

DISCOURSE

BY

President GEORGE A. SMITH,

DELIVERED AT THE

Semi-Annual Conference, in the
New Tabernacle, Salt Lake
City, October 7th, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I FEEL a deep interest in the subjects which have been brought before us this morning by the elders who have spoken, as well as in every discourse that has been uttered since the commencement of the Conference, and I hope that the impressions which have been made will be lasting. In relation to intemperance we, all of us, as Latter-day Saints, should observe the Word of Wisdom; and if we do not observe it we lay a foundation to weaken ourselves. You will see young persons come to the table in the morning and they want some tea or coffee, or a cup of good strong, warm drink. A habit of this kind has perhaps already been acquired by them, and it is likely to continue until they become slaves to it. In a little while it affects the complexion, it weakens the mind and the body throughout, and lays the foundation for a weaker generation to follow. Of course it is no use to talk to men about tobacco. It takes a man of energy to quit chewing tobacco, a man who has a mind and independence, boys who undertake it seldom accomplish it, though they are very foolish here to indulge in the habit.

I feel like exhorting my brethren and sisters to abstain from everything prohibited in the Word of Wisdom, and to live in accordance with its principles as near as our climate and the productions of our country will permit. So far as intoxicating drinks are concerned it is worse than madness and folly for men to indulge in them. There is something comparatively innocent in tea, coffee or tobacco when compared with intoxicating drinks. Of course a man who uses tobacco freely for years gets an appetite for liquor; he lays a foundation for an appetite for liquor, and after a while he craves it and must have it. He should let tobacco alone in the start; but yet tobacco does not make a man insane in a minute. Some of our most promising business men, who have come to Salt Lake City at different periods, have carried themselves to untimely graves by indulging in intoxicating drink. Men whose voices have been heard in the Tabernacle, men who have rendered service in the offices, and who have been honored have died like a dog in a ditch, or in a most degraded manner, in consequence of indulging in intoxicating drinks. A man says to another—"Come, take a drink." "No, I don't wish any." "Oh, don't be so pious, come and take a drink with us, don't be a coward;" and so, for fear of being a coward, he takes the drink. Shame on such a man! Why not quietly say—"No, I do not need it;" and if the invitation is repeated, say—"No more of that, gentlemen," and be man enough to let it alone, rather than yield and let a habit creep upon him that will destroy him. I have heard men say—"I can drink, or let it alone;" then let it alone; but some of those who can "drink or let it alone" will get drunk every day. They have sold themselves to the cursed alcohol. Let the elders of Israel cease this habit and learn wisdom. When you come to meet the presence of your Father in heaven, when you wish for the rewards of your priesthood, you who have not obeyed the Word of Wisdom will wait at the loss you have sustained in consequence of your folly. Think of these things; continue to think of them, pray over them, and set an example before your children that is worthy of imitation. If an old lady of seventy comes to my house at Conference and I get her a cup of tea, if there is a girl there of fifteen she will want to drink with grandma, and she will think she must have it because grandma does. This has been my experience in times past. I do not have it now, I do not get tea for people, unless they pretend to be sick, then I tell my folks to make them a tin cup full of good strong catnip tea. That is a rule I have prescribed. I do not know how my folks keep it. I certainly do not intend to place any restrictions on them any further than their own wisdom dictates. But if they use these things they do it in violation of my advice and run their own risks, and so do all others.

I say, brethren and sisters, let us observe the Word of Wisdom. We are doing a great business in tea, coffee and tobacco in the Co-operative Store. When we first established it we thought we would not sell tobacco at all; but pretty soon the superintendent asked the directors if he might not bring in some poor kind of tobacco to kill the ticks on sheep. It was very soon discovered that unless they sold tobacco, so many Latter-day Saints used it, that a successful opposition could be run against them on the tobacco trade alone, and they had to commence it, I believe under the plea that it was brought on to kill the ticks on sheep. Shame on such Latter-day Saints, so far as tobacco is concerned.

