

## Elder S. Dilworth Young

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I shall speak about boys who have just started into adolescence.

Historically, when the Lord God has wanted to train great leaders for his eternal purposes, he has not hesitated to choose boys, call them, anoint them, prepare them, and then when grown send them forth to their allotted destiny.

### Joseph's accomplishments

We all know the story of Joseph, of his enslavement, of his prophetic gift of interpretation, of his great temptation by the wife of Potiphar when he set the example for the youth of all future ages and "got him out." (Gen. 39:12.) And we know of his success in saving his people from famine.

I have often wondered how he felt crouching in that pit and looking fearfully up at the leering faces of his blood brothers and at other strange faces as the caravan leaders bargained for his body. This peculiar circumstance, cruel and harsh, turned out to be for his good because he trusted in the Lord. That trust, through his obedience, has benefited all mankind through all generations. To Joseph went the promise of the birthright—and the promised land.

### Eli, the pure boy

Perhaps you with me will transport yourselves back 1,000 years before Christ to that ancient land of Israel and enter the room in the temple where Samuel, a youth, lay sleeping. You will not hear the voice calling him, but you can see him arise and go to Eli, asking if he called. You will notice the impatience of Eli until he finally realized who was speaking to Samuel. After the third awakening, you will hear Eli say, "Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord;

for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3:9.) Remember, you are living ten hundred years before Christ when people knew that the Lord spoke intelligible words of instruction and reproof, as well as words of acceptance and praise. Of course, you will say to yourselves, "But Samuel was chosen to be a prophet."

As with me, it will thrill you that the Lord takes a pure boy and teaches him the truth before he can be taught what uninspired men conceive to be truth. Perhaps you will remember that the Lord puts into the minds and hearts of his prophets what he wants them to think and say rather than the thoughts of philosophical men. Remember what he said to Isaiah:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." (Isa. 55:8.)

### The Lord's thoughts

In the case of Samuel, the Lord spoke His thoughts, not men's thoughts. Samuel heard the voice of the Lord. Would it have surprised you in that day to learn that sometime after hearing the voice of the Lord, Samuel saw the Lord. (See Sam. 3:21.)

What do you suppose would have happened to Samuel if he had declared in the streets that he had heard the Lord without having the protection of the sanctuary and of Eli? What would Eli himself have said to Samuel if he had come as an unknown lad and knocked on his door and announced that he had a message for Eli?

### David

David was a boy tending his father's sheep when Samuel, spurning the other sons of Jesse, was led by the inspiration of the Lord to anoint David king of Israel. No one reading the ac-

count can doubt that the Lord had a deep love for David and that he was called of God.

Here then are three servants of the Lord, each chosen and called, in three different ways under three different circumstances. I mention these to remind us that boys in their adolescent years have been personally called by the Lord. They have learned by direct revelation that the Lord is God; that he is real, known, definable; and that he speaks to them in a language they can understand. Let us remember too that the Lord God does not change. He is the same yesterday—even if it be 3,600 years ago—today, and forever.

### Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith was a boy in his fifteenth year when the Lord spoke to him. Conditions were different then than anciently. Nearly 1,800 years had passed since the Lord had spoken to anybody. In those days, what the Lord had revealed had been written on parchment and kept in rolls. Later as philosophical men read them and reproduced them, they interpreted them by reason and not by the Spirit of God to guide them.

The only way the rolls could be reproduced was by scribes who laboriously copied the written word. It is almost impossible to copy anything without some error in the doing. Multiply the number of times copies were made from copies, over a period of nearly 1,400 years, each copy increasing the errors in the previous copy, and one can understand that many errors were bound to creep in.

When printing became common and men learned to read the word, even with its errors, they were shocked to discover how far the practices in the church had departed from the principles in the word. Their protests were vigorous and determined. Many lost their lives refusing to conform. That protest still goes on with multiplied Protestant interpretations of what the

Lord taught. Indeed, even today a man needs but to consider himself called, and he can and often does begin a church.

Some of the sects were vigorously protesting in Palmyra, New York, in the winter of 1819 and the spring of 1820. Efforts were made by the ministers to convince the people of the community that their varied interpretations were correct. And many confessed their acceptance of the word of these ministers.

### Joseph searches for the truth

Joseph Smith wanted to find the peace of salvation also, but he was confused as to which church was right. Even as a boy he knew that in such diversity of ideas and ordinances, not all could be the truth. He read the verse in James which says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5.) The words stirred him as much as the voice of the Lord stirred Samuel.

Many have read that verse and received comfort. Many have followed the admonition and have asked for wisdom. As they have had faith, they have received wisdom. This time the inspiration was more powerful. He was to receive knowledge as well as wisdom.

There are times in the history of this earth when the moment for great events has arrived. Prescribed, ordered, and arranged by the power of God, they cannot be stayed. For example, when the time came for the children of Israel to leave Egypt, no one could stop them, and those who tried failed to their sorrow. When the meridian of time came, the promises made by the prophets were fulfilled and miraculous events took place. The angels came, and suddenly Mary was told that she was to be the mother of the Son of God, and Elisabeth was told of her own part in this great and sublime event. This first public revelation came by an angel to a few simple shepherds. They only heard the heavenly chorus sing praise to God.

