



Type: Book Chapter

Angels as Guardians of Hidden Books

Author(s): John A. Tvedtnes

Source: *The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Records: "Out of Darkness unto Light"*

Published: Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2000

Page(s): 75–107



The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) existed as a California non-profit corporation from 1979 until about 2006, when it was allowed to go into involuntary liquidation, at which time copyrights held by FARMS and its authors and/or editors reverted or may have reverted back to their original author and/or editors. This chapter is archived by permission of author John A. Tvedtnes.

Angels as Guardians of Hidden Books

An interesting feature of the story of the Book of Mormon is that the book's existence and hiding place were revealed by an angel named Moroni (see JS—H 1:30–35). During his lifetime, this resurrected being was the last guardian of the Nephite records. That responsibility evidently continues to this day, for after completing the English translation, Joseph returned the plates to Moroni (see JS—H 1:60). Yet Moroni's story is not unique.

A number of ancient documents indicate that sacred records are kept by angels.¹ Usually, these documents indicate that the books are kept in the heavenly temple and are intended to be used at the last day to judge the works of men. For example, in *2 Enoch* 52:15 we read that the books written in heaven will be produced on the judgment day. In his vision of the latter-day judgment, Enoch saw the opening of sealed books and an angel keeping a record beside the Lord. In another of Enoch's visions, an angel of the Lord brought the books recording men's deeds from the storehouse to explain them to Enoch, who copied from them 366 books in thirty

days (see *2 Enoch* 22:10–23:6). And in still another vision, the archangel Uriel showed Enoch a book of astronomy (see *1 Enoch* 72:1).

The vision of Rabbi Ishmael, recorded in the book of *3 Enoch*, also speaks of heavenly scrolls that were written by angels and that contain the books of the dead and the living (see *3 Enoch* 18:19, 24–25). According to the vision, God will judge the world using information on a scroll kept in a box and guarded by the angel in charge of the archives. Such documents are destined to be opened and read in the heavenly court (see *3 Enoch* 27:1–2; 28:7; 30:2; 32:1). Ishmael saw the heavenly scribes who stood near God in heaven (see *3 Enoch* 33:2). The archangel Metatron, who in his mortal life was known as Enoch, gave Ishmael the books containing the deeds of the wicked, which he was allowed to read (see *3 Enoch* 44:9). Similarly, the Book of Mormon plates were kept in a box and will be used to judge the world.

In a similar story, Abraham is shown a large book on a table at the gates leading to heaven and hell. On either side of the table is an angel with papyrus, pen, and ink. One angel records deeds of righteousness, while the other records the sins of mankind. The souls of the dead are to be judged by these records (see *Testament of Abraham* 12.4–18; 13.9).

Heavenly Visions

During his heavenly vision, the prophet Lehi was given a book to read. From that book he learned of the fate of the city of Jerusalem (see *1 Nephi* 1:11–13), and he also learned about the coming of the Messiah (see *1 Nephi* 1:19). Lehi's son Nephi experienced the same vision, in which he saw books that are clearly the Bible and the Book of Mormon and other related scriptures (see *1 Nephi* 13:20–29, 38–39). He learned that some

of what he had seen would later be recorded by the apostle John in what we know as the book of Revelation (see 1 Nephi 14:20–28). He then informed his readers that he had been shown these things by “the angel of the Lord” (1 Nephi 14:29).

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote that he saw heavenly books in his vision. At one point he saw an angel who may have been carrying a book containing the gospel to declare to the inhabitants of the earth (see Revelation 14:6–7). One of the angels “had in his hand a little book open,” which the Lord told John to eat (Revelation 10:2; see 10:8–10).² Ezekiel, during his vision of the celestial world, was also given a book that he read and was commanded to eat (see Ezekiel 2:8–3:3). This can be compared with Jeremiah 15:16, which describes the prophet eating the Lord’s words. Note also Daniel’s vision, in which an angel “touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake” and, evidently like Lehi, “retained no strength.” Another angel declared that he would show Daniel “that which is noted in the scripture of truth,” evidently referring to a heavenly book (Daniel 10:16, 21). These visions are similar to a vision of Joseph Smith Sr. in which he was shown a box whose contents he was to eat in order to gain wisdom.³ The box parallels the one in which Moroni hid the plates.⁴

Another account that resembles that of Ezekiel and John the Revelator is the record of the prophet Zechariah. Like Moroni when he first appeared to Joseph Smith, the angel awoke Zechariah to deliver his message (see Zechariah 4:1).⁵ The angel showed him “a flying roll” or scroll, which represented the curse God would send forth on the land (Zechariah 5:1–3).

The poem “Abou Ben Adhem,” written by Leigh Hunt (1784–1859), has a similar theme. An Arab man awakens in the middle of the night and sees in his room “an angel writing in a

book of gold . . . the names of those who love the Lord.” This modern story shares themes with the account of Joseph Smith and with other more ancient texts, notably the story of V,2 *Apocalypse of Paul*, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In *Jubilees* 32:21–29, we read that Jacob, during his second vision at Bethel (when returning from Syria), read from seven heavenly tablets brought to him by an angel. The tablets recorded all that would happen to his sons in the future, and Jacob documented this and everything else he saw in the vision. The story is told in first person in a Dead Sea Scrolls fragment, 4Q537 (4QAJa ar), which is sometimes called the *Apocryphon of Jacob*.

The tenth-century Arab chronographer al-Kisaʿi noted that, prior to his death, Adam told Seth that he had seen in a heavenly vision what was “written on the Canopy of the Throne and the gates of Paradise, the layers of the heavens and the leaves of the Tuba tree.”⁶

The prophet Isaiah is said to have been taken to the seventh heaven, where, like Abraham before him, he saw Abel, Enoch, and others (see *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* 9:7–9). An angel brought him heavenly books that named the deeds of the children of Israel (see *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* 9:19–23). A similar experience is ascribed to the prophet Zephaniah. Following his visit to heaven, Zephaniah was taken to hades, where an angel handed him a rolled manuscript and told him to read it. The manuscript contained all of the prophet’s sins and omissions of good works (see *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* [Akhmimic] 7:1–8). He was given another manuscript to read (see *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* [Akhmimic] 7:10–11), but the part of the *Apocalypse* describing its contents, presumably his good deeds, is missing.

