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The Sanctity of Food: A Latter-day Saint Perspective

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One hesitates to begin a paper by issuing disclaimers, but issue them I must.¹ From my vantage point, most Latter-day Saints do not approach food and drink in the same sanctifying sense that many observant Jewish people do. The Jewish approach to diet includes an elaborate, highly detailed web of regulations that comprise a complete, ethical system. For reasons largely having to do with holiness rather than health or hygiene, many Jews follow this intricate and complex dietary system—one they consider to be divinely sanctioned and one that closely governs and limits what foods they eat.²

Why must observant Jews practice such dietary discipline? Why would God be so concerned about the food people eat? The reasons, many Jews will admit, are not altogether clear. The Torah gives only one reason for God’s requiring such observance: the dietary laws will help Israel become holy.³

In short, Jews believe that obeying such laws promotes holy living. “Jews who keep these laws,” as noted by scholar Louis Jacobs, “introduce a spiritual element into their lives, even into the satisfaction of hunger, the most basic and animal-like of all human appetites. By means of the dietary laws one’s everyday life becomes nobler and purer.”⁴

The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on food and drink (and it may be presumptuous to assume a position exists) is different. Many Latter-day Saints regard food and drink as a means to an end. The Church's emphasis has always been on the importance, or even sacredness, of the body and the necessity of treating it properly. We hold, as do many Jews, that the body is sacred. As Jacob observed, most Jews believe that the "human body is given to a person in trust by God."⁵

We are not uncomfortable with that observation. Our founding prophet, Joseph Smith, said, "We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body."⁶

Because we hold the body sacred, we take certain precautions to maintain its purity, strength, and integrity. Like many others, members of the Church believe in chastity before marriage and fidelity afterward. Because we hold the body sacred, we maintain that certain foods are especially important to eat and that certain substances or foods and drinks should be avoided. The Word of Wisdom, a revelation given to Joseph Smith, serves as a general guide in this respect.

The Coming Forth of the Word of Wisdom

The Word of Wisdom was given at a meeting of the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio, in February 1833. According to Brigham Young's later recollection, it came about largely as a result of Joseph and Emma's concerns about frequent tobacco use by school participants:

I think I am as well acquainted with the circumstances which led to the giving of the Word of Wisdom as any man in the Church, although I was not present at the time to witness them. The first school of the prophets was held in a small room situated over the Prophet Joseph's kitchen, in a house which belonged to Bishop Whitney, and which was attached to his store, which store probably might be about fifteen feet square. In the rear of this building was a kitchen, probably ten by fourteen feet, containing rooms and pantries. Over this kitchen was situated the room in which the Prophet received revelations and in which he instructed his brethren. The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen. When they assembled together in this room after

breakfast, the first thing they did was to light their pipes, and while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, and spit all over the room, and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean so filthy a floor made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco, and the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry.⁷

About twenty-two people were in attendance the day Joseph walked into the room and read the revelation. One of them, Zebedee Coltrin, recalled that Joseph's reading of the revelation had an immediate impact on the assembled brethren: "The Prophet Joseph was in an adjoining room . . . and came in with that Revelation in his hand. Out of the twenty two members that were there assembled, all used tobacco more or less, except two. Joseph read the Revelation and when they heard it they all laid aside their pipes and use of tobacco."⁸

The revelation Joseph read on that occasion became canonized scripture in 1835. Today, it is known as section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants. As almost all members of the Church know, section 89 contains far more than just a single prohibition against tobacco. It contains other proscriptions, some prescriptions, and a series of promises involving increased vitality and knowledge for those who adhere to the instructions contained in the revelation.

In terms of prescriptions, Saints were advised to eat herbs (including vegetables) and fruits, especially fresh ones. Grains were to serve as the staff of life. Meat was to be eaten sparingly—more specifically, only in times of winter or famine.

The proscriptions listed in section 89 were fewer in number but more pointed. Saints were instructed to use wine only of their "own make" for sacramental purposes. They were enjoined not to partake of or use internally any strong drink, tobacco, or hot drinks. Interestingly, with all these admonitions, there was an important qualification. Unlike other revelations Joseph received, this one was to be received "not by commandment or constraint." In other words, when initially given, compliance with the instructions given in the revelation was advocated or recommended—but not necessarily mandated.

