
Joseph Smith's Description of Paul the Apostle

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Discussions by scholars about Joseph Smith's January 5, 1841, Nauvoo Lyceum teachings in which he offered a tantalizing physical description of the New Testament apostle Paul have long recognized a parallel description of Paul found in the pseudepigraphical *Acts of Paul* (1.11).¹ Unfortunately, however, it is not obvious that Joseph Smith directly borrowed from the *Acts of Paul* description, or whether the description should be considered revelatory. Without further methodological considerations, the problem of whether Joseph Smith used the *Acts of Paul* as the foundation of his statement will likely continue to plague interpretations by Mormon scholars.²

Under consideration are two statements that purport to describe Paul's physical characteristics, one of which makes the claim to offer a firsthand account of Paul in the city of Iconium while Paul was yet living; and the other given by Joseph Smith in 1841 in a context that has revelatory underpinnings. Both accounts are rather brief and cannot be immediately described as resulting from direct copying or borrowing; or at least if there was borrowing of the *Acts of Paul* by Joseph Smith, it is not overt or obvious.

The *Acts of Paul* were originally composed in Greek during the latter half of the second century AD, and the forger of the acts was actually identified in antiquity.³ The *Acts of Paul* were widely known in the early nineteenth century through a popular English translation that had wide circulation in the United States and England. However, despite the widespread circulation

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Joseph and Emma Smith's Homestead, Nauvoo, Illinois, September 30, 2011. On Tuesday, January 5, 1841, the first meeting of the Nauvoo Lyceum, an adult school of instruction, was held in the Smith home. The lyceum generally met weekly at different locations in Nauvoo. During his remarks at the inaugural meeting, the Prophet gave a brief description of the ancient apostle Paul. Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.

of the English translation and even the fairly certain conclusion that Joseph Smith owned a copy of that translation, it is not obvious that he borrowed directly from the *Acts of Paul*. To help clarify and shed light on this question, this article explores a distant genetic relationship between Joseph Smith's description of Paul and the *Acts of Paul*. This conclusion is based on the use of text-critical tools that have been developed to distinguish the direction of textual borrowing among the New Testament authors Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Moreover, a new and alternative explanation as to the source and purpose of Joseph's description of Paul will be proposed.

William Hone, *The Apocryphal New Testament*

With reference to the Apocrypha, it is important to distinguish between two types of publications of "Apocrypha": (1) the Apocrypha which were published in some printings of the Bible and which were available to Joseph Smith; and (2) literally hundreds of other Christian writings that were never

part of the Christian canon but were valued and copied by Christians. These latter texts contain the *Acts of Paul*, where the physical description of Paul is found, whereas the former do not. It is important therefore, to discuss whether Joseph had access to the *Acts of Paul* and not to the other apocryphal writings generally, or to the Apocrypha that were printed in many English editions of the Bible in the nineteenth century.⁴

Available to most English speakers was the publication of a large body of apocryphal writings that were eclectic by modern standards and were based on what are now considered inferior medieval manuscripts in Greek and Latin. Although William Hone is better known for his political satires and cutting critiques of nineteenth century British government, the opportunistic editor published in 1820 an edition of the New Testament Apocrypha which he hoped would bring to light a number of otherwise neglected texts.

Little could Hone have anticipated that the publication of *The Apocryphal New Testament* would be wildly popular and eventually enjoy nine different printings: three in England, each of which was published in London (1820, 1821, and 1824), and six in the United States—Boston (1821, 1832), Buffalo (1824), Philadelphia (1825), and two Ohio editions (1832, 1835). Each of the American editions would have been available for purchase in the regions where Joseph Smith lived and where the nascent Church of Christ, and later the Church of the Latter Day Saints, were present.⁵ It is very unlikely that Joseph Smith would have had access to any of the eighteenth century English printings of the Apocrypha used by William Hone, and no evidence has surfaced that he was able to gain access to the much older editions of Jones or Wake in any of the traveling libraries to which the Mormon leader might have been a patron. By Joseph Smith's day, the eighteenth century editions were largely of antiquarian or academic interest; popular interest in them was relatively non-existent.

