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## The Power of Evidence in the Nurturing of Faith

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# THE POWER OF EVIDENCE IN THE NURTURING OF FAITH

*John W. Welch*

Since the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830, its adherents have sought, found, and enjoyed publishing evidences in its support. What spiritual value do such evidences have? How do bits of knowledge contribute to an increase of faith? How do reason and revelation work together? What is evidence, and how is it related to faith? Without diminishing the essential power of the Holy Ghost in bearing testimony, and knowing that we cannot prove anything in absolute terms, I still speak favorably about the power of evidence. It is an important ingredient in Heavenly Father's plan of happiness.

## **Both Reason and Revelation**

Basic to the discussion of evidence and faith is the relationship between reason and revelation. One of my favorite scriptures is Doctrine and Covenants 88:118, a text that

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This chapter is adapted from *Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon: The Twenty-Fourth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 149–86.

is posted conspicuously on a plaque in the old stairwell between the third and fourth floors of the Harold B. Lee Library: “As all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” We would do well to post this verse in our own libraries. This passage gives significant place to the role of scholarship in the restored church. It commands us to “seek” (which would include doing research) and to seek “diligently” (we must do it thoroughly and carefully); it obligates us to teach one another (to share our findings generously) and to draw out of “the best books” (which cautions us that some books will be better than others); and it tells us to do all this “even by study and also by faith” (in other words, both are required). Nothing is more fundamental for a Latter-day Saint scholar than to maintain a proper balance between the intellectual and spiritual pursuits of life.

Many church leaders and authors have written about study and faith, and everyone agrees that we should have both.<sup>1</sup> President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “There is incumbent upon each of us . . . the responsibility to observe the commandment to study and to learn. . . . None of us can assume that we have learned enough.”<sup>2</sup> Elder Neal A. Maxwell has affirmed: “If there is sometimes too little respect for the life of the mind, it is a localized condition and is not institutional in character.”<sup>3</sup> “The Lord sees no conflict between faith and learning in a broad curriculum. . . . The scriptures see faith and learning as mutually facilitating, not separate processes.”<sup>4</sup> Elder Boyd K. Packer has said: “Each of us must accommodate the mixture of reason and

revelation in our lives. The gospel not only permits but *requires* it.”<sup>5</sup>

The difficult problem is not whether to have both study and faith but how to get these two together and in what order of priority or in what type of combination. In attempting to describe or prescribe the proper coordination of study with faith, LDS thinkers have turned or may turn to various analogies, as we often must when we are confronted with our deepest intellectual or religious concepts. Each of these metaphors is potentially quite powerful. Some work better than others, but each may offer insight into the roles of scholarly evidence in nurturing or strengthening faith.

Some analogies emphasize that both study and faith are necessary. In the bicycle-built-for-two metaphor, the relationship between reason and revelation is likened to two riders on a tandem bicycle. When both riders pedal together, the bicycle (the search for truth) moves ahead more rapidly. Each rider must work, or the other must bear a heavy and perhaps exhausting burden; but only one (that is faith) can steer and determine where the bicycle will go, although the other (reason) can do some backseat driving.

In another metaphor, these two necessary elements are brought together as in a marriage, with “all the tension, adjustments, frustration, joys, and ecstasy one finds in a marriage between man and woman.”<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the apostle Paul used the human body as a strong metaphor to show the need for many parts in an organic whole. It would be unseemly for “the head [to say] to the feet, I have no need of you”; they are “many members, yet but one body” (1 Corinthians 12:20–21). As B. H. Roberts has cautioned, let us not have “the heart breathing

defiance to the intellect.”<sup>7</sup> And one might equally add, let us also not have the intellect pounding submission to the heart.

### **Specific Ways Evidence Nurtures Faith**

Although we should not expect to find a sign somewhere that says “Nephi slept here” or a drop of blood on the Mount of Olives that establishes the truth of Christ’s ordeal in Gethsemane,<sup>8</sup> the world has been told to expect circumstantial evidences of the truth. An 1842 editorial announcing some archaeological discoveries in Central America that was published in the *Times and Seasons* when Joseph Smith was editor boldly asserts: “We can not but think the Lord has a hand in bringing to pass his strange act, and proving the Book of Mormon true in the eyes of all the people. . . . It will be as it ever has been, the world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence, in experiments, as they did Moses and Elijah.”<sup>9</sup>

Without overstating the value of these factors, evidence plays several specific roles in the cultivation of faith. Comments by General Authorities and personal experiences by many people are instructive and have affirmed various functions.

Elder John A. Widtsoe taught that evidence can remove honest doubt and give assurances that build faith. “After proper inquiries, using all the powers at our command,” he said, “the weight of evidence is on one side or the other. Doubt is removed.”<sup>10</sup> “Doubt of the right kind—that is, honest questioning—leads to faith” and “opens the door to truth,”<sup>11</sup> for where there is doubt, faith cannot thrive. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith likewise affirmed that

evidence, as convincing as in any court in the land, proves “beyond the possibility of doubt that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery spoke the truth.”<sup>12</sup>

Over and over, I have found that solid research confirms the revelations of God. As Elder Maxwell has stated, “That a truth is given by God and then is confirmed through scholarship makes it no less true.”<sup>13</sup> President Hinckley has said that in a world prone to demand evidence, it is good that archaeology, anthropology, or historical research can “be helpful to some” and “confirmatory.”<sup>14</sup>

Evidence also makes the truth plain and plausible. In 1976 Elder Maxwell predicted: “There will be a convergence of discoveries (never enough, mind you, to remove the need for faith) to make plain and plausible what the modern prophets have been saying all along.”<sup>15</sup> I believe that this prophecy has been amply fulfilled in the last twenty years. Literally hundreds of newly discovered insights converge on the same supporting conclusion. Certain things that might at first have appeared outrageous, on closer inspection have turned out to be right on target. The ancient Jaredite transoceanic migration that lasted 344 days (see Ether 6:11) ceases to seem so fantastic when that turns out to be exactly the length of time it takes the Pacific current to go from Asia to Mexico.<sup>16</sup> The oddity of Nephi’s making new arrows when only his bow had broken suddenly becomes plausible when one realizes that arrows and bows must match each other in weight, length, and stiffness,<sup>17</sup> again making “plain and plausible” what the Book of Mormon has said all along.

