

2001 GD 13 "This Generation Shall Have My Word through You"
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1. Review of publications of Smith's Revelations

Display and circulate:

Reproduction of 1st Edition Book of Mormon

Reproduction of Evening and Morning Star

Reproduction of Book of Commandments

Reproduction of 1st Edition Doctrine & Covenants

Briefly discuss historical events surrounding publication of each text.

The Scriptures teach "by their fruits ye shall know them", these are Joseph Smith's fruits.

2. "This generation shall have my word though you" (D&C 5:10)

Context of quotation

Historical

Even after the incidents surrounding the loss of the 116 pages, Harris still wanted additional evidence regarding the Plates. He requested that Smith ask the Lord to grant him a viewing of the Plates, and the text of D&C 5 was the Lord's answer to Harris' question.

In fairness to Harris, his concerns were probably rooted in his financial underwriting of the publication of the Book of Mormon and the persistent conflict he had with his wife over the matter.

Doctrinal

The Lord has always selected people to stand as His witnesses. If non-believers will reject His servants, they would reject Him if he were present Himself. The Lord has always rejected signs as a means of converting people, because it is ineffective.

People who will not receive the testimony of the Lord's servant will not receive the Lord either:

John 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is [one] that accuseth you, [even] Moses, in whom ye trust. 46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Those who reject the Lord's prophets will reject him.

John 16:1 THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

Those who reject/persecute/kill the Lord's prophets do not know the Lord nor His Father.

The Lord refuses to indulge sign seekers because miracles do not convert people:

Mark 8:1 IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples [unto him], and saith unto them, 2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these [men] with bread here in the wilderness? 5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before [them]; and they did set [them] before the people. 7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before [them]. 8

So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken [meat] that was left seven baskets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away. 10 And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11 And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

After performing a huge public miracle for people who don't ask for one, Jesus rejects the requests of sign-seekers.

John 4:46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. 48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

Note John sets the context of the miraculous by pointing out in v. 46 that Jesus was back in an area where his miracles had been previously seen, yet Jesus rejects a man who is initially a sign-seeker.

Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Despite the numerous miracles Jesus performed, which testified of God's approval of him, they took him and

killed him anyway. Miracles just don't work when it comes to conversion.

If people are not humble, then the signs will not convert them, just as the people who were following Jesus because of the signs he performed at the beginning of John 6 nearly all end up abandoning him by the end of John 6. If the people are humble, then they don't need signs to convert them.

Logical consequences

Historical

Protestant era notions were generally hostile to the Roman Catholic notion of Papacy. People felt entitled to question/ignore/reject a single point of authority based upon doctrinal differences.

This mind set continues today among Protestants and even among American Roman Catholics who do not generally view the Pope as a single point of authority. Contemporary Christians do not see their minister/pastor/preacher as being inspired or as receiving revelation from God for them, they are seen as scholars/academics/counselors who can be questioned/ignored/rejected.

Doctrinal

The Lord appoints a single point of authority when it comes to governing His people.

Oliver Cowdery incident, late July or Aug. 1830

Oliver Cowdery was the original author of the text which eventually became D&C 20, but Smith edited it to Cowdery's consternation:

Shortly after we had received the above revelations [i.e., D&C 24, 25, 26], Oliver Cowdery returned to Mr. Peter Whitmer's, Sen., and I began to arrange and copy the revelations, which we had received from time to time; in which I was assisted by John Whitmer, who now resided with me.

Whilst thus employed in the work appointed me by my Heavenly Father, I

received a letter from Oliver Cowdery, the contents of which gave me both sorrow and uneasiness. Not having that letter now in my possession, I cannot of course give it here in full, but merely an extract of the most prominent parts, which I can yet, and expect long to, remember.

He wrote to inform me that he had discovered an error in one of the commandments—Book of Doctrine and Covenants: "And truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins." [i.e., D&C 20:37]

The above quotation, he said, was erroneous, and added: "I command you in the name of God to erase those words, that no priesthood be amongst us!"

I immediately wrote to him in reply, in which I asked him by what authority he took upon him to command me to alter or erase, to add to or diminish from, a revelation or commandment from Almighty God.

A few days afterwards I visited him and Mr. Whitmer's family, when I found the family in general of his opinion concerning the words above quoted, and it was not without both labor and perseverance that I could prevail with any of them to reason calmly on the subject. However, Christian Whitmer at length became convinced that the sentence was reasonable, and according to Scripture; and finally, with his assistance, I succeeded in bringing, not only the Whitmer family, but also Oliver Cowdery to acknowledge that they had been in error, and that the sentence in dispute was in accordance with the rest of the commandment. And thus was this error rooted out, which having its rise in presumption and rash judgment, was the more particularly calculated (when once fairly understood) to teach each and all of us the necessity of humility and meekness before the Lord, that He might teach us of His ways, that we might walk in His paths, and live by every word that proceedeth forth from His mouth. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, page 104-105)

Hiram Page incident, Sept. 1830

...we soon found that Satan had been lying in wait to deceive, and seeking whom he might devour. Brother Hiram Page had in his possession a certain stone, by which he had obtained certain "revelations" concerning the upbuilding of Zion, the order of the Church, etc., all of which were entirely at variance with the order of God's house, as laid down in the New Testament, as well as in our late revelations. As a conference meeting had been appointed for the 26th day of September, I thought it wisdom not to do much more than to converse with the brethren on the subject, until the conference should meet. Finding, however, that many, especially the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery, were believing much in the things set forth by this stone, we thought best to inquire of the Lord concerning so important a matter; and before conference convened, we received the following:

[text of D&C 28 quoted]

[text of D&C 29 quoted]

At length our conference assembled. The subject of the stone previously mentioned was discussed, and after considerable investigation, Brother Page, as well as the whole Church who were present, renounced the said stone, and all things connected therewith, much to our mutual satisfaction and happiness. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, pages 109-115)

D&C 28:1 Behold, I say unto thee, Oliver, that it shall be given unto thee that thou shalt be heard by the church in all things whatsoever thou shalt teach them by the Comforter, concerning the revelations and commandments which I have given. 2 But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses. 3 And thou shalt be obedient unto the things which I shall give unto him, even as Aaron, to declare faithfully the commandments and the revelations, with power and authority unto the church.... And thou shalt not command him

who is at thy head, and at the head of the church; 7 For I have given him the keys of the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead.... 11 And again, thou shalt take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him; 12 For, behold, these things have not been appointed unto him, neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants.

Hubble incident, Feb. 1831

...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 D&C 43 quoted] (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Volume 1, page 154)

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: [See D&C 43] (John Whitmer, Book of John Whitmer, chapter 3, paragraph 2)

D&C 43:1 O hearken, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you. 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.

3. Conclusions

Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Lord, through whom the Lord chose to restore His Church. The evidence of his calling is before us.

The LDS concept of a single point of authority is one that is Scripturally endorsed and yet uncommon among contemporary Christians. It is a concept that has come to be understood over time.

The day will come when the Lord will tell those who have rejected the revelations which came through Smith that they have rejected the Lord Himself, just as the Lord censured the Pharisees for not heeding Moses.