The story of the heavenly book is common in the Enoch materials. The angel Uriel showed Enoch the “heavenly tablets” and told him to read their content and note everything they contained (*1 Enoch* 81:1–3). Enoch then recounted to his children that “which I have learned from the words of the holy angels, and have understood the heavenly tablets” (*1 Enoch* 93:2).⁷ Later, he spoke about what he had read on the heavenly tablets (see *1 Enoch* 103:2; 106:19).

According to *Zohar* Genesis 217a, Rabbi Judah once “fell asleep and dreamt that he saw four wings outstretched, and R. Simeon ascending on them with a scroll of the Law, and also with all manner of books containing hidden expositions and Agadahs. They all ascended to heaven and were lost to his view. When he woke he said: ‘Verily, since the death of R. Simeon wisdom has departed from the earth. Alas for the generation that has lost this precious jewel which used to illumine it and on which higher and lower beings were supported.’”⁸

A second-century A.D. document (Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1381) from Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, contains the story of the Greek writer Isidor, who put off for some time the translation into Greek of an Egyptian book describing the healing god Imouthes (Asclepius). After a few years Isidor fell gravely ill, and as he lay half asleep one night Asclepius appeared to him in a dream, wearing a shining robe and carrying a book in his left hand. After the apparition disappeared, Isidor understood that he must continue his translation work.⁹

This story is similar to some of the Hermetic literature examined in chapter 2, “Hidden Records.” The Hermetic literature describes various individuals who are said to have experienced a vision in which they received a book of arcane lore from an old man who is often said to have been seated on a

golden throne. Among those who received the book are Balinas,¹⁰ Apollonius,¹¹ and Thessalus.¹² The latter, like Isidor, described the giver of the book as the god Asclepius, known to the Egyptians as Imhotep.

As an illustration of how widespread the idea of heavenly records is, note the Maori tradition of Tane, who ascended to the uppermost heaven to retrieve “the three baskets or receptacles of occult knowledge” and “the two sacred stones.” There he met with the supreme being, who conducted him to the heavenly sanctuary where the artifacts were kept. He descended to earth, accompanied by some of the heavenly host, but en route the group was attacked by a hostile force who wanted to thwart Tane’s mission. These enemies, however, were repulsed, and the receptacles and stones were set up on the earth.¹³

An Angel From On High

A number of stories can be found in which an angel delivers a heavenly book or a long-lost earthly book to a mortal. Perhaps the most well-known is that of Muhammad, who declared that the angel Gabriel presented him a book to read. The book is called the Qur’an, from the Arabic verb meaning “to read.” One of the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q529 I, 6) begins with the claim that it contains the “words of the book which Michael spoke to the angels of God.”¹⁴

Hippolytus noted that the Elchasaites, the earliest Jewish Christian sect, told of a book delivered by a female angel of enormous stature to their founder, one Elchasai, or Alcibiades (see *Refutation of all Heresies* 9.8). According to Eusebius, Origen merely noted that the book had fallen from heaven (see *Ecclesiastical History* 6.38). This would place it in the category of letters from heaven, discussed later in this chapter. In a similar story, another early Christian apostate, Mani (who

founded the Manichaean religion) claimed that he received the news contained in the books he wrote from an angel named at-Taûm.¹⁵

In one of the texts discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945, an angel instructed a man named Allogenes: “Write down [the things that I] shall [tell] you and of which I shall remind you for the sake of those who will be worthy after you. And you will leave this book upon a mountain and you will adjure the guardian: ‘Come Dreadful One.’ And after he said these (things), he separated from me. But I was full of joy, and I wrote this book which was appointed for me, my son Messos, in order that I might disclose to you the (things) that were proclaimed before me in my presence.”¹⁶

In another of the Nag Hammadi texts, *VI,1 Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* 2.10–29, Peter described how he encountered “a man . . . wearing a cloth bound around his waist, and a gold belt girded [it]. Also a napkin was tied over [his] chest, extending over his shoulders and covering his head and his hands. I was staring at the man because he was beautiful in his form and stature. There were four parts of his body that I saw: the sole of his feet and a part of his chest and the palms of his hands and his visage. These things I was able to see. A book cover like (those of) my books was in his left hand. A staff of styrax wood was in his right hand.”¹⁷ The golden belt is known to have been worn by Jesus in the heavenly temple (see Revelation 1:13), and the shape of the man’s clothing allowed him to see the same body parts that Joseph Smith saw when the angel Moroni appeared to tell him about the Book of Mormon (see JS—H 1:31). This man initially told Peter that his name was “Lithargoel . . . the interpretation of which is, the light, gazelle-like stone,”¹⁸ perhaps referring to the interpreters (urim and thummim) by which ancient documents can be

translated. Ultimately, the man removed the covering on his head and revealed himself to be Jesus. He then gave the apostles sacred relics, an unguent box, and a pouch or bag containing medicine with which they were to heal the people of the city (see VI,1 *Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles* 5.15–18; 9.10–22; 10.31–11.1).

In the Mandaic *Haran Gawaita*, Ruha-Šurbiš, wife of Adonai (a term applied to Jehovah in the Bible), disguised as Hibil-Ziwa (also spelled Hiwil-Ziwa), came to the Nasoraean (Mandaean) Qiqil saying, “I, Hibil-Ziwa, have brought parchment and reed-pen, so write a Root of Life, and a Saying and a Mystery, and disseminate (*them*) send (*them*) forth and act in accordance with them.” Qiqil brought parchment and a reed pen and wrote down the text and disseminated it. After her departure, Qiqil recanted, burned the writings, and gave instructions for others to do the same, but the Jews refused to destroy them. The Mandaeans consider these books to be false.¹⁹

Hugh Nibley noted a Jewish tradition, recounted by Bin Gorion, that Adam received a golden book from the archangel Michael and “hid it in the crevice of a rock.”²⁰ In the *Cologne Mani Codex*, an angel appears to Adam and “he said to him: ‘I am Balsamos, the greatest angel of light. Wherefore take and write these things which I reveal to you on most pure papyrus, incorruptible and insusceptible to worms’—and he revealed to him very many other things in the vision as well.”²¹