The evidence for Joseph Smith's ownership of a copy William Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament* is conclusive. In January 1844, the Prophet met with other leading citizens of Nauvoo to discuss the organization and creation of the Nauvoo Library and Literary Society. Subsequent to that meeting a number of books were donated by him to the fledgling library, and among them was an *Apocryphal Testament*. That volume,



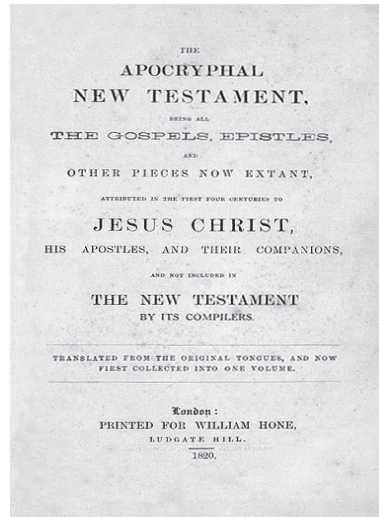
William Hone portrait by William Patten, National Portrait Gallery, London, England.

Amount of Stock Received into the Library

<i>Ebenezer Robinson</i>		\$ 0
<i>Walter Scott - in 2 vols 3.00 per Vol</i>		6.00
<i>Flavius Josephus</i>		1.00
<i>Locke's Pantheon</i>		1.25
<i>Beattie's Essay on Truth</i>		.50
<i>Lewis & Clarke</i>		.62 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Gardner's Universal History</i>		1.00
<i>Women of England</i>		.62 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Plunk Book</i>		2.00
		\$ 13.00
 <i>Joseph Smith</i> 		
<i>Review of Edwards on the Will</i>	+	.62 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Life of Tecumseh</i>	+	.37 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Whepley's Compend</i>	+	1.00
<i>Scott's Practical Works in 5 vols 40cts per Vol</i>		2.00
<i>Sillmore's Lectures</i>	+	.50
<i>Merrill's Harmony</i>	+	.50
<i>Epicureo</i>		.25
<i>Humana's Works</i>	+	.62 $\frac{1}{2}$
<i>Catholic Piety</i>	+	.25
<i>Home Physician</i>	+	1.00
<i>Apocryphal Testament</i>	+	2.00
<i>Brown's Travels</i>	+	1.25
<i>Rebel & other Travels</i>	+	.50
<i>Brown's Appeal. gram</i>	+	.75
<i>Brown's English Synastope</i>	x	.75
<i>India in Poetry & Prose</i>		.75
<i>Passed Over</i>		0. \$ 12.00

Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute ledger. The ledger shows Joseph Smith's donations to the library. The eleventh entry records that he donated William Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament* to the library, indicating that he owned the book. Image courtesy LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

entitled the *Apocryphal Testament*, can confidently be identified as an edition of William Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament*, and it is certain that at some point before 1844 Joseph Smith came to possess a copy of Hone's edition.⁶ Because no record survives that details the purchase of the book, it is not possible to say when he came to own the volume. Significantly, it appears that the *Apocryphal New Testament* was used in a September 1842 article printed in the *Times and Seasons*, since the article makes reference to the *Protevangelium of James*.⁷ Although it was probably William W. Phelps who actually authored the material that quotes from the *Protevangelium*, it does show that there was open usage of Hone in Nauvoo as early as 1842.⁸ Thus, based on the firm evidence that Joseph Smith owned a copy of William Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament*, that he donated that copy to the Nauvoo Library, and that there is evidence that it was used as a source in the *Times and Seasons* as early as 1842, we can reasonably conclude that Hone's English translation was available to, and was likely consulted by, Joseph Smith. Further analysis will determine whether he used Hone's *Acts of Paul* as a source for his description of the apostle Paul in his 1841 Lyceum remarks.



Title page from William Hone's *The Apocryphal New Testament* (London: Ludgate Hill, 1820).

