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Joseph Smith and the Translation of the Sermon at the Temple

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JOSEPH SMITH
AND THE TRANSLATION OF
THE SERMON AT THE TEMPLE

Inasmuch as the Sermon at the Temple is appropriately nuanced and subtly different from the Sermon on the Mount, as the previous chapters show, one might well wonder how this occurred. Joseph Smith explained that it came by the gift and power of God as the text was translated one line after another. The following study of events and factors involved in this translation process bear out Joseph's testimony and point strongly to the conclusion that his translation of the Sermon at the Temple was meticulously accurate.

No Time for Research

To begin with, those who reject Joseph Smith's explanation of how the Book of Mormon came forth must at least credit him with high marks for keeping many factors in mind as he allegedly modified the Sermon on the Mount to fit into a Nephite context. Given enough time and research opportunities, a reasonably intelligent person could probably work his way through the Sermon on the Mount in a

similar fashion, producing something like the Sermon at the Temple; and with a little luck, such a reviser might not overlook or mistake anything important in the modification process.

Time and research, however, were not on Joseph Smith's side. The account of Jesus' ministry among the Nephites was translated before May 15, 1829, and Joseph and Oliver had commenced their work of the translation and transcription several hundred pages earlier only on April 7, 1829.[1] At this pace, assuming that they completed about eight pages per day, they could have spent only about two days on the totality of the Sermon at the Temple in 3 Nephi 11–18.

No Way to Crib

Several historical accounts of the translation process make it unlikely that any copying of a printed Bible occurred. While many have assumed that Joseph covertly took out his copy of the King James Bible and worked from it when he came to the Isaiah and Sermon on the Mount materials in the Book of Mormon, the following testimonies of people who intimately assisted Joseph Smith in the transcription process and routinely watched him work give evidence that such a thing did not occur. Emma Smith, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, William Smith, Lucy Mack Smith, Elizabeth Anne Whitmer Cowdery Johnson, Michael Morse, Sarah Heller Conrad, Isaac Hale, and Joseph Knight Sr. all left historical comments on what they knew of how Joseph worked when he was translating the Book of Mormon.[2] None of their statements mentions anything about the use of a Bible or allows room for it.

In an interview in 1879, Emma Smith was asked and asserted the following:

Q. Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read, or dictated to you?

A. He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.

Q. Could he not have had, and you not know it?

A. If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.[1]

While this interview occurred fifty years after the events it reports, Emma still had a vivid memory of many details. Her recollection can probably be trusted even more regarding things that did *not* occur than in describing the particulars of things that did occur, especially since she would have been unforgettably surprised to see Joseph cribbing from the Bible. It is unknown whether she was present when the Sermon at the Temple was translated, although she would have been somewhere in and around the cabin in Harmony, Pennsylvania, in the middle of May 1829, when Joseph and Oliver were working their way through this material.

David Whitmer and others corroborated Emma's description. For example, in 1881 the *Deseret Evening News* published an article from Richmond, Missouri, about this Book of Mormon witness. It reports, "Mr. Whitmer emphatically asserts, as did Harris and Cowdery, that while Smith was dictating the translation he had NO MANUSCRIPT NOTES OR OTHER MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE save the Seer stone and the characters as shown on the plates, he being present and cognizant how it was done."[4]

In 1834 Oliver Cowdery described the work of that period. He vividly recalled, "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven. . . . Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated . . . the 'book of Mormon.'"[5] Oliver was present during all of

the translation of the Sermon at the Temple. It seems highly unlikely that Joseph could have read from the Bible and Oliver not have known it—and if he knew it, not to have been irreparably disillusioned. Oliver had himself attempted to translate but had been unsuccessful (see D&C 9). Certainly he thought that more was involved in the translation process than simply reading from the Bible and making a few modifications to the text. It seems to me that Oliver would have instantly doubted Joseph's ability to translate if he ever caught him using the Bible or suspected him of relying directly on it as he translated. Oliver and Joseph were in close proximity to each other, and the use of the interpreters would have made it very awkward for Joseph to put a large Bible anywhere nearby without Oliver becoming aware of it.

