

eye; he dictates in the affairs of nations. If a mighty king and kingdom are raised up upon any portion of the earth, the Lord has done it. And when a mighty nation crumbles in its power, the Lord has touched their pride and strength. He raises and casts down; he dictates in the light and in the darkness, at his pleasure; he makes the thick darkness his chariot and rides upon the clouds; and he is also the brightness of the sun. We have the privilege of learning that God dictates, controls, and manages all to his own glory.

With many, even in this Church, the question arises, "If God dictates all these affairs, to whom shall sin be attributed? Am I to blame, if God always dictates and controls?" You should keep before you, as Latter-day Saints, other principles besides those you may be able to hear or read at any one time. No man can tell you everything in one short discourse. You understand that you have organizations endowed with a certain portion of divine intelligence, which is supreme, absolute, and independent in its sphere. You are organized expressly for the purpose of being exalted, of preserving your identity before the Lord, and being prepared to enter into celestial glory, to be crowned, to receive kingdoms, thrones, and dominions—to design and act as do the Gods. These principles you are well acquainted with, and they should be continually before you. All intelligent beings are also endowed with certain inalienable rights, privileges, and powers inherent in them. When God organized intelligent beings, he organized them as independent beings to a certain extent, as he is himself. And whether we see an evil act or a good one performed by an intelligent being, that being has performed the act by his will, by his own independent organization, which is capable of doing good or evil, of choosing light or darkness,

of performing that which will promote life, or that which will promote death, or a dissolution of his organization. Then, without the evils being placed before us, we should not be capable of refusing it; without darkness had come into the earth, we should never have learned how to appreciate the light. Then all the family of Adam and Eve would have been mere machines, as a portion of the inhabitants of the earth profess to believe that God has foreordained all the acts of the children of men from all eternity, and that they are obliged to act as they do. But we have learned that in our organization we are as independent as the angels are in theirs, or as any heavenly being that dwells in eternity.

If a nation transgresses wholesome laws and oppresses any of its citizens or another nation, until the cup of its iniquity is full, through acts that are perfectly under its own control, God will hurl those who are in authority from their power, and they will be forgotten; and he will take another people, though poor and despised, a hiss and a by-word among the popular nations, and instil into them power and wisdom; and they will increase and prosper, until they in turn become a great nation on the earth. God does that; and all within our power, that we have any understanding of, is ordained for the use, benefit, and control of his intelligent creatures.

You remember that a year ago this people were in the height of what they called a reformation. You also well recollect my teachings and my feelings upon the subject, and that to my mind the necessity for a reformation among Latter-day Saints was a disgrace, and beneath our calling; for it belongs to sinners and the ungodly, and not to Saints, to be getting up a reformation, though continually improving belongs to the calling of every Saint. Suffice it to say, there has