

because some business transaction did not come out in accordance with their expectations or desires, they would apostatize and come to the conclusion that they never knew anything about it, and become infidels. This shows the weakness to which some individuals have been subject. I also remember, in the great apostasy which took place in Kirtland, that those who apostatized considered that all the talent of the Church had left it, and yet the work rolled right along, and, so far as they were concerned, they were never missed, and were soon forgotten, and nobody could tell where they went to. I have occasionally met them twenty or thirty years afterwards, and could hardly tell where they dropped out, their disappearance made no ripple. The facts are, brethren, that the work of the Lord does not depend upon us. If we go into darkness, if we let our hearts be filled with covetousness or corruption, or give way to licentiousness, drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, unbelief, or any crime that corrodes our system or organization, so that our tabernacles become unfit for the holy Spirit to dwell in, it will withdraw from us, and the light that is in us becomes darkened, and that darkness is so great that we grope as a blind man and wander hither and thither, and those who suffer themselves to be led by these blind men fall into the ditch with them, but the work rolls right along.

Now, we assemble here, and we want to review our conduct and our characters before the Lord. It is one of the weaknesses of human nature to sit in judgment on others, but on the present occasion we should bring ourselves to account, one and all, and determine whether we are living in accordance with the principles of the holy Gospel that we have

received. I recollect hearing once that Satan had invented for men a certain kind of leather spectacles which, when a man looked at his own sins, made them look very small, and when he looked at his own righteous acts, made them look very large; when he looked at his neighbor's sins they seemed very large, and when he looked at his neighbor's righteous acts they appeared very small. Spectacles of this kind should be avoided, and we should be very careful when we are examining ourselves that we do not get them on, as well as when we examine our neighbors.

The first step, then, in relation to the business of this Conference, is to preach the principles of repentance and reformation. We should question ourselves, and determine whether we have suffered ourselves, with the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the desire of gain, or from any other cause, to become darkened in our minds. There are many false spirits gone out into the world, and when Joseph Smith communicated the keys of the Priesthood to the servants of the Lord, he gave them the power to try these spirits, and this power was given to the Church, and no man need be led astray only as he suffers himself to lose the Holy Spirit, which is the result of sin, wickedness, neglect or transgression.

In addition to this general reformation which we wish to impress upon the minds of our brethren and sisters at the opening of the Conference, we want to take such steps as will be for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Saints. The changes which have transpired in the world show us how uncertain a tenure our business arrangements are placed upon. From the time that the revelation was given to the Saints, commanding them to let the beauty of their gar-