

The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source

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EVEN A CASUAL REFERENCE to studies treating the Book of Mormon reveals a range of divergent explanations of its origins. At one extreme are those who are skeptical of the book's claims to antiquity who generally conclude that it is a pious fraud, written by Joseph Smith from information available in his immediate environment. At the other extreme are those who accept the book as scripture and suggest that it can be explained exclusively by reference to ancient sources either not available to Joseph Smith or available only if he were capable of the most recondite research and near-genius ability in comparative literature and ancient studies.

It is my purpose to demonstrate that both extremes are too limited and to offer a theory of the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith's expansion of an ancient work by building on the work of earlier prophets to answer the nagging problems of his day. In so doing, he provided unrestricted and authoritative commentary, interpretation, explanation, and clarifications based on insights from the ancient Book of Mormon text and the King James Bible (KJV). The result is a modern world view and theological understanding superimposed on the Book of Mormon text from the plates.

The first section of this paper provides examples and analysis of some of these expansions by using the scholarly tools of source, motif and form-critical analyses. The second section explores the concept of translation "by the gift and power of God" and discusses the usefulness of seeing the Book of Mormon as an ancient text mediated through the mind of Joseph Smith, who attempted to render its message in categories of understanding that were meaningful to him and his contemporaries. The final section of the paper explores a preliminary theology of revelation which is consistent with Mormon theology in general and with the expansion theory of scripture in particular. This final section will also suggest why scripture and the development of doctrine are necessarily bound by culture and language, thus demanding expansion and explanation to render God's revelations meaningful to every new generation.

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Like all attempts to account for revelation in general and the Book of Mormon in particular, this one labors under the limitations of my experience and commitments. I have found Joseph Smith's statement that "a man would get nearer to God" by abiding the precepts of the Book of Mormon to be true for me. I bring to this study a believer's experience. I see meaning and possibilities where the nonbeliever does not or finds no reason to see such meaning. This statement of faith is not to say that I have biases, whereas the unbeliever has none; rather, my biases are different. Faith enables one to see and expresses commitments before all of the evidence is in. Aware of the predispositions of faith, however, I have tried to control my biases by refusing to go beyond conclusions justified by the evidence or allowed by logic.

I must also acknowledge the debt I owe to contemporary students of the Book of Mormon, whose studies on specific aspects of culture and parallels with the ancient and modern worlds have significantly advanced our knowledge. My own summaries of their research will, I hope, point interested readers to their fuller studies.

ANALYZING EXPANSIONS: SOURCE CRITICISM

Source criticism is a method of determining if one text is dependent on another source, usually by close comparisons of parallel language or forms. Source criticism allows scholars to determine the relative date of a work *as received* because, if a source can be identified, they can properly deduce that the work was composed later than the source upon which it relied. Source criticism is also useful in determining the place of composition because the document must be composed at a place where the source is available.

Critics of the Book of Mormon most often use this method, usually unknowingly, by pointing to modern parallels. They reason that if they can identify modern sources and ideas in the book, then it must be entirely a modern work. Merely pointing to parallels without a critical methodology explaining why the parallels exist and how the Book of Mormon depends on a modern document(s) logically entails only that two documents contain similar ideas or material (Sandmel 1962). Thus, Hugh Nibley's list of thirty-five parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Book of Mormon or Fawn Brodie's parallels between the Book of Mormon and nineteenth-century lore about Indian practices show nothing more than that parallels can be drawn between the Book of Mormon and both ancient and modern sources (Nibley 1973, 299–303; Brodie 1945, 46).

When does a parallel entail dependence? Similar ideas presented in identical order and expressed in similar phraseology may suggest dependence, but chronology is also important. For example, the extensive parallels between 1 Nephi and the Narrative of Zosimus, a Jewish work written during the intertestamental period, include some uncommon ideas about writing upon tablets and a vision in which Zosimus is led by an angel through a dark and dreary wasteland to the bank of a river obscured by a mist of darkness. He crosses the river to a tree with surpassingly sweet fruit, of which he partakes. It is clear,

however, that the Narrative of Zosimus as we know it was composed (circa first to fourth century A.D.) after Lehi's family reached the New World and discovered too late to be a source for Joseph Smith. Hence, these parallels must be explained in another way, perhaps, as some scholars hypothesize, by an earlier tradition whose roots cannot specifically be traced (Charlesworth 1983, 2:444; Welch 1982).

Possible Ancient Sources

No clearly identifiable ancient sources appear in the Book of Mormon except as might derive from the King James version of the Bible. Possible ancient sources suggested by the book itself include a nonbiblical prophet, Zenos, who gave the wild olive tree allegory (Jacob 5) and several messianic prophecies. Another nonbiblical prophet known as Zenez, or Kenaz, appears in the pseudepigraphic Pseudo-Philo; he is said to have lived during the period of the Judges and prophesied of a "vineyard" planted by the Lord which will bring forth corrupt fruit (Hebrew text in Harrington 1974; James 1893; Nibley 1973, 323-27). The Pseudo-Philo is much too late (c135 B.C.), however, to lead us to believe it is a reliable report about the existence of the prophet Zenez during the period of the Judges, unless a document about Zenez dating before the Exile (587 B.C.) could be found.

The metaphor of a vineyard or olive orchard (mixed in Jacob 5) planted by the Lord that brings forth wild fruit when left unattended is an ancient Hebrew theme (Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 11:16; Hosea 14:6-7). Paul used it (Rom. 11:16-21) as an allegory of the gentiles being adopted into Israel. Thus, Joseph Smith had access to both the theme and the concept of grafting in his Bible. It is impossible to determine, however, whether the source of Jacob 5 is Zenos, which Lehi would have shared with contemporaries like Jeremiah, Joseph Smith's inspired reading of the KJV, or both.

In another possible ancient source in the Book of Mormon (Alma 46:23-27), Moroni 1 quotes the patriarch Jacob as saying that a remnant of his rent garment would be preserved and explains that it means his seed would be preserved forever. The words attributed to Jacob are not in the Bible, but Hugh Nibley discovered a similar tradition in Muhammad ibn-Ibrahim ath-Tha'labi's collection of legends about the Hebrew prophets in the tenth century, drawn from a much earlier Persian record (1957, 186-89). Once again, this source is much too late to supply convincing pre-exilic evidence of Jacob's rent garment tradition, but it may indicate an ancient source.

Similarly, the words attributed to the patriarch Joseph about a descendant who would have a father named Joseph and who would be called Joseph in 2 Nephi 3 are not found in biblical texts, but a tradition of the Messiah ben Joseph or ben Ephraim appears in the Talmud, Targumin, and Midrash (Torrey 1947, 256-67; Patai 1979, 163-70). These sources are much too late to be a direct influence on the Book of Mormon. The tradition itself may have developed from much earlier Midrashic embellishment and commentary on Genesis 30:23-24 and Jeremiah 30:21; 31:19, 33, though I am not aware of any pre-exilic discussion of this tradition.

Possible Modern Sources and Influences

Views of the Hebrews. Ethan Smith's 1825 edition of the *Views of the Hebrews* has been widely suggested as Joseph Smith's source for the Book of Mormon (B. H. Roberts 1985; Pursuitte 1985; Brodie 1945, 47–59; G. Smith 1981; Jones 1964). The claims of noteworthy parallels between the two works, aside from proximity of publication, include providing an Israelite origin for the American Indian; a holy book the Indians wrote which they will have again; two groups — one savage, lazy and ignorant and one civilized and expert in mechanical arts — in ancient America, the savage destroying the civilized. Both feature the fall of Jerusalem, quote Isaiah extensively on the restoration of Israel and the rise of a great gentile nation, allegedly quote Ezekiel 37:16–17 to identify the stick of Judah with the Bible and the stick of Joseph as a new record, and allegedly speak of the Urim and Thummim. *Views* speaks of Quetzalcoatl and the Book of Mormon of the resurrected Christ in ancient America.

On closer examination, however, these seeming parallels are much less compelling. *Views* teaches that the American Indians descend from a single migration of the ten tribes following the fall of Jerusalem in 721 B.C. to the Assyrians. The Book of Mormon speaks of at least three migrations, one at the time of the tower of Babel and two at the fall of Israel to Babylon in 588 B.C. The Book of Mormon is not a story of the ten tribes and does not claim, like the Indian book in *Views*, to have been written in Hebrew on parchment, but in reformed Egyptian on gold plates. *Views* quotes numerous biblical passages on the restoration of Israel which are essential to Ethan Smith's argument, including Deuteronomy 30; Isaiah 11, 18, 60, 65; Jeremiah 16, 23, 30–31, 35–37; Zephaniah 3; Amos 9, Hosea, and Joel, yet none of these appear in the Book of Mormon except Isaiah 11 (Palmer and Knecht 1964). *Views* sees Quetzalcoatl as a figure of Moses rather than as Jesus, a significant distinction.

Unlike *Views*, the Book of Mormon does not simply divide the people into civilized and savage groups. The Nephites and Lamanites enjoyed free cultural exchange and trading throughout much of their history (Alma 22; 23:15–17; 47:35–38; 55:4; Hel. 6:7–8; 4 Ne. 20; Moro. 2:8; 6:15). Lamanites became Nephites and Nephite dissenters became Lamanites (Words of Mormon 16; Alma 32:15–17; 43:13; Hel. 4:4). Most important, the Nephites were reportedly more depraved and savage than the Lamanites at some points in their history, and especially at their demise as a nation (Jarom 3; Alma 59:12; Hel. 4:1–12, 22; 6:17–18, 37–38; Morm. 2:13–15; 3:11; 4:5–9; Moro. 9). The supposed parallel between civilized and savage nations in the two works thus oversimplifies the Book of Mormon.

George D. Smith claims that "both the *Views of the Hebrews* and the Book of Mormon identify the American Indians as the 'stick of Joseph or Ephraim'" (1981, 46). This assertion is false. *Stick* appears only once in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 16:23) referring to an arrow. While Doctrine and Covenants 27:5 quotes Ezekiel 37:16 that the sticks of Judah (the Bible) and of Joseph (the Book of Mormon) will grow together, it confuses the issue to assume that Joseph Smith's revelation was a source for the Book of Mormon as well.

2 Nephi 3:11–12 expresses the idea that the writings from Judah will grow together with the Nephite writings, but the stick symbolism of Ezekiel 37 found in *Views* is absent.

Similarly, “Urim and Thummim” is not found in the Book of Mormon at all. The instruments of translation into which Mosiah could “look” to interpret the record of Zeniff are described, not named: “the things called interpreters” (Mosiah 8:13). “Urim and Thummim” was apparently first used in Mormonism by William W. Phelps in 1833 (*Evening and Morning Star* 1 [Jan. 1833]:8). Most members of the Church probably identify the interpreters with Urim and Thummim — Joseph Smith did in his 1838 account — but the term is not a point of contact between *Views* and the Book of Mormon (JS — H 1:52).

The significant differences between *Views* and the Book of Mormon tend to rule out direct dependence. *Views* has nothing in common with the Book of Mormon in style of presentation; *Views* presents itself as a list of proofs while the Book of Mormon is a religious history. None of the thirty-four Indian words mentioned in *Views* as proof of Hebrew Indian origins appear in the Book of Mormon. Ethan Smith’s Indians, as another proof of their Hebrew origins, carry the Ark of the Covenant to war. The Book of Mormon, despite recurrent wars, does not mention the ark. Ethan Smith lists numerous Indian practices which suggest Hebrew festivals, sacrifices, and temple rituals; the Book of Mormon makes no direct allusions to any practices recognized in *Views*. Ethan Smith claims that the Indians always migrated from north to south. Book of Mormon migrations in the New World, however, are all from south to north.

Furthermore, Book of Mormon people do not practice the Law of Moses after the coming of the Christ, and Book of Mormon remnants therefore would be expected to exhibit Christian practices and not the Hebrew practices of *Views*. Hence, the Book of Mormon contradicts *Views* on several, crucial points and the case for direct dependence fails because the Book of Mormon either significantly modifies the supposed “parallel” or does not mention it at all (Bushman 1984, 133–39; Nibley 1959).

A separate question, however, focuses on broad themes appearing in Joseph Smith’s culture — for example, prophecies of a great gentile nation among the Indians which will bring the truth and restoration of Israel through conversion of the American Indians. Almost certainly they constitute the major source of ideas for *Views* and may have influenced the Book of Mormon as well (*Views* ch. 4; 1 Ne. 22:7–9; 2 Ne. 3:12; Morm. 7:1–10). The prophecies of the discovery of America and the role of a gentile nation in the Book of Mormon can be most reasonably explained, in my opinion, as popular nineteenth-century concepts inserted in the text by Joseph Smith (1 Ne. 13:10–20). In short, similarities between *Views* and the Book of Mormon do not require the dependence of one upon the other but are more easily explained as two reflections of common nineteenth-century assumptions about the American Indians.

No single parallel presents identical language or ideas expressed so similarly as to suggest direct dependence. Perhaps the closest is a quotation by Ethan

Smith from the KJV 2 Esdras which states that the ten tribes disobeyed the Lord by taking it upon themselves to go "into a further country, where never man dwelt" (1825, 168). Ether 2:5 states that "the Lord commanded [the Jaredites] that they should go forth into the wilderness, yea, into that quarter where there never had man been." Even this similarity does not present identical phraseology and contains significant dissimilarities, for the Jaredites obey God by going into the uninhabited land while the ten tribes disobey God by doing so. Further, any similarity in language could be explained by mutual dependence on 2 Esdras which was included in Joseph Smith's Bible.

Joseph Smith, Sr.'s Dream. Another often-cited source of dependence for Lehi's dream is Joseph Smith Sr.'s 1811 dream (1 Ne. 8:2-38; L. Smith 1956, 48-50). The two accounts are indeed close in phraseology and motifs which may suggest dependence. The direction of dependence, however, cannot be ascertained because Lucy Mack Smith's book was produced in 1853, after the Book of Mormon. It seems likely to me that Lucy was influenced by the Book of Mormon in relating the dream, rather than vice versa as critics suggest, because several other dreams that she recounts in her 1853 manuscript also reflect Book of Mormon phraseology (1853 Ms. 56, 71-74/1 Ne. 8:11; pp. 58-59/2 Ne. 33:10-15; pp. 281-82/Alma 34; Bushman 1984, 50-51). Further, Lehi's dream is archetypal; remarkably similar accounts appear throughout the ancient world (Griggs 1982; Welch 1982; Woodford 1953; Goodenough 10:197-202). Lehi's dream also contains poetic allusions and metaphors that correspond better to a desert environment whereas Joseph Sr.'s dream has the meadow and thick forest of upstate New York (Nibley 1952, 47-51; 1973, 177-85).

Money Digging. Some have read money digging into a few passages of the Book of Mormon because it speaks of "slippery treasures" (Hel. 13:31, 33, 36), while in money digging the treasure would sink into the ground without the proper magic ritual (Hullinger 1980, ch. 4). Though the Mark Hofmann trial currently in process raises questions about the authenticity of some documents dealing with early Mormon origins and makes it difficult to determine to what extent Joseph Smith may have been involved in magic, it is clear that the world view associated with money-digging had little influence on the Book of Mormon.

For instance, the Book of Mormon says nothing about the enchantment of spirits, divining rods, magic circles, guardian spirits, sacrifices to appease spirits, or other rituals necessary to obtain hidden treasures — all a necessary part of the magic world view associated with money digging (Bushman 1984, 72-74; Leventhal 1976, 109-18; Hurley 1951). Rather, the book is best interpreted from an understanding of the Deuteronomic covenant which required obedience and pronounced resulting curses and blessing upon the land for breach or obedience to the covenant respectively (Deut. 11:26-29).

Three passages in the Book of Mormon refer to treasures "hidden up in the earth" which cannot be obtained because of a curse: "Whoso shall hide up treasures in the earth shall find them again no more, because of the great curse on the land, save he be a righteous man and shall hide them unto the Lord. . . .

