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“As Delivered from the Beginning”: The Formation of the Canonical Gospels

Robert L. Millet

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.” (Luke 24:5–6.) This divine announcement, uttered by two angelic ministrants to a group of faithful and sensitive women, affirmed the hope and stilled the fears of a troubled lot of early Christian disciples. It was a testimony, a witness of a bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, and thus the physical assurance of his Divine Sonship. The word of their Master was attested: he was literally the Son of Man, and had power over life and death. From this singular hour the plain declarations of those with apostolic commission were delivered with greater fervor than before. Not only had the Messiah come among them, established the kingdom of God on earth, and left timely and timeless messages, but most important he had put into effect the conditions of the plan of the Eternal Father; he

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had trodden the winepress alone, and through the agonies of the Atonement had “brought life and immortality to light” (2 Timothy 1:10). In short, he had established the *gospel*, the God-news, truly the good news, the theological center and hub from which all other ethical principles and practices receive meaning and context. A modern revelation declared the gospel to be “the glad tidings . . . that he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; that through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him” (D&C 76:40–42).

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Prior to his ascension into heaven, the Lord delivered a charge to the Apostles to go into all nations, teach, testify, and make disciples through baptism of those who would give ear to their words. In addition, these earliest messengers were to perfect their converts through proper instruction and discipline, through “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever [Christ had] commanded” (Matthew 28:20). They were to proclaim the Lord and teach what he had taught.

Acceptance of Christ and his gospel was accomplished first through the power of verbal human testimony: faith came by hearing the word of God, as taught by legal administrators whose oral witness was attended by the spirit of prophecy and revelation.¹ Much of the earliest scripture in the meridian dispensation (as perhaps in all dispensations) existed in an oral and unrecorded form.² The *kerygma* or proclamation of the gospel, the *logia* (sayings of Christ), and the *agrapha* (unwritten things) circulated as the witness of the Apostles spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the known world (Acts 1:8). And as we shall observe shortly, these oral testimonies spread at the same time that written documents were being prepared and circulated concerning the majesty of the ministry of the Master. Then, as now, the gospel was preached by word and by power, whether that was by mouth or by pen; either system of delivery, oral or textual, has its underlying purposes, its strengths, and its limitations. In our own day genuine faith-promoting stories circulate throughout the Church

orally at the same time that written accounts of the events are readily available. Does it require a stretch of the imagination to suppose that in the first-century Church written documents recounting many of the events of the life of Jesus were contemporaneous with the Saints' reminiscences and personal oral testimonies of the same? The manner in which oral traditions were valued is highlighted, for example, in the following statement of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor (ca. A.D. 130–140):

I will not hesitate to set down for you alongside my interpretations all that I ever learned well from the elders and remembered well, guaranteeing their truth. For I did not, like the majority, rejoice in those who say most, but in those who teach the truth; not in those who regard the commandments of others, but in those who relate commandments given by the Lord to faith, and proceeding from him who is truth. Also, if ever a person came my way who had been a companion of the elders, I would inquire about the sayings of the elders—what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples? . . . For I did not suppose that what I could get from books was of such great value to me as the utterances of a living and abiding voice.³

THE TASK OF THE GOSPEL WRITER

It would be the grossest understatement to suggest that the task facing the Gospel writer was a formidable one. How does one write the biography of a God, sketch the outlines or prepare the epoch of the Infinite One? It would seem, therefore, that an initial obstacle facing the inspired author/editor was one of being able to discern the words and ideas that could most closely approximate that which is basically ineffable. Indeed, some matters are such that “no tongue can speak [of them], neither can [they] be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things” (3 Nephi 17:17; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:4). But to certain chosen representatives it *was* given to construct a limited but living and descriptive testimony of the Messiah—a carefully constrained chronicle of the life of the Son of God.

A second potential obstacle facing the Gospel writer was the passage of time, the interval between the actual events and the

accounts of those events. We are in no position at this date to state exactly when Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John produced their individual Gospel narratives. Reason would dictate, however, that much of the material in our present canonical Gospels did not take final form until a number of years after the death and resurrection of Christ. The passing of time often leads to a loss of detail. Yet the passing of time also leads to an enhanced perspective and a breadth of clarity and context. Nephi began his small plates approximately thirty years after leaving the land of his father's inheritance (2 Nephi 5:28–32), but we as readers and recipients of his offering are so much the richer as a result of a period of rare and valuable spiritual gestation. With eyes open to the works and wonders of the Lord during the previous three decades, Nephi the prophet/writer set forth in remarkable fashion his "outline," an intriguing account of how the "tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he has chosen" (1 Nephi 1:20). Joseph Smith's account of the First Vision as recorded in the Pearl of Great Price was dictated some eighteen years after the initial opening of the heavens. During that interval Joseph the Prophet grew in spiritual graces and gained a maturity and spiritual frame of reference which sharply defined the significance of the appearance of the Father and the Son. In similar fashion the Gospel writers, moved upon by the Holy Ghost, reflected upon personal or reported experiences with the Master, and now with mature minds and a grander vision set out to construct an extended written testimony of Jesus the Christ. Time frequently yields a peak in overall perception.

