

[F604]

The World as an Enemy of the New Creation

Everything pertaining to this present evil world is more or less out of alignment with righteousness, and hence, more or less contrary to the New Creation and its righteous standard. The law of the world might in a general way be summed up as Selfishness; notwithstanding the world makes claims, and with considerable propriety, to a grand recognition of justice. We are not of those who believe that all the laws and all the regulations of the civilized world are evil; on the contrary, we have frequently been amazed to note how grand are the laws of Christendom—how wise, how just, how noble—many of them evidently enacted with a view to protecting the interests of the weak against the strong, and of doing justice to all. Nevertheless, with selfishness interwoven with every thought and word and act of the whole world, it is not surprising that its very highest conceptions of justice are sometimes bent and twisted—wrested.

Our surprise, on the contrary, may well be that poor fallen humanity should ever have attained to so grand a system of laws as are to be found on the statute books of Great Britain, the United States and other countries. We cannot doubt that the law given through Moses and exemplified, multiplied and made honorable and expounded by our Lord Jesus and his apostles has had much to do with—has been the basis, indeed—of these human laws. Nevertheless, as all will concede, the selfishness of man is continuously battling with man's own definitions of justice, and seeking to set them aside either in part or in whole; and this, which is ceaselessly progressing on a large scale in the world, is one of the chief difficulties and battles of the New Creation.

The world and its spirit of pride, selfishness, etc., must be recognized as one of the chief foes of the New Creation. The whole world of mankind, operating under this general "spirit of the world," is moving in one general direction, as a great river, in some parts of which there is greater swiftness, and in other parts greater sluggishness, but all, nevertheless, following in the same general selfish direction. The New Creature, by his consecration, by the spirit of his new mind, is obligated to an adverse course, and is, therefore, opposed by all the current of popular sentiment, theory, tradition, etc., and marked as peculiar. He has friction to contend with. He necessarily is in antagonism to those who are going in the opposite direction, and who come in touch with him. This collision cannot be avoided. It means not outward peace but outward conflict; this outward conflict, however, may signify inward peace and joy because divine approval is realized.

The world's aims and objects and methods are not always ignoble and unjust; but even its noblest aims and objects are generally contrary to those of the New Creation, because the world is acting under the impulse of human wisdom, while the New Creation is actuated by the wisdom from above. Worldly wisdom has its own conceptions of religion as a means for holding wicked people in check. It has its own idea of morality, benevolence, faith, hope, love—cannot comprehend the different standpoint of the New Creation, and is apt to consider its views extreme, unreasonable, etc., not comprehending the divine plan, not appreciating from the divine standpoint the insignificance of the present life, as compared to the future one. Nor does worldly wisdom appreciate the impotence of all human effort as respects real human uplift, when contrasted with the great and grand arrangements which God has in reservation, and which will be fully brought to light and put into successful operation in the Kingdom, as

soon as his work of the present age has been completed—as soon as the elect Church shall have been selected, polished, approved, glorified.

The New Creation must not, therefore, be surprised if the world hate it—even the morally and religiously well-disposed of the world. And this hatred and opposition of the world, at times so vexatious and trying to faithfulness and patience, is to be received meekly; with the remembrance that the world is still blinded by the "god of this world" ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)) and sees not the "exceeding great and precious things," "the deep things of the Spirit," ([1 Cor. 2:10](#)) in the light of which we, by the grace of God, are enabled to count all things—losses, trials, etc.—as but "loss and dross," ([Php. 3:7,8](#)) that we may win the wonderful things promised us in the Word. To yield to the spirit of the world, to allow its sentiments to dominate us for the sake of its peace, would be giving evidence of an inferior appreciation of the Lord, his Truth, and the privileges of his service. The result would be that if we did not lose everything by going completely over to worldliness we might, at least, lose the prize, and have a portion with the "great company," and come up through great tribulation to an inferior place in connection with the glories to follow.