How unique was the Word of Wisdom? It was not as novel as many have supposed. As Lester Bush has demonstrated, most physicians in the United States in the 1830s, both orthodox and botanic or herbal, would have agreed with much of the counsel given in Doctrine and Covenants 89. In that era, many doctors felt disease was a result of the overstimulation of one's energy source. Ardent spirits were deemed a major cause of overstimulation, and, to a lesser extent, so was meat. Thus, many medical practitioners recommended they be used sparingly. There was more ambivalence about the stimulating effects of tea and coffee. Tobacco would have weighed in somewhere between ardent spirits and tea and coffee on the "stimulation scale."⁹

What was novel about the revelation, of course, at least for Church members, was the prophetic authority that was attached to it. Although many other Americans may have agreed with much of the counsel contained in section 89, there is no evidence such belief translated into lifestyle changes. The fact that Church members felt it was given by God rather than by man made a considerable difference in terms of overall acceptance. In large part, because of this divine stamp of approval, Latter-day Saints, collectively speaking, came to embrace the counsel contained in section 89—at least some portions of it—with a fair amount of willingness and, in some cases, enthusiasm.

The Interpretation of the Word of Wisdom in the Joseph Smith Era

How did Church members come to interpret the Word of Wisdom in the years immediately following its reception? What parts of the revelations were deemed most important? Not surprisingly, because the revelation was in its infancy and because Joseph never precisely delineated the relative importance of the various prescriptions and proscriptions, some lack of uniformity existed in early obedience patterns. In other words, different Saints embraced different parts of the revelation. For example, some took seriously the passage indicating that "all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man" (D&C 89:10). Botanic physician Willard Richards, among others, advocated the use of herbs.¹⁰

But despite Willard's advocacy of herbs, herb usage never took hold among the general populace of Saints; it never became a criterion for fellowship. In addition to herb usage, there is limited evidence that at least two other notions, derived from various passages in the revelation, held some attraction for some Saints for a limited period. Regarding the injunction limiting meat eating to times of winter or famine, Joseph instructed some participants on the Zion's Camp march in 1834 that "fish was much healthier for us to eat than meat, and the use of fish in warm weather was not prohibited in the Word of Wisdom."¹¹

And William W. Phelps was possibly alluding to avoiding drinks of extreme temperature as well as tea and coffee when he noted in correspondence to his wife that the Kirtland Saints were unified in keeping the Word of Wisdom. "They drink cold water," Phelps said, "and dont [sic] even mention tea and coffee."¹²

But like herbs, neither eating fish or any other kind of meat, in winter or whatever season, nor avoiding drinks of extreme temperature caught on. Nor did any other of the various prescriptions gain ascendancy. Indeed, it is interesting, perhaps instructive, just how quickly the overwhelming majority of leaders and lay members identified exclusively with the proscriptive stipulations dealing with alcohol, tobacco, and hot drinks (meaning tea and coffee). And, almost from the onset, there was a certain pecking order regarding these items. Alcohol, and more especially distilled liquor as opposed to fermented drinks like wine, was considered most objectionable. Tobacco use closely followed alcohol consumption as a transgression of consequence, with tea and coffee lagging somewhat behind. The identification of hot drinks with tea and coffee was in place by the mid-1830s. Church member Joel Hills Johnson recalled that about four months following the reception of section 89, Joseph Smith said to the Saints: "I understand that some of the people are excusing themselves in using tea and coffee, because the Lord only said 'hot drinks' in the revelation of the Word of Wisdom. The Lord was showing us what was good for man to eat and drink. Now, what do we drink

when we take our meals? Tea and Coffee is it not? Yes! tea and coffee then, they are what the Lord meant when he said ‘hot drinks.’”¹³

In less than a decade following its reception, then, the contours of the revelation were in place. For nearly all Church members, observance of the Word of Wisdom implied either nonuse or sparing use of alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee. These were the only items that became criteria of Church fellowship. Why, it may be fairly asked, did the proscriptions prevail while the prescriptions were largely shoved aside? Probably, at least in part, because Church leaders felt the social and moral results of disobedience to the proscriptive counsel (especially with regard to alcohol and tobacco) were of far greater consequence.

