter of Daniel and when he concluded the Prophet got up and complemented the young Elder but said the Prophet, "I will correct the idea in regard to the little stone rolling forward — that is not so, it is stationary like a grindstone. And like a grindstone it revolves (Joseph made a circular motion with his hands) and said that when the Elders went abroad preaching the gospel and people believed and obeyed the gospel and became believers in the Book of Mormon, they were added to the little stone—thus they gathered around it so that it grew larger and larger until it had already began to pinch the toes of the image — and it [the stone] would finally break it [the image] in pieces and be carried away like the chaff of the summer thrashing floor while the stone kep[t] growing until it filled the whole earth [cf. D&C 109:72: "... that the kingdom, which thou hast set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.""]

96 Mark 14:58.

97 1 Kings 6:7. Thanks to Ben McGuire for this suggestion.

98 J. Smith, Jr., Words. This statement appears only in the online version of the book.

99 Ibid., 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, p. 206.

100 As recorded in Joseph Smith's Journal by Elder Willard Richards, J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 21 May 1843, p. 20, spelling modernized.

101 J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 2 July 1839, p. 158.

102 J. Smith, Jr., Words, 21 May 1843, p. 209.

103 See M. L. Bowen, *Founded Upon a Rock*, pp. 22-24.

104 Ecclesiastes 7:6: "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity." Thus, Joseph Smith is comparing the opinions of men to the "laughter of the fool."

105 W. Woodruff, Woodruff, 10 March 1844, 1:364. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Words, 10 March 1844, p. 331. For the expanded version prepared later by Church historians, see J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 10 March 1844, 6:253 J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 10 March 1844, p. 339.

106 Ecclesiastes 7:6.

107 According to B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016: "it seems very likely that [Church historians] used a printed source [for the wording of this anecdote]. The wording is too close to any number of highly similar accounts."

108 With permission. Image References: BathAbbey-9Oct2004.jpg; BathAbbeyDetail-9Oct2004.JPG.

109 2 Corinthians 12:2.

110 Genesis 28:12.

111 1 Corinthians 15:40-41. Cf. D&C 76:81; D&C 88:21.

112 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. Cf. 3 Nephi 28:13-14; D&C 76:115.

113 Jacob 3:13; Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33.

114 D&C 76:1-119. Cf. D&C 137:1-10.

115 Alma 16:16; D&C 132:3; D&C 136:31.

116 1 Nephi 8:37.

117 D&C 111:11; 121:33; 128:19.

118 John 16:12; 3 Nephi 17:2; D&C 19:22; 50:40; 78:18.

119 D&C 35:21; 86:3; 101:53.

120 Isaiah 10:3; 1 Peter 2:12; D&C 124:10.

121 Genesis 9:13; Ezekiel 1:28.

122 Matthew 24:36-38; D&C 51:20; 87:8.

123 J. Smith, Jr., Words, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, p. 207.

124 W. Clayton, Chronicle, 17 May 1843, p. 103; J. Smith, Jr., Words, William Clayton Diary, 17 May 1843, p. 202. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 17 May 1843, 5:392; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 17 May 1843, p. 301.

125 J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, 11 June 1843, p. 33.

126 *Ibid.*, 10 March 1844, p. 200. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Words, 10 March 1844, p. 335. For an expanded version of this statement prepared later by Church historians, see J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 10 March 1844, 6:254; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 10 March 1844, p. 340-341.

