

THE  
CHRISTIAN'S POSITION  
IN THE WORLD.

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SECOND EDITION.

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"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 23.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS paper was written in the first instance to meet some contrary statements made by a friend of the writer—not, however, as will be seen, in a controversial spirit, but simply to ascertain in a positive manner what the word of God says on the subject. It is hoped that the publishing of it may prove useful in leading many of the children of God to be more alive to Him, and more dead to and separate from the world, the friendship of which is enmity against God, and in a day, too, when every kind of evil, both gross and religious, is so rapidly leavening the whole lump.

E. C.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION IN THE WORLD.

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It will be readily admitted that when one has by God's grace passed from death unto life—when one has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, it is of the last importance that he should understand his proper position, and his relationships towards the world out of which he has been taken. And for one who has been made a new creature in Christ, born of God and brought to God, it is most needful that he should know how to behave himself in his new place, and according to the new relationships into which he has been brought. In the world there is great care that all the various stations should be duly maintained and regulated; any breach of order is at once met, and the offending party is made to understand what is his proper place. And should it be less so in the highest relationship, nay, should it not be more so, should there not be the strictest diligence in maintaining the proper behaviour becoming members of that divine family—that heavenly household of which we have been made members by adoption and grace?

In a day like the present, when worldliness and infidelity are having so wide and so free a course it is peculiarly needful that we who are believers,

in the Lord Jesus should learn our place, and the demeanour which becomes that place to which we have been brought. And to ascertain these points is the purport of this paper.

Now in doing this it will help us very much to see in the first place what the world itself is from whence we have been taken, and its own proper characteristics; and, in the next place, what the believer in Jesus is. And happily this is a point upon which the Holy Ghost is most clear and decided. There is no room for dispute, and all that the believer has to do is to read, and to bow to what he reads as God's own instruction.

Well, then, what is the world? John tells us that all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father, but of the world. Thus the world, in its very essential nature, is evil, inasmuch as the fruits it produces are evil. It is corrupt in its fruits, and therefore it is corrupt in its very vitality. In another part we are told that the *whole* world lieth in wickedness, or rather in the wicked one. Its disposition towards God, and those who are His children, is described as hating. “Marvel not,” said our Lord to His disciples, “if the world hate you; it hated me before it hated you.” Then, again, this world has its leader, its prince, and he is Satan. It has, too, its god, and he again is Satan, who, I suppose, will one day be such in greater manifestation than at present.

Solomon, the wisest and richest of men, pronounces



all under the sun to be but vanity and vexation of spirit, and declares over and over again that there is no profit under the sun (Eccl. ii. 11). Such, then, in a few words, are the characteristics of the world.

Now all those who have believed in Jesus to the saving of their souls were at one time, not only in, but *of* the world—part and parcel of it in all its nature and condition. Their minds were taken up with it, and their hearts engrossed with its pleasures. Its maxims were their rule, and its pleasures were their delight. They were wholly apart from Christ and God, and without hope in the world. By nature they were at enmity against God, hating Him and all those who loved and owned Him as their Lord and Saviour. According to the course of this world they walked—their conversation in time past was in the lust of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath.

Such, indeed, was their condition; but what is it now? A great change has taken place. God, has for the great love wherewith He loved them, sent forth the Son of His love that He might put away all this terrible evil—that He might, by His death, bear their condemnation, and meet all the claims of God's justice which were against them, so that God might be perfectly just in pardoning, yea, more, in justifying all these ungodly ones who would believe in Jesus. By His death and resurrection Jesus has abolished the enmity, and all that was contrary to them. All that was against them He has taken out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And now all who believe in

Jesus are justified from all things, delivered from the wrath to come; and though once in mind, and heart, and practice, all that is bad, yet now they are cleansed from all sin, and washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. And they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light—made sons, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ of an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away. Christ's work was a perfect work—perfect in itself, perfect in its results, both as regards God and as regards the believer.

But this is not all, for the Lord Jesus, by His death on the cross, has not only purged the believer's sins away, but thereby the evil *nature*, the *old man*, which produced all that corrupt fruit is considerably affected. God in His grace does not improve or make better this old sinful nature of man's, but He makes the believer a *new creature*—a new man. He is born again from above—born of God—made a partaker of the divine nature—created in Christ Jesus. This new creation is unto good works, which God hath fore-ordained that the believer should walk in. The old man, on the other hand, is said to be crucified with Christ—dead with Him. "Knowing this," said the apostle, "that our old man is crucified with Him, that the *body* of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;" for he that is dead is justified from sin (see margin—Rom. vi.). In applying this truth to himself, the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,

and the life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." This crucifixion with Christ of the old nature, this putting off of the old man, is so perfect a thing in God's sight, that He, looking at [the believer as accepted in His own Son, says by the Holy Ghost, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 9).

