

27. *Hymns*, no. 158.
28. In Conference Report, Apr. 1957, 7. President James E. Faust issued this solemn warning:
 "Living on the edge can also mean being perilously close to the Bottomless Pit. . . .
 "Some of you may think that you will discover your strengths and abilities by living on the edge. . . . There will always be enough risks that will come to you naturally without your having to seek them out" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 61; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 46).
29. Doctrine and Covenants 6:36.
30. Address delivered at Ricks College regional conference, 29 Oct. 1995; reported in *Church News*, 2 Mar. 1996, 2.
31. Doctrine and Covenants 93:1. He has also given many other promises, among which are:
 "Blessed are you; for as you now behold me and know that I am, even so

shall ye come unto me and your souls shall live" (D&C 45:46).

"I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

The chorus sang "High on the Mountain Top."

President Hinckley

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "High on the Mountain Top."

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

President Boyd K. Packer

Youth can avoid unseen dangers

These marvelous young people in this choir are typical of the young people that we meet all over the Church. How we love them. How grateful we are for you, our youth. *Nothing* is more precious than our children, our youth. And it is to you, our youth, that I speak.

Several years ago in Africa I learned how dangerously invisible crocodiles can be. I then warned our youth about unseen spiritual crocodiles lying in wait to destroy them.

Those invisible dangers have greatly increased in number, and now there are many kinds of them.

Some of them are like land mines hidden about in a field you must cross on

your way to maturity. Neighborhoods and schools, which once were safe, are no longer secure. Fortunately you have within you a spiritual power much like a mine detector. If you learn how it works, it will warn you of the presence of unseen crocodiles and mines, and you can avoid trouble.

Regulations of the Word of Wisdom

Three years after the organization of the Church, a revelation came which described our day in these prophetic words: "Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving

unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

The Word of Wisdom put restrictions on members of the Church. To this day those regulations apply to every member and to everyone who seeks to join the Church. They are so compelling that no one is to be baptized into the Church without first agreeing to live by them. No one will be called to teach or to lead without accepting them. When you want to go to the temple, you will be asked if you keep the Word of Wisdom. If you do not, you cannot go to the house of the Lord until you are fully worthy.

We know that young people generally don't like restrictions. Believe it or not, we were young once and we remember.

A resistance to anything that limits one's conduct has almost taken over society. Our whole social order could self-destruct over the obsession with freedom disconnected from responsibility, where choice is imagined to be somehow independent of consequences.

Young people, you must understand that there is something of colossal importance to justify the restrictions imposed by the Word of Wisdom!

While the revelation came first as a "greeting; not by commandment or constraint" (D&C 89:2), when members of the Church had had time to be taught the import of the revelation, succeeding Presidents of the Church declared it to be a commandment. And it was accepted by the Church as such.

"A principle with promise"

The Word of Wisdom was "given for a principle with promise" (D&C 89:3). That word *principle* in the revelation is a very important one. A principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Generally principles are not spelled out in de-

tail. That leaves you free to find your way with an enduring truth, a principle, as your anchor.

Members write in asking if this thing or that is against the Word of Wisdom. It's well known that tea, coffee, liquor, and tobacco are against it. It has not been spelled out in more detail. Rather, we teach the principle together with the promised blessings. There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in the revelation.

Everything harmful is not specifically listed; arsenic, for instance—certainly bad, but not habit-forming! He who must be commanded in all things, the Lord said, "is a slothful and not a wise servant" (D&C 58:26).

In some cultures, native drinks are claimed to be harmless because they are not specifically mentioned in the revelation. Yet they draw members, particularly men, away from their families to parties which certainly offend the principle. Promises made in the revelation will be denied to the careless or the reckless.

Stay on the safe side

Obedience to counsel will keep you on the safe side of life.

The story is told of a king who was choosing between two drivers for his coach. He ordered each of them to drive his coach down a steep, winding road cut into a high cliff.

The first driver came down slowly, hugging the wall of the cliff. The second driver demonstrated great talent and ability. He raced down the mountain, with the coach so close at times that half the wheel was off the edge of the cliff.

The king was very thoughtful, then wisely chose the first man to drive his coach. It is best to stay on the safe side of things.

Use moderation in matters of health

The Word of Wisdom is “adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints” (D&C 89:3). It is buttressed by other scriptures. They teach that the good things of the earth “are made for the benefit and the use of man, . . . yea,” the Lord said, “for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul, . . . to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion” (D&C 59:18–20).

Young people, learn to use moderation and common sense in matters of health and nutrition, and particularly in medication. Avoid being extreme or fanatical or becoming a faddist.

For example, the Word of Wisdom counsels us to eat meat sparingly (see D&C 89:12). Lest someone become extreme, we are told in another revelation that “whoso forbiddeth to [eat meat] is not ordained of God” (D&C 49:18).¹

Another scripture counsels, “Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; . . . cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated” (D&C 88:124).

The promise of health

Honor the principle of the Word of Wisdom, and you will receive the promised blessings. “All saints,” the revelation promises, “who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments,” are promised that they “shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones” and “shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:18, 20).

