

in our midst. I rejoice that these things have been taught to us in this conference. My soul is atune to the word that has gone forth; and as I looked into the faces of men and women in the congregation yesterday, I realized that they, too, felt as I did, that it was a step in the right direction.

This is the land of Zion, blessed above all other lands. Our Father has placed with the people the power to make it the grandest of all nations upon the earth. He has helped to make it such, for verily I believe, today, no other nation under heaven is equal, in privileges, to the nation in which we live. God grant that we may not side-step, that we may not back-step, but that, day by day, with our faces turned toward righteousness, we may go steadily onward, serving the Lord, keeping His commandments, and fulfilling the requirements that He has made of us. This is our Father's work. The land that we live in is blest above all other lands; God has decreed it—only so far, however, as the people upon it are righteous. He has given us the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. It has been taught to us in plainness; He has given us power to keep its laws; He has given us the privilege of proclaiming them; He has broken down the barriers wherever the Gospel has been proclaimed. Here in Zion, with hearts filled with joy and gratitude for the blessings we receive let us evidence, by our lives, that we do know that Jehovah is at the head, that this is not the work of any man, but that it is the work of our Father.

May the Lord strengthen us for our labor; may He qualify us for our ministry; May He give us strength to keep His commandments

day by day; and may we seek to apply in our lives the glorious principles He has revealed, that by and by, from this portion of His vineyard, may radiate peace and righteousness, that others observing our good works, may be constrained to glorify our Father in Heaven. May the Lord continue His blessings upon us; may those who have assembled here take to their homes the influence of this blessed occasion; and, day by day, may we consecrate our lives for the blessing and the benefit and the uplifting of our fellow-men, using the intelligence with which God has blest us to overcome evil and plant, in the place thereof, righteousness and truth, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS.

Temporal and spiritual welfare enhanced, by observing Word of Wisdom.—Love to do God's will should be the incentive to obedience.—The Savior's great example of loving obedience.—Splendid record in some wards and stakes.

The spirit of this conference, as nearly as I am able to judge, is to create a sentiment among this people in favor of yielding more implicit obedience unto the word of the Lord; as pertains to the keeping of the Word of Wisdom. I do firmly believe that it will be fitting for men and women holding leading positions in this church, to carry from this conference to their homes, in the stakes and wards of Zion and in the mission field, this sentiment, and that they should advocate it, and teach it to those under them—the ward teachers, the officers of the various quorums of Priesthood, and auxiliary organizations. The offi-

cers of the Church must see to it that they themselves observe this important Word of Wisdom, and then teach those over whom they preside to do likewise. They must follow this counsel up closely until they see the fruits of their labors.

I am reminded that a few years ago, when the Church authorities discovered that the Church was greatly involved in debt, and they could see no opening, apparently, by which they would soon be able to meet the obligations and liquidate the indebtedness, inspiration came to the President of the Church, and he saw that if the Latter-day Saints would pay their tithes there would be an abundance of means, in the storehouse of the Lord, with which to pay the debts and meet the current expenses of the Church. Therefore, a sentiment was created, and a wave passed over the people, a resolute determination that they would do their part well and faithfully in the payment of their tithing, and the results were most gratifying.

I am reminded, now, that since we received the word first in this conference from the President of the Church, the mouthpiece of the Lord unto us, all the servants of the Lord who have addressed us, or nearly all of them, have been inspired to speak upon the same subject. I do feel that we should put forth an effort, greater than we have ever done before, to make obedience to the Word of Wisdom universal among us. If there are some who will complain that too much time of this conference has been given to a consideration of the Word of Wisdom, I will answer that no faithful Latter-day Saint, who has himself been yielding obedience to this requirement of the

Lord, will make such complaint. Any person who speaks thus you may justly suspicion as not having observed this important revelation of the Lord. There are many reasons which might be assigned why we ought to observe to keep the Word of Wisdom, reasons which are common to those in and out of the Church. As a matter of individual economy we ought to observe it. As a matter of national economy all men and women ought to observe it; also that the evil effects of the use of these things which are forbidden may be obviated among the people. The evil effects of these forbidden things, on the system of the individual, ought to remind him, if he will stop to consider, that it is profitable for him to yield obedience unto this requirement, whether he is in the Church or out of it.