Nowhere to Hide

It is possible, one may counter, that Joseph sat behind a curtain or blanket while he was translating, as is commonly imagined. But the only reports, so far as I know, that mention such a thing are from Professor Charles Anthon and Reverend John A. Clark.[6] Both of these hostile sources, even if we can trust them on this point, depend on information given to them by Martin Harris, who was scribe only in 1827 and 1828. None of the scribes in 1829 ever mentions the use of a curtain while they were present. Their silence on this point is significant. All other factors indicate that Joseph was quite open with the translation process when Oliver and the others at the Whitmer farm were present and assisting.

It appears that Joseph used the curtain only at first and perhaps because he rightly did not trust Martin Harris as much as his other scribes (see D&C 10:7, which calls Martin

Harris "a wicked man" who "has sought to destroy" Joseph's gift of translation). Oliver Cowdery, on the other hand, had used the interpreters; and the Lord, who had appeared to Oliver early in 1829 testifying of "the truth of the work" and calling him to "write for [Joseph] and translate," had already shown him the plates in a vision.[7] With such a divine endorsement for Oliver, Joseph would have had little need to use a curtain when Oliver was present. Indeed, Emma's testimony describes a similar situation, wherein she "frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us."[8] The recollection of Oliver's wife, Elizabeth Anne Whitmer Cowdery Johnson, written in 1870, also denies that a curtain was used while she was present during the final stages of translating at the Whitmer farm in Fayette: "I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together. Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating. He would place the director in his hat, and then place his face in his hat, so as to exclude the light, and then [dictate?] to his scribe the words [he said] as they appeared before [him?]."[9]

At this time in Fayette, according to our best estimates,[10] Joseph translated the small plates of Nephi, and that section of the Book of Mormon contains several sections of Isaiah material (see 1 Nephi 20–21; 2 Nephi 7–8, 12–24). If Joseph simply cribbed from the Bible when he came to such sections on the Book of Mormon plates, one must seriously wonder how he did it.

Thus, while the theory in question—that Joseph used his family Bible in translating the Book of Mormon—may appear to solve one problem, it creates another. The idea

that Joseph relied directly and heavily on his Bible may ease the minds of those who resist seeing any divine power at work in the translation process, but it creates a different concern: the historical accounts give no impression whatever that Joseph turned to the Bible when dictating the text of the Sermon at the Temple.

No Need to Assume Physical Reliance

Additional considerations also make the claim of plagiarism improbable. For example, Hugh Nibley has cogently argued that it is counterintuitive to imagine that Joseph would have included long passages in the Book of Mormon that closely resembled several chapters from Isaiah as well as the Sermon on the Mount if he did not need to. He would not have been so foolish as to copy unnecessarily and thereby create an obvious problem for the Book of Mormon: "It is hard to see why a deceiver would strew the broadest clues to his pilfering all through a record he claimed was his own."[11]

Although B. H. Roberts, Sidney B. Sperry, and others have conjectured that people might argue that Joseph made direct use of his King James Bible in order to make the difficult translation job easier, they advance this theory as an assumption.[12] Sperry was satisfied to view the Nephite scripture in 3 Nephi 12–14 as an independent text, even though it only "finds support *at times* for its unusual readings in the ancient Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions, and at other times no support at all."[13] Roberts believed that Jesus presented to the Nephites "great truths in the same forms of expression he had used in teaching the Jews, so that *in substance* what he had taught as his doctrines in Judea he would repeat in America."[14] Hence, according to Roberts, when Joseph Smith thought that the words on the Nephite

record and in the King James Bible "*in substance*, in thought, . . . were alike, he adopted our English translation."[15] The conjecture that Joseph needed a rest is neither a necessary nor an exclusive explanation.

Other logical possibilities exist for the Sermon in the Book of Mormon. For instance, although very little is known about the process of translating the Book of Mormon, for one who believes that Joseph Smith received *any* part of the book through the gift and power of God, it is a relatively small step from there to believe that the Sermon at the Temple was similarly translated and dictated under the direction of divine inspiration; that is, if the spiritual mechanisms or procedures were in place to accomplish the translation of the some ninety-five percent of the book that has no biblical counterpart, those mechanisms could just as well have supplied the rest. One may thus assume that, in accomplishing this translation, God projected a text similar to the biblical texts through Joseph Smith or that the power of God brought the English texts of the Bible especially to Joseph's memory as those words were appropriate and helpful in producing the Book of Mormon translation.

