

Saints, believe that man was a holy prophet of God; the world consider that he was an impostor. We consider that we have a sufficient amount of evidence to warrant us in believing that he was a prophet. It was he who organized and established this Church under the direction of Almighty God. According to our faith, had it not been for that man, or some other raised up in the same manner, this people called "Mormons" or Latter-day Saints, now occupying this mountain territory, would have been dwelling among the various nations of the earth, and this Territory, at this period of time, would probably have been a barren waste, and such a thing as the Pacific railroad would probably not have been started or thought about for at least half a century to come. That man, called Joseph Smith, in our estimation, was a very good man, and the Lord recognized him as His servant and called him to perform a certain work here on the earth.

When did the Lord first manifest Himself to this man? Read our history if you wish to understand all the particulars; on this occasion I shall barely refer you to the early history of this Church, in print. The Lord revealed Himself to that person, not in his manhood, but in his youth. We have heard much said, by those who know nothing of the matter, about "old Joe Smith." How old was Joseph Smith when the Lord first manifested Himself to him? He was about fourteen years and four months old. Was that a very aged man? Look around here in this assembly and hunt up children fourteen years of age, and you will immediately admit that they do not look very aged.

What were the circumstances that enabled him to have manifestations

from Heaven at that early period of his life? He was very anxious, as most of mankind are, to be saved; and he was also very anxious to understand how to be saved. But on this point he was at a loss, he did not understand the way to be saved. He was a farmer's boy; he was not brought up and educated in high schools, academies, or colleges; he was merely a poor farmer's boy. He was not acquainted with those bad habits that are usually practiced by the youth in the great and populous cities of the United States. You know boys at the age of fourteen in those cities are apt to become contaminated with the evils with which they are surrounded; but Joseph Smith, having been reared in a secluded part of the country and laboring hard on the farm with his father, had not fallen into the pernicious habits practiced by many boys. When he was about fourteen years old there was what is called a religious revival or reformation in the neighborhood in which he lived. It was not confined to any one particular sect. The Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and the various denominations in that district or country were all engaged, more or less, in this revival. Several of the relatives of this youth had taken part in this revival, and had united themselves with the Presbyterian church. This young man was also requested to unite himself with this church. First one and then another of the different persuasions would come and converse with him and try to influence him to join his lot with them; and seeing so much confusion, each sect claiming that they were the true people of God, he became at a loss what to do. He occasionally devoted an hour, when his labors on the farm would permit, to reading the Bible, and while doing so his eyes happened