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## Premortal Life and Mortal Life: A Fearful Symmetry

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## **Premortal Life and Mortal Life: A Fearful Symmetry**

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

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# PREMORTAL LIFE AND MORTAL LIFE: A FEARFUL SYMMETRY

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Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

**Abstract:** *Bodily weakness, along with the varied circumstances into which we were born, provide the essential initial and ongoing conditions that shape the challenges and opportunities of our mortal probation. In life, we are not expected merely to preserve our innocence in defiance of worldly tendencies, nor are we compelled to cede to cynicism in the face of disheartening earthly experience. Rather, we are meant to follow the Savior in uniting the state of innocence with that of experience, thus joyfully fulfilling the unique mission that has been generously given to each of us.*

**[Editor's Note:** *This essay was adapted and expanded from Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Appreciation for Terryl Givens's 'When Souls Had Wings': The Fearful Symmetry of Premortal and Postmortal Life," From the Desk of Kurt Manwaring (blog), 4 January 2024, <https://www.fromthedesk.org/terryl-givens-when-souls-had-wings-book-review/>.]*

A friend once told me a story about an elderly woman in his ward who had passed away. The woman, who had planned the details of her funeral service in advance, had selected organ music for the program and listed my friend's wife as the one who should play it. She struggled as she practiced, not only because the piece was difficult, but also because the deceased woman had a reputation of being very critical of other people. As she played, she reflected in discouragement that if that woman had been there to hear her mistakes, she would have received an earful of mean comments. Then, suddenly, she heard the voice of the woman in her mind. It said, "I'm not like that now."

Of course, I relate this story not as a commentary on the life of a singular person but rather as a reminder of our shared condition. I find personal encouragement in these words from beyond the veil. They

impress on me the truth that, after death, not only will our physical and mental infirmities be removed but also many of the chronic personality dispositions that challenge our best efforts to overcome them. That the deceased woman was so quickly freed from fastidiousness at death, with no prolonged period of repentance required to effect the change, reminds us that human weakness should not be summarily ascribed to sin. Wendy Ulrich clarifies the distinction between “weakness,” “sin,” and “strength” as follows:

*Weakness* is inherent in the mortal body — which is fashioned from the elements of earth, shaped by circumstances and experience, and subject to temptation, sickness, injury, fatigue, and death. Out of this general state of human *weakness* we experience specific *weaknesses* such as variations in mental or physical well-being, vulnerability to desires and appetites, predispositions to various physical and emotional states, or differing levels of talents or abilities. All these varying attributes come with the territory of having a mortal body. [And, I would add, these attributes are not only *shaped* by our circumstances but also *include* our circumstances, which extend or limit our freedom and opportunities to act in the world in accordance with our desires.]

*Sin* is a state of rebellion against God. It almost always involves believing Satan over God about what is real, what is useful, or what will make us happy. It often entails self-centeredness, self-deception, and selfishness. ...

*Strength* in its highest sense is what makes us more like God. While we often think of strength as having to do with our abilities and talents, the strength that interests God has to do with our character — our moral choices, our spiritual gifts, and our righteous desires. ... Some of our specific *strengths* apparently came with us from the premortal experience; others are ours by blessing from the Lord as part of our mortal stewardship; still others we develop here out of weakness through God’s grace.<sup>1</sup>

The mortal body given us at birth — a means of protection<sup>2</sup> as well as a source of happiness and trial — is a custom-designed crucible, meant to be temporarily inhabited by our spirits during a relatively short period of probation. That said, when our mortal body is sloughed off in death, it appears that despite its imperfections, we will sorely miss it<sup>3</sup> — and in

its absence we will long to receive its gloriously perfected replacement in the resurrection. Our immortal bodies, in contrast to their spiritually opaque mortal precursors, will showcase our bright, shining spirits in full transparency.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Satisfying Symmetry of Departure and Return in the Hero's Journey**

Even for those who have never encountered any of the copious sources in religion, philosophy, and other classics, the ubiquitous literary trope of the hero's journey is something that no breathing human in our day can have missed. In myriad books and movies, the journey of the protagonist's adventure is rarely portrayed as a one-way ascent from dust to glory, but rather as a more natural and satisfying symmetry of departure and return — “a sleep and a forgetting”<sup>5</sup> followed by a concomitant “awakening and remembering” that leads to a glorious end.

