

✓ THE STORY OF MY CONVERSION.

HOW I HEARD AND ACCEPTED THE LATTER-DAY MESSAGE.

BY ELDER J. W. METCALF.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—The opening meeting of the General Conference of 1905 was in progress. The time was being occupied with short speeches. President Joseph Smith called on Elder T. W. Chatburn, who responded in characteristic style. By a strange coincident President Smith next called on Elder Metcalf, who opened his impromptu speech as follows: "Brothers and Sisters, I have been quite edified by listening to the brethren who have preceded me, and especially in listening to the brother who has just spoken. It has only been about six years since I met this brother in controversy; and I rather filled up in listening to him this morning, until I feel that I am hardly able to say anything. But I rejoice that my talk with him in controversy led me to examine into this work, to investigate it; and in my investigation I became convinced that this is the work of God. And entering into it I have been more and more convinced by the manifestations and evidences that have been given to me time and time again by the Spirit of God. My associations with the church have been pleasant; and I have enjoyed this work. And notwithstanding I have met with things that have been unpleasant, things that have risen that seemingly were going to bring about a crash, yet through all of that God's hand has been with us, and we have seen the work go out victorious, and I feel to rejoice this morning that we have that faith and confidence in this work which the brother has just expressed.

I WAS BORN July 14, 1858, in Larue County, Kentucky. My parents were Roman Catholic, so had me christened while small. My mother died when I was about six years old and my grandfather took me to raise. He was my mother's father. He was a playmate of Abraham Lincoln and belonged to the Missionary Baptist Church, so I grew up in that faith.

I was married to Miss Sadie Ross, on the 5th of December, 1882, at Athertonville, Kentucky, and came to Louisville March 3, 1883, and have lived there ever since. On February 18, 1888, by the side of a dying baby boy of mine, I surrendered to the Lord with full purpose of heart to serve him all the rest of my life. I engaged in doing mission work here in the city and at night while all were in bed asleep, I would lay my Bible in a chair and kneel down and pray for light. My friends got me mixed up in the Methodist Church, but in less than six months I saw by my studies of the word of God that none of the churches were in harmony with the Scriptures, and so came out and went ahead holding missions in the city and preaching that the church ought to be like it was anciently, and the gospel should be preached as it was of old. I would anoint the sick and lay on hands and many wonderful healings were effected, and I had quite a little band of "faith healers," as some called us.

Finally, in 1897, that is the first part of the year, came a man by the name of M. R. Scott, Jr., to my mission and I let him preach several times, but I could not tell from his preaching that he was different from anybody else; but shortly after that a man by the name of J. M. Scott came in the city to do missionary work. I met him at Bro. James E. Riggles' and we had quite a tilt on doctrine. I fully thought he was a Salt Lake Mormon and he made a

statement in our little tilt that was against what Paul said, so I called him to time and he did not see it that way, so I would not have anything to do with the Mormons till finally he came to my house and apologized. Then came Elder T. W. Chatburn, another elder, and Bro. Riggle came after me to meet this Mr. Chatburn; so I met Elder T. W. Chatburn; I found him to be a fair-minded man, so we parted friends. Then I heard J. M. Scott preach several times and I went to praying over the church question.

I had a beautiful vision. I was standing on the bank of a river and there came a beautiful boat moving up to where I was standing, and I asked, "Will that boat take me to New Heaven?"

The answer came back, "Yes, sir, get on."

I looked at the hull of the boat and under it was a great, big man; and he just twisted himself out from under and the boat disappeared. I looked to see the man; he also disappeared. Then I looked up and there came another boat.

When it came up I asked, "Will that boat take me to New Heaven?"

The answer was, "Yes, get on."

So I looked at the hull to see if it had a man for a hull, but it was all right, so I got on and it started. The river was out of its banks and the boat just ran over the tops of trees and everything that was in its way. Finally I saw a large stump standing out of the water and the boat was running right at the stump, so I began to brace my feet to prevent falling when the jar came, but it passed over the stump without the slightest jar. Then I saw a large log sticking up out of the water, so I again began to brace my feet to prevent falling, but the boat passed over without the slightest jar.

Then the vision passed away and I asked the Lord what that meant, and the answer came: "This is the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the other the church of men."

So real was the information that on the twenty-seventh day of March, 1899, I was baptized by Elder J. M. Scott, and on the eleventh day of May, 1899, I was ordained to the office of elder by M. M. Turpen and J. M. Scott. On the fifth day of July, 1903, I was ordained to the office of seventy by Isaac N. Roberts.

I have seen many stumps and logs thrown in the way, but this work still goes on and I trust that my feet will be able to stand. To this end pray for me, as I am ever your brother in the faith.

