

man of God. It was not a matter of opinion with me, for I received a testimony from the heavens concerning that matter; and without such a testimony it is difficult for us always to judge; for no man can know the things of God but by the Spirit of God. I do not care how much education a man may have—how learned he may be—how much he has studied theology under the eyes of teachers that are uninspired; I do know there is no man living that can know the things of God for himself only by revelation. I could form some kind of an opinion about Joseph Smith as a natural man, without receiving any communication or revelation for myself. I could believe him to be a man of God from his conversation, from his acts, from his dealings; I could believe him to be a Prophet by seeing many things take place that he prophesied of: but all this would not give me that certain knowledge which is necessary for an individual to have, in order to bear testimony to the nations.

If I bear testimony to others that I know this Church and this kingdom to be the Church and kingdom of God, and that Joseph Smith was really raised up as a Prophet, and as a Seer, and as a Revealer, I must bear that testimony from some certain information and knowledge I have derived independent of what can be learned naturally by the natural man. The testimony I have borne for twenty-nine years past upon this point is that the Lord revealed to me the truth of this work; and because the Lord revealed this fact to me, I have the utmost confidence in bearing testimony to it in all the world. It is true I was then but a youth; I was ignorant and am still ignorant in many points and in many respects: but I was then very ignorant so far as the religion of heaven is concerned, until the Lord made manifest his

truth, and taught, informed, and instructed my mind.

For about one year before I heard of this Church, I had begun seriously in my own mind to inquire after the Lord. I had sought him diligently—perhaps more so than many others that professed to seek him. I was so earnest and intent upon the subject of seeking the Lord, when I was about eighteen years of age, and from that until I was nineteen, when I heard this Gospel and received it, that I did not give myself the necessary time to rest. Engaged in farming and laboring too by the month, I took the privilege, while others had retired to rest, to go out into the fields and wilderness, and there plead with the Lord, hour after hour, that he would show me what to do—that he would teach me the way of life, and inform and instruct my understanding. It is true I had attended, as many others have done, various meetings of religious societies. I had attended the Methodists, I had been to the Baptists, and had visited the Presbyterian meetings. I had heard their doctrines and had been earnestly urged by many to unite myself with them as a member of their churches; but something whispered to not do so. I remained, therefore, apart from all of them, praying continually in my heart that the Lord would show me the right way.

I continued this for about one year; after which, two Elders of this Church came into the neighborhood. I heard their doctrine, and believed it to be the ancient Gospel; and as soon as the sound penetrated my ears, I knew that if the Bible was true, their doctrine was true. They taught not only the ordinances, but the gifts and blessings promised the believers, and the authority necessary in the Church in order to administer the ordinances. All these things I received with gladness. Instead of feeling, as many do,