The Sources

Some of the standard text-critical tools used to determine a shared textual tradition within the biblical canon are the repetition of short phrases between sources, the use of unique vocabulary or grammatical forms, shared ordering of events, and the detection of similar contexts or settings. From a text-critical standpoint, the *Acts of Paul* and Joseph Smith's description of Paul immediately stand out because of the shared context: a physical portrait of Paul.⁹ Additionally, textual borrowing can be in only one direction, because the two sources are separated by over 1,500 years. Assuming then the possibility of at least a shared tradition, it is important to further analyze

Table 1

<i>Acts of Paul (AP)</i>	Joseph Smith (JS)
1:7 At length they saw a man coming (namely Paul), of a low stature, bald (or shaved) on the head, crooked thighs, handsome legs, hollow-eyed; had a crooked nose; full of grace; for sometimes he had the countenance of an angel. And Paul saw Onesiphorus, and was glad. ¹⁰	He is about five foot high; very dark hair; dark complexion; dark skin; large Roman nose; sharp face; small black eyes, penetrating as eternity; round shoulders; a whining voice, except when elevated and then it almost resembles the roaring of a Lion. ¹¹

the two traditions using available text critical methodology (see Table 1, bold showing potential overlap).

The reader is immediately struck by the limited shared vocabulary of the two sources, albeit both descriptions exhibit a certain vague sense of overlap. Even though similar physical features are mentioned, they are sometimes opposites: “bald (or shaved) on the head” (*AP*) versus “very dark hair” (*JS*), “crooked nose” (*AP*) versus “large Roman nose,” (*JS*) or “hollow-eyed” (*AP*) versus “small black eyes” (*JS*).¹² The latter comparison could indeed be interpreted to have a similar intent, but “hollow eyes” and “penetrating” seem to convey different ideas. These pairings of opposites or quasi-opposites suggest a corrective effort or tendency between the two reports, namely those attributes that in the modern world could be considered negatives: crooked thighs, hollow-eyed, and crooked nose are either skipped over or adjusted into more positive terminology.¹³ Indeed, the only potentially demeaning feature of Joseph’s description is the rather short height of five feet. It might also be worth noting that the ordering of the two descriptions is similar in some minor ways: height, hair, nose and eyes in reverse order, with a general description of the impact of Paul’s appearance. This final similarity might be enough to inextricably connect the two accounts because the general similarities can be accounted for on the grounds that a physical description of anyone would involve a certain degree of overlapping criteria, but the fact that each ends with what is obviously overt praise for Paul is telling. Even in the final descriptions the two accounts diverge in significant ways, the *AP*

description drawing attention to Paul's appearance in a way that deifies his physicality, and the JS account drawing attention to the power of Paul's voice. It is my firm conclusion that from a text-critical standpoint there is only limited evidence of textual borrowing and that the *AP* description is at best a faded memory that is reworked in the JS account.¹⁴ If there is some type of tenuous remembered connection between the two, then the relationship between the two accounts is likely corrective.

A note of caution is in order. It might be assumed that Joseph Smith's description is revelatory in nature and that he distantly remembered the *AP* description and then added to it from a revelation in which he had seen and heard Paul in a dream or vision. This conclusion needs to be considered in light of the fact that the larger context of the description given in Joseph Smith's account does reveal some relationship to the *Acts of Paul* and thus solidifies the relationship between the two. The context of the Joseph Smith description is eventually the key piece of evidence that unlocks the textual relationship. In this regard, text-critical methodology can further the discussion significantly.

When the original context of the Nauvoo Lyceum statement is considered, it becomes apparent that Joseph's description of Paul was originally given in a setting where John C. Bennett was being introduced to the Lyceum audience as a guest of some distinction. Immediately after describing Paul, Joseph went on to say, "He was a good orator, but Doctor Bennett is a superior orator, and like Paul is active and deligent [*sic*], always employing himself in doing good to his fellow men."¹⁵ What has not been noted in previous discussions of Joseph's description of Paul is that it was actually given in part, or in whole, in the context of comparing Paul's appearance to John C. Bennett, who had recently been baptized into the faith.¹⁶