How closely was the Word of Wisdom lived in its infancy? In all likelihood, more diligently than many historians have supposed. In February 1834, the high council of the Church resolved that “No official member in this Church is worthy to hold an office, after having the Word of Wisdom properly taught him, and he, the official member, neglecting to comply with or obey it.”¹⁴

Most Church leaders and many Church members took this declaration at its word and emphasized adherence to the proscriptive portions of the revelation with some vigor through at least 1837, especially at Church headquarters in Ohio.¹⁵

But the relatively strict approach to Word of Wisdom observance that characterized many Ohio Saints in the 1830s did not prevail for long. For reasons difficult to discern but probably in part having to do with the varied challenges of establishing and maintaining a church amid hostile surroundings, Word of Wisdom considerations assumed secondary status. This comparatively relaxed approach was in place by at least 1842 when the Saints lived in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Latter-day Word of Wisdom Observance in Territorial Utah

By and large, the comparatively liberal attitude toward Word of Wisdom observance that existed in Nauvoo prevailed in Utah Territory for the rest of the nineteenth century. It is true that Brigham Young asked Latter-day Saints in the September general conference of 1851 to covenant to

keep the Word of Wisdom; it is also true that, for whatever reason, President Young chose not to require Latter-day Saints to keep that particular covenant.¹⁶ Perhaps, he reasoned, that with all the challenges inherent in settling and colonizing their Great Basin kingdom, it made little sense to quibble about a cup of coffee. As late as 1861, President Young indicated that although observance should be a worthy goal, he did not desire to make adherence to the Word of Wisdom a test of fellowship.¹⁷

In 1883, President John Taylor initiated the most zealous, widespread Word of Wisdom reform movement in the half century following the inception of the revelation. Following President Taylor's lead, at general conference in October 1883, Wilford Wilford, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, preached Word of Wisdom observance to assembled Saints and indicated "the time was at hand when it would be necessary to keep the whole law of God."¹⁸

Two months later, Elder Woodruff told members of the newly formed St. George School of the Prophets that the time had come for Church members to observe the Word of Wisdom.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the antipolygamy legislation and resultant persecution disrupted Latter-day Saint society and largely sapped the vigor of President Taylor's Word of Wisdom crusade.²⁰

What then, in summary, constituted Word of Wisdom observance in the nineteenth century? At least three general patterns of adherence can be identified: (1) moderation, rather than abstinence, was the major concern; (2) drunkenness was not tolerated; and (3) wine was generally not categorized as a "strong drink."

The Word of Wisdom: A Twentieth-Century Test of Fellowship

From 1901 until 1945, two men, Joseph F. Smith and Heber J. Grant, directed the Church. Presidents Smith and Grant had very similar views on the Word of Wisdom—essentially, that abstinence rather than moderation should constitute the primary criterion for Word of Wisdom compliance. The path to our current interpretation of the Word of Wisdom can be traced to their administrations.²¹

President Grant probably emphasized Word of Wisdom compliance more than any other General Authority, before or since. At general conference in October 1935, President Grant announced he was going to read the revelation to the congregation. “It may be that it will be the fifty-third time in the past fifty-three years,” he declared to the congregation. “I think that I have read it at least once a year if not a half a dozen times.”²²

By the 1920s, abstinence became a requirement for a temple recommend.²³ By that same period, Word of Wisdom adherence had clearly replaced plural marriage as the Latter-day Saint badge of identification. Certainly, the Word of Wisdom did not escape nineteenth-century non-Mormon detection—various travelers through Utah often commented on the overall orderliness and sobriety that prevailed in Latter-day Saint communities.²⁴ But nineteenth-century non-Mormon emphasis on distinctive LDS Word of Wisdom patterns paled in significance compared to the deluge of twentieth-century gentile commentary. To outsiders, Mormons became known primarily as the people who wouldn’t consume alcohol, smoke, or drink coffee or tea.²⁵

The Word of Wisdom: A Temporal and Spiritual Guide

Although the differences and distinctions between Latter-day Saint and Jewish attitudes to food and diet will probably always be greater than the similarities, it is possible, perhaps even likely, that in the future, many Latter-day Saints, of their own volition, will adopt attitudes and assume patterns toward food and drink that are somewhat analogous to the Jewish approach. I predict (some would say, with unwarranted temerity) that some alteration of attitudes will take place along two fronts. The first such front has to do with the broadening of Word of Wisdom considerations to include more than just the present list of proscriptions. In short, in all likelihood, more and more Latter-day Saints will come to view Doctrine and Covenants 89 not only as a delineator of forbidden items but also as an indicator of what one should eat.