The time cometh that he curseth your riches, that they become slippery, that ye cannot hold them; and in the days of your poverty ye cannot retain them" (Hel. 13:18, 31; Jac. 2:12-13; Morm. 1:18). These passages are better interpreted as expressing the ethic prominent throughout the Book of Mormon that seeking wealth while ignoring the poor is abhorrent to God. The ability to obtain riches and keep them was dependent upon obedience to the Deuteronomic covenant: "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, . . . ye shall surely perish" (Deut. 8:17-19).

The point of the Book of Mormon is never that the proper ritual has not been performed, but that the people have forgotten God and worship their riches as a false God and will therefore perish: "Ye are cursed because of your riches, and also are your riches cursed because ye have set your hearts upon them, and have not hearkened unto the words of him who gave them unto you. Ye do not remember the Lord your God in the things with which he has blessed you, but ye do always remember your riches . . . For this cause hath the Lord God caused that a curse should come upon the land, and also upon your riches, and this because of your iniquity" (Hel. 13:21-23). The Book of Mormon is thus concerned with covenants, not money digging.

The Ethiopic Enoch expresses a similar ethic in almost identical terminology: "Woe to you rich, for you have trusted in your riches; and from you your riches will depart, for you have not remembered the Most High in the days of your riches" (1 Enoch 98:8; in Nickelsburg 1979). Riches which cannot be retained because of divine curses may be seen as metaphors for wealth that is unrighteously obtained, in the same source: "Woe to you who acquire gold and silver unjustly and say, We have become wealthy and we have possessions, and we have acquired all that we wish. And now let us do whatever we wish, for we have treasured up silver in our treasuries. . . . You err! for your wealth will not remain, but will quickly ascend from you, for you have gotten everything unjustly, and you will be delivered to a great curse" (97:8-10; Nickelsburg 1979). The similarity between 1 Enoch and the Book of Mormon is best explained by a common understanding of the Deuteronomic covenant.

Some have also seen the influence of money digging in Alma 37:23 which describes the stone of an extra-biblical prophet, Gazelem, that "shines forth in darkness unto light." It is clear that Joseph Smith had a seer stone, a chocolate-colored, egg-sized stone found at age sixteen while digging a well for Mason Chase, and used it to hunt for treasure, receive revelations, and translate the Book of Mormon (Van Wagoner and Walker 1982, 49-68; "Interview" 1859). Gazelem's stone revealed murders, plundering, and abominations, not treasures. The Hebrew *gazal* means "rapine, plunder, rob, steal, snatch away or injure." In Lamentations 4:7, *gazalah* refers to cutting or polishing precious stones. In Hebrew, *gazelam* would mean something like "stones cut by God"

or “hewn stones of God,” but could also be a play on the word for “robbers” or “plundering.” This pun is possible only in Hebrew, however.

Passages possibly influenced by money-digging lore constitute less than .02 percent of the entire text. Hence, while Joseph Smith’s involvement in magic is important for understanding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, such lore is far from even a partial explanation of the book’s content or message.

Possible Political Influences. Competent scholars have suggested that some details of Book of Mormon government and political practices were derived from the American Republican form of government, a democratic electorate, and revolutionary fervor (O’Dea 1957, 32; Brodie 1945, 69). Richard Bushman has demonstrated, successfully in my opinion, that such political forms and practices as refusal of kingship, authority vested in judges, and divine deliverance are better explained in terms of Israelite practices (Bushman 1984, 132–33; 1976, 190–211).

The anti-Masonic controversy that erupted in upper New York in 1826 after the disappearance and assumed murder of William Morgan is also often cited as an obvious nineteenth-century source for the Book of Mormon’s denunciation of “secret combinations” (Ahlstrom, 1:606–8; O’Dea 1957, ch. 2). Morgan had announced his intention to publish an account of Masonic rituals, so the populace assumed he was murdered by Masons. More than a dozen trials were held between 1827 and 1831 in western New York, but few of those charged were convicted, and those who were convicted received only light sentences.

However, between 1826 and 1830, the Anti-Masonic party emerged as a major political force in western New York. Its 1830 convention stated flamboyantly: “When intimations were thrown out that appeal would be made to the laws, more than one freemason has been heard to say, that the judges were masons, the sheriffs were masons, and the jurymen would be masons, and set at defiance the requirements of justice” (*Proceedings* 1830, 23). It was asserted that, as a result of the Masonic oaths to keep the rituals of the lodge secret and to protect another member of the fraternity in all circumstances “right and wrong,” Masons were “at full liberty to conceal others’ murders and treasons” and the judges were corrupted (*Proceedings* 1830, 48).

The Book of Mormon describes secret oaths to “get gain,” secret murders, secret combinations, and infiltrations of the government characteristic of anti-Masonic charges against the Masonic order. Morgan had made a point of the Masons wearing a lamb skin about the loins, also an identifying mark of the combination in 3 Nephi 4:7 (Morgan 1827, 24). An earlier anonymous work, *Joachim and Boaz*, stated that “every brother has an apron of white skin, and the strings are also of skin” (1807, 11). The Book of Mormon bands of robbers are called “secret combinations” and threaten the government (Alma 37:22; Hel. 2:8–11; 6:17–38; 3 Ne. 5:5; 9:9; 4 Ne. 1:42; Eth. 8:22–23) while Masonry was referred to as a “secret combination of murderers” who posed a threat to the laws of society (*Wayne Sentinel*, 27 Sept. 1828; *Palmyra Reflector*, 10 Nov. 1829; Bernard 1830, 464–68). Claims that secret societies

had caused the overthrow of the French monarchy and had infiltrated the American government, corrupting the courts, received great attention in anti-Masonic rhetoric (Barruel 1798; *Proceedings* 1830, 98–99, 107–8). Finally, the secret oaths and identifying signs were discussed in both contemporary sources and the Book of Mormon (*Proceedings* 1830, 81–83; 99–100; *Wayne Sentinel* 28 July, 1828; Morgan 1826, 55; Alma 37:27–29; Hel. 6:21–22).

As Richard Bushman has argued, however, only certain aspects of the Book of Mormon secret societies resemble anti-Masonic expressions (1984, 131). The Book of Mormon does not describe such Masonic characteristics as elaborate rituals, degrees of initiation, competing orders and fraternities, legends of the Ark of the Covenant and Hiram Abiff, the mythic heroic figure of Masonry, that were typical objects of ridicule in anti-Masonic rhetoric (Bushman 1984, 130–31). A frequent charge against Masonry, also absent from the Book of Mormon, was that it displaced Christianity by being a religion in itself (*Proceedings* 1830, 43–45, 79–83, 102–7).

Book of Mormon bands of robbers were not a quasi-religious fraternity, but rather resemble bands of robbers and insurgents in the ancient Near East identifiable in legal materials from early Babylonia to Josephus (Welch 1985a; Lutz 1937, 241; Daranl 1961; Sorenson 1985, 300–309). According to John W. Welch, a law professor and Book of Mormon scholar, *robbers (gazalan)* in ancient Near Eastern law applied technically to those who lived outside the community which they plundered and robbed (Welch 1985a, 3; Jackson 1972, 46). These robbers were an organized society with their own leaders and code of conduct, bound together by ritual oaths (Lutz 1937, 241; Welch 1985a, 6–7). The common mode of operation was for the band to sweep down from the mountains, plunder isolated villages, and return to their hideout, usually in the mountains (Judges 9:34–36; 2 Chr. 21:16–17; Jackson 1972, 6–7). The government and military controlled and eliminated these bands under martial law — the law applied to outsiders bearing the death penalty — rather than under the laws applicable to members of the tribe or society (Jackson 1972, 11). Hence, the robbers constantly attempted to weaken the government and infiltrate the military so their plundering would go unpunished (Welch 1985a, 9; 2 Chr. 21:16–17, 22:1). The penalty for these robbers under martial law was death (Jackson 1970, 63; Welch 1985a, 10).

The Book of Mormon secret societies differ from Masons in the precise ways they are similar to ancient Near Eastern bands of robbers. The Book of Mormon secret societies were not a continuous brotherhood, but were five different groups springing up in different periods.

1. The first band originated among the Nephites about 52 B.C. when Pahoran's three sons, Pahoran II, Pacumeni, and Paanchi all wanted to succeed him as chief judge (Hel. 1–2). When Pahoran II was chosen, Pacumeni and his followers acceded; but Paanchi and his supporters mounted a rebellion which ended with Paanchi's execution for rebellion after a trial "according to the voice of the people." His followers hired Kishkumen to murder Pahoran II and entered into an oath not to reveal the identity of the murderer. Following the murder, Pacumeni was appointed as chief judge "according to his right."

Kishkumen reappeared a year later when his plot to assassinate the chief judge, then Helaman I, was discovered by a loyal servant. Helaman sent his military troops to take the “band of robbers . . . that they might be executed according to the law.” Gadianton, Kishkumen’s successor, took his band “into the wilderness.”

2. About 25 B.C., the band of robbers, by now a distinct social group with its own laws, murdered the chief judge and his son (Hel. 6). Their oaths are reminiscent of anti-Masonic rhetoric:

[The Nephites] did unite with those bands of robbers, and did enter into their covenants and their oaths, that they would protect and preserve one another in whatsoever difficult circumstance they should be placed, and they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their stealings . . . they did have their signs, and their secret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to the band, who had taken the covenant (Hel. 6:21–22).

By 24 B.C., the band “did obtain the sole management of the government” and was eradicated only when Nephi II exposed the chief judge’s murderer and the conspiring corrupt judges (Hel. 8:1–4, 27–28; 11:10).

3. About 12 B.C. a group of robbers formed from Nephite dissenters established headquarters in the mountains, and attacked isolated villages (Hel. 24; 3 Ne. 4). Their strength challenged the Nephite army. After ten years of continued raids and plundering, the robbers demanded that the Nephites capitulate and accept its leaders in exchange for protection from plundering. The band was eliminated only when the Nephites adopted a “scorched earth” policy and retreated to a stronghold where they endured seven years of siege, starving the robbers, then sentencing them to death under martial law.

The first three Book of Mormon bands differ from Masonry in significant ways. They maintained a separate social identity (“a band of robbers”) from the society which they plundered. Nowhere in anti-Masonic rhetoric were Masons referred to a distinct band of robbers. The Gadianton robbers lived in the mountains and attacked the Nephites in the lowlands (Hel. 11:25–31; 3 Ne. 1:27; 2:17; 3:20). The Masons were never identified as a group which held out in the mountains and attacked as marauding robbers. Both Near Eastern societies and the Nephites tried the robbers under martial law, and assigned responsibility for dealing with them to the military. Americans looked to their civil sheriffs, and Masons stood trial in the usual criminal courts.

4. About 29 A.D. a fourth secret society began among the corrupt judges and lawyers in a family-based, secret organization after Nephite society disintegrated. These families, organized for plunder, recognized their own leaders and sought to establish their own law. This band resembles neither ancient Near Eastern robbers nor Masons but rather the Mafia or Cosa Nostra crime rings based on family organizations.

5. The Jaredites showed a pattern of secret conspiracies to murder rival claimants to the throne, which spawned counter-conspiracies (Eth. 7–9). This pattern differs from both the Nephite robbers and the Masons, but resembles

Old Testament stories of Abimalech and Jehoram murdering their brothers and sparking a counter-rebellion (Judg. 9; 2 Chr. 11).

Herod's oath to Salome, which resulted in the death of John the Baptist, parallels the plot of the daughter of Jared to entice a murderous oath from Akish (Matt. 14:9; Eth. 8). The binding power of the oath, though singled out by the Masons (*Proceedings* 1830, 46), is also common in the ancient world. The Qumran Enoch and Ethiopic Enoch (c150 B.C.) echo Ether 8:15-16 and Helaman 6:21-22:

The chief [executor] of the oath . . . spoke to Michael to disclose to him the secret names so he would memorize this secret name of his, so that he would call the oath in order that they shall tremble before it and the oath. He [then] revealed these to the children of the people, [and] all the hidden things and this power of this oath, for it is power and strength itself. The Evil One placed this oath in Michael's hand (1 Enoch 69:13-15).

And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: I fear ye will not do this deed, and I alone will have to pay the penalty for this great sin. And they all answered: let us swear an oath, and bind ourselves by mutual promises not to abandon this plan; but to do this thing. Then they all swore together and bound themselves by [the curse] (4Q Enoch 1:3-4.)

This extended analysis of Book of Mormon robber bands and Masonry shows that the book differs in important respects from Joseph Smith's society, although Helaman 6:21-30; 8:3-4; 3 Nephi 6:28-30 and Ether 8:10-16, 22-26 appear to be influenced by anti-Masonic terminology and concerns. They may be explained best, it seems to me, as Joseph Smith's independent commentary on Masonry, sparked by his reflection on Nephite secret combinations.

The King James Bible. At least one modern source was undisputably used in the Book of Mormon — the King James Version of the Bible — in three primary ways. First, the Book of Mormon adapts many phrases, particularly from the New Testament, to a new context. A single passage from 2 Nephi 9:12-28 attributed to the prophet Jacob about 560 B.C. demonstrates this method:

Wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead; and hell must deliver up its captive spirits and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and spirits of men will be restored one to the other . . .

And when all men have passed from death unto life . . . they must appear before the judgment seat of the Holy One of Israel, and then cometh the judgment, and then they must be judged according to the holy judgment of God.

And assuredly, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord God hath spoken it, and it is his eternal word, which cannot pass away, that they who are righteous shall

and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works (Rev. 20:13).

. . . my word shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

. . . and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let

be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end. . . . But behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel: they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full.

him be righteous still (Rev. 22:11). Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:4).

And the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . And death and hell were cast into a lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14).

. . . [Jesus] endured the cross, despising the shame (Heb. 12:2).

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

. . . that your joy might be full (John 15:11).

Jacob's speech reinterprets the KJV snippets into a new synthesis on death, resurrection, and the judgment. It is conceivable that the phrases approximate the meaning of an original text, and the intricate structure of the passage, known to scholars as ascending synthetic inclusion, seems to require such an original. Hence, these phrases may represent interpretation of an original text using the KJV New Testament and a nineteenth-century theological framework. Yet it is clear that the KJV New Testament phrases have become part of the structure itself. This mode of using the KJV, replicated throughout the Book of Mormon, suggests that Joseph Smith freely adopted KJV phraseology and concepts to present his "translation."

The Book of Mormon also quotes entire chapters from the KJV, including Exodus 20:2-17; Isaiah 2-12; 48-54; and Malachi 3-4. Since these chapters are all from the Old Testament, it is possible that they appeared in the Nephite record in some form, even though Joseph Smith clearly used the KJV translation.

Quotations from Isaiah 49-54 by Nephi I represent a special problem. Probably a majority of scholars maintain that Isaiah 40-66 was written after the Babylonian exile about 587 B.C. by an unknown author called "deutero-Isaiah." Some scholars also posit a "trito-Isaiah" in chapters 56-66 (McKenzie 1983, xv-xxiii; Eissfeldt 1965, 304-46). Other scholars argue for the unity of Isaiah (Gileadi 1982; Gozzo 1964, 1281-83; Sperry 1968, 493-512).

Douglas Jones, a respected Old Testament scholar, agrees with others that certain disciples of Isaiah in the exile expanded and explained basic passages from the original prophet to console the exiles and give them hope of return in chapters 40-55 (Jones 1955, 227-44; McKenzie 1983, xx-xxiii; Nibley 1973, 144-47). This hypothesis deserves serious consideration. Significantly, before the coming of the resurrected Christ, the Book of Mormon does not quote from "trito-Isaiah," chapters 56-66, which many scholars regard as devoid of the words of the original prophet Isaiah (McKenzie 1983, xx-xxiii; Eissfeldt 1965, 343-46). Scholars also usually regard chapters 1 and 24-27 as post-exilic (Eissfeldt 1965, 232-37). Again, the Book of Mormon does not quote from

these chapters. Nephi and Jacob refer, not to the "book" of Isaiah but to the "words of Isaiah," possibly a collection of "words" or sayings written by the eighth-century prophet which may not have included chapters 56–66 (1 Ne. 15:20; 19:23–24; 2 Ne. 6:4–5, 14; 11:18). Possibly the resurrected Christ "updated" the Nephite scriptures by quoting Isaiah 52, 54, and 66:18–19, Malachi 3 and 4, and Micah, together with various New Testament scriptures, just as he restored the words of the Lamanite prophet Samuel which the Nephites had failed to record (3 Ne. 23:9–14). Hence, the Book of Mormon may anticipate the "Isaiah problem" and can be reconciled with the deutero-Isaiah/trito-Isaiah hypothesis.

