

Some Significant Texts of Joseph Smith's Inspired Version of the Bible

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My first article in the Autumn 1968 issue of *BYU Studies* dealt primarily with the *making* of the Inspired Version of the Bible. It considered two major aspects: (1) the preparation of the manuscript notes by the Prophet Joseph Smith and his scribes, and (2) the publication of the printed editions by The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS). This article will discuss a number of passages that are unique to the Inspired Version and also some of the implications in the text that are frequently overlooked.

There are at least three levels at which one may read the Inspired Version. The first and simplest level is to compare it with the King James Version to find the variant readings. The second and perhaps the most informative level is to analyze each variant to determine the actual change in meaning that resulted from the Inspired Version rendition. The third and most difficult level is to examine the Inspired Version not only for content but also for style. This level is not limited to *what* is said but also involves an analysis of *how* it is said. The third level is particularly important because it deals with the question of whether the Inspired Version is a restoration of the original text of the Bible. Although not all of the variants in the Inspired Version are suitable for this kind of critical examination, a number of passages are thus suited, and these are highly interesting and even provocative when analyzed. Such passages have characteristics about them which strongly suggest inspiration and even restoration of the original text in some instances.

The first level described above was essentially the subject of the first article and will be given no further explanation at this point. The remainder of this article will discuss the second level (passages of subject-matter significance) and the third level (passages that have significance because of form in addition to content). Although there is often an overlapping of these areas in which a passage fits both categories, there is enough distinction between them to justify treating them separately. Limitations of time and space will permit only a sampling of these categories.

The major subject-matter revisions involved in the Inspired Version are doctrinal, and deal with the nature of God, the nature of man, the atonement, priesthood, the kingdom of God, the building of Zion, salvation,

obedience, the first principles of the gospel, the resurrection, and similar items. Little is given of a geographical, geological, or cultural nature, although there are some references that may be so applied.

The King James version contains many passages that convey the idea that God repents. The very idea seems inconsistent with and contradictory to the nature of a righteous and perfected Deity, and the thought that the very God of heaven should have need to repent is to many persons unthinkable.

The problem is somewhat diminished with the realization that the Hebrews word which is frequently translated "repent," actually has the connotation of "breathing a heavy sigh" rather than the meaning of repenting. Consistent with this, the Inspired Version contains many passages that were amended by the Prophet Joseph so that they no longer convey the idea that the Lord repented in the usual sense of the word. Following are a few examples. (Throughout this article the corresponding passage from the King James version is given for comparison. The italics in the Inspired Version are mine for emphasis.)

King James Version	Inspired Version ¹
Ex. 32:14 And the Lord repented of the evil which hethought to do unto his people.	Ex. 32:14 And the Lord <i>said unto Moses, If they will</i> repent of the evil which <i>they have done</i> , I will <i>spare them, and turn away my fierce wrath</i> ;
1 Sam. 15: 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king:	1 Sam. 15: 11 I have set up Saul to be king, <i>and he</i> repenteth <i>not that he hath sinned</i> , . . .
2 Sam. 24:16 . . . the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand.	2 Sam. 24:16 . . . <i>for the people</i> repented, <i>and the Lord stayed the hand of the angel</i> . . .
Ps. 135:14 For the Lord will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.	Ps. 135:14 For the Lord will judge his people, and he will <i>not</i> repent himself concerning his servants.
Jer. 42:10 . . . for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.	Jer. 42:10 . . . and I will <i>turn away</i> the evil that I have done unto you.
Amos 7:3 The Lord repented for this:	Amos 7:3 <i>And the Lord said, concerning Jacob, Jacob shall repent</i> for this. . . .
7:6 The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.	7:6 And the Lord <i>said, concerning Jacob, Jacob shall repent of his wickedness; therefore I will not utterly destroy him</i> , saith the Lord.

King James Version

Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Inspired Version

Jonah 3:10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way *and repented; and God turned away* the evil that he had said he would *bring upon* them.

Other passages in which the Prophet made the same type of changes about the Lord repenting are found in Genesis 6:6–7 (Genesis 8:13–15 in the Inspired Version); Psalms 135:14; Jeremiah 18:8–10; and Jeremiah 26:3, 13, 19.

Who Hardens Hearts?

In a similar vein, the Lord does not harden anyone's heart in the Inspired Version. In each of the following passages the Inspired Version renders the statement so that the Lord was not the responsible agent in hardening someone's heart.