127 J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843-1844, p. 21 n. 69.

128 J. Smith, Jr., Words, p. 283 n. 9.

129 Edwards compared the rainbow to Jacob's ladder in a covenantal context (J. Edwards *et al.*, Works 2, pp. 697-698):

Psalm 122:3: "Jerusalem is builded as a city compact together." Part of this bow is on earth, and part in heaven, so it is with the church. The bow gradually rises higher and higher from the earth towards heaven, so the saints from their first conversion are travelling in the way towards heaven, and gradually climb the hill, till they arrive at the top. So this bow in this respect is a like token of the covenant with Jacob's ladder, which represented the way to heaven by the covenant of grace, in which the saints go from step to step, and from strength to strength, till they arrive at the heavenly Zion; so in this bow the ascent is gradual towards the top in the way to heaven; the beginning of the ascent is sharpest and most difficult; the higher you ascend the easier the ascent becomes. On earth this bow is divided, the parts of it that are here below are at a distance from one another, but in heaven it is united, and perfectly joined together. So different parts of the church on earth may be divided, separated as to distance of place, have no acquaintance one part with another, and

separated in manner of worship and many opinions, and separate in affection, but will be perfectly united in heaven. The parts of the rainbow, the higher you ascend, the nearer and nearer do they come together; so the more eminent saints are in knowledge and holiness, the nearer they are to a union in opinion and affection; but perfect union is not to be expected but in heaven.

130 B. L. McGuire, March 7 2016.

131 E.g., J. Smith, Jr., Words, 21 January 1844, p. 319: “But their has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation it has been like splitting hemlock knots with a Corn doger for a wedge & a pumpkin for a beetle, Even the Saints are slow to understand I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God, but we frequently see some of them after suffering all they have for the work of God will fly to peaces like glass as soon as any thing Comes that is Contrary to their traditions, they Cannot stand the fire at all.” Cf. the polished versions of this statement in J. Smith, Jr., Documentary History, 21 January 1844, 6:184-185; J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 21 January 1844, p. 331.

132 Jacob 3:13; Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33.

133 D&C 47:4.

134 See D. C. Jessee, Reliability, p. 41.

135 J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, August 1832, pp. 12-13; J. Smith, Jr., Words, 7 April 1844, p. 350. See also the Church historians’ polished version of the 7 April 1844 references in J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 7 April 1844, pp. 347-347, 348.

136 H. W. Nibley, What, p. 369. On the topic of Freemasonry and the origins of modern temple ordinances, see, more generally, J. M. Bradshaw, Freemasonry.

137 A. G. Mackey *et al.*, Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, s.v., Jacob’s Ladder, p. 361. Elsewhere, Mackey elaborates on the symbolism of the ladder as found in the Tracing Board of the First Degree (A. G. Mackey, Symbolism of Freemasonry, chapter XVI-The Covering of the Lodge): “This mystic ladder, which connects the ground floor of the lodge with its roof or covering, is another important and interesting link, which binds, with one common chain, the symbolism and ceremonies of Freemasonry, and the symbolism and rites of the ancient initiations.” G. Oliver, *Freemason's Treasury*, p. 197 elaborates as follows:

On the volume of the sacred Law rests a ladder, which reminds us of the vision of Jacob at Luz, on his journey into Padanaram to avoid the wrath of his brother, when he received the promise of a blessing on himself and his posterity ; by the assistance of which, we, as Masons, hope to attain to the holy covering of our Lodge; which is sometimes denominated “a cloudy canopy,” at others, “a celestial canopy of divers colours,” or “ a starry-decked heaven where all good Masons hope to dwell.” Hence the charge appended to the fourth section of the E. A. P. Lecture: “May every Brother Mason arrive at the summit of his profession, where the just will be sure to meet with their due reward.” It is depicted on our tracing board as a triad, consisting of Sun — Moon — Seven Stars, and connected with the earth by means of the above-mentioned ladder, containing a triad of steps, and resting on the Holy Bible.

Speaking specifically of the theological virtue of charity, Mackey continues:

Charity ... takes the same place in the ladder of masonic virtues as the sun does in the ladder of planets. In the ladder of metals we find gold, and in that of colors yellow, occupying the same elevated position. Now, St. Paul explains Charity as signifying, not alms-giving, which is the

modern popular meaning, but love — that love which “suffereth long and is kind” [1 Corinthians 13:4]; and when, in our lectures on this subject, we speak of it as the greatest of virtues, because, when Faith is lost and Hope has ceased, it extends “beyond the grave to realms of endless bliss,” we there refer it to the Divine Love of our Creator. But Portal, in his *Essay on Symbolic Colors*, informs us that the sun represents Divine Love, and gold indicates the goodness of God.