The same text notes that an angel appeared to Sethel, the son of Adam, taking him from world to world.²² It continues, “Now he spoke with me and said: ‘He who is eminently most powerful sent me to you so that I may reveal to you the secrets which you pondered, since you were singled out for the truth. Now all these things that are hidden, write upon bronze tablets and store them up in the desert land.’” Sethel obediently wrote

down “all which he heard and saw” and left it for his posterity.²³ The text also points out that angels (with Michael as voice) came down from heaven to Enoch and showed him the places where the righteous and the wicked would live. Enoch then “carefully questioned the angels; and whatever they said to him, he would inscribe in his writings.”²⁴

The *Cologne Mani Codex* also cites portions of the now-lost *Apocalypse of Enosh* (Enosh was son of Seth and grandson of Adam). The *Apocalypse*, a first-person account, notes that an angel appeared to Enosh (spelled Enos in the King James Bible) and brought him to a mountain, where “He spoke to me and said: ‘The Pre-Eminent Almighty One has sent me to you so that I might reveal to you the secret (things) which you contemplated, since indeed you have chosen truth. Write down all these hidden things upon bronze tablets and deposit (them) in the wilderness.’” The abbreviated account then notes that “many things similar to these are in his writings (which) set forth his ascension and revelation, for everything that he heard and saw he recorded (and) left behind for the subsequent generations.”²⁵

According to *Zohar* Genesis 75b–76a, God gave Adam a book of heavenly wisdom. Adam lost the book by sinning, but after his repentance it was returned to him. The *Sepher ha-Razim* (Book of the Mysteries), sometimes identified with the *Sepher Razi`el* (Book of the Mysteries of God),²⁶ is said to have originally been given to Adam in the Garden of Eden by an angel, sometimes called Raphael and sometimes Raziel (meaning “secret of God”). Jealous angels stole the book and threw it into the sea, but God had the angel Rahab retrieve it for Adam. A copy of the *Sepher ha-Razim* was found in the genizah of the Old Cairo synagogue.²⁷ The story is similar to one told in the Hindu *Bhagavata-Puranu*, where we read that the demon

Hayagriva stole the *Vedas*, or scriptures, from Brahma and placed them in the sea. The god Vishnu, in his incarnation as a fish, recovered the records and gave them to Manu Satyavrata, the Hindu Noah, whom he had rescued from the flood.²⁸

Zohar Genesis 37a–b tells a similar tale in regard to the “book of the generations of Adam” mentioned in Genesis 5:1. According to this version,

God did indeed send down a book to Adam, from which he became acquainted with the supernal wisdom. . . . This book was brought down to Adam by the “master of mysteries,” preceded by three messengers. When Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden, he tried to keep hold of this book, but it flew out of his hands. He thereupon supplicated God with tears for its return, and it was given back to him, in order that wisdom might not be forgotten of men, and that they might strive to obtain knowledge of their Master. Tradition further tells us that Enoch also had a book, which came from the same place as the book of the generations of Adam. . . . This is the source of the book known as “the book of Enoch.”²⁹

Zohar Genesis 55b tells a similar story:

When Adam was in the Garden of Eden, God sent down to him a book by the hand of Raziel, the angel in charge of the holy mysteries. In this book were supernal inscriptions containing the sacred wisdom, and seventy-two branches of wisdom expounded so as to show the formation of six hundred and seventy inscriptions of higher mysteries. In the middle of the book was a secret writing explaining the thousand and five hundred keys which were not revealed even to the holy angels, and all of which were locked up³⁰ in this book until it came into the hands of Adam. When Adam obtained it, all the holy angels gathered round him to hear him read it . . . Thereupon the holy angel Hadarniel was secretly sent to say to him: “Adam, Adam, reveal not the glory of the

Master, for to thee alone and not to the angels is the privilege given to know the glory of thy Master.” Therefore he kept it by him secretly until he left the Garden of Eden. While he was there he studied it diligently, and utilised constantly the gift of his Master until he discovered sublime mysteries which were not known even to the celestial ministers. When, however, he transgressed the command of his Master, the book flew away from him. Adam then beat his breast and wept, and entered the river Gihon up to his neck, so that his body became all wrinkled and his face haggard. God thereupon made a sign to Raphael to return to him the book, which he then studied for the rest of his life. Adam left it to his son Seth, who transmitted it in turn to his posterity, and so on until it came to Abraham, who learnt from it how to discern the glory of his Master, as has been said. Similarly Enoch possessed a book through which he learnt to discern the divine glory.³¹

The three recensions of the medieval *Book of Noah* tell the story, though with some variation. According to the second recension, after Adam spent three days in prayer, God sent to him the angel Raziel to deliver the book and read it to him. The angel then ascended in a flame of fire, reminiscent of the conduit of light by which Moroni departed from Joseph Smith (see JS—H 1:43). Adam evidently hid the book away, for four generations later its location (in a cave) was revealed to Enoch in a dream. Enoch read the book and then hid it away. The book was later delivered to Noah by the angel Raphael, and from it he learned how to build the ark. Before entering the ark, Noah hid the book away, but it seems that he later retrieved it, for he passed it to Shem, who transmitted it to succeeding generations.

In the first recension of the *Book of Noah*, the angel Raphael delivered a book of medicinal cures to Noah after the flood.³² The third recension is closer to the second than it is to

the first. In the third version, the angel Raziel delivered the book, written on a sapphire stone, to Adam. Noah eventually gained possession of the book, and from it he learned how to build the ark. This version differs from the second in that Noah brought the book with him in the ark and kept it in a golden box.³³ After the flood, he gave it to Shem, from whom it was transmitted to others until the time of Solomon. This third recension forms most of the introduction of another medieval work known today by the title *Sepher ha-Razim*.³⁴

One of the Nag Hammadi texts, V,5 *Apocalypse of Adam* 85.3–24, declares: “The words they have kept, of the God of the aeons, were not committed to the book, nor were they written. But angelic (beings) will bring them, whom all the generations of men will not know. For they will be on a high mountain, upon a rock of truth. Therefore they will be named ‘The Words of Imperishability [and] Truth,’ for those who know the eternal God in wisdom of knowledge and teaching of angels forever, for he knows all things. These are the revelations which Adam made known to Seth his son. And his son taught his seed about them. This is the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth.”³⁵

According to *Life of Adam and Eve* 51:3–9, Seth, under the guidance of an angel, chronicled the life of his parents, Adam and Eve, on tablets of stone and clay and deposited them in the oratory of his father’s house. After the flood many people saw the tablets but did not read them. When Solomon saw them he prayed to the Lord, who sent the angel who had been with Seth when he prepared them and commanded Solomon to build a temple on the site. Solomon built the temple and found on its stones the prophecy of Enoch recorded in *1 Enoch* 1:9 and cited in *Jude* 1:14–16. In *1 Enoch* 68:1, we read that an angel taught Noah from the book of his ancestor Enoch and that Noah kept the book.