At the same time, while there is no evidence that Joseph could recite verbatim long sections of Isaiah and Matthew, one may certainly assume that he had read or heard those chapters several times around the family hearth. This would make it possible for the powers of inspiration to draw these words out of his memory and put them extraordinarily at his disposal, causing him to recall them, even though they would have been buried too deep in his brain to be remembered voluntarily. As B. H. Roberts has said, "The English interpretation was a reflex from the prophet's mind," and not "an arbitrary piece of mechanical work."[16]

As Joseph studied the translation out in his mind (see D&C 9:8), the words he then thought and spoke rang true to him. I would think this occurred as the translation flowed forth, independent of immediate input but also reflexive of Joseph's vocabulary and prior knowledge, reinforced by his inspired subconscious recall of the parallel texts in the Bible.

Stylistic Similarities

Even if the claim of simple plagiarism is set aside, the question may still arise, Why, in any event, is the English translation of the Sermon at the Temple so pervasively similar to the style and language of the King James rendition of Matthew 5–7? As general Christian commitment to the King James translation wanes, and as the number of years between modern readers and the time of Joseph Smith widens, the oddities of King James language grow more glaring and the force of this question increases.

For people in 1830, however, the question was far less obvious or bothersome than it may be for people today. This concern was not an issue even for critic M. T. Lamb, who wrote in 1887 that the King James Version itself had already miraculously preserved the exact words of Jesus, penned by Matthew: "if Matthew remembered the exact words of the Savior, and wrote just as they were first spoken" or "if he only remembered the substance," in either case it was a miracle.[17]

B. H. Roberts readily and unproblematically concluded that the stylistic similarities between the Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount were simply due to Joseph's language: "While Joseph Smith obtained the facts and ideas from the Nephite characters through the inspiration of God, he was left to express those facts and ideas, in

the main, in such language as he could command."[18] As Joseph translated, the Lord spoke to him "after the manner of [his] language," as he speaks to all men, "that they might come to understanding" (D&C 1:24). Where the King James English would best communicate the thought of a passage to Joseph Smith, that would be the preferred rendition.

Hugh Nibley has suggested several other reasons that made the use of King James style important, if not necessary. One reason was Joseph's audience: "When Jesus and the Apostles and, for that matter, the Angel Gabriel quote the [Hebrew] scriptures in the New Testament, do they recite from some mysterious Urtext? Do they quote the prophets of old in the ultimate original? . . . No, they do not. They quote the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Old Testament prepared in the third century b.c. Why so? Because that happened to be the received standard version of the Bible accepted by the readers of the Greek New Testament."[19]

Another reason for the use of the style of the King James Version was the nature of the record: "The scriptures were probably in old-fashioned language the day they were written down."[20] Furthermore, "by frankly using that idiom, the Book of Mormon avoids the necessity of having to be redone into 'modern English' every thirty or forty years."[21] To such points, other explanations may be added, but the foregoing seem sufficient. The King James idiom yields a good translation of both the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple. In fact, a study of the Greek vocabulary used in Matthew 5–7 will show that in most cases, the traditional English translation is rather straightforward. The syntax of most of the sentences is relatively simple, the expressions are direct, and most of the words and phrases have obvious and adequate primary choices in

English as their translation (although their meaning and implications still remain profound).

Identical Wording

Points such as these may sufficiently justify at one level the similarities between the English in the Sermon at the Temple and the King's English in the Sermon on the Mount, but they do not explain the origins of the overwhelming preponderance of identical phraseology in these two translations at a more particular level. Something more than merely idiomatic usage, the needs of the contemporaneous audience, or the adequacy of the meaning is necessary to account for the nearly identical correspondence of expressions between these two texts. For example, if a person were to undertake the task of translating an ancient text that had already been translated by another, and if one assumed that this person had no familiarity with the first translation, there is no chance that the second translation would turn out word for word the same as the first. Something more is necessary to account for the verbal similarities between the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple. That shortfall, in my opinion, is made up in two ways: First, the problem with the case of our hypothetical translator is that it assumes something that is not in evidence regarding Joseph Smith and the Sermon on the Mount, for Joseph *was* familiar with the wording of the King James translation. Second, the model inadequately assumes a normal translation process rather than one impelled and activated by inspiration.

A Precise Translation

This last point naturally invites further reflection about a persistent question regarding the Book of Mormon—

namely, what kind of a translation is it? There are several possibilities, and it exceeds anyone's ability at the present time to say which is correct.[22] Joseph Smith himself declined to comment very much on this subject, saying that "it was not expedient for him" to give "all the particulars,"[23] although in private he apparently explained the process somewhat to David Whitmer and others who spoke about the matter.