Eusebius, the fourth-century church historian, reported that "of all the disciples, Matthew and John are the only ones that have left us recorded comments [concerning the ministry of Christ], and even they, tradition says, *undertook it from necessity.*"⁴ What was the *necessity* for written Gospels? Why was it essential that *the* gospel be formed into *a* Gospel, that the oral become textual? First of all, it is important to note that the power and impact of oral traditions are bounded by the limitations and inabilities of human transmitters. Two early Latter-day Saint writers thus suggested that the written Gospels took shape to insure continuity and orthodoxy of doctrine. They explained:

It may be supposed that those Disciples of Christ . . . like Matthew and John, would keep journals while they followed their Master, witnessing His works and listening to His teachings. These journals would, after the Crucifixion and Ascension, naturally be read in private and in public. They would be copied and distributed in the various branches of the Church and from texts for sermons and otherwise discourses, and thus be augmented with such incidents or sayings which were still retained in the memories of those who had been eyewitnesses. In this way several versions of the doings and sayings of our Lord began to circulate, some no doubt contradicting others, until the necessity became universally felt to have some authentic record showing exactly what was reliable of the many circulating reports, and what was not reliable. And the result is the four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.⁵

Then, as now, there was a need for a standard work, a written testimony whereby the first-century Saints might “speak the same thing,” and thus “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). The authorized Gospels helped to establish precise doctrinal and historical lines between orthodoxy and heresy, between the accepted and the aberrant. One theologian has described the process as follows: “In the Graeco-Roman world, the Palestinian Gospel came into contact with all sorts of religious and philosophic movements. Men challenged it and could have perverted it by turning it into a metaphysical system or a mystery or Gnostic cult, without connection with that historic figure who gave it birth; that is, they could have cut it from its root. To prevent this, the Gospels came into being; they kept the Church attached to its base.”⁶

Secondly, the Gospels were written to secure and maintain the precious witness of those who had originally walked and talked with the Savior. “When these witnesses began to pass away,” W. D. Davies has written, “their testimony had to be preserved. This is one of the fundamental reasons for the emergence of the Gospels—in part, at least, they were designed to supply the witness of those witnesses who were no longer alive.”⁷ In analogous fashion, one might ask where we would be as a Church today had it not been for the handy and faithful pens of such persons as Wilford Woodruff and William Clayton and Willard Richards

and Thomas Bullock, men who conscientiously recorded and preserved critical elements of the sermons of Joseph Smith for a future day. In prophetic fashion the Gospel writers prepared documents and thus preserved traditions which were both timely and timeless.

THE FOUR GOSPELS: FORMATION AND FUNCTION

In speaking against doctrinal heresies of the second century, Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 180) taught that “it is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are.” He further referred to the four gospels as like unto the “four zones of the world in which we live,” as well as the “four pillars” of the Church. Irenaeus then added that Christ “has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one spirit.”⁸ Irenaeus’ statement is obviously intended to discourage and discount any and all apocryphal gospels. At the same time, it is wise for us to recognize the hand of Providence in the formation, inspiration, and preservation of the four canonical Gospels that we have. Surely Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were foreordained in premortality and raised up in mortality to make their particular contributions. “Every man,” Joseph Smith taught, “who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of Heaven before this world was.”⁹ The ministries of our Gospel writers did not end with their own deaths; their compositions continue to turn men’s minds toward their Savior twenty centuries later.

Matthew. Matthew (Levi) was one of the original Apostles, a publican or tax gatherer before his call. One noted theologian has written concerning Matthew as the scribe or recorder of the Twelve:

Matthew was probably a man of somewhat more education, as we would call it, than some of his fellow disciples. He must have been able to read and write, and to use the elements at least of arithmetic, in his work as a tax collector. . . . Matthew is more likely to have known Greek than any of the rest, for he was a tax collector. He is likely to have been readier with the pen than most, perhaps than any, of the group, and he may even have jotted down for his

own use not a few of Jesus' striking sayings, especially after the missionary travels of the Twelve about the Jewish towns.¹⁰

In the preparation of his Gospel, Matthew would have drawn upon his own reminiscences and notes, and possibly upon other extant oral or written sources. After providing the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Matthew records (1:18): "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. . . ." The Matthean infancy narrative follows. Joseph Smith's translation of the same verse (JST Matthew 2:1) reads: "Now, *as it is written*, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise." This alteration of the King James text by the Prophet seems to point toward a written source available to the Apostle that predates his own Gospel.