In any case, Joseph Smith clearly used the KJV Old Testament to render the Book of Mormon translation. The Book of Mormon also quotes the KJV Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5–7. As Krister Stendahl, dean of the Harvard Divinity School, observed, the Matthew version has been transformed in 3 Nephi by presenting the resurrected Christ in terms taken from the gospel of John (1978, 139–54). 3 Nephi shows Christ as the deified lawgiver and the mediator who weeps for joy in the presence of small children, and suffers with, because, and on behalf of the house of Israel (3 Ne. 17; 19:6–36). The compassionate Savior of 3 Nephi reconciles the resurrected glory of the Christ with the humanity of Jesus in ways possibly unmatched elsewhere in Christian thought. Furthermore, the visit of the resurrected Christ in 3 Nephi goes beyond the KJV to capture many striking aspects of the forty-day post-resurrection ministry of Christ reported in noncanonical sources (Nibley 1982, 121–40). Much of 3 Nephi appears, nevertheless, to interpret the KJV text. Krister Stendahl's observations concerning the use and interpretation of the KJV in 3 Nephi is very relevant:

The biblical material behind the Book of Mormon strikes me as being in the form of the KJV I have applied standard methods of historical critics, redaction criticism, and genre criticism. From such perspectives it seems very clear that the Book of Mormon belongs to and shows many of the typical signs of the Targums and the pseudepigraphic recasting of biblical material. The targumic tendencies are those of clarifying and actualizing translations, usually by expansion and more specific application to the need and situation of the community. The pseudepigraphic, both apocalyptic and didactic, tend to fill out the gaps in our knowledge about sacred events, truths, and predictions. . . . It is obvious to me that the Book of Mormon stands within both of these traditions if considered as a phenomenon of religious texts (1978, 152).

The Book of Mormon also provides extended interpretations of KJV passages. KJV Isaiah 29 prophesies that a voice will speak out of the dust and a marvelous work and a wonder will be revealed. In 2 Nephi 26:15–18 and 27:1–35 it becomes a prophecy of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and Martin Harris's visit to Professor Charles Anthon. Moroni writes (8:42–46) how faith, hope, and charity have the power to transform humans into the likeness of God, apparently an interpretation of KJV 1 Corinthians 13:3 and 1 John 3:2. Even if the Nephites learned a similar doctrine from the resurrected Christ, the language Joseph Smith used clearly comes from the

KJV. Ether 13:3–11 also expands KJV Revelation 21:1–17 about the New Jerusalem, or eschatological city in which God himself will dwell.

What, then, may we conclude from the Book of Mormon's use of modern sources? Only that the Book of Mormon *as translated* and presented by Joseph Smith relied on the KJV and was influenced by nineteenth-century American culture in rendering its message. While source criticism is useful to determine dependence, "source criticism per se reveals only that separate sources were used in the composition of the document. It has no way of knowing ". . . *who* used them" (Slingerland 1977, 97). For example, it is possible that an ancient source contained on gold plates underlies the Book of Mormon, but Joseph Smith uses the KJV both for language and to clarify, expand, and interpret the thought of the original text.

If the expansion theory of the Book of Mormon is correct, then the vast majority of studies, both pro and con, have assumed far too much by simply pointing to parallels. Both ancient and modern sources could have influenced the text published in 1829 without ruling out either. Furthermore, some aspects of the Book of Mormon, such as robber bands, Israelite government forms, and desert imagery in Lehi's dream, suggest an ancient text, though they do not prove it.

ANALYZING THE EXPANSIONS: MOTIF CRITICISM

Motif criticism (as Slingerland calls it) analyzes the comparative development of theological ideas in a document and is another useful mode of scholarly analysis to help determine authorship and provenance (1977, 98–103). For example, analyzing the comparative development of the concept of Christ in the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John suggests that John was written later (R. Brown 1966, lxxxiv). It is possible to analyze Book of Mormon doctrines to determine whether they resemble pre-exilic Israelite thought or nineteenth-century Christianity.

Anachronisms

For example, several Book of Mormon terms are obviously anachronistic. Referring to the people at Jerusalem as "Jews" and to those not belonging to Israel as "gentiles" became common only after the return from the exile in the fourth century B.C. The Book of Mormon indicates that *Jew* is an interpretation: "I have charity for the Jew," Nephi says, adding, "I say Jew, because I mean them from whence I came" (2 Ne. 33:8). The additional clarification suggests that *Jew* may not have been used commonly to refer to "those at Jerusalem." These, and other terms such as *church*, *Christians*, and "alpha and omega" have been explained as "translator anachronisms" (Tate 1981, 260 n10).

Hugh Nibley suggests that Joseph Smith used modern terms to translate words which did not have connotations assumed in modern usage. For example, Nibley argues that *church* and *synagogue* in the Book of Mormon may be expressed in Hebrew as *yahad* (a unity), a word the Qumran covenantors

used to refer to their community, or possibly as *'edah* (community) (1973, 187–88). *Church* assumes an ecclesiastical organization in modern usage which we should not read into the Book of Mormon because such an organization did not exist in pre-Christian times, even by the book's own account (2 Ne. 9:2; Mosiah 18:17). Instead, pre-Christian Book of Mormon religious communities were governed by priests who taught the people, with a chief high priest presiding over all communities (2 Ne. 5:26; Jac. 1:18; Mosiah 6:3; 18:18; 25:19; Alma 1:3; 4:4, 18; 6:1; 30:20). No deacons, bishops, or apostles are mentioned in Nephite communities before the coming of Christ. Elders are only unordained community leaders in the Israelite sense (1 Ne. 4:22, 27; Alma 4:7, 16; 6:1).

Baptism

Many Book of Mormon doctrines are best explained by the nineteenth-century theological milieu. For example, though there may have been ritual washings performed in the tabernacle and temple, there are no pre-exilic references to baptism (Exod. 29:4; 40:12; Lev. 8:6). Yet Jacob explains repentance and baptism as if his hearers were completely familiar with the concept: "He commandeth all men that they must repent and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God" (2 Ne. 9:23–24). It is difficult to see this passage as anything but the Christian baptism of repentance necessary for salvation. Ritual washings were never seen as necessary to salvation in the Old Testament. It is interesting that immersion is not mentioned, given the controversy over the modes of baptism in Joseph Smith's day (Ahlstrom 1:535–47; Backman 1971, 94–99). Though Nephi saw (in a vision) Jesus baptized by John the Baptist, supposedly by immersion (1 Ne. 11:27), the practice of baptism by immersion is first explicitly mentioned in the Book of Mormon when Alma founds his community near the waters of Mormon (Mosiah 18:10). Alma does not, however, perform a Christian baptism. He baptized by "authority from the Almighty God" and not in the name of Jesus Christ, and his baptism is not associated symbolically with the death and resurrection of Christ or the remission of sins, but symbolizes entering into a covenant with God (Mosiah 18:10, 13). A striking parallel is the Qumran practice of ritual immersions as a sign of repentance upon entering a covenant and a cleansing by the spirit of truth (1QS, 2–8 in Vermes 1968, 45; and Gaster 1976, 44–65; Soggin 1978, 184–99).

Salvation

The Book of Mormon also addresses several problems that simply were not, and could not be, problems for Israelites. For example, the salvation of infants and those who had not heard the gospel arises only if a soteriology is adopted which excludes the unbaptized or non-Christians. In Hebrew thought non-Israelites are not thus excluded (Dubarle 1970, 34–35).

Nineteenth-century Methodist theology taught, however, that non-Christians and the unbaptized could not be saved. The Methodist solution

resembles the Book of Mormon's. John Fletcher (1729–85), a Methodist theologian in America, stated that "Christ died for the entire human race, first to procure absolutely and unconditionally a temporary salvation, for men universally, and secondly, to procure a particular redemption, or an eternal salvation, conditionally for all men, but absolutely for all that die in infancy . . . and for all adults who obey him and are faithful unto death" (S. Dunn 1837, 258–59; Slatte 1977, 85). The Book of Mormon teaches that those who "have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them" have part in the first resurrection, "and little children also have eternal life" (Mosiah 15:24–25).

The Book of Mormon doctrine of atonement and free will shows influences of a theological conflict over depravity, grace, and the role of the will in salvation, all central to the conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism in the early nineteenth century (Ahlstrom 1:489–512). Calvin and his followers believed that persons are incapable of meritorious acts, and the atonement applied Christ's undeserved grace to those predestined to salvation. Human will or choice had nothing to do with salvation, for humans were captives of their depraved nature and could not avoid sin (Calvin 1961, 3.13.6; Edwards 1846, 185–97). In contrast, salvation in Arminian theology depended on an individual's free choice to accept Christ's freely offered grace (Merritt 1824; Banks 1817, 170). The idea that the atonement freed persons from their depraved "natural" state and restored them to the state enjoyed before the fall of ability to choose between good and evil is a distinctive Arminian concept taught in Joseph Smith's day (T. Smith 1980). The popular nineteenth-century theologian Nathan Banks taught: "Those gentlemen who urge the doctrine of total depravity against the truth [of moral agency] seem to forget one very important trait in the Gospel system, viz., the atonement of Christ, and the benefits which universally flow from it to mankind, by which they are graciously restored to the power of action" (1815, vii).

Such developed ideas of free will enabled by the atonement are not found in Israelite thought but are presented in 2 Nephi 2:8–9, 26–29 and 10:24. Lehi predicted that the Messiah would come to "redeem the children from the Fall. And because they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon." The choice which gives rise to free agency in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 2:27; 10:23–24) is invariably the choice between the way of life and the way of death also found in Deuteronomy 30:15, 19; such freedom is never said in the Old Testament to be made possible by the atonement.

The Fortunate Fall

The concept that the fall of Adam benefitted humankind by fulfilling the plan of God (*felix culpa*) and making the moral growth of humans possible is a Christian interpretation which developed very early in Christian thought (Theophilus, *Ad Autolytus* Bk. ii, 24–25, A.D. c175; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* III.xvi; III.x.2, A.D. c200). The same concept appears in 2 Nephi 2:17–26 and Alma 42:2–14. An Arminian influence on the Book of Mormon

seems evident in its stress on the paradoxical commandments God gave Adam and Eve and idea of "opposition in all things" to emphasize that choices among alternatives are necessary to moral freedom (Lovejoy 1960, 44-68; Hick 1978, 208-15; 287-89). In contrast, there simply is no pre-exilic interpretation of the fall of Adam. Indeed, the fall of Adam is not mentioned in the Old Testament after Genesis 2:4-3:23, although the myth of the fall was probably available in sixth-century Israel in some form (Nordio 1975, 54-64).

The doctrines of original sin and the fallen nature of humankind are also foreign to pre-exilic Israelite thought. The fall of Adam was never linked with the human condition in pre-exilic works, as it is in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 10:6; 2 Ne. 2:15-16; 9:6; Mosiah 3:16-27; 4:7; Alma 12:22; 18:36; 22:13; 42:2-10; Hel. 14:16). Human "nature" was not considered inherently sinful in Israelite thought — if one can meaningfully speak about a Hebrew concept of "human nature." The idea of *nature* is Greek rather than Israelite (Lovejoy and Boas 1935). Humankind was impotent and dependent on Yahweh for well-being in Israelite thought, but not evil by nature (Wolff 1964, 235-37). Teachings of original sin and depravity first appear in the Bible in Paul (Rom. 5:12-21).

The Atonement

The satisfaction theory of atonement elucidated in Alma 34:9-17 and 42:9-17 is a medieval theological development. The idea of atonement as necessary to satisfy two opposed but ontologically necessary attributes of God — his mercy and his justice — was first suggested by Anselm of Canterbury in his A.D. 1109 treatise, *Cur Deus Homo?* The satisfaction theory was premised on medieval concepts of law and justice and assumed that justice required full retribution for sin while mercy acquitted the sinner and did not require such penalties. The conflict in God's nature could be resolved only by a sinless individual upon whom justice had no claim but who would allow justice to be done vicariously through his suffering. The suffering would have to come from one having both human and divine natures, however, because an infinite being had been offended by human sin, and only an "infinite atonement" could satisfy the demands of justice. Thus, Christ's undeserved suffering provides infinite merit which can be dispensed vicariously to depraved creatures who stand in need of Christ's grace. It is possible to detect influences of this theory in Alma's presentation of God's plan, which also shows Arminian influences in its description of vicarious sacrifice:

Mercy could not take effect except it should destroy the work of justice. Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would cease to be God.

And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence.

And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also (Alma 42:13-15).

The Concept of Messiah

Several quasi-Christian concepts are presented in the Book of Mormon as new revelations requiring explanation and elucidation by Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob in the fifth century B.C. The idea of "a Messiah" is introduced as a new revelation in Lehi's call: "the things which he did read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also of the redemption of the world" (1 Ne. 1:10). The initial Book of Mormon concept of "a Messiah" is vague, requiring Nephi's clarification: ". . . even a Messiah, or, in other words, a Savior of the world . . . and [Lehi] also spake . . . concerning this Messiah, of whom he had spoken, or this Redeemer of the world" (1 Ne. 10:4-5). Nephi explains that the Son of God is the Messiah with whom Lehi spoke, as though it were somewhat novel. Lehi never uses *Christ*, *Jesus*, or "Son of God" to refer to the Messiah (K. Brown 1984, 25-26). Nephi consistently uses *Redeemer*, as Lehi first referred to the Messiah (1 Ne. 10:14; 11:27). The term *Christ*, the Greek equivalent of Messiah, meaning "the anointed one," was first used by Jacob as a proper name after it was revealed to him by an angel (2 Ne. 10:3).

When Nephi attempts to prove that the prophets knew of the Messiah, he refers only to nonbiblical prophets: "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself, according to the words of the angel, as a man, into the hands of wicked men, according to the words of Zenock, and to be crucified according to the words of Neum, and to be buried in a sepulchre, according to the words of Zenos, which he spake concerning the three days of darkness" (2 Ne. 19:10). Presumably, if Nephi had had more definite sources about the Messiah, he would have cited them.

The idea of a Messiah who dies for the sins of others, then rises from the dead, was unknown in ancient Israel (Klausner 1956), though competent scholars have maintained that Isaiah's suffering servant refers to an individual identified with Israel through his vicarious suffering and death as Yahweh's servant (Rowley 1952, 59-88; Eissfeldt 1965, 340-41). Early Christians identified the suffering servant with Christ. A similar development occurred in Nephi's thought; he learned from an angel that God himself would appear as a man and be delivered to the wicked (1 Ne. 19:19).

Furthermore, when Alma discusses the coming Christ about 74 B.C., he appears to be familiar only with prophecies of Zenos and Zenock. Their statements are vague: "Ye must believe what Zenos said; for behold he said: Thou hast turned away thy judgments because of thy Son" and "[Zenock] said: Thou art angry, O Lord, with this people, because they will not understand thy mercies which thou hast bestowed upon them because of thy Son" (Alma 33:13, 16). Alma knew Lehi's prophecies since he kept the records (Alma 36:22), but he did not cite Nephi's much more explicit vision, possibly because his audience was not familiar with it, although why they would know Zenos and Zenock instead remains mysterious.

The Afterlife

Concepts of an afterlife appear to undergo development in the Book of Mormon. An angel introduced "hell" as "the depths" of a river to Nephi

(1 Ne. 12:16). The Hebrew *sheol* means essentially the depths of the earth and abode of the dead (Wolff 1974, 102–5). When Nephi explains the meaning of the river of filthiness in his dream to his unbelieving brothers, he sounds as if a “hell . . . prepared for the wicked” is new to him (1 Ne. 15:29). This idea of hell is also new to Nephi’s brothers, for they want to know if “hell” is experienced after death or in this life (v. 31). Nephi explains that “there is a place prepared, yea, even that awful hell of which I have spoken . . . wherefore the final state of the souls of men is to dwell in the kingdom of God, or to be cast out” (v. 35).

