

set forth by its writers, the epitome of the plan of salvation which is there given unto us, we derive the highest consolation, we obtain the greatest strength. It is, as it were, a constant fountain sending forth streams of living life to satisfy the souls of all who peruse its pages. Our condition is bad enough, it may be said, in some respects with this in our possession and having this to refer to; but we can imagine that it would be much worse if we did not have it, if we could not appeal to our fellow creatures who believe in God, who believe in Jesus Christ, who believe in the Old and New Testaments—if we did not have this to appeal to, to prove that whatever our peculiarities may be, however different our views from the views of many who profess Christianity, we at least share in those views with others who were called the people of God, the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in days that are past, and who among all people throughout Christendom are recognized as the true exponents of the word of God, and the plan of salvation which He revealed.

There was a day in our history when it was considered a crime for us to believe in revelation from God. I do not know that that day is entirely past. There was a day in our history when it was considered very improper for us to believe in Prophets or Apostles—that is, to believe that they ought to be in the Church. There was a time when we were indicted by a mob in its written proclamation for believing in miracles. It was considered sufficient cause and justification to expel us from our homes because we believed that God, through His power, could heal the sick, and perform miracles like unto those that were performed in ancient days by His servants. How

do you think it would have been, my brethren and sisters, if we had not had the Bible to refer to? How would it have been with many of those who passed through those scenes if they had not had the teachings of the Apostles and the words of the Savior written as we have them in the Bible to comfort them, to cheer them, and to show them that it was not a new departure for men to have those ideas and beliefs? With the Bible in our hands we could test all men who professed to be followers of Jesus Christ; for God has plainly said, that He is the same yesterday, today and forever; that He does not change; that He is as near unto His people in these days as He ever was; that He is as willing to hear their cries, to answer their petitions, to grant unto them the desires of their hearts, in our age as He ever was in any preceding age. Now, this is a doctrine plainly taught in the Bible, and it has been the cause of immense satisfaction to those who have espoused its doctrine, it would have been a very trying thing for us in the days of gloom through which we have passed had we not been assured in a very reliable way that God would hear and answer our prayers, for there have been many times when if it had not been for this assurance and this knowledge, the Latter-day Saints would have sunk beneath the weight of their afflictions, it is doubtful if they could have endured them; but by having this knowledge, by having received a testimony concerning the willingness of our Father in heaven to answer prayer, and to deal with us as He dealt with His ancient children, we have been comforted, we have been sustained, we have been filled with hope and have been cheered in our onward progress, and