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WHY THE BELIEVER IS LEFT IN THIS WORLD

BY THE LATE: C. D. COLE

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world"
(John 17:18).

The believer is in the world, but he is not of the world. He is in the world physically, but not of it morally. He is in touch with the world physically, but is out of fellowship with its aims and purposes and pursuits. He is out of gear with the world just in proportion as he is in tune with God.

The believer was once of the world. By nature he walked according to the course of this world, and was led by the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. Christ said of His disciples: "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" (John 15:19). The world is used here, of course, in the ethical and moral sense. It means the aggregate of mankind, considered as apart from and alien to God. It means the unregenerate human society. Believers are not of that society.

Now the people of God are left in this world—some for a longer time than others. What is their business here? Why did not God take them on to heaven as soon as He saved them? Why does our loving, heavenly Father leave His children in such a bad place? These are not idle questions, but they lead us to inquire what our business is in this world.

1. The world is not a good place for the saint when his comfort and ease is considered. Heaven would be a sweeter and happier place for the saint. Our Father has not left us here to enjoy the world and have an easy time in it. We are here for the same purpose that Christ was sent into it. Christ did not come here to have a good time. This world was not a picnic ground for Him. He was not here on a vacation; He was here to glorify God and serve men. Christ's relation to this world is our pattern, and we are not to seek for pillows in a place where He had not where to lay His head. Christ was happy while here, but this world ministered nothing to His happiness. He received nothing from this world but jeers and taunts. He deserved a crown of glory but this world put upon His brow a crown of thorns. He deserved the sincere kisses of affection, but He received spittle from lips that hated Him. His meat and drink was to do the will of God, and His joy was from the Holy Spirit.

2. Sin is the thing that marks this world. Everywhere are to be seen monuments to its destructive character. Sin! The sound is brief. But it presents a dark abyss of thought. No mind can trace its birth. No eye can see its death. Before the worlds it scaled the heavens, and dragged angels down. In life's first dawn it entered Eden and slew innocence. It ends not with the end of time. It ever rolls an ever-deepening course.

Sin! It is earth's death-blow. It marred the beauty of a beautiful world. It stripped it of its lovely robe. It caused the soil to harden; the leaves to wither and decay. It turned fertility to weeds, and armed the brier with its bristling thorns. It placed its foot upon a perfect workmanship—and left it a disordered wreck.

Sin! It is man's ruin. Its most tremendous blight fell on our inner life. It drove the soul from peaceful fellowship with God. It changed the loving child into a hardened rebel. It robbed the mind of light. It rendered reason a bewildered maze. It made the heart a nest of unclean birds; a spring of impure streams; a whirlpool of tumultuous passions; a hot-bed of ungodly lusts; a den of God-defying schemes. It is the malady—the misery—the shame of our whole race. It is the spring of every tear. Each sigh, which rends the breast; each frown, which ploughs the brow; each pain, which racks the limbs, are cradled in its arms. It is the mother of that mighty monster—death. It digs each grave in every graveyard. Each widow and each orphan tastes its gall. It fills each hospital with sick. It strews the battlefield with slain. It is the core in every grief.

Sin! Its terrible destructions die not in the grave. There is a region where its full-blown torments reign. It built the prisonhouse of hell. It kindled quenchless flames. It forged the chains which bind lost sinners to their burning beds. It sharpened the undying sting of an upbraiding conscience. It arms the jailer, Satan, with his scourge.

Reader, think much of sin! It raised a rebel hand against God's will. It dared to violate His holy law. It strove to lay His honor in the dust. It trampled on the statute book of heaven. Reader, here is a picture in which all horrors meet. No fiction colors it. No power can ever paint the terrible reality. No artist's skill can represent a flame. The awful truth exceeds report. The lost writhe out eternity in fully learning the deserts of sin.

3. But this world, bad as it is, is a good place in which to witness for Christ. When going away, Christ said to His disciples, "Ye shall be my witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Witnesses for the truth are needed where there are false witnesses. When a man is hailed into court on false charges, the best place for his friends is to be in court to testify to the truth. There are false witnesses for Christ in this world, and it is a good place for His people to testify to the truth about Him.

Now, my dear believer, what is your testimony for Christ going to be? Here is what it should be:

(1) That He is the only Saviour—none other but Him to whom you trust for salvation.

(2) That He is precious to you—and show it by your desire to please and honor Him. We are all giving a testimony. It is impossible to be neutral. Christ said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Luke 11:23).

Every circumstance and condition of life gives us an opportunity to witness for Christ.

1. Are you poor? This gives an opportunity for you to prove that Christ is more precious than gold. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:8).

2. Are you persecuted? This gives an opportunity for you to show your faith in Christ and His Word. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10). "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

3. Are you rich? Do you have quite a bit of this world's goods? It is an opportunity for service. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21). "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (I Tim. 6:18).

4. This world is a good place to serve men. Christ was here as One that served. He went about doing good. He came to minister and to give His life as a ransom. Men and women are in need. They have both physical and soul needs. "Do good to all men, especially to them of the household of faith."

The story is told of a woman who visited relatives in a certain city, and when she left, she failed to take her trunk with her. She could not be located, and the trunk could not be sent to her, so it was set to one side. After a few months, the house was infested with a plague of moths. It was some time before it could be discovered where they were coming from, until one day a moth was seen to come out from under that trunk. On opening the trunk, there was a mass of clothing utterly ruined by the moths, and down in the bottom of that trunk there was an airtight box. When it was opened, it was found to be full of cedar chips. These chips scattered through that clothing would have kept the moths out, but they were useless in that airtight box. These chips reminded me of some church members; they are in the world, but useless because they are in some kind of

a box. Some are in the box of selfishness—they keep themselves bright and clean, but it never occurs to them they might be a blessing to anybody else. Others are in a box of sinful pleasures—they have money for the show and for other worldly pleasures, but none for the cause of Christ.



Building a Pastor

We have heard of building a church but what about building a pastor? It is true. You can build a pastor, or you can tear him down. "A great pastor will build his church, and a great church will build her pastor. A church is as responsible for what she does to her pastor as is the pastor for what he does for the church. How can we, as members of this church help make our pastor's ministry more effective.

1. *Build his spiritual power by praying for him.* When you pray for your pastor, you pray for your church, your community, your family.

2. *Build his reputation by speaking well of him.* He will have weak and strong points. His influence will depend on which of them you stress.

3. *Build his leadership by co-operating with him.* For every great leader there must be some great followers. Read Hebrews 13:7,17.

4. *Build his pulpit power by hearing him.* Full pews challenge a man to prepare and deliver great sermons. Empty pews discourage him.

5. *But the greatest thing you can do for your pastor is to follow the Christ he preaches and obey God's Word.*

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