In an important sense, evidence makes belief possible. I am very impressed by the words of Austin Farrar in speaking about C. S. Lewis and quoted by Elder Maxwell

on several occasions: “Though argument does not create conviction, lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows that ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.”<sup>18</sup>

Thus, evidence in a sense brings people toward belief. Some people have the gift to believe quite readily (see D&C 46:13–14), but most people need evidence, clues, and inducements to believe because they are by nature stubborn. Alma told the poor in Antionum that it was blessed to believe in the word of God “without stubbornness of heart, yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know” (Alma 32:16); but being “brought to know” is better than never coming to know at all. I have been “brought to know” many things by means of evidence, even though that evidence has fallen short of compelling me to know.

Evidence is also useful in articulating knowledge and defending against error and misrepresentation. Scholars can serve important roles “as articulators” of evidence, and when combined with “submissiveness and consecration,” solid academic research can be useful “to protect and to build up the Kingdom.”<sup>19</sup> If people misunderstand the thoroughly Christian character of the Book of Mormon, I would hope that statistical evidence about the pervasive references to Christ in the book would be quite arresting and informative.<sup>20</sup> I would hope that evidence about the distinctively personal testimonies of Christ uniquely borne by ten Book of Mormon prophets would be deeply impressive and convincing.<sup>21</sup>

Evidence helps to keep pace in the give-and-take of competing alternatives: Do you expect “incontrovertible proof to come in this way? No, but neither will the Church be outdone by hostile or pseudo-scholars.”<sup>22</sup> The historical facts in support of Joseph’s testimony, to quote Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, leave one “speechless absolutely, totally, and bewilderingly incredulous,” at the bald suggestion that Joseph Smith simply wrote the Book of Mormon.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps most of all, evidence promotes understanding and enhances meaning. In all our study, we should seek understanding.<sup>24</sup> Just as traveling to the Holy Land has richly enhanced my understanding of the world of the Bible, as it has for many people, evidence provides essential building blocks in understanding the full character of the Book of Mormon. Many factors, like the doubled, sealed documents, help me understand this record better as a powerful and ancient testament, for to be understood, our facts must be placed “in their proper context.”<sup>25</sup> Evidence helps to put many parts of the Book of Mormon in context.

A clear delineation of evidence also strengthens the impression left by any text on the mind and soul. Evidence has a way of drawing my attention to subtle details that otherwise escape notice on casual reading. With evidence about ancient Israelite festivals in mind, I read with heightened attention and gratitude the text in Mosiah 3:11 about Christ’s blood atoning for those who have “ignorantly sinned,” because it was of primary concern on ancient holy days to purify the people from all their iniquities (see Leviticus 16:21–22), with special reference being made to sins committed in ignorance (see Numbers 15:22–29).<sup>26</sup>



Marshalling evidence builds respect for the truth. I have been amazed and pleased to watch the Book of Mormon win respect for itself and for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I had long appreciated and valued the Book of Mormon, but it was not until I began to see it speaking for itself before sophisticated audiences, especially in connection with such things as chiasmus and law in the Book of Mormon, that I began to sense the high level of respect that the book really can command. On many grounds, the Book of Mormon is intellectually respectable.<sup>27</sup> The more I learn about the Book of Mormon, the more amazed I become at its precision, consistency, validity, vitality, insightfulness, and purposefulness. I believe that the flow of additional evidence nourishes and enlarges faith.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the presentation of evidence impels people to ask the ultimate question raised by that evidence. Once a person realizes that no one can explain how all this got into the Book of Mormon, the honest person is at last at the point where he or she must turn to God to find out if these things are indeed true. Elder Bruce R. McConkie advised readers to ask themselves over and over, a thousand times, “Could any man have written this book?”<sup>29</sup> By asking this question again and again, one invites all kinds of ideas that may bear one way or the other on the answer to that question. As ideas surface, evidence can help the reader explore those possibilities and inevitably return with increased intensity to the question, “Could any man have written this book?” If one will ponder the great miracle of the Book of Mormon, Elder McConkie promises, “the genuine truth seeker will come to know,” again and again, “by the power of the Spirit, that the book is true.”<sup>30</sup>

Moroni 10:3–4 promises this testimony but on several prerequisites: one must “read these things” (one must study it); one must “remember how merciful the Lord hath been”; and one must “ponder” this record. Then “if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ,” the answer will be revealed. Many people have told me how evidences have helped to impel them through this process of reading, studying, pondering, and asking.

The Holy Ghost bears record of the Father and of the Son (see 3 Nephi 11:32, 36). Scripturally, this truth is beyond question. Elder B. H. Roberts wrote in 1909: “The power of the Holy Ghost . . . must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary. . . . No arrangement of evidence, however skillfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place.”<sup>31</sup> It would certainly be an abuse to supplant testimony and faith with evidence, or with anything else, but scrutinizing evidence can help. Elder Roberts continued: “Evidence and argument . . . in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God’s purposes.”<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the careful presentation of evidence clarifies the truth and enhances the power of testimony. Elder Roberts concluded: “To be known, the truth must be stated and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Study and Faith Working Together**

In all of these faith-promoting functions, it is not enough just to have one’s mind and one’s spirit both alive

and functioning; the two must work together, each contributing in its own proper way. To turn to another metaphor, the correlation of faith and reason works like our two eyes (representing mind and spirit); working together they give depth to our sight, and with the aid of a pair of binoculars (representing scholarship and revelation), we see close up and in bold relief many marvelous things. For this process to work, however, both eyes must be healthy and both lenses in the binoculars must be clean and in focus.

I also like to think of faith and reason as two arms working together to play a violin. One hand fingers the strings and the other draws the bow. When these two distinct functions are brought together with skill and purpose, they produce expressions that ontologically transcend the physics of either part individually. According to this view, for an LDS scholar to proceed on either spirit or intellect alone is like trying to play a violin with only one arm.