Traditionally Matthew is said to have collected the *logia* (sayings) of Jesus in Hebrew (presumably meaning Aramaic) and later translated the same into Greek. From Papias, we have the following fragment: "Matthew put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them the best he could."¹¹ In commenting on the statement of Papias, one scholar has written: "If Matthew had made notes from time to time of things of especial interest and importance that Jesus had said, he would naturally have done so in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke and they all used." Further, "In Antioch [the traditional source of Matthew's Gospel], of course, his public was largely Greek, and he naturally translated the sayings into that language as he had occasion to use them, or unwritten things that he simply remembered. This is doubtless the background of Papias' remarks."¹²

Mark. John Mark's Gospel bespeaks an awareness of much detail concerning the comings and goings of Jesus Christ. Mark became a traveling companion of Paul, and certainly would have received and imbibed much information from this Apostle to the Gentiles. Most important, however, the early Church leaders recognized Mark's Gospel as being tied directly to his personal experiences with Simon Peter.

So greatly . . . did the splendour of piety enlighten the minds of Peter's hearers, that it was not sufficient to hear but once, nor to receive the unwritten doctrine of the gospel of God, but they persevered in every variety of entreaties, to solicit Mark as the com-

panion of Peter [see 1 Peter 5:13], and whose gospel we have, that he should leave them a monument of the doctrine thus orally communicated, in writing. Nor did they cease their solicitations until they had prevailed with the man, and thus become the means of that history which is called the gospel according to Mark. They say also, that the apostle (Peter), having ascertained what was done by the revelation of the spirit, was delighted with the zealous ardour expressed by these men, and that the history obtained his authority for the purposes of being read in the churches.¹³

Luke. Luke is the author of the two-part work, Luke-Acts, an inspiring narrative which documents the ministry of the Savior and describes the struggles and growth of the first-century Church. Also a missionary companion of Paul, Luke seems to have drawn widely from a number of sources to tell the gospel story. The first four verses of Luke's Gospel provide the background and motivation for his work: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order . . . that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:1–4). The Joseph Smith Translation identifies Luke as "a messenger of Jesus Christ" (JST, Luke 1:1). In the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, Luke "was a legal administrator. He held the Melchizedek Priesthood, served as an official minister of Christ, quite likely wrote his gospel by assignment of the church officers, and spoke as one having authority."¹⁴ In further commenting on Luke's role as a divinely directed author/editor, Elder McConkie has written:

Many of the early saints recorded their testimonies or gospels, bearing eyewitness accounts of the divinity of our Lord and of his ministry among men, just as many with personal knowledge of Joseph Smith and his work of restoration have written journals, letters, and histories delineating what took place in the ushering in of this dispensation. *Luke had access to many of these ancient gospels.*¹⁵

Luke prepared his Gospel "in order to free [the Saints] from the uncertain suppositions of others," and therefore "delivered the

certain account of those things, that he himself had fully received from his intimacy and stay with Paul, and also his intercourse with the other apostles.”¹⁶ After countless interviews with the Apostles, with various lesser-known disciples, and certainly with people like Mary, the mother of Jesus,¹⁷ the “beloved physician” sought inspiration and gave birth to his masterpiece, the Gospel of Luke.

John. The Apostle John, known as the Beloved Disciple or the Revelator, bequeathed to the world one of the most remarkable treasures in religious history in the form of his Gospel narrative. It is generally held (though difficult to establish beyond all doubt) that the Gospel of John, known early as “the spiritual Gospel,” was the last of the canonical Gospels to be committed to writing. One ancient tradition states that after Mark and Luke had published their Gospels, John “admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth.” John, however, recognizing the fact that “the other three evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist,” set out to fill in those historical gaps of the synoptic Gospels. “John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former evangelists, and the deeds done by our Savior, which they have passed by.”¹⁸ It is reasonable to suppose that John collected and drew upon available sources beyond his own personal records. If indeed John’s Gospel was written last, it may well be—in those few areas where his Gospel follows the course of the synoptics—that he would have been acquainted with, had before him, and thus utilized in a discerning manner details from the other three Gospels.¹⁹ An analogous situation in Latter-day Saint literature would be that of Elders James E. Talmage and Bruce R. McConkie, who, in the preparation of their masterworks on the life of Christ, would have had before them such earlier works as *The Life of Christ* (Farrar) and *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Edersheim) and, in the case of Elder McConkie, Talmage’s *Jesus the Christ*.

