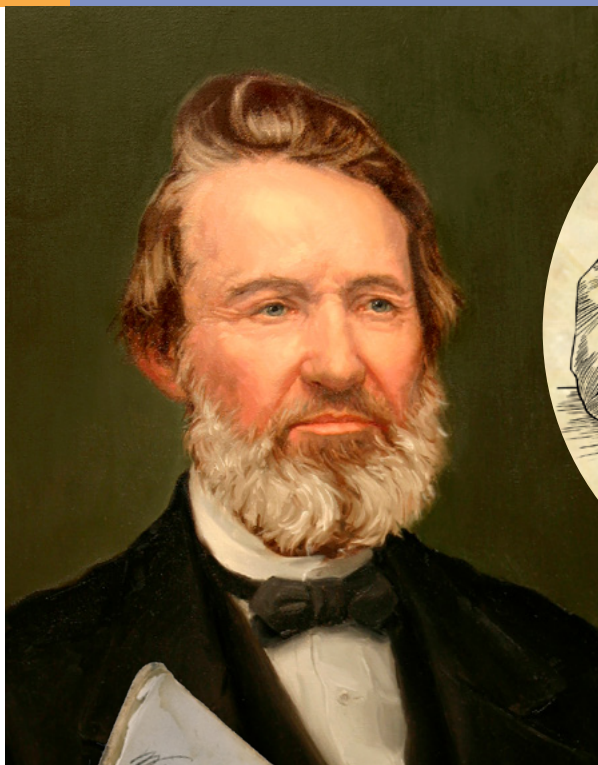




Did the Revelations Come from God?

November 1831: William E. McLellin listened intently as he sat in a Church conference with Joseph Smith and a few other elders. Just a few days before, Joseph had given him a revelation that answered five questions that William had shared only with God (see Doctrine and Covenants 66). Now the members at the conference had decided to publish the Prophet’s revelations in a compilation called the Book of Commandments (later called the Doctrine and Covenants).



The challenge: Some elders were not convinced that the revelations came from God. They thought the language was not refined enough. To answer that claim, the Lord issued a challenge: “Appoint him that is the most wise among you” to write something “like unto” the revelations. If one could do that, the elders could say the revelations were not true. If one could not, the elders needed to “bear record” that the revelations came from God (see Doctrine and Covenants 67:5–8).

of God” and that they were “profitable for all men and are verily true.”²

NOTES

1. See “History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” 162, josephsmithpapers.org.
2. See “Testimony, circa 2 November 1831,” 121, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling standardized.

DISCUSSION

How do we gain a testimony of the revelations received by prophets in our day?

The result: William, a former school-teacher, took the Lord’s challenge and tried to write a revelation. He failed.¹ William’s failure strengthened his testimony of Joseph Smith as a prophet. Along with other elders at the conference, William signed a statement declaring that he knew “through the Holy Ghost” that the revelations were “given by inspiration