

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VII.

THE WORLD: AN INDUCTIVE EXEGESIS AND
AN EXPOSITION.

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM H. BATES, D.D., WASHINGTON, D. C.

EVERY Bible student, and indeed every reader of the Bible, has been perplexed by the word *WORLD*, used as it is in Scripture, now with one meaning, now with another; on the one hand what it intends being approved, permitted, on the other hand disapproved, prohibited. Where is the line to be drawn that distinguishes between the good and the bad, between the allowed and the disallowed? All, doubtless, have felt that if such discrimination could be clearly set forth, a real contribution would be made to enlightenment in Christian thought and helpfulness in Christian life.

A satisfactory answer to the question, What is the World? can be found only in a study of all the passages in the Bible where the word occurs; and the answer, to be satisfactory, must include all the contents of the term and an explicit exposition of them. In all the range of religious literature, so far as the writer is aware, such study has not been made. It is here attempted.

The one English word "World" translates five different Hebrew words in the Old Testament, and five different Greek words in the New Testament. These may be presented, it is hoped, so that not only those instructed in the original languages of the Scripture, but the uninstructed, can understand them.

THE OLD TESTAMENT TERMS.

The first word in the Old Testament is אֶרֶץ, *erets*. It occurs 2454 times. In the Authorized Version it is translated 1512 times *land*; 695 times *earth*, as in Gen. i. 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and *the earth*"; 139 times *country*; 99 times *ground*; 3 times *way*; *nation*, *field*, *common*, and *wilderness*, once each; and 4 times *world*, as in Ps. xxii. 27, "All the ends of *the world* shall remember," etc. (see also Isa. xxiii. 17; lxii. 11; Jer. xxv. 26). This is the world, or earth, simply in its physical aspect. In Gen. i. 10, God pronounces it "good."

The second is חֵלֶד, *chedel*. It occurs but once, Isa. xxxviii. 11, "I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of *the world*." Gesenius defines it, "place of rest, region of the dead, hades." Young's Concordance gives it the meaning of *cessation*. While the Revision translates the text as the Authorized Version does, it gives the phrase, "with the inhabitants of the world," this marginal equivalent: "among them that have ceased to be."

The third is חֵלֶד, *cheled*. It is used five times, and is twice translated *age*, twice *world*, and once *short time*. The idea of it is *duration*, but with special reference to brevity, or transitoriness, as in Ps. xxxix. 5, "Mine age [*cheled*] is as nothing before thee." The two places where it is translated *world* are: Ps. xvii. 14, "men of the world," and Ps. xlix. 1, "inhabitants of the world"; the thought being that of "dwellers in this narrow sphere of mortality."¹

The fourth is עוֹלָם, *olam*. It occurs 412 times. It is translated 235 times *forever*; 65 times *everlasting*; 22 times *perpetual*. The list is here left incomplete, as the word is

¹ Spurgeon, Treasury of David, vol. i. p. 248.

translated by twenty-three different expressions. They all, however, have time significance,—indefinite time. Only twice is it translated *world*. First, in Ps. lxxiii. 12, "Behold these are the ungodly that prosper in *the world*." The Revisers punctuate the verse differently, and render *olam* by the phrase, "always at ease." Hengstenberg translates it, "eternally secure." The other place is Eccl. iii. 11, "He hath made everything beautiful in his time; also he hath set *the world* in their heart." Better: "Eternity in the heart," for *olam* is a time word. This is a rendering of Zöckler, and of the Revisers in the margin. Maclaren says that this word, in the Old Testament, "has never but one meaning, and that meaning is *eternity*." "Eternity in the heart," i.e. a conception of endless duration, intuition of infinity, thought and desire of immortality.

The last is תבל, *tebel*. It is used 36 times, and is rendered 35 times *world*, and once *habitable part*. It primarily denotes "the habitable earth," as in Ps. xxxiii. 8, "Let all the inhabitants of *the world* [*tebel*, i.e. the habitable earth] stand in awe of him." Then it has, by metonymy, a secondary meaning denoting the inhabitants themselves, as in Ps. ix. 8, "He shall judge *the world* [*tebel*, i.e. the inhabitants of the world] in righteousness."

The foregoing will probably be considered a sufficiently comprehensive, and yet detailed, view of the meaning of the Old Testament world-terms. With this showing, doubtless all will accept the statement of that distinguished scholar, Tayler Lewis, that "The New Testament use of the word *world* for 'worldliness,' 'love of the world,' is unknown to the Hebrew Scriptures."¹

¹ Lange, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, p. 67.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TERMS.

The first is $\gamma\eta$, *ge*, which enters into our word "geology." It occurs 251 times, and is translated 187 times *earth*; once *earthly*; 42 times *land*; 18 times *ground*; twice *country*; and once *world*. This single occurrence is in Rev. xiii. 3, "And all *the world* wondered after the beast"; and here the Revisers translate it *earth*. This word is the equivalent of the Hebrew *erets*, and denotes the world in its material or physical aspect.