Unfortunately, no surviving description of John C. Bennett's physical appearance was directly authored by Joseph Smith, but from the few that have survived there are several remarkable convergences between what Bennett actually looked like and what the Prophet said of Paul. The sources for a description of Bennett's physical appearance include a letter purportedly written by Sidney Rigdon to James Arlington Bennet (one "t"), a New York attorney, newspaper publisher, educator, and author.¹⁷ A second description comes from a reporter's brief sketch following an anti-Mormon speech Bennett gave in Boston in 1842.¹⁸ Finally, while residing in Iowa in 1843, Bennett was expelled from the Masonic Lodge, and a brief description of him was recorded in the minutes of the meeting at the time of his expulsion.¹⁹ Table 2 (below) includes Joseph Smith's description of the apostle Paul alongside the three contemporary descriptions of John C. Bennett. Similarities are noted in bold.

Table 2

<p>Joseph Smith (JS) Nauvoo Lyceum (January 5, 1841)</p>	<p>Sidney Rigdon (SR) Letter to James Arling- ton Bennet (April 14, 1842)</p>	<p><i>Times and Seasons</i> (T&S) (October 15, 1842)</p>	<p><i>History of the Grand Lodge of Iowa (H)</i> (circa. 1843)</p>
<p>He is about five foot high; very dark hair; dark complexion; dark skin; large Roman nose; sharp face; small black eyes, penetrating as eternity; round shoulders; a whining voice, except when elevated and then it almost resembles the roaring of a Lion. He was a good orator; but Doctor Bennett is a superior orator, and like Paul is active and deligent [<i>sic</i>], always employing himself in doing good to his fellow men.</p>	<p>General Bennett is five feet five inches high, one hundred and forty-two pounds' weight, and thirty-seven years of age. He possesses much decision of character; honorable in his intercourse with his fellows, and a most agreeable companion; possessing much vivacity and animation of spirit, and every way qualified to be a useful citizen, in this or any other city.</p>	<p>Five feet nine inches high, with black eyes, black hair sprinkled with gray, dark complexion, and rather a thin face.</p>	<p>John C. Bennett . . . about 38 years of age; 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high; dark complexion; dark eyes; Roman nose; lost his upper front teeth; quick spoken.</p>



John C. Bennett engraving, in *History of the Saints, or, An exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), frontispiece. Image courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

A comparison of Joseph Smith's description of Paul with the three contemporary accounts describing John C. Bennett reveals several striking similarities. According to Joseph Smith, Paul had "very dark hair" (JS), while one account describes Bennett as having "black hair sprinkled with gray" (*T&S*). In describing the ancient apostle's complexion, the Prophet stated he had "dark complexion; dark skin" (JS), while two of the three descriptions of Bennett state he had "dark complexion" (*T&S*, *H*). Further, Smith described Paul as having a "large Roman nose" (JS), a feature noticeably similar to the Masonic description of Bennett (*H*), and a fact confirmed in the engraving of him which appeared in the front of Bennett's book *History of the Saints, or, An exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*. The Mormon leader described Paul as having a "sharp face" (JS), terminology comparable to that in the *Times and Seasons* account, which depicts Bennett "having a rather thin face" (*T&S*). Joseph Smith stated that Paul had "small black eyes" (JS), where one account has Bennett having "dark eyes" (*H*), while another says "black eyes" (*T&S*). Finally, the Prophet concludes his description of Paul with the detail that he was "active and deligent [*sic*], always employing himself in doing good to his fellow men" (JS). Perhaps this is what Sidney Rigdon was saying when he described Bennett as having "much vivacity and animation of spirit" (SR), whereas the Masonic description states he was "quick spoken" (*H*). There is one notable difference, however. Whereas Joseph Smith described Paul being rather short, "about five foot high" (JS),²⁰ Rigdon wrote that Bennett stood five feet five inches tall (SR); while the account published in the *Times and Seasons* states he was five feet nine (*T&S*); and the Masonic report indicates he was five feet seven or eight inches in height (*H*). Apart from this difference, the remaining corresponding details strongly suggest that Joseph Smith used Paul as a model or illustration to introduce the distinguished Bennett to the Lyceum audience.

