before my mind." More specifically, he said, "I saw the graves open & the saints as they arose took each other by the hand . . . while setting up."[170] Thus, although many emendations are editorial, the more radical of Smith's changes to the Bible were understood by him as a function of what he saw when reading it.

Once the understandings of these passages had been revealed, however, it remained to the Prophet to exercise considerable personal effort in rendering these experiences into words:[171]

> At least with respect to the JST, it appears that when he read he saw events, not words. What he saw, he verbalized to a scribe. One of Smith's Book of Mormon scribes provided, in his own failed attempt to translate, the occasion for the most direct description of Smith's method. "You have not understood," God told Oliver Cowdery through Smith: "you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But… you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right and… you shall feel that it is right. But if it is not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget that thing which is wrong; therefore you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me."[172] Cowdery appears to have thought he could engage in the "inspired translation" of the Book of Mormon by parroting God's reading. In contrast, as implied by the above statement, Smith believed it necessary to determine independently how to represent what he read or saw. The appropriate question to God by the prophet-translator was whether his interpretation was correct, not what God's interpretation was.

> Arguably, then, "translate" expressed Smith's experience of "study[ing] it out in [his] mind" or his sense of agency in front of the text. Smith did not think of himself as God's stenographer. Rather, he was an interpreting reader, and God the confirming authority. He did not experience revelation "as dictated, as something whispered in someone's ear" and, thus, provides a useful illustration of Ricoeur's argument that revelation is not propositional but "pluralistic, polysemic, and at most analogical in form."[173] Of equal significance, however, is the manner in which Smith's description of revelation communicates a sense of being limited by a text. It was possible to not "be right" in one's reading. Smith experienced revelation as an interpretive response to the text: not freely associated from, but bound by the "world of the text" in front of him, even if in an altered mental state or vision. In sum, Smith's use of "translate," for all its discursive weaknesses, conveyed his experience of creative agency before a text and, simultaneously, his sense of being bound by the text as an account of events or as history.

With respect to the English translation of the Book of Mormon, Royal Skousen argues that the actual choice of words chosen was given under "tight control."[174] However, in another place, Skousen discusses the question of whether one should assume that every change made in the JST constitutes revealed text.[175] Besides arguments that can be made from the actual text of the JST, there are questions regarding the reliability of and degree of supervision given to the scribes who were involved in transcribing, copying, and preparing the text for publication.[176] Differences are also apparent in the nature of the translation process that took place at different stages of the work. For example, while a significant proportion of the Genesis passages that have been canonized as the book of Moses "[look] like a word-for-word revealed text," evidence from a study of two sections in the New Testament that were translated twice indicates that the later "New Testament JST is not being revealed word-for-word, but largely depends upon Joseph Smith's varying responses to the same difficulties in the text."[177]

For an excellent discussion explaining why historicity neither requires inerrancy nor completeness, see Peterson[178] and Tanner.[179]

**0-14**    About such passages, Matthews concludes that: "Some… portions [of the JST] may be the result of the

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170   J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 16 April 1843, pp. 196, 198.

171   K. Flake, *Translating Time*, pp. 507-508; cf. G. Underwood, *Revelation*, pp. 76-81, 83-84.

172   D&C 9:7-9.

173   P. Ricoeur, *Revelation*, pp. 76, 75.

174   R. Skousen, *Tight Control*.

175   R. Skousen, *Earliest*, pp. 456-470.

176   *Ibid.*, pp. 459-460. In "correcting" revelations for publication in the Book of Commandments, for example, though Joseph Smith had warned those involved not to "alter the sense" of the revelations (Joseph Smith, Jr. to W. W. Phelps, 31 July 1832, reproduced in J. Smith, Jr., *Writings 2002*, p. 273), Sidney Rigdon seems to have sometimes gone too far in his changes: "Whitmer often restored the original wording of many of the revelations that had been adjusted by Rigdon" (R. S. Jensen, *From Manuscript*, p. 36).

177   *Ibid.*, pp. 461-462. For the original study, see K. P. Jackson, *et al.*, *Two Passages*.

178   D. C. Peterson, *Inerrancy*.

179   J. S. Tanner, *World and Word*.