In Jewish and Samaritan tradition, when Moses ascended the mountain to converse with God, he actually went to heaven.³⁶ One Samaritan text says that “he ascended to heaven, and the Torah [law] was put on his hand.”³⁷ According to *Jubilees* 1:27–2:1, an angel of the presence³⁸ brought to Moses tablets containing the history of the world, from the first creation until the sanctuary of God would be built forever in the midst of Israel. Moses was instructed to copy part of the account, and this portion formed the basis of the Pentateuch and of *Jubilees* itself. The commentary on the law of Moses written by the Samaritan Marqa (*Memar Marqa*) also says that Moses, enthroned in the presence of God and angels, wrote down the words of the heavenly book as dictated to him by God.³⁹ The story is confirmed in *Moses* 1:40–41; 2:1, where we read that God dictated to Moses and told him to write his words in a book (compare with *Jubilees* 1:4–5, 26). In *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* 46, we read that when God gave Moses the law, the ministering angels, seeing his actions, gave to the prophets tablets to be used in healing.

In Mandaean belief, the first several secret books were revealed to Adam, including the one known as the *Ginza Rba* (Great Treasure), while others were given to various of his descendants. The Mandaean document known as the *Alma Rišaia Rba* (Great First World) is said to have been originally given, with an oath, by Mara-d-Rabuta (a name for God) to the great priest Šišlam-Rba. Šišlam-Rba passed the document down to another, also with an oath, and this new guardian “brought it down to the earth and set guardians in charge of it until world’s end.”⁴⁰ *Alma Rišaia Rba* 115–124 speaks of a heavenly being who brought a sealed letter to Adam.⁴¹ According to the Mandaean text known as *The Thousand and Twelve Questions* 1.1.3, this document was “hidden and guarded” and passed on only under oath.⁴²

Drower recorded the traditional Mandaean story *How Dana Nuk Visited the Seventh Heaven*, which resembles some of the other hidden book stories. Dana Nuk, also called Noh (Noah) is said to have possessed “all the sacred books which Hiwel Ziwa gave to Adam,” which he kept in a locked room. “One day, when he entered this room, he found a book placed above the others.” He burnt the book, then went out to think about what had happened, whereupon the book suddenly appeared before him. This time, he tore it up and cast the pieces into the river. Returning home and unlocking the book store-room, he found the book once again where it had been. This time he left it and went to sleep. On awaking, he found the book beneath his head and concluded that the book “must be from God [and] must be read.” He read the book and taught from it. Three weeks later, another book appeared in the room, and still later five more books appeared. “At last, a book appeared above the others which radiated light as it lay there.” This latest book “contained the perfection of the knowledge of God. When he read it, his spirit was glad.” Soon afterward, “he was in his garden, praying, when he saw a being of light descending from Awathur [heaven].” This being of light spoke to him of the importance of the eighth book, then took his soul to visit the seven heavens and learn about them.⁴³

In some of these accounts, it is God, rather than an angel, who delivers a book to the prophet. Similarly, when Moses went atop the mountain in Sinai, it was God who delivered to him the tablets containing the law (see Exodus 24:12). Likewise, King David told his son Solomon that he had received the pattern for the Jerusalem temple by means of a “writing” from the Lord (1 Chronicles 28:19).

Heavenly Letters

Similar in nature to books brought from heaven by angels are heavenly letters. In Mandaean lore, a letter sealed by God is sent from heaven to the soul of a righteous person, who must wear it around the neck when sent to the Gate of Life at death.⁴⁴ During the Mandaean rite of proxy baptism, performed at the annual rededication of the Mandi, a ritual text inscribed on lead sheets using a stylus is brought in. The text, which is wrapped in white cloth, is dipped three times in the water. It contains the *masiqta* (service for the ascension of the souls of the dead) and the *zidqa brikha* (a ritual meal for the dead).⁴⁵

Isaac H. Hall drew attention to two different versions of a letter said to have fallen from heaven in the days of the Nestorian patriarch Athanasius in the year 779.⁴⁶ A “letter from heaven” that has been widely published in English over the years first appeared in Latin in the latter part of the sixth century A.D. in Ebusa, a small Balearic island, where the local bishop, Vincentius, accepted it as genuine. The preface notes that “the Letter was written by Jesus Christ, and found under a great stone, round and large, at the foot of the Cross. . . . Under this stone was found the following, written by Jesus Christ. It was carried to the city of Iconium, and published by a person belong to the Lady Cuba. On the Letter was written, ‘The Commandments of Jesus Christ Signed by the Angel Gabriel, seventy four [*or* ninety nine] years after our Saviour’s birth.’” A modern Greek version of the letter indicates that it was “Found on the Grave of the Mother of God” and was revealed when Joannicius, patriarch of Jerusalem, smote a stone that had fallen from heaven.⁴⁷

According to the Qur’an, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, and David received heavenly books (see Surah 2:50; 3:48;

17:57; 19:13, 31). Accordingly, the eleventh-century Arab chronographer al-Thaḡlabi wrote of a book sealed with gold that was sent from heaven to David. The book contained thirteen questions that David was to ask his son Solomon.⁴⁸ Indeed, a sealed letter from heaven is mentioned in a work traditionally attributed to Solomon (see *Odes of Solomon* 23:5–10, 17, 21).⁴⁹