The second is $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\text{o}\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$, *oikoumene*. It occurs 15 times. *World* is the rendering 14 times, and *earth* once (Luke xxi. 26). It is from the same root as $\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\text{o}\varsigma$, a house, a dwelling, and denotes *the habitable earth*. It corresponds with the Hebrew *tebel*. Its first occurrence is in Matt. xxiv. 14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all *the world* [$\text{o}\acute{\iota}\kappa\text{o}\upsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$, i.e. the habitable earth] for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come."

It may seem, from the significations found thus far, that the search we have instituted is fruitless. Not so: we have seen where the game we are after is *not*. That is something. Besides, we now have it corralled in the three remaining words, $\kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\text{o}\varsigma$, $\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\acute{\nu}$, and $\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\acute{\nu}\iota\omicron\varsigma$; and we shall find that the last of these three can be eliminated.

$\text{K}\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\text{o}\varsigma$, *kosmos*, occurs 187 times, and is always translated *world* save once, where it is rendered *adorning*, in the advice given to wives, 1 Pet. iii. 3, "Let it not be the outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair." Here are some specimens of the use of *kosmos*: Matt. xiii. 38, "The field is *the world*"; Matt. v. 14, "Ye are the light of *the world*"; John i. 29, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of *the world*"; John xiv. 30, "The prince of this *world* cometh and hath nothing in me." This last is what Christ says of Satan.

He is the prince, the ruler, of *kosmos*. Of his own disciples Christ says, "They are not of *the world*, even as I am not of *the world*" (John xvii. 16). The believer is "to keep himself unspotted from *the world*" (Jas. i. 27). "If any man love *the world*, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15).

Αἰών, *aiōn*, occurs 103 times. It is translated 61 times by the word *ever*, or some of its combinations, such as *evermore*, or *ever and ever*, etc.; 37 times by the word *world*, either singly or in combination. Twice it is translated *ages* (Eph. ii. 7; Col. i. 26); twice *eternal* (Eph. iii. 11; 1 Tim. i. 17); and once *course* (Eph. ii. 2). Had it much oftener been translated *age*, it would have been far better. Here are some specimens of its use: Matt. xiii. 39, "The harvest is the end of *the world*," i.e. age, dispensation; Matt. xiii. 49, "So shall it be at the end of *the world*," i.e. age, dispensation. The Scriptures do not speak of *kosmos*, but of *aiōn*, as coming to an end (Matt. xiii. 19; 1 Cor. x. 11). "The children of this *world*," age, "are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Luke xvi. 8). Christ "gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil *world*," age (Gal. i. 4). "The god of this *world*," age, "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

The last word is *αἰώνιος*, *aiōnios*, and occurs 71 times. It is translated 42 times *eternal*; 25 times *everlasting*; once *forever*; and three times *world* (Rom. xvi. 15; 2 Tim. i. 9; Titus i. 2). Since in the three places where it is translated *world*, it is used in connection with the word *χρόνος*, *chronos*, *time*, and it is but the adjective form of which *aiōn* is the noun, we may leave it out of the account altogether, and confine ourselves to *kosmos* and *aiōn*. These we must study carefully.

KOSMOS.

Kosmos, at bottom, means order, regular disposition, arrangement, system. It may apply to arranging the person, and so get the meaning of *adorning*, as in 1 Peter iii. 3, "plaiting the hair." Our English word "cosmetic" comes from the same root. It may apply, as in the classics, to conduct, to military arrangement, to civil order, etc. Pythagoras (some 500 years B. C.) is said to have been the first who transferred and applied it to the sum total of the universe, desiring thereby to express his sense of the order, arrangement, system, which everywhere reigned in it. It is at this point that we get our word "cosmology," the science which treats of the order and course of nature. *Kosmos* is opposed to chaos.

The signification of *kosmos*, as the world of matter, is not uncommon in the New Testament, as in Rom. i. 20, "The invisible things of him are clearly seen from the creation of the world." *Kosmos* is then, first, *the material world*.

Following this signification, the word is frequently used to denote the sum total of the people living in the world, as in 1 John ii. 2, "He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world," i.e. the inhabitants of the world. But just here we must be careful to note that the inhabitants of the world are reckoned as *sinners*, alienated from the life of God, for whom propitiation is made. Christ came into "the world, the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John i. 10); i.e. he came into the material world, which he had made, but the world-people did not know him. We have, then, a second signification,—*the world-people*.

But the course and current of the affairs of the world-people are according to an order, a system. In Eph. ii. 2, we are told that the walk of the world-people is "according to the course of this world," i.e. the world-system, which, it is further stated,

is " according to the prince of the power of the air," Satan. A third signification of *kosmos* is, therefore, *the world-system*.

