

Brethren, I wish you to understand things precisely as they are. We shall dissolve the present High Council of this Stake. Many of them are far advanced in years, and some of them live at considerable distances from this city. They have labored according to the best of their ability; but I would like to see men who never become so old that they cannot learn. I desire to see everybody on the track of improvement, gaining all the knowledge, power, and advancement possible for them to gain and possess. But so it is: many of the first members in this Church appear as though they never could keep pace with the times, increasing in the knowledge of the truth and improving thereupon.

I will tell you how to expand and increase as far as I know. Let your whole soul—affections, actions, wishes, desires, every effort and motive, and every hour's labor you perform be with a single eye to the building up the Zion of God on the earth. If you will pursue this course, you will learn every day and make advancements every hour. But when you so love your property as to quarrel and contend about this, that, or the other trifling affair, as though all your affections were placed upon the changing, fading things of earth, it is impossible to increase in the knowledge of truth. The thrones and kingdoms of earth are frequently changing hands. Adventurers rise up or go forth and establish new governments, and in a few short years they are cast down to give place to more successful powers. All earthly things are changing hands. The gold, the silver, and other property pass from my hands to yours, and from yours to the hands of others. Shame on a people that place their affections upon this changing matter! Love God and the things that change not.

I have a little more counsel that I wish to give during this Conference,

and you may tell it to your Presidents, Bishops, High Councilors, High Priests, Seventies, etc. My counsel to the Elders of Israel is to let whiskey, brandy, and other strong drinks alone. I will tell you how drunkards appear to me. Although I have been a man of the world, yet I have never seen a moment, since I thought I had a character or had to establish one, when, with very few exceptions, I would count them worthy, in regard to moral character, to wipe my shoes upon, figuratively speaking. I would not abuse them, but I would give them something to kill the life of the liquor, and, when they were sufficiently sober, ask them if they did not think they were extremely foolish. Probably scores, who are not here, are drunk now; and it is my positive counsel and command that drinking liquor be stopped. If I had the influence the world gives me credit for, I would not have a single drunkard, thief, or liar in this society. I do not profess to have that influence, but I can raise my voice against those evils.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command the Elders of Israel—those who have been in the habit of getting drunk—to cease drinking strong drink from this time henceforth, until you really need it. But some may think they need it as soon as they go out of this house. Let me be your physician in this matter. So long as you are able to walk and attend to your business, it is folly to say that you need ardent spirits to keep you alive. The constitution that a person has should be nourished and cherished; and whenever we take anything into the system to force and stimulate it beyond its natural capacity, it shortens life. I am physician enough to know that. When you are tired and think you need a little spirituous liquor, take some bread-and-butter, or bread-and-milk, and lie down and rest. Do not