The Apostle's strict injunction is, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." ([1 John 2:15](#)) We should be on guard, therefore, against every indication of sympathy or affiliation with the spirit of the world. This does not mean that we should be out of sympathy with our friends, whom we term the worldly—that we should be careless of their interests, etc.; but it does mean that while careful to discharge our obligations toward the worldly, and to render honor to whom honor is due, tribute to whom tribute is due, support to whom support is due, kindness to whom kindness is proper, sympathy to whom sympathy is proper, we are, nevertheless, to distinguish between our friends and neighbors, who are still under the influence of the Adversary, and the spirit, or disposition, which has actuated them and which is deluding them.—[Rom. 13:7](#)

We are not to be in sympathy with any of the present institutions, which are based upon selfishness, and, in greater or less degree, are in opposition to the divine law, the Golden Rule. It may be necessary for us to conduct our affairs considerably along the lines of selfishness prevalent in the world; but without stopping to dispute the question continually, our hearts should be kept in that attitude in which we would be out of sympathy with selfish principles and longing for the reign of the Golden Rule absolutely in all the affairs of life, and, so far as possible, in our own intercourse with the world.

It is not for us to attempt to transform the world and revolutionize society and its methods. That herculean task the Lord has left for himself, and it will be fully accomplished in the "great day" fast approaching. Meantime the Lord's people, under guidance of his Word—although in the world, and necessarily having to do with its affairs and customs—are not to be in love, in sympathy, with them. They are to realize, on the contrary, that to keep in close touch with the Lord, and in close sympathy with the principles of his righteousness, will necessarily mean the same kind of opposition that God has to every form and degree of injustice, inequity, lawlessness—in church, in state, in finance, in politics, and in social customs and usages.

Seeing this more or less clearly, some, we believe, have gone to an extreme in denouncing present institutions in a manner that the Lord and the apostles neither commanded nor sanctioned, nor illustrated in their words and conduct. We should remember that the world as a whole is living up to as high a standard as it appreciates, and that simply to find fault with

matters which others are as powerless to correct as ourselves is worse than useless, because it merely produces unhappiness, vexation, etc., without accomplishing desired results. John the Baptist gave wise advice along this line when asked of some of the Roman soldiers respecting their proper course, he answered, "Do violence to no man [do not violate the laws and regulations under which you are placed by your government] and be content with your wages." ([Luke 3:14](#)) Simply making people discontented with their present conditions and surroundings is most unwise. On the contrary, the influence, the spirit, the disposition, of the New Creation should always be toward peace; and if we cannot commend present institutions highly, neither need we specially condemn them.

In such matters we may well follow the example of Michael the archangel, who did not even bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee!"—in his own time and manner. ([Jude 9](#)) So with us. Realizing that the Lord will rebuke present institutions in his own time and manner, we can say to ourselves, with the Apostle, "Be patient, brethren; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" ([James 5:8](#))—the establishment of his Kingdom, near at hand, will rectify all these difficulties. The agitation of these matters in advance will be not only unavailing, but worse—disadvantageous, injurious—both to the agitator and the agitated, breeding discontent. Amongst the children of this world there will be found plenty of agitators when the Lord's time shall come for these questions to be agitated. Meantime all the members of the New Creation will display wisdom in avoiding such questions as tend to strife and discontent, and in chiefly speaking amongst the Lord's people and such as "have an ear to hear," concerning the deeper things of the divine plan, of course including on proper occasions the time of trouble by which the Kingdom will be established.

The New Creation, the Royal Priesthood, has a special work quite apart from the world and all agitation of its elements. Their work at the present time, as already shown, is to blow the silver trumpets—to sound forth the truth of the divine plan for such as have an ear to hear, for such as are not blinded and deafened by the deceptions of the Adversary. Their mission is specially amongst the Lord's people, finishing up the work of this Gospel age, garnering the wheat. [Matt. 13:37-43](#)

Under another picture, the present work of the Church is shown to be the Bride making herself ready for the marriage. ([2 Cor. 11:2](#); [Rev. 19:7](#)) With such pressing calls upon them for every moment of their time, for every particle of their influence, means, etc., the New Creatures have neither love for the world, to seek to perpetuate its arrangements, institutions, etc., nor have they the disposition to anticipate the Lord's wise, beneficent arrangement for the transformation of this present evil world into "the world to come," "wherein dwelleth righteousness." [Heb. 2:5](#); [2 Pet. 3:13](#)