

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

II

Comrades and Friends, — Last Sunday I pointed out to you the evil consequences which follow conformity to the spirit and practices of the world. I also explained what such separation from the world involved, and called upon you, for your own sakes, the sake of The Army, and the unsaved around you, to come out and be separate right away.

It has since occurred to me that some of my hearers are likely to say, 'True General, but how is this separation to be accomplished?'

A multitude that no man can number have in days gone by discovered, and many at present are discovering, the hollow and ruinous character of the world's charms, and yet are powerless to get away from its embrace.

Though they are disappointed by the professions of the world, and maddened by its allusions, they cannot break the fetters that bind them to it.

Multitudes more effect their deliverance from this false and deceptive mistress, only to be drawn back by her charms into the wretched captivity from which they had escaped. Like the sow that was washed, they return to their wallowing in the mire.

I can readily understand, therefore, that many who heard my condemnation of the world, last Sunday may desire to ask two questions:--

First, 'But can I escape the domination of the world?' and second, 'How can I escape, so that the spell shall be broken, and my deliverance made lasting?'

In answering these questions, I remark: —

I. — You must be thorough.



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Do not let your renunciation be a half-and-half affair or make-believe. Few things are more despised by God than a pretense of giving up the world in form while we retain it in spirit. Beware of professing to renounce it in some particular thing, and condemning everybody else who does not join you in that particular separation, while all the time you are holding on to it in some other direction: and thus –

Compound for sins you are inclined to,
By damning those you have no mind to.

Do not pretend to renounce the world in dress while following its useless fashions in your homes, in the conduct of your business, or the ornamentation of your children.

How many mothers there are who would die rather than wear the fripperies and follies of the world, and who yet freely dress up their children with them, and so feed their vanity at the most impressionable period of their lives! They will not wear these things themselves, because they know that to do so would open a door into their hearts for the world to enter.

If men see that you cling to some of the vanities of the world, they will conclude that you would like to have them all, and will laugh at and despise you for it. But if you make it manifest that you have done with the world altogether, and have the courage to say so, they will admire your consistency, whether they copy your example or not.

So my friends, I advise you to let all the vain, useless charms, fashions, and pleasures of the world go, and go at once, and go forever.

If you want to keep the mastery of the world –

II. – Openly avow your Salvationism, and the separation from the world to which it has led you.

Confess it on the housetops; wear the uniform; boldly take your stand with your Comrades in the Open-Air as opportunity serves; sell 'The War Cry' in your own circle; testify to all your acquaintances to the change that the power of God has effected within you. Let the world know that you have made up your mind on the subject of religion, and it will probably give you up as



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a bad job. But if you are shamefaced in your acknowledgments of Christ and His cause, it will probably pursue you until it wins you back to its arms.

III. –Watch against those things which are the common causes of worldliness in Salvationists, and indeed in Christian people generally.

Every one who has any acquaintance with the history of the Christian Church knows that the world has been her greatest and most vital foe. If you want to save yourselves from this ruinous charmer you must watch against her first approaches.

Let me put you on your guard by mentioning a few of her most successful agencies.

1. The first I name is worldly prosperity. The gain of the world's goods often brings the world's spirit as well.

Salvation, as a rule, means making the best of both worlds. Nothing is more common in the experience of Salvationists than the improvement that takes place in their circumstances almost directly after their conversion.

This may be your experience, so you should be on the lookout lest the increase of worldly comfort and luxury brings with it that pride, vanity, and selfishness to which these things so often lead.

2. Another agency comes from worldly companionships.

Very many Salvationists go wrong here. How often does marriage with an unconverted man or women lead people astray? How often do business partnerships with worldly people bring disaster in this life and ruin for the world to come? How many go wrong through the influence of their worldly relatives, God Himself only knows.

Association with people who have only a worldly religion will often be more harmful than companionship with those who make no pretensions to being on the way to Heaven, and who openly sneer at those who are.



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3. Association with worldlings while holiday-making often exercise a wretched influence in this direction.

How few Salvationists return from their summer trips healthier in soul, even though improved in body!

IV. Seize every opportunity that comes within your reach of showing the ungodly the value of your religion.

Let every one around you see the satisfaction and peace it brings you now, and take every opportunity of testifying to the holy delight it promises in the world to come. Let men know what God has done, and is intending to do, for you.

V. – Keep your souls well and constantly supplied with the Heavenly riches.

Then, as time goes on, all desire for the earthly riches will leave you, and you will walk amongst the gilded charms and fleshly attractions of this world without paying any heed to the temptations they may present.

Now, my Comrades, how is it with you? Has any worldly vanity, or gain, or ambition stolen your hearts away from your Lord and His whole-souled service? Has the world robbed you of your joys, or interfered with the discharge of your duties you owe to the men and women around you? If so, seek diligently for the cause; discover the enemy, and then rid yourselves of him. Say to the world, with all her boasted wealth, entangling delights, and glittering fascinations, with the prophet of old, 'The daughter of Zion hath despised thee.'

Your affectionate General,
William Booth.