Of course, this literary and religious theme is not a modern invention.<sup>6</sup> The story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden and their return to the presence of God parallels a common pattern in ancient Near Eastern writings: departure from home, mission abroad, and happy homecoming.<sup>7</sup> The pattern is at least as old as the Egyptian story of Sinuhe from 1800 BCE<sup>8</sup> and can be seen again in accounts of Israel's apostasy<sup>9</sup> and return, as well as in the lives of key individuals in scripture.<sup>10</sup> To the ancients, however, it was more than a mere storytelling convention, since it reflected a sequence of events common in widespread temple ritual practices for priests and kings.<sup>11</sup> More generally, it is a microcosm of the plan of salvation, as seen from the personal perspective. Not surprisingly, the symmetric pattern of departure and return also shapes the Savior's parables of the Prodigal Son<sup>12</sup> and the Good Samaritan.<sup>13</sup>

### **Premortality: A Backward-Looking Loss or a Forward-Looking Opportunity?**

When Latter-day Saints look outside the scriptures for writings by others about preexistence, we cannot help but encounter William Wordsworth's well-known verse:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:<sup>14</sup>

Though these lines describe the descent of souls to earth with unequalled beauty and clarity, studying the historical background of this statement reveals that Wordsworth eventually came to see his “intimations of immortality” as “shadowy”<sup>15</sup> sentiments that he could endorse, at best, only half-heartedly. Ultimately, Wordsworth’s misgivings brought him to the point where he — like his fellow Romantic poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge — felt impelled to write a formal, though somewhat self-contradictory, disclaimer to repudiate the notion that he had ever considered the idea of pre-existence as anything more than a convenient poetic device to describe his poignant longings:

I think it right to protest ... against a conclusion, which has given pains to some persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief [in a prior state of existence]. It is far too shadowy a notion to be commended to faith. ... [Nevertheless,] the notion of pre-existence [has] sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with Latter-day Saints quoting Wordsworth’s beautiful sentiments, even if he didn’t believe them literally. However, what is of more significance is how little insight they actually offer on the subject. As they stand, they are “nothing more than nostalgic memories of lost hope ... too weak to call forth the reality they evoke.”<sup>17</sup>

Far more robust and satisfying than Wordsworth’s backward-looking expression of regret for the inevitable loss in adulthood of the divine spark that animates childhood is William James’ rhapsodic, forward-looking speculation about how the prospect of earth life might have looked from the perspective of a premortal state:

Suppose that the world’s Author put the case to you before creation, saying: “I am going to make a world not certain to be saved, a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own ‘level best.’ I offer you the chance of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real

adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of cooperative work genuinely to be done. Will you join the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?”<sup>18</sup>

Though James was arguing a particular point about his philosophy — not making a claim that an event like this took place in pre-earth life<sup>19</sup> — he had, unlike Wordsworth, at least more satisfactorily framed the subject. How is that? Because his characterization of the *descensus* and (potential) *ascensus* of God’s children not merely as a symmetry, but rather — in a sense that builds on Northrop Frye’s appropriation of William Blake’s fraught term — a “*fearful symmetry*.”<sup>20</sup>

Why fearful? Because, as James described, our “adventure” in mortality is not a simple walk in the garden, even for those who have accepted God as their guide. It involves real “risk” and “real danger” — an invitation to *give* our all in a “scheme of cooperative work” that cannot be undertaken unless we also face the possibility of *losing* our all in a mortal “world not certain to be saved.” As Carlfred Broderick puts it:

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not insurance against pain. It is resource in event of pain, and when that pain comes (and it will come because we came here on earth to have pain among other things), when it comes, rejoice that you have resource to deal with your pain.

Now, I do not want to suggest for a moment, nor do I believe, that God visits us with all that pain. I think that may occur in individual cases, but I think we fought a war in heaven for the privilege of coming to a place that was unjust. That was the idea of coming to earth — that it was unjust, that there would be pain and grief and sorrow. As Eve so eloquently said, it is better that we should suffer. Now, her perspective may not be shared by all. But, I am persuaded that she had rare insight, more than her husband, into the necessity of pain, although none of us welcome it.<sup>21</sup>

### **Gaining Experience While Retaining Innocence**

Elder B. H. Roberts eloquently emphasized the central role of experience in the purpose of life when he attempted to harmonize the justice of God with the seeming injustice of the highly varied circumstances in which God’s children come into the world:



Remember, we must keep in view the fact that God is just, and no respecter of persons. Then how do you reconcile this fact I have pointed out with the justice of God? I reconcile it by the knowledge which comes to us through the doctrine of the pre-existence of man's spirit, and I believe that conditions in this life are influenced and fixed by the degree of faithfulness, by the degree of development in the pre-existent state. Otherwise the diversified conditions in which men find themselves placed cannot be reconciled with the justice of God.

