

## CHRISTIANS AND POLITICS

[adapted, "Things New and Old", CHM]

"What is taught in the Word regarding the position of a Christian when called upon to vote [for a member of Parliament?]"

You will, perhaps, be startled when we tell you that your question involves the very foundation of Christianity. We would ask, to which world does the Christian belong?—this world or to the world above? Is his citizenship on earth or in heaven? Is he dead to this world or alive to it? If he be a citizen of this world; if his place, his portion, and his home be here, then, assuredly, he cannot take too active a part in its affairs. He should vote for town councillors and members of Parliament, he should strain every nerve to get the right man into the right place, whether it be at the municipal board, or on the floor of the House of Commons. He should put forth every effort to mend and regulate the world. If a citizen of this world, he ought, to the best of his ability, discharge the functions pertaining to such a position.

But, on the other hand, if it be true that the Christian is, as regards this world, "dead" (Col. 2:20; 3:3)—if his citizenship is in heaven (Phpp. 3:20), if his place, his portion, and his home be on high and he but a pilgrim and a stranger here below, then it follows that the Christian is not called to meddle in any way in this world's politics, but to pass on his pilgrim way, patiently submitting himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1 Pet. 2:3), yielding obedience to the powers that be, and praying for their preservation and well-being in all things (Rom. 13:1).

You asked, "What is taught in the Word" on this point? An all important question. Let us hear what "saith the Scripture", what our Lord saith when addressing the Father in reference to His own which are in the world (Jn. 17:11). *"I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because 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. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world"* (Jn 17:14-16).

Hear too the inspired apostlet: *"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Phpp. 3:17-20).

So also in the epistle to the Colossians we read, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set you affection [mind] on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory"* (Col. 3:1-4).

Somemight say the forgoing Scriptures no longer apply because "the world" of John 17 is not the world of the [ twenty-first] century], the former being a pagan world, whereas the latter has known the light of Christian truth. To those who use this argument we have nothing to say. If the teaching of the New Testament was only for a by-gone age, if it bears only on the things that were, having no application to the things that are, then, indeed, we know not where we are, or whither to turn for guidance or authority.

Thank God, we have a divine and, therefore, all-sufficient directory for *all ages*—all climes, and all conditions. Therefore if guided by Scripture, we have no warrant whatever for meddling in this world's politics. The cross of Jesus has snapped the link which connected us with this *present world*. We are identified with Him. He is our Model. If He were here, He would find His place outside the politics of this world. You would not see our blessed Lord Jesus at the council-board, seated on the bench, in the House of

Parliament, or with the sword in His hand.

In a coming day He will wield the sceptre, draw the sword, and hold the reins of government in His hand (May God hasten the day!). But now He is rejected, and we are called to share His rejection. Our path in this world, as Christians, is obedience and suffering (2 Tim. 3:12). We are called to pray for all that are in authority, not to seek that authority for ourselves. There is not so much as a single line of Scripture to guide me as a voter. If I act in these characters, I do so without one word of direction from my Master—nay, more, I act in a way opposed to Him, in direct opposition to the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.

May God stir our hearts to more love and faithfulness to Christ! May we delivered more completely, in heart and spirit, from this *present evil world*, enabled to pursue, with the firm conviction of faith, our pilgrim path across the desert sands! We are quite aware that what we have written on this subject will prove unpopular; but this must not deter us from speaking the truth, and we trust it will not deter any from acting on the truth as well.