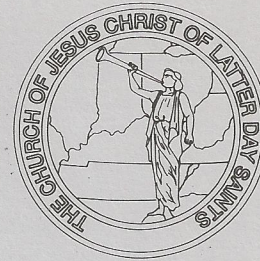




The IRON ROD



OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO TEACH AND TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND THE RESTORATION AND INVITE ALL TO COME AND BE BAPTIZED UNTO REPENTANCE THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

President's Message

February 1993

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible Evidence of the Restoration

"For December 1, 1831, Joseph Smith wrote the following note in his journal: 'I resumed the translation of the Scriptures, and continued to labor in this branch of my calling with Elder Sidney Rigdon as my scribe.' This is a most important comment because it reveals how the Prophet himself viewed his work of translating the Bible--it was part of his divine calling as a prophet of God."

In June 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith assisted by Oliver Cowdery as his scribe began what they called a "new translation" of the Bible. Today it is referred to as the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) or Inspired Version. Joseph was 24 years of age; Oliver was 23. Their formal schooling was meager. They did not have a knowledge of Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic. However, Joseph was not a novice at translating, for he had just previously, with divine assistance, translated the Book of Mormon.

In translating the Bible the Prophet used an English edition of the King James version, and did not translate from ancient manuscripts or records, but rather he discerned the true intent of the Bible through revelation. He was not limited to what was on the written page of the King James version he was using. This text was a starting point but the Spirit of Revelation was always an additional source of information. The Spirit suggested many enlargements, backgrounds, and additional concepts not found in the King James Version.

The term translation when used in reference to the JST has a broader meaning than it normally does when one thinks of translating languages. To a prophet, a revelation is a more important source than a written text. Another good example of this is Joseph's translation of the Book of Abraham in the *Pearl of Great Price* from Egyptian papyri. It may not have been a literal translation at all, and therefore the Book of Abraham may go far beyond what was written on the papyri.

Joseph knew that a new translation of the Bible was needed because he had learned from the Book of Mormon, particularly in 1 Nephi 13, that many plain and precious things had been taken away from the Bible. The JST contains thousands of additions to and clarifications of the King James Version. Elder Bruce R. McConkie has emphasized the great importance of using and relying on the JST. He said the JST, "is a thousand times over the best Bible now existing on earth. It contains all that the King James Version does, plus pages of additions and corrections and an occasional deletion. It was made by the spirit of revelation, and the changes and additions are the equivalent of the revealed word in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and

Covenants."

The translation of the Bible was a great learning experience for the Prophet. As he studied the Bible, he learned new things as the Lord gave him revelation. This process required effort, prayer, energy, desire and serious contemplation. In this the Prophet set an example we should follow in our scripture study. It was Joseph's study and translation of the Bible from June 1830 to July 1833 that set the stage for the reception of many of the doctrinal revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants including Section 76 on the three degrees of glory and Section 132 on the Celestial order of marriage.

The Book of Moses and Joseph Smith-Matthew, which are two significant portions of the Pearl of Great Price are excerpts from the JST. Much of the knowledge that we have about the creation is found in the JST. The Joseph Smith Translation gives us most of what we know about Enoch and Melchizedek who were two of the greatest men who ever lived. (Much of the above came from the work of Robert J. Matthews who Elder McConkie called the world's foremost authority on the JST.)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that the JST, "stands as one of the great evidences of the divine mission of the Prophet. The added truths he placed in the Bible and the corrections he made raise the resultant work to the same high status as the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. It is true that he did not complete the work, but it was far enough along that he intended to publish it in its present form in his lifetime."

Elder McConkie further explained, "Inspired version changes are found in the footnotes of our new edition of the Bible. Those too lengthy for inclusion in the footnotes are published in a seventeen-page section at the back of this Bible edition. All of these changes and additions are scripture and have the same truth and validity.... It is important that this is clearly understood by all who seek to learn the law of the Lord and to be in tune with that which has been revealed by the great seer of latter days."

To this I add my testimony and ask that we especially use and study those important parts of the JST found in the LDS Edition of the Bible. As I have done this I have thrilled at the light and knowledge we have been given from the Lord through his great latter day prophet. What a great privilege it is to share the message of the Restoration.

With Love,

President Lunt