### **Gaining Faith in General**

Nurturing faith in the Book of Mormon is just a specialized case of nurturing faith in general. Faith is increased by purposeful study, diligent prayer, attending church, rendering service, experimenting with the word, and feeling the Spirit. Evidence can play a role in this process in several ways.

First, Paul declared: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The presentation of evidence can help people to hear the word, to pay attention, to listen more closely, to hear what is really being said. King Benjamin admonished his people

to “open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view” (Mosiah 2:9). I have seen evidence, when it is presented modestly and accurately, help people listen to the Book of Mormon who otherwise would not give it the time of day. I have seen it soften hearts and prepare the way for testimony to be borne and received.

Second, faith comes by prayerful study. In the words of President Hinckley: “It will take study of the word of God. It will take prayer and anxious seeking of the source of all truth.”<sup>34</sup> The study of scriptural evidence can be a vital aid in this process, for faith is only faith if it is in things “which are true” (Alma 32:21). The intelligent use of evidence helps people sort out propositions that are clear, true, or plausible from those that are muddled, false, or bogus.

Third, faith also comes from sacrifice. For Elder McConkie, “faith and sacrifice go hand in hand. Those who have faith sacrifice freely for the Lord’s work, and their acts of sacrifice increase their faith.”<sup>35</sup> “The tests and trials of mortality are designed to determine whether men will use their time and talents in worldly or spiritual pursuits.”<sup>36</sup> These tests include tests of the mind as much as any other tests. And the quest for rigorous scriptural evidence demands the dedication of time, the consecration of talents, and the willingness to be swallowed up in the Lord’s purposes.

### **Some Problems with Evidence**

Evidence may perform several useful functions, but this is not to say that evidence is some kind of panacea or

elixir of pure knowledge. Evidence can even raise certain problems if it is not kept in proper balance.

Some people place too much weight on evidence. The scriptures caution against becoming overconfident or too secular. But such abuses are no different from anything else in life: riches may be abused, but that does not mean we stop working for a living; an artist runs the risk of pride, but that does not mean we cease improving our talents. As with all tools, the mind must be carefully used. Like a hammer, the intellect can be used either to build up or to tear down. Jesus gave us another analogy, that of a fruit tree, to help us determine the right balance: “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20).

Other people go the opposite extreme and give too little attention to evidence and latch on to answers too readily. Sidney Sperry once commented, “Too many persons in every generation, including our own, hope for things—fantastic things—in the name of faith and religion, but give little thought as to whether or not they are based on truth.”<sup>37</sup>

Others halt between the two and become consumed by questions. It is a fact of life that we can ask more questions than can ever be answered. It takes skill and wisdom even to ask a good question. Sperry is a good example of a scholar who willingly addressed the so-called Isaiah question or the problem of the Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi. My work on these topics has not only satisfied all of my honest inquiries but has opened many unexpected insights. My study of the Sermon on the Mount as a temple text embedded in 3 Nephi 11–18 has elucidated the Book of Mormon beyond my most remote expectation and has turned what I saw as a potential problem into a great strength.<sup>38</sup>

## The “Problem” of Proof

Of course, we cannot “prove” that the Book of Mormon or any other ultimate tenet of religious faith is true. Hugh Nibley has said, “The evidence that will prove or disprove the Book of Mormon does not exist.”<sup>39</sup> Our desire is not to become some grand inquisitor, wanting to put other people over a barrel by producing undeniable reasons for belief that will convince the whole world and compel everyone to believe.<sup>40</sup> Since this is so, why should one bother to gather evidence or to do religious research at all?

In an ideal world, evidence would not be necessary. Things would be known directly, immediately, and certainly. The only problem is, we do not live in an ideal world, and it was not intended by God that we should so live. We are surrounded in this probationary state by possibilities, choices, and the need to seek and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Moreover, in working with evidence, we must not forget what or who is really on trial. To quote President Benson: “The Book of Mormon is not on trial—the people of the world, including the members of the Church, are on trial as to what they will do with this second witness for Christ.”<sup>41</sup> In the same way, when the world presumed to judge its Messiah to be a thing of naught, in reality the world was being judged: “He that believeth not is condemned already,” says the Gospel of John, “and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:18–19). As so often occurs, the gospel stands things on their heads: the weak are strong, the rich are poor, and the losers are the finders. And likewise, the testers are being tested. In

dealing with and reacting to evidence, we actually reveal more about ourselves than we do about the subjects being tested, and we sharpen the sword not of human discernment but of divine judgment.

For this reason also we can understand why evidence does not affect all people in the same way. Not everyone will need evidences, and not all people will need them at every stage of their lives. Individuals see data differently, and “God made us free so to do.”<sup>42</sup> In the end, it will always come down to the choice each person must make between believing the good or rejecting it. Abundant miraculous and physical evidence was given to Pharaoh, but he still rejected Jehovah. Evidence is the vehicle that makes the plan of choice and accountability viable. Without evidence both for and against two alternatives, no bona fide choice could ever be possible. Paraphrasing Lehi, we might add, Adam fell that men might choose; and evidence is that they might have a basis on which to choose.

### **Faith, Choice, and the Nature of Evidence**

These theological observations about evidence invite a closer look at evidence itself. The better we understand both faith and evidence and the subjective elements that bridge the two, the better we will be able to bring them both beneficially together. Having seen how evidence contributes to faith, consider the elements of faith and the roles of personal choice in the nature of evidence and how evidence works.

People often misjudge the nature of evidence because, à la Perry Mason, they may take an overly simplistic view of evidence. The concept of evidence is complex. The power of evidence is shaped by metaphysical assumptions (such as causation) and cultural conditions (such as the value placed

on proof), and it combines wide fields of human experience (including such philosophical concerns as epistemology, the reliability of sensory experience, the adequacy of language, the nature of history, and the psychology of persuasion).

The word *evidence* derives from the Latin *ex videns*, meaning anything that comes from *seeing* and also from *seeming*. Evidence is literally what meets the eye and, more than that, what seems to be from what we see. Evidence is based on hard facts, but even under the best of circumstances it works less automatically and more subjectively than many people realize. If evidence were not such a complicated matter, many things would be much simpler in our courtrooms, legislative sessions, and corporate board rooms as well as in our lecture halls and Gospel Doctrine classrooms.

