You, Christian **[1]**

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You, Christian,

You, follower of the true and living Christ, you need to remember that we are strangers and foreigners and aliens in this world. This world is hostile towards us. This is the natural order of things. This is what our Lord warned us about. And this means that we need to accept a few things.

The world does not share our morality. We cannot force the world to do so. If a government changes laws that we do not agree with, we need to humbly accept that our King reigns in heaven, not in our governments. This fact does not absolve us from political activity and responsibility, and we must fight for what is right and what is moral. But we are not our singular causes: we are our Lord's workers sent into the world to proclaim the gospel through our work and conversations and families. We must never lose the focus of our end goal.

When the kingdoms of this world was offered to the Messiah, He did not accept them. Never forget who does lay claim to them.

> Let a man mercifully correct what he can. Let him patiently bear what he cannot correct. And let him groan and sorrow over it with love.
>
> Cyprian, bishop of Carthage

The Christian is called to face persecution. Persecution is not being told to remain quiet or dress in a certain way. Many of us are privileged to live in a society where we are accepted (far more than you might appreciate). But we have not always been. For hundreds of years, Christians were not accepted. In many parts of the world they still are not. And if the day comes, in our lifetime, that we are rejected once again, it is still not yet the End: it is simply the world reclaiming its dominance after a long period of grace that God has allowed us.

When people fall from the faith, this too is nothing new. If those who claimed to have loved the Lord walk away, we do not hate: we weep, we continue to love, and we pray that God may have mercy on them.

If Christianity is no longer the largest religion in the world, we do not despair. This too is nothing new. At one time, all the Christians in the world could fit into a small room. At one time, there were more Muslims on earth than Christians; and there was no certainty that the barricades to Christendom would hold. If we are in such a situation again, it is not a tribulation, but a reminder of the brokenness and need in this world. The Lord knows who are His, and we rest in that.

If our culture is threatened—our language, our traditions, our heritage—this is sad, because diversity is beautiful. But we are more than our milieu. We do not despair because of it, and we do not become hateful. We are part of a much bigger and diverse family than we can imagine. We shall never be alone. Many cultures have come and gone before ours, and ours may very well fade away one day. We enjoy what we have now, and look forward to the great family gathering which our Lord Jesus has promised us.

If our world gets turned upside down in the most spectacular way imaginable: if our nations fall, our governments disintegrate, if our stability is yanked out from underneath us, this too is nothing new. Many generations before us have faced this and empires greater than ours have fallen: we are no more special or privileged than them. We accept, trust in the Lord, and continue on wherever we are planted after being uprooted.

In our concerns and insecurities, let us rest in our Father, and remember that we are not alone.

> Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses [those who have come before and lived faithfully], let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings to us so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

You, Christian; you work, you love and you pray. You work to restore what is broken; whether people or places or institutions. You love those who need love and those who reject you. You pray always. This is our calling and there is no more noble cause. This is the work our Lord has given us. And we do it wherever we are, at whatever time, without ceasing.

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