

sorrow, affliction, and death. The Almighty has his objects and plans all laid, and we are to pass through all these afflictions and to endure all that he calls us to endure, to give us knowledge, wisdom, and experience; for we cannot receive them upon any other principle. His design is to exalt the human family, and to bring them back to the presence of the Father and the Son. The heir of the family died to take away our sins. He has suffered, that we may live. He has offered himself up for the sins of the world. Why? Because he is the heir of the family. The Father and the Son are now doing all they can to save his children, and all the heavenly hosts are exerting their powers to accomplish the same great end. "But," says the Father, "do not infringe on the agency of mankind; for my children, to be brought into my presence to enjoy with me the fullness of my glory, must pass through the same ordeals I have passed through. They cannot inherit eternal life upon any other principle."

How far does our agency extend? There are certain bounds to it. What we have witnessed in thirty years' experience teaches us that man can appoint but God can disappoint. Man can load his gun to shoot his neighbor, but he cannot make the ball hit him, if the Lord Almighty sees fit to turn it away. He can draw the sword to hew down his fellow man; but instead of that, he may fall upon it himself. Paul says, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." You may plead with the people and beseech them to embrace the truth; but unless God touches the heart your labors are vain. The Lord will bring about the results, and mankind cannot pre-

vent it. The wicked may design an evil against the righteous, and he causes it to result in good. That is making the wrath of man praise him. He has not granted to man to bring out the result of his works, but he has given him the ability to work as he pleases—to go here or there—to do this or that—to obey the Gospel or disobey it. He has not committed the keys of the results of the acts of the nations of the earth to any man on the earth; but that power he retains to himself.

I can discern the hand of the Lord in preserving and leading this people. A great many do not discern this, because they have not eyes to see, nor ears to hear; for, if they had, they would discern the footprints of the Almighty and hear his voice, and would understand that he leads this people by the right hand of his wisdom and power, and that no power can prevent it. Anoint your eyes and pour oil in your ears, and pray that your hearts may be softened and your minds quickened to understand.

God will overrule the acts of the children of men in this kingdom as well as among the nations. After the children of Israel had traveled thirty years in the wilderness, they thought that they had prospered tolerably well, though they were still traveling. In their travels they crossed their tracks many times, whereas we, in our travels, have done so but a few times. How many times we may have to do so, I do not know.

Strive to prepare your hearts as fully as possible to enjoy a great portion of the Spirit of the Lord at our Conference; strive to enjoy that Spirit above all things. Let us prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Ghost to be our constant companion.

May the Lord God of Israel bless you! Amen.