Kosmos, as the material world, corresponding to the Hebrew *erets*, God pronounced " good " (Gen. i. 10), and no moral change was wrought by the curse that fell upon it (Gen. iii. 17); but *kosmos*, as the world-people and the world-system, which are under the domination of Satan, is that, or the sphere of that, which lies under reprobation in Scripture, and is bad.

AION.

Aiōn primarily signifies time, either long or short, in its unbroken duration. It is an æon, or age, the length of which is determined by the nature of that to which it is applied. If *kosmos* is the material world, etc., *aiōn* is the time-world, and applies to all that, in the *kosmos*, which exists under conditions of time. And it will have character accordingly. The course and current of *kosmos*, i.e. the world-people and the world-system, are mixed and filled with sin. It is precisely at the point where *aiōn* begins to coincide with the disapproved *kosmos* that it, too, acquires an evil significance. It is in this area of meaning that we speak of " the times." We speak, also, of " the spirit of the times," " the genius of the age," " der Zeitgeist," meaning, thereby, the floating thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, tendencies, that are abroad; in a word, that subtle, informing spirit of the great mass of the world-people who are living alienated from God under the world-system. It is " from this present evil world," age, Gal. i. 4, that God would effect deliverance by his Son.

The world as *aiōn* coincides with the world as *kosmos*, and has character, good or bad, according as *kosmos* has character good or bad, and is approved or disapproved accordingly. *Kosmos*, as we have seen, is:—

1. The material world, good; and 2. The world-people; and
3. The world-system, both bad.

Such, according to our exegetical survey of the entire Bible, is the **WORLD**.

Arriving at this result in our exegesis, there is call for exposition even while further exegesis must be carried on.

THE WORLD-SYSTEM.

We should consider the World-System, and this with respect to its Head and its Scope.

It should here be emphasized, what has before been simply stated, that the world, as disapproved kosmos and aion, is in possession of Satan and is ruled over by him. There are very many who look upon the Devil, when offering Christ "all the kingdoms of the kosmos" (Matt. iv. 8) for an act of worship to himself, as a grand fraud, offering what he did not possess. Not so; the world-kingdoms *are* his, for we have Christ's own testimony to the fact (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11). Three times does He declare him to be "the Prince of this kosmos." St. Paul says he is the "god of this aion" (2 Cor. iv. 4). And St. John says, "The whole kosmos lieth in the evil one" (1 John v. 19). Precisely in the fact of the Satanic possession of the world-kingdoms lay the force of the temptation. Satan offered to abdicate if the Son of God would render him a moment's homage. Had He paid the price and had Satan's proffer been in good faith, our Lord would have secured thereby the absolute and immediate vanquishing of all kinds of evil upon the earth; and the anguish of the strife, the waging of the battle that has since been and is to be ere Satan is vanquished, would have been prevented. Surely *that* were something to be desired. But for so great an achievement Jesus would not commit the moment's sin. It is needless to add that the offer was

not made in good faith, and, had it been accepted, Satan would have triumphed over the Son of God, by craft bringing the Second Adam under his power as he did the first. Had it not been for his headship of the world-system and over the world-people, his proffer would have been no temptation; he is Head.

The world-system, in its Scope, is most extensive and complete. It embraces the governmental arrangements, the politics, of the world. To paraphrase a familiar political saw, Government is of the world-people, by the world-people, for the world-people. True, "the powers that be," governments, "are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1), but Satan has usurped them. They are not administered for the people of God except as he overrules them.

It embraces the "business" of the world. Cain, after the murder of Abel, went out and founded a city and, with his descendants, gave himself to handicraft, art, science, "culture." The development of what we call "civilization" was, and has been, in the Cainitic line. Business, with its selfish graspings, its competition, its syndicates, its trusts, its strikes, its strifes internal, external, and I had almost said eternal — doubtless eternal in the sense of æonic, age-lasting — is manifestly of "the world that lieth in the evil one."

It embraces "society." Social order, so called, with its arrangement of rank, caste, class, position, quality, blood; social disorder, with its dissatisfactions and jealousies, its strivings to get up at the cost of pulling somebody down, its multitudinous vices which must here be nameless, is the product of "the lust of the flesh and the pride of life" that are "of the world."

It embraces — shall I say "religion"? It certainly includes very much that passes under the name of religion. All false religions are its own. The tares, sown by the wicked one

among the wheat, belong to it. Not a little that is in the domain of the Church is confessedly of the world. We err in confounding religion with Christianity.

Politics, business, society, religion — may not the world-forces be comprehended under these terms?

