

Sunday, April 7

Third Day

Item 18. *Continuing Revelation.* It seems so reasonable to believe that the God who created the world and all of us, should still reach out in love toward us and guide our destinies. The thought of retirement for God seems repugnant to an intelligent evaluation of his purposes. Certainly the world is in need of direction quite as much today as it was in the days of Moses.

Item 19. *A Precious Fellowship through Service.* One of the most satisfying rewards for working in the Church is the privilege of coming to know fully how wonderful a companionship grows out of the mutual devotion to volunteer service in the interest of our fellow men. There is a rare joy in joining hands with friends in the service of our Father in heaven.

Item 20. *Intellectual Liberty Coupled with Intellectual Responsibility.* The basic belief, "the glory of God is intelligence," puts a premium on the search for truth. Men are encouraged to reach out for enlightenment wherever it is worthily to be found. But they are also charged with the responsibility of proofreading their thinking against good common sense and against the revealed word of God.

Item 21. (I marvel at your patience—I shall run out of numbers soon. But as I turn them through, the gospel seems so complete. I have wanted to do this once.) *Dedicated Home Membership.* Latter-day Saints honor the home as the foundation of civilization in keeping with two great scriptural declarations:

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: . . .

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

ELDER S. DILWORTH YOUNG

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I CANNOT remember the time when I have not heard the story, quoted by Brother Bennion, concerning the coming of the Father and the Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith. I am convinced as I grow older and become proportionately wiser that if boys and girls in our

Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3-5.)

And then that wonderful declaration to Latter-day Saint parents everywhere—*Doctrine and Covenants 68:25*—on our responsibility in the training of children, coupled with the wonderful suggestions offered in this conference; we bid parents accept their full responsibility to the spirits that have been entrusted to their keeping here in mortality.

Item 22. *The Anchor of Testimony.* The strength of the Church inheres in a mingling of two influences: revelation from God on high and individual testimonies in the hearts of men and women. Testimony is the stability of those people.

And finally, item 23. *The Assurance of Eternal Life and Exaltation.* Through keeping the faith and through keeping the commandments of God, confidence is born in the reality of a literal resurrection through the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

IN HUMBLE gratitude I give you my witness that in these twenty-three distinctive features we have the completest program for life—here and hereafter—that I have been able to discover.

May the Lord inspire us to live worthy of it, I pray in his name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

You have just listened to Elder Adam S. Bennion, member of the Council of the Twelve. Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy will now address us.

Church could keep that story uppermost in their hearts, believing it, having a testimony of it, much of the ills of our youth which President Richards so graphically portrayed this morning would not be.

I am concerned however with one

item which has recently been called to my attention on this matter. There appears to be going about our communities some writing to the effect that the Prophet Joseph Smith evolved his doctrine from what might have been a vision, in which he is supposed to have said that he saw an angel, instead of the Father and Son. According to this theory, by the time he was inspired to write the occurrence in 1838, he had come to the conclusion that there were two Beings.

This rather shocked me. I can see no reason why the Prophet, with his brilliant mind, would have failed to remember in sharp relief every detail of that eventful day. I can remember quite vividly that in 1915 I had a mere dream, and while the dream was prophetic in its nature, it was not startling. It has been long since fulfilled, but I can remember every detail of it as sharply and clearly as though it had happened yesterday. How then could any man conceive that the Prophet, receiving such a vision as he received, would not remember it and would fail to write it clearly, distinctly, and accurately?

It seems to me, too, that had he evolved such a thing, his enemies would have used it against him. In 1838 there was a crisis in the Church. Men were falling away. It was at that time that Oliver Cowdery became disaffected. If any man in this Church had ever heard that story of the first vision, Oliver Cowdery must have heard it. Yet his reasons for disaffection were never given as an evolution of the first vision. Other men of that time did not use it as their excuse. In 1844, when the final conspiracy was concocted to murder Joseph Smith, the reasons given by those men were not discrepancies in his story of the first vision, but rather other matters far removed from it.

