

REPORT OF A VISIT TO THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY

REMARKS BY ELDER GEORGE A. SMITH, DELIVERED IN THE BOWERY,
GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SEPTEMBER 13, 1857

Recorded by G. D. Watt, J. V. Long

The last time, I believe, brethren and sisters, that I had the privilege of speaking from this stand, was the day previous to my starting for the southern country. We were then expecting a visit from a very formidable force, directly from the State of Missouri. It waked up in my mind the feelings that I used to have—say from ten to twenty years ago, in hearing the constant annoyance of an approaching enemy. And according to the report which has been published of my remarks, I talked rather strong. But one thing is evident—if I did not talk strong, it was not because I did not feel strong on the occasion.

I left the next morning and wended my way southward. I visited the different settlements hurriedly, until I reached Parowan, in the county of Iron, the place of the first settlement in the southern part of the Territory. When I arrived there, it appeared that some rumor or spirit of surprise had reached them; for there were active operations going on, seemingly preparing for something that was near at hand. As I drove in at the gate, I beheld the military on the square exercising, and was immediately surrounded by the “Iron Battalion,” which seemed to have held its own very well since it was organized in that place.

They had assembled together under the impression that their country was about to be invaded by an army from the United States, and that it was necessary to make preparation by examining each other’s arms, and to

make everything ready by preparing to strike in any direction and march to such places as might be necessary in the defense of their homes.

As it will be well recollected, I was the President of the company that first made the settlement there. I was received with every feeling of enthusiasm, and I never found them in better spirits. They were willing any moment to touch fire to their homes, and hide themselves in the mountains, and to defend their country to the very last extremity.

Now, there had been no such preaching as that when I went away; but the Spirit seemed to burn in my bones to visit all these settlements in that southern region. Colonel Dame was about organizing the military of that district under the law of last winter. As the Colonel was going along to organize the military, I got into the carriage and went on a mission of peace, to preach to the people. When I got to Cedar, I found the Battalions on parade, and the Colonel talked to them and completed the new organization.

On the following day, I addressed the Saints at their meetinghouse. I never had greater liberty of speech to proclaim to the people my feelings and views; and in spite of all I could do, I found myself preaching a military discourse; and I told them, in case of invasion, it might be necessary to set fire to our property, and hide in the mountains, and leave our enemies to do the best they could. It seemed to be hailed with the same enthusiasm