

Since I came home, I have contrasted the present condition of myself and this people with what existed when I first became acquainted with this gospel. Then we were a little handful of people—there were, perhaps, not a hundred persons in all the States who had received the truth. I received it about five months after the organization of this Church, and, although but a boy, was immediately called to the ministry. In my inexperience I went forth, with gladness of heart, to bear my humble testimony to what I knew to be true. You may ask me if I had a knowledge before I commenced preaching this gospel. I answer, yes. I went forth from a farming occupation in the eastern part of the State of New York, and traveled alone between two hundred and three hundred miles, for the purpose of beholding the Prophet Joseph Smith. I found him in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, at the house of father Whitmer, where this Church was organized with only six members. In that house I found not only Joseph, the Prophet, but David Whitmer, John Whitmer, Christian Whitmer, and many of those witnesses whose names are recorded in the Book of Mormon. Those were happy days to me. To see a prophet of the living God, to look on a man whom the Lord had raised up to bring forth one of the most glorious records that ever saluted the ears of mortal man, was to me almost equal to beholding the face of an holy angel! Yet, when I took that journey, and first beheld his countenance, I did not certainly know that he was a prophet. I believed him to be such because of the purity of the doctrine that I had heard preached which he had brought forth. I knew it was a scriptural doctrine, agreeing in every respect with the ancient gospel. For although but a

boy, I had already become acquainted, in some measure, with the doctrines of the various religious sects of the day, but none of them satisfied me, none of them seemed to coincide with the word of God. I stood aloof from all, until I heard this, when my mind became fully satisfied that God had raised up a people to proclaim the gospel in all its ancient beauty and simplicity, with power to administer in its ordinances. That was a great satisfaction, so far as faith was concerned, but still I sought for a knowledge. I felt as though I was not qualified to stand before the people, and tell them that the Book of Mormon was a divine revelation, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, unless I had a stronger testimony than that afforded by ancient prophets. However great my assurance might be, it seemed to me, that to know for myself, it required a witness independent of the testimony of others. I sought for this witness. I did not receive it immediately, but when the Lord saw the integrity of my heart and the anxiety of my mind—when He saw that I was willing to travel hundreds of miles for the sake of learning the principles of the truth, He gave me a testimony for myself, which conferred upon me the most perfect knowledge that Joseph Smith was a true prophet, and that this book, called the Book of Mormon, was in reality a Divine revelation, and that God had once more, in reality, spoken to the human family. What joy this knowledge gave me! No language that I am acquainted with could describe the sensations I experienced when I received a knowledge from Heaven of the truth of this work.

In that early day the prophet Joseph said to me that the Lord had revealed that twelve men were to be chosen as Apostles. A manuscript