Though this complexity may present problems in many cases, it also allows evidence to combine with faith, because in its complexity evidence is both a product of empirical data attractive to the mind amenable to study and the result of personal choices generated by the Spirit in faith. Not only is seeing believing but believing is seeing, as has been often said. Philosophical worldviews that would have it only one of these two ways offer us a model that limps on one leg.

In exploring the workings of evidence, I have found that the practice and study of law is a valuable experimental laboratory. Every legal case requires judges, lawyers, jurors, witnesses, and parties to define the issues, to organize evidence relevant to those issues, and to reach conclusions about the relative persuasiveness of the evidence.<sup>43</sup> This wrenching world of legal experience—as problematic as it may seem to the general population after the advent of



public television in the courtroom—is a furnace of realities that can teach us many things about the use and abuse of evidence. From these experiences, several operational rules emerge that illustrate the combination of objective and subjective elements in evidence, opening the way for one to add reason to one's faith and to engage faith in one's reason.

1. *Any piece of evidence is deeply intertwined with a question.* No real evidence exists until an issue is raised which that evidence tends to prove or disprove. By choosing what questions we will ask, we introduce a subjective element into the inquiry—seeking and asking begin in faith. At the same time, our questions in turn determine what will become evidence—faith begins with asking and seeking.

Some questions are relatively simple and mostly objective: Where was Tom on the day of the crime? Other questions are more difficult and intermediate: What was Tom thinking? Ultimate questions frame the crux of the case and are largely subjective: Did Tom commit murder? Evidence may answer the simpler questions, but it rarely settles the ultimate issues. Judges and jurors adopt “findings of fact” and “conclusions of law” that are based on evidence, but those findings do not emerge spontaneously. They are separate, subjective formulations made by them in response to the evidence.

Similarly, we approach religious matters by asking different levels of questions. Certain queries ask ultimate questions: Did Joseph Smith tell the truth? Did Jesus appear to the Nephites? Such questions are usually tackled by breaking the question down and asking intermediate and easier questions: Is it reasonable to think that Lehi

came from Jerusalem around 600 B.C.? Does it appear that many authors contributed to the writing of the Book of Mormon? To answer the intermediate questions, we start looking for specific bits of data. Was there timber in Arabia suitable for shipbuilding? (Indeed there was.) In what style did the Jews write around 600 B.C.? (They used many varieties of parallelism.) In response to such evidence, we then voluntarily form our own “findings of fact,” or opinions relative to the questions we have asked.

The study of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon illustrates in more detail this interaction of questions and data in the operation of evidence. One might ask: What does the presence of chiasmus in a text prove?<sup>44</sup> Chiasmus is usually thought of as evidence of Hebrew style, which it is, but it may be evidence of many other things as well, depending fundamentally on what question a person asks. For example, is the English text of the Book of Mormon orderly, complex, precise, and interestingly composed in purposeful units, or is it dull, chaotic, and redundant (as some have suggested)? Chiasmus gives evidence to answer that question. What is the meaning of a text? Form is often linked with content,<sup>45</sup> as in Alma 36, in which Alma meaningfully places the turning point in his life at the chiastic turning point of his beautiful chapter.<sup>46</sup> Were Book of Mormon authors well trained and careful in using their skills? Did they revise and rework their own earlier texts? The abrupt antithetical parallelisms in Mosiah 27:29–30 that were reworked into the chiastic pattern of Alma 36 offer internal evidence of the skill and care of these authors. Because all authors did not use chiasmus in the same ways, this literary element also provides evidence of multiple authorship and historical development in the Book of

Mormon. King Benjamin is quite classical in his use of chiasmus. Alma the Younger is more creative and personal in his use of chiasmus.<sup>47</sup> Chiasmus also provides evidence that the Book of Mormon was translated from an underlying Hebrew text, as is seen especially in Helaman 6:10. Chiasmus may further prove something about the precise nature of Joseph Smith's work as translator. Each time a word appears within these given frameworks, it seems to have been rendered by the same English word.

Each of these bits of evidence is interesting in its own right, but these points do not begin to function as evidence until we have provided the question we seek to answer. Thus, we are involved in the inception and conception of evidence by the questions we choose to raise.

Some of the questions are simple, and objective answers to those questions from the realm of evidence may, to a large extent, confirm faith or make faith plausible. But the ultimate questions are more subjective, and although influenced by reason, their answers remain predominantly in the realm of belief.

*2. Just about anything can serve potentially as evidence, depending on what a person wishes to emphasize.* Some have viewed violent opposition to the Book of Mormon as evidence of its divinity.<sup>48</sup> Others see evidence of the same in its acceptance worldwide. Some rightly find evidence for the spiritual truthfulness of the Book of Mormon in its clarity, plainness, and expansiveness.<sup>49</sup> Others rightly find evidence for its miraculous origins in its complexity, subtlety, and precision. Some properly find persuasiveness in its uniformity and its conformity with eternal truths, whereas others appropriately find confirmation in its variety and cultural idiosyncrasies.

When we seek evidence of something, we are prospecting, looking around at just about anything to see what we can find. Of course, not everything we find will ultimately amount to useful evidence, but just because some people may go overboard and wish to see every hole in the ground in South America as evidence of pre-Columbian baptismal fonts, that does not mean we should reject all evidence as worthless. Thomas Edison had several silly ideas before coming up with his many inventions.

3. *For this reason, evidence can almost always be found or generated for and against just about any proposition.* Only a very impoverished mind cannot find evidence for just about anything he or she wants. Once again, this points out that evidence is not only discovered but also created. That creation is not arbitrarily *ex nihilo*, but neither is it impersonally predestined.

4. *Different kinds of legal evidence evoke different kinds of responses.* The law allows physical evidence, written documents, oral testimony, and so on. But at the same time, different people or legal situations may require or prefer to favor one kind of evidence over another. No rules automatically determine how one kind of evidence stacks up against another or what kind of evidence is best.