Then how blessed, indeed, some one will exclaim, must they be who are born to riches, who were born to titles, to dukedoms, earldoms, and lordships! How faithful must they have been who inherit these privileges and blessings! whose life is one continual summer, whose existence is as a sea without a ripple! Nay, I pray you, take no such view of it as that. This class that I have described are not the most blessed among men.

When you would point to those who are the favored sons of God, and who enjoy the best and highest privileges in this life, you must take into account the object for which man came here. That object is to gain an experience. Hence, those are the most blessed who live in the midst of conditions that give the widest experience. The favored sons of God are not those furthest removed from trial, from sorrow, from affliction. It is the fate, apparently, of those whom God most loves that they suffer most, that they might gain the experience for which men came into this world. ... I take it that the life of Jesus Christ and these His words to the Prophet [referring to Doctrine and Covenants 122] demonstrate the truth for which I was contending, that not those furthest removed from trials and afflictions are most blessed; but those who are called to pass through the thickest of afflictions are the most blessed; for the Son of Man hath passed through them all.<sup>22</sup>

Said differently, God's gift of mortal life enables us "to take the state of innocence into the state of experience."<sup>23</sup> Northrop Frye argues that this was the central point that the English poet and mystic William Blake was trying to make in his companion books entitled *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, his "profound meditations upon the state of childhood

and the presence of Christ.”<sup>24</sup> The well-known verses entitled *The Lamb* in *Songs of Innocence* runs as follows:

Little Lamb who made thee  
     Dost thou know who made thee  
 Gave thee life & bid thee feed  
 By the stream & o’er the mead;  
 Gave thee clothing of delight.  
 Softest clothing wooly bright;  
 Gave thee such a tender voice.  
 Making all the vales rejoice:  
     Little Lamb who made thee  
     Does thou know who made thee  
  
 Little Lamb I’ll tell thee,  
 Little Lamb I’ll tell thee;

He is called by thy name,  
 For he calls himself a Lamb;  
 He is meek & he is mild,  
 He became a little child:  
 I a child & thou a lamb,  
 We are called by his name,  
     Little Lamb God bless thee,  
     Little Lamb God bless thee.<sup>25</sup>

Contrast these verses with Blake’s depiction of *The Tyger* in *Songs of Experience*:

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
     In the forests of the night;  
 What immortal hand or eye,  
     Could frame thy fearful symmetry?  
  
 In what distant deeps or skies.  
     Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
 On what wings dare he aspire?  
     What the hand, dare sieze the fire?  
  
 And what shoulder, & what art,  
     Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
 And when thy heart began to beat.  
     What dread hand? & what dread feet?  
  
 What the hammer? what the chain,  
     In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp.  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?  
When the stars threw down their spears  
And water'd heaven with their tears:  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?  
Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?<sup>26</sup>

Frye observes that Blake's imagery enables us to see the face of "our accusing enemy who frightens us out of Paradise behind the menacing blaze of a tiger's eyes":

This is the only world the child can grow into, and yet the child must grow. The *Songs of Experience* are satires, but one of the things that they satirize is the state of innocence. They show us the butcher's knife which is waiting for the unconscious lamb. Conversely, the *Songs of Innocence* satirize the state of experience, as the contrast which they present to it makes its hypocrisies more obviously shameful. Hence the two sets of lyrics show two *contrary* states of the soul, and in their opposition there is a double-edged irony, cutting into both the tragedy and the reality of fallen existence.<sup>27</sup>

Experience teaches us what innocence is made to suffer in a fallen world. As we age, we witness repeatedly, as it were, "the butcher's knife ... waiting for the unconscious lamb."<sup>28</sup> Importantly, however, we are never compelled by these realities to retreat into hardened cynicism. Like our "forerunner,"<sup>29</sup> the Lamb of God, we can benefit from experience while retaining innocence — eventually coming to fully "*unite* the state of experience with that of innocence."<sup>30</sup>

### **Joy Through Immersing Ourselves in God's Work and Glory**

Some years ago, during a pleasant evening at a Paris café, a related question came up in a leisurely discussion with a friend — a learned philosopher and a sincere Christian. We were thinking together about "joy" — whether it could be more fully experienced by a child or an adult. He observed that there was nothing to compare with the pure, unalloyed, innocent delight of a child. However, while I certainly

couldn't disagree, another truth was suddenly impressed upon my soul: if memories of my early life can be trusted, the joys I have known as an adult surpass anything I knew as a child. I now think that this is because the pain of experience is an inseparable part of every true joy. "That's the deal."<sup>31</sup> Were this not true, Lehi's explanation of the process by which mortals "might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25) would be a falsehood. Were this not true, our greatest joys would not be ahead of us, but would lie forever unattainable in our past.