In addition to the possibility that John had access to the synoptics, there is a strong probability that the forepart of his Gospel was based on the earlier writings of John the Baptist. A modern Apostle has written regarding this ancient Apostle’s resources: “There is little doubt but that the Beloved Disciple had before

him the Baptist's account when he wrote his gospel. The latter John either copied or paraphrased what the earlier prophet of the same name had written. The only other possibility is that the Lord revealed to the gospel author the words that had been recorded by the earlier messenger who prepared the way before him."²⁰

There should be no doubt among Latter-day Saints that the canonical Gospels were compiled and composed and organized and written under the spirit of revelation. At the same time, we do not remove any of the importance or spiritual significance from these inspired authors by acknowledging Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as divinely directed *editors* as well as creative authors. Moses was a choice seer and a man open to the revelations of the Almighty. He was also a gifted compiler and editor of earlier records. From the beginning men had been commanded to keep records in order that the history of man's existence (as well as the dealings of God with man) might be preserved. "How else," President Kimball has asked, "do you think Moses, many hundreds of years later, got the information he compiled in the book of Genesis? These records had been kept, and he referred to them and got the history of the world, which wasn't in any library other than that."²¹ Likewise, Mormon was an inspired editor/author whose "and thus we see" passages in the Nephite record help wondrously to achieve the "wise purposes" of the Lord. The Gospel writers undertook the task of producing authorized and written testimony-narratives, based upon accurate and authentic accounts and directed by the Spirit which their Master had promised to send. Undoubtedly, the Holy Ghost instructed the writers and brought things to their remembrance that were critical to the assignment at hand (see John 14:26).

All four Gospel writers knew of the Divine Sonship of Jesus of Nazareth; they all loved and served the same Lord. And yet their testimonies of the Christ were expressed in varying ways and in a manner peculiar to each author.

It appears that Matthew was directing his gospel to the Jews. He presents Christ as the promised Messiah and Christianity as the fulfillment of Judaism. Mark apparently wrote with the aim of appealing to the Roman or Gentile mind. Luke's gospel presents the

Master to the Greeks, to those of culture and refinement. And the gospel of John is the account for the saints; it is pre-eminently the gospel for the Church, for those who understand the scriptures and their symbolisms and who are concerned with spiritual and eternal things.²²

Each Gospel writer “had especial and intimate knowledge of certain circumstances not so well known to others,” and thus each “felt impressed to emphasize different matters because of the particular people to whom he was addressing his personal gospel testimony.”²³

Another matter worth considering is the fact that our four Gospels may not always have existed in their present state or condition. On the one hand, we need to recognize the appropriateness of a writer—even an inspired writer—adding to or taking away from his work as he matures spiritually or gains new or added perspective. In our Book of Mormon story, Moroni returned to his record after a period of fearful anticipation and (since he was still alive) provided additional doctrinal and historical insights to that which had previously been written. In the preparation of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith made prophetic editorial changes as he felt impressed to do so. What is now section 7 of the Doctrine and Covenants (concerning the continued ministry of John the Beloved), for example, is a broadened and extended version of what had appeared in the 1833 Book of Commandments. The same is true of Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of the King James Bible: whereas the Prophet and his scribe had formally completed the work of translation by July of 1833, Joseph Smith continued to labor with the manuscripts (making changes where he felt the need to do so) until the time of his death. We might, therefore, want to remain open to the possibility that different editions of the Gospels may have existed through the years. In this connection it is worthwhile to consider an excerpt from the somewhat controversial “Secret Gospel of Mark.” This document was discovered in 1958 by Morton Smith in the Mar Saba monastery, some twelve miles southeast of Jerusalem.

[As for] Mark, then, during Peter’s stay in Rome he wrote [an account of] the Lord’s doings, not, however, declaring all [of

them], not yet hinting at the secret [ones], but selecting those he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those who were being instructed. But when Peter died as a martyr, Mark came over to Alexandria, bringing both his own notes and those of Peter, from which he transferred to his former book the things suitable to whatever makes for progress toward knowledge [*gnosis*]. [Thus] he composed a more spiritual gospel for the use of those who were being perfected. Nevertheless, he yet did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic teaching of the Lord, but to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue, lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by seven [veils].²⁴

It may be that the Gospels as we have them now represent a truncated version of the Gospels as they were first written by the evangelists. Nephi saw in vision the day when the Bible record (the book which would proceed “out of the mouth of a Jew”) would suffer a willful interference by the great and abominable church, such that “many plain and precious things [would be] taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God” (1 Nephi 13:28). We need to be extremely grateful that the Lord has seen fit to preserve those portions of the Gospels that have been secured for us; at the same time, we must be aware that the “fulness of the gospel of the Lamb” is not to be had in our present canonical Gospels, but that the Lord is revealing and restoring many of those precious truths through the “other books” (the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the Joseph Smith Translation, and other materials yet to be revealed) which have and will come forth by the power of the Lamb of God (1 Nephi 13:39).

