

had a great desire to live on the earth until I could see inspired men who could teach me those principles that I read of in the New Testament. I prayed a great deal in my boyhood and my early manhood that I might live on the earth to receive those principles that I there read of in the New Testament. In 1833, for the first time in my life, I saw an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That was Zera Pulsipher. He told me that he was inspired of the Lord. He was threshing grain in his barn when the voice of the Lord came to him and told him to arise and go to the north, the Lord had business for him there. He called upon Brother Cheney, his neighbor and a member of the Church. They traveled sixty miles on foot, in

listened for the first time in my life to a Gospel sermon as taught by the Elders of this Church. It was what I had sought for from my boyhood up. I invited the men home with me. I borrowed the Book of Mormon, and sat up all that night and read. In the morning I told Brother Pulsipher I wanted to be baptized. I had a testimony for myself that those principles were true. Myself and my brother, as was stated here yesterday, went forth and were baptized—the two first in that county. That was the beginning of my connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

At this point I will say, upon the subject of religion, what are the rights of men upon religious subjects? I do not know that I can do better

spirit world he will find the Bible is not a novel. He will learn that there is never before. He will learn that the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the sacrifice He made is not a burlesque, but that that was done for the salvation of the world. And he will find that there will be a God there, there will be a heaven there, there will be a hell there, there will be everything there of which the Bible has spoken concerning it.

In the spring after I was baptized, I went to Kirtland. There I met with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyram. I met those men that afterwards formed the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I traveled with Joseph Smith and with that company of men—205 of them—one thousand miles to the Missouri to assist our brethren in their difficulties. They had been driven from their homes and their lands, from Jackson county into Clay county. We traveled a thousand miles together. There I had my first experience of the dealings of God with the Prophet of God. I understood perfectly well that he was a prophet. I read the vision, I read his revelations, and I knew they could not come from any man on the face of the earth only by the inspiration of Almighty God. From Missouri I commenced my mission under Bishop Partridge. In other words, I will say that while there I had a great desire to preach the Gospel. I had that desire from my boyhood up. I had been a miller, and I had walked my mill hours and hours in the night, with my soul filled with these desires to preach the Gospel to the children of men. At the time I speak of I was a Teacher, and had no power and authority to go forth and preach. I went one Sunday into the forest there in Clay county. I was living with Lyman Wight, with half a dozen of the signers of the Book of Mormon—the Cowderys, the Whitmores, Judge Higbee, etc. I went off by myself and prayed to the Lord that I might have the privilege of preaching the Gospel to my fellowmen. That is all the office that I ever asked of the Lord or anybody else, as far as that is concerned. While praying the Lord gave me His spirit and answered me that my prayers were heard and would be answered upon my head, and that that I had asked for should be given me. I walked two or three hundred yards out of the forest into an open—a broad highway—in the midst of the forest, and there I saw Judge Higbee standing in the middle of the road with his arms folded. I walked up to him, and when I got to him he says, "Willford, the Lord has revealed to me that it is your duty to be ordained to go and preach the Gospel." I said, "Is that so?" He said, "Yes." "Well," says I, "if the Lord wants me to preach the Gospel I am ready to go and do it to the best of my ability." I did not tell him that I had been praying for it. My mission commenced there and it never has ended to the present hour. I have had a responsibility resting upon me in connection with my brethren.

Now, before I close, I will again bear my testimony that this work is of God. This tabernacle that you are in today was seen by the Prophet



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February, in deep snow, and the first place they felt impressed to call upon was the house of my brother and myself. They went into the house and talked with my brother's wife, and they told her who they were and what their business was. They told her that they were moved upon to go to the north, and they never felt impressed to stop anywhere until they came to that house. When they told her their principles, she said her husband and her brother-in-law both were men who believed those principles, and they had prayed for them for years. They appointed a meeting in the schoolhouse upon our farm. I came home in the evening, and my sister-in-law told me of this meeting. I had been drawing logs from the shores of Lake Ontario (I was in the lumber business), and I turned out my horse, did not stop to eat anything, and went to the meeting. I found the house and the dooryard filled with people. I

then to quote Brother Joseph Smith's remarks before thousands of people at a conference in Nauvoo, when there were many non-Mormons present. He said, "If I were the emperor of the world and I had power to control the whole human family, I would sustain every man, woman and child in the enjoyment of their religion." Those are my sentiments today: I believe every man—Jew, Catholic, Protestant, or anything—has a right to enjoy his religion unmolested. I believe the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the United States guarantee this blessing and privilege to everybody. In fact, I believe that even Robert Ingersoll and his followers have a right to their opinions and to enjoy the same; they have a right to their views with regard to God, to Christ, to the heavens and earth, to the present and the future. Still I will say, I believe that when Robert Ingersoll goes into the