An Angel Guards the Record

After Joseph Smith received the plates from the angel Moroni, it became necessary for him to return them from time to time to the angel's keeping. After Joseph "wearied" the Lord with his requests to allow Martin Harris to take the first 116 pages of translation to show to a few others, the angel returned to take possession of both the plates and the interpreters. He returned them to Joseph when he was ready to continue the work.⁵⁰ The plates were also taken away for safety considerations. When Joseph and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, moved from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York, to continue the translation work at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr., the Lord told Joseph "that he should commit them into the hands of an angel, for safety, and after arriving at Mr. Whitmer's the angel would meet him in the garden and deliver them up again into his hands."⁵¹

Upon completion of the translation, Joseph evidently returned the plates to the angel, who subsequently showed them to the three witnesses—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.⁵² Eight more witnesses saw them not long afterward.⁵³ In an 1878 interview with P. Wilhelm Poulson, David Whitmer said that "the angel, the guardian of the plates, gave the plates up to Joseph for a time, that those eight witnesses

could see and handle them.”⁵⁴ After finishing his work with the plates, Joseph returned them to the angel (see JS—H 1:60).

There were other witnesses as well, two of them women whose families were involved with the translation. Lucy Harris, wife of Martin Harris, had a dream in which a personage (presumably the angel Moroni) appeared to her and showed her the plates.⁵⁵ Mary Musselman Whitmer, wife of Peter Whitmer Sr., also received a visit from a messenger who showed her the plates and turned the leaves so that she could see them.⁵⁶ Harrison Burgess, a member the church, reported that in 1832, while praying in the woods, he was visited by “a glorious personage clothed in white,” who showed him “the plates from which the Book of Mormon was taken.”⁵⁷

Some early Jewish and Christian accounts parallel the Book of Mormon story in that an angel is appointed to guard sacred records. For example, *2 Enoch* 33:10–12 notes that the writings of Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, and Enoch were to survive until the final age and were to be preserved through the flood by angels. The preservation of the writings of Enoch until the last days is indicated in *1 Enoch* 104:10–13. Accordingly, in *Pistis Sophia* 134, God commanded Enoch to write *1 Jeu* and *2 Jeu* and deposit them in the rock of Ararat (Ararat). God then set a watcher (a member of an angelic class) to protect the books from the coming flood and the rulers who, through envy, might seek to destroy them.⁵⁸

The Ethiopic *Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth* also indicates that angels guarded sacred records. It declares, “Now the sons of Moses the prophet preserved a little book (*or*, a few works) which their father had left to them and to their children’s children. And when they revealed that book to all men, an angel came, and seized it, and carried it up into

heaven. Now, I have related unto thee these many words of mystery: keep them carefully and reveal not [to any man] how thou hast acquired them. And when the angel had said all these things the Apostle went up [into heaven], and the angel who remained taught me all these mysteries.”⁵⁹

The second-century Christian writer Hermas, brother of Pius, the bishop of Rome, wrote an account of a series of visions in which he was visited by several angels. One of the celestial beings who appeared during his first vision was an elderly woman “arrayed in a splendid robe, and with a book in her hand.”⁶⁰ She read to him from a book, naming the calamities that would befall the wicked and the blessings that would come to the righteous in the last days (see Pastor of Hermas, *Vision* 1.3). She later reappeared with the book and allowed Hermas to take it and transcribe its contents, insisting that, when he had finished, he must return the book to her. He wrote, “Thereupon I took it, and going away into a certain part of the country, I transcribed the whole of it letter by letter; but the syllables of it I did not catch. No sooner, however, had I finished the writing of the book, than all of a sudden it was snatched from my hands; but who the person was that snatched it, I saw not” (Pastor of Hermas, *Vision* 2.1).⁶¹ The story bears similarities to Joseph Smith’s dealings with the angel Moroni, including the description of the angel’s white robe. Another element that ties to the Book of Mormon, which the prophet Joseph translated by the gift and power of God, lies in Hermas’s explanation of how he came to understand the meaning of what he had copied from the book: “Fifteen days after, when I had fasted and prayed much to the Lord, the knowledge of the writing was revealed to me” (Pastor of Hermas, *Vision* 2.1).⁶² In a subsequent vision, a young man ap-

peared to Hermas and told him that the woman who had delivered the book was the church. She subsequently reappeared to provide additional words for the book, instructing Hermas that he should make two copies and send them to two of the elders to be recopied and sent out to the churches (Pastor of Hermas, *Vision* 2.4).

Another story of a snatched book, told in the Samaritan chronicle known as the *Tolidah*, relates to the Torah scroll held in the high priest's house in Nablus. Said to have been written by Abisha^c, son of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, it was formerly kept at Elon Moreh. Once, the priest charged to carry the scroll took it to Gilgal, in Ephraim, where the people quarreled with him about it. When the scroll was opened, there was an earthquake, accompanied by lightning and thunder, "and a mighty wind lifted the Scroll out of the ark wherein it lay, and it was carried up and whirled into the air by the wind, while the community was watching, trembling and weeping. But they strengthened their hearts and took hold of the end of the Scroll, and it happened that a fragment was torn off."⁶³

In an ancient Egyptian tale examined in detail in chapter 3, "Hiding Records in Boxes," a man named Setne Khamwas is said to have removed a sacred book from the tomb of Naneferkaptah. The dead man appeared to persuade him to return the book, in much the same way as angels are elsewhere said to come to recover sacred records from the hands of mortals.

Two Medieval Stories

From the twelfth and thirteenth centuries come two stories of angels delivering metallic plates. The first of these stories was recapped in 1876 by John William Draper:

About the close of the twelfth century appeared among the mendicant friars that ominous work, which under the title of “The Everlasting Gospel,” struck terror into the Latin hierarchy. It was affirmed that an angel had brought it from heaven, engraven on copper plates, and had given it to a priest called Cyril, who delivered it to the Abbot Joachim. The abbot had been dead about fifty years, when there was put forth, A.D. 1250, a true exposition of the tendency of his book, under the form of an introduction, by John of Parma, the general of the Franciscans, as was universally suspected or alleged. Notwithstanding its heresy, the work displayed an enlarged and masterly conception of the historical process of humanity. In this introduction, John of Parma pointed out that the Abbot Joachim, who had not only performed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but had been revered as a prophet, received as of unimpeachable orthodoxy, and canonized, had accepted as his fundamental position that Roman Christianity had done its work, and had now come to its inevitable termination. He proceeded to show that there are epochs or ages in the Divine government of the world.⁶⁴

This account parallels that of Joseph Smith in two respects. The first is that an angel delivers metallic plates that are said to contain the “everlasting gospel.” Doctrine and Covenants 27:5 speaks of “Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel” (see also D&C 109:65; 135:3). One need not read into this that the Lord really called Cyril and Joachim as he later called Joseph Smith; still, Joachim’s declaration, like Doctrine and Covenants 27:5, draws on the imagery of the angel bringing the “everlasting gospel” in Revelation 14:6.