Moreover, every one that is born, is born a world-person, under the world-system. The world-system takes him and seeks to provide for him from the cradle to the grave. To every instinct, to every need, to every taste, to every aspiration, the world has something to offer. Be the outgoing political, social, or religious; professional, mechanical, or commercial; educational, æsthetic, or carnal; for fashion, for amusement, for fame — it matters not what — the world-system has something to meet it. To every human faculty the world brings something to satisfy it — no: I will not say “satisfy,” but to occupy and busy it, so that the man may be kept from breaking away from it, and find what his heart craves and what the world cannot afford, which is God! Satan, the head of the world-system, would himself be God.

This may seem to some altogether too comprehensive and sweeping. Possibly it may be even called “pessimistic.” Let us refrain from epithets and seek the truth, and that, too, not from our own inner consciousness or wishes, but from God’s Word. If *kosmos* and *aion* have the meanings which our exegesis has deduced — and surely we have not read meanings into them, but have fairly deduced their meanings by the scientific inductive method — then I see no stopping short of the length to which we have gone.

Such, then, is the World-System as to its Head and Scope.

We are now confronted with inquiry as to the course of the world. Is it growing better? Deductions seem to be forced upon us that may give rather emphatic answer.

THE COURSE OF THE WORLD — IS IT GROWING BETTER?

At the dedication of a beautiful and costly building presented to a theological seminary in the Middle West, a distinguished clergyman who gave the principal address took for his theme, "The World Growing Better." Among his many eloquent and glowing periods he said: "For we have it assured to us in the words of God, not only that this world is yet to be made beautiful and blessed, but that from the planting of Christianity onward there should be, on the whole, a steady progress in that direction."

A noted church secretary, of some military and musical repute, who was afterward elected bishop, at the close of his discourse at a watering-place, invited the congregation to join in the refrain of a song of which he sang the solo:—

"The world is growing better, no matter what they say,
The light is shining brighter in one refulgent ray,
And though deceivers murmur, and turn another way,
Yet still the world grows better and better every day."

And when in the refrain he declared in a couple of measures of minims, 'tis "growing," the congregation, or rather some of the congregation, in accompanying crotchets and quavers, declared, in equal time, 'tis "growing, growing better, growing, growing better"; and after discussing the subject at some length by point and counterpoint, they came to the unanimous conclusion at the end, "Better and better every day."

"This present evil world" (Gal. i. 4); "the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2); the whole world lying in the wicked one (1 John v. 19); the world which is to be crucified unto the Christian and unto which the Christian is to be crucified (Gal. vi. 14); the world the friend of which is the enemy of God (Jas. iv. 4); the world from which pure religion is to keep one's self un-

spotted (Jas. i. 27), growing better? Since when, pray tell? Have these beloved brethren studied their Bibles? Do they know what they are talking about?

There is a mistake somewhere. If we have a correct exegesis of the Bible world-terms, we may know just what it is we are talking about when we are asking, Is the world growing better?—a very essential point in order to arrive at a true answer. The material world we have found to be “good.” The remaining contents of the Bible world-terms are the world-people and the world-system; and precisely these are the subject of inquiry.

The world-people: are they growing better? Look at their character. They are “born of the flesh” (John iii. 6). In the “flesh dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. viii. 18); “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. vii. 8). These texts are but samples of multitudes of similar import. Not only is this the character of the world-people in God’s sight, but he declares this character to be unchangeable, “because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

There is the sensuous flesh, low, groveling, bestial. There is the æsthetic flesh, the sensibilities of which are called into play by the beautiful in nature, music, art. There is the intellectual flesh, whose activity is in the life which concerns itself with thinking, inquiring, reasoning, philosophizing. There is the ethical flesh, moral but not Christian, and it is exemplified in the many who think they need no gospel, no salvation, no Jesus, in order to be generous, humane, honest, patriotic, chaste, magnanimous, honorable. Sensuous, æsthetic, intellectual, ethical: it is plain that a person may have any or all of these characteristics and yet be utterly without the range of spiritual fellowship with God, in which alone

can true goodness inhere. The changes in the flesh, "improvements" they are called, that have been wrought by culture, and that have such beautiful display in the sweet amenities of family, social, and civil life,—surely these are too marked and too numerous to be refused recognition by any observer. But can any application of culture to the flesh produce *holiness*? Can any improvements, so called, wrought in "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22), and which, as we have seen, is unchangeable in its essential nature, be even good, to say nothing of growing better, in God's sight, however we may esteem them according to our common, conventional, worldly standards of goodness? Does varnishing a clock's case make the works within keep correct time? Does whitewashing sepulchers change their charnel contents? Does reformation of outward action alter the inward nature? Reform—that is the devil's whitewash! Something more is needed—regeneration, a "new creature."