I will say a word in relation to the colleges which Brother Jesse N. Smith spoke about. As he said, we have struggled against many difficulties as far as education is concerned, and our university and our colleges, so far, have simply been schools for the education of teachers in the primary branches. We have sometimes employed professors and taught many different branches. But a great effort has been made to educate teachers for primary schools, and some of them have taken great pains to inform themselves. They have held associations and got up a normal and training class, have given lectures, and this summer they spent six weeks voluntarily to instruct each other.

It has been the uniform custom of the General Government to give the different States public lands and money to a liberal extent for educational purposes. None of this has ever been made available for Utah, we have had to carry everything by our own individual effort. Now that there are many young men and women among us who wish to study more advanced branches than we have, as yet, been able to organize, they would like to go to famous seats of learning in distant parts of the country for that purpose. A co-operative effort is now required on the part of the people, as a matter of domestic economy, to establish schools of a higher order, and to provide the professors and apparatus necessary to impart instruction in the higher branches of learning, that our young people may be able to obtain the education they desire at home; for while they would go away and spend five or six hundred dollars a year each, the same amount expended here would establish schools for the higher branches and cut off a large proportion of the expense in all time to come. We would like to have all the wards and settlements consider these questions, and make it a matter of real interest to bring about an organization and to supply the means necessary for this object.

In the foundation of a country it is necessary of course, to look well to its primary schools, we have tried to do this, we are still doing it, and, I believe, considering their circumstances, the people of Utah have done more for education than the people of any other Territory.

May the blessing of Israel's God be upon us in all our efforts to guide our children, in all our efforts to maintain the principles of temperance, to observe the Word of Wisdom and keep the commandments of God, and to establish such schools and colleges as shall enable us to advance in all branches that are useful, for our religion includes every good and true principle. There is no principle on the face of the earth or in heaven that is true, but what belongs to "Mormonism." May God enable us to do these things as we should, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE

BY

President DANIEL H. WELLS,

DELIVERED

At the Semi-Annual Conference, in
the New Tabernacle, Salt
Lake City, Oct. 6, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

It is with great pleasure I rise to bear testimony to the great truths that have been announced here this morning. The President has given some reasons for the testimony that he has borne, and the testimony that the servants of God bear to the truths of the everlasting gospel. I, too, can say that I know this to be the gospel of the Son of God, which is the power of God unto salvation. The great plan of salvation, devised

by our heavenly Father before the world was organized, when it is said the stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, has again been revealed in accordance with the prophecies of the servant of God. The Lord made his own selection, he chose from among the children of men whom he would, and Joseph Smith was the favored individual who received the visit of the angel bearing to this generation the gospel of salvation to be preached unto those who dwell on earth. It was taken away in fulfillment of prophecy. If it had not been taken away what necessity would there have been to restore it? If it had not been taken away the apostle could not have seen in the future the angel flying through the midst of heaven, bringing it back to earth to preach to all nations, kindreds, tongues and people. We bear testimony that it has been restored. It is not a new gospel—it is that which existed from the beginning, and which was devised before the world was made for the salvation of those who should come to dwell upon the face of the earth.

It is true that the terms of the gospel are inexorable. Every son and daughter of Adam will have to bend the knee to this plan of salvation, either here or somewhere else. The ordinances of the gospel pertain to this existence, and they have to be attended to in the flesh or by those in this state of existence. Except a man is born of water he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no getting around this, it is the declaration of the Savior, the Son of the living God, and I count that this is pretty high authority. Every man and every woman, including those who have died and passed behind the veil without hearing the gospel, before they can enter heaven will have to render obedience to the gospel ordinances, and as they cannot be administered to in the spirit, those in the flesh will have to administer for those in the spirit. You can not grapple a spirit to baptize it, neither can you perform the sealing ordinances in the spirit, hence the Savior said there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage in the resurrection. It is an ordinance pertaining to this state of existence, and by those dwelling in the flesh upon the earth have all these ordinances to be performed. If they are not by ourselves during this life they must be done by some one acting for and in our behalf still existing in the flesh, and in the authority of the holy priesthood, which has come down from heaven.

