

of the people—that is, to a very great extent. He has placed certain men whom He has chosen as watchmen upon the walls of Zion; He has placed them as shepherds of the flock of Christ; and in their capacity as watchmen and as shepherds He expects them to exercise that vigilance and care which are necessary for the protection and preservation of the people. The Lord has promised unto His servants that He will give them the necessary qualifications for, and that He will sustain them in the discharge of the duties that devolve upon them; and through the varied experience of the past 53 years this has been the case. The Lord has not left His people without proper care, and He has not left His servants destitute of his word and of a knowledge of His will, but has given these to them at the very time when they have been needed. No evil or difficulty has ever occurred in the Church or outside of the Church affecting us that we have not been warned of by the servants of God, and prepared for by their teachings, their counsels and their warnings. This constitutes the great difference between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the other churches that are organized among the children of men, and called by various names. God has made promises unto this people; He has provided for them; He has revealed himself unto them, and has extended His power for their preservation and safety all the day long.

Now, this is a new thing, it may be said in the earth—that is, comparatively new. Previous to the organization of this Church there was no claim made by any of the churches of the day to hold direct communication with Deity. Preachers, and those who lead in these

various sects, base their claims for authority upon that which was given in former days to the ancient servants of God. They are honest enough to make no pretense of having received communication from heaven, or direct revelation from God, calling them to the ministry or designating them to occupy the places they fill; but, as I have said, claiming the commission that was given to the ancient Apostles as the basis for their labor, they proceeded to teach the people such doctrines as they considered essential to salvation. God's voice was not heard. The silence that existed between heaven and earth—and which had existed after the slaying of those who had received authority from God, and unto whom He gave communications—was still unbroken—there were no heavenly messengers descending from heaven to earth and making manifest the mind and will of God unto the inhabitants of the earth, but it was as though the heavens were as brass over the heads of the people, and as though—so far as the voice of God was concerned—He took no interest in the affairs of the children of men. And this was the conclusion to which the whole religious world had come—that God had withdrawn Himself from communicating with his children, that He had revealed his mind and will as it is recorded in the Bible, and that therefore the canon of Scriptures was full, and there was no longer any necessity for further light or knowledge from Him. This was produced as an argument against the Elders of this Church, when they commenced to teach the doctrine of new revelation, when they went forth proclaiming unto the inhabitants of the earth that God had spoken; that the silence between heaven and earth had been broken;