So that if Charity is equivalent to Divine Love, and Divine Love is represented by the sun, and lastly, if Charity be the topmost round of the masonic ladder, then again we arrive, as the result of our researches, at the symbol so often already repeated of the solar orb. The natural sun or the spiritual sun — the sun, either as the vivifying principle of animated nature, and therefore the special object of adoration, or as the most prominent instrument of the Creator’s benevolence — was ever a leading idea in the symbolism of antiquity.

138 W. K. MacNulty, *Freemasonry*, p. 160 gives the following description:

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

With respect to the “Mystic Ladder of the 30th Degree, Knight Kadosh or Knight of the Black and White Eagle,” Hutchens writes (R. R. Hutchens, *Bridge to Light*, pp. 284, 286-287):

The most elaborate symbol in this degree is the Mystic Ladder. On one side the rungs represent the seven liberal arts and sciences of the ancients — grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. ...

Corresponding to the rounds representing the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Mystic Ladder has seven rounds of a more esoteric or mystical significance. Pike approximately corresponds some of them to parts of the Sephirothic Tree of Life from the Kabbalah. The first round represents the Fourth Sephira, Justice; the second, the Fifth Sephira, Benignity; the fifth round, the Seventh and Eight Sephiroth, Victory and Glory; the seventh, the Third Sephira, Intelligence or Understanding. The other round represent the Masonic virtues of Faith, Kindliness, and Patience. The esoteric significance must remain as part of our ritual, confided only to faithful breasts.

On the other side are the Four Cardinal Virtues (Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice) surmounted by the three Theological Virtues (Faith, Hope and Charity). Connects the ground floor of the Lodge (representing the world) to its roof or covering (representing the heavens).

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

[Joseph] Smith regularly found ways to make productive and pedagogic use of the Saints’ “traditions” by harnessing words and concepts already available to his listeners and then gradually modifying them in an effort to better explain complex and original — even radical — doctrines. If the Prophet was correct in the Saints’ tendency to “fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 20 January 1844, p. 331), then introducing the endowment ceremony in wholly unfamiliar terms would have been extremely

difficult. [For example, t]he deployment of “key” [in discussing] the temple was one strategy that allowed the Saints to understand the endowment as both an extrapolation of already familiar doctrines and the expression of new truths in a new way.

140 See, e.g., A. Nozedar, *Secret Signs and Symbols*, s.v., ladder, p. 116: “A rainbow also serves as a ladder, or bridge, between the celestial realms and the ones below.” Cf. *Ibid.*, s.v. rainbow, p. 249.

141 This fact is known with certainty because the Coray Notebook was not acquired by the Church until sometime after 10 July 1902 (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 419 n. 2).

142 In the Coray Notebook, the material about Paul’s visit to the third heaven occurs near the end of the record of the discourse, between these two statements: “There are some things in my own bosom that must remain there” and “There are only certain things that can be done by the Spirits and that which is done by us that is not done with a view to eternity is not binding in eternity” (*ibid.*, 21 May 1843, p. 207). In the notes of Elder Richards, the equivalent of these two statements occurs in the same order (i.e., “ I shall keep in my own bosom. we have no claim in our eternal compact. In relation to Eternal thi[n]gs [p. [216]] unless our actions. & contracts & all thi[n]gs tend to this end. —”), however Elder Richards appears not to have recorded the statement between them that appears in the Coray Notebook concerning Paul’s visit to the third heaven.