Now, together with this being created in Christ Jesus new creatures, the old things have passed away, and all things have become new; new hopes—new desires—new affections, &c., &c., flow forth Godward. The old desires and affections are to be reckoned dead. Paul said of himself, "I die daily." They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Gal. v. 24), so that now there is no enjoyment in those old things in which the heart once delighted, neither is there any effort to give up these old things—I mean to one who understands his death and resurrection in Christ. It requires no effort to give them up, for they all drop off like autumn leaves, or the feathers of the moulting bird. There is no asking the questions, May I do this, may I not do the other? There is no saying, Well, there is no harm in this or that. All such is mere bondage. "How can he that is dead live any longer in and for that to which he is dead?" What, then, has the world to do with me, and what have I to do with the world? The answer is very simple: By the cross of Christ "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). Both are



dead, then—myself to the world, and the world to me. “How, then, shall we that are dead *live* any longer in sin,” and for that which is dead to me?

But yet again, such is the perfection of the work of Christ on the cross, and the power of His resurrection, that not only is sin put away, not only is the old nature crucified, and not only is the world crucified to the believer, but the child of God is declared by his Lord Himself to be *not* of the world, even as Christ was not of the world (John xvii. 16). Oh for faith to grasp and to apprehend the fulness of this blessing—not of the world, even as Christ was not of it! He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners. The believer is not in the flesh—he is not of the world.

And yet, once more, not only are we not of the world, but being taken out of it we are brought to God. Christ hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Not only made nigh, but brought to God (1 Peter iii. 18)—in a way, too, far different to that of Israel of old. In that dispensation one person only, and he only once in the year, was permitted into the presence of God. But now the veil of the temple has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the holiest of all is now open to all believers in Jesus. By this new and living way the child of God can now enter into the holiest of all, and there enjoy the abiding presence of his God and Father; this is his proper place. In Christ he has been made to sit there (Eph. ii. 6). His feet, once in the miry clay of this



world, have been taken thence, and set upon a rock. His goings, once according to the course of this evil world, have been established in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Oh yes, he is brought to God in virtue of the blood of Jesus, and in His person united together with Him by resurrection life. Christ is the believer's life, and he has been quickened together with, not apart from Him. He is a saint (*agios*, not of the earth) in Christ; he is in him that is true (1 John v. 20). How full—how real—how practical is the deliverance of the believer out of this world, which lieth in the wicked one. Not of this world, *even as* Christ was not of the world. Well then can we understand the prayer of the apostle for the saints at Thessalonica: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23). God grant it may be so with us, my dear readers.

But there is yet one other point to be noted before answering the question, What is my position and relationship towards the world? I refer to the expression of the apostle in Gal. i., "Christ died for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world," or rather *age* (the Greek word is *aion*). Now Paul, in the epistle to the Galatians, is dealing with sin, for which Christ gave Himself; 2ndly, the law, for which He became a curse by dying on the tree; and, 3rdly, the world (*kosmos*), to which, by the cross of Christ, the believer has been crucified, and it to the believer.

But this word "age," in Gal. i., I take to be one particular phase of the world (*kosmos*), from which that He might deliver the believer, the Lord Jesus gave Himself. This word "deliver" is very strong; in the Greek it means a coming out of (*exeletai*); but let us inquire for a moment what it is. Our Lord, in Matthew xiii. 24, said that the age, as to its religious aspect (kingdom of heaven), was like to a man sowing seed in his field, and Satan coming and sowing tares in the same field, which were both to grow together until the harvest. The field, he says, is the world (*kosmos*); the end of the world (*aion*), when the reapers are to come, is the end of the age (*aion*). Now we know that the tares were soon sown among the wheat after Pentecost. In Paul's day, the mystery of iniquity had already begun to work. This mystery (or secret thing) I suppose to be the leaven which the woman hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened (Matt. xiii. 33). At Corinth there was much evil, both moral and religious. At Galatia, there was a going back to Judaism; so, indeed, in all, more or less, there was evil working amongst the good. But the leaven was, according to the Lord, to increase until the whole was leavened; "evil men and seducers were to wax worse and worse," and in that place where there was a *form of godliness* (2 Tim. iii. 5). Out of this religious evil—this *aion*—Christ had given Himself, that He might deliver (take out) the children of God, and now bids us to turn away from such.

