



The Whole World Lieth in Wickedness

A sermon preached by George Müller

I John v. 10,

It has been my happy privilege to be present at every one of the various Conference Meetings, year by year, held here; but I do not remember one single day that brought such an awfully solemn subject before our consideration as the one before us today – “The whole world lieth in wickedness,” or, the Wicked One,

O Lord, grant that our hearts may be truly affected by this Thine own declaration! Through the riches of Thy grace we apprehend it a little, we enter into it a little, we are affected by it a little. But, oh, how little! Now we beseech Thee that Thou Thyself, by the Holy Ghost, wouldst so write upon our hearts the truth contained in this statement, as that it may affect us day by day for the remainder of our life. We ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I just refer to the expression itself, in which there seems a vast deal contained: “The whole world lieth in the Wicked One.” What does it imply? A kind of repose, of slumber, - a readiness to be in such a condition. This is implied in it. Thus is it with the world. They will have it to be so. They desire not it should be otherwise, - because they are blinded by Satan, because they are dead in trespasses and in sins, because they are wanting spiritual life, and fail to apprehend the awful condition in which they are. They are just, spiritually, in the condition in which a man is who is sleeping at the top of the mast and apprehends not the awfulness of his danger. Precisely in the same state, spiritually, are those who are lying in the Wicked One. Should there be any here present, - and I cannot help fearing there are some here present, - to whom this applies, because as yet they belong to the world; oh, let me beseech and entreat affectionately, as one who by God's grace knows by painful and sad experience what it is to be in that state, and as one who at the same time by grace has known now for about forty-six years the blessedness of the opposite state; oh! let me beseech such to consider the awfulness of their condition, if by any means they might be aroused out of their state. Oh! be besought and entreated, for the end of your course is destruction, - the end of your course is everlasting misery. Therefore be besought, be entreated to flee from “the wrath to come.” The arms of the blessed Lord Jesus are stretched out to receive you. Oh how willing is that Blessed One! He has proved the depth of His love to the vilest, the most awful sinner, by laying down His life for you; and therefore how can you doubt the readiness of the blessed Son of God, who left His glory, who became a servant, who lived as a servant in the most degraded condition for more than thirty years, and then laid down His life as a substitute in order to save sinners, the greatest, the oldest, the vilest, the most hardened sinners, - how can you doubt His love to receive you? Therefore come .to Him; which means, believe in Him, trust in Him, depend on Him for the salvation of your souls, and blessing will be yours, - this evening it will be yours. And oh! what joy in heaven there would be if this last meeting of this happy Conference is God's instrument in bringing some precious souls here present to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, then, be besought, be entreated to consider your state, dear fellow-sinners, and with earnestness to flee from “the wrath to come!”

But while the statement is, "The whole world lieth in wickedness," or the Wicked One, it is evident here are excluded the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the little flock, comparatively the few. Those who trust in Jesus, those who depend on Him for the salvation of their souls; they by God's grace are excluded, they by God's grace believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they by God's grace are "begotten again," "born again," "renewed"; they have been "delivered from the power of darkness," out of the kingdom of Satan, and have been "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," to show forth His praise, to live to His honour and glory, to be lights in this dark world, to make it manifest that they have been translated into the kingdom of God, and that they are the children of God. Such to whom God has been gracious - to you who are by far the larger part here present, as to myself, what becomes us to do? To show forth our gratitude to God who has done so much for us! That is our one great business of life, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to be grateful to God for all He has done for us in Jesus, and for having revealed Him to our hearts and given to us peace in Him, and forgiveness of our sins by faith in His name through the power of that precious blood which was shed for the remission of our sins. How may I show forth gratitude? Evidently, by seeking to do those things which please God, acting according to His mind revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures - in that one blessed, precious Book of which we heard at the beginning of this meeting. And, therefore, while seeking to refrain and abstain from those things which are contrary to the mind of God - and this is our business if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ - we are to seek also to please God in doing those things which are according to His mind.