The second front where some alteration might occur has to do with perspective or viewpoint. I suspect that in this present age of environmental sensitivity and holistic living, a good many Church

members might begin to view the entire revelation in a larger and more holistic sense—as a guide not only to physical well-being but also to spiritual growth.

Are there legitimate reasons or precedents to believe that such lifestyle changes will occur among some in the Latter-day Saint community in the future? I believe there are. Certainly there are strong scriptural precedents—both in canonized scripture and in the statements of presiding brethren whom Church members revere as prophets and revelators.

Regarding precedents contained in canonized scripture, I noted earlier that Doctrine and Covenants 89 included both prescriptions as well as proscriptions. In truth, the prescriptions actually take up more scriptural space. Among other things, Saints were advised in holy writ to eat herbs and fruits, regard grain as the “staff of life,” and eat meat sparingly. And, of course, the concluding verses of the revelation indicate “spiritual blessings” await those Saints who comply—presumably with both proscriptions and prescriptions.

The first latter-day prophet to emphasize a so-called expanded view of the Word of Wisdom—that is, to emphasize the importance of the prescriptions as well as the proscriptions—was Brigham Young. As early as 1855, President Young complained of the food he was fed when visiting Saints. “The only thing I crave,” he said, “is milk.” On this occasion, he also noted that he wished Latter-day Saints could become more of “a natural people.”²⁶ In 1860, President Young observed that the Lord has given us wheat, beef, and herbs (probably including vegetables) for our benefit. Regarding herbs, he asked rhetorically that if they were useless, why did the Lord make them available?²⁷ At the April 1868 general conference, both Brigham Young and George Q. Cannon advised Latter-day Saints to avoid eating pork.²⁸

Other General Authorities who have emphasized Word of Wisdom prescriptions are Lorenzo Snow, Heber J. Grant, John A. Widstoe, Joseph F. Merrill, Joseph Fielding Smith, and Ezra Taft Benson. In the 1890s, Apostle Lorenzo Snow expressed surprise that so many of the brethren who preached on the Word of Wisdom avoided commenting on the passage advocating the use of meat

sparingly. Elder Snow suggested, seemingly for humane reasons, that the time was not far distant when the eating of animal flesh would be prohibited.²⁹ At one time, Heber J. Grant also apparently believed that the day would come when meat eating would be forbidden.³⁰ John A. Widtsoe coauthored with his wife, Leah, *The Word of Wisdom: A Modern Interpretation*, a widely read book that advocated the use of grains and the use of meat sparingly, among other things. *A Modern Interpretation* was used as the Melchizedek Priesthood study manual in 1938.³¹

In April general conference of 1948, Elder Joseph F. Merrill of the Quorum of the Twelve lamented that “all over the Church the belief is general that the Word of Wisdom is practically observed if the individual abstains from the use of tea, coffee, liquor, and tobacco. But a careful reading of the revelation,” cautioned Elder Merrill, “shows this belief to be erroneous.” Brother Merrill then proceeded to emphasize the injunction advocating the sparing use of meat.³²

In more recent times, LDS Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and Ezra Taft Benson have advised Church members to heed the prescriptive portion of section 89. President Smith noted:

We seldom hear of the things mentioned which are “ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man.” The Lord has given us all good herbs, fruits and grains. These are to be the main foods of men, beast, and fowls. But we should not overlook the fact that they are to be used with “prudence and thanksgiving.” . . . The difficulty with most of the human family, is eating too much, and failing to heed this counsel. There would be less disease and mankind would live longer if all would also heed the counsel of the Lord concerning the use of wholesome foods. Many a man thinks he keeps the Word of Wisdom, who knows only the “don’ts” which is [are] but a part of its great meaning.³³

Most recently, we are aware that at various times in his ministry, President Benson promoted the advantages of eating food in its natural state and partaking heartily of grains, fruits, and vegetables.³⁴

I also understand that President Benson, in his personal life, was sparing in his use of meat and generous in his use of fresh vegetables and grains.³⁵

Clearly then, there are both scriptural and prophetic precedents for members of the Church— if they so desire to expand their own personal list of Word of Wisdom considerations. There are also scriptural and prophetic models for viewing the entire revelation in a more holistic way by our

combining the physical with the spiritual—by our viewing the eating of foods that God has prescribed as a spiritual act or event. Indeed, if Latter-day Saints chose to pursue this path, it would be somewhat analogous to Jewish attitudes.

