

must have had on the mind of Joseph; he was a young man, I was but a boy, and I know how those revivals affected young minds in the neighborhood in which I lived. Some of those preachers would hold their protracted meetings for days and weeks, and sometimes for a month, one meeting after another, every day and every evening, getting around the young with their influences, and concentrating their prayers, perhaps, on a single individual, and praying for no other, until he would say he had got religion and was converted. Suffice it to say, that I was disgusted with it, and did not believe in any of it, and rested my chance, so far as religion was concerned, on trying to do that which was right as near as I could, and running the risk.

In this frame of mind I was introduced to Joseph Smith, by Sidney Rigdon, who remarked, at the time, that he was the man who was talked about so much. He was a fine looking man; he did not say much to me nor I to him. Time passed along, and for years after I was occasionally thrown into his society, and frequently heard him speak; and, though I did not at first believe that he was inspired or that he was more than a man of great natural ability, I soon learned that he knew more about religion and the things of God and eternity than any man I had ever heard talk. I read the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants without their having any particular effect on my mind. I did not get the principles from either of these sources, but I obtained them from Joseph, and it seemed to me that he advanced principles that neither he nor any other man could have obtained except from the Source of all wisdom—the Lord himself. I soon discovered that he was not what

the world termed a well-read or an educated man; then where could he have got this knowledge and understanding, that so far surpassed all I had ever witnessed, unless it had come from Heaven? It commended itself to my understanding and my sober judgment, and although I admitted nothing, and did not embrace the gospel, but stood aloof, yet the words and principles which I heard from him had their effect on my mind.

I had been a reader of the Scriptures, and had learned a great deal by heart in my youth in the Sunday school. I had read a great many religious publications, and had a tolerable idea of what the sects of the day believed with regard to the principles of salvation. I had investigated and had been raised according to orthodox notions, and in my early youth I believed in the “Trinity.” I investigated the principles of the Unitarians, who did not believe in the “Trinity,” and also the doctrines of the Universalists, and I believed about as much in Universalism at the time I was introduced to Joseph as in any of the religions of the day, if not a little more, but had not united myself with any church organization, because I was not fully satisfied. I heard Joseph Smith state at one time in Nauvoo that whether “Mormonism” was right or wrong, the people were just as well without as with the ordinances taught and administered by the sectarians of the day. That was exactly what I thought, though I did not comprehend so much then in relation to the ordinances of the gospel, and those authorized to administer in them, as I afterwards learned. And although my understanding of these things may have been of slow growth, yet I can say and feel that it is grounded in the truths of heaven, for with the