

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 43

1 O hearken, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you.

v1 Introduction. A summons from the Lord to those profess to be Elders of the Church.

2 For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand. 3 And this ye shall know assuredly--that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me. 4 But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead. 5 And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments; 6 And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me. 7 For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.

v2-7 These verses emphatically reiterate statements in D&C 28 concerning there being only person at a time who will receive revelations for the entire Church, especially cp. D&C 28:2.

v4 None will replace Smith, or the current Prophet, except it is done under his hand. This sounds reminiscent of the Elijah and Elisha transfer, cp. 2 Ki. 2. It also seems to indicate that if Smith fell from favor with the Lord, then the only thing he could have authority to do is appoint his successor. A statement such as this effectively eliminates the claims of historical or contemporary splinter groups who say the Prophet is fallen and they now have the authority through some other means.

v7 The themes of Matt. 7:13 and John 10:1-2 are invoked. Note 2 Ne. 9:41 equates the "gate" from Matt. with the "door" from John.

8 And now, behold, I give unto you a commandment, that when ye are assembled together ye shall instruct and edify each other, that ye may know how to act and direct my church, how to act upon the points of my law and commandments, which I have given. 9 And thus ye shall become instructed in the law of my church, and be sanctified by that which ye have received, and ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me-- 10 That inasmuch as ye do this, glory shall be added to the kingdom which ye have

received. Inasmuch as ye do it not, it shall be taken, even that which ye have received. 11 Purge ye out the iniquity which is among you; sanctify yourselves before me; 12 And if ye desire the glories of the kingdom, appoint ye my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and uphold him before me by the prayer of faith. 13 And again, I say unto you, that if ye desire the mysteries of the kingdom, provide for him food and raiment, and whatsoever thing he needeth to accomplish the work wherewith I have commanded him; 14 And if ye do it not he shall remain unto them that have received him, that I may reserve unto myself a pure people before me.

v8-14 The text emphasizes two points. First, they must follow the correct method of teaching doctrine (v. 8-10). Second, they must follow the Lord's prophet (v. 11-14).

Some saints had allowed various people to lead them away from the Lord's chosen leader (ct. v. 8), and as such were not being bound together (ct. v. 9) to support the work of the Kingdom (ct. v. 10), but were being splintered. As such, the Lord wants these false leaders purged (v. 11) and His chosen leader supported (v. 12-13). Any individual who will not support the Lord's chosen leader is to be removed from the church, so those who do support him will be faithful to the Lord (v. 14).

This section of text can be arranged as follows:

A - (v. 8) Command issued: assemble, instruct, edify, know, unify

B1 - (v. 9a-b) Instructed in law, sanctified by that received

B2 - (v. 9c) Bind yourselves to act in holiness

C - (v. 10) Glory added to the kingdom

D - (v. 11) Purge out iniquity from among you

D - Sanctify yourselves before Me

C - (v. 12) If ye desire glories of the kingdom

B1 - (v. 13a-c) If ye desire mysteries of the kingdom

B2 - (v. 13d-e) Provide food, clothing and what he needs

A - (v. 14) Warning issued: do it not and he will be preserved along with those who do, division

With respect to v. 9 and 13, these verses are complimentary as the laws and those things received by revelation are the mysteries of the kingdom (the B1s). The binding oneself and providing material support is a bit obscure (the B2s), but note the heavy emphasis on supporting those in need in D&C 42:30-55.

v8 The points of doctrine are given so we may know what to do and how to act. They are not simply for meditating on, they are for doing. And they are given to unify and sanctify the members

of the church, not to divide them and lead them astray.

v10 "inasmuch as you do it not, it shall be taken", when people are given things and they don't do anything with it, it is taken away. This has physical as well as spiritual applications, cp. Mark 4:25, Alma 12:11, Alma 37:15, D&C 1:33.

v14 A polite way of stating that if people do not like what Smith is saying, it does not impact his calling. The church is not a democracy swayed by popular opinion. The Lord endorses it as it is His and Smith, or the contemporary Prophet, will remain with those who do accept it and will ultimately be chosen.

The implicit message is those who do not accept the Lord's prophet are to be cut off, or excommunicated from, the church.

15 Again I say, hearken ye elders of my church, whom I have appointed: Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit; 16 And ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken.

17 Hearken ye, for, behold, the great day of the Lord is nigh at hand. 18 For the day cometh that the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven; the heavens shall shake and the earth shall tremble, and the trump of God shall sound both long and loud, and shall say to the sleeping nations: Ye saints arise and live; ye sinners stay and sleep until I shall call again. 19 Wherefore gird up your loins lest ye be found among the wicked.

