

that natural light, that natural inspiration which gives them understanding, and by which they exist, they would be guided directly to Him who is the fountain of all light; they would then be in a condition to be communicated with by Him who is their Maker and Creator. But the inhabitants of the earth have been from the beginning prone to walk in the ways of darkness rather than in the light, because, as Jesus explained it, "their deeds are evil." This is the reason why there is so much ignorance in the world concerning God and His ways.

When the Lord, at different times, has raised up men who sought Him, who learned of Him, and who put themselves in such a condition that He could communicate with them, and through them to the rest of mankind, generally speaking, those men have been despised and rejected by the multitude. The great masses of the people have gone downward in error and darkness; it has been hard for them to walk in that straight and narrow path which leads upward to light, to intelligence, to purity, to the presence of Him who is the author of truth; and, therefore, the vast majority of the servants of God, who have been called to be special witnesses of the Almighty to a fallen world, have met with cruel and inhuman treatment from those to whom they were sent. They have generally been persecuted; they have been put to death in many instances in the most ignominious manner; they have been beheaded; they have been torn asunder; they have been cast into furnaces and into dens of wild beasts, and in order to escape maltreatment they have roamed hills and mountains, concealing themselves in dens and caves of the earth; men bearing a heavenly mes-

sage, a message fraught with peace and good will to all men, a message too, involving their eternal welfare and happiness. This is the reason why there has been so much ignorance in the world concerning God; and it is in consequence of their disobedience, in consequence of their wickedness, in consequence of their love for darkness rather than light, in consequence of their choosing the things that come from beneath in preference to things that come from above. For there are two opposing spirits or influences upon the earth, just as there are light and darkness. They cannot dwell together; they always were and always will be at war one with another, but one flees away at the approach of the other, as when the light of the morning beams forth over the hilltops, darkness flees away.

The inhabitants of the earth have been willing to be led by the influence of darkness; for there is a spirit of darkness upon the earth as well as the spirit of light, which leads to death as surely and certainly as the spirit of light leads to life. In the beginning God gave to man his agency, leaving him to choose either light or darkness, truth or error, as he might please. When men choose to receive the light of truth, the spirit of truth prompts them to do good, but it does not force them to do so; it is gentle and kind, and will enlighten and bless if people are willing to receive and act upon its promptings; but if men choose to walk in their own ways, they are at liberty to do so without let or hindrance, so far as the spirit of light forcing itself upon them to compel them to walk in the way of the Lord, is concerned. The inhabitants of the earth generally have chosen to walk in the paths which lead to death; they have chosen that