

or to sacrifice principle to gain some temporary advantage or to answer some mercenary purpose; and they should be so firmly fixed upon our minds, and so applied in our lives, that nothing could induce us to do so, for however great the seeming advantage resulting from such a course, it would in the end prove a serious disadvantage, for in following it we sacrifice our integrity, violate our faith, weaken our confidence in God and our power with him, and lay ourselves liable to fall into snares from which it is impossible for us to extricate ourselves.

As I have already said, when I first read the Book of Mormon, this trait of character astonished me, and I have been equally astonished at seeing it manifested by this people during the thirty-seven years I have been conversant with their history. In relation to the Word of Wisdom, see what a variety of opinions and feelings have arisen amongst us. It is now about thirty-six years since that was given by the Lord to His people, not by commandment or constraint, but a principle with promise, and yet today many of us find it difficult to leave off our tea or to do without our tobacco. Had we, as a people, pursued an even, straightforward course in obedience to the counsels of the Almighty, many of us who today are in bondage to these and other pernicious practices would never have indulged in them.

I moved into Kirtland with five families. The question immediately arose—“Where shall we settle?” Why, right here in Kirtland; the Lord designs to make this a stronghold for a few years, and here we are to settle, which was the counsel of the Prophet.

The very first thing that occurred after this advice was that two out of the five came to the conclusion that

they had better go to the neighboring town, because they thought they could gain some temporary advantage. To Chagrin they went, in opposition to the advice of the Prophet, and in a few weeks they were in darkness, and not long after they were numbered with the enemies of Zion, and were soon using all their power for the destruction of the Saints. He that gathereth not with us scattereth abroad. Joseph, the Prophet, told us to go to work and build up the cities of Zion, and not to build up strange cities. Kirtland, of course, contained but few Saints, and they were poor, and many of the brethren who were mechanics would go to Cleveland, Painesville, and other places, while the residue were willing to take the advice of the Prophet and stay in Kirtland and get what work they could among the brethren, and make improvements, and at the end of the year it invariably turned out that those who had obeyed counsel had made the most means, and what was more, they had the best spirit, and, as a general thing, they are still in the midst of the Saints; while those who went abroad, contrary to the counsels and instructions of the servants of the Lord, became darkened in their minds, and eventually apostatized. The fact is, in relation to this, that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, and to use all our efforts to sustain His Kingdom and each other, and to sustain and uphold those who uphold the Kingdom of God, and when we neglect to do this, and suffer temporary interests to drag us to the right or to the left, we lay a foundation for darkness and destruction. However many objections we may feel to abiding the counsels and instructions which are given to the Saints, we will find, under all circumstances, that they are invariably for