

Their expectations were fulfilled. The truth was not popular. Although devils were subject to these men; although they performed mighty miracles in the name of Jesus, yet they were despised, persecuted or ignored by the great mass of humanity. A few believed in their words; a few rejoiced exceedingly that the Church of God was established on the earth; that the Savior who had been promised as a lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, had at last come in fulfillment of the prophecies of old. Their minds were prepared to receive Him, and they rejoiced in the work of God. Churches were formed in different lands. The Apostles went forth from Jerusalem, after they had been "endued with power from on high," and built up churches in many of the surrounding nations, perhaps in all the nations that then existed. But although they were successful in planting the tree of life upon the soil of a fallen world, it seems that the time had not come for it to remain there and bear fruit throughout the ages of eternity. It was destined to be uprooted, and there was to come another time when the truth should be transplanted once more, and should bear the fruits of righteousness forever. The glory of God was not destined in that day to cover the earth, as He has said it would in the latter days, "as the waters cover the mighty deep." The Apostles labored faithfully; they went forth baptizing in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but the power of sin, the power of the evil one was so great that it did not please the Almighty to establish upon the earth in that day a work which should endure forever. He permitted it for a wise purpose to be thrown down, and of this fact we are well

assured by the prophecies of the Apostles which they have left on record. Paul, one of the most faithful laborers in the vineyard of our Lord in that day, said the time would come when the people would not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts should heap unto themselves teachers, and having itching ears, should turn away their ears from the truth, and should be turned unto fables.

If we follow the history of the Apostles, we will see how their words were fulfilled. Nearly every one of the Twelve whom Jesus chose, met with a tragic death in defense of the principles which they proclaimed. Some were dragged to death, some beheaded, one was crucified with his head downward, others were thrown into cauldrons of boiling oil and others to wild beasts; so that at the end of the second century after Christ, the Church of God in its purity no longer existed upon the face of the earth. It had been torn asunder; it had apostatized from the truth; they who were faithful had been put to death, and in their place sprang up a race of compromisers, who were willing to barter away to the world the principles of truth, being too weak and cowardly to stand and die for their convictions as their fellow laborers had done. They were willing to give up this principle, and concede that point, to amalgamate for the purpose of making them popular and palatable the doctrines of the pure Christian faith with the pagan ideas of ancient Rome. So that the temporal body of Christ, the Church, became corrupt, deformed by this departure from first principles. Apostles, Prophets, were done away with; spiritual gifts became extinct and were said to be no longer needed; Bishops were put into the