Several factors indicate that it was quite a precise translation. A range of opinions may emerge as people try to describe the nature of Joseph's translation more explicitly. Some commentators on one extreme (position 1) may suggest that it was a grammatically literal translation, a verbatim word-for-word, form-for-form rendition. This seems, however, to leave little room for the fact that Joseph had to take the matter and "study it out in [his] mind" (D&C 9:8) in order to translate the text "after the manner of [his] language" (D&C 1:24). As the discussion in chapter 9 will show regarding some of the minute grammatical comparisons of 3 Nephi 12–14 and the Greek manuscripts of the Sermon on the Mount, I do not imagine that Joseph's translation process produced this kind of extremely strict, literal translation.

At the same time, such things as the presence of detailed chiasmus in the Book of Mormon,[24] the precise nature of the book's internal quotations (see, for example, Alma 36:22 quoting exactly from 1 Nephi 1:8; and Helaman 14:12 quoting verbatim from Mosiah 3:8), its consistent use of technical legal terminology,[25] and many other instances of remarkable textual complexity strongly indicate that most of the time the translation was probably not a very loose one either. Consequently, neither does it appear, as some may suggest on the more nebulous side of the matter

(position 2), that the English translation should be understood as having only occasional, casual verbal connections with the ancient Nephite records or, even more nebulous (position 3), only rare thematic intersections with the underlying record.

Accordingly, seeking something of a solution close to position 1 but not quite so strictly grounded, it seems to me that Joseph's English translation (position 4) was more expressive than a mechanically literal rendition but that its elements still corresponded in some way, point by point, with many features of the ancient writing that was being translated. Many of the textual details discussed in this study strongly suggest that the meaning of something on the plates gave rise to each element of meaning in the translation, although one cannot know in all cases how close that relationship or connection was.

Historical evidence also bears out this view. David Whitmer described how the characters from the plates would appear to Joseph on a parchment with the corresponding English translation below them. Whitmer once explained, "Frequently one character would make two lines of manuscript while others made but a word or two words."[26] If this is an accurate statement, it confirms that the translation was rather strict, character for character, although sometimes several English words were required to express the meaning of a single inscription. So, for example, two simple characters might be translated into English as "the interpretation of languages" and two others as "the Book of Mormon," as Frederick G. Williams once wrote in Kirtland.[27] Work by Royal Skousen on the surviving portions of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon further corroborates this view, that the translation and transcription of the Nephite record was tightly controlled by Joseph Smith.[28]

Thus, with regard to the translation of the Sermon at

the Temple, this understanding of the nature of Joseph's translation—that the English Book of Mormon reflects competently but not slavishly the meaningful details in the original record of Nephi—best accounts for the presence of consistently meaningful details that are found in that text today, as has been indicated on several counts above.

Confirmation of Chiasmus

Within the boundaries of the Sermon at the Temple itself, well-composed literary structures further confirm the elemental accuracy of the translation. The account in 3 Nephi 17:5–10 of Jesus healing the sick is a beautiful five-part literary composition (A–B–C–B'–A'). It seems natural to see its elegant and coherent chiastic structure and substructures as originating in the ancient text, for it was written with great care and reflection:

(A) It begins with three references to the eyes, as Jesus casts "his eyes round about again on the multitude," as he sees that their eyes are in tears, and as they look longingly upon him, hopeful that he will tarry with them longer (3 Nephi 17:5).

(B) Jesus next speaks to the people in balanced words that sincerely invite reciprocation:

> a   Behold, my *bowels are filled*
> > b   with *compassion* towards you.
> > > c   Have ye any sick among you?
> > > > d   *Bring them hither.*
> > > > > Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt,
> > > > > e   or maimed, or leprous, or . . . withered, or . . . deaf, or . . . afflicted in any manner?
> > > > d'   *Bring them hither*
> > > c'   and I will heal them,
> > b'   for I have *compassion* upon you;
> a'   my *bowels are filled* with mercy.

