

VISIT OF THE PRESIDENCY TO THE NORTHERN SETTLEMENTS

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE A. SMITH, DELIVERED IN THE NEW TABERNACLE,
SALT LAKE CITY, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SEPT. 7, 1873

Reported by David W. Evans

For the past two weeks it has been my privilege, in company with President Young, and Elders John Taylor, Cannon, and Woodruff and others, to travel among and visit the Saints in some of the settlements in the northern valleys of this Territory and the southern portions of Idaho. Considering the short time since the settlements north of Ogden were formed, especially those of Cache Valley and Bear Lake, it seems that great progress has been made in building towns and villages, preparing places of worship, providing the necessities of life, and constructing mills, roads and bridges, so that in a very few years the country has been turned from a desert, uninhabited region, to one of thrift and plenty.

While at Logan, a two days' meeting was held, on Saturday and Sunday, two weeks ago today. The people of the valley were in the midst of a very abundant harvest, and their grain had so ripened that the harvest came upon them all at once; yet the attendance at our meetings was very large, larger, in fact, than it had ever been my pleasure to witness in that place before. The Spirit of the Almighty seemed to be striving with the people, and though they were pressed with the labors of an abundant harvest, they were on hand,

alive and awake, to attend meetings and to perform their duties.

The changes which have come over this land, since we first settled in it, seem wonderful. The first visitors to Cache Valley pronounced it too cold a country for the cultivation of grain. Frost occurred almost every week during the summer, and the winters were very severe. Early explorers of that valley found the thermometer so low in the summer as to deprive us even of a hope of successful cultivation. But settlements were commenced and farming was attempted, and finally it was concluded that wheat could be grown there. It seems, however, that the brooding of the Spirit of the Lord over that land has softened the climate, and large crops of many varieties of fruit, including the apricot and peach, are raised there now.

I believe it is the case universally where the Latter-day Saints have settled in these valleys, and commenced their work with faith, trusting in the Lord, that he has softened the elements and tempered the climate, until they are now favorable, and year after year more tender vegetation has been introduced. I have noticed this in the settlements in the Sevier Valley and in Iron County. I commenced a settlement