The world-system: is that growing better? We are pointed to the triumphs of the brain and brawn of men in their grand achievements for human weal in things intellectual, social, civil, material. We are told of better education, better government, better physical conditions, increasing average of longevity, multiplied comforts and more numerous conveniences, such as the mariner's compass, printing, railways, steamships, telegraphy overland and under sea, with and without wires, telephones, photography, phonography, type-writing, electric lights, steam fire-engines, gravity water-works, anæsthetics, nitro-glycerine, electro-plating, electric and gasoline motors, steam heating, elevators, cold storage, etc. Surely these, and a thousand more unnamed kindred things, are splendid monuments to human genius. Their

true value ought in no wise to be depreciated. Yet they but serve to confirm what has been said upon the completeness of the world-system. But how much of holy character or savor is in them? What was the motive that devised them? What was the end for which they were achieved? The glory of God or the glory of man? It is blessedly true that these things may be rescued and used for the glory of God and the true well-being of man; but no thanks therefor to him who is at the head of the world-system. He meaneth not so. He is running them for himself and his, and if they subserve a good and righteous end, that is due to a Power greater than his. How *can* "the course of this world" which is "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," get, from God's point of view, morally or spiritually better?

The prevalent confusion of thought and speech may be seen in the common phrase "Christian world." These two words present a contradiction in terms. As well might we speak of "Christian flesh," or a "Christian devil," as of "the Christian world." Many good brethren, because of unconscious mental or moral strabismus, view the world as becoming more and more Christian, while in fact what they see is only a Christianity that is becoming more and more worldly, or like the world. Even if by the phrase is intended that part of the earth known as Christendom, or, at best, the Christians that are in the world, still it is incorrect and therefore misleading. A correct exegesis of the Bible world-terms should clear up our vision, and shape our thought, speech, and deed, in accordance therewith.

The world—i.e. the world-people and the world-system which the Scriptures show to be bad—growing better? "Better" is the comparative of "good," and is itself a thing

of degrees. How can that grow "better" which is not even "good," but bad and only bad to begin with? To ask the question is to answer it. No, it cannot.

But something is growing better.

THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH.

If Satan is the head of the world, "Christ is the Head of the Church" (Eph. v. 23). But just what is the Church?

The Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven to this material world, into (not under) the world-system, unto the world-people, God's messenger to an apostate, rebellious race. Our first parents, under stress of temptation, yielded allegiance to Satan, were expelled from the paradise of God (Gen. iii. 24) into the wilderness, under Satan's dominion. Jesus goes into the wilderness, meets the Tempter in conflict on his own ground, and vanquishes him. Then the Victor would rescue and save the lost subjects of Satan. He proclaims the gospel, the good news, of salvation. He calls men to himself, invites them to transfer their allegiance back to God. They who thus do are made the children of God, are endowed with a new spiritual life, are saved: they are begotten of God unto a divine sonship (John iii. 3; Titus iii. 5; Gal. iv. 7; 2 Pet. i. 4). Whatever may be the relation of this act of the individual to God's antecedent purpose, it is at this point that the church in the world begins.

They who hear and heed Christ's call are, in Scripture language (Rom. viii. 28), *κλητοί*, *kletoi*, "the called"; or again (Matt. xxiv. 31), *ἐκλεκτοί*, *eklektoi*, "the elect," the called (or chosen) out; and these constitute what the Scriptures call *ἐκκλησία*, *ekklesia*, "the church." We are thus brought to distinguish sharply between the church and the world. The actual church consists of those who, hearing the Saviour's call, come out from the world, transfer their alle-

giance and love to God, evidencing the fact by leading the life of the children of God. They who do not, in fact, do this, no matter what they profess, are not of the church, but of the world; and they who do do it, are not of the world but of the church. Here is the something that is "good" and that is to grow "better." This is the church as it is apprehended in the mind and purpose of God, and it is to be presented to his Son, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27). Here may be found what some are pleased to call "the invisible church."

By confessional word and deed, they who hear and heed Christ's call become known. They take on organic form. The spiritual becomes phenomenal, the invisible, visible. Others, too, become associated with them, as a mixed multitude became attached to the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Canaan. They all belong to the same assembly. It is composed of "wheat" and "tares," — largely of wheat, let us hope. Of the 115 times the word *ekklesia* is used in the New Testament, it oftenest denotes the church in this secondary, larger, looser sense. The term "ecclesiastic" has become very elastic. But of course the church, in this looser sense, ought to come to coincide with the church in its primary and stricter sense as the spiritually regenerate of God.

The true church on earth, they who hear and do heed Christ's call, have their location in this material world, the same as others. They are among the world-people, but they are not *of* the world-people. They move in the world-system, but they are not under it; they are not subject to it, nor to its head. They are subject to their own Head, the Lord Jesus Christ: they are under the church-system, the laws, precepts, and principles of which are revealed in the Divine Word.

Such is the Church as distinguished from the World.

THE RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN TO THE WORLD.

