

pure heart, that Priesthood has power with the heavens. If a man magnifies that Priesthood, the blessings of God are with him.

The first sermon that I ever heard in this Church was in 1833, by old father Zera Pulsipher, who died in the south, after having lived to be considerably over eighty years old. That sermon was what I had prayed for from my childhood. When I heard it I had a testimony for myself that it was true. I received it with every sentiment of my heart. He preached in a school house upon a farm that we owned in Oswego County, New York. He opened the door for any remarks to be made. The house was crowded. The first thing I knew I stood on top of a bench before the people, not knowing what I got up for. But I said to my neighbors and friends, "I want you to be careful what you say as touching these men (there were two of them) and their testimony, for they are servants of God and they have testified unto us the truth—principles that I have been looking for from my childhood." I went forth and was baptized. I was ordained a Teacher. I was always sorry that I was not a Deacon first; for I had a desire to bear the Priesthood in its various degrees, as far as I was worthy. I had had a desire for years, not only to hear the Gospel, but to have the privilege and power of preaching it to my fellow men. I was a miller by trade, and I spent many a midnight hour in the mill calling upon the Lord for light and truth, and praying that I might hear the Gospel of Christ and be able to teach it to my fellow men. I rejoiced in it when I did receive it. I afterwards went with Zion's Camp to Missouri in the spring of 1834, with the Prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum, and over two hundred of the Saints of God. That was a great mission to me. I was with the Prophet. I had read his revelations. I had read the vision recorded in this Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and it had given me more light and more knowledge with regard to the dealings of God with men than all the revelations I had ever read, in the Bible or anywhere else. I had been taught that there was one heaven and one hell; and everybody that was not sprinkled or baptized, infants and all, would have to go to hell. It made no difference whether the individual had committed no wrong, if he had not been received into the church by sprinkling or baptism, he would have to go to hell with the murderer, with the whoremonger, with the wickedest of men. On the other hand, everybody that was sprinkled would go to heaven. No matter if they had never made a single sacrifice for the Gospel of Christ, they would have the same glory as Peter, James and John, who had sacrificed their lives for the Gospel's sake. That was the kind of teaching I heard in my boyhood. I did not believe one word of it then; and I don't now. But this vision of which I speak opened my eyes. It showed me the power of God and the righteousness of God in dealing with the human family. Before I saw Joseph I said I did not care how old he was, or how young he was; I did not care how he looked—whether his hair was long or short; the man that

advanced that revelation was a prophet of God. I knew it for myself. I first met Joseph Smith in the streets of Kirtland. He had on an old hat, and a pistol in his hand. Said he, "Brother Woodruff, I've been out shooting at a mark, and I wanted to see if I could hit anything;" and says he, "Have you any objection to it?" "Not at all," says I; "there is no law against a man shooting at a mark, that I know of." He invited me to his house. He had a wolfskin, which he wanted me to help him to tan; he wanted it to sit on while driving his wagon team. Now, many might have said, "You are a pretty prophet; shooting a pistol and tanning a wolf skin." Well we tanned it, and used it while making a journey of a thousand miles. This was my first acquaintance with the Prophet Joseph. And from that day until the present, with all the apostacies that we have had, and with all the difficulties and afflictions we have have been called to pass through, I never saw a moment when I had any doubt with regard to this work. I have had no trial about this. While the people were apostatizing on the right hand and on the left, and while Apostles were urging me to turn against the Prophet Joseph, it was no temptation to me to doubt this work or to doubt that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

As I have said, while holding the office of teacher, I went to Missouri in Zion's Camp. After arriving in Missouri, having gone through many trials and tribulations, and suffering from cholera, which caused us to lay in the grave fifteen of our brethren, we stayed at brother Lyman Wight's. While at Lyman Wight's, I attended council meetings with the Prophet, with David Whitmer, with Oliver Cowdery and other leading brethren of the Church. David Whitmer was the President of the Stake of Zion. Brother Joseph reproved him very sharply, as well as some of the other brethren, because of their lack in fulfilling the commandments of God and doing their duty. While at that place I had a great desire in my heart to go and preach the gospel. I went off one Sunday night by myself into a hickory grove, several hundred yards from the settlement, and I asked the Lord to open the door for me that I might go and preach the gospel. I did not want to preach the gospel for any honor I might get on this earth; for I thoroughly understood as far as a man could in my condition, what a preacher would have to pass through. It was not honor, nor wealth, nor gold, nor silver that I desired; but I knew this was the gospel of Christ, revealed to me by the power of God; I knew this was the Church of Christ; I knew Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; and I had a desire that I might preach that gospel to the nations of the earth. I asked the Lord to give me that privilege. The Lord answered that prayer and said I should have my desire granted. I got up rejoicing. I walked about two hundred yards out in the open road, and when I got into the road, there stood Judge Higbee. Says he, "Brother Woodruff, the Lord has revealed to me that it is your duty to be ordained to go and preach the gospel." Says I, "Has He?" "Yes." "Well,"

says I, "if the Lord wants me to preach the gospel, I am perfectly willing to go and do that." I did not tell him I had been praying for this. The consequence was, I attended a council at Lyman Wight's, and was called and ordained to the office of a Priest in the Aaronic Priesthood, while other brethren were ordained Elders. I was called by Bishop Partridge to go to the Southern country on a mission. Bishop Partridge asked me a great many questions, and I asked him questions. It was then dangerous for any of our brethren to go through Jackson County. He wanted me to go to Arkansas, and the road led square through Jackson County. I asked him if we should go through there (I had a companion with me—an Elder). Says he, "If you have got faith to do it, you may; I haven't." I thought that was a curious remark from a Bishop. "Well," says I, "the Lord says we must travel without purse or scrip; shall we do it?" Says he, "That is the law of God; if you have got faith to do it, you can do it." He said he had hardly got faith to go into Jackson County. However, we started and went through Jackson County. We came near losing our lives, and were saved almost by a miracle. We traveled through Arkansas and other parts.

But I do not want to dwell on these things. I merely wish to say that I went out as a Priest, and my companion as an Elder, and we traveled thousands of miles and had many things manifested to us. I desire to impress upon you the fact that it does not make any difference whether a man is a Priest or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling. A Priest holds the keys of the ministering of angels. Never in my life, as an Apostle, as a Seventy, or as an Elder, have I ever had more of the protection of the Lord than while holding the office of a Priest. The Lord revealed to me, by visions, by revelations, and by the Holy Spirit, many things that lay before me.

I was once moved upon to go and warn old Father Hakeman, living on Petty-John Creek, Arkansas. He had been in Jackson County during the persecution period. His wife died there. His family consisted of five sons, all over six feet tall. Most of them had been whipped with hickory gads by mobs, and he went south into Arkansas, taking his sons with him. We went a good deal out of our way for the purpose of visiting Father Hakeman. I had a vision the night previous, in which was manifested to me the trouble that lay before us, but that the Lord would deliver us. We arrived at his house on Sunday morning. He was taking breakfast. We had had breakfast at the place where we stayed over night. I saw a Book of Mormon on his shelf. He did not seem to pay any attention to us or to take any interest in us. I took up the Book of Mormon, and said, "You have a very good book here." "Yes," said he, "but it is a book that came from the devil." That opened my eyes. He had been an Elder; he had been in Zion; he had been persecuted there and driven out; but I found that he had apostatized, and he was our enemy. I saw he would do anything he could against us. We left him and went to Brother Hubbard's and stayed with him three weeks, during which we