

## Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 91

Addressing the Apocrypha, the Lord instructs Smith to not "translate" it.

Based upon subject, the text can be arranged as follows:

- A - (v. 1) Apocrypha has many things which are true and is mostly translated correctly
  - B - (v. 2) There are many things in it which are not true
- A - (v. 3) It is not needful to translate it
  - B - (v. 4) Let whoever reads it understand by the Spirit of Truth
    - C - (v. 5 line 1-2) Whoever is enlightened by the Spirit
      - D - (v. 5 line 2-3) shall obtain benefit from it
    - C - (v. 6a) Whoever does not receive by the Spirit
      - D - (v. 6b) cannot be benefitted
- A - (v. 6c-d) Therefore, it is not needful to translate it.

Aside from the main issue of the appraisal of the Apocrypha's content, the issue of perceiving truth and falsity via the Spirit is an important theme. The Spirit is given such that those who study diligently with its assistance can discern what is truth and what is not. This type of approach strongly emphasizes the importance of individual involvement with the scriptures and Spirit.

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you concerning the Apocrypha--There are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly; 2 There are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men.

3 Verily, I say unto you, that it is not needful that the Apocrypha should be translated. 4 Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; 5 And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; 6 And whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefitted. Therefore it is not needful that it should be translated. Amen.

v1-6 While there are many things within the Apocrypha that are true (v. 1), it also contains uninspired writings (v. 2). But, it is not necessary for Smith to revise it (v. 3, 6) as the Spirit can manifest the truth it contains (v. 4) to the inspired reader (v. 5). If the reader is uninspired, then it doesn't matter (v. 6).

v5-6 Owing to the nature of the text, it is relatively plain

which books are rigorous prophetic histories and which are not. Thus, the test is one that is relatively straightforward. Unlike Smith's highly selective emendations for the Inspired Version (IV), also known as the Joseph Smith Translation (JST), the books of the Apocrypha are either taken or rejected in their entirety. Hence the lack of need to Smith to intervene.

## **Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 91**

This section was first published in the Kirtland edition Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, page 231. It was published in Times and Seasons, volume 5, number 23, page 737, dated December 15, 1844. It was published in the Millennium Star, volume 14, number 24, page 376, dated August 7, 1852.

### **Excerpt from History of the Church**

March 9.-Having come to that portion of the ancient writings called the Apocrypha, I received the following:

[text of D&C 91 quoted]

(Joseph Smith, History of the Church, volume 1, page 331)

Respecting the Apocrypha, the Lord said to us that there were many things in it which were true, and there were many things in it which were not true, and to those who desire it, should be given by the Spirit to know the true from the false. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, volume 1, page 363)

### **Excerpt from the Juvenile Instructor**

I was present when the books, writings, etc., were deposited in the southeast cornerstone of the Nauvoo Temple. Joseph was there overseeing the selection made for deposit. Perhaps two hundred persons were collected around the place. When a Bible was presented for deposit it was thought necessary that it should be complete--containing the Apocrypha. As there seemed to be none within reach, except large, highly-prized family Bibles, Brother Reynolds Cahoon volunteered to go to his home, which was nearby and cut out the Apocrypha from his large family Bible, which was accepted and the Bible thus made complete. (Milton V. Backman and Keith W. Perkins, Writings of Early Latter-day Saints, Juvenile Instructor, Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith, quotation of Samuel Price, page 174)

Copyright © 2021 by S. Kurt Neumiller <kurt.neumiller@gmail.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.