
Teaching with Authority

D&C 43:5–6

In this revelation the Prophet Joseph Smith was told, “This shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments; And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me” (D&C 43:5–6).¹

The historical background of this revelation has much to do with Mrs. Hubble, who claimed to be a teacher and “a prophetess of the Lord, and professed” to make “great pretensions of revealing commandments, laws and other curious matters.” Hubble backed her pretensions by testifying that she “knew the Book of Mormon was true, and that she should become a teacher in the church of Christ. She appeared to be very sanctimonious and deceived some who were not able to detect her in her hypocrisy [*sic*].”²

The problem was that Mrs. Hubble had not received authority from God to be a prophetess or a teacher. The proper way to teach “requires that any teacher in the Church be ‘ordained by someone who has authority, and it is known to the church that he [she] has authority’” (D&C 42:11).

President Spencer W. Kimball spoke of the solemn obligation resting upon those called by authority to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ:

If one cannot accept and teach the program of the Church in an orthodox way without reservations, he should not teach. It would be the part of honor to resign his position. Not only would he be dishonest and deceitful, but he is also actually under condemnation, for the Savior said that it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he

¹ John Whitmer, *History*, 1831–circa 1847, 21. Joseph Smith Papers.

² Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:154n.

be cast into the sea than that he should lead astray doctrinally or betray the cause or give offense, destroying the faith of one of “these little ones” who believe in him.³

Elder S. Gifford Nielsen in his October 2013 general conference address shared a humorous yet poignant story of being called by authority:

Several years ago I needed to speak to the wife of one of the bishops in our stake, so I called their home. A young son answered the phone. I said, “Hello. Is your mother there?”

His reply: “Yes, she is. I’ll get her. Who is this?”

My response: “Tell her it’s President Nielsen.”

There was a short pause, and then, in a very animated voice, I heard, “Hey, Mom, President *Hinckley’s* on the phone!”

I can’t imagine what she must have been thinking. It had to be the longest walk to the phone she ever had. The thought did cross my mind: “Should I?” I didn’t, but we had quite a laugh. Now that I think about it, she must have been so disappointed just talking to me.

What would you do if the prophet of the Lord really called you? Well, he has! President **Thomas S. Monson**, as he did once again this morning, has called each one of us to a very important work. He said, “Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together, to labor in the Lord’s vineyard to bring souls unto Him.”⁴

³ Spencer W. Kimball, “Objective to Build Faith,” in *Conference Report*, April 1948, 109.

⁴ S. Gifford Nielsen, “Hastening the Lord’s Game Plan!” *Ensign*, November 2013.