The second parallel element in this story is that Joachim of Floris announced the beginning of a new dispensation of the gospel. But his concept was different from that of Joseph

Smith, for he taught that there were only three dispensations, represented by the Old and New Testaments and the new book brought by the angel. The first dispensation was governed by God the Father, the second by God the Son, and the third would be governed by God the Holy Ghost.

The other medieval tale that draws our attention is that of Nicholas Flamel, a thirteenth-century French alchemist. His story has been translated and published in various places.⁶⁵ Flamel lived before the invention of printing and was a copyist, and his account has been summarized by Arthur Waite:

Now tradition informs us that, whether his application was great, his desire intense, or whether he was super-eminently fitted to be included by divine election among the illuminated Sons of the Doctrine, or for whatever other reason, the mystical Bath-Kôl appeared to him under the figure of an angel, bearing a remarkable book bound in well-wrought copper, the leaves of thin bark, graven right carefully with a pen of iron. An inscription in characters of gold contained a dedication addressed to the Jewish nation by Abraham the Jew, prince, priest, astrologer, and philosopher.

“Flamel,” cried the radiant apparition, “behold this book of which thou understandest nothing; to many others but thyself it would remain for ever unintelligible, but one day thou shalt discern in its pages what none but thyself will see!”

At these words Flamel eagerly stretched out his hands to take possession of the priceless gift, but book and angel disappeared in an auriferous tide of light. The scrivener awoke to be ravished henceforth by the divine dream of alchemy; but so long a time passed without any fulfilment of the angelic promise, that the ardour of his imagination cooled . . . in the year 1357, an event occurred which bore evidence of the veracity of his visionary promise-maker, and exalted his ambition and aspirations to a furnace heat.⁶⁶

Flamel's story contains a number of parallels to the story of how the Book of Mormon came into Joseph Smith's hands. The use of metal is common to both records, as is the fact that both sets of plates were engraved. Additionally, the fact that the book could not be readily comprehended but would ultimately be intelligible to the recipient is found in both accounts (see JS—H 1:63–65; compare 2 Nephi 27:15–20). Just as Flamel was told that no others would see the original record, so, too, was Joseph Smith commanded not to show the plates to others except when directed by God. In both cases, the record is delivered by an angel of light, who takes the record away again.

Though Flamel was originally shown the book by an angel, he later recovered it by rather ordinary means—he found it for sale:

There fell by chance into my hands a gilded book, very old and large, which cost me only two *florins*.

It was not made of paper or parchment, as other books are, but of admirable rinds (as it seemed to me) of young trees. The cover of it was of *brass*; it was well bound, and graven all over with a strange kind of letters, which I take to be Greek characters, or some such like.

This I know that I could not read them, nor were they either Latin or French letters, of which I understand something.

But as to the matter which was written within, it was engraved (as I suppose) with an iron pencil or graver upon the said bark leaves, done admirably well, and in fair and neat Latin letters, and curiously coloured.⁶⁷

Again, some of the parallels with the Book of Mormon are evident, including the “strange kind of letters” in which the record was written. For example, the Testimony of Eight Witnesses at the beginning of the Book of Mormon mentions

“the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work; and of curious workmanship.”

Flamel set about trying to understand the book. He copied “as much to the life or original as I could, all the images and figures of the said fourth and fifth leaves. These I showed to the greatest scholars and most learned men in Paris, who understood thereof no more than myself: I told them they were found in a book which taught the philosophers’ stone. But the great part of them made a mock both of me and that most excellent secret, except one whose name was Anselm, a practiser of psychic and a deep student in this art. He much desired to see my book, which he valued more than anything else in the world, but I always refused him, only making him a large demonstration of the method.”⁶⁸ This is reminiscent of when Martin Harris took the transcript from the plates to scholars in New York.

At length Flamel went to Leon, Spain, carrying “the extract or copy of the figures or pictures.” There he consulted with Canches, a Jewish physician who had converted to Christianity. Upon examining Flamel’s copies, Canches became excited at the prospect of a translation, which he began to provide. Anxious to see the original, which Canches declared to be “a thing which was believed to be utterly lost,” the two set out for France. Unfortunately, Canches died before reaching Paris, and Flamel was obliged to provide his own translation, which he published as divinely inspired.

The Story of John Dee

John Dee (1527–1608) was an English mathematician and astrologer who made many contributions to the scientific knowledge of his time but also dabbled in the occult and alchemy, as did many other sages of his time and before. He

spent much of his life in royal service both in England and abroad (notably Poland and Bohemia).

Dee was fascinated by Bible stories of the patriarchs and prophets, especially by the fact that they had been visited by angels. He also pondered on the “Shewstone,” by which the Israelite high priests were able to receive revelation from God. In the 1580s Dee teamed with one Edward Kelly, a scryer well versed in Hermetic literature who claimed to see angelic apparitions in Dee’s crystal ball. In 1582 Kelly claimed to have seen successive sets of seven angels, each carrying a tablet with his name written on it. During a subsequent apparition, an angel told the two men that they should not look to the Catholics or the Protestants for truth, but to God and Christ.

Over the years, both God and the angelic visitors dictated to the men a number of books, including a long-lost record made by the antediluvian patriarch Enoch entitled *The Angelic Keys* and another called the *Mystery of Mysteries and the Holy of Holies*. In 1586, however, the voice of God came to Kelly, instructing them to burn the manuscripts. Reluctantly they complied and consigned the books to the fire. As the flames rose, Kelly declared that he saw the form of a man gathering up the ashes and reforming them into books. He then heard the divine voice proclaiming that they would receive the books again and warning that the information contained therein was not to be revealed to the world at large.