In his introduction to Jewish belief, Louis Jacobs indicated that “in Judaism everything must be brought into contact with the spiritual domain.”³⁶ Latter-day Saints could identify with that notion. In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord told Joseph Smith, “Wherefore verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created” (D&C 29:34). Mormonism, then, postulates a blending of the spiritual and temporal domains.

Church members, if they so chose, could regard eating and drinking as temporal-spiritual events. Orthodox Jews, by eating some foods and refraining from others in obedience to their religion, actually elevate the act of eating to a level of godliness. As Jacob Milgrom observed, “The dietary laws are rungs on the ladder of holiness, leading to a life of pure thought and deed, characteristic of the nature of God.”³⁷

Although such a view is hardly widespread in the Latter-day Saint community, it is scripturally supportable. For example, why couldn't Latter-day Saints, by avoiding food and drink God has placed off limits and by eating only those foods they believe God has singled out as being especially good for mankind, gain greater reverence for life and increased appreciation for the Lord? My suspicion is that in the future, some Church members will do so and thus come to regard eating as much more than just a practical necessity.

To concern oneself with eating foods the Lord has prescribed and to consider eating prescribed foods as an act of holiness are both attitudes that could be understood as logical results of living in divine harmony with the earth God has created. Latter-day Saints believe that men and women are God's superior creations but not His only creations. Many also believe they are to respect, not abuse, the earth they are placed on and live in divine harmony with it.³⁸

The Lord indicates that “the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, . . . are made for the benefit and the use of man.” But the revelation also stipulates that such things are “to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion” (D&C 89:17–18).

Brigham Young, who respected and even revered the earth that God created, taught: “Man cannot control the heavens; he cannot control the earth, nor the elements; he can fertilize and prepare the ground for the reception of seed; he can plant, water, till, and reap, . . . but, until his mind is opened by the Spirit of God, he cannot see that it is by a superior power that corn, wheat, and every kind of vegetation spring into life, and ripen for the sustenance of man and beast.”³⁹

I conclude with two very different observations. First, I want to make plain my intentions. I have no hidden agenda. I am not crusading for change in Word of Wisdom emphasis—that is hardly my province. My motivation for writing this paper came when I was asked to compare Latter-day Saint attitudes toward food and drink with those of Jewish people. I have indicated that at present, the similarities are not striking; and I have speculated that in the future, at least for some Latter-day Saints, the similarities (in attitude rather than detail) will become more obvious. I wouldn’t be surprised if, in the future, some of the presiding leaders of the Church occasionally emphasize some of the prescriptive portions of section 89. I will be surprised, however, if such an emphasis ever assumes fellowship proportions. For social, moral, and practical reasons, I expect that adherence to the proscriptive elements of the Word of Wisdom will remain the only criteria for Church fellowship.

Second, it should be mentioned that one important similarity between Jewish and Latter-day Saint dietary approaches has not been discussed. Herman Wouk observed that Jewish dietary laws serve as both “a community bond and a reminder of personal identity that comes whenever a man gets hungry. It is a daily commitment in action to one’s faith, a formal choice, a quiet self-discipline.” Such laws are, Wouk concludes, “social instruments for keeping the Jewish nation alive, and psychological instruments for preserving the identity of individuals.”⁴⁰

Possibly to a lesser but still a highly meaningful extent, the Word of Wisdom has served a similar function among Latter-day Saints. Every time a Church member politely says “no thank you” to the generous offer of an acquaintance or stranger to partake of coffee or alcohol, the action has the effect of reminding everyone involved that Latter-day Saints are a “separate people,” that they made covenants with the Lord, and that because of their “peculiarity,” there are things they can and cannot do. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a more suitable vehicle to remind us of our covenantal responsibilities and embed them into our self-consciousness than to require certain patterns of eating and drinking—something that is usually done openly and daily.⁴¹

In this very functional sense, Jews and Mormons—peculiar peoples both—can readily identify with one another.

Notes

¹ This article is adapted from a paper given on 5 October 1995 as part of a lecture series featuring Jewish and Latter-day Saint scholars. The lecture series, “Jews and Mormons—A Common Heritage,” was held at Utah Valley State College during fall semester 1995.

² Jacob Milgrom, “The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System,” in *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology*, ed. Jacob Milgrom (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), 104–18.

