

of living in peace and making ourselves comfortable in these valleys of the mountains; and do you recollect that but a short time ago it seemed as though almost everyone had wandered his own way? The people had almost forgotten and lost sight of the principles of truth and righteousness, of the religion that we have embraced; and the whole plan of salvation. They had almost lost sight of the redemption of the nations of the earth, and each one had turned to his own way. Can you recollect that situation of the people?

We have reason to be thankful that we have forsaken backslidings and returned to the Lord in a great measure; but we are still far from being as we should be, taking every individual, though the great majority of the people are doing the best, or about as well as they know how. This I believe with all my heart; and they feel very anxious to live so that they can enjoy more and more of the knowledge of God: they are very anxious to know how to obtain more of the revelations of Jesus Christ; and some are fearful that the people are not doing right, and that they do not live up to their privileges.

Some of the brethren were conversing in my office the other day, and I discovered that a part of them had a great anxiety for us to know more of godliness, and had a feeling that this people must do better—must more strictly refrain from evil and walk more humbly before their God. I said to them, “Brethren, I will take you for an example, with myself; and I tell you, for one, that I do not know how to do any better than I do; and if the Lord wants me to do any better, he must let me know it; for I cannot do any better of myself. Can you say the same?” They said they could. So it is with the people: the most of them are doing the best they know how. There are a few who sin,

and a few who will do wrong—do things that they ought to be ashamed of. They are scarce: but there is once in a while one of that class in this community; and we expect that there will be, just so long as the wheat and the tares grow together. There is once in a while one that we would like to be rid of—would love to have leave us and this community.

It is astonishing that any should prefer to act wickedly, and yet there is a reason for all this. We expect it—at least I do: I look for it. I do not look for anything else but that there will be tares in the field until the time of burning. I will just say, for your consolation and mine, that I think the field is now pretty well weeded out, though the roots are here, and they will spring up occasionally, and once in a while things are done that are disgraceful. Some will do things that the Devil would be ashamed of and would not think of doing. But I am thankful that there are but few of that class here; and I pray that the evils may be lessened and that the people may be purified before the Lord.

It is truth—it is God’s truth—it is eternal truth, if people did but know it, that it is much better to be honest, to live here uprightly, and forsake and shun evil, than it is to be dishonest. It is the easiest path in the world to be honest—to be upright before God; and when people learn this, they will practice it. If they could only believe this, it does appear to me that they will forsake every evil practice, every evil thought, and banish them from their minds, and try to practice virtue and truth, and to live in that way that they will overcome every evil disposition, and live so that they can control their reflections, and that their reflections will tend to virtue, truth, and holiness; for this is our privilege, until we become pure in our hearts, and find that the prin-