

The Wilderness Wanderer

"They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in." Psalm 107:4

The true Christian finds this world to be a wilderness. There is no change in the world itself. The change is in the man's heart. The wilderness wanderer thinks it altered—a different world from what he has hitherto known—his friends, his own family, the employment in which he is daily engaged, the general pursuits of men all seem to him different to what they were.

This however is the prominent and uppermost feeling in his mind—that he finds himself, to his surprise—a wanderer in a world which has changed altogether its appearance to him. The fair, beautiful world, in which was all his happiness and all his home—has become to him a dreary wilderness. Sin has been fastened in its conviction on his conscience. The Holy Spirit has taken the veil of unbelief and ignorance off his heart. He now sees the world in a wholly different light—and instead of a paradise it has become a wilderness—for sin, dreadful sin, has marred all its beauty and happiness. It is not because the world itself has changed that the Christian feels it to be a wilderness—but because he himself has changed.

There is nothing in this world which can really gratify or satisfy the true Christian. What once was to him a happy and joyous world has now become a barren wilderness. The scene of his former pursuits, pleasures, habits, delights, prospects, hopes, anticipations of profit or happiness—is now turned into a barren wasteland. He cannot perhaps tell how or why the change has taken place, but he feels it—deeply feels it. He may try to shake off his trouble and be a little cheerful and happy as he was before—but if he gets a little imaginary relief, all his guilty pangs come back upon him with renewed strength and increased violence. God means to make the world a wilderness to every child of His, that he may not find his happiness in it, but be a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth.

-J.C Philpot