20 Lift up your voices and spare not. Call upon the nations to repent, both old and young, both bond and free, saying: Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord; 21 For if I, who am a man, do lift up my voice and call upon you to repent, and ye hate me, what will ye say when the day cometh when the thunders shall utter their voices from the ends of the earth, speaking to the ears of all that live, saying--Repent, and prepare for the great day of the Lord? 22 Yea, and again, when the lightnings shall streak forth from the east unto the west, and shall utter forth their voices unto all that live, and make the ears of all tingle that hear, saying these words--Repent ye, for the great day of the Lord is come? 23 And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying: Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you. 24 O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! 25 How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trump,

and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not! 26 Behold, the day has come, when the cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full. 27 Behold, verily I say unto you, that these are the words of the Lord your God.

28 wherefore, labor ye, labor ye in my vineyard for the last time--for the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth. 29 For in mine own due time will I come upon the earth in judgment, and my people shall be redeemed and shall reign with me on earth. 30 For the great Millennium, of which I have spoken by the mouth of my servants, shall come. 31 For Satan shall be bound, and when he is loosed again he shall only reign for a little season, and then cometh the end of the earth. 32 And he that liveth in righteousness shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and the earth shall pass away so as by fire. 33 And the wicked shall go away into unquenchable fire, and their end no man knoweth on earth, nor ever shall know, until they come before me in judgment.

v15-33 Following the theme of D&C 29:4-8, the Elders are called to go out and warn the nations (v. 20-26) of the impending Day of the Lord (v. 17-19, 27-33). They are similarly warned not to be led astray by those they come into contact with (v. 15-16).

v15-16 As the missionaries go out, they are to teach and are not to be taught by men. The general historical context of some saints being led astray suggests that as the early missionaries were traveling and teaching, they were coming into contact with people who were trying to teach them and lead them in a different path. The result is the missionary effort is being diluted as the messengers are off the main topic. So, the Lord reiterates what the main topic is, namely repentance (v. 20-26) and judgement (v. 17-19, 27-33).

v18 Making reference to the first and second resurrections, cp. D&C 29:13, 26.

v19 "gird up your loins", cp. D&C 27:15-18, D&C 38:9. IN other words, "get to work". If they fail to gird up their loins, then they will be disobedient and found among the wicked.

v20-26 The Lord gets the missionaries back on topic and tells them what they are to preach, which sermon contains a direct quotation of Himself in v. 23-26. The Lord is delivering a statement wherein He quotes Himself.

v22 "lightnings shall streak forth", the footnote in some 1981

edition LDS triple combinations refers to Amos 4:6(6-10). This is a typo and should read Amos 5:6(6-10).

v23-26 A quotation of the Lord, containing similar material to that which was said to the Nephites after the destruction that attended the First Advent. Also cp. D&C 29:1-8.

v26 Compare D&C 29:17 for a similar statement.

v27 The verse serves to close off the statement (v. 20-26) delivered to the Elders.

v28-33 The Lord reemphasizes the subject of v. 17-19 by instructing the Elders to labor in the vineyard in preparation for the separation of the sheep and goats previous to the Millennium.

v28 "labor ye in my vineyard for the last time", cp. Jacob 5:71, D&C 39:17.

34 Hearken ye to these words. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds. 35 Be sober. Keep all my commandments. Even so. Amen.

v34-35 Conclusion. The section closes by endorsing it as the words of Jesus Christ, something that needs to be heeded. As some of the saints were led astray, they need to get back in with their true Shepherd, and not be distracted by the teachings of men. The consequences of not doing so are eternal.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 43

Despite a similar incident with Hiram Page (cf. D&C 28:11-13) some 6 months earlier, a woman leads members of the church astray in much the same manner. In addition to this particular woman, there were a number of incidents with people leading members astray at this time.

Excerpt from History of the Church

Soon after the foregoing revelation [e.g., D&C 42] was received, a woman came making great pretensions of revealing commandments, laws and other curious matters; and as almost every person has advocates for both theory and practice, in the various notions and projects of the age, it became necessary to inquire of the Lord, when I received the following:

[text of D&C 43 quoted]

(Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, pages 155-156)

Excerpt from Book of John Whitmer

After the above law or revelation [e.g., D&C 42] was received, the elders went forth to proclaim repentance according to commandment, and there were members added to the Church. The Bishop Edward Partridge visited the Church in its several branches, there were some that would not receive the law. The time has not yet come that the law can be fully established, for the disciples live scattered abroad and are not organized, our numbers are small and the disciples untaught, consequently they understand not the things of the kingdom. There were some of the disciples who were flattered into the Church because they thought that all things were to be common, therefore they thought to glut themselves upon the labors of others.