The acts and ordinances of that priesthood are just as legitimate here as in any other state of existence. It is the same authority as exists in the heavens. Through the authority of the everlasting priesthood channels have been opened between the heavens and the earth, by which we may seal upon earth, and it is sealed in heaven. This is the same authority that has always existed in the church and kingdom of God when it has been upon the earth. Why? Because it is the same authority that exists in the heavens; it is the authority by which the Gods are governed, and by which the worlds are organized and held in existence. It has been conferred from time to time upon the servants of God in the flesh, to enable them to perform the ordinances which pertain to this state of existence, and reach back again within the veil.

Having been called of God we stand ready to administer the ordinances of the gospel and of the house of God to the children of men; we stand ready to bear off this gospel to the nations of the earth, this great plan of salvation devised by our Father. There has never been any other, and there never will be. Men have tinkered at it, and tried to change and pervert it; but their efforts do not change God's plan, it is like its author—the same yesterday, today and forever. God is the fountain of truth, righteousness and grace. All true science and every good thing emanate from him. It is from this heavenly source we draw our information and our inspiration, and, as a matter of course, it comprehends everything good and worth having. Within the kingdom of our God is everything enjoyable that is lasting. If we do not build upon this basis then are we lost, because it is the only foundation that will stand. Everything else will be swept away in the due time of the Lord. The people are suffered to go their own way, to walk after the imaginations of their own hearts, to do this and do that,

because they are agents unto themselves, to do as they please. We can accept these principles or reject them; it makes no difference in regard to their truth. They are true, whether we receive or reject them, and they are calculated to save all the children of men. The plan is ample and will save all who will let it; and if we are not saved by this we shall be condemned.

Now may God help us and all the nations of the earth to see the light, that we may all come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved in his kingdom, is my prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.

DISCOURSE

BY

Elder Joseph F. Smith,

DELIVERED

At the Semi-Annual Conference, in
the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake
City, October 7th, 1873.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

To say I have been very much interested in the instructions that we have had at this Conference is but faintly to express my feelings. We have had much very excellent teaching, which we will do well to give heed to. I can not believe that the congregations that have attended this Conference will cast lightly aside these teachings. Certain it is that all the preaching that can be done by those who are most competent, and most richly endowed with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, will not benefit the people in the least, unless they will receive it, and will realize that the counsels which are given are designed expressly for themselves. It is not for us to say, "that does not mean me," and "that applies to my neighbor," or "that has reference to the doings of so and so." We should each feel that the instructions given have direct reference to ourselves individually; that counsel or that commandment is for me, and it is for me, as an individual, to put it into practice. This is the only course that will benefit, and fit us for the responsibilities that will devolve upon us in the future. It will not do for us to say—"If brother so and so, or sister so and so, will observe and carry out that counsel, I shall be satisfied to remain as I am." We can not obtain blessings from God by taking this course; the only way to secure them is by diligence on our own part. When we are prepared, by our own works and diligence, to receive the blessings that God has in store for the faithful; then, and not till then, shall we receive them. It will not do for us to be satisfied for our brother to prepare himself to receive the blessings God has promised to his children, and to rest content with seeing him receive the light of truth, the blessings of the gospel, and manifest a willingness to work righteousness in the earth. That will not reach us, only so far as we adopt his course and follow his example.

This is how I look at the requirements which God has made upon his people collectively and individually, and I do believe that I have no claim upon God or upon my brethren for blessing, favor, confidence or love, unless, by my works, I prove that I am worthy thereof, and I never expect to receive blessings that I do not merit. Who does? I do not know that anybody does, yet if we were to judge by the actions of some we must come to the conclusion that they are satisfied by seeing others live their religion.

