

I was a child I read the New Testament. I inquired of my father if there were any Apostles then upon the earth, or if there were any people who had the gifts which the disciples of Jesus possessed? His reply was that he knew of the existence of no such people. I could not understand it; to my mind, as a child, there seemed to be as great a necessity for the power of God then, as there was in those earlier days. I can recall nights when I thought of the blessings which former generations enjoyed, and felt to grieve that I could not live in a generation when there were Apostles who had the power of God. I thought then I would have been willing to endure the persecution and difficulties which they had to encounter for so glorious a faith.

This is an advantage we have above every other denomination with which I am acquainted. We believe the Bible in its entirety—that God is the same today as he was yesterday, and as he ever was—that he is as willing now as ever to bestow his blessings upon man, if man will prepare himself to receive them. And if there be an absence of faith and power, and of heavenly gifts, God our eternal Father cannot be accused of partiality in withholding them from this generation.

Do we as a people sufficiently bear in mind that God requires us to live so as to receive and enjoy, to the fullest possible extent, the gifts and graces which he has to bestow upon his faithful children? I think, sometimes, we are like other people in this respect—we are very liable to grow careless, to become willing to allow the time to pass along without any particular effort on our part to improve ourselves, to increase in godliness and the power thereof. We have the human disposition to be at ease in the enjoyment of the

earthly comforts by which we may be surrounded. In this respect human nature has been the same in all ages, and hence it has almost become proverbial that for a church to prosper it must be persecuted, and its members placed in constant jeopardy. But with the knowledge God has given to us this should not be the case. It should be a pleasure, a source of constant delight to us, as Latter-day Saints, to keep all the commandments of God, to seek and contend for that faith once delivered to the Saints, by which they accomplished such mighty works.

I have said that I greatly desired to live when Apostles were upon the earth. Are there not hundreds of this congregation who have felt, in various times in their lives, before they heard the sound of the everlasting Gospel, that they would traverse this earth, and undergo all manner of hardships, if they could only have the privilege to behold the face of a man of God, an Apostle of the Lord Jesus? What would they not have given to hear words of salvation from such a man, a man who had authority to teach and to administer the ordinances of the Gospel? Doubtless there are hundreds present who at various times in their lives have felt this, having grown up amid contending sects. I am satisfied that there are hundreds here who felt in their hearts that there was no sacrifice they were capable of making, which they would not have gladly made, to have had the privilege they now enjoy. They are now numbered with the Church of God, and have a knowledge of this through the power of the Holy Ghost, and the enjoyment of its gifts and blessings. And yet you talk to these men and women today, and what are their feelings? A number of them feel as zealous and warm in the work of God as