

## BEARING FALSE WITNESS

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE A. SMITH, DELIVERED IN THE TABERNACLE,

SALT LAKE CITY, SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1870

Reported by David W. Evans

The 16th verse of the 20th chapter of Exodus, one of the ten commandments, reads as follows: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." We, as a people, are situated in the Great Basin, among the mountains, and occupy the little valleys which form the backbone of the American continent. We have been here about 23 years, and we have had the privilege of contending with the fury of the elements, with a sterile country and with desolation itself, and by the magic wand of industry and the blessing of our heavenly Father upon our labors, and upon the waters and the land, we have been able to make for ourselves comfortable homes and to enjoy religious liberty—a blessing which had been denied to us in other localities where we had resided. No other community can be found on the face of the earth that has had more good order, peace and harmony. In all the settlements, protection, safety, and every necessary blessing have been extended to the traveler, to the stranger and the resident alike. I believe that for the forty or fifty thousand square miles we have occupied in spots, the desert of course intervening between the settlements, there have better police regulations and more safety to all parties than have existed in the streets of New York or Washington. And the protection which has existed and which does still exist has been the work of the

Latter-day Saints. Of this we have every reason to be proud.

I have recently traveled more than 1,000 miles among the settlements, and have visited perhaps 30,000 people. During that journey I have not seen an idler, loafer, or heard an oath or blasphemous word; I have not seen a drinking saloon, dram shop, gambling hell, or brothel; but all has been perfect order and peace, the people worshipping God as they understand the Gospel and rejoicing in the same.

It was my lot, during the past season, to be present much of the time in this city, which was visited by great numbers of men, from nearly all parts of the earth. Many of them were clergymen of the various denominations—Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and others. Some of these men occupied our pulpits in this and the New Tabernacle. We were glad to hear them. We had many good reasons for wishing them to preach to us. Many of the younger members of our community have not been conversant with the religions of the age. The elder members of our body have been, for most of us were raised in some one or other of the religious denominations, and have felt and realized the effects of their principles, and are fully acquainted with their doctrines. Thousands of our Elders have traveled abroad in the earth preaching and have been observant of their