

Is the Honour and Power of this World any part of the Endowment of the Saints,
according to the Word?

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I feel this question to be one of immense practical importance. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, the Jews — as they had done before, when they said to God, "All that thou hast said unto us we will do" — asked Jesus, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? Man flatters himself, that all that is necessary for him to know is, what he ought to do, and he will do it. Jesus did not flatter them, but said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." There are a very large number of believers in the world, who do not at all recognise their position before God. There are very many of whom it may be said that they are not unbelievers, and yet by their position in the world cannot be addressed *as Christians*. The Word of God does not recognise them as in a Christian position. This should show us the importance of not being in a position to intercept the Word when it speaks, but to be able to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and of so walking, as to be discerned by the world as those who are not of the world.

There are some also who think that because they are Christians there can be nothing unchristian in their position. While nothing can alter a believer's relation to God, there may be many things in his positions which the Scriptures cannot recognise. I confess I can think of no other relations scarcely, in which the Word of God recognises the Christian, than the natural ones, — as husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant. It is possible that we may be in a position of hostility, like our Lord, "When I am for peace, they are for war." I might suppose that the relation of subject and prince being recognised in the Scriptures, we ought to take part in the power of the world; while others may go to the other extreme and fall into a fearful mistake, that if it were wrong for a Christian to act as a sovereign, it must be wrong for him to act as a subject. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2), exhorts them to make "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." While we are in this world, we are commanded to submit to the powers that be. But as to the saints themselves being those powers, is another thing. Surely none would say they wished to abide where God's glory must depart; and God does not abide in the high, easy, comfortable places of this world. All that is in the world a Christian is called to give up. Is the honour and power of the world any part of the endowment of the saint according to the Word? I must broadly answer, No. The answer to this last question would be brought into a very narrow compass when we read those words, "They are not of the world, *even as* I am not of the world." We find the Jews wanted to make Him a king, but He pointedly rejected it; and I cannot see any opening or authority in Scripture for a Christian to say, Our Lord had nothing to do with the honour or power of the world, yet I may. Again, when one came and acknowledged Him as Master and Lord, and said, "Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus answered him, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" I believe it to be essentially wrong to touch anything of the mechanism of this world. I do not want to go into all the depths of the question, but all I have to do is just to ask, What did Jesus do? and upon that ground I safely take my stand. Who is the highest person in the rank of this world? The

Scriptures tell us Satan is; and therefore the higher I get in the world, the nearer I get to Satan. Jesus is at the bottom of the ladder, Satan at the top; and I would ask those who desire the high places in the world, "Is it best to sit nearest Jesus or Satan?" I have never seen any good from a saint's association with the world's glory. Our work is *in the Church*, yet while we cherish the Church of God, we should remember to pray for those who are in the world, who are not yet manifested. It is a most wicked thing for the child of God, who knows he is in a wrong place, to ask, How shall I do God's will in my own way? The language of our hearts should be this, that he would cast down imaginations, and every thing (high) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. It is not for a believer to choose his own place, and then ask God to show him what to do in that place. Again, there is often a fear of bringing the light of truth really to bear upon our position. One great practical difficulty, so to speak, is, having dug at the foundation, to go no deeper. God would say, Go very deep; but we say, We have not man's leave to go deeper. The question with us should not be, Where will these principles lead us? but if they are *of God*, let them lead to the Antipodes, let them take us out of the world, what matters that? Dear friends, what the most ignorant wants, is honesty; it is a single eye that we so much need, if we shrink, as I believe many do, from an increase of light. Oh, dear friends, let me warn you that that is a fearful darkness which is brought on by a man's own disobedience and rejection of the light. There are two things I desire for the saints, — that we may be guarded from the knowledge that puffeth up; and if we do get more perfect knowledge, that we may with the knowledge get more honesty.