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## DISCOURSE

Delivered at the Weber Stake Conference, Ogden, Monday, October 19th, 1896, by

PREST. WILFORD WOODRUFF.

[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

I am pleased to meet with so many of our friends this morning, and I feel desirous to talk to you upon a principle that I very seldom dwell upon before the congregations of the Saints. I have had my mind somewhat exercised of late on various things, perhaps for purposes known to the Lord better than myself, though they are principles we are all more or less acquainted with.

One of the Apostles said to me years ago, "Brother Woodruff, I have prayed for a long time for the Lord to send me the administration of an angel. I have had a great desire for this, but I have never had my prayers answered." I said to him that if he were to pray a thousand years to the God of Israel for that gift, it would not be granted, unless the Lord had a motive in sending an angel to him. I told him that the Lord never did nor never will send an angel to anybody merely to gratify the desire of the individual to see an angel. If the Lord sends an angel to anyone, He sends him to perform a work that cannot be performed only by the administration of an angel. I said to him that those were my views. The Lord had sent angels to men from the creation of the world, at different times, but always with a message or with something to perform that could not be performed without. I rehearsed to him different times when angels appeared to men. Of course, I referred to the angel visiting Joseph Smith. The Revelator John said that in the last days an angel would fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth. The reason it required an angel to do this work was, the Gospel was not on the earth. The Gospel and the Priesthood had been taken from among men. Hence God had to restore it again.

Now, I have always said, and I want to say it to you, that the Holy Ghost is what every Saint of God needs. It is far more important that a man should have that gift than he should have the ministration of an angel, unless it is necessary for an angel to teach him something that he has not been taught.

I am going to refer to some of my own experiences with regard to the ministration of angels and the operations of the Holy Ghost. I have never prayed for the visitation of an angel,

but I have had the ministrations of angels several times in my life.

One visitation I received in Kentucky, at the house of A. O. Smoot's mother, while on my first mission. I went through Jackson county into Arkansas Territory, and from Little Rock waded the Mississippi swamp 180 miles to get across into Tennessee. I arrived in Henry county, Tennessee, on the west, at the same time that David Patten and Warren Parrish landed in that region on the north. We met and labored together for a while and built up some churches there. I then held the office of a Priest. I traveled thousands of miles and preached the Gospel as a Priest, and, as I have said to congregations before, the Lord sustained me and made manifest His power in the defense of my life as much while I held that office as He has done while I have held the office of an Apostle. The Lord sustains any man that holds a portion of the Priesthood, whether he is a Priest, an Elder, a Seventy, or an Apostle, if he magnifies his calling and does his duty.

I will give you an instance of the Lord's protecting care over me while I was a Priest. I had this experience while in Arkansas with my companion, who was an Elder. There was a man in that country who with his wife and five sons had been in Jackson county. His wife died there. The old gentleman was in the faith apparently when he left there. He was driven out, the same as the rest of the Saints were, and some of his sons were whipped with hickory gads in the persecution there. I knew he was in this Arkansas country, and I felt anxious to go and see him, as he was the only Latter-day Saint that we knew anything about in that region. The night before I got there I had a peculiar dream. I dreamed that an angel appeared to us and pointed out a certain path that we must follow, and that the blessings of God would attend us in following that path. As we went along this path we came to a log cabin with a wall on each side ten or fifteen feet high. This road led right through that building. When I went to the door and opened it, it was full of large serpents. My companion said he was not going into that room for anybody or anything.

"Well," says I, "I am, or I'll die trying." The Lord told us to follow that path, and I am going to walk in it, unless I am stopped by some power that I know not of." I stepped into the door. These serpents all arose up ready to jump on me, and there was a very large one in the middle of the floor that made a pass at me. It appeared to me as though I would be destroyed, but when the serpent reached near to me it dropped dead; in fact, they all dropped dead, and they turned black and burst

open, after which they took fire and burned up, and both of us went through safely. The morning after, we arrived at this man's house. His name was Akeman. It was Sunday morning, and we went into the house. Mr. Akeman and his daughter were at breakfast. His sons were settled in cabins around him. We sat down, but there seemed to be a peculiar spirit in the place. I finally stepped up to the mantlepiece, on which I saw a Book of Mormon. I picked it up, and said, "Brother Akeman, you've got a very good book here." He said, "It's a book that came from hell." I then began to understand a little of what lay before us. He had apostatized. He cursed everything and everybody — Joseph Smith, Lyman Wight, the Apostles and a good many others whom he named. He was very angry. I inquired about his sons. He said they were settled around him there. Well, we took up our valises and left. I looked up one of his sons — the youngest, I believe, and the only one that was in the faith, and he was like a drowning man; but by praying with him we got the Spirit of the Lord in him, and we had a pretty good time with him. We told him of our experience at his father's, and I said we were desirous to have some meetings there if we could. He said he did not know: his father had apostatized and was at war against everything that was Mormon. He told us, however, where an old gentleman lived close by to whom he had loaned the Book of Mormon. He was an aged man and his wife was an aged woman. Their name was Hubbard. We went to see them and they were very glad to receive us. In the morning my companion said he was going to leave the place. Of course, he was an Elder, and I was only a Priest, and we generally suppose that the lesser should obey the greater; but I said to him, calling him by name, "You are not going to leave here, nor I either; we shall both of us stay here till I see the fulfillment of my dream. It is here, and I am going to stay and see it, and you will, too." It is not natural for me to take a stand of that kind, but I felt led to do it upon that occasion. We stopped there three weeks, and cleared land for father Hubbard, while he fed and housed us. Three times while we were there I was warned of the Lord to go and warn this Mr. Akeman. The last warning I received from the Lord was on Saturday night of the third week. I went up to his house which was about three quarters of a mile distant, and when I got there his daughter stood in the doorway. I walked in and saluted him. He was walking the room, but did not say anything to me. I told him the Lord had sent me to pay him a visit.