Many different types of evidence likewise exist for the Book of Mormon: internal and external, comparative and analytic, philological and doctrinal, statistical and thematic, chronological and cyclical, source critical (the seams between the texts abridged by Moroni in the book of Ether are still evident)<sup>50</sup> and literary. Its historical complexity and plausibility are supported by the study of warfare in the Book of Mormon (including remarkable coherence in its martial law, sacral ideology of war, and

campaign strategy, buttressed by archaeological evidence regarding weaponry, armor, fortifications, and seasonality).<sup>51</sup> Evidence is found to enrich the prophetic allegory of Zenos by researching the horticulture of olives (it is evident that whoever wrote Jacob 5 had a high degree of knowledge about olives, which do not grow in New York).<sup>52</sup> Numerous legal practices in the Book of Mormon presuppose or make the best sense when understood against an ancient Israelite background. And so on, many times over. It objectively boggles the mind: How could any author keep all of these potential lines of evidence concurrently in his head while dictating the Book of Mormon without notes or a rough draft? It also subjectively engages the Spirit: How should all these different kinds of evidence be received, assessed, and evaluated?

5. *Legal evidence is often circumstantial.* The more direct the evidence, the more probative it usually is, and in some courts “circumstantial evidence only raises a probability.”<sup>53</sup> But on the other hand, people may also choose to view circumstantial evidence as desirable and even necessary in certain situations. Indeed, the circumstances surrounding a particular event or statement are usually essential to understanding the matter. To quote Henry David Thoreau, “Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk.”<sup>54</sup> A dictum from the United States Supreme Court explains the power of circumstantial evidence: “Circumstantial evidence is often as convincing to the mind as direct testimony, and often more so. A number of concurrent facts, like rays of light, all converging to the same center, may throw not only a clear light but a burning conviction; a conviction of truth more infallible than the testimony even of two witnesses directly to a fact.”<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, the

convergence of huge amounts of circumstantial evidence, such as in the astonishingly short time in which the Book of Mormon was translated,<sup>56</sup> may be viewed quite favorably, if a person's spiritual disposition inclines one to receive and value such evidence.

6. *Another fascinating and crucial question is, How are we to evaluate the cumulative weight of evidence?* Some compilations of evidence are strong; other collections are weak. Yet once again, in most settings, no scale for evaluating the cumulative weight of evidence is readily available. No canons of method answer the question, How much evidence do we need in order to draw a certain conclusion? Answering this question is another choice that combines and bridges faith and evidence.

An interesting scale has developed in the law that prescribes specific levels of proof that are required to support certain legal results. The world of evidence is not black and white; there are many shades of gray. Ranging from a high degree of certitude on down, standards of proof on this spectrum include:

1. Beyond a reasonable doubt, dispositive, practically certain
2. Clear and convincing evidence, nearly certain
3. Competent and substantial evidence, well over half
4. Preponderance of evidence, more than half, more likely than not
5. Probable, as in probable cause, substantial possibility
6. Plausible, reasonably suspected
7. Material, relevant, merely possible.

Thus, for example, a person cannot be convicted of a first-degree murder unless the prosecution can prove its case “beyond a reasonable doubt.” A civil case, however, between two contesting parties to a contract will be decided by a simple preponderance of the evidence. A grand jury can indict a person on probable cause.

But even within this spectrum, as helpful and sophisticated as it is, no precise definitions for these terms exist. Lawyers and judges still have only a feeling for what these legal terms mean, and their applications may vary from judge to judge. For example, a survey conducted in the Eastern District of New York among ten federal judges determined that the phrase “beyond a reasonable doubt” ranged from 76 percent to 95 percent certainty (although most were on the high end of this range). “Clear and convincing evidence” covered from 60 percent to 75 percent.<sup>57</sup> Obviously, a degree of subjectivity is again involved in deciding what level of certitude should be required or has been achieved in a given case.

In a religious setting, no arbiter prescribes or defines the level of evidence that will sustain a healthy faith. All individuals must set for themselves the levels of proof that they will require.<sup>58</sup> Yet how does one privately determine what burden of proof the Book of Mormon should bear? Should investigators require that it be proved beyond a reasonable doubt before experimenting with its words to learn of its truth or goodness? Should believers expect to have at least a preponderance of the evidence on their side in order to maintain their faith? Or is faith borne out sufficiently by a merely reasonable or plausible position, perhaps even in spite of all evidence? Few people realize how much rides on their personal choice in these matters

and that their answer necessarily originates in the domain of faith.

7. *Different legal cases call for different configurations of evidence.* Some matters of common law or statute are what one might call single-factor cases: the presence or absence of a single factor is dispositive of the matter. More often, however, legal rules call for a number of elements that must be proved in order for a claim to be established. In such cases, every element is crucial, and each must be satisfied for the legal test to be met. In other cases, however, several criteria are recognized by law, none of which is absolutely essential but, given the facts and circumstances of the particular case, may be an indicative factor. Thus, for example, in determining whether a person is either an independent contractor or an employee, more than twenty factors have been recognized by law as being potentially significant in resolving the issue, but none of them is absolutely essential.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Book of Mormon evidences may come in all three of these configurations.

In ultimate matters of faith, however, the individual must decide what configuration of evidence to require. Is the ultimate issue of Book of Mormon origins to be answered by a single-factor test, by satisfying the requirements of a multiple-element set (and if so, who defines what the essential elements are to be?), or by drawing on various facts and circumstances accumulated through spiritual experience and research? Individual choice on this matter will again affect how the objective evidence works in any given individual's mind and spirit.

8. *In certain cases, the sum of the evidence may be greater than the total of its individual parts.* "Pieces of evidence, each by itself insufficient, may together constitute a



significant whole, and justify by their combined effect a conclusion.”<sup>60</sup> The cumulative effect of evidence is in some ways perplexing, but again reflects the role of the observer’s preference in how evidence works. Individual pieces of evidence, each of which standing alone is relatively insignificant and uninteresting, may take on vast importance in a person’s mind as they combine to form a consistent pattern or coherent picture. It is in some senses ironic that a few strong single facts can be overwhelmed and defeated by a horde of true but less significant facts, a strategy I used in winning several tax cases. But should one give greater credence to a wide-ranging accumulation of assorted details or to a few single strong factors? Only personal judgment will answer that question.