The concept of an after-life may have been new to Laman and Lemuel; pre-exilic Hebrews did not have a refined notion of life after death (Wolff 1974, 102–5). *Sheol* may have been considered in Lehi’s day as a place where the “shades” (*rephaim*) of the dead languish in a dismal half life (Ps. 16:10; 88:10–11; Isa. 14:9; Prov. 21:16; Dubarle 1970, 34–35; Eichrodt 1:205–8). Robinson maintains, however, that the concept of after-life did not develop until after the return from the exile (J. A. T. Robinson, 3:38–53). Apparently a more archaic idea of death as a final destination, the end of human existence, coexisted with other ideas of afterlife in ancient Israel (Job 10:21–22; R. Smith 1979). This may be what Lehi means when he refers to the grave (another meaning of *sheol*) as a “sleep of hell” and a “place of no return” (2 Ne. 1:13–14). He also assumes that his sons could be cut off from God’s presence and “destroyed forever” (2 Ne. 1:17). *Sheol* was often thought of as final ruin outside the presence of God (Ps. 9:14–18; 30:10; 88:5–13).

God’s love is inconsistent, however, with final ruin in *sheol* for Lehi. Relying on the language of the Psalmist, he rejoices: “The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Ne. 1:15; Ps. 16:10–11). It should be noted, however, that Lehi’s entire person or “soul” had been redeemed from hell even before his death. An alternative to death as the end of human existence and *sheol* as a languishing existence outside the presence of Yahweh began to take shape before the exile, premised on Yahweh’s universal sovereignty, with all power, including power over death and *sheol*. Thus, the righteous could anticipate eternal fellowship with Yahweh beginning in this life (Ps. 73:23–28; Wolff 1974, 109–10). It is this concept of life after death that Lehi seems to express.

It was difficult for pre-exilic Hebrews to conceive of life without the body because they did not think of mortals in dualistic terms of corruptible body and eternal soul. The term *soul* (*nephesh*) connoted the entire person in Hebrew thought, consisting of the breath of life or “spirit” (*ruah*) plus the body (*basar*) (Tresmontant 1962, 12–56; Eichrodt 1967, 131–50). The discussion of the grave delivering up the body and hell delivering up the spirit (2 Ne. 9:10–13) is thus awkward and perhaps inappropriate given Hebrew anthropology, though the parallelism of hell and grave suggests the natural Hebrew word pair of *sheol* and *abaddon* as in Job 26:5–6: “The shades (*rephaim*) tremble from under, and the waters with their inhabitants. Sheol is naked before him, and abaddon has no covering” (Watters 1976, 200). Jacob also

refers to the “monster death and hell” which has the dead within her grasp (2 Ne. 9:10, 19).

Sheol was often personified in Hebrew thought as an insatiable monster or demon with wide-open jaws waiting to swallow the dead (Prov. 1:12; Isa. 5:14; Heb. 2:5). Jacob makes the location of the body and spirit after death clear; the *nature* of existence in hell or paradise before the resurrection remains unclear. The concept of after-life appears to have remained that of a dismal half existence where nothing further could be accomplished or enjoyed, or “the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed” (Alma 34:33; Eichrodt 1:210–16). Jacob specified, however, that the righteous ultimately go to a place of royal glory and the wicked to never-ending burnings after the resurrection and judgment, as in the Serehk scroll or Revelation (2 Ne. 9:14–16; 1QS IV, 12–14 in Vermes 1969, 76–77; Rev. 20:10, 14).

Nearly 450 years later, when Alma attempts to discover the nature of the intermediate state between death and resurrection, he apparently cannot find an answer in available sources but an angel explains that the wicked go to eternal burnings and the righteous to a paradise even before the resurrection (Alma 40:7–23).

The Resurrection

The resurrection in the Old Testament is first mentioned in Isaiah 26:19 (“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead”) and usually attributed to deutero-Isaiah or trito-Isaiah in the fourth century B.C. Ezekiel 37:5 (“Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live”), is usually dated to 350–338 B.C. (D. Russell 1964, 366–79; Charlesworth 1:xxxiii–xxxiv). In contrast, the Book of Mormon has a well-developed concept of universal resurrection brought about by the Messiah’s death and resurrection (2 Ne. 9:10–16; 26:13; Jac. 4:11–12; Mosiah 15:21–22; 16:7–11; Alma 16:20; 27:28; 33:22; 40:2–21). However, Lehi teaches that the wicked will be destroyed “body and soul,” thus precluding a universal resurrection. The earliest references to salvation in the Book of Mormon are not of bodily resurrection but of the “redemption of the world” (1 Ne. 1:10; 20:20; 2 Ne. 1:15; 2:3, 4:31). Nephi sees in vision the resurrection of the Messiah but does not mention resurrection for humans (1 Ne. 10:11).

The Devil

Pre-exilic Hebrews did not have a concept of a personal devil who tempted individuals and opposed deity (Eichrodt 1:205–8). In the Old Testament, the adversary is a counselor in the heavenly court, a son of God, not quasi-divine opposition (Ps. 89:7; Job 1:1; 1 Chron. 21:1). The adversary is thus a “role” in pre-exilic writings rather than a specific demi-god who explains the origin of evil and who tempts individuals as in the New Testament, whose idea of the devil and demons is influenced by Zoroastrian dualism (J. Russell 1977, 79–91). The early Hebrews did not equate the serpent of the Eden story

with the devil (Nordio 1975, 105). A significant development in the concept of the devil is Isaiah 14:12–14 where he has attributes of the Assyrian/Babylonian king and is linked with the fallen morning star, which may have given rise to the later Jewish view of Satan as a fallen angel (Eissfeldt 1965, 320; D. Russell 1964, 235–62).

Lehi describes Satan: "I, Lehi, according to the things which I have read, must needs suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written, had fallen from heaven; wherefore he became a devil having sought that which was evil before God" (2 Ne. 2:17). Lehi treats the idea of the devil as a fallen angel as a new interpretation of what has been written, one that he must "suppose" is justified by the writings available to him. Lehi then equates this fallen angel with the serpent of Eden, apparently another novel interpretation requiring explicit identification: "Wherefore he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of lies . . ." (v. 18). The temptation in Eden thus becomes part of Lehi's explanation of the existence of evil.

Devil is used in only two places prior to Lehi's discussion. The mists of darkness in Lehi's dream symbolize the "temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost" (1 Ne. 12:17). Such a symbolic reference to the devil does not necessarily connote a personal devil, but merely personifies temptation. In 1 Nephi 14, the devil is associated with the great and abominable church, a usage which Joseph Smith clearly borrowed from Revelation 17:1–18:3 to expand the original text. Lehi's interpretation of "what is written" is thus the first reference to a personal devil in the original Book of Mormon source.

1 Nephi 13–15 can be distinguished as Joseph Smith's expansion through motif criticism. Its denunciations of the devil's great and abominable church depend on Revelation and appears to express anti-Catholicism characteristic of nineteenth-century New York (Ahlstrom 1:666–81). These chapters contain ideas foreign to pre-exilic Israelites, such as a "church," a personal devil, and Jews and gentiles. The expansion can be distinguished from the original text because the angel's purpose in 1 Nephi 11–12 is to explain the symbolic significance of Lehi's vision. The interpretation ceases at 1 Nephi 12:18, and the vision attributed to Nephi thereafter no longer explains Lehi's dream but presents unrelated prophecies of very specific historical events including the discovery of America.

What then can be concluded from the presence of developed Christian doctrines in the Old Testament sections of the Book of Mormon? James H. Charlesworth, an expert in the Pseudepigrapha, quoted Mosiah 3:8–10, then observed:

In these three verses we find what most critical scholars would call clearly Christian phrases; that is, the description is so precise that it is evident it was added after the event. . . . How are we to evaluate this new observation? Does it not vitiate the claim that this section of the Book of Mormon, Mosiah, was written before 91 B.C.? Not necessarily so, since Mormons acknowledge that the Book of Mormon could have been edited and expanded on at least two occasions that postdate the life of Jesus of

Nazareth. It is claimed that the prophet Mormon abridged some parts of the Book of Mormon in the fourth century A.D. And it is likewise evident that Joseph Smith in the nineteenth century had the opportunity to redact the traditions he claimed to have received (1978, 125).

Though I am informed that Charlesworth does not consider the Book of Mormon to be an ancient document, his hypothesis should still be taken seriously. The Christian motifs in the Book of Mormon require either that a Christian has been at work during some stage of the compilation or that it is Christian in origin (Slingerland 1977, 100). A study of the editorial tendencies may determine whether the Christian motifs derive from Mormon or from Joseph Smith. In 1 and 2 Nephi, Jacob, and Enos, however, expansions must come from Joseph Smith because the small plates were not abridged by Mormon.

ANALYZING THE EXPANSIONS: FORM CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Form criticism is the study of oral, ritual, or literary forms underlying a written text. Israelite authors were much more dependent on fixed forms of speech than modern authors (Hayes 1973, 60–62). Because forms are subtle patterns that usually are not evident except through scholarly analysis, it is somewhat unlikely that someone unfamiliar with form content or the purpose underlying the form would simply duplicate or use it in an appropriate context. Hence, form critical analysis may be the best, perhaps the only, method of detecting ancient influences in the Book of Mormon, especially if the mode of translation inherently entailed interpretation from a Christian perspective. I will focus on three Book of Mormon forms: the ritual form of the covenant renewal festival, the prophetic lawsuit of Abinadi's trial, and Lehi's call.

The Covenant Renewal Festival

A Christian expansion in Mosiah's speech is detectable on form critical grounds. Mosiah 2–5 would appear to be reminiscent of a nineteenth-century camp/revival meeting on first reading (M. Thomas 1983). At a predetermined location where the people would sometimes camp in tents for several days, the revivalist would build a stage or stand (Mosiah 2:27) from which he would preach and call his audience to a sense of their awful guilt (3:19). Those who were convicted in sin would come forward crying, "What shall we do?" (4:1–2). They would be admonished to accept Christ (4:2–11). Many would experience a change of heart (5:1–4) and sometimes would fall to the ground as if dead or exhibit physical spasms. The names of those who experienced conversion would sometimes be recorded (6:2; C. Johnson 1955, 122–44, 170–91; Sweet vol. 4; Cleveland 1959; Young 1853, 34–38; Ahlstrom 1:507–23).

However, not all of Mosiah 1–6 can be explained as a nineteenth-century camp meeting and conversion experience. No nineteenth-century camp meeting was convened by royal proclamation requiring the attendance of the entire nation to be present at the temple where the king would consecrate his son as

his successor (Mosiah 1:9–10). Furthermore, those attending brought firstlings of their flocks for burnt offerings according to the Law of Moses (2:3–4).

Several studies have explicated a coronation and Israelite covenant renewal festival underlying Mosiah 1–6 (Ricks 1984; Tvedtnes 1978; Thomasson 1983; Welch 1985b; Nibley 1957, 256–69 and 1973, 279–82). Though the exact nature of pre-exilic festival(s) in Israel is not totally clear, form critical scholars have identified six elements of covenant renewal rites, which Stephen Ricks has demonstrated in King Benjamin's speech: (1) a preamble identifying the author of the covenant; (2) a historical prologue enumerating the mighty deeds of Yahweh on behalf of his people; (3) stipulations of obligations of the covenant; (4) a record of the covenant itself and provisions for its preservation and periodic reading among the people; (5) a list of witnesses; and (6) curses and blessings for breach or obedience (Mendenhall 1955, 32–35; McCarthy 1972; Ricks 1984). Further, the continuity of festival rites from pre-exilic to post-exilic times can provide some idea of the covenant renewal festival and its relation to the rite of consecrating the new king (Weinfeld 1985; Eaton 1979, 9–37; Bloch 1980, 181–243).

In addition to the covenant renewal itself, the festival includes ten formal elements, also identifiable in Mosiah:

1. The king convened his people by proclamation to the temple (Mosiah 1:10, 2:1; Menahem 1978, 291). John H. Eaton, an old Testament scholar who has treated the elements of the festival in deuterero-Isaiah, states that

The institution and conduct of the festival were considered to be ordinances of Yahweh (Ps. 81.5–6) executed by the king, as the stories of David, Solomon, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jeroboam II, Josiah, etc., make clear. Having been responsible for the construction and maintenance of the installations, the appointment of ministers, and the very institution of the festivals, it was the king who finally called the people from far and wide to the great pilgrimage gathering (1 Kings 8.1 cf., 2 Kings 10.21). He then presided over the festival, taking the leading part in the worship (1979, 19).

2. The people willingly made a pilgrimage to the temple (Mosiah 2:2; Menahem 1978, 300–302), for it signified that they were to be counted in a formal census among the fellowship of those who gathered at the ritual center as one nation (Eaton 1979, 11). Benjamin noted that his people were too numerous to be counted, and the usual census was therefore impractical (Nibley 1957, 259; Mosiah 2:2). Those attending made sacrifices to God and gave gifts to the king (Mosiah 2:3; Tvedtnes 1978, 155; 2 Sam. 6:13, 18–20; 1 Chron. 16:2–3, 43). They dwelt in booths or tents, commemorating Israel's life in the wilderness (Mosiah 2:5–6; Lev. 23:13–15; Exod. 33:8–10; Tvedtnes 1978, 159; Harrelson 1964, 126).

3. The ceremony began with a formal preamble identifying the maker of the covenant: "and these are the words which [Benjamin] spake and caused to be written" (Mosiah 2:9). Ideally, the festival took place at the time of succession to the throne, with the old king presiding (Eaton 1979, 24–25; Ricks 1984, 155–56). The king delivered his address from a "tower" or scaffolding made especially for the occasion (Mosiah 2:7; 2 Chr. 6:13; Neh. 9:4; Tvedtnes 1978, 159). The wooden tower was usually placed within the temple

precincts, but King Benjamin's tower was placed outside the temple walls because the crowd was too large (Mosiah 2:7; Sotah to the Mishnah 7:8, 26).

4. The covenant recognized Yahweh as the true king and the earthly king as his servant (Mosiah 2:10–19; Eaton 1979, 12–13, 29–35; Tvedtnes 1978, 154; Nibley 1957, 262; Ps. 93:1; 97:1; 99:1). As Eaton noted, “In the festal hour . . . Yahweh overpowers chaos, takes his kingship, makes right order, sends forth life, and enters into intimate communion with his liberated people. The triumphant proclamation ‘Yahweh has become king’ or ‘Yahweh is now king’ expresses the heart of this exciting utterance” (1979, 12).

King Benjamin recognized the same relationship: “If I, whom you call your king, who has spent his days in your service . . . do merit any thanks from you, O how you ought to thank your heavenly King!” (Mosiah 2:19). The Paragraph of the King (Deut. 17:16–20) was often read at the festival to remind the people that the earthly king was a servant who could not usurp Yahweh's authority. As Moshe Greenberg (1986) noted, “Such a conception of a humble king seems paradoxical, if not quixotic. It is unparalleled in antiquity, and remained in Israel too an unrealizable attempt to break human pride for the good of society and the greater glory of God.”

5. The king recounted God's mighty deeds and past kindnesses which obligated the people to enter into the covenant (Mosiah 2:20–25, 34; Tvedtnes 1978, 153; Ricks 1984, 156), particularly the creation, the deliverance from bondage and the exodus (Josh. 24:4–8; Deut. 1:6–3:29; 4:10–13; 6:20–25). God was designated as the Creator and the source of life and all earthly things (Mosiah 2:20–25; Tvedtnes 1978, 153; Deut. 6:24–25). As Eaton noticed, “The gifts of God to his king culminate especially in the bestowal of ‘life,’ a life which extends beyond immediate deliverance and even beyond a good natural life-span to an everlasting prospect. This everlasting life can to a large extent be explained as a continuance of the dynasty . . . but this concept does not exclude a king's hope that he personally would enjoy nearness to God even after physical death. In the ideal, the quality of royal life, as a specific gift and also in consequence of the king's being seated in God's aura, was so rich that it could challenge the usual negative conception of after-life (1979, 32). Benjamin also praises God as “him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live” (Mosiah 2:21).