I love the society of the good, honorable and pure, of those who love virtue and work righteousness. To associate and be numbered with such and to have my portion and my lot with them in this life, and to live so that I can secure that association in the life to come, throughout the countless ages of eternity. I take no pleasure in the society of the wicked, for this reason—the pleasures of the wicked will cease and be forgotten, and the wicked will die and will not be regretted, their names will be cast out from the presence of God and from the throngs of the righteous for ever. I, therefore, want no part with them, but I want to cast my lot with those who are securing to themselves eternal riches and happiness. To obtain these blessings I must be found walking in their footsteps and following their examples, otherwise I shall come short. This is how I understand the

principles of the gospel and the work we are engaged in. It is an individual work. You and I must secure the blessings of eternal lives for ourselves, through obedience and the mercy of God. We have the volition of our own wills and we can choose evil or good, the society of the wicked or that of the good; we can enlist under the banner of Christ, or under that of Belial. We have this option, and can do whichever we choose. Therefore we must look well to our ways, and see that we choose the right course, and build upon a foundation that will not wash away. We have got to learn to stand or fall for ourselves, male and female. It is true that we are taught in the principles of the gospel that man is the head of the woman, and Christ is the head of the man; and according to the order that is established in the kingdom of God it is the duty of the man to follow Christ, and it is the duty of the woman to follow the man in Christ, not out of him.

But has not a woman the same volition that the man has? Can she not follow or disobey Christ? Certainly she can, she is responsible for her acts, and must answer for them. She is endowed with intelligence and judgment, and will stand upon her own merits as much so as the man. That is why the brethren, during this conference, have been teaching the sisters that they must refrain from the fashions of Babylon. They must use their own judgment and agency as to whether they will obey this counsel or not. If they will not obey it, they will be responsible as much as the men are responsible for their acts. The man is responsible for the woman only so far as she is influenced by, or is obedient to, his counsels. Christ is responsible for the man so far as the man walks in obedience to the laws and commandments he has given, but no further, and so far will his atoning blood redeem and cleanse from sin; so far as they obey them will the principles of eternal life revealed in the gospel have effect upon the souls of men, so also with women. So sisters, do not flatter yourselves that you have nothing to answer for so long as you may have a good husband. You must be obedient. Obedience is the first law of heaven. Without it the elements could not be controlled. Without it neither the earth nor those who dwell upon it could be controlled. The angels in heaven would not be controlled without it, and in fact without obedience there could be no union or order, and chaos and confusion would prevail. When we are obedient we may be guided to the accomplishment of all that is required of us by our heavenly Father, for it is on this principle that the designs and purposes of God are accomplished. The elements are obedient to his word. He said "Let there be light and there was light." He commanded the land and the waters to be divided, and it was so. When Christ commanded the storm to be still, and the sea to be calm the elements were obedient to him. The earth, and all the worlds which God has made are obedient to the laws of their creation, for this reason there are peace, harmony, union, increase, power, glory and dominion, which could not exist without obedience. For the lack of obedience the whole world to-day lies in sin, for except, the little existing among this people, obedience can not be found on the face of the earth. Go to the religions of the day, do you find obedience manifested by the people? No, but you find man everywhere selfwilled and untractable, therefore confusion and anarchy reign. It is said in the Scriptures that all things are possible with God; but he only works in accordance with the principles by which he himself is governed; and hence he can not convince nations of the truth against their will. As the poet says—

Know this, that every soul is free,
To choose his life and what he'll be;
For this eternal truth is given,
That God will force no man to heaven.

He'll call, persuade, direct aright,—
Bless him with wisdom, love and light,—
In nameless ways be good and kind,
But never force the human mind.

That is the way that God deals with man. Therefore I say, he cannot work with this generation. They have set him aside and made themselves supreme. They have fulfilled the words of the prophet Paul, when he said that "In the last days perilous times should come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,