9. *Another interesting effect occurs when a good case is actually weakened by piling on a few weak additional points.* A bad argument may be worse in some minds than no argument at all if the weak arguments tend to undermine confidence in the strong points. But who can tell what will work or not work for one person or another? The degree of confidence a person is willing to place in any evidence is another manifestation of faith or personal response.

10. *Similarly, advocacy and rhetoric are virtually part of the evidence.* The techniques of presenting evidence are often as important as the evidence itself, and the subjective decision to feature certain points in favor of others can be the turning point of a case. Important facts forcefully presented take on added significance; crucial evidence overlooked and underused will not always even be noticed by the judge or jury.

Again, it is a sobering reality that the apparent victory in debates often goes to the witty, the clever, the articulate, and the overconfident. Hopefully, good arguments will always be presented in a clear manner so as not to obscure their true value; but because this does not always happen, prudent observers need to be careful to separate kernels of truth from the husks they are packaged in.

11. *Not all evidence ultimately counts.* In a court of law, the judge and jury will eventually decide to ignore some of the evidence, especially hearsay, mere opinions, or statistical probabilities. Similarly, in evaluating Book of Mormon evidence, one needs to be meticulous in separating fact from opinion. Likewise, fantastic statistics can be generated by either friends or foes of the book. This does not mean that statistical presentations should be ruled out of Book of Mormon discussions; some wordprinting studies, for example, have achieved noteworthy results.<sup>61</sup> But such evidence must not be exaggerated and must be approached with sophistication.

12. *Constraints on time and the availability of witnesses or documentary evidence may be completely fortuitous yet also very important.* If a witness is unavailable to testify in court, the case may be lost. Documentary evidence known or presumed once to have existed is scarcely helpful. To reach a legal decision, time limitations are imposed on all parties; and in most cases, evidence discovered after a decision has become final is simply ignored.

In much the same way, important evidence relevant to religious matters will often be perpetually lacking. Thus, a person must subjectively choose at what point enough has been heard. Further historical or archaeological discoveries

may eventually surface, but in the meantime, one must choose. In this regard, Elder Richard L. Evans counseled, “And when we find ourselves in conflict and confusion, we can well learn to wait awhile for all the evidence and all the answers that now evade us.”<sup>62</sup> And President Hugh B. Brown recommended: “With respect to some things that now seem difficult to understand, we can afford to wait until we have all the facts, until all the evidence is in . . . . If there seems to be conflict, it is because men, fallible men, are unable properly to interpret God’s revelations or man’s discoveries.”<sup>63</sup>

### **The Need for Caution**

Clearly, the matter of evidence is complex. While certain evidences will be demonstrably stronger and more objective than others, the processing of evidence is not simply a matter of feeding the data in one end of a machine and catching a conclusion as it falls out the other. Even in the law we read: “Absolute certainty and accuracy in fact-finding is an ideal, rather than an achievable goal.”<sup>64</sup> Caution and care are in order.

Caution on the side of reason tells us that the power and value of evidence may be overrated in the world. Although evidence is certainly required to prevent our legal system of justice from degenerating into the Salem witch trials, even under the best of circumstances evidence is often ambiguous, incomplete, or nonexistent.

Caution is also advised on the side of faith. Revealed knowledge must be understood and interpreted correctly. What has actually been revealed? Do we know by revelation where the final battles in the Book of Mormon were

fought? Do we know that because twenty-one chapters of Isaiah are quoted in the Book of Mormon that all sixty-six were on the plates of brass? Moreover, the implications of revelation are not always clear. Does the revealed fact that God is a God of order require us to reject the Heisenberg principle of uncertainty? Elder Widtsoe thought so. Perhaps that principle is only an expression of incomplete information, which will “disappear with increasing knowledge,”<sup>65</sup> but until we have further knowledge we must walk with caution in both spheres.

### **A Puzzle**

Maybe another metaphor will help—that of an old jigsaw puzzle. The picture on the box is a broad, or holistic, view of some reality given by revelation; but the picture on our box is incomplete (see Article of Faith 9) and unclear in spots (see 1 Corinthians 13:12). Moreover, we are also missing several pieces of the puzzle, and we are not even sure how many are gone. Some of the pieces in our box do not appear to belong to our puzzle at first, and others quite definitely are strays. The picture on the box becomes clearer to us, however, with greater study of its details. The more closely we examine the available pieces and the more use we make of our minds, the more we are able to put together a few pieces of solid truth here and there. We may, of course, put some of the pieces in the wrong place initially, but as other pieces are put into position and as we continually refer to the picture on the lid, we are able to correct those errors. As our understanding of both the picture and the pieces progresses, we gain greater respect

for what we know, for how it all fits together, and for what we yet do not know.

### **Redeeming the Mind**

In the end, what we need is not a metaphor, but a metamorphosis. Metaphors strongly depict the paradigm, but only a shift of heart will make the difference if we are going to learn wisdom even by study and also by faith. How are we to foster both spirit and intellect? I have five suggestions.

First, be competent but resist pride. Joseph F. Smith firmly declared, “Of those who speak in his name, the Lord requires humility, not ignorance.”<sup>66</sup> All are susceptible to the pervasive curse of pride, but scholars are above average in the pride category. We know by sad experience that when people get a little power, their natural disposition is to exercise unrighteous dominion, and clearly, knowledge is a form of power. Competence facilitates intellect, just as humility facilitates the Spirit.

Second, never oversimplify and never overcomplicate. Truth is both simple and complex. The scriptures affirm both. The message of the gospel is simple, the way is clear, the path is straight; but the content of the gospel is also imponderable, inscrutable, and unfathomable.

