

# The Word of Wisdom

In 1833 Joseph Smith claimed that through divine revelation he was able to issue a code of practice relating to diet, liquid consumption and the use of tobacco. This Word of Wisdom was canonised and appears in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, one of the sacred books which the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) put on a par with the Bible.

In order to receive a Temple Recommend (no Mormon can enter the Temple without this), a Latter Day Saint must demonstrate among other things that he is scrupulously abiding by the tenets of the Word of Wisdom. Indeed, it is impossible to attain "godhood" and reach the "celestial kingdom" unless the Word of Wisdom is kept. Below is a photograph of this supposed revelation.

## SECTION 89.

REVELATION given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, February 27, 1833, known as the Word of Wisdom. — Abstinence from wine, strong drink, tobacco and hot drinks enjoined—Moderation in the eating of meat—Wholesome foods—Promises to those who live according to these precepts.

1. A Word of Wisdom, for the benefit of the council of high priests, assembled in Kirtland, and the church, and also the saints in Zion—
2. To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but 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—
3. Given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints.
4. 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—
5. That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him.
6. And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make.
7. And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies.
8. And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill.
9. And again, hot drinks are not for the body or belly.
10. And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—
11. Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving.
12. Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly;
13. And it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine.
14. All grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life, not only for man but for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, and all wild animals that run or creep on the earth;
15. And these hath God made for the use of man only in times of famine and excess of hunger.
16. All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine; that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground—
17. Nevertheless, wheat for man, and corn for the ox, and oats for the horse, and rye for the fowls and for swine, and for all beasts of the field, and barley for all useful animals, and for mild drinks, as also other grain.
18. And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;
19. And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;
20. And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.
21. And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them, Amen.

← Reference to hot drinks

Since the Mormons have made the Word of Wisdom an issue of salvation, the legitimate question which must be asked is: Is this indeed a revelation from God or the arbitrary precept of a man? If it is a precept of a mere man, especially if it is demonstrated that it is contrary to biblical principles, then this "revelation" should be rejected as being spurious and the giver of it, namely Joseph Smith, exposed as a false prophet.

No man has the power to bind the conscience of his fellows. The Christian Gospel, in contrast to all other religious systems including Mormonism, is established on the bedrock of grace rather than legalism. In other words our salvation is entirely dependent on what God does for us rather than what we may think we can do for God. The Bible states: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). God will only accept a sinner on the grounds of the righteousness

of Christ. The saved sinner, that is the Christian, is therefore free and not in bondage to the rules and regulations of men. The Christian is bound only by the moral law of God, not for his salvation but for his sanctification and for his wellbeing. We are expressly told in the Bible that "the kingdom of God is not meat [i.e. food] and drink" (Romans 14:17). So then at a glance we can see a fundamental difference between Mormonism and Christianity.

The Mormons are not consistent in that the original prohibition was for "hot drinks". There is no qualification in the original "revelation". Can we really suppose our salvation is dependent on abstaining from drinking a cup of tea, far less a cup of hot soup? There is no moral impurity *per se* in tea, coffee or any hot drink; neither is there any moral impurity *per se* in alcoholic beverages. A Christian of course should exercise prudence in what he eats or drinks and certainly it would be wise for him not to smoke; and there may well be expediency, for example, in abstaining from alcoholic beverages. But to make such practices an article of faith is to undermine the Gospel.

The Mormons in their sacrament meeting use water rather than wine. If the Lord Jesus Christ Himself saw fit to use wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for obvious symbolical reasons then it is inconceivable that mere men, i.e. Joseph Smith and his followers, nearly 2,000 years later could overthrow the dominical ordinance. The Christian of course would rather follow the example of the Lord Jesus than anyone else.

All in the medical profession recognise that wine in moderation has a medicinal value. 2,000 years ago the apostle knew this when he recommended to Timothy "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake" (1 Timothy 5:23). Joseph Smith clearly got it wrong, as he did also with respect to tea. It is now widely recognised that tea has substantial anti-oxidant properties beneficial for the suppression of cancer. It should be noted that Utah (the stronghold of Mormonism) has a higher than average rate of some forms of cancer compared to other states in the USA.

Mormons have tried to justify their actions by citing the presence of caffeine in tea and coffee but yet they are happy to allow the consumption of Coca Cola and Pepsi. Realising the inconsistency in their position, Mormons up until the 1980s generally abstained even from Coca Cola and Pepsi. However, the majority of young Mormons today consume these beverages and the leadership turn a blind eye to this. Coca Cola, with its high sugar content, is far healthier than tea or coffee. If the Mormons wish to try and justify the Word of Wisdom by hiding behind the ethos of a healthy lifestyle, then let their so-called prophets and apostles prohibit the consumption of foods with high salt or cholesterol content. There are plenty of obese Mormons and Mormons with heart conditions.

Thank God we are not saved by food and drink fads, even the more plausible ones, but by the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

Following are two articles from the secular press which demonstrate the useful properties of tea (some of the other sentiments in the articles we do not necessarily endorse).

#### **“Forgotten anything? Then sit down and have a cup of tea” by Anna Patty**

Drinking tea can help to improve the memory and even ward off Alzheimer's disease, according to research. Black and green tea were shown in laboratory tests to inhibit the activity of certain enzymes in the brain. It is hoped that the findings, published in the academic journal *Phytotherapy Research*, may lead to the development of a new treatment for Alzheimer's - a form of dementia that affects about ten million people worldwide.