In the fall of the same year, as Dee and Kelly were praying in the garden, an angel appeared in the form of a gardener. They knew he was an angel because he stood a full foot off the ground. Kelly followed the angel, who delivered to him most of the books that had been burned and promised that the others would ultimately be restored to them. Kelly brought the books to Dee, who had remained seated beneath the almond tree where they had prayed, and the two rejoiced together.

The Apocalypse of Paul

One of the more fascinating stories of hidden books revealed by angels is about the *Apocalypse of Paul*, whose authorship is attributed to the apostle Paul.⁶⁹ Where the Greek and Latin texts end, the Syriac version adds these words:

And I, Paul, returned unto myself, and I knew all that I had seen: and in life I had not rest that I might reveal this mystery, but I wrote it and deposited it under the ground and the foundations of the house of a certain faithful man with whom I used to be in Tarsus a city of Cilicia. And when I was released from this life of time, and stood before my Lord, thus said he unto me: Paul, have we shown all these things unto thee that thou shouldst deposit them under the foundations of a house? Then send and disclose concerning this revelation, that men may read it and turn to the way of truth, that they also may not come to these bitter torments. And thus was this revelation discovered.⁷⁰

This is immediately followed by an explanation of how the text was discovered, which is also found in the Greek and Coptic versions. In the Latin version, this explanation (which reads same as the Greek) prefaces the text. The explanation relates how, in the fourth century A.D., the time of Theodosius Augustus the younger and Cynegius, a man of Tarsus who was living in Paul's old house was visited by an angel during the night. The angel told the man to tear up the house's foundation and publish what he found. The man thought the words of the angel were untrue, but on the third visit the angel compelled him to break up the foundation. As he dug he found a marble box sealed with lead. The box bore an inscription on the sides, indicating that it contained a revelation of Paul and the shoes he wore on his missionary journeys. The man turned the box over to a judge, who sent it to the emperor Theodosius.

The emperor opened it and found the revelation, then sent a copy to Jerusalem (or, according to the Greek, kept a copy and sent the original).

This story was also told by the early Christian writer Sozomen (see *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19), who rejected the apocalypse as a forgery. It was generally rejected by early writers. In his preface to his English translation of the *Apocalypse of Paul*, Willis Barnstone wrote, “The details of the discovered scriptures calls to mind the detailed evidence associated with the discovery of Mormon scriptures in New York state.”⁷¹

Other Dream Records

Other stories also mention books whose location was revealed by dreams. Chapter 3 noted how Epiteles, a Greek man who lived before the fourth century B.C., learned from a dream the location of a sacred book hidden in the ground. Serge Sauneron cited an Egyptian text in which Horus, son of Panishi (Pawenesh), slept overnight in the temple of Hermopolis, where the god Thoth came to him in a dream. Thoth told Horus to go the next morning into the rooms of the temple in which books were kept, and there he would find a sealed naos. In the naos would be a box containing a magical text written by Thoth himself, which Panishi was to copy and then return to its place. He followed the instructions and, by use of the magic in the book, the Egyptians were able to defeat an invading Ethiopian army.⁷² Aspects of the story resemble some of the Hermetic tales discussed in chapter 2, “Hidden Records.”

Summary

The story of the angel Moroni delivering a sacred record to the young prophet Joseph Smith has close parallels with some

of the ancient and medieval accounts discussed in this chapter. In most of these instances, a heavenly being was appointed as guardian of the record, which he retrieved from the mortal to whom the record had been revealed. We need not assume that all of these tales are true, but the antiquity of some of them suggests that the concept was known anciently.

Notes

1. The stories of angels keeping heavenly records are too numerous to mention here but will be discussed in the chapter on “Writings of the Fathers” in my forthcoming FARMS book, tentatively titled *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Notes and Reflections*.

2. According to D&C 77:14, the book represented a mission given to the apostle John.

3. See Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 47.

4. For a discussion of the role boxes play in the hiding of records, see chapter 3 of this volume, “Hiding Records in Boxes.”

5. Zechariah’s angel, like the angels seen by Ezekiel and John the Revelator, measured the temple in Jerusalem.

6. W. M. Thackston Jr., trans., *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa’i* (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 81–82.

7. James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:74.

8. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, trans., *The Zohar* (New York: Rebecca Bennet Publications, 1958), 2:304.

9. See Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 50–51.

10. Cited in Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book* (Uppsala, Sweden: University of Uppsala, 1946), 77–78. Widengren refers to the Arabic text and German translation

in J. Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1926), 112–14.

11. See Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 8.19.

12. See Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 162–64; Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*, 78–79, 81, citing the Arabic text and the German translation in Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina*, 16–24, 132.

13. See Elsdon Best, *Maori Religion and Mythology* (Wellington, New Zealand: W. A. G. Skinner, 1924), 60–64, 67–68. I am grateful to Matthew Roper for bringing this to my attention.

14. Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 125.

15. See Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (New York: Viking, 1960), 227. For a Parthian Manichaean hymn that says the book revealed was by an assembly of angels, see Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts From Central Asia* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 58.

16. XI,3 *Allogenes* 68.16–31, in James M. Robinson, ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 3rd ed., (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990), 500. For a discussion of records hidden on mountaintops, see chapter 7 of this volume, “Mountain Repositories.”

17. Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 290.

18. *Ibid.*, 291.

19. See E. S. Drower, *The Haran Gawaita and the Baptism of Hibil-Ziwa* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953), 13–14. According to their tradition, the Mandaean are descendants of the disciples of John the Baptist.

20. Hugh Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1986), 151, citing M. J. Bin Gorion, *Die Sagen der Juden* (Frankfurt: Kütner and Loening, 1913), 1:263.

21. P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780, 49–50, in Ron Cameron and Arthur J. Dewey, *The Cologne Mani Codex* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979), 39.

22. See P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780, 50–52, in *ibid.*

23. P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780, 54, in *ibid.*, 39–43.

24. P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780, 57, in *ibid.*, 47, see 45–57.

25. John C. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 142. Reeves's translation and commentary on the *Apocalypse of Enosh* comprises chapter 5 of his book. For a discussion of records hidden on mountaintops, see chapter 7 of this volume, "Mountain Repositories."