This relation may be expressed under five heads:—

1. *Victorious over it.* Christ became the world's victor in becoming victorious over the world's head, Satan. It is written that "As he is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17). He victorious, we therefore may be victors. It is written again, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John iv. 4). But how?

We read that "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down" (Heb. xi. 30). Was it the Orphic sweetness of the winding melody blown through those rams' horns that drew the massive stones from their long resting places? Was it the mental attitude or act of those circumambient Hebrews? In all the previous wanderings and warrings, when they went into battle implicitly obedient to God, we do not read that they ever lost a man. Said Moses, "The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you" (Deut. i. 30). But this was only when their faith permitted. There is, however, faith and faith. There is incipient faith, imperfect faith, complete faith. We speak of a faith that is the assent of the understanding,—of the head. We speak also of a faith that carries with it the affections, the heart. But the Greek verb *πειθω*, *peithō*, which is the root of the other New Testament faith-words, has in one of its voices the meaning "to obey." Accordingly, concerning Abraham's call and the attendant promises, it is written that he was "persuaded" of them—they carried his head; "embraced" them—they carried his heart; and he "obeyed" (Heb. xi. 8, 13)—they carried his will. That is a complete faith. Only such a faith—a faith that carries the intellect, affections, and will, that is to say the whole man—is sufficient and efficient. This is victorious faith, and the energy that accomplishes the result,

whether it be leveling walls, winning battles, or overcoming the world, is *the power of God*. "Are you the woman of strong faith?" asked a strange minister of an old saint. "No," she replied, "I am a woman of weak faith in a strong Saviour." God is, so to speak, if the simile may be permitted, an infinite dynamo. Without this faith we are insulated; with it, we have that which forms the connection through which divine energy flows from God to victorious result. Thus the Christian is victorious over the world.

2. *Free from it*. The victor is under no obligation of subservience to the vanquished. As St. Paul says of Christians, they are not debtors to the flesh, the carnal nature, to live after the flesh (Rom. viii. 12). We are not debtors to the world to live after the world. Undeniably, mastership is declared by service. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" (Rom. vi. 16). If we yield obedience to world-principles, world-maxims, world-customs, the world masters us. The child of God is non-conformed to the world, for the simple reason that he is transformed from it (Rom. xii. 2). Free, we should *be free*.

3. *Separate from it*. Separation from the world is a phase of Christian life apparently ill understood by the professing church. It may be questioned whether there be not very many who have not yet learned the first syllable of the word: indeed some seem never to have heard of it. Still, the divine injunction is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 17). "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). True religion is a rectification of the tastes, or an impartation of new tastes. Naturally there will be a separation from what one dislikes. A person is of that from which he is not separated.

This principle of separation should intelligibly and satisfactorily settle the thousand and one questions that lie along the so-called border line between the church and the world. Take the matter of amusements, for instance. Is the thing in question of the world, or of the church? Would my use of it mark me as a worldling, or as a Christian? Is Christ at the head of it, or is Satan? Not a difficult thing, it would seem, for one whose heart is right, to determine. Again, a business into which the believer cannot take Christ as a partner is no business for him. In fact, if he is a Christian, Christ is his partner. "Ye were called unto the fellowship [*κοινωνία*, *partnership*, *having in common with*] of his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 9). So, too, this principle applies to social and political affairs, indeed to all matters connected with the world-people and the world-system with which the Christian has to do.

Still, it should be borne in mind that this separation is not physical or outward altogether—only so in part—but is also affectional. Worldliness is determined not so much by the sphere in which men move, as by the affections which reign within them; although the affections which reign within them will largely determine the sphere in which they move. Says Jesus of his disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John xvii. 16, 15). In it, not of it; using, not abusing, it. The Christian in the world, not the world in the Christian. Outwardly separate where he must be, affectionally separate always. Victorious faith separates from the world unto Christ.

4. *Conflict with it.* Though the world is overcome in that grand contest in which the individual becomes of and

for the church, it does not follow that all conflict is over. The world constantly seeks to reclaim to itself those who have come out from it. Here is the sphere of constant conflict. Politics, business, society, spurious religion, present their solicitations. Desire for gain is besieged. The young are assaulted all along the amusement line. There is hardly a point in the whole being upon which an onset is not made. But the onsets are those of a malignant and beaten foe rather than of an antagonist hopeful of triumph.

To have no conflict with the world is to be at peace with the world. To be at peace with the world is to be of the world. The essential constituents of the world and the church are such as to involve their continued oppugnancy, and the faith that was victorious at the first has in it an element that makes it militant always when occasion calls for.