Above and beyond all these reasons, and any others which I can think of, is that which appeals to the Latter-day Saints—that our Father in heaven has expressed it as His will that we do observe these laws. I would call your attention to a part of the second paragraph in the 89th section, which reads as follows, referring to this revelation; it “was given by revelation, and the word of wisdom, showing forth the *order* and *will* of God in the temporal salvation of all Saints in the last days.” We have accepted Joseph Smith as the prophet, seer, and revelator of this last dispensation, and in doing so we accept these revelations as being the word of the Lord to us. Here the Lord expresses His *will*, in very plain terms, that this revelation is given “showing forth the *order* and *will* of God.” If for no other reason, this should be sufficient for any consistent Latter-day Saint to induce him to yield

implicit obedience unto this word. I can think of no gospel subject that will apply directly to more people among us as Latter-day Saints than this Word of Wisdom, unless it may be the principle of obedience, which includes yielding obedience unto this word; or repentance, which also includes turning away from these things which are forbidden, and obeying the will of the Lord. In our onward march towards perfection we will not leave the first principles of the Gospel of the Master, but will continue to observe them. In the Church, we, the teachers, are placed for the express purpose of bringing the people up to a knowledge of the Son of God, showing them the way unto perfection. I desire to say here that we never can reach perfection until we yield obedience unto this simple word of the Lord. We are required to do the will of God, at any sacrifice. I have in mind the word of the Lord upon this subject, contained in the revelations: "Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake; for whoso layeth down his life for my sake, shall find it again, and whoso is not willing to lay down his life for my sake is not my disciple." We are not asked now, my brethren and sisters, to lay down our lives to show our obedience to the Lord, and our worthiness to be His disciples, but we are asked by the Lord to abstain from the use of strong drinks and tobacco, in every form, also to abstain from the use of meats to excess. This is a simple requirement. How can we hope to have faith to lay down our lives, how can we claim to be willing to do so, while our lives and actions, every day, show to our neighbors and to the Lord that we are not willing to rid ourselves of the use of strong drink

or tobacco—those things which are forbidden of the Lord? Let us be consistent with ourselves and our professions of faith.

I am reminded of the great warfare that was carried on in heaven, while we existed in the spirit, of which we read in the revelations of John, given upon the Isle of Patmos, and more clearly explained in the revelations of the Lord to Moses, as found in the Pearl of Great Price. The account states that, when Lucifer rebelled against the Father and drew away a third of heaven's hosts, that great general, the First Born of God our Father, in the spirit and Who was the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, stepped forward and, in contradistinction to the demands made by Lucifer, that God our Father should give to Him His honor, which means His glory and His power and authority, the First Born said: "Father, Thy will be done, and the glory be Thine forever." That is the true spirit of the Gospel, the spirit that every Latter-day Saint ought to possess, no matter what the requirement may be. Do you not think that Jesus, when He made that declaration, had some conception of the requirements that would be made upon Him? I think so. We are told expressly, in the scripture, that He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world; and I believe that when He made that remark to the Father, He did not intend it to apply merely to the warfare in which they engaged in the spiritual existence, but that it was to continue in all His work pertaining to the salvation and eternal life of the children of men, which involved His mortal existence here upon the earth. As you will observe in the reading of the scrip-

tures, that spirit characterized, more than anything else, the life and labors, the testimony and teachings of our Savior. In the midst of His direct sorrow and suffering, when He endured such agony that it is said of Him that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood—in the midst of it all He said, "Oh, Father, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass, but Thy will, and not mine, be done." That is the spirit. When Adam was cast out of the garden of Eden, as we read in the revelations of the Lord to Moses, found in the Pearl of Great Price, he was commanded to build an altar and make offerings to the Lord, the firstlings of his flock, those that were without blemish, and he did as he was required. After a time, an angel appeared to Adam and said: "Adam, why do you do this thing?" Adam answered, "I know not, save God has commanded me." That should be a sufficient reason for obeying every commandment that our Father has given unto us. It ought only to be necessary that it be known by us that the Father wills it so, to incite us to go straightway and perform our duties, and live by the law; we have his promise that He will help us. How was it with Abraham, when he was called upon to offer his son Isaac, in whom he had hope of a numerous posterity of honorable men and women? The Lord required that he take his son three days' journey into the mountain, and upon a place which should be indicated to him he was to slay his son, offer him as an offering to the Lord. All his hopes would thereby be blighted, yet we have no account that Abraham said to the Father: Why am I required to do this? I warrant you that Abraham made no such argument with the Lord, nor did he