The Word of Wisdom does not promise you perfect health, but it teaches how to keep the body you were born with in the best condition and your mind alert to delicate spiritual promptings.

I remember a blessing I received when I was serving in the military. It included counsel that’s good for every young person: “You have been given a body of such physical proportions and fitness as to enable your spirit to function through it. . . . You should cherish this as a great heritage. Guard [it] and protect it. Take nothing into it that shall harm the organs thereof because it is sacred. It is the instrument of your mind and [the] foundation of your character.” That counsel had great influence on me.

The promise of health for living the standard of the revelation is not limited to members of the Church. Tell your nonmember friends about the Word of Wisdom and urge them to live it.

The promise of revelation

And then there is a greater blessing promised in the Word of Wisdom. Those who obey it are promised that they “shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). This is the personal revelation through which you can detect invisible crocodiles or hidden mines or other dangers.

When you were confirmed a member of the Church, you had conferred upon you the gift of the Holy Ghost. “Know ye not,” Paul wrote, “that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

And the Lord said, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

The promise of redemption

There’s a final promise in the revelation. Speaking again of those who keep and do and obey these commandments,

the Lord said, "I . . . give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:21). That is a remarkable promise.

To understand it, we must turn to the time of Moses. The Israelites had been enslaved for 400 years. Moses came as their deliverer. He called forth plagues upon Egypt. The Pharaoh agreed each time to free the Israelites, but each time he reneged on his promise. Finally "the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go. . . . All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die" (Exodus 11:1, 5).

Moses told the Israelites to "take . . . a lamb . . . without blemish, a male of the first year. . . . Neither shall ye break a bone thereof" (Exodus 12:3, 5, 46; see also John 19:33).

They were to prepare the lamb as a feast and "take of the blood, and strike it on the . . . door post of the houses. . . . For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land . . . : and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you. . . . And this day . . . ye shall keep . . . by an ordinance for ever" (Exodus 12:7, 12-14). "When your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? . . . ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover" (Exodus 12:26-27).

Surely, young people, you see the prophetic symbolism in the Passover. Christ was "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36), the Firstborn, male, without blemish. He was slain without breaking His bones, even though the soldiers were sent to do it.

But it is not from mortal death that we shall be spared in such a passover if we walk in obedience to these commandments, for each of us in time shall die. But there is spiritual death which you need not suffer. If you are obedient,

that spiritual death will pass over you, for "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," the revelation teaches (1 Corinthians 5:7).

While the Word of Wisdom requires strict obedience, in return it promises health, great treasures of knowledge, and that redemption bought for us by the Lamb of God, who was slain that we might be redeemed.

The law of sacrifice was fulfilled with the Crucifixion. The Lord instituted the sacrament in its place. That is the ordinance we shall keep forever! Young people, attend your meetings and partake of the sacrament.

Surely the Word of Wisdom was given so that you may keep the delicate, sensitive, spiritual part of your nature on proper alert. Learn to "listen" to your feelings. You will be guided and warned and taught and blessed.

Go forward with faith

Even though young life is always filled with uncertainties, young people, do not fear the future!

Your young dreams can be realized. All of your worthy, natural physical and emotional desires can be satisfied. You can find a companion to whom you can offer a body free from addiction, from depressants, from stimulants, and a mind sensitive to spiritual guidance and impressions.

You can be sealed together for time and for all eternity in a marriage covenant and express that love freely, which has as its consummate purpose the begetting of life, of children, of family, of happiness.

If you are one who's been wandering off course, now is the time to return. You can, you know. Young people, go forward with faith. You'll be led by the Spirit as was Nephi, "not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do" (1 Nephi 4:6).

Keep the Word of Wisdom. Seek worthy companions. Attend church faithfully. Never fail daily to seek for help through prayer. And I promise you that the way will be easier and you shall have a composure of mind and a confident attitude toward life and the future. You shall be warned of dangers and shall be guided through the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

I bear witness that this revelation is a powerful protection to all members of the Church, particularly to you, the youth of the Church, as you face a life full of so many troubles and danger and uncertainties. But, young members of the Church, have faith. The Lord will be with you; you will be guided. I bear witness of Him and of His sacrifice and of His Atonement and of His love for you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTE

1. The context for verse 18 is verse 19: "For, behold, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air [are] ordained for the use of man for food." Section 49 was specifically directed to members of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing (the Shakers) to cor-

rect some of their erroneous doctrines. One of their beliefs was not to eat flesh-meat or fish.

President Hinckley

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve, has been our concluding speaker for this session of the conference.

We are grateful to the Bonneville International LDS Radio Network and the owners and operators of the many other television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "I Need Thee Every Hour," and the benediction will be given by Elder J. Richard Clarke of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

The chorus sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder J. Richard Clarke offered the benediction.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second session of the 166th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 6, 1996, at 2:00 P.M. President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Ricks College combined choirs, under the direction of Kevin Brower and Richard Robison, with Bonnie Goodliffe at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began.

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you to the second general session of the 166th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Gordon B. Hinckley, who presides at this conference, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct this session.

We extend our greetings to all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and to the many who are watch-