5. *Rescuing from it.* If separation from the world means abandonment of sin, it does not mean desertion of the sinner; nor does conflict with the world mean no concern for those who are of the world. Christ came to the world as a Saviour, and every Christian, by virtue of relationship to him, is constituted, in his individual measure, a co-saviour. Jesus says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18). While we owe the world nothing in the way of obedience to it, we do owe it a tremendous debt in the way of work of rescue from it. Indeed the church has absolutely no justification for its existence in the world, a church has no justification in a community, save as it is engaged in this work. And he who considers himself to have been rescued from under the world-system and from among the world-people and thereby brought into the ekklesia, and yet does not take personal interest and part in rescuing those who are in that hapless

world-condition, does he not indeed prove that he has not himself been rescued?

That little word "go" — "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" — should thrill every nerve like an electric discharge. Here the most atribilarious pessimist and the most rosy-visioned optimist can be at one. Some of the rescuing work we can do at home, in person. Much of it — that in the regions beyond — we must do by proxy, i.e. support the workers there. *Rescue* is the word. This is the work for all, every one. All at it, and always at it.

As the Christian sustains to the world the relation of victory over it, freedom from it, separation from it, conflict with it, and rescuing from it, shall he help to usher in the time foretold and promised, when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. vi. 15).

THE DESTINY OF THE WORLD.

History gives man knowledge of the past: observation gives him knowledge of the present; but he has no means by which he alone can acquire certain knowledge of the future. What has been, and is, he knows: what is certainly to be he cannot know except as He who "changeth the times and the seasons" reveals it. It were presumptuously trespassing the limits of human knowledge even to attempt to determine the destiny of the world, apart from the revealings of God's Word. What He has revealed concerning it we may seek to determine.

What, then, is the destiny of the world-system?

The world-system was inaugurated by Satan in his triumph in the garden of Eden; and humanity went into the wilderness. Into the wilderness Christ went, triumphed over Satan,

and practically served upon him notice of the future overthrow of his kingdom, together with personal dethronement and destruction. "Now [i.e. in this dispensation] shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31).

There is a quite prevalent notion, as irrational as it is unscriptural and as unscriptural as it is irrational, that the millennial state is to be brought about by a progressive betterment resulting from the preaching of the gospel. In substantiation of this notion, often is quoted Ps. ii. 8, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"; but a reading of the whole psalm will show there is not one particle of progressive betterment in it; instead, there is overwhelming catastrophe (ver. 9, 12). In the parables in Matt. xiii., Satan catches away one-fourth of the seed entirely, two-fourths are fruitless, and only one-fourth is fruitful; the tares grow rank, choking, to the end of the present dispensation; the little mustard seed generates a tree in which the birds of the air, unclean fowls (Dan. iv. 12), lodge; the leaven, undeniably everywhere else in Scripture a symbol of corruption, permeates the whole mass; and so on. As a prescription to cure the unscriptural, strabismic, falsely-focused optimism of this theory, see 2 Tim. iii. 1-5; iv. 3, 4; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 3-10; 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4; and Jude 17, 18. And quite as irrational is the concept that the millennial state foretold can be brought about while the power of "the god of this world" is operative.

The fulfilment of the wilderness-notice is seen in Rev. xx. 1, 2. Satan is bound and evicted, his domain overthrown and deleted.

The world-system, then, by the dethronement of its head, is destined to be overthrown and destroyed.

And what is the destiny of the world-people?

All through the centuries they who have renounced their allegiance to Satan, and have submitted themselves to God and his Christ, have ceased to be world-people and have become of the church. As they have gone out of life they have gone to God (Eccl. xii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23), in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore (Ps. xvi. 11). This is the destiny of all once world-people who cease to be such and become church-people, i.e. truly regenerate. Those who do not become church-people but continue to be world-people, they, being let go, go to their own company (Acts iv. 23; Matt. xxv. 41), "whose end is destruction" (Phil. iii. 19), "who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. i. 9).

The destiny, then, of the world-people is everlasting destruction, — which is not *annihilation*, for, according to the scientific doctrine of the Correlation and Conservation of Forces, *that notion* is unthinkable, and only a perverse exegesis can deduce it from the Bible.

And, finally, what is the destiny of the material world, i.e. our earth?

The material world was divinely pronounced to be "good" (Gen. i. 10), and our exegesis and exposition have been conducted in accordance with this idea. This declaration concerning it, however, was made before the Fall. Sin came and because of the sinner a curse came: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. iii. 17); "The creation was subjected to vanity," frailty, liability to change and decay, "not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it" (Rom. viii. 20). How far wrong Milton was, if at all, we may not say, when hymning that evilly-fateful, Eden hour, he sang:—

"Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
Sighing, through all her works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost."

But this subjection was "in hope" of deliverance. Whatever of sin-consequence, beyond the volitional sphere of the world-system and the world-people, disturbed the harmony of creation, that discord is to be composed. A day of "regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28), of "restitution" (Acts. iii. 21). "waiteth" (Rom. viii. 19). Says St. Peter, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 10, 13). This is the prophesied and promised regenesis of which Isaiah speaks, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" (lxv. 17), and which St. John saw as having taken place: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. xxi. 1).