King James Version

Ex. 4:21 . . . but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.
7:3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, . . .

Inspired Version

Ex. 4:21 . . . but *Pharaoh* will harden his heart, *and* he will not let the people go.
7:3 And *Pharaoh* will harden *his* heart, as I said unto thee.

See also Ex. 7:13; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; and 11:10 for additional passages of this kind.

Along this same general topic are two passages from Isaiah:

King James Version

Isa. 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.
63:17 O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?

Inspired Version

Isa. 6:9 *And* he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, *but* they *understood* not; and see ye indeed, but *they* perceived *not*.
63:17 O Lord, why hast thou *suffered* us to err from thy ways, and *to harden* our heart from thy fear?

Each of the foregoing Old Testament passages illustrates the positive direction of the Inspired Version away from the concept that the Lord leads people to evil or hardens their hearts against doing good, and this rendering is in agreement with the following change in the Lord's Prayer:

King James Version

Matt. 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

Inspired Version

Matt. 6:14 And *suffer us not to be led* into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Many of the passages used above to illustrate the nature of Deity also suggest something about the nature of man. Since God neither hardens men's hearts nor leads them toward sin, it is evident that men are to that extent left untrammelled. The Inspired Version, however, goes further than this in its explanation of man's nature. Just as the Lord does not harden the hearts of men or turn them away from God, neither does he unconditionally force eternal life upon them.

Called to Eternal Life

The Inspired Version takes exception to many Bible passages which imply that because some men are "called to eternal life" they are thereby able to do good works. It reverses the view and suggests that good works make it possible for one to be "called" to eternal life. This is illustrated in the following passages:

King James Version

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Inspired Version

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as *believed* were *ordained unto* eternal life.

Another passage that shows the same consistency of doctrine follows:

King James Version

1 Cor. 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Inspired Version

1 Cor. 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

1:24 But unto them *who believe*, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The King James version gives no hint as to the age of accountability of children. However, the Inspired Version deals with the matter as follows:

King James Version

Gen. 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations.

Inspired Version

Gen. 17:11 And I will establish a *covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be* my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; *that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.*

The exact relationship between circumcision and accountability is not explained, but the Inspired Version definitely declares what the age of accountability is.

While in Galilee with the Twelve, Jesus taught the people that little children were without need of repentance. This doctrine is emphasized in the Inspired Version rendition:

King James Version

Matt. 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

18:11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

Inspired Version

Matt. 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father *who* is in heaven.

18:11 For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost, *and to call sinners to repentance; but these little ones have no need of repentance, and I will save them.*

A short time later, when Jesus and the Twelve had gone into Judea, the people brought little children unto Jesus, "that he [might] put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them." Evidently the Twelve felt that the Judeans had not heard their Lord's teachings concerning little children; for the Inspired Version gives the reason why they sought to prevent the people from bringing their little ones. Note the following:

King James Version

Matt. 19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me.

Inspired Version

Matthew 19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them, *saying, There is no need, for Jesus hath said, Such shall be saved.*

19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children *to come unto me*, and forbid them not, . . .

These additions supplied by the Prophet not only attest to the sinless state of childhood, but give an otherwise unattainable insight into the reason why the Twelve tried to prevent the people from bringing their children to Jesus. Without the Inspired Version, we can have but scant appreciation of this matter. The disciples remembered what Jesus had said in Galilee about little children needing no repentance, and therefore proceeded to inform the Judeans that there was no need to have Jesus bless the

children. They apparently acted in good faith but simply did not understand the full meaning of Jesus' teaching—that Jesus was willing to bless the children and lay hands on them, even though children did not need repentance and baptism. The Inspired Version weaves this principle into the narrative in a very casual and natural way.

Another significant feature of the Inspired Version occurs in Romans, Chapter 7. As the chapter stands in the King James Version, Paul says that he is carnal and sinful; that the good he would do, he does not do, and the evil he would not do, he does do. All of this is written in the present tense, signifying that even after experiencing the cleansing power of the gospel Paul is still under sin, for he says “to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.” (v. 18) The chapter concludes with Paul saying that with his flesh he serves the law of sin.

These are strange statements for Paul to make about himself when in so many other instances he explains that when he was under the law he was a sinner, but Christ freed him, and through Christ he walks not after the flesh but after the spirit. (See Romans 8:4–5, 10.)