<div align="right">(3 Nephi 17:6–7)</div>

(C) Jesus then draws himself close to the people through a series of intimate "I/you" statements. Here, too, are five elements, the symbolic number of mercy. These lines emotively and mercifully affirm God's personal relationship to mankind:

> *I* perceive that *ye* desire
> that *I* should show unto *you*
> what *I* have done unto *your* brethren at Jerusalem,
> for *I* see that *your* faith is sufficient
> that *I* should heal *you*.
>
> (3 Nephi 17:8)

(B') The people then bring forth their sick to be healed. The "one" at the beginning of this verse is found in the throng coming forward with "one accord," but at the end it is found in the individual acts of love as Jesus healed "every one":

> All the multitude, with *one* accord, did go *forth*
>   with their sick and their *afflicted*, and their lame,
>   and with their blind, . . . dumb, and . . . *afflicted* . . . ;
> and he did heal them every *one* as they were brought *forth*.
>
> (3 Nephi 17:9)

(A') Finally, the account concludes with three references to the feet, as the entire multitude bowed down at Jesus' feet, and many came forward to kiss his feet and "did bathe his feet with their tears" (3 Nephi 17:10).

Mentioning the feet three times in this verse echoes the threefold emphasis placed on the eyes at the beginning of this pericope, thus conveying a sense of how completely these people were engrossed with their Savior, from head to foot. Moreover, in the end, their bathing his feet with their tears brings the account full circle back to the tears in their eyes, thus tying the episode together intimately and artistically.

There is certainly nothing clumsy or out of place in the composition or translation of this record.

Translated Correctly: An Interesting Case

Finally, Joseph's translation process produced a text that, interestingly, agrees with what appears to have been the Aramaic that Jesus originally spoke in Matthew 5:10. The Sermon at the Temple comes closer to the likely original intent of Jesus in the case of this verse than does the ancient Greek of the Sermon on the Mount. It is commonly assumed that Jesus usually spoke to his disciples in Aramaic (when and by whom the Sermon on the Mount was soon translated into Greek is unknown). When Jesus spoke to these fishermen and to the popular multitudes in Judea, he probably spoke to them in their local, native language. Accordingly, some scholars have worked hard, although not definitively, attempting to put the Greek of the New Testament Gospels back into what might have been the Aramaic of Jesus in order to learn what that might tell us about the intent of his original sayings.[29] In the Sermon on the Mount, several passages have been studied along these lines, but only a few have been detected where the Greek has likely misunderstood an underlying Aramaic word or expression. In most cases the nuances are very fine and the distinctions rather inconsequential.[30]

The case in Matthew 5:10 is an interesting and somewhat exceptional example of this. Several scholars speculate that the Greek New Testament may have mistranslated the purported Aramaic original. Lachs argues that the word *saddiq* (righteous one) was in the original form of Matthew 5:10 but that it was wrongly read as *zedeq* (righteousness) and accordingly rendered into Greek as *dikaiosunē*.[31] Thus, the Greek reads "blessed are they which are

persecuted for righteousness' sake." But this makes awkward sense compared with the Aramaic idea that one would be blessed for enduring persecution for the sake of the "Righteous One." The latter is far closer to the translation offered by the Sermon at the Temple: "Blessed are all they who are persecuted for *my name's sake*" (3 Nephi 12:10). Joseph's inspired translation in this detail finds significant independent support from biblical studies.

Accordingly, in the several ways explored above we gain insights that help us understand how the interesting nuances and meaningful differences between the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple arose. Everything we know about Joseph Smith and the translation of the Sermon at the Temple warrants the detailed analysis that is pursued throughout this study of the Sermon.

Notes

1. The chronology of events in these months is discussed in John W. Welch, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, January 1988, 46–47; and John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Preliminary Report on the Basic Historical Information" (FARMS, 1986), 38–39.

2. Collected in Welch and Rathbone, "Translation of the Book of Mormon."

3. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Advocate* 2 (October 1879): 51; and *Saints Herald* 26 (1 October 1879): 289–90.

4. *Deseret Evening News*, 10 November 1881; capitalization in original.

5. Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 14; italics deleted.

6. See sources in Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 213, 218; and Royal Skousen, "Towards a Critical Edition of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 30/1 (1990): 41–69; see 68 n. 25.

7. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 8; see *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Volume 1, Autobiographical and Historical Writings*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:10.

8. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," 51.

9. Copy contained on the obverse of letter of William E. McLellin to "My Dear Friends," Independence, Missouri, February 1870, RLDS Archives P13 f191; question marks indicate illegible words.

10. Welch and Rathbone, "Translation of the Book of Mormon," 33–37.

11. Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 111.

