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About That Lover's Quarrel with the World

One has to agree with the song writer that wrote "It's a Great Big Wonderful World we live in," But the song also adds "When you're in Love it's "the age old wonderful story." Unfortunately, a problem arises when we wake up from our lover's dream to discover a host of enemies, just waiting to turn that dream into a nightmare. It's then that one begins to see what Paul meant when he wrote, "Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world, for the love of the world worketh death."

At this point we need to understand what the Bible means by "the world." Simply put, *the world* refers to the tangible realm of the senses. It also refers to all the prizes, awards, and fame gained by success in the public eye.

But Wordsworth wrote, "The world is too much with us;/ Late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers/ Nothing we see in nature that is ours./ We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon."

Surely the poet implies here higher rewards than just worldly success in finances, sports/ hobbies, or popular passing fads.

So, if not these, what? Paul says, "Set your mind on things above." He means that 'realm of the spirit,' Jesus called "the kingdom of heaven," His intangible alternative to the world's fleeting obsessions with food, raiment, fame and fortune, good looks and physical strength – all the "likes" face book deems important.

The hip-hop rappers dazzle adoring fans with their gold-plated teeth, wads of easy money and stables of willing consorts. "So runs the world away!" sings King Lear's fool. But unlike the eternal things of the spirit, the things of the world are all melting away like April snow.

The confusion comes from our being born into a world of pain and sorrow. "Thou knowest the first time that we smell the air,/ We wail and cry, that we are come/ to this

great stage of fools.” So, in that sense, it would seem that *in the world*, too many of us *are* indeed “born to lose.”

But Jesus gives us a lifeline of hope when tells us, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you can “still bring forth fruit even in old age.” He’s talking about the fruit of the spirit: “love joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, kindness, patience, faith, meekness, temperance, all those “defiant things of the spirit” as Eudora Welty put it.) Why *defiant*? Because they stand victorious against all the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” the world can pelt us with.

And that’s when we discover we are in a war: the age-old battle that attends our being born into a fallen world whose control has been lost to Satan. See Genesis. Engaged in that war are the forces of good, led by Jesus, and Satan’s army of evil spirits and misguided human souls.

We see many casualties daily: celebrities, dead before their time. Think of Elvis, Prince, Michael Jackson, James Dean. And of course the “miserables” peopling the homeless camps and skid rows of the world.

So is there any cause for hope? Yes there is. Think of the marvelous words of that old hit “I Believe:” “I believe for every drop of rain that falls/ A flower grows”... I believe above the storm the smallest prayer will still be heard/ I believe that Someone in the great somewhere/Hears every word/ Every time I hear a new-born baby cry/ Or touch a leaf/ Or see the sky/ Then I know why I believe.” Play that song a few times; I think your faith will be renewed. For where the troubles of the world abound, Grace much more abounds.” (Romans 5) Only believe: God’s on our case.

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