

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

can help him. I don't know whether we can or not, but we can't send him back with just saying, 'No, there's nothing we can do to help you.' We've got to see if there's not some alternatives." We've had some brethren down there this last week trying to see if we can find a way by which part of the land might be purchased for what is all owing on the balance and save them sixteen thousand acres of their property. Now, I don't know what they're coming back with, but I knew that I hadn't spoken by the Spirit of the Lord the night before. But I knew before the next morning what the Lord was trying to say to me.

Now, do you see the difference of what I'm trying to say to you? Sometimes we can speak just as a man. But when we get the Spirit of the Lord we may think differently, and so it's our responsibility when we stand in holy places that we speak by the Spirit of the Lord and make as sure as we possibly can that we're speaking as the Lord directs us to speak. (73-15)

Prophets may speak their own opinions at times. There have been times when even the President of the Church has not been moved upon by the Holy Ghost. There is, I suppose you'd say, a classic story of Brigham Young in the time when Johnston's army was on the move. The Saints were all inflamed, and President Young had his feelings whetted to fighting pitch. He stood up in the morning session of general conference and preached a sermon vibrant with defiance at the approaching army, declaring an intention to oppose them and drive them back. In the afternoon he rose and said that Brigham Young had been talking in the morning but the Lord was going to talk now. He then delivered an address the tempo of which was the exact opposite of the morning sermon.

Whether that happened or not, it illustrates a principle: that the Lord can move upon His people but they may speak on occasions their own opinions. (65-08, p. 110)

The Lord chooses those whom He needs. I heard someone say something that I have learned is an absolute fact. When I sat in as a younger member of the Council of the Twelve, the first Church reorganization I was permitted to participate in was when President [Heber J.] Grant passed away. As we met in the temple for a long discussion, as is the usual custom before the votes are taken and the de-