In the Inspired Version these passages are worded in a manner to draw a distinction between Paul's life under the law (of Moses) as compared with his life after he received the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the Inspired Version, Paul says that when he was under the law he was carnal, but now, with the gospel, he is spiritual, concluding that he would serve the law of sin with his flesh if he subdued not the sin in him:

King James Version

Rom. 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

7:16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

7:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Inspired Version

Rom. 7:14 For we know that the *commandment* is spiritual; but *when I was under the law, I was yet carnal, sold under sin.*

7:15 *But now I am spiritual; for that which I am commanded to do, I do; and that which I am commanded not to allow, I allow not.*

7:16 *For what I know is not right, I would not do; for that which is sin, I hate.*

7:17 If then I do *not* that which I would not *allow*, I consent unto the law, that it is good; *and I am not condemned.*

7:18 Now then, it is no more I that do *sin*; but *I seek to subdue that sin which dwelleth in me.*

King James Version

7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

7:20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Inspired Version

7:19 For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not, *only in Christ*.

7:20 For the good that I would *have done when under the law, I find not to be good; therefore*, I do it not.

7:21 But the evil which I would not *do under the law*, I find to be good; that, I do.

7:22 Now if I do that, *through the assistance of Christ*, I would not *do under the law, I am not under the law; and it is no more that I seek to do wrong, but to subdue sin that dwelleth in me*.

7:23 I find then *that under the law*, that when I would do good evil *was* present with me; for I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

7:24 *And now* I see another the law, *even the commandment of Christ, and it is imprinted in my mind*.

7:25 *But* my members *are* warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

7:26 *And if I subdue not the sin which is in me, but with the flesh serve the law of sin;* O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

7:27 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, then, that so with the mind I myself serve the law of God.

The whole tenor of the Inspired Version rendition is that the gospel changed Paul and gave him a power over sin that he did not have before.

This great message is Paul's dynamic testimony of the power that Christ can have in a human life, that Christ is the enabling power to salvation.

The King James Version fails to place sufficient emphasis on the change that the gospel had made on Paul's nature, and this makes the chapter out of tune with many of Paul's other statements, whereas the Inspired Version brings the chapter into harmony with the totality of Paul's teaching about the merits of Christ. The King James version not only lacks the vitality of the Inspired Version in this chapter, but it gives a false impression of Paul's life after his conversion—it denies the full power of the gospel.

The King James version lists certain blessings that the Father will give to men and then adds, "O ye of little faith." The Inspired Version reads a little differently and qualifies the promise as follows:

King James Version

Matt. 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Inspired Version

Matt. 6:34 Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *how much more will he not provide for you, if ye are not of little faith.*

A similar rendition is also found in Luke 12:30 of the Inspired Version.

The very well-known passage admonishing man to seek first the kingdom of God received a change of major importance in the Inspired Version:

King James Version

Matt. 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Inspired Version

Matt. 6:38 *Wherefore, seek not the things of this world* but seek ye first *to build up* the kingdom of God, and *to establish* his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

The significant change in this passage directs man to be engaged in building the kingdom and establishing righteousness on the earth, whereas the implication in the King James Version is that man need only seek the kingdom, which apparently is already established.

Because of the particular way that the King James version cautions against rendering judgment, many have felt it to be wrong to judge at all. However, the Inspired Version alters the statement to say that the important thing is *how* the judgment is made. Note the following:

King James Version

Matt. 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Inspired Version

Matt. 7:2 Judge not *unrighteously*, that ye be not judged; *but judge righteous judgment.*

In still another selection the King James Version represents Paul as saying that the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The Inspired Version alters this verse by relating it to Christ:

King James Version

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Inspired Version

Tim. 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.

3:16 The pillar and ground of the truth *is*, (and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness,) God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of the angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

The well-known passage where charity covers sins is rendered thus by the hand of the Prophet Joseph:

King James Version

1 Pet. 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Inspired Version

1 Pet. 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity *preven-*
teth a multitude of sins.

The Bible has many figurative expressions and in some instances the Inspired Version clarifies and explains them. For example, the injunction to take up thy cross and follow me is given several times in the scriptures, and is understood to be a figurative expression. The Inspired Version explains what it means:

King James Version

Matt. 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Inspired Version

Matt. 16:25 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

16:26 And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.