6. The king recited individual covenant stipulations (Mosiah 2:22–24; 4:6–30; Exod. 21:1–23:19; Josh. 22:8; Ricks 1984, 156–57). The reciprocal covenant obligations are clear in Benjamin's speech: “Behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land . . . and secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever” (Mosiah 2:22–23). They parallel the Deuteronomist's covenant promise: “Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do” (29:9).

7. The people entered into a covenant and agreed to be witnesses of the proceedings (Mosiah 5:5; 6:1; Ricks 1984, 157; Exod. 19:8; 24:3; Neh. 10:29). King Benjamin reminded, "Ye yourselves are witnesses this day" (Mosiah 2:14). Similar witness formulas are found in Israelite covenant renewal festivals: "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses" (Josh. 24:22; Jansen 1955, 362). Benjamin's people were "willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient . . . all the remainder of our days" (Mosiah 5:5). The Israelites administered a similar oath at the festival of the renewal of the covenant: "Stand this day all of you before Yahweh your God . . . that thou shouldst enter into a covenant with the Lord thy God, and into this oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God" (Jerusalem, Deut. 29:10-14).

Like King Benjamin, Ezra recited the book of the law from the tower to his convened people at the post-exilic covenant renewal festival (Ezra 8:1-5). When he had read the covenant and blessed the people, "all answered Amen, Amen, with lifting their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (8:6). Similarly, when Benjamin had finished his covenant speech, the people fell to the earth and expressed a willingness to enter into the covenant recognizing God as king for all that he had done for them (Mosiah 4:1; 5:1-4).

8. The blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience were then enumerated (Mosiah 2:22, 24; 5:9-10; Ricks 1984, 157-58; Exod. 23:20-33; Deut. 27:15-17; 28:2-3; Josh. 24:19-20). The people were divided into two camps on the right and on the left symbolizing the righteous and wicked (Josh. 8:33; Deut. 27:11-13; Tvedtnes 1978, 174). Benjamin warns: "I would that you should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. And . . . whosoever doeth this shall be on the right hand of God . . . and . . . whosoever shall not take upon him the name of Christ . . . findeth himself on the left hand of God" (Mosiah 5:8-10).

9. The proceedings of the covenant ceremony and names of the covenantors were recorded for reading at later festivals (Mosiah 2:8-9; 6:3; Exod. 19:7; 24:7; Deut. 27:2-4; Neh. 9:34-38; Josh. 24:26; Ricks 1984, 159). Benjamin then appointed priests and teachers "that thereby [the people] might hear and know the commandments of God, and stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made" (6:3).

10. The people were dismissed and returned home (Mosiah 6:3; Josh. 24:28; 1 Sam. 10:25-26). A formal conclusion is found in Samuel's covenant renewal: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house" (1 Sam. 10:25). Benjamin seems to have also made a formal dismissal: "And it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made



an end of all these things . . . he dismissed the multitude, and they returned, every one, according to their families, to their own houses" (Mosiah 6:3).

Thus, in many ways a formal covenant renewal ceremony better explains most of Benjamin's speech than seeing "camp meeting" influences. However, as Stephen Ricks notes, Mosiah 3:1-23 (on Christ's mission), 4:1-5 (the audience's conviction of sin), 5:1 (Benjamin's request for responses), and 6:4-5 (the beginning of Mosiah's reign), do not reflect the covenant form (1984, 159). In my view, they are better explained as Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century expansions.

Other points of parallelism that received a nineteenth-century interpretation include the physical arrangements of Passover and *sukkoth* tents for each family as at revivals or camp meetings. Lorenzo Dow, a famous circuit preacher contemporary with Joseph Smith, pointed out this parallel in his sermons (1854, 248-50). Joseph Smith appears to have interpreted the king's tower as the preacher's altar, from which he called his audience to repentance (Thomas 1983, 20). Joseph Smith interpreted the acclamation of the king as a Christian confession (Mosiah 4:1-5; Exod. 24:3, 7; Josh. 24:16-18, 22; Nibley 1957, 265). It seems reasonable that Joseph Smith cast the response of Benjamin's people in the form familiar to him from revivals where the people would fall to the ground and cry out, "What then shall we do?" and "Have mercy on me, Jesus" (Thomas 1983, 20; Ahlstrom 1:526-28). The people's prostration may have originally reflected their subservience to the new king (Nibley 1957, 264-65; Tvedtnes 1978, 160; Neh. 8:6).

The covenant oath may have suggested to Joseph Smith the deliverance from sin common to revivals (Mosiah 5:1-4). Finally, Mosiah 3:5-4:8 seems to be nineteenth-century expansions on the atonement stressed at covenant renewal (Tvedtnes 1978, 159-60; 1QS ii, 25-iii, 12). As John Eaton states: "Since the festival meant close encounter with God, the need for purification, atonement and forgiveness was readily acknowledged The ministry of atonement carried out annually by the post-exilic high priest was largely inherited from the king" (1979, 11, 33; Ezek. 45:17; 1 Kings 8). I see the cry for mercy in Mosiah 4:2 as typical of revival preachers and hence a possible expansion by Joseph Smith: "And they viewed themselves in their own carnal state . . . and they cried aloud with one voice: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins" (Mosiah 4:2).

In Mosiah 7-8, 25 many of the same covenant renewal rituals are repeated, but with fewer Christian elements. Limhi sent a royal proclamation which required his people to convene at the temple (7:17/1:10). Limhi also initiated his festival with a formal preamble: "When they had gathered themselves together he spake unto them in this wise, saying . . ." (7:18/2:1, 9). He then recounted the mighty deeds of God, especially the exodus from Jerusalem to the new land (7:19-20/1:6-7). Limhi reminded his people: "Ye are all witnesses this day" (7:21/2:14), pronounced the curse of bondage upon them, but promised them that they would be blessed with deliverance if they entered a covenant to be obedient to God (7: 25, 29-30/2:22, 24; 5:9-10). Limhi

then recited the reciprocal stipulations of the covenant: "If ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his good pleasure, deliver you out of bondage" (7:33/5:5). Limhi had Benjamin's words read, evidently as a renewal of the same covenant which Benjamin's people had entered (Mosiah 8:2/6:1). Limhi then formally dismissed his people (8:4/6:3). He caused the records from which he had read to be brought to him, and they evidently became part of the Nephi record (Mosiah 8:5).

Similarly, Mosiah in Mosiah 25, required his people to convene, numbered them according to tribal affiliation, saw them divide into two bodies, read to them from Zeniff's record (which Limhi had also caused his people to hear), recounted the mighty deeds of God, emphasizing the deliverance of Limhi's people, and had them enter a covenant through baptism "after the manner of" Alma's baptism at the waters of Mormon (25:18; 18:10). Immediately following the festival gathering, Mosiah granted Alma power to ordain priests and teachers over the various churches (25:19/6:2). The probable expansion of Benjamin's speech stands out in contrast with the less "Christianized" covenant festivals in Mosiah 7-8 and 25. The established Book of Mormon ritual tradition is also evident from these later convocations.¹

The Prophetic Lawsuit

Old Testament scholars have recognized numerous prophetic speech forms such as the Messenger Speech, the Proclamation of Judgment, the Woe Oracle, the Lament, the Ethical Sermon, and the Parable. Another prophetic speech form, the prophetic lawsuit, has been thoroughly analyzed by old Testament scholars (Huffmon 1959, 285-95; Limburg 1969, 291-304; Nielsen 1978; Boyle 1971, 338-63; Harvey 1967; North 1970; Von Waldow 1963). Although they describe some elements differently, they agree on these:

1. Suit Announced: The prophet announces that Yahweh accuses or complains against his people, usually for breach of the Sinaitic covenant, in the language common to Hebrew lawsuits. The prophet emphasizes that Yahweh initiates the lawsuit; the prophet is merely his messenger (Limburg 1969, 301; Nielsen 1978, 74).

2. Witnesses Called: Witnesses are sometimes summoned to appear, usually the people of Israel, heavenly hosts, or the heavens and earth (Hos. 4:1; Isa. 1:2; Nielsen 1978, 29).

3. Accusations: Yahweh lists the people's omissions and crimes against him (Nielsen 1978, 29).

¹ For another doctrinal expansion on an underlying ritual form, see the Testament of Levi, c180 B.C., which seems to have a Judeo-Christian baptismal ceremony worked into Levi's coronation as high priest, a ceremony influenced by early covenant renewal and royal consecration forms (Danielou 1964, 325-27; Widengren 1963; Jansen 1955). The Qumran scrolls also document a covenant renewal ceremony involving ritual immersion (Leaney 1966, 95-106; O'Connor 1969, 543; Wernberg-Moller 1957). Qumran also reinterpreted the Deuteronomic Feast of Weeks to require a yearly renewal of the covenant and ritual atonement, looking forward to the coming of the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel (Delcor 1976, 290-92).

4. Defense: A defense is sometimes offered but is more often implicit in a rhetorical question put to the accused. Of course, the accused has no defense against Yahweh (Nielsen 1978, 28; Huffmon 1959, 290). Yahweh is willing to forgive if people repent (McGuire 1982, 3).

5. Judgment: Yahweh acts as both prosecutor and judge, pronouncing the curse if the people will not repent (Nielsen 1978, 74).

6. Covenant Elements: Sometimes the formal covenant renewal elements of historical prologue, covenant stipulations, and provisions for recording the covenant are included (Harvey 1967).

One of the best examples of a prophetic lawsuit is found in Hosea 4 (Jerusalem Bible trans.):

Witnesses called: "O Sons of Israel, listen to the word of Yahweh";

Suit announced: "for Yahweh accuses the inhabitants of the country";

Accusations: "There is no fidelity, no tenderness; no knowledge of God in the country, only perjury and lies, slaughter theft, adultery and violence, murder upon murder";

Judgment: "Therefore this country will mourn, and all who live in it shall languish, even the wild animals and the birds of heaven; the fish of the sea themselves are perishing";

McGuire (1982) identifies three prophetic lawsuits in the Book of Mormon — Mosiah 12–17, Jacob 2, and Helaman 13. Abinadi's accusations against the people of Noah and his prophetic diatribe against the wicked priests of Noah are excellent examples of prophetic lawsuits.

Suit announced: "Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus he commanded me, saying, Go forth and say unto this people";

The Lord as witness and accusations: "I have seen their abominations and their wickedness and their whoredoms";

Implicit defense and judgment: ". . . for unless they repent I will visit them in mine anger. . . . And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; and they shall be brought into bondage; and they shall be afflicted by the hands of their enemies. And it shall come to pass that they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people (Mosiah 11:20–21).

Abinadi's diatribe charges breach of the Sinaitic covenant: He declares that the people must repent and return to the Lord as "their God," and come to know that "I am the Lord their God, and I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people" (Mosiah 11:22). At Sinai, Yahweh required his people to enter a covenant recognizing him as their God: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exod. 20:5). Recognizing Yahweh as a jealous God is equivalent to a covenant to renounce other gods (Exod. 34:14). Because they have broken the covenant, the Lord will be slow to hear Noah's people even as Yahweh was slow to hear the children of Israel in the wilderness after they transgressed the covenant (Mosiah 11:24). Finally, the Lord would not deliver them but would lead them back into bondage (Mosiah 11:21–24), where the Israelites had been

required by covenant to recognize Yahweh as their God because he delivered them from bondage (Exod. 20:2; Mendenhall 1955, 32–35).

Abinadi's second "lawsuit" adds some elements of covenant renewal by declaring judgment for failure to repent:

Suit announced: "Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying, Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people";

Accusations: "for they have hardened their hearts against my words, they have repented not of their evil doings";

Judgment curses: "Therefore, I will visit them in my anger, yea, in my fierce anger will I visit them in their iniquities and abominations . . . this generation shall be brought into bondage, and shall be smitten on the cheek; yea, shall be driven by men, and shall be slain; and the vultures of the air, and the dogs, yea, the wild beasts shall devour their flesh. . ."

Record and witnesses: "Yet they shall leave a record behind them, and I will preserve them for other nations which shall possess the land, yea, even this will I do that I may discover the abominations of this people to other nations" (Mosiah 12:1–2, 8).

Abinadi delivers his third "lawsuit" speech before king Noah's priests (12:16–19). The actual trial setting was often an occasion for the prophet to deliver his indictment of the people before witnesses (McGuire 1982, 8–9). King Noah appears to have understood the full significance of Abinadi's role: "Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him?" (11:27). Abinadi accuses the priests: "Wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord" (12:28). The priests offer in defense that they teach the Law of Moses. Abinadi further accuses: "If ye teach the law of Moses why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts on riches? Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength on harlots?" Abinadi then names the priests as witnesses of their own iniquity: "Know ye not that I speak the truth? Yea, ye know that I speak the truth, and ye ought to tremble before God" (12:30).

Abinadi then reminds the priests of the Sinaitic covenant by presenting the historical prologue and covenant stipulations: "I know that if ye keep the commandments . . . which he delivered unto Moses in the mount of Sinai, saying: I am the Lord thy God, who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above, or things which are in the earth beneath" (12:33–37; Exod. 20:2–4; Deut. 27:11). Abinadi then became a type of Moses delivering the law, for his "face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while on the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord" (13:5), while he reminds the priests of the remaining commandments (13:11–24; Weinfeld 1985, 30–35).

Though the priests found Abinadi guilty of reviling against the king, his suit shows that Noah, not Abinadi, is the unfaithful vassal (McGuire 1982, 15). As a sign of prophetic irony, the sentence of death by fire executed on Abinadi becomes the Lord's sentence on Noah (Mosiah 17:15).

The prophetic speech form and metaphors in Abinadi's diatribe show evidence of an ancient text. Additionally, many aspects of Abinadi's trial conform to Israelite legal procedures (Welch 1981). Abinadi was initially arrested, charged, and tried by the people as was the practice under Hebrew law (Welch 1981, 2). Abinadi was found guilty of false prophecy and reviling against the ruler of the people, actionable charges under Israelite law (Deut. 18:20; Exod. 22:28). Abinadi was taken before the king, apparently because the laws of Mosiah forbade a capital punishment without consent of the ruling authority (3 Ne. 6:24–25; Lev. 24:10–22). The priests were convened as a judicial body of witness and accusers (2 Chron. 19:8; Jer. 26:10). Abinadi appealed to God as his witness (Mosiah 13:3). A priest, Alma, offered a defense for Abinadi and voted in favor of his innocence (Welch 1981, 13–14). Perhaps strangest from the standpoint of American jurisprudence is that if Abinadi had recanted, the charges of blasphemy would have been dropped (Mosiah 17:7–8). It was common for an Israelite court to plead with the accused to recant so that prosecution of the judgment would not be necessary (Welch 1981, 16). In short, it is difficult to see any trace of American jurisprudence in Abinadi's trial, though it conforms to what would occur under Israelite legal procedure.

At the same time, Abinadi's prophetic speech is interrupted by clearly identifiable expansions of the text. After delivering the covenant stipulations, Abinadi states: "The time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses" (Mosiah 13:27). This statement is surprising in light of his denunciation. Abinadi's view of the law of Moses as a lesser law given to lead the hard-hearted Israelites to Jesus echoes Galatians 2:16 (Mosiah 13:28–32). Further, Abinadi declared that "if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved" (Mosiah 12:33). In the next chapter, however, his words are put into the mouths of Noah's priests: "Ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that you should keep the law of Moses *as yet*" (Mosiah 13:27, italics added). Mosiah 13:28–32 appears to be Joseph Smith's expansion to clarify Abinadi's view that the law of Moses was sufficient for salvation by having Abinadi explain that the law of Moses, then sufficient, would not always be so. Noah's priests do not charge Abinadi with reviling against the law, as they surely would have had he declared that the law of Moses would be done away.

Mosiah 14–16 are also best explained as Joseph Smith's expansions or interpolations. Abinadi refers to a messianic prophecy by Moses, probably with Deuteronomy 18:18–19 in mind (Mosiah 13:33). He then states, however, that "all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began — have they not spoken more or less concerning [the Messiah]? Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth . . . and that he himself should be oppressed and afflicted? Yea, doth not Isaiah say . . ." (Mosiah 13:34–35).