This is why the opening line of "I Am a Child of God" cannot stand on its own. This is why, with prophetic insight, this *backward*-looking phrase was eventually counterbalanced to symmetry by new, *forward*-looking lines that were added in the years that followed. These adjustments were meant to remind us that the main business of life is not to fixate retrospectively on our heavenly starting point but rather — and more importantly — to live with our eyes pointed firmly toward the unfolding events of the present reality, happily embracing our divinely provided opportunity to "do" and "endure"<sup>32</sup> to the utmost during our short mortal span. Significantly, scripture reveals no details of our family arrangements in the life before. Instead, it focuses almost exclusively on the premortal announcement of Christ's atoning mission<sup>33</sup> and the *co*-mmissioning of those who bear responsibility "in partnership with the Almighty"<sup>34</sup> to help carry out His plan on earth. Immersing ourselves in His "work and glory" (Moses 1:39) is the only means in existence of experiencing a fulness of joy.

By virtue of baptism, we are no longer just God's children but have also "become his sons and his daughters,"<sup>35</sup> "children of the covenant."<sup>36</sup> Only those who become thereafter well-practiced in both the songs of innocence and the songs of experience will be prepared to "sing the song of redeeming love."<sup>37</sup>

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*publications, see [www.TempleThemes.net](http://www.TempleThemes.net). Jeff was a missionary in France and Belgium from 1975 to 1977, and his family has returned twice to live in France. He and his wife Kathleen are the parents of four children and sixteen grandchildren. They served two missions in the DR Congo and currently live in Nampa, Idaho. As a church service missionary for the Church History Department, Jeff is writing histories of the temples in the DR Congo and the Republic of the Congo. For The Interpreter Foundation he is working with RedBrick Filmworks to document the history of the Church in the DR Congo on film ([www.NotByBreadAloneFilm.com](http://www.NotByBreadAloneFilm.com)).*

### Notes

- 1 Wendy Ulrich, *Weakness Is Not Sin: The Liberating Distinction That Awakens Our Strengths* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 5–6. See also Ether 12:27: “I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me ... and have faith in me.”
- 2 Joseph Smith taught that “before the foundation of this Earth ... God saw that those intelegences had Not power to Defend themselves against those that had a tabernicle ... & agrees to form them tabernicles.” Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds. and comps., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 67–68, <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/words-joseph-smith>.)
- 3 Doctrine and Covenants 45:17 and 138:50 tell us that the dead look upon “the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage.”
- 4 C. S. Lewis, “The Weight of Glory,” in *C. S. Lewis: Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces*, ed. Lesley Walmsley (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 45–46.
- 5 See W. Wordsworth, “Ode: Intimations of Immortality,” stanza 5. Originally published in *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Henry Reed (Philadelphia, PA: Troutman and Hayes, 1851), 470, <https://books.google.com/books?id=encWAAAAYAAJ&pg>.

- 6 See, for example, Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).
- 7 Avraham Gileadi, ed., *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (New York: Hebraeus Press, 1994), 12.
- 8 See, for example, James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 18–22.
- 9 See, for example, Joseph E. Coleson, “Israel’s Life Cycle from Birth to Resurrection,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 237–50; Avraham Gileadi, *Isaiah Decoded* (Escondido, CA: Hebraeus Press, 2002); Stephen D. Ricks, “The Prophetic Literality of Tribal Reconstruction,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 273–81.
- 10 See, for example, the story of Jacob in Genesis 27–33. See also Matthew L. Bowen and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “From Jared to Jacob: The Motif of Divine Ascensus and Descensus in Genesis, the Book of Moses, and the Enoch Tradition,” and “Jacob’s Temple Journey to Haran and Back” (papers presented at The Temple on Mount Zion Conference, The Sixth Interpreter Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, November 5, 2022), videos at <https://interpreterfoundation.org/conferences/2022-temple-on-mount-zion-conference/videos/bowen/>, and <https://interpreterfoundation.org/conferences/2022-temple-on-mount-zion-conference/videos/bradshaw/>.
- 11 See, for example, Dexter E. Callender, *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 211–18. From a ritual perspective, these three parts correspond to van Gennep’s classic stages of separation (préliminaire), transition (liminaire), and incorporation (postliminaire). See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11.
- 12 Luke 15:11–32. See, for example, Robert L. Millet, *Lost and Found: Reflections on the Prodigal Son* (Salt Lake City: Deseret

