

PERSECUTION—TEMPLES—COOPERATION

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE A. SMITH, DELIVERED IN THE NEW TABERNACLE,
SALT LAKE CITY, SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 6, 1872

Reported by David W. Evans

Owing to a spirit of persecution and religious bigotry, alike disgraceful to the age, the enlightenment of the present generation and the nation in which we live, our First President is not permitted to be with us. While we regret such a state of affairs, we rejoice in the many liberties, privileges, blessings and powers which are extended unto us. It is not by any means strange that, while the world has been plunged in ignorance upon matters of religion and morality, and broken up into factions, on the appearance in the midst of the whole, of a small body of men, illiterate in their character, proclaiming to the world that they are inspired of the Lord, and undertake to introduce system and principles calculated to elevate mankind from degradation and destruction, and exalt them to eternal glory and endless increase, they should be misunderstood; it has been so in all ages of the world. When our Savior visited the earth bringing the simple principles of salvation, he was misunderstood, misapprehended, persecuted, imprisoned, crowned with thorns, tortured, as a man who was opposed to the religion of the age, and dangerous to the State. He was accused of a great variety of crimes, of being a pestilent fellow, and was finally put to death

by a class of men a great number of whom were zealous professors of religion—elders, high priests, rabbis, doctors of the law and others claiming to be exceedingly holy. Jesus, in referring to the history of the past, said that the fathers of those who persecuted him had slain the prophets, and such was the case; and we find that, in every age, when God inspired a man to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, all, or a large portion of mankind, were ready to denounce him and put him to death, to whip, imprison, annoy, lie about him, proclaim all manner of evil against him, and so on, until his influence should be annihilated from the earth. The same principle still exists, and the Latter-day Saints have had to contend with it. When Joseph Smith, in 1830, organized the Church with six members, the war as it were commenced; a few hours only had passed away when he was arrested, taken before a magistrate and accused of prophesying. He was discharged, arrested again, taken before another magistrate, and finally a declaration was made that if the law could not reach him, tar and feathers and mob power should. This is a very poor argument and shows the weakness of those who have recourse to it.

We live in an age of science, in an