At this point, the King James Translation of Isaiah 53 is read into the text. This passage comes from a section of Isaiah commonly attributed to deutero-Isaiah; but even without that problem, it is commonly accepted that the KJV

translators made a chapter division in the wrong place. The poem about the suffering servant actually begins at Isaiah 52:13. It is highly unlikely that Abinadi would break up this poem by beginning with the present chapter division.

Furthermore, Abinadi prophesies that the Messiah will come "as a man," to be scourged by wicked men. Nowhere else in scripture does a prophet state that God would come among men as a man and be scourged except for Nephi's prophecy (1 Ne. 19:10); and it is clear that Abinadi is attributing these words to some prophet: "Have they [the prophets] not said . . ." (13:34). Thus, Nephi must have been the source of Abinadi's prophetic quotation. Noah's priests have either not heard of the prophecy or disapproved of it, for they charge Abinadi with blasphemy for saying that "God himself would come down among the children of men" (Mosiah 17:8). Since Noah's priests had access to the brass plates which contained the law of Moses and the "words of Isaiah," and since Abinadi must have quoted from a prophecy not generally known or accepted by Noah's priests, Isaiah cannot be the source. I suggest that Joseph Smith provided the Isaiah quotation in the place of Nephi's own prophecy.

Both the Nephi and Isaiah quotations are formally appropriate in Abinadi's prophetic lawsuit, for the "suffering servant incurs the legal prosecution and covenant curses ensuing from a vassal's failure to keep the covenant," though it is clear he is innocent because he will survive the ordeal and be raised, according to Nephi's words, or have seed according to Isaiah (Gileadi 1984, 123). It also seems that in addition to Moses, Abinadi has the prophets identified by Nephi (Neum, Zenos, and Zenock) in mind as "all of the prophets who prophesied" about the Messiah (1 Ne. 19:10). Hence, the underlying ancient text is identifiable because we can identify the source relied upon elsewhere in the Nephite record.

Mosiah 15-16 appear to be Joseph Smith's expansions to explain how God becomes man. Mosiah 15 does not discuss the relationship between the Father and Son in the Godhead as is often assumed (Alexander 1980, 25). Rather, Joseph Smith here addresses, through Abinadi, how the Son can be both fully man and fully God. Mosiah 15 adopts a genetic theory of Christology wherein the Son is deemed to partake of the nature of mortality because literally descended from humans in the flesh, though also truly God because he is also begotten by God the Father through the spirit (Mosiah 15:2-3). Hence, the Son partakes of both the nature of humanity and of the Father, "and thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God . . ." (Mosiah 15:5). Abinadi further explains that the Son can become subject to death in the flesh by virtue of his mortality and can thus "make intercession for the children of men," thereby satisfying the demands of both mercy and justice by virtue of his dual humanity-divinity (15:7-9).

Mosiah 15 thus attempts to answer theological questions that were asked only after the council of Nicea in A.D. 325, and the answer is premised on Anselm's medieval satisfaction theory. Joseph Smith also resolves a problem raised by interpreting Isaiah 53 to apply to Jesus. Isaiah speaks of the servant's

"seed." How, then, could this passage refer to Christ who had no seed? Joseph Smith interprets "seed" as a metaphor for the prophets who testify of Christ to resolve the problem (15:10-13):

The next chapter, Mosiah 16, can be identified as Joseph Smith's expansion on motif critical grounds. Here Abinadi says we are "carnal and devilish" by nature as a result of the Fall, themes that stem from Paul and Calvin. Further, the language attributed to Abinadi clearly assumes that Christ had already come: "If Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption. If Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection" (Mosiah 16:6-7). These verses depend on 1 Corinthians 15:55-56.

The Prophetic Commission and Throne Theophany

The description of Lehi's vision in 1 Nephi 1 contains a characteristic Hebrew literary form, the prophetic commission and throne theophany (Ostler forthcoming). The prophetic commission form was placed at the beginning of the words of the prophet as a means to publicly vindicate his exceptional status as the emissary of the heavenly council and Yahweh (Habel 1965, 232; Baltzer 1968, 568). Examples are Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 1, and Ezekiel 1-3 in which these typical elements appear:

1. Historical introduction of place, and setting, almost always with the name of the reigning king and prophet's previous vocation. Some scholars assert that the historical introductions are invariably the work of later editors who sought to establish the words of the prophet as revelation (Tucker 1977, 65-70). Nephi thus begins Lehi's record: "In the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (my father, Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem all his days) . . ." (1 Ne. 1:4).

2. Divine confrontation: Either God or an angel unexpectedly appears in glory. As Lehi "went forth" and¹prayed, "there came a pillar of fire and dwelt on a rock before him" (1 Ne. 1:6). The pillar of fire is symbolic of the glory of God's presence and echoes God's promise to Moses: "I will stand before thee on a rock . . ." (Exod. 17:6).

3. Reaction: The prophet is frightened, feels unworthy, and is often physically overcome. Lehi "did quake and tremble exceedingly . . . and he cast himself upon his bed, being overcome with the Spirit and the things which he had seen" (1 Ne. 1:6-7).

4. Throne theophany: The prophet sees the heavenly council and God sitting upon his throne surrounded by angels. Lehi not only sees God seated on his throne surrounded by angels but also sees one descend, having a luster like the sun, followed by twelve having the brightness of stars (1 Ne. 1:8-10). Yahweh was typically envisioned as symbolically surrounded by the sun and stars which represented the hosts of heaven in Hebrew thought (Ostler forthcoming). Like Ezekiel, Lehi received a book which caused him to cry, "Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem" (1 Ne. 1:12-13; Ezek. 2:9-10; 3:1-3).

5. Commission: The prophet is commanded to deliver a message to Israel. Nephi's retelling obscures Lehi's commission, but this element is evident from his activities after the vision and from God's declaration, "Blessed art thou Lehi, because of the things which thou hast done; and because thou hast been faithful and declared unto this people the things I commanded thee" (1 Ne. 2:1).

6. Protest: The prophet protests the commission by claiming he is unable or unworthy to accomplish the task. This element is usually absent when the reaction element is present (Hubbard 1974, 63-64). Because both Ezekiel's and Lehi's calls include the reaction element, they do not include the protest.

7. Rejection: God warns the prophet to expect rejection. Lehi hears that his people would reject him and Jerusalem would be destroyed, no matter what his efforts (1 Ne. 1:13, 19-20).

8. Reassurance: God assures his prophet that he will be protected and able to fulfill his commission, even in the face of hopeless rejection. The Lord assured Lehi that he would deliver him from his enemies (1 Ne. 1:20).

9. Conclusion: The commission form usually concludes formally with a statement that the prophet has begun to carry out his work. Lehi's call concludes by noting that he preaches to his people and the Lord blesses him for obedience to his commission (1 Ne. 1:19-21).

Although there were numerous accounts of theophanies in nineteenth-century literature, they do not take the form of the prophetic commission (Ostler forthcoming). Lehi's vision is clearly better explained by the prophetic call form than by nineteenth-century influence.

What, then, can be concluded from the presence of covenant renewal festivals, Hebrew legal procedure, prophetic speech forms, and prophetic literary forms in the Book of Mormon? Only that ancient forms have been used to compose the book *as we know it*. Once a form has been established, anyone, modern or ancient, who knows it may use it (Slingerland 1977, 98-99). Further, form critical studies of the Book of Mormon are hampered to the extent that a given form depends on precise language. For instance, the prophetic lawsuit form in the Old Testament is most clearly signalled by the verb *rib* ("to accuse"), and the commission is most often indicated by *slh* ("to send a word"). Joseph Smith could have been aware of these forms and rituals from reading the Old Testament, though Lehi's call contains some unique developments evidenced in the pseudepigrapha, such as an intercessory prayer and ascension to heaven.

Nevertheless, the force of the evidence provided by form criticism should not be overlooked. It is unlikely that Joseph Smith independently discovered and consciously used these forms through his own research, especially since Benjamin's speech strongly suggests that Joseph saw it not as a Hebrew festival, but as a camp meeting. It is not persuasive to suggest that he used these forms unconsciously because it begs the question. We simply have no idea how such results could be produced subconsciously. Can those who view the Book of Mormon strictly as Joseph Smith's work contend that he was "subconsciously" a genius in comparative literature and truly concerned with the Sinaitic cove-

nant and Hebrew legal procedure? Because forms are subtle patterns that are usually evident only through scholarly analysis, it is unlikely that one unfamiliar with content of the form would simply duplicate it randomly, and less likely that he or she would use it in the proper context. Hence, when we find ancient forms underlying the Book of Mormon text, it is reasonable to believe that Joseph Smith used an ancient source, as he said he did.

Other Evidences of Ancient Origin

Other studies also suggest that some aspects of the Book of Mormon are better explained as ancient rather than nineteenth-century:

1. Resemblances between Israelite law, international treaties, and laws governing war and oath forms (Rasmussen 1982; R. Johnson 1982; Morise 1982).

2. Hebrew, Egyptian, and classical names which appear in the Book of Mormon but not in the Bible (Nibley 1973, 192–96; Nibley 1957, 242–54; Nibley 1948, 85–90; Carlton and Welch 1981; Tvedtnes 1977). Though many of these names could be biblical variants, others are difficult to explain as Joseph Smith's inventions. Paanchi, Pahoran, and Pacumeni, for example, are Egyptian names which are sometimes transliterated exactly as they stand in the Book of Mormon, while Korihor is a close variant of Herihor, predecessor to 'Amon-Pi'ankhy in about 734 B.C. (Baer 1973).

3. Description of military, social, and political institutions of sixth-century Israel corroborated by the Lachish letter and other recently discovered sources (Nibley 1982b; Nibley 1952, 4–12, 20–26, 107–18; Nibley 1957, 47–111; R. Smith 1984).

4. Accurate and consistent geographical detail (England 1982; Nibley 1952, 123–28).

5. Ancient forms of government (Bushman 1976; Nibley 1973, 281–82; Nibley 1952, 20–26; Nibley 1957, 82–86).

6. Evidence that the Book of Mormon assigned value to the cardinal directions with south representing the sacred and north the profane (Alma 22; 46:17; Eth. 7:6). It also presents a social organization revolving around a ritual center from which government, territorial order, and communal sanctity flowed. The moral order of life and understanding of the covenant were also linked to territoriality (Olsen 1983). These symbolic aspects of territoriality are common in ancient societies.

Some studies also conclude that the Book of Mormon's literary structure is uniform, not one that reveals expansions. For example, many of the book's messages are, like Hebrew scripture generally, imbedded in its structure rather than in its discursive doctrines, as impressive as they may be. Some studies have demonstrated an ingenious structure characterized by literary typologies, or exposition of symbolic similarities between peoples, places and events (Tate, Rust, and Jørgensen, all 1981).

Other unifying structures are the various forms of parallelism (synthetic, antithetic and synonymic) that are the basis of Hebrew poetry (Welch 1969 and 1981). Steven Sondrup (1981) has demonstrated that the poetic paral-

lelism of 2 Nephi 4 resembles poetic structure in the Psalms. Noel Reynolds (1982) has argued that chiasmus (inverted parallelism) is the organizing principle for the entire book of 1 Nephi.

Finally, some proponents of wordprint studies suggest that the translation is very literal — the appearance of noncontextual words showing patterns that differ significantly from author to author in the different books. This is a far-from-fixed field, however, and the wordprint analysis of the Book of Mormon has been both critiqued and defended (Larsen and Rencher 1982 and 1986; Croft 1981).

Do such studies rule out the possibility of modern expansions and interpretations in the Book of Mormon? No. Such literary characteristics are not necessarily impossible to explain in terms of a nineteenth-century context. For example, Puritan preachers like Samuel Mather and Jonathan Edwards often analyzed the Bible typologically (Brumm 1970; Bercovitch 1972). Indeed, George S. Tate is surely correct that *type* is a translator anachronism in the Book of Mormon (1981, 260–61, n10). Chiasmus can also be found in some nineteenth-century works, including the Doctrine and Covenants and Book of Abraham (D&C 88:34–38; 98:18–38; 132:19–26; Abr. 3:16–19). Thus, the assumption that chiasmus is an exclusively ancient poetic device appears to be false. Further, many Book of Mormon chiastic passages presuppose a doctrine of Christ developed beyond anything found in the Old Testament (Mosiah 3:18–19; 5:10–12; 2 Ne. 25:2–27; Alma 36; 41:13–15).

New World Archeology

Despite vigorous debate, no concrete evidence exists establishing a Book of Mormon archeology (Sorenson 1985; Coe 1973). I am not qualified to assess the evidence in this field; however, if a civilization like Ebla could remain undiscovered until 1976 in an area of the world where more archeological exploration has been done than anywhere else, it appears too early to draw firm conclusions on the basis of infant New World archeology. Book of Mormon culture does not seem to have been the type likely to leave numerous, distinctive remains, especially where the people lived in tents around a ritual center even near the apex of their civilization (Hel. 3:9). Further, expectations about discovering Book of Mormon relics are often misformed by comparison with biblical archeology. The survival of archeological remnants in the humid, hot environment where Sorenson believes the Book of Mormon civilization existed should not be compared with discoveries in the arid biblical environment where only one partially preserved metal sword has been discovered that dates to the time of Lehi. The chance that a similar sword could survive in a central American environment is remote.

Any argument from silence is admittedly weak. Nevertheless, we must distinguish between evidence which counts against a proposition and the mere lack of evidence. John Sorenson has made a strong case that the book's claims are plausible if one is willing to accept that Joseph Smith was neither a zoologist nor metallurgist and therefore did not describe animals and metals with

scientific precision. That is, if one is willing to recognize that Joseph Smith interpreted the translation, the book's claims to antiquity are plausible.

This discussion of source, motif, and form critical studies is far from exhaustive. There is too much that we do not know to claim anything like a definitive analysis of the issues discussed. Instead, this section has intended merely to demonstrate that it is likely that Joseph Smith expanded the Book of Mormon and to show how modern expansions can be identified by critical methods. A competent explanation of the book must account for both ancient and modern influences.

Those who have seen only the modern aspects of the book have overlooked its detailed and precise reflection of Israelite literature, culture, and social structure. Yet some doctrines in the book's pre-Christian sections are simply too developed and too characteristic of the nineteenth century to explain as pre-exilic ideas. The presence of the KJV in the book is, it seems to me, indisputable.

If these observations are at all accurate, then only a view that accommodates both the ancient and the modern aspects of the Book of Mormon can fully account for it. We must thus examine the process by which Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon.

THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Joseph Smith's role as translator of the Book of Mormon has become more complicated as new information has come forth. He apparently became aware of the gold plates, the interpreters, and the breastplate through a messenger who visited him by night; he found their location apparently by looking into his seer stone.² The lost 116 pages of Lehi's record were translated through the

² According to a Martin Harris interview, "These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, twenty four feet from the surface. It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates. . . . Joseph had before this described the manner of finding the plates. He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase. The family had likewise told me the same thing" (1859, 164).

Joseph Knight, Sr., said that Joseph saw the plates "so plain in the vision that he had of the place" that he immediately recognized the place when he visited the hill. Knight also recalled that, when Joseph laid the plates down and could not find them, "he thot he would look in the place again and see if it had not got Back again. He had heard people tell of such things." This statement seems to refer to Joseph's expectations formed by money digging. The personage, continues Knight, told Joseph he couldn't have the plates then because "you have not Done rite; you should have taken the Book and gone right away" (Jessee 1976, 30-31).

