

judge so by the result—"you have chosen this course, you have slain my chosen Apostles and servants, and now I will withdraw myself from you, and leave you to yourselves;" and for 1,800 years, or nearly that—probably 1,600 or 1,700 at least, so far as that continent was concerned—there had been no man left upon the earth who held the Priesthood, that we know anything about. If there are any among the children of men who held it, they are in some retired place, inaccessible to the wicked. When the set time had come for God to reestablish His Church and to bring to pass the fulfillment of that which had been spoken by the mouths of the Prophets, He came himself.

The first account we have of the visitation of divine beings in this dispensation, is the account that is given to us by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself, concerning the visit of the Father and the Son. There had been men, doubtless many men in the various ages of the world, who had light and who had a degree of the Spirit of God. I believe myself that Mahomed, whom the Christians deride and call a false prophet and stigmatize with a great many epithets—I believe that he was a man raised up by the Almighty, and inspired to a certain extent by Him to effect the reforms which he did in his land, and in the nations surrounding. He attacked idolatry, and restored the great and crowning idea that there is but one God. He taught that idea to his people, and reclaimed them from polytheism and from the heathenish practices into which they had fallen. I believe many men were inspired who lived after him and before him, who, nevertheless, did not have the Holy Priesthood, but were led by the Spirit of God to strive for a better con-

dition of affairs and to live a purer and higher life than those by whom they were surrounded were living. But while this was the case it was the Spirit of God that did it. We have no account—no authenticated account at least—of angels coming from heaven, or of the Father manifesting Himself unto the children of men. And we have no account of the Priesthood being restored; in fact, there is every reason to believe it never was restored after it was withdrawn. The first that we knew concerning God was through the testimony of the Prophet Joseph. Even the personality of God was doubted. The traditions of men were so false respecting God that the idea of a personal Deity had faded from the so-called Christian mind. Though Jesus had appeared on the earth as a personage having a body, parts and passions, and declared Himself to be the Son of God, and the Apostles declared Him to be in the express image of His Father—notwithstanding that fact and that the record bore ample testimony to it, so long had been the silence that had existed between God and man, that the very conception of the nature of God—that is, of His characteristics—had entirely faded from the human mind, and He was deemed to be something other than He is. The common sectarian idea was that His center was nowhere, and His circumference was everywhere. There was no man scarcely upon the earth that had a true conception of God; the densest ignorance prevailed; and even ministers of religion could not conceive of the true idea, and there was mystery associated with what is called the Trinity—that is, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But all this was swept away in one moment by the appearance of the