We must not lose sight of the fact that the original grant of dominion to the sinless Adam and his posterity was "over all the earth" (Gen. i. 26). Of this original grant, Ps. cxv. 16 is the record: "The heaven, even the heaven of heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men." And elsewhere it is written: "Those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Ps. xxxvii. 9); "the meek shall inherit the earth" (ver. 11); "for such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth" (ver. 22); "the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever" (ver. 29); "wait on the Lord and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land" (ver. 34); "what man is he that feareth the Lord? . . . his seed shall inherit the earth" (Ps. xxv.

12, 13). And Christ in his inaugural address as King said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. v. 5). Did he mean it?

The British "Financial Almanac" informs us that more than one-half of the land of the United Kingdom is held by one-twelve-thousandth of the population; that is to say, 2238 individuals, out of a population of 28,000,000, monopolize 40,000,000 out of the 72,000,000 acres that comprise the territory of the two Islands. The Duke of Sutherland owns 1,208,000 acres, and Lord Middleton 1,005,000. Mr. Gladstone is reported to have said in a speech that seventeen persons own the soil of Ireland. And in our own land, viewing the grasping greed of corporations and individuals in their rings, monopolies, trusts, combines, pools, syndicates, etc., it must be allowed that the present outlook, or the outlook under the present order of things, for the meek to inherit the earth is not altogether encouraging!

Yet, so sure as the Word of God is true, these inheritance-declarations cannot fail. And it will not do to evacuate them of their plain import by saying, as does Mr. Barnes in his Commentary, with the emphasis of italics, that the promise of the earth was "a proverbial expression to denote any great blessing," or say, as do others, that the inheritance is only a "spiritual inheritance." I do not see how any heavy malpractice in interpretation can divert or pervert the obvious meaning of these scriptures, since they mean what they say because they say what they mean.

It is to Christ in his official capacity as Messiah that, in covenant gift, the promise is made: "I will give thee . . . the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). In the wilderness conflict he by conquest recovered the lost inheritance. It is to him that is "put in subjection the world

to come [οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, the future inhabited earth] whereof we speak" (Heb. ii. 5). The saints, as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17), shall possess the recovered inheritance, and in their royal and sacerdotal character they "shall reign upon the earth" (Rev. v. 10). "The saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Here is the end of the matter" (Dan. vii. 18, 27, 28).

In the regenesis of which Isaiah and Peter speak, in the "new earth" and not in the "first earth" which is to pass away (Rev. xxi. 1), shall the meek inherit the earth.¹

There is one text which apparently is in conflict with the foregoing exposition: "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. i. 4). But the conflict is only apparent. Of the seventy-five times the word translated "reserved" (τηρέω) is used, it is so rendered but eight times, and this word is but one of seven different words by which it is translated. In Matt. xxiii. 3; xxvii. 20; Acts xxi. 25, it is translated "observe," and in Matt. xxvii. 36, 54, "watch." The inheritance is "observed," "watched," and so "reserved" in the sense of "guarded." Accordingly, Vincent says that the Greek word "indicates the inheritance as one reserved through God's care.

¹ Those who wish to see a fuller and quite complete exposition of this subject, which the present writer did not see until his own studies were made, are referred to "The Inheritance Destined for the Heirs of Blessing," in Fairbairn's *Typology of Scripture*, vol. i. sect. vi, pp. 329-361. See also Chalmers's sermon on 2 Peter iii. 13, "on the New Heavens and the New Earth," vol. ii. p. 391.

. . . . The verb signifies *keeping* as the result of *guarding*.”¹
 The earthly inheritance is guarded in heaven for us by our Lord “until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. i. 14) “at his appearing and kingdom” (2 Tim. iv. 1).

The material world, then, is destined to be renovated by a fiery ordeal that it may become the eternal abode, or the capitol² of the abode, of God's saints.

For “the redemption” creation waits with earnest expectation, groaning and travailing for deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 19-21). The glory! Now are we—though once world-people—the children of God: it is not yet made manifest what we shall be; but when He shall appear we shall be *like him*, because we shall see him as he is (1 John iii. 2). Transformed by beholding! And he shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed unto his glorious body (Phil. iii. 21). The curse shall be lifted: creation, no more groaning and travailing in pain, shall experience its longed-for deliverance, and the renewing energy of the Divine Deliverer, working in all its processes, shall waken it to beauty and glory all immortal. Even so, Lord Jesus, do quickly!

¹ Word Studies, vol. 1. p. 631.

² See the remarkable book, just out, the first and only volume ever published which attempts a systematic and comprehensive exposition of the biblical teachings upon its theme, *The Starry Universe the Christian's Future Empire*, by Horace C. Stanton, Ph.D., D.D., S.T.D.