The 1832 account partly written and partly dictated by Joseph Smith, Jr., states that "an angel of the Lord came and stood before me and it was by night and called me by name and he said the Lord had forgiven me my sins and he revealed unto me that in the Town of Manchester Ontario County N.Y. there was plates of gold upon which there was engravings which was engraven by Maroni & his fathers the servants of the living God in ancient days. . . . He appeared to me three times in one night and once on the next day and then I immediately went to the place and found where the plates was deposited as the angel of the Lord had commanded me and straightway made three attempts to get them and then being exceedingly frightened I supposed it had been a dream or Vision but when I considered I knew that it was not therefore I cried unto the Lord in agony of my soul why can I not obtain them behold the angel appeared unto me again and said unto me you have not kept

medium of the "interpreters," described by Joseph as "two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate" and later commonly called the Urim and Thummim (JS — H 52; Jessee 1984, 215). Emma Hale Smith Bidamon described the sequence in a letter to Emma Pilgrim 27 March 1870: "Now the first that my husband translated was by the urim and thummim, and that was the part Martin Harris lost. After that he used a small stone, not exactly black, but was a rather dark color." According to Joseph Knight, Sr., Joseph Smith described the interpreters: "He went on to tell the length and width and thickness of the plates, and said he, 'they appear to be Gold.' But he seemed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummim than he did of the Plates, for, says he, 'I can see any thing; they are Marvelous. Now they are written in characters and I want them translated'" (Jessee 1976, 33).

William Smith also gave a detailed description of the "spectacles" in a 4 July 1891 interview in which he said that he himself had put on the breastplate and interpreters and looked through the stones:

We asked him what was meant by the expression, "two rims of a bow," which held the [interpreters]. He said a double silver bow was twisted into the shape of the figure eight, and the two stones were placed literally between the two rims of a bow. At one end was attached a rod which was connected with the outer edge of the right shoulder of the breast plate. By pressing the head a little forward, the rod held the Urim and Thummim before the eyes like a pair of spectacles. A pocket was prepared in the breastplate on the left side, immediately over the heart . . . William informed us that he had, himself, by Joseph's direction, put the Urim and Thummim before his eyes, but could see nothing, as he did not have the gift of Seer. He also informed us that the instruments were too wide for his eyes, as also for Joseph's, and must have been used by larger men. The instruments caused a strain on Joseph's eyes, and he sometimes resorted to the plan of covering his eyes with a hat to exclude the light in part (W. Smith 1924).

Lucy Smith described the breastplate in similar detail. She said, "He handed me the breastplate spoken of in his history. It was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief, so thin that I could see the glistening metal, and ascertain its proportions without any difficulty. It was concave on one side and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, as far as the center of the stomach of a man of ordinary size. It had four straps of the same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast" (1853, 107). Emma Smith (1879) described the plates with similar concrete detail: "The plates often lay on the table without an attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edge of a book."

the commandments of the Lord which I gave unto you therefore you cannot obtain them for the time is not yet fulfilled therefore thou wast left unto temptation that thou mightest be made acquainted with the power of the advisory . . . for now I had been tempted of the adversary and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the glory of God" (Jessee 1984, 6-7). Joseph added in his 1835 account of the vision of the angel: "I saw in the vision the place where they [the plates] were deposited" (Jessee 1984, 76).

David Whitmer gave a similar description: "There were golden plates, 8" × 10" each, as thick as sheet tin, and all bound by three rings, a large portion of the volume sealed, the loose pages engraved with hieroglyphics. Also with the plates was a pair of spectacles set in silver bows" (*Chicago Tribune*, 17 Dec. 1885, p. 3). Though the evidence of the plates' existence will probably never be explained to everyone's satisfaction, it is hard to escape the conclusion that for Joseph Smith and his associates, the plates, breastplate and spectacles were very real.

After the 116 pages were lost, Joseph Smith apparently used only the seer stone to translate by placing it in his hat, putting his face in the hat to shut out external light, and reading the translation as it appeared in the stone in English (Van Wagoner and Walker 1982, 49–55; Lancaster 1962; Jessee 1976, 35). He apparently did not need the plates during this portion of the translation. Since Joseph Smith transcribed "Caractors" from the plates themselves on the Anthon document, however, apparently with an accompanying separate translation, he clearly saw a close connection between what was written on the plates and his translation (Jessee 1976, 34; Bushman 1984, 86).

When Oliver Cowdery's attempt to translate using the "rod of Aaron" failed after apparent initial success, Joseph received a revelation directed to Oliver that gives perhaps the only contemporaneous, personal insight into the translation process: "You have supposed that I [God] would give it to you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me; but behold I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you . . . therefore you cannot write that which is sacred, save it be given you from me (Book of Commandments 1833, 8:20–21).

It seems reasonable to believe that these instructions reflected Joseph's own experience, suggesting that the translation was not merely mechanical or "automatic" but involved human thought and feelings as well as divine response. In 1835, Joseph described the Book of Mormon as "coming forth out of the treasure of the heart . . . bringing forth out of the heart, things new and old" (D. Hill 1977, 104). Joseph Smith appears to have believed that the book was a complex product of "things new and old," both human and divine. The message reflected in his stone may thus have mirrored in part the "treasure" of his own heart as he dictated "by the gift and power of God." A congressman who heard Joseph speak in Washington, D.C., stated: "The Mormon Bible, [Joseph Smith] said, was communicated to him, *direct from heaven*. If there was such a thing on earth, as the author of it, he was the author; but the idea he wished to impress was, that he had penned it as dictated by God" (Ehat and Cook 1980, 34, italics in original).

Joseph Smith did not "translate" if translate means he knew ancient Egyptian or Hebrew and rendered it into English. The term *translate* usually means to render from one language into another; but Joseph Smith did not know ancient languages. He used *translate* to cover a wide range of revelatory activities that did not necessarily entail either access to ancient documents or knowledge of ancient languages. For example, he "translated" through the stone a

“parchment” hidden up by John the Beloved Disciple, that he never possessed (HC 1:35–36; D&C 7). He “translated” the entire KJV Bible through inspiration without reference to original documents, without knowledge of Greek or Hebrew, and apparently without the seer stone (Matthews 1975, xxix, 21, 40). He received the book of Moses in June 1830 by revelation, not through the Urim and Thummim. He also “translated” vignettes of what we now know is the Book of Breathing, but meant by “translation” only an explanation of certain figures or pictures in relation to the book of Abraham (Ashment 1980, 12).

The mode of translation appears to have involved a mode of revelation. The closest phenomena to Joseph Smith’s experiences are probably found in the prophetic tradition which he intentionally adopted. Joseph’s state of consciousness differs from shamanistic possession, classical mysticism, and most reports of automatic writing in that he did not lose consciousness of his surroundings or become dispossessed of his personal identity (Gowen 1975, 57–60; A. Parker 1975, 121–25). Further, there is no evidence that he claimed to hear a voice or take dictation from another personality, unlike cases of spirit writing or channelled texts. As anthropologist Simon Parker noted, Israelite prophecy manifested various types of trance states; but possession trance, in which the prophet is dispossessed of personality, was rare. The spirit of God overpowered the prophet but did not obliterate his personality. Rather, the prophet became extremely self-aware of both personal unworthiness and of the unmistakable call to deliver a message (S. Parker 1978; D. D. Russell 1964, 159–73).

Since Joseph asked questions during translation, he was conscious of both himself and his surroundings (Newell and Avery 1984, 26). Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer reportedly helped Joseph with the “pronouncing of some biblical words” (*Chicago Tribune*, 17 Dec. 1885, p. 3). In 1839 Joseph Smith explained, “When you feel pure Intelligence flowing unto you it may give you sudden strokes of ideas” (Ehat and Cook 1980, 5). Perhaps when Joseph looked into his stone he felt such a surge of “pure intelligence” flowing into his mind, and whatever he then spoke would represent the translation as given to him by God.

The translation process involved both human and divine interaction and was therefore interactive rather than automatic or mechanical. Certainly Joseph Smith did not believe that it ruled out clarification and expansion. For example, Joseph authorized numerous, mostly minor grammar, changes in the 1837 edition of the *Book of Mormon*. He also instructed the printer to add “or out of the waters of baptism” in the 1840 edition to clarify an Isaiah phrase, “the waters of Judah,” found in the 1837 edition, without reference to either the plates or seer stone (*Saints Herald* 30 [March 1883]: 146–47). He clarified theology by adding explanatory phrases. For example, the 1830 edition of 1 Nephi 11:21 reads: “And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father” (Ch. 3, p. 25). The 1837 edition reads: “And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father.” These changes indicate that Joseph Smith had a

much freer idea of scripture than many of his contemporaries or his present fundamentalist critics.

Of course, seeing the Book of Mormon as, at least in part, a function of Joseph Smith's interpretive activities is not new. B. H. Roberts suggested more than fifty years ago that Joseph Smith was partly responsible for the "modes of expression" of the Book of Mormon (Madsen 1982, 14). Hugh Nibley suggested about twenty years ago that the Book of Mormon reflected a process of expanding and explaining similar to that found in Isaiah:

What we have in Isaiah is a lot of genuine words of the prophet intermingled with other stuff by his well-meaning followers. . . . The transmitter of Isaiah, we are told, 'adapted the words of the master to contemporary situations, expanding them and adding further oracles'. . . . Since all the prophets tell the same story, any prophet is free to contribute anything to the written record that will make the message clear and intelligible. The principle is illustrated throughout the Book of Mormon, and indeed by the very existence of the book itself—a book that shocked the world with its open-ended production susceptible to the errors of men and amenable to correction by the spirit of prophecy. . . . We have come across a great tradition of prophetic unity that made it possible for inspired men in every age to translate, abridge, expand, explain, and update the writing of their predecessors (1967, 143, 150–51).

Nibley also suggests that it is the "prophet's prerogative" to bring scriptures up to date and apply them to contemporary situations. Indeed, such expansion is ubiquitous in Judeo-Christian works accepted as scripture. All Old Testament texts are at least partially the product of editing and reworking. Some include extensive additions and deletions. Deuteronomy assembles numerous pre-exilic traditions and also introduces post-exilic traditions, implicitly attributing them all to Moses (Weinfeld 1972; Friedman 1981a, 1981b; Mayes 1983). As Raymond Brown explained, ancient concepts of "authorship" were much broader than our own:

In considering biblical books, many times we have to distinguish between the *author* whose ideas the book expresses and the *writer*. The writers run the gamut from recording secretaries who slavishly copied down the author's dictation to highly independent collaborators who, working from a sketch of the author's ideas, gave their own literary style to the final work. . . . Even if we confine authorship to responsibility for the basic ideas that appear in the book, the principles that determine the attribution of authorship in the Bible are fairly broad. If a particular author is surrounded by a group of disciples who carry on his thought even after his death, their works may be attributed to him as author. The Book of Isaiah was the work of at least three principal contributors, and its compositions covered a period of over 200 years. . . . In a similar way, David is spoken of as author of the Psalms, and Moses [as] the author of the Pentateuch, even though parts of these works were composed many hundreds of years after the traditional author's death (Brown 1966, lxxxvii).

It is in this broader biblical sense that we may see Joseph Smith as justified in attributing the Book of Mormon to the prophets whose names it bears.

A good example of the type of conceptual translation that I propose is found in the Gospel of John. New Testament scholarship has demonstrated that Matthew, Mark, and Luke expand upon the words of Jesus in light of a

post-resurrection understanding provided by the later church (R. Brown 1967 and 1986, 16–17). The Gospel of John, however, represents an entirely different thought-world. Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God more than fifty times in the synoptics but speaks of the kingdom of God in John only once. Instead, John speaks of eternal life. Jesus does not demand repentance in John as he does in the synoptics, but rebirth.

The historic Jesus presumably spoke the idiom of Palestinian Judaism found in the synoptics, whereas in John, his thought-world resembles that of Qumran (Braun 1962). As Leonard Goppelt, the late New Testament theologian at the Universities of Hamburg and Munich, stated: “Whenever one wishes to compare Johannine with synoptic statements, it is a preliminary requirement to translate the former back into the conceptual language of the latter. Only in this way can one determine to what extent genuine words and sayings of the earthly Jesus will emerge from behind their formulation in Johannine diction” (1981, 1:15). We are thus compelled to speak, not merely of rendering words from one language into another, but of translating from one thought-world into another — even though both systems deal with the same Greek language in this case. The translation gives not merely the words spoken, but also an interpretation of the true meaning of the words spoken by Jesus.

The author of the gospel of John has placed several sayings from the synoptics in a new conceptual framework, explaining and expanding them. For example, Jesus is reported as saying: “Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (RVS John 3:3). This appears to be John’s “translation” of this saying: “Truly, I say unto you, unless you turn and become like a little child, you will never enter the kingdom of God” (RVS Matt. 18:3). The saying is further expanded in John 3:4: “Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Thus, the saying of the earthly Jesus is translated into the thought-world of the post-Easter Church. John recounts not merely Jesus’ historical acts, but also their religious meaning. If Jesus offers food, he offers the bread of life. If he gives water to a Samaritan woman, it is the water of eternal life. We see vividly in the Gospel of John how the author’s conceptual framework has reinterpreted and added content to help us understand what the sayings and actions of Jesus meant.

I suggest that we view the original, ancient text of the Book of Mormon much as scholars view the expansion of the words of the historical Jesus in the New Testament. Joseph Smith gave us not merely the words of the Book of Mormon prophets, but also the true meaning of the text within a nineteenth-century thought-world. The translation was not merely from one language into another but was also a transformation from one thought-world to another that expands and explains the meaning of the original text in terms that Joseph Smith and his contemporaries would understand. Translation “by the gift and power of God” thus entails much more than merely rendering from one language to another.

A PRELIMINARY THEOLOGY OF REVELATION

The expansion theory of the Book of Mormon has far-reaching implications for our ideas of revelation and scripture. What does revelation mean if the Book of Mormon is best interpreted as an ancient text that has been translated, explained, and expanded within a nineteenth-century framework? Several concepts of revelation have developed in the history of Christian thought. All accept the basic assumption that God communicates with mortals, but the mode and content of the communication has generated disagreement.

Christian fundamentalists see revelation as a truth disclosed in propositional form, reduced to writing in the Bible. In this view, every word of the Bible is considered equally inspired and all writers exhibit total harmony. Biblical statements can be accepted as axiomatic premises which build upon each other logically and are consistent with every other part of the Bible and general reality. While scribes may sometimes write down wrong words, the propositional view of revelation holds that prophets are passive communicators of God's infallible words (Dulles 1983, 37-52). The propositional theory sees God as an omnipotent deity who can insure by coercive power that prophets hold his exact views, express the message in totally accurate ways, and are devoid of shortcomings that would detract from God's message.

The propositional model dominated Christian thought well into the eighteenth century. Though Mormonism has not officially elucidated a view of revelation, Mormons tend to accept this propositional view, partly because it was the dominant view among early converts and partly because Joseph Smith's early revelations tended to reinforce this view. However, a revelation to Joseph rejected the dogma that the Bible is the sole repository of God's revelations and made allowances for human participation in fashioning scriptural expressions: "These commandments are of me [God]; and they were given unto my servants in their weaknesses, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding" (D&C 1:24).

The view that the Bible is the sole source of God's revelations is thoroughly unbiblical. Its writers did not anticipate a single, authoritative canon. Nowhere do they teach that the Bible is God's sole revelation. Such a view was impossible because the Bible as we know it did not exist until after they wrote it. They did not see themselves as writing scripture containing a manual to the church or a handbook of axiomatic truths, but as bearing witness to God's mighty acts in history.

Scholars like Oscar Cullmann (1967), G. Ernest Wright (1952, 1968), and, more recently, Wolfhart Pannenberg (1970) suggest that the core of the biblical narrative is a confession of God's saving acts which reveal his attributes and purposes for all humanity. In this view, revelation consists not in passively conveying God's very words but in interpreting historical events as God's acts. Thus, revelation is not merely a historical chronicle of God's acts, for interpretation of the event as God's act requires the prophet to see what others do not perceive and to reveal about history what is not evident from the mere occurrence of the events or historical evidences (Dulles 1983, 55).

The Book of Mormon lends itself to this model of revelation, for its primary concern is not history *per se*, but God's dealings in history. The history of the book provides a moral framework for interpreting history as God's saving acts. Other theories of revelation include revelation as human self-realization, symbolic mediation of the inexpressible and inaccessible, or a paradoxical statement of truth arising from personal encounters with the divine (Hansen 1985).

