
Importance of Records

D&C 24:5

Joseph Smith was admonished to write “the things which shall be given thee by the Comforter” (D&C 24:5). He had not been in the habit of writing down revelations received from God. The Lord instructed him in July 1830 to “continue in calling upon God in my name, and writing the things which shall be given thee” (D&C 24:5).

Willing to follow counsel, the Prophet Joseph asked scribes to write as he dictated revelations from God. Several men served as his scribe, including Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and William E. McLellin. Of these scribes, William McLellin penned of writing the revelations as they were spoken by Joseph Smith:

The scribe seats himself at a desk or table, with pen, ink, and paper. The subject of enquiry being understood, the Prophet and Revelator enquires of God. He spiritually sees, hears, and feels, and then speaks as he is moved upon by the Holy Ghost, the “thus saith the Lord,” sentence after sentence, and waits for his amanuenses to write and then read aloud each sentence. Thus they proceed until the revelator says Amen, at the close of what is then communicated.¹

William McLellin added, “I have known [Joseph], without premeditation, to thus deliver off in broken sentences, some of the most sublime pieces of composition which I ever perused in any book.”²

¹ William E. McLellin, “Revelations,” *Ensign of Liberty*, August 1849, 98–99, in Joseph Smith as Revelator and Translator. Joseph Smith Papers.

² McLellin, “Revelations,” 98–99.

Just as the Prophet Joseph Smith was asked to record his revelations, President Russell M. Nelson has asked Latter-day Saints to write the personal revelations they receive from the Lord. At the April 2018 general conference, President Nelson said,

The privilege of receiving revelation is one of the greatest gifts of God to His children. . . . Follow the example of the Prophet Joseph. Find a quiet place where you can regularly go. Humble yourself before God. Pour out your heart to your Heavenly Father. Turn to Him for answers and for comfort. Pray in the name of Jesus Christ about your concerns, your fears, your weaknesses—yes, the very longings of your heart. And then listen! Write the thoughts that come to your mind. Record your feelings and follow through with actions that you are prompted to take. As you repeat this process day after day, month after month, year after year, you will grow into the principle of revelation.³

³ Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018.