143 The Coray Notebook mentions Paul’s visit to the third heaven, but does not say anything about Jacob’s Ladder nor about Joseph Smith’s limitations in being able to explain the Vision (i.e., D&C 76). D&C 76 outlined details of the three degrees of glory in the telestial, terrestrial, and celestial kingdoms.

144 {Bradshaw, in preparation #5186}.

145 Jude 1:3.

146 2 Peter 1:1.

147 2 Peter 1:4-8. Cf. D&C 107:31.

148 2 Peter 1:10.

149 2 Peter 1:5.

150 2 Peter 1:10.

151 2 Peter 1:3.

152 2 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3; D&C 80:5.

153 2 Peter 1:3; 1 Timothy 2:2.

154 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, pp. 206-207.

155 J. Starr, *Partakers*, p. 81.

156 N. Russell, *Deification*, p. 151.

157 J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 21-23. See also B. C. Hafen *et al.*, *Contrite Spirit*, pp. 222-223.

158 S. Sandmel *et al.*, *New English Bible*, 2 Peter 1:4, p. 299. See also J. H. Neyrey, 2 Peter, Jude, pp. 159-160.

159 J. N. Sparks *et al.*, *Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 1692.

160 J. Vajda, *Partakers*.

161 D&C 107:31. Cf. 2 Peter 1:8.

162 2 Peter 1:5.

163 Elder Bruce R. McConkie affirmed that there is “an additive order to the attaining of these attributes” (J. F. McConkie *et al.*, Revelations, p. 68).

164 H. A. Fischel, *Uses of Sorites*. An earlier, Israelite form of sorites was used, e.g., in Joel 1:3; Genesis 36:31-43; 1 Chronicles 1 and 2. Matthew 1:1-17 and M. Lieber, *Pirkei Avos*, 1:1, pp. 6-11 are famous examples of the classic form of sorites in use during the Hellenistic period as applied to lists of genealogy and transmission of authority. As to the use of ethical or ethico-metaphysical sorites similar to Romans 5:3-5 and 2 Peter 1:5-7 in Jewish and Roman literature, see, e.g., H. Marks *et al.*, *English Bible*, Wisdom 6:17-20, 2:739; J. Neusner, *Mishnah, Sotah*, 9:15:III:MM, p. 466; L. A. t. y. c. B.-C. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 2, 85:2, pp. 286-287; M. T.-B. Cicero, *De Legibus*, 1:7:22-23, pp. 320-323. For an example of sorites in modern revelation, see D&C 84:6-17. Sorites arguments have been studied extensively by philosophers since the late nineteenth century because of logical paradoxes that can arise in some formulations (D. Hyde, *Sorites Paradox*).

165 H. W. Attridge *et al.*, *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 2068 n. 1:5-7.

166 J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, p. 155. I have substituted the KJV terms for these virtues where they differ from Neyrey’s list. I have also corrected the ordering of these lists where it differed from scripture.

167 Matthew Bowen observes that the Hebrew word for hope (*tiqvah*), often equated with “patience” in the New Testament, comes from a root that means to “wait” (M. L. Bowen, March 7 2016). He suggests that this may reflect the process of approaching the veil and being prepared in all things into enter the presence of the Lord (cf. D&C 136:31). Romans 5:3-4 defines hope as the result of “patience/endurance” (= steadfastness; Greek *hupomene*) and “experience” (= character, proof, testing; Greek *dokime*), developed in tribulation. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 3:10; Titus 2:2; Hebrews 6:12; 2 Peter 1:6; Revelation 2:19; Alma 7:23; D&C 4:6; 6:19; 107:30 where patience either complements or replaces “hope” in the list. Elsewhere in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, the similar quality of “longsuffering” (Greek *makrothymia*) is mentioned, often in conjunction with patience. Cf. Ephesians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 13:4; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11; 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:10; Alma 7:23; 13:28; 17:11; 38:3; Moroni 7:45; D&C 107:30; 118:3; 121:41.