16:27 Break not my commandments for to save your lives; . . .

The figurative expression to cut off a foot or hand if it offends is clarified by the Inspired Version thus:

King James Version

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go to hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

9:44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

9:45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.

9:46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

9:48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Inspired Version

Mark 9:40 *Therefore, if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; for if thy brother offend thee and confess not and forsake not, he shall be cut off.* It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to go to hell.

9:41 *For it is better for thee to enter into life without thy brother, than for thee and thy brother to be cast into hell;* into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

9:42 And *again*, if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; *for he that is thy standard, by whom thou walkest, if he become a transgressor, he shall be cut off.*

9:43 It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell; into the fire that never shall be quenched.

9:44 Therefore, let every man stand or fall, by himself, and not for another; or not trusting another.

9:45 Seek unto my Father, and it shall be done in that very moment what ye shall ask, if ye ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive.

9:46 And if thine eye *which seeth for thee, him that is appointed to watch over thee to show thee light, become a transgressor and offend thee, pluck him out.*

9:47 It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God, with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

9:48 *For it is better that thyself should be saved, than to be cast into hell with thy brother, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

Of a similar expression found in Matthew 18:9, the Inspired Version makes the explanation that “a man’s hand is his friend, and his foot, also; and a man’s eye, are they of his own household.”

That the disciples were to be selective and even restrictive in teaching the gospel, especially to those who were not ready, is offered as the meaning of the figurative expression about not casting pearls before swine. This is shown by the following:

King James Version

Matt. 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Inspired Version

Matt. 7:10 *And the mysteries of the kingdom ye shall keep within yourselves; for it is not meet to give that which is holy unto the dogs; neither cast ye your pearls unto swine, lest they trample them under their feet.*

7:11 *For the world cannot receive that which ye, yourselves, are not able to bear; wherefore ye shall not give your pearls unto them, lest they turn again and rend you.*

7:12 *Say unto them, Ask of God; ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

The King James version contains the injunction that the Lord had given to men and animals the green herbs of the field for food. It specifies every *green* herb. The Inspired Version altered this as follows:

King James Version

Gen. 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth . . . to you it shall be for meat.

1:30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

Inspired Version

Gen. 1:31 And I, God, said *unto man*, Behold, I have given you every herb, bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth . . . to you it shall be for meat.

1:32 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *I grant* life, there shall be given every *clean* herb for meat; and it was so, *even as I spake*.

Although the Inspired Version differs from the King James Version in several instances in the foregoing passage, the most significant seems to be that the Lord did not order every *green* herb as food for living beings, but

every *clean* herb. It would seem inconsistent that every green herb was intended as food, since that would include not only all of the edibles, but such things as poison ivy, poison oak, tobacco, marijuana, and a number of other green plants that are nonfoods.

Passages from the Inspired Version that have special importance because of their form (the third level referred to in the forepart of this article) are not so numerous as the subject-matter passages but are given special treatment in this discussion because they offer clues and suggestions about the Inspired Version being a restoration of the original Biblical text.

Although the words are only vehicles by which the Prophet Joseph Smith conveyed the thought he wished to give in each passage, the particular form and structure that he gave to these words may very well be a reflection of the inspiration that came to him in making the Inspired Version.

For example, the Prophet arranged several passages in the Inspired Version as conversation between Jesus and his disciples, or, in some instances, between Jesus and the Jewish rulers. Although the subject matter of the conversation is important, it is also intriguing that the Prophet chose to place these ideas in this particular form.

The following passages from the Sermon on the Mount illustrate one of these situations.

King James Version

Matt. 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Inspired Version

Matt. 7:1 Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people.

7:2 Judge not *unrighteously*, that ye be not judged; *but judge righteous judgment.*

7:3 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

7:4 And *again, ye shall say unto them, Why is it that thou beholdest the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.*

7:6 And Jesus said unto his disciples, Beholdest thou the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Priests, and the Levites? They teach in their synagogues, but do not observe the law, nor the commandments; and all have gone out of the way, and are under sin.

King James Version

7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eue; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

7:9 Oh what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Inspired Version

7:7 Go thou and say unto them, Why teach ye men the law and the commandments, when ye yourselves are the children of corruption?

7:8 *Say unto them, Ye hypocrites, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see dearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

7:14 And then said his disciples unto him, they will say unto us, We ourselves are righteous, and need not that any man should teach us. God, we know, heard Moses and some of the prophets; but us he will not hear.

