

any faith in God, there is no room to doubt it. It is most fortunate for us that this record has been preserved, for by it we are enabled to understand what kind of a generation lived in the day in which the chapter I have read in your hearing was written. They were a people who spoke highly of religion, who built synagogues and places of worship, who honored the Sabbath day, who wore long phylacteries, on which were written select passages from Scripture, who had the word of God written on their very doorposts, who prayed at the corners of the streets, who fasted, and, apparently, sought in every way to glorify God. They believed in Abraham and Moses, and in the covenants which God made with them. They believed and practiced the law which Moses had revealed unto them, and so strict were they in observing many of its principles, that they were ready on one occasion to have a woman slain for the violation of the commandment respecting adultery; and at another time their wrath was kindled against the disciples because they plucked some ears of corn on the Sabbath day to appease their hunger. They considered that act a violation of the Sabbath, and their righteous souls were shocked thereat. They were shocked even at the idea of Jesus eating with unwashed hands, and at him, who professed to be a teacher, associating with publicans and sinners. They thought it was beneath the dignity of a man of God to condescend to associate with the low and degraded. This was the kind of people that existed when Paul wrote this chapter, yet with all their professions and with all their apparent sanctity they were utterly destitute of the knowledge and power of God. They drew near to God with their lips, but their hearts were

far from him. They made a great parade of their religion, but they dwelt on the glories of the past, on the evidences of God's favor which their nation and religion had formerly received. But did they themselves possess the spirit of prophecy, and the faith which Paul describes? If they had they would have recognized Jesus when he came amongst them, and they would have gladly received him and his teachings, and would have obeyed and practiced in their lives the principles of his Gospel. But as I have said, they were utterly destitute of the Spirit of God, they were darkened in their minds, and instead of receiving Jesus and his teachings, they hounded him until they got him into their power and then they slew him, and they treated his Apostles in the same manner.

It is truly said that history repeats itself. We are familiar with this in the history of our race. When the Prophets who preceded Jesus went into the midst of the people and preached unto them the word of God, they found them believing in the Prophets who had gone before. They were willing to receive the testimony of Moses, and of some who succeeded him. Samuel, after his death, was recognized as a great Prophet by the Jews, and so were some others who were dead; but while they lived they were treated much the same as Jesus and his Apostles were treated. The wicked could not recognize the character of the men of God who labored among them, and they rejected and persecuted them, and slew many of them. This is characteristic of the human family. One of the most unreliable things connected with mankind is popular opinion. So far as God's dealings with the children of men are concerned, and the sending of Prophets and Apostles to them, those who