168 Neyrey points out that 2 Peter 1:5-7, unlike Romans 5:1-5, supplements the group-specific qualities of faith, hope, and charity with more properly Greco-Roman virtues. He compares the combination of vertically and horizontally oriented virtues within the list to the division in the Ten Commandments between the laws that govern relationship with God and fellow man. Moreover, citing Philo, *Special Laws*, 2:211-213, pp. 438-441, he sees the numerical count of eight virtues as “suggesting a certain wholeness or completeness. ... All of the specifically Christian virtues are joined with the more popular ones to suggest a completeness of moral response. ... Wholeness, moreover, is found in attention to virtues in regard to body (self-control) and spirit, as well as thought and action. In this wholeness, then, holiness is urged, a completeness of moral excellence to all” (see J. H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, pp. 154-155).

169 J. E. Faulconer, *Life of Holiness*, p. 209. Cf. 1 John 3:2; D&C 38:8; 50:45; 76:94; 93:1. Faulconer continues: “Since the word ‘glory’ can also be taken to mean ‘perfection,’ as in Romans 3:23, Jesus Christ has brought us into a place where we can rejoice in a hope that we will see the perfection of the

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

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

171 Matthew Bowen comments (M. L. Bowen, *Thy Will Be Done*, p. 243):

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

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

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

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

172 J. W. Welch, *Sermon*, p. 72.

173 See, e.g., 1 Corinthians 13:12; D&C 93:1. Cf. J. A. Widtsoe, *Work*, p. 33. Also cited in A. K. Parrish, *Widtsoe*, pp. 307-308.

174 See J. M. Bradshaw, *He That Thrusteth in His Sickle for the temple themes woven throughout D&C 4 and a brief history of the evolution of the list of virtues in that revelation.*

175 J. W. Welch, *Counting to Ten*, p. 57.

176 E. J. Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, p. 134. Cf. D. W. Parry, *Demarcation*, pp. 413-414.

177 F. I. Andersen, *2 Enoch*, 1:110-161, p. 140.

178 In an unpublished manuscript, Samuel Zinner has shown that in several ancient Christian writings, what later surfaced as the Jewish Sefirot appear as Christian virtues (S. Zinner, *The Kabbalistic Sefirot: Overlooked prototypes in first- and second-century Christian literature*).

179 I discuss the relationship between faith, hope, and charity and the temple ordinances in greater detail in {Bradshaw, in preparation #5186}.

180 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, p. 305. Elder Richards' notes for this passage state simply that "knowlidge will do this" (J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1843-1844, 21 May 1843, p. 21). See D&C 128:11, 14 and J. M. Bradshaw, *What Did Joseph Smith Know*, pp. 34-36.

181 2 Corinthians 12:2.

182 Genesis 28:12.

183 1 Corinthians 15:40-41. Cf. D&C 76:81; D&C 88:21.

184 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. Cf. 3 Nephi 28:13-14; D&C 76:115.

185 Jacob 3:13; Words of Mormon 1:5; Helaman 3:14; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; Ether 15:33.

186 D&C 76:1-119. Cf. D&C 137:1-10.

187 Alma 16:16; D&C 132:3; D&C 136:31.

188 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, p. 207.

189 *Ibid.*, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, p. 207.

190 *Ibid.*, 21 May 1843, Martha Jane Knowlton Coray Notebook, pp. 207-208.

191 *I.e.*, 2 Peter 1:19.

192 L. T. Dennis *et al.*, *ESV*, p. 2419 n. 1:19.

193 Emphasis added. Likewise, summarizing the thrust of Peter's arguments, Lee writes (S. S. Lee, *Jesus' Transfiguration*, p. 143):

I believe that [the] theological thinking of 2 Peter is almost equivalent to both the Markan discipleship of following Jesus in his suffering, death, and glorification (Mark 8:27-9:13) and Paul's understanding of the believers' continuous transformation into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18-4:6).

194 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 11 June 1843, p. 308.