

"You Can not Serve God and Mammon."

The World.

"The World's Work" is the name of a magazine. It is harmless as the name of a magazine, but the real work of the world is a horrible thing. Our Lord warned His Apostles most earnestly to beware of the world. "You are in the world, but are not of the world," He told them; "therefore the world hateth you."

The world is jealous of you. It wants your undivided attention. If it cannot have that, it tells you that at least you can serve both God and Mammon; it tells you that you can serve the world while you are young and your blood is hot, and you can turn to God when sin is no longer attractive. But it wants you to believe, or at least act as if you believed, that there is but one life and you are a fool not to enjoy it to the full.

The world is a jolly old jester. It can smile at anything. It laughs off sin, and it winks knowingly at virtue. It will go to church with you, because church is still a part of respectability, and it approves respectability within limits. It will even go to confession with you, provided your purpose of amendment does not exclude the world; the world loves to make you comfortable, and if your conscience makes you uncomfortable it is willing to let you unload -- provided you load up again without delay.

It is the world that tells you that others have sinned and have gotten away with it. It is the world that tells you that you must not be a piker, that you must have experience to be a man. It is the world that says, "Don't be an old woman; don't be a wet blanket." It is the world that tells you that you must assert your independence, that you must drop old-fashioned ideas, that you've got to make a living and you can't be behind the times.

The world talks like a real estate agent, but it is in reality an undertaker. Like the devil when he tempted Our Lord, the world promises you all the kingdoms of the earth if falling down you will adore it; it gives you a six-foot hole in the ground.

The Grace of God.

It is the work of grace to offset the work of the world. "Unless the branch remain in the vine it cannot bear fruit," said Our Lord. Grace is the active principle of the supernatural life; what the sap is to the vine, grace is to the soul in its supernatural life. Without the grace of God we live and act only for the world.

God also is jealous of you -- and with reason. He has created you, and wants you back again. Unlike the world, God is not a liar; He is Eternal Truth. He tells you that you cannot serve Him and the world. He wants your youth, and may never give you old age; He wants your soul in its unspoiled beauty; He wants you to act as if this world were nothing: He says: "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of his soul?"

Sin is no jest with God. Really to know the malice of sin we would have to know the mind of God. When the world tells you that God, if there be a God, is too vast to pay any attention to a little mortal sin or two, you can answer that it was after the commission of the first mortal sin that God promised to become Man to redeem us; and that it was for mortal sin that Our Lord suffered and died. Respectability, in the eyes of God, consists in the avoidance of mortal sin and in the cultivation of what He calls virtue.

The grace of God prompts you to do what is right because it is right, no matter what others may do or say. The Holy Spirit tells you: "I would have you to be wise in good and simple in evil." And again: "The learning of wickedness is not wisdom, and the device of sinners is not prudence." The really independent man is the man who can say "No" to temptation; the sinner is a slave and a coward. "A net is spread in vain before the eyes of them that have wings

God is Truth. His promises are not vain. He promises Heaven as a reward for virtue; He threatens Hell as a punishment of sin. And God is not mocked. If in His mercy He gives you time for repentance, see that it is used for repentance, not for more sin.