From a text-critical standpoint, I conclude that the source of Joseph Smith's description of Paul did not come exclusively from the description given in the *Acts of Paul*. While the *Acts of Paul* may have provided a structure for Joseph Smith's description, and may have played a distant role as a source, that text is not the most important source. Furthermore, while some have interpreted Joseph Smith's description of Paul as originating in a revelatory experience, in actuality, the Mormon leader was simply comparing John C. Bennett with the ancient apostle as a form of flattery.

Joseph Smith and Ancient Stereotypes

I originally set out to establish an inherent link, if one existed, between Joseph Smith's description of Paul and the ancient description of the apostle

in the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*. Having established that there is very little textual agreement between the two sources, and that perhaps the relationship between the two sources is Joseph Smith's later memory of the description, and that there is rather a strong likelihood that Joseph was physically describing John C. Bennett using Paul as a model, the discussion will now consider other instances where Joseph used ancient individuals to describe modern individuals.

That Joseph Smith would compare a modern individual to an ancient one is demonstrated in several instances, particularly when newly called Church members were singled out to serve in various capacities. For example, at the time of his appointment as the first bishop in the Church, Edward Partridge was compared to "Nathanael of old, in whom there is no guile" (D&C 41:11, quoting John 1:47). Soon after his conversion, Sidney Rigdon was informed that his pre-Mormon ministry was similar to that of John the Baptist's in preparing a people to receive the fullness of the gospel (D&C 35:3-4). And finally, in a revelation calling Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet on a short-term mission, the two were encouraged to open their mouths with the promise that they would "become even as Nephi of old" (D&C 33:8). These descriptions come from a time when Partridge, Rigdon, Thayer, and Sweet were recently baptized into the Church and showed great potential in their contributions for the kingdom. Unlike the Bennett description, however, these comparisons have clear revelatory foundations.

John C. Bennett's baptism and introduction to the community of Latter-day Saints was no less auspicious than those of men such as Edward Partridge and Sidney Rigdon, and there can be little doubt that many Mormons felt that the conversion of the quartermaster general of the Illinois state militia would be beneficial to the Church. In the weeks and months after Bennett's January 1841 introduction at the Nauvoo Lyceum, a general pro-Bennett euphoria gripped some members of the Church. The *Times and Seasons* reported: "We are happy to state that several of the principal men of Illinois who have listened to the doctrines we promulge [promulgate], have become obedient to the faith and are rejoicing in the same; among whom is John C. Bennett, M.D., Quarter Master of Illinois." The report continued: "He is a man of enterprize [sic], extensive acquirements, and of independant [sic] mind, and is calculated to be a great blessing to our community."²¹ In March, the *Times and Seasons* applauded his election as Nauvoo's first mayor, noting that he is "a very popular and deserving man."²² The superlatives continued to mount. Following the April 6, 1841, laying of the cornerstone of the Nauvoo Temple, the *Times and Seasons* once again lauded Bennett's contributions to the Mormon community: "Too much praise cannot be given to Maj. General Bennett for his active services on the occasion, he has labored diligently for

the prosperity of the City, and particularly for the Legion, and it must have been a proud day for him, and entirely satisfactory to see his efforts crowned with success and his labor so well bestowed.”²³ His popularity appears to have reached a fever pitch in June 1841 when an editorial in the *Times and Seasons* responded to some criticisms of Bennett with dripping compliments: “General Bennett’s character as a gentleman, an officer, a scholar, and physician stands too high to need defending by us, suffice it to say, that he is in the confidence of the Executive.”²⁴ This final commendation recognizes the positive relationship and confidence Bennett enjoyed with the leaders of Nauvoo and thereby his imprimatur was granted.

All this praise of Bennett suggests an atmosphere in which the Saints of Nauvoo were enamored with him and were proud that an individual of such notoriety had joined their ranks. Unfortunately, he was quite adept at provoking great admiration followed by great dislike, and it is not unlikely that Joseph Smith fell into that same pattern of initial euphoria.

