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WORD OF WISDOM.

Discourse Delivered at the General Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Salt City, Saturday, October 6th, 1894, by

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[REPORTED BY ARTHUR WINTER.]

My heart is full of gratitude to my Heavenly Father for the privilege that I have enjoyed at being present at this conference, and I am grateful indeed for the teachings which have been given to us. I do pray with all the earnestness of my heart that every soul that has listened to the advice and counsel which have been given during this conference may seek to God for the aid and assistance of His Holy Spirit, that they may be enabled to carry out in their lives the words of God that have been delivered to us here today. I confess to you, my friends and fellow-laborers in the cause of God, that I have been humiliated beyond expression to go to one of the Stakes of Zion, to stand up and preach to the people and call upon them to obey the Word of Wisdom, and then to sit down to the table of a President of a Stake, after having preached with all the zeal, energy and power that I possessed, calling upon the people to keep the commandments of God, and to have his wife ask me if I would like a cup of tea or a cup of coffee. I have felt in my heart that it was an insult, considering the words that I had spoken, and I have felt humiliated to think that I had not sufficient power, and enough of the Spirit of God to enable me to utter words that would penetrate the heart of a President of a Stake, that he at least would be willing to carry out the advice which I had given. I remember going to a Stake of Zion but a short time ago and preaching with all the energy I possessed and with all the Spirit that God would give me upon the necessity of retraining from the drinking of tea and coffee, and I heard also at that conference a very eloquent appeal to the Latter-day Saints by a man who, I understood, was a president of a quorum of Seventy. But when we came to take our meal, he jokingly said that he could not do without his tea and coffee, and he proposed to have it and suffer the consequences. I remember going to another Stake of Zion and preaching to the people on the necessity of retraining from tea and coffee and giving some figures upon the wasting of the people's means; and the president of the Stake remarked, after I got through, that he thought the Lord

would forgive them if they did drink their coffee, because the water in that Stake of Zion was very bad. I did not say anything, but I thought a good deal, and I had to pray to the Lord and to bite my tongue to keep from getting up and doing something that I never have done in my life, and that is, to pick out a man and thrash him from the public stand. I felt that God owed me a blessing for not publicly reproofing that man, because I wanted to do it so badly.

Now, I had made up my mind before I came to this conference that I would not open my mouth upon the Word of Wisdom. I have become so discouraged, so disheartened, so humiliated in my feelings, after preaching year after year both by precept and example, to realize that there are Bishops, Bishops' Counselors, President of Stakes, and Patriarchs among the Church of God whose hearts I have not been able to touch, that I had about made up my mind that I would never again say Word of Wisdom to the Latter-day Saints. I felt that it was like pouring water on a duck's back. It had seemed to me as if I could not get sufficient of the Spirit of God to penetrate the hearts of the Latter-day Saints. But after listening to the remarks that have been made here, I feel to rejoice and thank God for what has been said; and I feel that my labors are approved of God among the people, whether they listen to what I say or not. We seem to get into ruts as a people, and we justify ourselves in doing that which is not pleasing in the sight of God. A man who does not pay his tithing make excuses for not doing it. A man who does not keep the Word of Wisdom makes excuses for not doing that. I want to say that there is not a man or a woman among all the Latter-day Saints but who could keep the Word of Wisdom if they got down on their knees, as Brother Teasdale has advised, and pray to God for help. The Lord has said that these words of wisdom are adapted to the weakest of the weak among the Latter-day Saints, and I have not only felt but said within the last week or two, to the Presidency of the Church, that I was on hand to make the motion to call upon certain individuals holding high and responsible positions in this Church to resign their offices or keep the commandments of God. I endorse with all my heart a remark made here yesterday by President Joseph F. Smith that if a man is standing in the doorway that leads to life eternal and by his pernicious habits he is blocking up that doorway and crowding others out, let him stand aside or let him reform his life.

Now, I want to make all mistakes on the side of mercy; but once in a while I want to see justice get just a

little bit of a chance among the people. If a man thinks more of a cup of tea or coffee, or a cigarette, or a chew of tobacco, than he does of his Priesthood, let him resign his Priesthood. That is the way that I have been feeling lately. I want to say that if I hold the Apostleship with the spirit of an Apostle, I feel as though I am almost justified, if after preaching to the people a president of a Stake gets up and casts doubt upon what I have said, in saying something from the stand against that man, whether he likes it or not. I am naturally earnest in my makeup, and I realize that I make greater mistakes than drinking a cup of tea or coffee; but I do try for the Spirit of the Lord, to know these mistakes and to endeavor to overcome them; and I want my brethren who preside over me in the Presidency and in the Apostleship to tell me of my mistakes. I also pray God to help me to overcome them. Those of us who know our mistakes and our errors, if we will seek for the light and the inspiration of the Spirit of God to overcome them, we can do so.

We hear a great deal about hard times. The Latter-day Saints last year expended in breaking a commandment of God by disobeying the Word of Wisdom, over a million dollars. In other words, the Latter-day Saints expended more cash in breaking a commandment of God than they paid tithing. I have faith in the integrity and honesty and in the testimony existing in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints. I know that the Latter-day Saints desire the onward advancement of God's kingdom. I know that the mistakes they make as a rule are mistakes of the head and not of the heart. But when we stop to reflect that a great deal more is expended by the people in breaking a commandment of God than they pay in tithing, do you not think that some of the mistakes of the head ought to be remedied? I do. The average price paid today for wheat in this Territory is about forty cents, and yet I am told that there comes into Utah Territory every year over one hundred thousand pounds of one brand of smoking tobacco, called the Duke of Durham, and as I understand it retails at 80 cents a pound, it takes one hundred and sixty thousand bushels of wheat to pay for that one brand of smoking tobacco! And we have had preached to us for the past fifty or sixty years that tobacco is only fit for sick cattle! The agent of this tobacco gives us the proud distinction, if you consider it so, that Utah Territory leads every other State and Territory west of the Mississippi river, in proportion to its population, in buying Duke of Durham smoking tobacco! Do you know that it is humiliating to me