12. B. H. Roberts, "Bible Quotations in the Book of Mormon and Reasonableness of Nephi's Prophecies," *Improvement Era* 7 (January 1904): 184, says, "This is but a conjecture," but on page 191 he is more certain: "How are these *differences* to be accounted for? They unquestionably arise from the fact that the Prophet compared the King James' translation with the parallel passages in the Nephite records, and when he found the sense of the passage on the Nephite plates superior to that in the English version he made such changes as would give the superior sense and clearness." See also B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1951), 3:441; Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 507–8; H. Grant Vest, "The Problem of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1938), 3; Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998); Stanley R. Larson, "A Study of Some Textual Variations in the Book of Mormon: Comparing the Original and the Printer's Manuscripts and the 1830, the 1837, and the 1890 Editions" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974), 246–47; and Robert F. Smith, ed., *Book of Mormon Critical Text: A Tool for Scholarly Reference* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1987), 1:ix.

13. Sidney B. Sperry, *Our Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1947), 177; italics added.

14. B. H. Roberts, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1907), 1:272; italics added.

15. Ibid.; italics added.

16. B. H. Roberts, "Translation of the Book of Mormon: Answers to Questions respecting the Theory in the Senior Manual, 1905–1906," *Improvement Era* 9 (April 1906): 433.

17. M. T. Lamb, *The Golden Bible* (New York: Ward and Drummond, 1887), 19.

18. Roberts, "Bible Quotations in the Book of Mormon," 184.

19. Hugh W. Nibley, "Literary Style Used in the Book of Mormon Insured Accurate Translation," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 215.

20. Ibid., 218.

21. Ibid.

22. For general discussions of the mechanics of the translation process, see Richard L. Anderson, "By the Gift and Power of God," *Ensign*, September 1977, 79–85; James E. Lancaster, "'By the Gift and Power of God': The Method of Translation of the Book of Mormon," *Saints Herald* 109 (15 November 1962): 798–802, 806, 817; and Stephen D. Ricks, "Translation of the Book of Mormon: Interpreting the Evidence," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 201–6. For other views to the effect that the translation was not a literal process, see Ed Ashment, "The Book of Mormon—A Literal Translation?" *Sunstone*, March–April 1980, 10–14; and Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20/1 (1987): 66–123. For comments on Ostler, see Stephen E. Robinson, "The 'Expanded' Book of Mormon?" in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1989), 391–414; and John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:210–13.

23. B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 1:220.

24. See several of my works on this topic, for example, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10 (autumn 1969): 69–84; "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis,* ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981; reprint Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1999); "Chiasmus in Alma 36," (FARMS, 1989); "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon,* ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 114–31; "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/2 (1995): 1–14; and "What Does Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon Prove?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins,* ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 199–224.

25. See, for example, "Statutes, Judgments, Ordinances, and Commandments," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon,* ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 62–65.

26. David Whitmer, "The Last Man of the Men Who Attested to the Truth of the Book of Mormon," interview by *Chicago Times,* 17 October 1881; reprinted in *Chicago Tribune,* 17 December 1885, 3; also reprinted in *Deseret Evening News,* 10 November 1881.

27. "Did Lehi Land in Chile?" in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon,* 58.

28. Royal Skousen, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited,* 61–93.

29. See, for example, Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967); Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971); and Frank Zimmermann, *The Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels* (New York: KTAV, 1979).

30. For example, Zimmermann argues that "bushel" is correct in Matthew 5 but was misunderstood by Luke and Mark (see Zimmermann, *Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels,* 57); that "they shall see God" is in his opinion theologically impossible

and thus must have come about as a mistranslation of "they shall be seen of God" (ibid., 68–69); that in Aramaic the salt became "spoiled (putrid)," not "foolish" (ibid., 70); that "rust" was a mistranslation of "eater" (i.e., a weevil?) (ibid., 71); that "body" and "life" in Matthew 6 should be translated more precisely as "soul" and "nourishment" (ibid., 37, 108); and that the wise man should be understood as building his house "with" stone not "upon" stone (ibid., 66). Objections can be raised quite readily to these conjectures.

31. Samuel T. Lachs, "Some Textual Observations on the Sermon on the Mount," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 69/2 (1978): 101–2; and Georg Strecker, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Exegetical Commentary*, trans. O. C. Dean Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988), 42. Strecker agrees that *righteousness* was a favorite word of Matthew, which indicates that Matthew probably introduced this word into the text of 5:10.