- Book, 2001); Matthew R. Linford, “The Parable of the Benevolent Father and Son,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 149–78, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/the-parable-of-the-benevolent-father-and-son/>.
- 13 Luke 10:29–37. See, for example, John W. Welch, “The Good Samaritan: A Type and Shadow of the Plan of Salvation,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (1999): 50–115; and John W. Welch, “The Good Samaritan: Forgotten Symbols,” *Ensign*, February 2007, 40–47.
  - 14 LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 290, <https://archive.org/details/marvelousworkandrich00rich>. See also Wordsworth, *Complete Poetical Works*, 470, <https://books.google.com/books?id=encWAAAAYAAJ&pg>. Long-time members may recall having heard the following lines from William Wordsworth in the Church-produced film for the 1964–65 New York World’s Fair, *Man’s Search for Happiness*, or having read them in LeGrand Richards’ now out-of-print missionary resource.
  - 15 In a later comment, Wordsworth qualified his degree of certainty about the ideas of premortality expressed in the poem, stating that the concept was “far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith,” quoted in Richard Brantley, *Wordsworth’s ‘Natural Methodism’* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 125.
  - 16 Cited in Terryl L. Givens, *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 251.
  - 17 Eugen Drewermann, “Le Petit Prince, une parabole religieuse?” in *Il Était une Fois... Le Petit Prince*, ed. Alban Cerisier (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2006), 283. Drewermann was applying this conclusion not to Wordsworth, but to the feeble remainder of Antoine de St. Exupéry’s “vestigial Catholicism” that is woven into the story of *The Little Prince*.
  - 18 William James, “Lecture 8: Pragmatism and Religion,” in *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1907), 290–97, [http://books.google.com/books?id=1S62J9uY\\_x4C](http://books.google.com/books?id=1S62J9uY_x4C). Elder B. H. Roberts also admiringly cited a longer version of this passage in Brigham Henry Roberts, *The Seventy’s Course in Theology, Fourth Year: The Atonement*

(Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 30–32, <https://archive.org/details/seventyscoursein04robe>, and B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1994), 286–87, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/node/345>.

Truman G. Madsen noted that Roberts wrote in a margin in his James volume, “Had James read of the council in heaven?” Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 439n34.

Sterling M. McMurrin commented as follows about James’ statement: “Nowhere is the radical finitism of James more effectively expressed in contrast to traditional Christian absolutism than in his famous lines in *Pragmatism*,” a statement that “warms the heart of every Mormon reader.” Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), 34.

- 19 The intent of James in this passage is not to make a specific metaphysical claim about what actually happened in a hypothetical premortal life. Instead, he is “discussing the ‘logic’ of scientific inquiry,” by which ordinary people, like scientists, develop their beliefs, i.e., “we have these habits to believe in God and salvation and this generally works out well for us.”

For example, James says, “It would contradict the very spirit of life to say that our minds must be indifferent and neutral in questions like that of the world’s salvation.” We care for the world’s salvation *by nature* — this is our shared spirit of life. An ethicist might make an argument of the form: if you assume my x, y, z premises are true and you are a rational-minded person, then you *should do* this or that. James describes us as a scientist would: look around, we observe x, y, and z, and this theory accounts for what we observe.

Ira Cran, “Why We Won’t Ever Arrive at Truth,” *Erraticus* (website), January 23, 2023, <https://erraticus.co/2023/01/03/why-we-wont-ever-arrive-at-truth/>.

- 20 Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949).



