

The various persecutions which have been in the world, have arisen from ignorance of the truth of God. Jesus forewarned his disciples that persecution for the truth's sake would come upon them ; but he also informs them that ignorance was the cause of them. " These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues : yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have *not known* the Father nor me," John xvi. 1-3 ; see also Chap. xv. 20, 21 ; Acts xxvi. 9-11. These words were partly fulfilled in Saul of Tarsus ; for he thought that he did God service, in persecuting the church of God and wasting it. Being asked by Jesus, " why persecutest thou me ? " his answer implied that he *knew not God*, nor his son Jesus Christ. " Who art thou Lord ? " was his reply ; which illustrates and confirms what he afterwards declares was the cause of his persecution : " I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry ; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it *ignorantly* in unbelief," 1 Tim. i. 12, 13.*

Christians marvel at the attachment of the Jews to the traditions of their fathers, and condemn them for their ignorant zeal in persecuting Christ and his disciples. Marvel not at this : *zeal* for the traditions of the Christian fathers has shed more of the blood of the saints than was ever shed by the Jews. It was not in reference to the Jews, but to professed Christians, that these words were spoken : " And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," Rev. xvii. 5, 6. In the days referred to in this passage of Scripture, *ignorance* was the mother of devotion ;

* Some have supposed that the apostle in this text assigns his ignorance and unbelief as a reason why he obtained mercy. Nothing more is necessary to obviate the difficulty which appears in this text, to reconcile it with the context and other parts of Scripture, than to translate the last clause of the verse before the middle. The idioms of different languages often require a transposition of the phrases, in translating from one language to another, to make common sense. The passage will then run thus, " Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief : but I obtained mercy, and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant," &c. If this transposition of the phrase be admitted, it appears that Paul states his ignorance and unbelief as the cause of his blasphemy, persecutions, &c. and not as the reason why he obtained mercy of the Lord. This view of the apostle's meaning is confirmed from many other texts, some of which have been already quoted ; see John xv. 21. and xvi. 3 ; 1 Cor. ii. 8 : Acts iii. 17, 18. and xiii. 27 ; Luke xxiii. 34.