

had not heard the voice of Jonah, the Ninevites could not have been held to the same accountability as those to whom the word of the Lord had been proclaimed; and when prophets arose in the midst of Israel, prophets whom God raised up to declare his word, when the children of Israel repented of their sins and obeyed the warning voice of the servants of God, then the blessings of God always followed their obedience. But on the other hand, when the children of Israel rejected the testimony of the servants of God, when the prophets preached in vain, when they testified and warned the people without the people obeying their testimonies or their warnings, then invariably the judgments of God followed, his anger and indignation were kindled against that people or generation, it rested down upon them and in many instances to their destruction.

This is our position today. In this respect the Latter-day Saints occupy a unique position in the midst of the inhabitants of the earth. Men wonder very frequently at the testimonies that we bear. They express surprise that a people so few in number as we are, should imagine that there is so much importance attending the testimonies that we bear, or the Gospel that we preach. But it is a remarkable fact, abundantly sustained in the history of God's dealings with the children of men, that he does not hold mankind guiltless because there are only a few who are the oracles of truth in their midst and who have the authority to proclaim that truth. If there was but one prophet on the face of the earth, and he had no followers, but stood alone in the midst of the nations of the earth, his warnings would be followed by terrible results if they were

disregarded by those who heard them. The Lord does not look upon men according to their numbers; the importance of his work and his dealings with the children of men is not to be measured by the number of those who adhere to the principles that he proclaims. When Joseph Smith stood alone, when he had only two or three followers, and he declared unto those by whom he was surrounded that God had spoken to him from the heavens, that God had revealed the everlasting gospel in its ancient purity and power, that God had sent his holy angels to him, and that those angels had laid their hands upon his head, and upon the head of Oliver Cowdery, and ordained them to the everlasting Priesthood, his testimony was as binding upon those who heard it as if millions of men had testified to the same truths. His testimony was binding from the moment that he commenced to bear it to those by whom he was surrounded, and the accountability of the people who listened to him and heard his voice, and heard his testimony, began from the moment that he opened his mouth and bore testimony of these things. And so it has been from that day unto this, wherever the Elders of this Church have gone and have borne testimony to the inhabitants of the earth respecting the work that God has commenced—from that very moment the condemnation of the generation commenced if they did not obey these testimonies and warnings. This seems to some minds scarcely what it ought to be, that is, it seems to many that we attach too much importance to what one or two men might say, when we assert that condemnation follows their testimony; but there is this to be considered connected with the testi-