7:15 And they will say, We have the law for our salvation, and that is sufficient for us.

7:16 Then Jesus answered, and said unto his disciples, thus shall ye say unto them,

7:17 What man among you having a son, and he shall be standing out, and shall say, Father, open thy house that I may come in and sup with thee, will not say, Come in, my son; for mine is thine and thine mine?

7:18 Or what man is there among you, who if his son ask bread, will give him a stone?

It should be noted in the foregoing passages that in the midst of the Savior's instructions discussion developed between Jesus and his disciples concerning how they would take the gospel to the Jewish rulers. It appears that the disciples were hesitant to debate with the Pharisees and Scribes, whereupon Jesus told his disciples how to reply to the Jewish leaders. The point to be observed is that either this discussion between the Master and the disciples took place or it did not. That is, it is an historical event or it is not. Joseph Smith inserts the discussion as part of the Sermon on the Mount in such a manner as to give every indication that he regarded it an actual event that took place during the delivery of the Sermon.

The question might be raised whether the Prophet actually restored the text as Matthew wrote it, or whether, being the seer that he was, he went

even beyond Matthew's text and recorded an event that actually took place during the delivery of the Sermon, but which Matthew did not include. This cannot be determined with certainty; nevertheless, the way in which Joseph Smith inserted the passage permits this type of reconstruction. Since the Prophet was dealing with scripture and knew the importance of the word of God, it is unlikely that he would "add or take from" unless he did it by the authority of divine revelation. We have no record of the Prophet taking such liberties with other sacred writing and there seems to be no valid reason to suspect that he was careless with injecting new thought into the Sermon on the Mount.

An event in Church history concerning the language of revelation probably has some relevance to this point. When Elder William E. M'Lellin failed in an attempt to imitate the language of scripture written by the Prophet as contained in the Book of Commandments, the Prophet made the following observations:

William E. M'Lellin, as the wisest man, in his own estimation, having more learning than sense, endeavored to write a commandment like unto one of the least of the Lord's but failed; *it was an awful responsibility to write in the name of the Lord.* The Elders and all present that witnessed this vain attempt of a man *to imitate the language of Jesus Christ*, renewed their faith in the fullness of the Gospel, and in the truth of the commandments and revelations which the Lord had given to the Church through my instrumentality. (Italics mine.)²

This experience in the language and form of scripture took place in November 1831 during the same period of time in which the Prophet was engaged almost daily in the revision of the New Testament. He presented the passages from the revision of the Sermon on the Mount as the words of Jesus to his disciples, and it is not likely that the Prophet would try to "imitate the language of Jesus Christ." The *how* of the Prophet's revision of the Sermon on the Mount calls for an expression of inspiration and could represent either a restoration of material that was once in Matthew's account of the Sermon, or could go beyond Matthew and reiterate an event immediately behind the text which took place during the Sermon but which Matthew did not record.

Another example of direct discourse found only in the Inspired Version is Matthew 9:18–21, which tells of a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees and relates an exchange of information about the subject of baptism that is not recorded in the King James version.

King James Version

[No text—what was added between Verses 15 and 16 seems to fit.]

Inspired Version

Matt. 9:18 Then said the Pharisees unto him, Why will ye not receive us with our baptism, seeing we keep the whole law?

9:19 But Jesus said unto them,
Ye keep not the law. If ye had
kept the law, ye would have
received me, for I am he who
gave the law.

9:20 I receive not you with your
baptism, because it profiteth
you nothing.

9:21 For when that which is new
is come, the old is ready to be
put away.

As with the earlier example the question may again be asked whether this encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees actually took place as recorded in the Inspired Version. It is either historical or it is not. If not historical then it would simply be a literary device used by the Prophet to convey a doctrine; but since the Prophet is not known to use devices of this kind in the other volumes of scripture that he produced, there is considerable reason to believe that the Prophet regarded this passage as a statement of historical fact. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Inspired Version at this point represents either a restoration of Matthew's original record or an addition of an event that took place in the ministry of Jesus which Matthew did not record but which is, nevertheless, germane to the discussion in Matthew's account.

Other examples of this kind found only in the Inspired Version are Matthew 12:37–38; Luke 14:35–36; and Luke 16:16–23.