Third, learn with a purpose, and then give purpose to your learning. The bridge between faith and reason is purposeful activity. Study gives us facts, truth, and knowledge; faith gives us values, goodness, and objectives. Both are necessary. Knowledge, in and of itself, is morally neutral until it is put to work in support of some chosen purpose. There is a trouble with truth: Satan knows a lot of truth. He knows the laws of physics, physiology, psychol-

ogy, and social behavior. What he lacks is the willingness to do what is good. That conviction comes through the Light of Christ and with faith in Jesus. Without the love of Christ, truth is dangerous. No one, scholars included, operates above the moral law. I continue to be impressed in Alma 32 that what we learn when we plant the seed is not that the seed is true but that it is good. We should know that the gospel is both good and true, for our knowledge will “operate toward [our] salvation or condemnation as it is used or misused.”<sup>67</sup>

Fourth, not only must we cultivate and listen to both intellect and spirit but we must apply the steps of repentance in overcoming our rebellious thoughts every bit as much as in rectifying our disobedient actions.<sup>68</sup> I find in the gospel a remarkable ability to harmonize and transcend such stubborn dichotomies as spirit and matter, rights and duties, and human and divine.<sup>69</sup> In no case is that power to unify more significant than in harmonizing the mind and the spirit. The only power that can achieve such unities is the power that truly makes one, the atonement of Jesus Christ. Our minds and our spirits both have need of the atonement. A clean engine runs better, and so do a cleansed spirit and mind.

Perhaps it strikes you as odd to think of redeeming your mind. But is the human intellect any less or any more in need of redemption than any other part of the soul? Is a mortal’s mind any less subject to the fall than the body? Mind and spirit are polarized only when both are unredeemed. The natural mind is an enemy to God, but through the redeeming powers of the atonement of Christ, the human spirit and the human intellect both become

mutually cooperative counterparts as they work in harmony with the mind and will of God.

So, the question becomes, Has our thinking been redeemed? Have our mind and spirit both been sanctified by the atoning blood of Christ? Has the finger of the Lord touched our inert cerebral stones and made them into light-giving gems? Have you been “transformed by the renewing of your mind”? (Romans 12:2). Has your mind yielded “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and . . . [become] as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict”? (Mosiah 3:19). Elder Maxwell has said, “Absolute truth calls for absolute love and absolute patience.”<sup>70</sup> The qualities mentioned by King Benjamin in Mosiah apply as much to the mind as to anything else. The basic meaning of the word *atonement* in Greek is to reconcile two alienated parties.<sup>71</sup> The atonement can fully reconcile the tensions between reason and revelation not by obliterating the distinctiveness between reasoned thought and heartfelt spiritual experience but by bringing both into oneness in Christ.

Finally, seek the fulness. What we seek in the dispensation of the fulness of times is the fulness of the everlasting gospel, not just one half or the other of the loaf of the bread of life. Longing to pour out upon the Saints more of what he knew, Joseph Smith once remarked, “It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind.”<sup>72</sup> Hugh Nibley has similarly said, “Our search for knowledge should be ceaseless, which means that it is open-ended. . . . True knowledge never shuts the door on

more knowledge, but zeal often does”; Adam and Abraham had “far greater and more truth than what we have, and yet the particular genius of each was that he was constantly ‘seeking for *greater* light and knowledge.’”<sup>73</sup> We are not likely to have the kind of faith it will take to receive all that the Father has if we have not served him with all that we do have, that is, with all our heart, might, mind, and strength.

### **The Choice Is Ours**

“Of all our needs,” President Gordon B. Hinckley has said, “the greatest is an increase in faith.”<sup>74</sup> Anything that truly helps in that process, even a little bit, should be useful to us.

As a young man and still today, I have always felt very satisfied in my testimony of the Book of Mormon. At first, I believed that the book was true with little or no evidence of any kind at all. Never expecting to find great proofs or evidence for the book, I have been astonished by what the Lord has done. In all of this, I have not been disappointed but richly satisfied.

It seems clear enough that the Lord does not intend for the Book of Mormon to be an open-and-shut case intellectually, either pro or con. If God had intended that, he could have left more concrete evidences one way or the other. Instead, it seems that the Lord has maintained a careful balance between requiring us to exercise faith and allowing us to find reasons that affirm the stated origins of this record. The choice is then entirely ours. Ultimately, evidences may not be that important, but then it is easy to say that the airplane or the parachute has become irrelevant after you are safely on the ground.



We are blessed to have the Book of Mormon. It is the word of God. It would be ideal if all could accept it without suspicion and then, upon humble prayer, receive the witness of the Holy Ghost that it is true, but in this less than ideal world, it is good that so much evidence can bring us to believe and help us to nurture faith in this extraordinary book.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Henry B. Eyring, ed., *On Being a Disciple-Scholar* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995); and Robert L. Millet, ed., *To Be Learned Is Good If . . .* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987).
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Faith: The Essence of True Religion* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 73.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 15.
4. Neal A. Maxwell, "The Disciple-Scholar," in *On Being a Disciple-Scholar*, ed. Eyring, 3.
5. Boyd K. Packer, "I Say unto You, Be One' (D&C 38:27)," *Brigham Young University 1990–91 Devotionals and Fireside Speeches* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1991), 89.
6. Used by Lowell L. Bennion, "The Uses of the Mind in Religion," *BYU Studies* 14/1 (1973): 47–55, arguing that one cannot turn one's back on either the religious (biblical) or the rational (Greek) tradition, 48.
7. Truman G. Madsen, "Philosophy," in B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), lxxiii.
8. "The Lord does not convince men of his truth by placing before their eyes and in their hands tangible evidence, as a lawyer may do before the court, marking it exhibit A and exhibit B, and then expect it to be accepted. The Lord expects the searcher

after truth to approach him with a contrite spirit and with sincerity of purpose, if he will do this and keep the commandments of the Lord, he shall receive the witness through the Holy Spirit and shall know the truth.” Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 3:228.

9. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 267.

10. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943), 28.

11. *Ibid.*, 29.

12. Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:124.

13. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple*, 16.

14. Hinckley, *Faith*, 10.

15. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple*, 49.

16. See John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985), 111, 368 n. 16.

17. See John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 41–43.

18. Austin Farrar, “Grete Clerk,” in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, comp. Jocelyn Gibb (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1965), 26; cited in Neal A. Maxwell, “Discipleship and Scholarship,” *BYU Studies* 32/3 (summer 1992): 5.

19. Maxwell, “Discipleship and Scholarship,” 5.

20. See Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987).

21. See John W. Welch, “Ten Testimonies of Jesus Christ from the Book of Mormon,” in *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 223–42.

22. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple*, 49. Elder Maxwell has enumerated a lengthy list of evidences that raise “vexing challenges for disbelievers and critics who reject the true account but remain surrounded by increasing incredibilia.” Neal A. Maxwell, “The Ends of the Earth Shall Inquire after Thy Name,”

address delivered at the Missionary Training Center, Provo, Utah, 23 August 1994.

23. Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Standard unto My People,” address delivered at CES Symposium, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 9 August 1994 (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1994), 7.

24. See Stephen L. Richards, in Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Conference Report), October 1954, 96.

25. Hinckley, *Faith*, 78.

26. John W. Welch, “The Temple in the Book of Mormon,” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 353–55.

27. See John W. Welch, “A Book You Can Respect,” *Ensign*, September 1977, 45–48.

28. See B. H. Roberts, *Deseret News*, 11 October 1930.

29. Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 466.

30. *Ibid.*, 466.

31. B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1909), 2:vi–vii.

32. *Ibid.*, 2:vii; cited by Ted E. Brewerton, “The Book of Mormon: A Sacred Ancient Record,” in Conference Report, October 1995, 39; or *Ensign*, November 1995, 31.

33. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 2:vii.

34. Hinckley, *Faith*, 5.

35. McConkie, *New Witness*, 189.

36. *Ibid.*, 188.

37. Sidney B. Sperry, “Some Universals in the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/1 (1995): 232.

38. John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999).

39. Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), xiv.

40. See Richard L. Bushman, “My Belief,” *BYU Studies* 25/2 (1985): 23–30. Bushman rightly learned that such expectations

are unrealistic (pp. 28–29), but there are other alternatives besides discarding all evidence as “essentially irrelevant” (p. 30).

41. Ezra Taft Benson, “A New Witness for Christ,” in Conference Report, October 1984, 7; or *Ensign*, November 1984, 8.

42. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple*, 18.

43. For an excellent précis of the legal science of evidence and proof, see Peter W. Murphy, “Teaching Evidence, Proof, and Facts: Providing a Background in Factual Analysis and Case Evaluation,” *Journal of Legal Education* 51/4 (2001): 568–98.

44. See John W. Welch, “What Does Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon Prove?” in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 199–224.

45. In Mosiah 5:10–12, for example, King Benjamin is interested in contrasting those who remember the covenantal name and those who do not. The structure of the chiasm in this text accentuates this sharp contrast, the *either/or* separating the two options. In Alma 41:13–15, the balanced sense of divine justice, which will reward good for that which is good, and righteous for that which is righteous, is conveyed subtly by the balance implicit in its literary structure. A similar effect is achieved in Leviticus 24, where the “bruise for bruise, eye for eye” sense of talionic justice is reflected perfectly in the chiasmic structure that embraces that content. John W. Welch, “Chiasmus in Biblical Law,” in *Jewish Law Association Studies IV: The Boston Conference Volume*, ed. Bernard Jackson (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 5–22, esp. 7–11.

46. See John W. Welch, “Alma 36: A Masterpiece,” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 114–31.

47. The pair of lists that is inverted to become a list of pairs in the opposite order in Alma 41:13–15 is brilliantly creative.

48. See McConkie, *New Witness*, 462.

49. *Ibid.*, 467.

50. See John W. Welch, “Preliminary Comments on the Sources behind the Book of Ether” (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986).

51. See William J. Hamblin and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990).

52. Steven D. Ricks and John W. Welch, *Allegory of the Olive Tree* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 484–562.

53. *Reg. v Rowton* (1865), 13 W.R. 437; cited in Norton-Kyshe, *Dictionary of Legal Quotations*, 88.

54. Henry David Thoreau, *Journal*, 11 November 1850; cited in Angela Partington, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 696.

55. *Thompson v Bowie*, 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 463, 473 (1867); cited in Eugene C. Gerhart, ed., *Quote It! Memorable Legal Quotations* (New York: Boardman, 1969), 205.

56. See “How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?” in Welch, ed., *Reexploring*, 1–8.

57. *United States v Fatico*, 458 Federal Supplement 388, 410 (Eastern District of New York, 1978). See Timothy J. Martens, “The Standard of Proof for Preliminary Questions of Fact under the Fourth and Fifth Amendments,” *Arizona Law Review* 30 (1988): 33.

58. Elder Widtsoe felt that “the weight of evidence” on one side or the other was sufficient to remove all doubt (Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, 28). Joseph Fielding Smith asserted that the highest standard of proof could be met, that evidence “prove[d] beyond the possibility of doubt that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery spoke the truth” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:124).

59. See Revenue Ruling 87–41, 1987–1 Cumulative Bulletin 296.

60. Lord Wright, in *Grant v Australian Knitting Mills, Ltd.*, A. C. (1936) 85, 96; cited in M. Frances McNamara, ed., *2,000 Classic Legal Quotations* (Rochester, N.Y.: Lawyers Cooperative, 1992), 207.

61. See John L. Hilton, "On Verifying Wordprint Studies: Book of Mormon Authorship," *BYU Studies* 30/3 (1990): 89–108.
62. Richard L. Evans, in Conference Report, October 1952, 96.
63. Hugh B. Brown, in Conference Report, April 1955, 82.
64. Perry Meyer, "Evidence in the Future," *Canadian Bar Journal* 51 (1973): 118.
65. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, 13. Widtsoe also stated, "Chance, disorder, chaos are ruled out of the physical universe" (*ibid.*, 19).
66. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1919), 206.
67. *Ibid.*, 206, citing *Juvenile Instructor* 41 (August 1906): 465.
68. Indeed, the word for *repentance* in Greek, *metanoia*, means literally to change one's mind.
69. See John W. Welch, "BYU Studies: Into the 1990s," *BYU Studies* 31/4 (1991): 25.
70. Maxwell, *Deposition of a Disciple*, 17.
71. See Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:255, 258. See also Hugh W. Nibley, "The Meaning of the Atonement," in *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 556, 560–61.
72. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 296.
73. Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 70–71.
74. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Lord, Increase Our Faith," in Conference Report, October 1987, 68; or *Ensign*, November 1987, 54.