

In the first place, I will say that the Prophet Joseph taught us that Father Adam was the first man on the earth to whom God gave the keys of the Everlasting Priesthood. He held the keys of the Presidency, and was the first man who did hold them. Noah stood next to him. These keys were given to Noah, he being the father of all living in his day, as Adam was in his day. These two men were the first who received the Priesthood in the eternal worlds, before the worlds were formed. They were the first who received the Everlasting Priesthood or Presidency on the earth. Father Adam stands at the head, so far as this world is concerned. Of course, Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest of the salvation of the human family. But Adam holds those keys in the world today; he will hold them to the endless ages of eternity. And Noah, and every man who has ever held or will hold the keys of Presidency of the Kingdom of God, from that day until the scene is wound up, will have to stand before Father Adam and give an account of the keys of that Priesthood, as we all will have to give an account unto the Lord, of the principles that we have received, when our work is done in the flesh.

Brother Cannon has given my mind with regard to Joseph Smith. I look upon Joseph Smith as the greatest Prophet that ever breathed the breath of life, excepting Jesus Christ. Father Adam, as I have said, stands at the head; but Joseph Smith was reserved to lay the foundation of this great Kingdom and dispensation of salvation to the whole human family in these last days, to build up Zion, to establish God's Kingdom, and to prepare it for the coming of the Son of Man. He held those keys. Brother Cannon has told you the truth. No other man held those keys while he lived. After him, as has been said, came Brother Brigham. I have traveled with Joseph Smith thousands of miles. There are some here tonight who were in Zion's Camp. He was a boy, in one sense of the word. He was but a young man when he was martyred and passed into the presence of God. His days were comparatively few. But he was a great man. He lived a long life for a few days. He performed an almighty work—as great a work as any man, save Jesus Christ, that ever lived on the earth. We knew him. We knew the Apostles. We knew Brother Brigham; he was a glazier and painter, and, in one

sense of the word, an illiterate man. But God raised him up to do a great work and to follow in the channel of Joseph Smith. He magnified his calling. He led this people to these mountains, and he built up this country almost from one end of it to the other, by his counsel. The Lord took him to Himself. Brother Taylor followed, until he was taken away.

Now, all of these men were what the world would call weak instruments in the hands of God. I have been asked the question many times, "Why did the Lord choose Joseph Smith to bring forth the Book of Mormon and to lay the foundation of this great Kingdom here on the earth? Why didn't He choose Dr. Haws, Dr. Porter, Mr. Beecher, or some great man?" I have never had but one answer in my life to all such men, and that is, "The Lord could not do anything with them, because of their unbelief, and their unwillingness to acknowledge His hand in all things." That is the reason the Lord has chosen weak instruments to do His work. And I will say here, if any of you want a weaker instrument than Wilford Woodruff to hold the keys of the Kingdom of God, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. The Lord, however, is just as able to inspire me, or Brother Cannon, or any other man, when the time comes, as He has inspired other men in past ages. I know what the will of God is concerning this people, and if they will take the counsel we give them, all will be well with them.

Now, I want to make a few remarks concerning myself. I never like to do this; but I want to give you a little of my experience in a few things, and I want to tell you where my strength lies, and the greatest evidence that any Elder of Israel can have, ever did have, or ever will have on the face of the earth with regard to the work of God.

Speaking of the administration of angels. I never asked the Lord in my life to send me an angel or to show me any miracle. I wanted the Gospel of Christ; and the first sermon I ever heard preached in this Church I had a testimony for myself that it was the Gospel of Christ. I had a testimony to satisfy myself when I was baptized. I had been looking, praying, hungering and thirsting to find some man on the face of the earth who had the Priesthood, and who could teach me the Gospel. When I heard this sermon, I knew the voice; I knew the shepherd; I knew it was true. And

from that day until this, I have never seen one moment in my life that I have ever had doubts with regard to it. I have never had any trial in this Church with regard to my faith. My trials have been of another nature. I have had the administration of angels in my day and time, though I never prayed for an angel. I have had, in several instances, the administration of holy messengers. In 1835, at Brother A. O. Smoot's mother's house in Kentucky, I received a letter one day from Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, requesting me to stay in Kentucky and Tennessee and take charge of the Church there. He wanted David Patten and Warren Parrish to go to Kirtland to receive their endowments. Joseph said in that letter: "You shall lose no blessing by pursuing this course." That letter was a great joy, a great comfort and consolation to me. I had traveled with Joseph Smith to Missouri. I had been acquainted with him, and I knew he was a Prophet of God. In the evening of that day I went into a little back room, in which was a small settee. I was alone. I was overwhelmed with joy and consolation at the letter I had received and the encouraging words it contained. I knelt down and prayed. I arose from my knees and sat down. The room was filled with light. A messenger came to me. We had a long conversation. He laid before me as if in a panorama, the signs of the last days, and told me what was coming to pass. I saw the sun turned to darkness, the moon to blood, the stars fall from heaven. I saw the resurrection day. I saw armies of men in the first resurrection, clothed with the robes of the Holy Priesthood. I saw the second resurrection. I saw a great many signs that were presented before me, by this personage; and among the rest, there were seven lions, as of burning brass, set in the heavens. He says, "That is one of the signs that will appear in the heavens before the coming of the Son of Man. It is a sign of the various dispensations."

Now, had I been an artist, on the next day I could have sat down at my table and drawn, as clearly as though I had studied them all my life, everything I saw. I went to meeting the next day, with Brother Smoot. I hardly knew where I was. I did not comprehend a being, scarcely. I was entirely overwhelmed with what I had seen the night before.