Conclusion

An examination of primary sources relating to Joseph Smith’s physical description of Paul suggests that the Mormon leader owned and likely read and had an understanding of William Hone’s description of the ancient apostle in the *Acts of Paul*. Further, it is known from other sources that Joseph did indeed describe some of his contemporaries by recourse to ancient biblical individuals. Additionally, the description the Prophet offered of Paul matches remarkably well with the physical descriptions of John C. Bennett, who was specifically mentioned by name in the description. Challenges to this thesis surviving sources do not enable us to confirm the extent to which Joseph Smith would openly alter an apocryphal text without compelling reason to do so; or whether Joseph was caught up in the John C. Bennett euphoria that captured the hearts of the citizens of Nauvoo in 1841.

Notes

1. Joseph Smith’s description of the apostle Paul is in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comp. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: Grandin Book, 1991), 59, as reported by William Clayton. The meeting was held in Joseph Smith’s Homestead.

2. Richard L. Anderson is exemplary in his attempt to carefully distinguish the historical from the revelatory while concluding that Joseph Smith’s description was largely revelatory. See Richard L. Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983): 399–402. However, Alexander L. Baugh came to the opposite conclusion, namely that the Prophet’s description is rather mundane in its origins, although he does not weigh the ancient evidence to the extent that Anderson did. See Alexander L. Baugh, “Parting the

Veil: The Visions of Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 1 (1999): 23–24.

3. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, 17.

4. D. Michael Quinn's analysis of the books donated by Joseph to the Nauvoo library conflates the two types of publications of the Apocrypha. See D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 188, n78.

5. A search of WorldCat brings up these editions. While there may have been others, it is reasonable to conclude that six American editions of Hone were in circulation during Joseph Smith's lifetime and three English editions. This number does not include twentieth century reprintings of the work. Hone was largely dependent on the eighteenth century English publications by Jeremiah Jones and William Wake. See Jeremiah Jones, *A New and Full Method of Settling Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: 1826–27; Oxford: 1798, 1827); and William Wake, *The Suppressed Gospels and Epistles of the Original New Testament of Jesus the Christ*, 9 vols.

6. See Christopher C. Jones, "The Complete Record of the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 192; see also Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3 (1974): 387. The titles listed in Joseph Smith's donation to the Nauvoo Library show a significant number of abbreviations, and it is reasonable to conclude that *Apocryphal Testament* is simply the abbreviation for Hone's *The Apocryphal New Testament*. The abbreviation in Joseph Smith's donation to the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute may also be accounted for by the fact that some printings of Hone presented the title of the work on the spine as *Apocryphal Testament*. It is interesting that *Epicureo (De Phaedro Epicureo)*, an ancient source, also appears in the list without mention of the author.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints actually possesses two copies of Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament*—the 1820 London printing (first printing), which was purchased in Utah in the modern era from the Utah Book & Stationary Co.; and the 1832 edition published in Ravenna Ohio. The Ravenna printing has no markings in it that would otherwise help connect it to Joseph Smith or suggest that he marked the text in any of the ways he marked the Bible used in the New Translation.

7. See "Persecution of the Prophets," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 21 (September 1, 1842): 902. Hone's edition of the *Protevangelium of James* was the only available English language translation of the text in first half of the nineteenth century.

8. Gerald E. Jones notes that Phelps authored the editorial. The reason that the passage can be identified as reliant upon the *Protevangelium* is that both confuse Zacharias in Matthew 23:35 as being the father of John the Baptist with the martyr by the same name (2 Chron. 24:20–21). See Gerald E. Jones, "Apocryphal Literature and the Latter-day Saints" in *Apocryphal Writings and the Latter-day Saints*, ed. C. Wilfred Griggs (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1986), 26.

9. It is worth noting that the Greek behind the *Acts of Paul* translation has no bearing on the discussion because Joseph Smith had no access to the Greek text.

10. Acts of Paul 1.7, as translated in Hone, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 100.

11. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 59.

12. Anderson notes that the *Acts of Paul* description has only two points of convergence with Joseph Smith's description. See Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 400–01.