In each of the foregoing instances the subject matter is important but there is also importance in the fact that the messages purport to record actual historical events in the Savior's ministry. These passages have more meaning than the recording of mere subject matter.

Another interesting item in this category occurs in Luke 3:19–20 of the Inspired Version, which is inserted in the midst of the account of John the Baptist's preaching. The passage consists of a personal and direct note from Luke to a Gentile acquaintance named Theophilus. This personal note is not found in the King James Version, but the style of the insertion implies that the Prophet regarded the passage as an authentic Lucan comment. The passage is as follows:

King James Version
Luke 3:12 Then came also publi-
cans to be baptized, and said unto
him, Master, what shall we do?
3:13 And he said unto them,
Exact no more than that which
is appointed you.

Inspired Version
Luke 3:17 Then came also publi-
cans to be baptized, and said unto
him, Master, what shall we do?
3:18 And he said unto them,
Exact no more than that which
is appointed unto you.

King James Version

3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, . . .

Inspired Version

3:19 For it is well known unto you, Theophilus, that after the manner of the Jews, and according to the custom of their law in receiving money into the treasury, that out of the abundance which was received, was appointed unto the poor, every man his portion;

3:20 And after this manner did the publicans also, wherefore John said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

3:21 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, . . .

This unique passage in the Inspired Version is addressed to Theophilus to explain a matter of Jewish law and custom. Why would the Prophet use a literary device of this kind unless he were actually recounting something from Luke's original account? If the explanation were intended by Joseph for latter-day readers only, why was it addressed to the first-century Theophilus? As with the earlier examples, this passage seems to convey more than mere subject matter.

If the examples discussed in this section are restorations of actual events, they could be worded just as they are without further explanation or commentary, and the simplest conclusion appears to be that the Prophet intended these items to be so recognized.

It should be emphasized again that these conclusions do not apply to the entire Inspired Version, since there are only a limited number of readings that have particular characteristics. It is probable that the Inspired Version is many things, and that only portions of it represent restorations while other portions may be explanations, interpolations, enlargements, clarifications and the like.

The science of textual criticism offers an objection to the Inspired Version being a restoration of the original text on the basis that the Prophet's work is not extensively supported by the many ancient manuscripts and fragments of the Bible that are now in common use by scholars. However, this may possibly be accounted for in two ways. First, no original manuscripts of the Bible are available, and even the earliest available documents are removed from the originals by many decades. Corruption of the texts could have taken place in the intervening years. Second, many of the passages in the Inspired Version may be reiterations of events which were

either not recorded by the Biblical writers or were lost before the Bible was compiled, in which case even the original Bible manuscripts would not contain the information.

There are similarities of subject matter, vocabulary and phraseology between the writings of Luke and of Paul that are enhanced by the Inspired Version. This similarity can be noted in all of the versions of the Bible, but it is increased and fortified in the Inspired Version. Since Paul and Luke are known to have been traveling-companions, it could be expected that their writings would reflect this association and contain similarities of style and subject matter. The important item here is that the situation is magnified in the Inspired Version, which seems consistent with a document that purports to be inspired and which, as a result of this inspiration, contains a freshness and completeness that the other versions no longer possess.

Likewise there are several items exclusive to the Inspired Version that bespeak an internal consistency in the book of Matthew. These matters are worthy of additional study, but space will permit only the mere mention of them without detail, discussion, or example.

This article presents only a few examples that could be cited to illustrate some of the peculiar and interesting points in the text of the Inspired Version. Most examinations of the Inspired Version in the past have studied content only, but this writer believes that a form study of the Inspired Version would be both challenging and rewarding and would demonstrate more fully just what the Inspired Version is. Form study is as yet a relatively unused procedure in studying the Inspired Version and could be a great source of information for this extensive work by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

My analysis leads me to conclude that the Inspired Version is many things. There are passages that are strongly persuasive of being restorations of the original text, or even of historical events beyond the text. There are other passages that may be inspired explanations, but not necessarily restorations. Other items appear to be simply clarifications of ambiguous passages. In any event the subject matter of the Inspired Version is informative, the style is intriguing, and there is still much to be learned about this great work of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The full value of the Inspired Version of the Bible is not yet appreciated.

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1. The "New Corrected Edition" of the Inspired Version printed in 1947 is used throughout this article. A preference for the "New Corrected Version" was explained in the former article.

2. *DHC* 1:226