About these days there was a woman by the name of Hubble who professed to be a prophetess of the Lord and professed to have many revelations, and knew the Book of Mormon was true, and that she should become a teacher in the Church of Christ. She appeared very sanctimonious and deceived some who were not able to detect her in her hypocrisy: others however had the spirit of discernment, and her follies and abominations were made manifest. The Lord gave revelation that the Saints might not be deceived which reads as follows:

[text of D&C 43 quoted]

After this commandment was received, the saints came to understanding on this subject, and unity and harmony prevailed throughout the Church of God: and the Saints began to learn wisdom, and treasure up knowledge which they learned from the word of God, and by experience as they advanced in the way of

eternal life. (John Whitmer, Book of John Whitmer, chapter 3, paragraphs 1-3)

Excerpt from Church History and Modern Revelation

When the Lord gave the revelation correcting the error of Hiram Page it should have been sufficient information for the guidance in such matters for the members of the Church for all time, but this did not prove to be the case. A few months later, in February, 1831, a woman by the name of Hubble began to make claims to the reception of revelations through a peepstone in her possession. In this way she deceived some members who had not learned the lesson in the previous August. The Lord, therefore, gave another revelation as a law to the Church in which the Lord stated that Joseph Smith is the only person "appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me." There was to be "none else appointed unto this gift." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, Vol. 1, page 126)

Excerpt from Doctrine & Covenants Commentary

A short time after the Revelation in Section 42 was given, a woman named Hubble came to the Prophet Joseph and made the claim that she had received divine revelations. She was one claimant of many, at this time. Elder George A. Smith relates that, "There was a prevalent spirit all through the early history of this Church, which prompted the Elders to suppose that they knew more than the Prophet. Elders would tell you that the Prophet was going wrong" (Jour. of Dis., Vol. XI., p. 7.) On one occasion Sidney Rigdon began a sermon by saying that the Church and Kingdom had been rent from them and given to another people. Joseph was absent, and when he came home, he found Rigdon acting very strangely. There was a man named Hawley who said the Lord had commanded him to go to Kirtland and tell the Prophet that he had lost his office, because he had caused John Noah, a pretended prophet, to be cut off from the Church. Many were bewildered by the different voices and consequent confusion. It was therefore necessary to ask the Lord for light and guidance with regard to this matter, and this Revelation came in answer to prayer. (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, Doctrine & Covenants Commentary, section 43)

Excerpt from Journal of Discourses

Among the early baptisms in Northern Ohio, was a Methodist minister by the name of Ezra Booth. He was present when the Elders first received the ordination of the High Priesthood. They

met together in June, 1831, in a log school house in Kirtland, a room about eighteen feet by twenty. While they were there, the manifestation of the power of God being on Joseph, he set apart some of the Elders to the High Priesthood. Ezra Booth was bound, and his countenance was distorted, and numbers of the brethren looked at him, and thought it was a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but to their astonishment, Joseph came forward and rebuked the foul spirit, and commanded it to depart, in consequence of which Booth was relieved, and many of the brethren were greatly tried at such a singular treatment by the prophet of these wonderful manifestations of power.

Other had visions. Lyman Wight bore testimony that he saw the face of the Savior.

The Priesthood was conferred on a number of Elders, and thirty were selected to take a mission to the western boundaries of Missouri, and travel and preach two and two by the way, travelling without purse or scrip. They did so, building up churches. Joseph was required to travel by water, or at a more rapid rate to reach there, to meet the brethren and hold a Conference in the land of Zion. It was only a short time after the return from this mission, that Ezra Booth apostatized as did Jacob Scott, Symons Rider, Eli Johnson and a number of others. The spirit of apostacy was little known, but when these men apostatized they became more violent, more cruel, and manifested a greater spirit of persecution than any other enemies. What seemed singular, Ezra Booth had been brought into the Church through the manifestation of a miracle. The wife of father John Johnson had been afflicted with the rheumatism, so as to be unable to raise her arm and hand for two years. Her husband had believed the work, and she also was believing. She went to Joseph Smith the Prophet to have him administer to her, Booth accompanied them, for he was well acquainted with the family, and the condition of Mrs. Johnson. When the Elders laid their hands upon her, she was instantly healed, so that she could use her arm and hand as well as ever she could previously. Booth knew this to be an instantaneous cure, and soon after witnessing this miracle, he was baptized, and ordained an Elder. He having formerly been a Methodist minister, commenced preaching the Gospel without purse or scrip, and he did so until he found, (using a common expression,) it did not pay. Under these circumstances he apostatized. While he was in apostacy he searched his cranium for some means to justify himself and published a series of lying letters in the Ohio Star, a paper printed in Revenna. These nine letters had been republished several times as evidence against "Mormonism;" and his apostacy culminated in collecting a mob who tarred and feathered Joseph Smith, and inflicted upon his family the loss of one of its number at Hyrum, Portage county, Ohio. Joseph Smith was occupying the room of a house brother Johnson

