

Pilgrims who Forsake: Living in an Unseen World

Hebrews 11:7 “By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

J. Gresham Machen: “The Christian life is a warfare after all. John Bunyan rightly set it forth under the allegory of a Holy War; and when he set it forth, in his greater book, under the figure of a pilgrimage, the pilgrimage, too, was full of battles. There are indeed, places of refreshment on the Christian way; the House Beautiful was provided by the King at the top of the Hill Difficulty, for the entertainment of pilgrims, and from the Delectable Mountains could sometimes be discerned the shining towers of the City of God. But just after the descent from the House Beautiful, there was the battle with Apollyon and the Valley of Humiliation, and later came the Valley of the Shadow of Death. No, the Christian faces a mighty conflict in this world. Pray God that in that conflict you may be true men; good soldiers of Jesus Christ, not willing to compromise with your great enemy, not easily cast down, and seeking ever the renewing of your strength in the Word and sacraments and prayer!” (A Sermon Preached in the Chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary, on Sunday morning, March 10, 1929).

The Christian pilgrim enters his freedom, both forsaking the world and finding conflict in it.

John 15:18

John 17:14-18

Romans 12:1-2

1 John 5:19

The world is that “falsely structured way of life” opposed to the rule and reality of the living God.

Oliver O’Donovan: “The world is a falsely structured reality exhibiting an unreal continuity and coherence. The world is not the real and good world that God has made, nor any other real world, but a fantasy world of sinful imagination, a nothingness which will destroy us if we love it simply because it is nothingness and offers nothing on which we may nourish ourselves.”

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The world is condemned by the faith of pilgrims...and blessed in turn by the faith of pilgrims.

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”