plead with Him to know the whys and wherefores; but he went and offered his son, virtually offered him, and it was accepted of the Lord. It was sufficient for Abraham to know that God had commanded it; and why should not the same be sufficient for us? If we are consistent, anything that the Lord expresses to us as His will, whether it be by written revelation or through the mouths of His servants in whom we have confidence, and whom we sustain, when we know what the will of the Lord is, and we fail to do it, with all our mind, might, and strength, we are under condemnation before the Lord, and are not acting according to the light He has given us.

I am very thankful for the knowledge I have of the faithfulness of the Latter-day Saints generally, in yielding obedience to this word of the Lord. In one stake of Zion it was reported to me, by the president of the stake, that every officer in all the organizations and wards of the stake, observed to keep the Word of Wisdom, except a very few who had given him their word that they would observe it in the future. I have found, as I remember now, a stake president of primary associations, in one of our stakes here on the east, in reporting her organization, made the statement that out of ninety officers engaged in primary work in the stake, including the ward officers, eighty-nine of them were strictly observing the Word of Wisdom. I remember, too, the report made by a superintendent of the Young Men's associations in one of our stakes, in which he made the statement that all the Mutual Improvement officers in the wards and stake, excepting two, were observing that law. We often hear such reports, during our trav-

els among the people. There are thousands to whom this word does not come as a reproof, yet there are too many, by far, who have disregarded this word of the Lord. It is time, my brethren and sisters, that we begin to comply with these smaller things, things that are most easily complied with, that we may prepare and school ourselves for the greater requirements that may be made upon us in this Church.

May the Lord help us to be faithful in this and in all things in the keeping of His commandments, that we may receive the promised blessing of eternal life, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

A baritone solo, "Oh, rest in the Lord," was sung by Elder Charles E. Pike.

ELDER ORSON F. WHITNEY.

The Lord's Work Progressive.—The Latter-day Saints in Sympathy with Every Good Cause.—Dr. Henry Van Dyke on the Question of Human Betterment.—The World Growing More Just and More Kind, but Lacking in Self-restraint.—God Cannot Fail.—Good Will Triumph Over Evil, and the World Will Attain Perfection.

I hope that my voice, which is somewhat disabled by a cold, will permit me to speak what is in my heart.

It is about two thousand years, according to our accepted chronology, since the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary, since He commissioned twelve apostles and other seventy and sent them forth to preach the Gospel to every creature. It is over one hundred years since the Prophet Joseph Smith came into the world to restore the Gospel, from which the world had departed.

It is seventy-eight years since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, and Mormonism—so-called—has been preached among the nations during that time.

The question uppermost in my mind today is this: Has the world been benefited by what the Lord has done? Is it growing better or worse as a result of the efforts put forth by the God of Heaven for the salvation of mankind? I think there can be but one answer to such a question. I am a believer in the progress of the human race. I believe that the world, in spite of its wickedness, its opposition to the truth, and its hatred of the people and the cause of God, is six thousand years nearer to perfection than when Adam fell from the Garden of Eden. I believe that this Church, in spite of its derelictions, its disobedience to some of the requirements of the Gospel, its neglect of some of the principles revealed from heaven for the perfecting of the Saints and for the salvation of all people—I believe that this Church, in spite of its errors of omission and commission, is in a better condition today than it has ever been. I cannot consistently take any other view, and yet I know that there is great room for improvement. The present condition, however superior to the conditions of the past, furnishes no argument to justify stagnation and stand-still.

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Church in his day to be progressive. In his epistle to the Hebrews he says: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of bap-