26. The story of the book is told in *Pirqe Rabbi Eliezer* and in two medieval kabbalistic works, the *Zohar* and the *Book of Noah*, with variants in the different recensions of the latter. The story in the *Zohar* is based on the one given in the second recension of the *Book of Noah* (see *Zohar* I, 37b, 55b, 58b, 72b, 118a). For a discussion of the subject, with source information, see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1911), 1:156–57, 5:117 n. 110, 177 n. 23.

27. For a discussion of the genizah, see chapter 9 of this volume, "Books in the Treasury."

28. See Shakti M. Gupta, *Vishnu and His Incarnations* (Bombay: Somaiya, 1974), 13.

29. Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 1:138–39.

30. Compare the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon.

31. Sperling and Simon, *The Zohar*, 1:176–77.

32. Significantly, the name Raphael means "God heals." Traditionally, this angel has charge over healing powers.

33. Traditionally, the sapphire (often a pearl or some other precious stone) provided light in the ark during the flood and is comparable to the urim and thummim. (See the appendix "Glowing Stones in Ancient and Medieval Lore.")

34. For an English translation, see Michael A. Morgan, trans., *Sepher ha-Razim: The Book of the Mysteries* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 17.

35. Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, 286. For a discussion of records hidden on mountaintops, see chapter 7 of this volume, "Mountain Repositories."

36. For a discussion of records hidden on mountaintops, see chapter 7 of this volume, “Mountain Repositories.”

37. Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*, 46, citing the text published in Wilhelm Gesenius, *Carmina Samaritana e codicibus Londinensibus et Gothanis* (Leipzig: Imensis Typisque Fr. Chr. Guil. Vogelli, 1824), 40.

38. The term “angel of the presence,” used in the Bible and other early documents, denotes an angel of superior rank (an archangel) who is allowed to stand in God’s presence.

39. See Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*, 48–49, citing the text published in A. E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 1:31.

40. *Alma Rišaia Rba* 4–8, in E.S. Drower, *A Pair of Naṣōraean Commentaries (Two Priestly Documents)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 1.

41. In Mandaean lore, other letters from heaven are sent to the souls of the righteous, as noted later in this chapter.

42. E. S. Drower, *The Thousand and Twelve Questions* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 110.

43. E. S. Drower, *The Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), 300–305. For the name Noh, see *ibid.*, 307 n. 6.

44. See, for example, E. S. Drower, *The Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), 61 (song number 73); *Alma Rišaia Rba* 160, 331. Drower notes that the letter is placed in “a small phial . . . in the small pocket over the right breast of the dying person’s tunic” (Drower, *Thousand and Twelve Questions*, 14). She also notes that “the dying man himself is also spoken of as ‘a letter’” (*ibid.*, 115 n. 9).

45. See Drower, *Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran*, 132.

46. See Isaac H. Hall, note in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 13 (1889): clv, and “The Story of Arsânîs,” *Hebraica* 6 (October 1889–July 1890), 81.

47. For an account, see Edgar J. Goodspeed, “The Letter From Heaven,” in *Famous “Biblical” Hoaxes*, (original title *Modern*

Apocrypha) (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1956), 70–75, from which I have drawn the quotes. For records hidden in tombs, see chapter 2 of this volume, “Hidden Records.”

48. See al-Thaʿlabi, *Qiṣaṣ ʿal-ʿAnbiyaʿ* (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa-Awladuhu, A. H., 1340), 202. Hugh Nibley was the first to bring this information to the attention of Latter-day Saints. I am grateful to Brian Hauglid for confirming details of the story from the Arabic text.

49. The text is described in detail in chapter 4 of this volume, “Sealed Books.”

50. See Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 1:21. Joseph’s mother, recollecting the events years later, indicated that the angel took possession of the translators and the plates after the loss of the 116 pages. See Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 133–34.

51. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 149–50.

52. See Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:54–56. See also Testimony of Three Witnesses, published at the front of the Book of Mormon.

53. See *History of the Church*, 1:57. See also Testimony of Eight Witnesses, published at the front of the Book of Mormon.

54. *Deseret Evening News*, 16 August 1878, 2.

55. See Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 117.

56. See Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* (October 1888): 621, cited in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 30–33.

57. Harrison Burgess, “Sketch of a Life Well Spent,” in *Laborers in the Vineyard* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884), 65–66. Although two of these accounts had already come to my attention, all three are noted by Matthew Roper in his “Comments on the Book of Mormon Witnesses: A Response to Jerald and Sandra Tanner,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 169–70.

58. See Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, trans. Violet Macdermot (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978).

59. Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth and Other Works of Bakhayla Mika'el (Zosimas)* (London: Oxford, 1935), 124, citing folio 62b, column 2.

60. The aged woman in the white robe, who is said to be seated on a chair, is reminiscent of the aged man in a white robe seated on a throne and identified with Hermes Trismegistos, who hands over records in the Hermetic traditions. See the discussion in chapter 2 of this volume, “Hidden Records.”

61. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 2:10. Originally published in 1886. Many writers prefer to call the work Shepherd of Hermas. Its title draws upon the fact that one of the angels appeared in the form of a shepherd.

62. *Ibid.*, 2:11. In a subsequent vision, a young man appeared to Hermas and told him that the woman who had delivered the book was the church. She subsequently reappeared to provide additional words for the book, instructing Hermas to make two copies and send them to two of the elders to be recopied for the churches (see Pastor of Hermas, *Vision 2.4*).

63. John Bowman, ed. and trans., *Samaritan Documents Relating to Their History, Religion and Life* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1977), 47–48.

64. John William Draper, *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* (New York: Harper, 1876), 77–78. I am indebted to Ron Myatt for bringing this text to my attention.

65. See, for example, Laurinda Dixon, *Nicolas Flamel: His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures (1624)* (New York: Garland, 1994).

66. Arthur Edward Waite, *Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers* (London: George Redway, 1888), 96–97.

67. *Ibid.*, 99.

68. *Ibid.*, 102–3.

69. See the appendix by Steven Booras in this volume.

70. *Apocalypse of Paul* 51, in Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 553–54.

71. Willis Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 537.

72. See Serge Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Evergreen Profile, 1960), 125.