

ceeded. But in every age from the beginning there have been those found who have sought after truth and have been willing to make every sacrifice for it. It was so with the Apostles. It was so with those who believed in their doctrine. It was so with the Prophets who preceded them. It has been so with those who have succeeded the Apostles; for in every age, and among all people, as we have been told, there have been those who have sought for the truth in heathendom, in Christendom, among all people, as they would for a precious treasure of inestimable worth, and who have endeavored to comprehend it, to value it, and have been willing to lay down their lives for it. There have been such persons found in all ages and among all people, but it has been especially the case with those who have received the Gospel as we have heard it described in our hearing this afternoon.

The world generally have the idea that when truth comes from God, it comes in such overwhelming power, that mankind are compelled to accept whether they will or no. But this is not the case, it never has been the case. If it were the case man would be deprived of that great privilege that he has received from God—that is, his agency, without which man would cease to be the being that he is, the child of God. The Almighty has given unto all the inhabitants of the earth their agency. A man can choose to be a wicked man; he can choose to be a devil, so to speak, if he wish. Will God interpose? Yes; but not to take away his agency. He can turn to wickedness, be corrupt, and do everything that is evil and abominable in the sight of God, so long as life is given to him, and God permits him to do it. He will

not take away his agency. If He did, we would cease to be independent creatures with the right to choose. On the other hand, a man can turn to that which is good and holy and pure. He can cherish it, he can seek for it, he can love it. He has that right, he can choose between those two principles. They have been placed before us so that we might choose the good and reject the evil, or choose the evil and reject the good. That is the privilege that is given to us.

It is not always—neither has it been the case with the majority of mankind who have comprehended the truth—the popular voice that is expressive of the truth. On the contrary, from the very beginning down through all the generations, even to our own day, it has been the case that truth has been unpopular. Hence the saying of the Apostle Paul: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” He did not say that they *might* suffer, or that they *perhaps* might suffer, but that they shall suffer. It should be one of the consequences of living godly in Christ Jesus. The Savior told His disciples the same thing. He led them to expect that they would be persecuted, that they would be hated of all men for His name’s sake. He cited the attention of His disciples to the Prophets who had preceded them; they had been persecuted, they had been slain, and in like manner they might expect a similar fate, and we know full well that this was all fulfilled, that they did meet this fate; as He himself died a martyr to the truth, so His Apostles died in like manner, and the great body of his followers suffered persecution unto death, but were sustained by the knowledge they had received from God, not looking at the world and the