Then there is one other thing in which believers are especially to show their gratitude to God; and that is by seeking to rescue out of the world those who are living in the world, by seeking to do what lies in their power to bring to the knowledge of the truth those who know it not, to seek to be instrumental in the salvation of their souls. I would ask, How many of you have children in the faith? Can you point to so-and-so, and so-and-so, and say, "him has God given me as my child in the faith," "her has God given to me as my child in the faith"? Oh! if you are yet alone, if you have no spiritual children as yet, there remains yet a precious blessing before you. Let there be a holy ambition, which is according to the mind of God, for this precious blessing. Pray earnestly for this blessing, pray earnestly day by day that God will not allow you to go out of the world without having spiritual children. Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus ought to aim after this. Let me affectionately press this point on your hearts. The consideration that "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One" does not allow us to go on dreaming, to go on slumbering; and if we are not affected by it, it is a plain proof that as yet we have not apprehended what is contained in that solemn statement. In the measure in which the soul does apprehend it, the soul cries to God, "Lord, help me to deliver my poor fellow-sinners out of their present condition," and the Lord condescends to use us as the blessed instruments to win souls to Him. Now in this state of mind we are to continue. Not, now and then, - not, to use a common phrase, by fits and starts, - but, day by day, as an habitual thing, this should be foremost in our hearts.

Let me affectionately ask all my fellow-believers, Are we day by day in the habit of praying for blessing in the way of conversion? Are we day by day - at least once in each day asking God that He would graciously be pleased to work mightily through the variety of instruments employed for the winning of souls? If not, such a day should be considered as a day regarding which we have not done one thing which is according to the mind of God, in which we have neglected one thing regarding which He would

have us to be earnest. Further: we should day by day ask God graciously to be pleased to fulfil that word which He laid on the minds of His disciples, that they should pray to "the Lord of the harvest" that He would be pleased to "send forth labourers into His harvest." Are we in the habit of doing so? .The most important point is, that we are earnest in prayer. But we are not to be satisfied simply with praying. The example of our Lord is before us. He told His disciples - we have it in Matthew - to pray for labourers to be sent forth; and immediately He sent them forth. Then He Himself went forth, through every city and town, preaching the gospel. This is the order in which we should go, labouring according to the ability and opportunity given to us, and according to the gift God has bestowed upon us, - not all of us in a public way, but in our measure doing what we can for the spread of truth. As Sunday School teachers, as Adult School teachers, as Ragged School teachers, as District Visitors, as Tract Circulators, we may labour in winning souls to God. Further: in our own families seeking to bring our children to the knowledge of the truth, - and this is especially the point for Christian parents - to have uppermost on their hearts. I do not mean from morning to night; five, six, or ten times a day bringing the truth before your children, - there are certain times and seasonable times for doing this; but it is to be done prayerfully, lovingly, affectionately, as it becomes parents, the heart filled with love to the children. Then, in every position in which believers are placed, they are to bring the truth before those around them, - before their servants, their warehousemen, their shopkeepers. Then some may speak a word to little companies, and some may have a gift for speaking in the open air. How great a privilege is this, which I was led to enjoy forty years ago, till I was obliged to give it up, not having sufficient strength of voice or lungs. But for those who have strength of lungs and voice it is a glorious and blessed privilege to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God in the open air. And let me affectionately press this on my fellow-believers who have the ability so to do. Everyone has his work to do, and our business is to find out in what way we may serve the Lord in the winning of souls to Him.

I hope some beloved young brethren and sisters in Christ may be stirred up tonight to purpose that they will do something for God; that they will begin in earnest tonight, to work somewhere or other, to do something or other, and by the help of God to say, "I mean not to go to heaven alone; I mean to have spiritual children; I mean to pray for many spiritual children; and will cry mightily to God till I receive many spiritual children." Here is a holy ambition of which we cannot have too much, for which we cannot pray too much, for which we cannot labour too much.

And in connection with all this use of the means we have never to depend on the means as if they could accomplish anything. Millions of tracts you may circulate, and not a single soul be converted thereby. Wait upon God. Water the tracts with your tears, water them with your prayers. As you give the tract, let your soul go out after the tract. Cry to God, "Go with this tract; direct it to the right person." And when you have given it, or when you have given the Testament, cry to God that He would graciously be pleased to give His blessing upon your effort; but at the same time labour as if everything depended upon your labour. Put no trust in your labour, but let all your dependence be upon God the Holy Ghost; at the same time pray as if everything depended on your prayer. Thus work and pray, and pray and work. Again and again work, again and again pray; expect blessings, and blessings assuredly will be granted. Our meetings have been of an unusually practical character, and I bless God for it; and if furrows are made in the heart, and good traces left behind of our Conference Meetings, what cause we shall have to bless and praise God; and most of all, if some of our dear fellow-sinners, who as yet are out of the way, would receive the Lord Jesus

Christ, and love and serve Him, what joy there would be in heaven, and what joy to us to hear of such cases.

The word "Müllers" is written in a large, black, cursive script font. The letters are connected and have a fluid, handwritten appearance.

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