- 21 Carlfred Broderick, “The Uses of Adversity,” in *My Parents Married on a Dare and Other Favorite Essays on Life* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 121–41, <https://rusch.files.wordpress.com/2006/09/the-uses-of-adversity.pdf>.
- 22 Brigham Henry Roberts, “What is Man? (Discourse delivered by Elder B. H. Roberts in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, 27 January 1895),” in *Collected Discourses*, ed. Brian H. Stuy (Woodland Hills, UT: B.H.S. Publishing, 1991), 4:231–39; Reprint, “Discourse by Elder B. H. Roberts,” *Millennial Star* 57, no. 27 (July 4, 1895), 417–21, continued in vol. 57, no. 28 (July 11, 1895), 433–37, <https://books.google.com/books?id=9NcRAAAIAAJ>.
- 23 Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 238.
- 24 From editor David Bindman, in *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Books* (New York: Thames and Hudson, and the William Blake Trust, 2000), 42.
- 25 Blake, *Illuminated Books*, Plate 8: The Lamb, 406.
- 26 *Ibid.*, Plate 42: The Tyger, 409.
- 27 Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 237.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Hebrews 6:20. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Freemasonry and the Origins of Latter-day Saint Temple Ordinances* (Orem, UT, and Salt Lake City: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2022), 76; Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 61–62, <https://archive.org/details/151128TempleThemesInTheOathAndCovenantOfThePriesthood2014Update>.
- 30 Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 238, emphasis added.
- 31 In the screenplay of “Shadowlands,” based on the story of C. S. Lewis’ love and loss of his wife, Joy Davidman, he is depicted as making the following reflection, “Why love, if losing hurts so much? I have no answers anymore, only the life I’ve lived. Twice in that life I’ve been given the choice, as a boy, and as a man. The boy chose safety. The man chooses suffering. The pain, now, is part of the happiness, then. That’s the deal.” Lenore Fleischer, *Shadowlands* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 263, cf. 239.
- 32 President Spencer W. Kimball personally requested that the line reading “Teach me all that I must know” be changed to

“Teach me all that I must do.” Similarly, the later addition of a fourth verse to the song emphasized that “celestial glory shall be mine if I can but endure.” For details of these changes, see Abbey Olsen, “Beloved Song Turns 50,” *Ensign*, February 2007, 76, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2007/02/news-of-the-church/beloved-song-turns-50>; “New Verse is Written for a Popular Song,” *Church News*, April 1, 1978; Sarah Jane Weaver, “Hymn Writer Tells of Penning Words to ‘I Am a Child of God,’” *Church News*, 17 October 1998, <https://www.thechurchnews.com/1998/10/17/23250008/hymn-writer-tells-of-penning-words-to-i-am-a-child-of-god>.

- 33 See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ronan J. Head, “Mormonism’s Satan and the Tree of Life,” *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 4, no. 2 (2008): 1–54, <http://www.templethemes.net/publications/1%20-%20Bradshaw%20Head%20-%20Mormonisms%20Satan%20and%20the%20Tree%20of%20Life.pdf> (this is a longer version of an invited presentation originally given at the 2009 Conference of the European Mormon Studies Association, Turin, Italy, 30–31 July 2009); Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “The Tree of Knowledge as the Veil of the Sanctuary,” in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament (2013 Sperry Symposium)*, eds. David Rolph Seely, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, and Matthew J. Grey (Provo, UT, and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University and Deseret Book, 2013), 49–65, <https://rsc.byu.edu/ascending-mountain-lord/tree-knowledge-veil-sanctuary>.
- 34 John A. Widtsoe, “The Worth of Souls,” *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 25 (1934), 189, <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/338036-utah-gh-mag-v-25-utah-genealogical-and-historical-magazine>.
- 35 Mosiah 5:7. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Matthew L. Bowen, “‘By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified’: The Symbolic, Salvific, Interrelated, Additive, Retrospective, and Anticipatory Nature of the Ordinances of Spiritual Rebirth in John 3 and Moses 6,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 24 (2017): 50, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/by-the-blood-ye-are-sanctified-the-symbolic-salvific-interrelated-additive-retrospective-and-anticipatory-nature-of-the-ordinances-of-spiritual-rebirth-in-john-3-and-moses-6/>. Reprint, updated and expanded in Stephen

- D. Ricks and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, eds. *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, and Sacred Meaning, Proceedings of the Third Interpreter Foundation Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 5 November 2016* (Orem, UT, and Salt Lake City: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2020).
- 36 3 Nephi 20:26. See Russell M. Nelson, “Children of the Covenant” (discourse, General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1 April 1995), <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1995/04/children-of-the-covenant>; Russell M. Nelson, “Choices for Eternity” (discourse, Worldwide Devotional for Young Adults, Salt Lake City, Utah, 15 May 2022), <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/broadcasts/worldwide-devotional-for-young-adults/2022/05/12nelson>.
- 37 See Alma 5:9, 26. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Faith, Hope, and Charity: The ‘Three Principal Rounds’ of the Ladder of Heavenly Ascent,” in *“To Seek the Law of the Lord”: Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 103–104. Updated version reprinted in *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scripture* 39 (2020): 251, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/faith-hope-and-charity-the-three-principal-rounds-of-the-ladder-of-heavenly-ascent/>.