THE GOSPELS: A UNIQUE CREATION

In forming the message of *the* gospel into what we have come to call *a* Gospel, the writers became the initiators of a unique literary genre, a form which is not seen elsewhere in ancient literature. The Gospels are not wholly biographical, in the modern sense of revealing or developing the thoughts or personalities of the main characters; possibly not more than thirty days of the life

of Christ receive treatment through all four Gospel accounts. On the other hand, the Gospels represent laudatory biographies written to elicit faith and emulation.

The presence of sensational and titillating elements often evident in the apocryphal gospels are absent in the canonical Gospels. Absent also are attempts to explain the unexplained or to reconcile the seemingly estranged or disparate. There are no attempts to “lie for God,” to appease the questioning mind, to conciliate by appending the authoritative. The canonical Gospels combine simplicity with the power of their message, and present a dignified and appropriate glimpse into the life and words of the Savior.

The Gospels are testimonies of Christ, and “do not claim to be exhaustive accounts of all that Jesus said or did.” Rather, “Each gospel was selective according to the purpose of the author, and is complete in the sense that it carries out his intent.”²⁵ The Gospels were “standard works,” in the sense that they were given to guide the Saints in emulating the Sinless One, and given to transmit the witness that Jesus died, was buried, rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven (see 1 Corinthians 15:3–4). The Gospels were written to convey the “portion of the word” (to use Alma’s words) which is appropriate for Christians who are gaining or strengthening a conviction of Jesus as the Messiah. They were not written to convey the esoteric teachings of the Master, those sacred truths preserved for those persons able to bear the added enlightenment. In a sense, the Gospels are public documents, created for display purposes. Surely there are “many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25).

CONCLUSION

The process by which the four Gospels came into being as written documents is a fascinating field of study, a field worthy of the consideration and attention of Latter-day Saints. Obviously the complete story of the transmission of the Gospels is not

available; we are left with fragments and particles of tradition and history, and we thus seek to piece together the overall drama associated with the formation, inspiration, and preservation of four books now accepted with sacred appreciation the world over. Without question, the story of the sources and the sequences of events of the overall formation of the texts is not as important as the message delivered in the Gospels themselves. A serious study of this process, however, may lead one to a deeper awareness of the Lord's ability to make bare his mighty arm and preserve through millennia the essence of the gospel message. Such a process also reveals the infinite love of God for his children.

Notes

1. See Romans 10:17; Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1957), 3:30.

2. See Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966–73), 1:55–56.

3. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. C. F. Cruse, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, popular edition, 1977), III.39; see also "Fragments of Papias," in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 1:153.

4. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.24.

5. George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1965), pp. 21–22.

6. W. D. Davies, *Invitation to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1969), p. 83.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

8. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.8, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1:428.

9. *History of the Church*, 6:364.

10. Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Twelve: The Story of Christ's Apostles* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1957), pp. 27, 42–43; see also Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Matthew: Apostle and Evangelist* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1959), pp. 13, 16–17.

11. "Fragments of Papias," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1:155; see also Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V.8.

12. Goodspeed, *Matthew: Apostle and Evangelist*, pp. 101, 103. Note the following statement from Eusebius regarding the spread of the gospel to all parts of the earth, particularly the ministry of one Pantaenus of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 180): "Pantaenus also was one of them and [is] said to have gone to India, where the story [goes] that he found the gospel according to Matthew, [which] had preceded his arrival, among certain people there who had learned of Christ; that Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them; and that *he had left the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which also was preserved to the time indicated*" (*Ecclesiastical History*, V.10). A detailed study of this tradition regarding Matthew's Gospel is Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967). See also J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Why the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1956), p. 11; Werner Georg Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975).

13. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, II.16; cf. VI.14.

14. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:69–70; emphasis added.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 69; emphasis added.

16. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.24.

17. See Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1979–81), 1:324.

18. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.24.

19. See McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:69.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71; cf. D&C 93:6–18 with Matthew 3:16–17.

21. Spencer W. Kimball, *President Kimball Speaks Out* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1981), pp. 55–56.

22. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:65.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

24. Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 15.

25. Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 133.