

before He may know whether or not one of us is prepared for the present assignment. (72-42, p. 107)

Each President has his place. Now, I think it is folly for one to compare one President of the Church with another. No one takes the place of another President of the Church. Each President has his own place. . . .

. . . We shouldn't try to compare one as being greater than this one or greater than the other, because each one is, in the eyes of the Lord, in his own time the one most needed for that particular time. You may be sure of that. (72-42, p. 107)

We can know when a man speaks as a prophet. Now, when does a person speak as a prophet? Do you recall that oft-repeated revelation in which the Lord said:

And, behold, . . . this is an ensample unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood [and he is talking of General Authorities], whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth—

. . . They shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation. (D&C 68:2-4.)

This is so when a General Authority is speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Someone has rightly said that it is not to be thought that every word spoken by our leaders is inspired. The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote in his personal diary: "This morning I . . . visited with a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that 'a prophet is always a prophet'; but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 278.)

It is not to be thought that every word spoken by the General Authorities is inspired, or that they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost in everything they write. I don't care what his position is, if he writes something or speaks something that goes beyond anything that you can find in the standard Church works, unless that one be the prophet, seer, and revelator—please note that one exception—you

may immediately say, "Well, that is his own idea." And if he says something that contradicts what is found in the standard Church works, you may know by that same token that it is false, regardless of the position of the man who says it. We can know or have the assurance that they are speaking under inspiration if we so live that we can have a witness that what they are speaking is the word of the Lord. There is only one safety, and that is that we shall live to have the witness to know. President Brigham Young said something to the effect that "the greatest fear I have is that the people of this church will accept what we say as the will of the Lord without first praying about it and getting the witness within their own hearts that what we say is the word of the Lord" (see *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 135). (64-04, pp. 162-63)

A prophet may not always speak as a prophet. We had a bishop from down in Florida that had a great problem. A third of his total ward membership had been trying to buy a large piece of property, twenty-six thousand acres. They had obligated themselves to a bank and an insurance company and things hadn't gone right, and now the bank and the insurance company were going to foreclose. The property was worth twice as much as they had borrowed, but somebody had to bail them out. So this good bishop called the First Presidency's office and said, "I'd like to come to Salt Lake. I'd like to see if we can do something to save my people." This good bishop, good old Southerner that he was, came with all the papers. He just neglected everything else pertaining to his business, because he wanted to save his people. And so for two hours the First Presidency listened to him, and I sat there and I said, "No, we can't do that. We can't invest the Lord's money in that property. It can't be done. No, I can't see a way out. We'd get into more trouble." I could see all these difficulties, and so he was sent on his way back home. The President of the Church had said no. But . . . before the next morning came, I knew that the President of the Church hadn't been speaking by the Spirit of the Lord. And when I met my counselors the next morning I said, "Where's the bishop?" And they said, "Oh, he's left on an early morning plane back home." And I said, "Well, I've had a complete change. I've done some praying; I've done some thinking. We mustn't let that bishop go down there without sending somebody down to see if we