³ Herman Wouk, *This Is My God: The Jewish Way of Life*, rev. ed. (New York: Pocket Books, 1974), 99.

⁴ Louis Jacobs, *The Book of Jewish Practice* (West Orange, New Jersey: Behrman House, 1987), 68.

⁵ Louis Jacobs, *The Book of Jewish Belief* (West Orange, New Jersey: Behrman House, 1984), 38.

⁶ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 181.

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- ⁷ *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 12:158; hereafter cited as JD.
- ⁸ Minutes of the St. George School of the Prophets, 23 December 1883, LDS Church Archives.
- ⁹ Lester E. Bush Jr., “The Word of Wisdom in Early Nineteenth-Century Perspective,” *Dialogue* 14, no. 3 (autumn 1981): 48–58.
- ¹⁰ Willard Richards to “Sister Hepsy,” 28 January 1837, Church Archives.
- ¹¹ George A. Smith, “My Journal,” *The Instructor* 81, no. 5 (May 1946): 323.
- ¹² William W. Phelps to Sally Waterman Phelps, 26 May 1835, Journal History of the Church, Church Archives.
- ¹³ Joel Hills Johnson, Excerpts from Autobiography, typescript made by Norman E. Wright, 25 January 1952, BYU Special Collections, Brigham Young University Library.
- ¹⁴ Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932–51), 2:35.
- ¹⁵ I am not suggesting that Saints in the 1830s matched the levels of obedience their twentieth-century descendants reached. If for no other reason, two common perceptions preclude such a possibility. First, like many other nineteenth-century Americans, most early Saints genuinely believed the prohibited substances had legitimate medicinal and fatigue-removing properties that justified occasional use. Second, most Church members did not categorize occasional wine drinking, especially at sacramental or festive events, as an infringement of the Word of Wisdom.
- ¹⁶ *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 14, no. 3 (1 February 1852): 35; James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 2:90; Paul H. Peterson, “An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom,” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972), 49–53; Robert J. McCue, “Did

the Word of Wisdom Become a Commandment in 1851?" *Dialogue* 14, no. 3 (autumn 1981): 66–77.

¹⁷ *JD*, 9:35. [p.45]

¹⁸ *Journal History of the Church*, 6 October 1883, 8, Church Archives.

¹⁹ "Minutes of the St. George School of the Prophets," 23 December 1883, Church Archives.

²⁰ Peterson, "An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom," 76–77.

²¹ Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 261.

²² Heber J. Grant, Conference Report, October 1935, 8.

²³ Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 264–65.

²⁴ See, for example, the accounts of Solomon Nunes Carvalho, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1857), 209; and William Hepworth Dixon, *New America*, 9th ed. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1869), 117.

²⁵ Peterson, "An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom," 101–2.

²⁶ Thomas Bullock Minutes, 1848–56, loose papers, 15 April 1855, Church Archives.

²⁷ Brigham Young Office Journal, Book D, 12 March 1860, Church Archives.

²⁸ Brigham Young Manuscript History, 6 April 1868, Church Archives; *JD*, 12:221.

²⁹ Heber J. Grant Diary, 1 October 1895, Church Archives; *Journal History*, 5 May 1898, 2.

³⁰ Heber J. Grant to Anna Grant, 16 September 1901, Church Archives.

³¹ John A. Widtsoe and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Word of Wisdom: A Modern Interpretation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1937).

³² Joseph F. Merrill, "Eat Flesh Sparingly," *Improvement Era* 51 (May 1948): 279, 314.

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- ³³ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953), 1:385.
- ³⁴ Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 476–77.
- ³⁵ Personal conversation with Reed A. Benson, son of President Ezra Taft Benson, 3 October 1995.
- ³⁶ Jacobs, *The Book of Jewish Belief*, 132.
- ³⁷ Milgrom, “The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System,” 111.
- ³⁸ Hugh Nibley opined that “man’s dominion is a call to service, not a license to exterminate.” See *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints*, Don E. Norton and Shirley S. Ricks, eds. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994), 18. Nibley’s four essays on Brigham Young and the environment in this volume make for insightful reading.
- ³⁹ *JD*, 3:119. 40. Wouk, *This Is My God*, 108.
- ⁴⁰ Wouk, *This Is My God*, 108.
- ⁴¹ Edwin B. Firmage, “The Word of Wisdom: Mark of a Peculiar People,” *Ensign* 1, no. 1 (October 1972): 18–19.