### The first vision

And so it was in 1820. The time had come. These were the last days. The prophets had declared it. And so Joseph was impelled to walk across his father's newly cleared field, dodging the raw stumps en route, and climb over the worn fence, and enter the forest. Climbing a hill, he found a spot where he felt he could not be disturbed and began to pour out his soul to the Lord.

In a great burst of heavenly light, all of the errors concerning the nature of God for nearly 1,800 years were dispersed. There stood God, the Father of us all, glorious beyond description, and by his side the glorified resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph saw that each was a personage—that men are truly formed in the image and likeness of God. The Eternal Father spoke: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.) Joseph heard.

He was told the true church was nowhere on the earth. He was told that *all* had gone astray, and that no man had the power to speak for the Lord, that all had been misled. Many important truths were told that spring day, and he learned that he was to be the instrument by which the true church would be restored to the earth.

### Another miracle

After coming home that afternoon, he told his parents about the vision—and another miracle took place. His father and mother and his brothers and sisters believed him. To his surprise, when he told others, they not only did not believe, but heaped upon his youthful head ridicule—which is a most difficult form of persecution for a boy to endure. The kindly minister who had been advising him how to seek turned bitter, sarcastic, and critical. From then on as Joseph grew into manhood and as the time came to do the things required of a prophet, bitter words, ridicule, and some physical torture were his lot. But, like Samuel who knew he had heard the

Lord speak, Joseph knew he had seen and heard the Father and the Son.

Like Joseph, the prophet of old whose name he bore, he pursued his course. With him as the instrument, the Lord brought forth his heavenly doctrine of the way, the truth, and the light—which pointed the way back into the heavenly home of God the Father—to become indeed his sons and his daughters and his children to inherit all that the father has, even eternal life.

### The Book of Mormon

Through him the Lord provided a miraculous witness which is a sure sign to anyone who will investigate it without prejudice. That witness is a record of Jesus Christ and his visit to the people of ancient America and is called the Book of Mormon. This is not man's witness. It is the Lord's. The existence of the golden plates from which it was translated was verified by 11 men who saw the plates and who bear witness to all men today. Three of them further testified that the voice of God declared unto them that these ancient records had been "translated by the gift and power of God." (Book of Mormon foreword.)

### A test for truth

We invite all people in the earth to put this witness to the test. Obtain a copy of the Book of Mormon; read it with a desire to know of its truth. If you do as one of the prophets said—ponder it in your heart, and then ask the Lord if it be true—the Lord will "manifest the truth of it" unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost. If you make that test, you will know that Joseph, the modern prophet, bearing a common surname—Smith—was indeed the prophet he proved to be. If you know that truth by the power of the Holy Ghost, you will not rest until you have come into the kingdom of God and into the rest of the great Jehovah, even the Lord Jesus

Christ, and have joined with the Latter-day Saints.

The power and the authority of this kingdom on earth rest upon President Spencer W. Kimball. I bear you this, my solemn witness—Joseph Smith was a prophet. President Kimball is a prophet—in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Kimball

We have just listened to Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder John H. Vandenberg, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. Following Elder Vandenberg, Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will be heard.

## Elder John H. Vandenberg

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

A few weeks ago while driving north along the Wasatch Front here in Utah on an early Sunday morning, I was conscious of the sun just rising over the mountains to the east. The valley to the west, was flooded by the rays of the sun, and inspirational music was flowing from the radio. A feeling of well-being prevailed within me. My thoughts dwelt on the goodness of being alive. The music ended in the usual way. It was time for the news. During the next several minutes the announcer commented, as I remember, on a burglary, a shooting, an accident, a hijacking, people being held hostage, and worry over the economic conditions. The news brought to my attention that the world could be full of peace, but that it was not.

Naturally, one fond of peace wonders why this is so, recognizing that if there were no people on earth, all would be quiet and peaceful. But then there would be no purpose in the earth. We know that its purpose is to receive God's children where they may dwell in mortality and prove themselves in the test against the forces of good and evil. In this process there will be strife as well as peace.

There is concern among society for the mounting trouble, the violation, and the turning away from the long-established moral codes. As one has said, "The living faith of the dead has become the dead faith of the living." (John Thompson, "Is There a Prophet

in the Land?" as quoted in *Quote, The Weekly Digest*, 24 July 1966, p. 6.)

Fortunately, there are many who know the value of faith in God and testify to its power to direct their lives, although: it is recognized that "truth is forever on the scaffold and wrong is on the throne." (James Russell Lowell, "The Present Crisis.") We join in that knowledge, and it is our purpose to constantly labor for the cause of truth with the assurance and promise that it will emerge victorious in the end.

### Revelation

God has revealed to his prophets his laws and commandments as they are now spread on the pages of religious history. From them we may learn the course which people and nations have followed when those laws and commandments have been violated, and we should not in this day think we can circumvent them. On the contrary, they will help us solve any dilemma in which we personally or nationally may find ourselves.

Jesus rebuked the Jews, who in their dilemma sought to kill him, saying: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39.) He gave us the keys to the fulfillment of life—search and think. Search for ideas. Search for examples. Search for testimony. Then apply the results and implant them into our in-