

to do the will of God, to benefit the children of men, and to seek after the welfare, happiness, and peace, not only of myself and family, but also of the whole human race, as far as it is within my power.

It does me good to return, after an absence of two years, and again look upon the faces of the brethren and sisters; there is something so different in the expression of your countenances from what we see abroad in the world; the principles of goodness, of righteousness, of virtue, and of holiness seem to be enstamped upon the countenances of the Saints of the living God; the spirit of meekness, of sobriety, of solemnity—a Godlike spirit is reflected in every feature of those who are truly good, which seems to carry peace, happiness, and joy to the hearts of those who gaze upon them with the same spirit. But after all, brethren, we are not near as good as we might be, in many respects. Though we are far in advance of the nations of the earth, though we have become far exalted above them in the principles of virtue, truth, righteousness, and a oneness of feeling, yet there is still room for improvement, and, while we remain here in the flesh, there will be room for improvement, upon all these principles, upon all the attributes of divinity, and upon everything that is good and Godlike.

There is one subject that presents itself to my mind, and upon which I have meditated in years past and gone, and which gave me great joy when I learned that it was being established in our midst. What is it? It is the consecration of the properties of the whole Church, according to the written revelations, commandments, and laws of the Most High God. I heard of this about the time I was starting upon the plains for this place, and it gave me great joy to learn that there was a prominent step taken at your last Conference to bring

about and accomplish this object. I consider it is one of the most important objects to be accomplished among the Saints of latter days.

You may ask why? You may think that this contradicts my first statement—that the temporal things of this life are not even of a secondary consideration with me. They are not in one respect, but, in another, I consider them a part and portion of the religion that we as a people have embraced, and a very essential and necessary part too.

We read in the revelations that God has given, that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; well, if it is the Lord's and the fulness of it, then it does not belong to you nor me as individuals, exclusive of others. If the Lord had set apart, and consecrated, and given a certain portion of the earth to any individual with a deed and covenant, he might with some propriety call it his own; but all other deeds that are according to Gentile laws, and the institutions of the nations of the earth, do not, according to the laws and revelations of heaven, give to men the exclusive right to the things of this world, as their own; they are good enough in their place, for the Lord deals with the nations according to their light; and suffers laws to be enacted that are good in their place, and calculated to govern imperfect beings; laws to govern and control property; and in many respects, they are just adapted to the circumstances and conditions of the nations where they are enacted; and they are the means of doing much good in preserving what are termed the rights of individuals, and of the citizens generally; and they should not be done away, until circumstances will permit of their being superseded by a more perfect law. That more perfect order is what we wish to speak a few words upon at this present time.