13. There is considerable evidence that the "Roman nose" was a desirable feature and signified strength and intellect to nineteenth century Americans. See George Duncan, *The various theories of the relation of mind and brain reviewed* (Oxford University: Trubner, 1869), 5; Emilia Marryat Norris, *Adrift on Sea; or, The Children's Escape* (London:

Griffith and Farran, 1871), 20; Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Jonathan Edwards: An essay* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1880), 2.

14. The Hone edition of the *Acts of Paul* contains a rather lengthy introduction claiming historical verisimilitude for the historicity of the book. While today such a claim would be considered a wild exaggeration, the claim may have further induced Joseph to comment on its contents. For example, Hone writes: “The learned Grabe . . . consider(s) them as having been written in the Apostolic age; as containing nothing superstitious, or disagreeing from the opinions and believe of those times; and, in short, as a genuine and authentic history.” Hone, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 99.

15. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 59.

16. The date of Bennett’s baptism into the Church is not precisely known. He received a patriarchal blessing from Hyrum Smith on September 21, 1840, which would imply that he would have likely been baptized prior to receiving the blessing. The *Quincy Whig* reported that he was baptized in early October. See Andrew Smith, *The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 209 n20. A December 1, 1840, report in the *Times and Seasons* stated: “The Quarter Master General of Illinois, (Dr. J. C. Bennett) has joined the Mormons and been baptized according to their faith.” *Times and Seasons*, 2, no. 3 (December 1, 1840): 233. The report originated in the *Louisville Journal* (Louisville, KY).

17. The letter is reproduced in J. C. Bennett, *Mormonism Exposed: The History of the Saints* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), 40, and purports to have been written to the editor of the *New York Herald*, dated April 14, 1842. The letter’s glowing tone obviously places it months earlier when Bennett was still in favor among the Nauvoo Latter-day Saints. For a brief biographical sketch of James Arlington Bennet, see Lyndon W. Cook, “James Arlington Bennet and the Mormons,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 247–48.

18. Beginning on September 7, 1842, Bennett gave three lectures in Boston at the Marlboro Chapel, and from September 14–16, he lectured in Salem. See Smith, *The Sainly Scoundrel*, 119, 121. Reports of his lecture and physical descriptions of him appeared in the *Boston Courier* (Boston MA), September 8, 1842, reprinted with changes in the *Essex County Washingtonian* (Salem, MA), September 15, 1842; and reprinted with alterations and additions in the *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 24 (October 15, 1842): 955–56. Additional reports describing Bennett appeared in the *Pittsburgh Morning Post* (Pittsburgh, PA), April 2, 1844; *Lee County Democrat* (Burlington, IA), May 4, 1844; and *People’s Organ* (St. Louis, MO), April 10, 1844. All the sources relating to the Boston discussion, being genetically intertwined, lead to the conclusion that each repetition of the story can be traced back to the *Boston Courier*, although at times with significant embellishment. A note in Smith, *Sainly Scoundrel*, can be misleading. In addition to the sources noted here, Smith lists *Zion’s Reveille* (Voree, WI), December 1846; *New Era and Herald of Zion’s Watchman* (Voree, WI), January 1847; and Joseph Smith III, “The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith (1832–1914),” ed. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, *Saints’ Herald* (January 8, 1935), 49, as sources in his description of Bennett. However, these sources do not contain anything beyond character references to Bennett. See Smith, *Sainly Scoundrel*, 56 n18.

19. Joseph E. Morcombe, *History of the Grand Lodge of Iowa*, vol. 1 (n.p.: Grand Lodge of Iowa, 1910), 153. Bennett resided for a short time in Iowa in late 1843. See Smith, *Sainly Scoundrel*, 138–39.

20. Joseph Smith’s estimation of Paul would have put him well below the average height of his day (5’8”). See Richard Steckel, “A History of the Standard of Living in the United States,” in *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, ed. R. Whaples, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/steckel.standard.living.us>

21. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith, "Proclamation to the Saints Abroad," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 6 (January 15, 1841): 275.
22. *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 10 (March 15, 1841): 351.
23. Robert B. Thompson, "Laying the corner stone of the Temple," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 12 (April 15, 1841): 382.
24. "The Warsaw Signal," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 15 (June 1, 1841): 432.