A Mormon Model of Revelation

The model of revelation I propose here is that of creative co-participation. It seems to me that the Book of Mormon makes most sense if it is seen as both a revelation to Joseph Smith and as Joseph's expansions of the text. This view requires a theology of revelation focusing on interpretation inherent in human experience. This view is grounded in two fundamental premises: (1) There can be no revelation without human experience and, (2) there can be no human experience without interpretation. According to this view, revelation is continuing, dynamic, and incomplete. It results from free human response to God.

Revelation must remain in some ways the product of irreducible experience and divine communication. Nevertheless, it is a mistake to assume that we have pure experiences devoid of interpretation upon which we simply overlay an interpretation distinct from the experience itself. Of course, we can give different interpretations to our experiences at later points in our lives, but that does not mean that the initial pre-reflective experience was devoid of interpretation until reflection could occur. There is no experience without interpretation; rather, interpretation is inherent in, and makes possible, meaningful human experiences. As Edward Schillebeeckx stated, to experience revelation "is experience *and* interpretation at the same time. In experiencing we identify what is experienced, and we do this by classifying what we experience in terms of already known models and concepts, patterns or categories. . . . Religious faith is human life in the world, but experienced as an encounter and in this respect a disclosure of God. This latter is not an interpretation in the sense of a theory which is subsequently presented as a retrospect on *recalled* experiences; it is the *particular way* in which religious men in fact *experience* the events in their lives" (1983, 32). We experience our world through conceptual paradigms or assumptions that give order and meaning to the chaos that confronts us. There is a synthetic unity present in human experience that is not present in the mere datum of the experience itself. As Francis Bacon stated, "The human understanding is of its own nature prone to suppose the existence of more order and regularity in the world than it finds" (1955, 71).

A paradigm is a set of broad assumptions which are presupposed in experience, including the experience of revelation. These paradigms are so powerful that when they change, our perceptions of the world and our understanding of our most basic experience changes with them. We bring our experience to consciousness by interpreting it within a framework of meaning. Yet we are usually unaware of the categories of understanding, to use Kant's terminology, that we inherently employ in the act of extracting meaning from the chaos of

stimuli from which we fashion our experience. As Kant said, "We cannot think of any object except by means of categories; we cannot know any subject that has been thought except by means of intuitions, corresponding to those concepts" (1970, 128). These categories of experience are *a priori* ("before experience") or assumed in experience. Quine aptly stated, "The totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only at the edges. . . . [A paradigm] is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience" (1961, 38-39).

When individuals attempt to verbalize their experience, they further interpret by using a conceptual framework of language. Concepts affect how we perceive, however, even before we interpret and explain. The way we conceptualize the world influences how we will perceive it. Further, language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of various items of experience, it also contains a creative, symbolic organization which not only refers to experiences already acquired but actually defines experience. Language constitutes a logic, a general framework within which we categorize reality (Bishin and Stone 1972, 159). Anyone who has learned to think in another language knows that there are expressions and nuances of thought that cannot be translated into English, for the cultural frame of reference necessary to understand the concept is missing. As Michael Polanyi (1962) noted, culture and language entail a tacit knowledge which impacts upon how we conceptualize experience. We assume a structure of reality in the act of attempting to communicate about our experience.

These observations about experience are crucial to understanding revelation, but they are not the total explanation of revelation. If they were, nothing new could be learned in revelation; revelation would be a mere restatement of cultural and preconceptual presuppositions. Revelation is not experienced from God's viewpoint, free of cultural biases and conceptual limitations, but neither is God limited to adopting existing world views or paradigms to convey his message. Revelation is also a revolution in human thought, a real breakthrough that makes new understanding possible. In Mormon theology, revelation is necessarily experienced within a divine-human relationship that respects the dignity of human freedom. God does not coerce us to see him as God; that is left to the freedom of human faith. Revelation cannot coerce us because the divine influence is, of metaphysical and moral necessity, persuasive and participative rather than controlling. We exercise an eternal and inherent freedom even in relation to God. Revelation becomes a new creation, emerging from the synthesis of divine and human interaction. Revelation is part human experience, part divine disclosure, part novelty. It requires human thought and creativity in response to the divine lure and message (Cobb and Griffin 1976, 101-5).

The ultimate reality in Mormon thought is not an omnipotent God coercing passive and powerless prophets to see his point of view. God acts upon the individual and imparts his will and message, but receiving the message and

internalizing it is partly up to the individual. In this view, revelation is not an intrusion of the supernatural into the natural order. It is human participation with God in creating human experience itself. Revelation is not the filling of a mental void with divine content. It is the synthesis of a human and divine event. The prophet is an active participant in revelation, conceptualizing and verbalizing God's message in a framework of thought meaningful to the people. Human freedom is as essential to revelation as God's disclosure.

This creative co-participation theory of revelation resolves the tension between propositional and experiential understandings of revelation. As Edwart Schillebeeckx noted, "Religious language only becomes valid in a full context of experience of this language — both linguistic and non-linguistic. The demand means that the propositional understanding of revelation cannot be excluded, but must be kept in a right relation to the experience with which this propositional language is associated" (1983, 54). To adequately and properly interpret scripture and religious doctrine, we must understand the entire structure of the paradigm or world view from which its experience with God is expressed. No element of the paradigm can be rightly understood unless we also understand how it relates to other concepts entailed in the paradigm. Understanding the dominant paradigms operative in the Book of Mormon is essential to understand its message.

The Book of Mormon as Revelation

Understanding the role of interpretive experience of revelation within an assumed paradigm is important to the claim that the Book of Mormon is the revelation of an ancient text interpreted within a nineteenth-century framework of thought. It would not be necessary for Joseph Smith to be aware of his expansions and interpretations of the Book of Mormon simply because they were a part of his experience. In fact, he seems to have been unaware of how his nineteenth-century framework and theological categories or past experiences affected the Book of Mormon or his other revelations since he appears to have believed, despite recognitions in revelation to the contrary, that the words used were God's (D. Hill 1977, 141). Even if Joseph had been aware of his presuppositions, however, it would have been impossible for him to escape the influence of his culture and the necessity of rendering the translation in a conceptual framework meaningful to his contemporaries. We are all limited by language, culture, and conceptual presuppositions.

It also appears that the usual relationship existing between a translator and an identifiable, objective text did not exist for Joseph Smith, for the ancient text merged with his own thought processes. Though Joseph Smith did not lose self-consciousness, the distinction between the text being revealed and the person receiving the revelation apparently dissolved. What we have therefore is neither an ancient document nor a translation rendering an ancient document from one language into another. The Book of Mormon as we know it is a "text-as-revelation" — the revelation *is* the text.

However, the presence of translator anachronisms or expansions in the book show that Joseph Smith imposed an interpretation on the text which was

foreign to the ancient text, but not an interpretation alien to his revelatory experiences which produced the book. In other words, he did not perceive the ancient text and then consciously interpret it as he pleased; rather, the text is the revelation he experienced within his own conceptual paradigms.

The Urim and Thummim or seer stone — the implements Joseph Smith used to aid his production of the Book of Mormon — are instruments to spark human creativity in response to the divine lure. Joseph also used his seer stone for what we today would consider secular purposes; but the most important purpose of his instruments was to open the channels of human receptivity to divine inspiration. Such creativity is a way of hearing God's voice. But the voice heard in revelation is not a solo by God. It is a chorus in which the experience of the prophet and God merges. The idea of revelation proposed by the expansion model recognizes the translation process as truly by "the gift and power of God," a synthesis of human creativity responding to divine persuasion. The Book of Mormon demonstrates that process, a book reflecting both old and new, both the human heart and a divine revelation.

The expansion theory, premised on a concept of revelation as creative co-participation, also helps us to understand the historical development of Mormon doctrine. The Book of Mormon reflects the influence of Joseph Smith's earliest belief structure in its synthesis of passages from the KJV and contemporary theology with nineteenth-century concerns. Joseph Smith's interpretive framework was largely derived from Christian Primitivism, a particular orientation within nineteenth-century Protestantism (M. Hill 1968). As Quine noted, there is "a natural tendency to disturb the total system [of thought] as little as possible" and to make adjustments within a paradigm before abandoning it for a new paradigm (1961, 39). In expressing the message of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's revelatory experiences naturally assumed the world view arising from his culture. Later revelations, however, necessitated so much revision in this basic set of assumptions that the paradigm reflected in the Book of Mormon was largely abandoned.

Book of Mormon doctrines of God, human nature, heaven, and hell have been refined, expanded, and perhaps superseded by further light and knowledge. The Book of Mormon doctrine of God, though not explicitly trinitarian, is not the developed tritheism that now characterizes Mormon thinking (D&C 130:22). The doctrine of a single heaven and single hell was refined by a vision of the three degrees of glory (D&C 76). Joseph Smith's later revelations about the nature of uncreated spirits or "intelligences" was so revolutionary that an entirely new metaphysic was necessary to adequately express its implications (Ostler 1982, 59–62). Many of these developments surprised some of Mormonism's earliest converts, like David Whitmer, who expected revelation to continue building logically within the paradigm of Primitive Christianity. Joseph Smith's modern-day critics have similar expectations about scripture and revelation, but I find their views to be too restricted and inadequate in light of biblical scholarship. Revelation isn't like that, not in the Bible and not in the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith's continuing revelations proved to be revolutions in thought rather than restatements of an established world view.

It would be a mistake, however, to think of the Book of Mormon as obsolete or displaced by later developments. Almost every important development in Mormon thought, from the preexistence to salvation for the dead, from polygamy to the notion of Zion, was foreshadowed in the Book of Mormon. Its concepts of atoning grace freely accepted and of morally significant free agency are responsible for much of the distinctive character of modern Mormon theology. The Book of Mormon teachings on social justice and the hope for Zion will continue to shape Mormonism's future. Moreover, Mormons have adopted an interpretation of the Book of Mormon that sees the book as a preparatory gospel to modern Mormonism, much as the Old Testament was a preparatory revelation of Jesus' gospel for Paul. For example, Book of Mormon teachings on the salvation of children foreshadowed the doctrine of salvation and baptism for the dead.

The salvation history of the Book of Mormon has given modern Mormonism its sense of now carrying forward God's plan in a new chapter of salvation history. God continues to show his will in mighty acts through history. The religious genius of the book was its ability to speak to Joseph Smith's world and answer the theological dilemmas facing those looking for further light and knowledge. The book's essential mission to bring people to the new-yet-old gospel revealed to Joseph Smith could not have been accomplished had the book not effectively communicated the fully developed Christian message expected by the early converts to Mormonism.

The creative co-participation theory of revelation may also help us come to grips with critical biblical scholarship and wider problems facing the historicity of the Book of Mormon and biblical records. An appreciation of pre-reflective categories that shape and give context to human experience — sometimes limiting and prejudicing understanding of the divine disclosure — suggests a need to continually render the divine word relevant to modern culture. While it is clear that the Book of Mormon and biblical experience of revelation require assent to the belief that God's disclosures can sometimes be reduced to propositional form, it does not mean that any particular statement of revelation is the final and complete word on any given subject.

Scripture should not be considered a set of axiomatic propositions from which we can logically derive all truth and define answers to all problems. The works constituting the Judeo-Christian scriptures were written in different times, at different places, by different people, living in different cultures, facing different problems, asking different questions, and, even when asking the same questions, often receiving different answers. There are clearly different world views represented among the writers of the Bible. The self-righteousness of biblical literalism that insists on "one true understanding" of reality is simply irresponsible in light of disagreement among biblical writers. While the fundamentalist speaks of *the* biblical view of God or *the* biblical concept of justification, the more informed person speaks of biblical concepts of God, or concepts of justifications, and views of humanity. We should expect, therefore, that our present revelation is still incomplete and will yet be augmented by future revelation if we are able to hear God's message.

Some may see the expansion theory as compromising the historicity of the Book of Mormon. To a certain extent it does. The book cannot properly be used to prove the presence of this or that doctrine in ancient thought because the revelation inherently involved modern interpretation. When we find aspects of the book that show evidences of an ancient setting or thought that is best interpreted from within an ancient paradigm, we should acknowledge the possibility that an ancient text underlies the revelation. Such a model does not necessarily abrogate either the book's religious significance or its value as salvation history. After all, much of the Bible is a result of a similar process of redaction, interpolation, and interpretation, yet its spiritual power is attested to by two thousand years of revealing God's mighty acts to later generations.

I would agree with the rabbis, Qumran Covenantors, and transmitters of the biblical texts that prophetic expansion and explanation of scripture enhances, not reduces, its religious value. Such scripture is twice inspired: once to the original prophet-author and again to the prophet who restores meaning and explains, or who gives new meaning and insight into the ancient records by reinterpreting them.

What of the historical significance of the events related in the Book of Mormon? First, the historical identity of the prophets revealed through the Book of Mormon is not altered in the least by textual expansion. Second, the powerful message of the book is that if God is not God of all, he is not really God at all. The visit of Christ to America is the central historical event to which the entire book is oriented. The historicity of this event can hardly be doubted if one accepts, as I do, that there is anything ancient about the book at all. Its message of the compassionate lawgiver appearing to the Nephites is a perfect and intimate revelation of the nature of God — a being worthy of our worship, devotion and love. Third, one of the primary messages of the book is its ethical interpretation of history. Its history is, in fact, a cycle of righteousness to social prosperity, social prosperity to class divisions and materialistic pride, and materialistic corruption to social disintegration and spiritual ruin. We cannot afford to ignore this message grounded in the history of the Book of Mormon people.

In sum, the message of the book is also historical. It is a warning to us from a people so concerned with wealth and war that they were unable to escape self-annihilation. The grief of Mormon for the total destruction of his once-great nation is a vivid reminder to our culture which has the capacity to destroy every living creature on the face of the earth. The salvation history of the Book of Mormon is a prologue to our own experience, a gift given in the hope that we can escape their fate.

In the final analysis, however, the value of the book as scripture is not whether its history is complete and accurate, but whether it adequately bears witness of God and what is ultimately most valuable. The Book of Mormon is not a history and was not meant to be; it is a revelation of the experiences of God and the salvation history of an ancient people. For many, it has become a means of encountering God. The judgment that a book is worthy of the

designation of "scripture" is a judgment made within a community. A work is included in a community's canon only by common consent of its members — only when the community values the work as an expression of itself, of its identity and values. The community is established as a sacred community when it begins a new chapter of salvation history, when the experiences of the community are defined as a continuation of the experience with God and his purposes identified in the scripture.

The Book of Mormon is thus a sacred book because (1) it serves as a means of spiritual conversion, revealing God to those who accept it as sacred; (2) it mediates the values of the community which it created and which now embraces it as a foundational statement of faith and normative ethics; and (3) it reveals the way to become reconciled with God. The value of the book as scripture includes its historicity and transcends it.

CONCLUSION

This essay has attempted to identify and define some expansions of the Book of Mormon and to demonstrate the value of such a model as an explanation of the book. The expansion model requires coming to grips with larger issues concerning the historicity of scripture and the plausibility of revelation as a partial explanation. Evidences concerning the historicity of the Book of Mormon certainly will never be explained to the satisfaction of all, but a universally acceptable proof is not necessary to show that many of our common assumptions about scripture prevent an adequate interpretation of scriptures and their historicity.

The conclusion that the Book of Mormon is pious fraud derived from nineteenth-century influences does not logically follow from the observation that it contains KJV quotations and is expressed in terms of a nineteenth-century world view. Nor does it follow that doctrinal developments cast doubts on whether earlier expressions reflected an authentic encounter with God. All expressions of revelation must be communicated within their author's framework of thought, a framework limited by its assumptions. Nor does it follow that if the book derives from the revelation of an ancient source it must be explained exclusively in ancient terms. Fundamentalist views of revelation and scripture that give rise to such assumptions are grossly inadequate.

The views expressed here logically preclude taking scripture as a source-book of axiomatic truths which can be wielded as a sword of the excluded-middle to exclude all who disagree on religious issues with *the* true understanding. They do not, however, exclude taking seriously the possibility that God is involved in human experiences giving rise to scripture.

The Book of Mormon is worthy of serious consideration and respect. It is a sufficient foundation for the community which reveres it as scripture. The refusal to engage the richness, complexity, and even the problems of the Book of Mormon will impoverish our religious lives as individuals and as a community.

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