When Joseph wrote the story in 1838, men and women who had known him ever since he had started this work took the story in their stride; that is, it was common enough knowledge from the beginning that no one took an exception to it. Everybody knew it; everybody had heard it; not exactly in the words in which he wrote it—I believe no man will speak extemporaneously in

the same manner that he will write something—but essentially the same, and when the Saints read it, it merely confirmed what they had heard over and over again.

His mother should have known something about it. You will remember, he walked into her house that morning and told her that the church to which she had given allegiance was not true. To my way of thinking, he must have told her all about the vision. When she chose to write the story of her son's experience, she did not put it in her own words. I suspect that she must have felt that so nearly was what he had written the way he had described it to her, that she quoted his written statement.

All of these things seem to me to add up to irrefutable evidence, although not said exactly, that Joseph Smith, in 1838, told the correct story of his vision of 1820.

Recently I made some slight investigation, although not enough, trying to find the testimonies of some of those who had heard Joseph say these things before 1838. I did not find much—I did not have time to look far—but I have one, which I should like to give you.

Edward Stevenson told how in 1834 the Prophet came to Pontiac, Michigan, Stevenson's home town, and there held a series of meetings, attended by Brother Stevenson. Brother Stevenson wrote that the following was the Prophet's testimony on that occasion:

"I am witness that there is a God, for I saw him in open day, while praying in a silent grove in the spring of 1820." Then Brother Stevenson wrote: "He further testified that God the Eternal Father, pointing to a separate Personage in the likeness of himself, said, 'This is my beloved Son. Hear Him.'"

I submit this excerpt as enough like the story that the Prophet wrote to bear witness that he wrote it accurately and correctly.

I am of the fifth generation. I can remember the second generation. My grandchildren are of the seventh generation. Likely in their day, they will remember not only my generation, but will see also, before they die, the tenth or the eleventh generation. It is just possible that some of them may be

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interested enough to want to know what their grandfather thought about these things, and they will investigate the conference reports. I should like them to have in my words what I believe about this great event.

SO WILL you indulge me while I talk a moment to my grandchildren and to my great-great-grandchildren, to Lorraine, to Parkie, to Charlotte, to Annette, and Wendy, and any that may come hereafter. (I hope there will be many of them.) I want you to know that I know that Joseph Smith walked into a grove in 1820, inspired of the Lord to do so, knelt down, as he said, among the silent trees, offered up a prayer, and there he was given a vision in which he saw God the Eternal Father, who in his turn introduced to Joseph his beloved Son. The Son told Joseph many things which would transpire but of which he was not allowed to speak. Beginning with that vision, which gave us our first knowledge since the time of the Savior of the true relationship of our Father and his Son to us, has grown this Church. That is my solemn and humble testimony to those of my house who in the future will want to know what I thought and believed.

In order that they will have no doubt, and that no carping critic may read into my words things that are not there, I should like to repeat for their benefit what the Prophet said when he wrote his vision:

BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

Presiding Bishop of the Church

PRESIDENT MCKAY, my beloved brethren and sisters, I sincerely trust I may have an interest in your prayers that I might express a few thoughts I have with reference to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not recall ever having attended a more inspirational conference. Our prophet has received revelation for our good and benefit. If I have one thought above another, it is that as we go home and continue to live from day to day, we should remember what President McKay has said to us. If we will live

. . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

. . . when the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him! (Joseph Smith 2:16-17.)

I will stand on that witness and add mine that I know by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost that it is true, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

The Congregation will join with the Choir now in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." The last speaker, the one to whom we have just listened, is Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For A Prophet."

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, Presiding Bishop of the Church, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

accordingly day by day, without a doubt the Lord will bless, inspire, and help us in all of our endeavors.

As I think of President McKay, I see him as a prophet and as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has always been deeply interested in the young people and children, as well as older individuals. I have made many trips with him and always the children have looked forward to the opportunity of coming in contact with him. He invariably shakes hands with them.

I cannot help recalling Saturday night