

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

