

prayer." They exercised strong faith in "things unseen," they went without the camp, bearing the reproach of him who suffered for them "without the gate." By their holy and self-denying life they exhibited to the world the spectacle of a "peculiar people"—such in a word was the purity of their lives, that if they were spoken evil of it was because they no longer "walked according to the course of this world."

It was their entireness of Christian character that so mightily convinced the gainsayers of that day and drew from their fiercest persecutors the involuntary tribute of commendation "see how these christians love each other." Well would it be for the world—happy for the church if the conduct of modern professors bore so close analogy to those of the past as to prove them identical. What power would such a fact give to the gospel? The rays of the sun of righteousness would be reflected from one object to another—every hill-top and every valley of earth become divinely radiant, and soon would be heard a simultaneous shout—the world again is full of the glory of God. Alas! that it is not so; this is our sin—our shame. This fact enfeebls our internal efforts and throws across our path an impediment of undefinable magnitude. Science tells us with regard to electricity that the passing cloud if not in a positive is in a negative state. May it not be so with the church? If she is not charged with the spirit of God—she is with his antagonist, the spirit of the "world that lieth in wickedness"—hence instead of being a helper to the truth she proves an obstructive—so true are the words of the great teacher, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." There are indeed yet things among us on account of which it behoves us to "thank God, and take courage." Our leader has not left us wholly to ourselves, nor suffered us utterly to forsake him. But if the religion of Christ in its life and power be not in the church, what have we in its stead. A cold and empty formalism—a "form of godliness" while the power is practically denied—What have we? A total absence of "the joy of the Lord," which is the believers "strength"—no divine unction in the pulpit—an "itching ear" in the pew—no spirit of prayer in the social concert—a sickly faith—a languid hope—that cringing spirit that seeks "honour of the world," and seeks not the "honour that cometh from God," that would fain "muzzle" the lip of truth—that shrinks from an annunciation of the "whole counsel of God," and seeks to accommodate the gospel to the vitiated taste of the Lord's enemies. There will be a "turning to fables"—opposition to revivals—discord—confusion and every evil work. What have we? The mere machinery of religion—the priest—the altar—the victim and the wood, but no fire from heaven to enkindle the sacrifice, while over our temple gates will be written in characters, (which to the spiritually minded, will be) fearfully legible "The glory is departed." These then dear brethren are some of the difficulties

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