Researchers at Newcastle University's Medicinal Plant Research Centre found that regular consumption of tea inhibited the activity of the enzyme acetylcholinesterase (AChE), which breaks down the chemical messenger, or neurotransmitter, acetylcholine. Alzheimer's is characterised by a drop in acetylcholine.

Black tea - the traditional English breakfast tea - is taken from the same plant as green tea, but is fermented. Green and black tea were both found also to hinder the activity of the enzyme butyrylcholinesterase (BuChE), discovered in protein deposits found on the brain of patients with Alzheimer's disease. Green tea went a step further by obstructing the activity of beta-secretase, which plays a role in the production of protein deposits in the brain associated with Alzheimer's.

Ed Okello, the lead researcher, said that the findings were particularly exciting because tea was such a popular drink, inexpensive and not associated with any adverse side-effects. Dr Okello, a green tea drinker, said the research suggested that tea could boost the memory of everyday drinkers. "Tony Benn is a prime example of somebody who drinks tea and has a fantastic memory. He is said to drink 18 pints a day and has a very sharp mind," he said.

The average cup of tea or coffee bought on Britain's high streets now costs £1.30, and with 12 million bought each day the nation's spending on the two beverages is now a daily £16.3 million. Nine out of ten British adults drink tea or coffee each day, and on average the drinkers consume six cups a day each. If the equivalent cost of one cup of tea or coffee each day was put into a pension fund over the course of 25 years, it would equate to over £19,000, the Prudential said yesterday.

#### **CUPPA HEALTH:**

**Prostate cancer:** chemicals in green and black tea were found to slow the growth of prostate cancer, according to a study from the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Skin cancer:** tea contains chemicals that block formation of non-melanoma skin tumours, according to research by the University of Minnesota, Austin.

**Ovarian cancer:** researchers at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia, reported in July that green tea could improve the survival rates of women with ovarian cancer.

**Heart disease:** green and black tea were found to lower cholesterol levels and hypertension in studies published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in June last year and July this year.

*The Times*, October 26, 2004

#### **"Happiness is the key to a long life (plus plenty of tea)" by Zoe Catchpole**

A happy marriage and a positive attitude really do help you live long, research has shown.

Studies have found that everyday factors such as happiness, having lots of friends, living in the countryside and eating a healthy diet could add up to 20 years to your life. On the other hand smoking, heavy drinking, being in an unhappy marriage and having a poor education could shorten your life by just as much. Even living by a main road could cost you two and a half years, according to Canadian scientists.

The findings, from various studies, suggest that making just a few small changes can delay death for decades. Drinking tea, for example, can add four years to your life. And eating broccoli can add an astonishing eight years. However, some factors we are just born to. Being a woman is a distinct advantage. British women live five years longer than men on average, with a life expectancy of 80.8 years compared with 75.8 for men. Mothers fare even better, with women who start families under 30 developing greater protection against contracting breast and ovarian cancer. Being born into a wealthy family can help you live an extra four years, according to research by the National University of Ireland. The research adds up to good news for stars such as Catherine Zeta-Jones. Her successful life, home in the country, happy marriage, children and healthy diet suggest she could be adding 26 years to her life.

But all is not lost for those of us with a more down-to-earth life. Just being in a happy marriage can add five years to your life, while those who quit city life for the tranquillity of the countryside can live up to eight years longer. According to the Office for National Statistics, countryside dwellers have an average life expectancy of 84 years, compared with 76 in cities.

Other simple life-lengthening tips include drinking two cups of tea a day - its anti-oxidants and cancer-defeating chemicals add four years. Eating one head a day of broccoli, which protects against cancers, boosts the immune system and helps build bones and a healthy heart, could add eight years. Having a good education is highly beneficial, according to U.S. Figures which show that students who had been to high school lived more than nine years longer than those who hadn't. And eating breakfast, enjoying the odd glass of wine, walking to work, finding religion and getting a pet all add up to a longer lifespan.

But, if all else fails, then try looking on the bright side of life. Optimists live seven and a half years longer than those who are gloomy or depressed, a study at Yale University in the US found. It also found that simply being happy added nine years of life.

*Daily Mail, August 16, 2004*

Below is a more recent article from the secular press on the benefits of coffee:

**“A cup of coffee is good for the heart”** by Celia Hall, Medical Editor

One to three cups of coffee a day may protect people from heart disease and strokes, according to research which contradicts numerous studies that have suggested that coffee is bad for you.

The good news for coffee drinkers comes from a report in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* and is based on a study of 27,000 older women, followed for 15 years.

It found a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease by about 30 per cent in women who had a moderate intake of coffee. The analysis, part of the Iowa Women’s Health Study, found that up to 60 per cent of antioxidants in the diet may come from coffee.

Antioxidants protect cells from damage and reduce the inflammation that encourages arteries to narrow.

Active parts of coffee include caffeine and polyphenols. Polyphenols are also found in red wine and they too have been linked to a reduction in the risk of cardiovascular diseases in people who drink one to three glasses of red wine a day. The researchers in the Iowa study also pointed out that a Scottish survey of 11,000 men and women found that coffee drinking was associated with a reduction in deaths from all causes.

Dr Sarah Jarvis, a fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners said: “This is a message about moderation. Too much exercise, too much coffee or too much alcohol are bad. In moderation they are beneficial.”

*The Daily Telegraph, Friday 12th May, 2006*