was living in, at the same time; it was a two story building, had steps in front. The mob surrounded the house, the twins being afflicted with measles, Joseph was lying upon a trundle bed with one of them. The mob rushed in, gathered up Joseph while in his bed, took him out in his night clothes, and carried him out on to the top of the steps. Joseph got a foot at liberty and kicked one of the men, and knocked him down off the steps, and the print of his head and shoulders were visible on the ground in the morning. Warren Waste, who was the strongest man in the western reserve considered himself perfectly able to handle Joseph alone, but when they got hold of him Waste cried out, "do not let him touch the ground, or he will run over the whole of us." Waste suggested in carrying him to cross his legs, for they said that would make it easier for the Prophet, but that was done in consequence of the severe pain it would give to the small of the back. He was daubed with tar, feathered and choked, and aqua fortis poured into his mouth. Dr. Dennison had been employed to perform a surgical operation, but he declined when the time came to operate. The liquid they poured into his mouth was so powerful, that it killed the grass where some of it had been scattered on the ground. Joseph is reported by the mob to have said, be merciful, when they told him to call upon his God for mercy. They immediately, as he began to pray, heard an alarm which made them think they were about to be surprised, and left suddenly. Sidney Rigdon, who resided near by, had been dragged by the heels out of his bed at the same time, and his body stripped and a coat of tar and feathers applied. The next morning he was crazy, his head greatly inflamed and lacerated. Joseph found his way in from the light of the house, the mob having abandoned him. While he was engaged in getting off the tar by the application of grease, soap and other materials, Philemon Duzette, the father of our celebrated drummer, came there, and seeing the Prophet in this condition, took it as an evidence of the truth of "Mormonism," and was baptized. These circumstances exposed the life of the child, the measles struck in and caused its death, and the whole of this persecution was got up through the influence of those apostates; and it made it necessary to keep up a constant watch lest some violence should be repeated. Luke Johnson informed us that Warren Waste was afterwards a cripple, rendered so by weakness in the small of the back, and Dr. Dennison died in the Ohio Penitentiary where he was incarcerated for procuring an abortion, which caused death; Joseph soon after located in Kirtland. In Kirtland there were manifestations of evil spirits in high places, which might have been considered more dangerous than the manifestations in the early establishment of the Church. Sidney Rigdon, on one occasion got up to preach, and commenced by saying that the Church and kingdom was rent from them and given to another people. Joseph was absent, when he came home he found

Sidney almost like a mad man. He labored with him and with the Church, and finally succeeded in convincing him that he was under the influence of a false spirit. A man from the State of New York by the name of Hawley, stated that while he was working in his field, barefoot, the word of the Lord came to him, saying that he should start on the instant, and not stop to put on his shoes. He came six hundred miles to Kirtland, and went to Joseph with the message that he had suffered John Noah, a prophet of God, to be cut off from the Church, and that consequently he had lost his office; and he had also suffered the women to wear caps, and the men he allowed to wear cushions on their shoulders, and for these heinous sins he was cut off, and this man had come six hundred miles barefooted to bear the terrible message. You might suppose such an adventurer coming among us would be regarded as a madman by all, but at that time several men were ready to listen to him; a Bishop's Council was assembled and an investigation had. During the investigation, the subject of women wearing caps and veils and having their heads covered was canvassed, and the Bible ransacked by Oliver Cowdery and others. When the man was expelled from the Church for giving way to the power of false spirits, he rose up in a most solemn manner, and proclaimed to the Council that they had chosen darkness instead of light. This man went through the streets of Kirtland in the night crying in a most doleful voice, woe, woe to this people. I understand that brother Brigham, hearing this nonsense and noise in the street, jumped up out of his bed in the night, took with him a cow hide whip into the street, and told that noise person if he did not stop his noise he would certainly cowhide him, which caused him to cease to annoy the inhabitants with his folly.

Another prophet arose by the name of Hoton, he had his head quarters at the forge in Kirtland. He was the president, and a man named Montague was appointed Bishop. They resolved to live precisely in accordance with the principles, as they understood them, spoken of soon after the day of Pentecost, for they had all things common. Their number increased to ten, and they called themselves "the independent Church." Persons who had apostatized from the Latter-day Saints could be admitted into their party upon the terms of entering the room, shaking hands with every member and consecrating their property. This church lasted some two or three months, when a difficulty occurred between the President and the Bishop. The Bishop accused the President of being too familiar with his meat barrel; the President, in turn, accused the Bishop of being too intimate with his sheets. The result was, a split took place between the two chief authorities, and the organization ceased to exist.

There was a prevalent spirit all through the early history of this Church, which prompted the Elders to suppose that they knew more than the Prophet. Elders would tell you that the

prophet was going wrong, men who thought they knew all about this work thirty or forty years some of them before the Lord revealed it, tried "to steady the ark." The Church was constantly afflicted with such a class of men. (George A. Smith, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11, pages 4-7, November 15, 1864)

Copyright © 2013 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.