There can be no doubt that it was *religious evil* that the apostle referred to in Gal. i. 4; for the world, its lusts, and the such like, were all dead and put away (Gal. v., vi.); and surely religious evil is a fearful thing, inasmuch as it concerns God and His Christ in a very special manner. The Galatians had got under its influence, and were being removed from the gospel that had been preached to them by Paul, and hence he stands in doubt of them; they were going back again to a system of law and doings, and were fallen from grace. From this Jesus had died to deliver the believers, and yet they were going back to these beggarly elements. From the days of the apostle up to this present day, in which we are now living, this religious evil has been increasing. The leaven has made rapid progress in these last days. Evil men and seducers are indeed waxing worse and worse; the law in opposition to grace is being in most places set up; religiousness has taken the place of Christ; infidelity, and all kinds of false doctrine, is making rapid progress on all hands, and those in authority seem altogether powerless to stay its course. Well, then, what are those who desire to be true to Christ to do in this evil day, and under such circumstances? What is to be their course? Shall they remain, and try to mend and reform matters? Oh, that is hopeless, for the word says, "Evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*," and in that very place where there is a form of godliness, and the power thereof denied. But the word



of God is plain on this point, and to the simple-minded, whom the Lord will always guide in His way, his path is clear and straightforward. The Holy Ghost, by the apostle, tells him what to do: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? *or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* and, what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,* saith the Lord, and *touch* not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 14—18). Again: "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow (1) righteousness, (2) faith, (3) charity, (4) peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 20, 22). Oh for grace and faith to obey the injunction!

Well, then, we have seen that as to the whole world, in its religious and in its grosser characteristics, which lieth in the wicked one, the believer is not only delivered from, but is dead to it. He is not of it, *even* as Christ was not of it. And that old nature



that once took delight in this world is dead, and the believer is not in it.

What, then is the believer's place in the world? The answer is most easy. He has been sent into it again by the Lord; taken out from it, and sent back into it. "As Thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world," saith the Lord Jesus. And for what purpose? Why not have taken them out of the world straight up to heaven? Because the Lord had a great privilege to confer upon them. He has sent them into the world, not to be of it, but in separation from it, and to be lights in the midst of the darkness, to be witnesses for Him and for His truth. Jesus said to His disciples, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me; and *ye also* shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John xv. 26, 27). Oh, what an honour, what grace upon the part of Jesus, to take up such as we, and make us temples of the Holy Ghost, to be His witnesses in a world that hates Him! He has not sent us to enjoy the world, but to testify against its evil, and to testify for Christ and for His truth. And how are we fulfilling this office? Are we living for ourselves and the world, or for "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"? The best way, I suppose, to answer that question is by asking another: How does the world treat me? Do worldly people like me or

hate me? Depend upon it there is something terribly wrong if the world is going on right with me, and I with it. Our Lord said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not Him that sent me" (John xv. 18—21). This is the Christian's position in the world. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. xiii. 12—14).

May the Lord in His grace awaken us in these last days to a more practical separation from the world and its attractions. And may He make us more faithful to Him and His truth, and towards those we come in daily contact with. If we are ashamed of Jesus, He will, by-and-bye, be ashamed of us. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" and "take heed that no man take thy crown."

E. C.

126, *Manor Street, Clapham, S.*

*March, 1865.*

## STRANGERS WITH JESUS.

WE'RE not of the world, that fadeth away,  
We're not of the night, but children of day ;  
The chains that once bound us, by Jesus are riv'n :  
We're strangers on earth, and our home is in heav'n.

Our path is most rugged and dangerous too,  
A wide trackless waste our journey lies through ;  
But the pillar that guides us, and shows us our way,  
Is our light in the night, and shadow by day.

Our Shepherd is still our guardian and guide,  
Before us He goes to help and provide ;  
We drink of the stream from the Rock that was riv'n,  
Our bread is the manna that came down from heav'n.

'Mid mightiest foes most feeble are we,  
Yet, trembling, in each encounter they flee ;  
The Lord is our banner, the battle is His,  
The weakest of saints more than conqueror is.

Soon, soon shall we reach our own promised land,  
Before His bright throne in glory shall stand !  
Our song then for ever and ever shall be,  
" All glory and blessing, Lord Jesus, to Thee !"

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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