

Eight Visions of the First

Derived from Joseph Smith Jr.'s four accounts of the First Vision

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I.

And how shall I know it?

In the 16th year at about the age of twelve

I was about at this time, in my fifteenth year,
an obscure boy of no consequence
of a little over fourteen years of age.

My mind seriously impressed
with the glorious luminary of the earth
rolling in majesty through its courses
and I stood—
a man walking forth upon the face
thereof.

II.

I discovered all important concern,
convinced of my sin and feeling to mourn,
found I did not come unto the summum bonum
of perfection. My heart exclaimed,
“Well hath the wise man said!”
I knew not who was right.
The beast of field, fowls of heaven,
fish of waters;
are they all together wrong?

III.

Strength and beauty wrought up in my mind.

I considered upon these
in their bounds
a power and intelligence so exceeding great
that maketh and bindeth,
marvelous even:
spirit and truth.
I seek such to worship.

My mind called to great feelings,
a deep and pungent
uneasiness
somewhat partial to believing.
I felt desire in the midst of this war—
so great the tumult it was impossible
for a person
young as I was
and so unacquainted with men and things
to come to any certain
conclusion.

IV.

I often said to myself, what is to be done?
I began to reflect upon the importance
of being
aloof. At length I discover
I must remain in darkness
and confusion or else.
Could God be believing,
as if author of a church?

V.

Being thus perplexed
 in mind, I most desired
 to call out amidst my anxieties—

retired to the silent
 woods to make
the attempt.
Kneeled down on the morning
 of a beautiful day
in a secret previously
 designed place
early and began
a fruitless attempt.

 In other words,
for the first time with fixed determination,
having looked around—
my swollen tongue in my mouth
 —I cried,
finding myself alone.

There was none else.
 To whom could I go?

VI.

Which is it?

behind me a noise like some person
walking
 but could not draw nearer

I sprung up but saw no thing
 to seize upon,
could not speak
 overcome and astonishing—
my tongue thick
 as if doomed in that
 great alarm
by some enemy of destruction
I had never before felt,
ready to sink
to the power of despair and abandon.
 To whom if any
 being?

VII.

I saw,
believing to obtain
and he spake
 my name.

My mouth opened, and liberated
 I cried my cry:
 enwrapped
in a brilliant wilderness of light,
the world gracefully taken
 away in a pillar
 like flame in the air, yet nothing
 consumed.

