



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Love Not The World (1 John 2:15-17)

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The Church and the World walked far apart
On the changing shores of time,
The World was singing a giddy song,
And the Church a hymn sublime.

“Come, give me your hand,” said the merry World,
“And walk with me this way!”
But the faithful Church hid her gentle hands
And solemnly answered “Nay!

I will not give you my hand at all,
And I will not walk with you;
Your way is the way that leads to death;
Your words are all untrue.”

“Nay, walk with me but a little space,”
Said the World with a kindly air;
“The road I walk is a pleasant road,
And the sun shines always there.

Your path is thorny and rough and rude,
But mine is broad and plain;
My way is paved with flowers and dews,
And yours with tears and pain.

The sky to me is always blue,
No want, no toil I know;
The sky above you is always dark,
Your lot is a lot of woe.
There's room enough for you and me
To travel side by side.”

Half shyly the Church approached the World
And gave him her hand of snow;
And the old World grasped it and walked along,
Saying, in accents low:

“Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I will give you pearls to wear,
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair.”

The Church looked down at her plain white robes,
And then at the dazzling World,
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip
With a smile contemptuous curled.

“I will change my dress for a costlier one,”
Said the Church, with a smile of grace;
Then her pure white garments drifted away,
And the World gave, in their place,
Beautiful satins and shining silks,
Roses and gems and costly pearls;
While over her forehead her bright hair fell
Crisped in a thousand curls.

“Your house is too plain,” said the proud old World,
“I'll build you one like mine;
With walls of marble and towers of gold,
And furniture ever so fine.”

So he built her a costly and beautiful house;
Most splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there
Gleaming in purple and gold.

Rich fairs and shows in the halls were held,
And the World and his children were there.
Laughter and music and feasts were heard
In the place that was meant for prayer.

There-were cushioned seats for the rich and the gay,
To sit in their pomp and pride;
But the poor who were clad in shabby array,
Sat meekly down outside.

“You give too much to the poor,” said the World.
“Far more than you ought to do;
If they are in need of shelter and food,
Why need it trouble you?

Go, take your money and buy rich robes,
Buy horses and carriages fine;
Buy pearls and jewels and dainty food,
Buy the rarest and costliest wine.

My children, they dote on all these things,
And if you their love would win
You must do as they do, and walk in the ways
That they are walking in.”

So the poor were turned from her door in scorn,
And she heard not the orphan's cry;
But she drew her beautiful robes aside,
As the widows went weeping by.

Then the sons of the World and the Sons of the Church
Walked closely hand and heart,
And only the Master, who knoweth all,
Could tell the two apart.

Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said,
“I am rich and my goods increase;
I have need of nothing, or ought to do,
But to laugh, and dance, and feast.”

The sly World heard, and he laughed in his sleeve,
And mockingly said, aside:
“The Church is fallen, the beautiful Church;
And her shame is her boast and her pride.”

The angel drew near to the mercy seat,
And whispered in sighs her name;
Then the loud anthems of rapture were hushed,

BIBLE STUDIES

TUESDAYS 8:30 AM, ROOM 151 EAST WING

PENNSYLVANIA

Love Not The World (1 John 2:15-17)

And heads were covered with shame.

And a voice was heard at last by the Church
From Him who sat on the throne:

“I know thy works, and how thou hast said,
‘I am rich, and hast not known
That thou art naked, poor and blind,
And wretched before my face;’
Therefore from my presence cast I thee out,
And blot thy name from its place.”¹

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Having defined or clarified three categories of Christian maturity, John introduces his first Imperative...his first prohibition: Love not the world. In the Greek, the construction is Μη (pronounced ‘may’) with the imperative, meaning: Stop doing what you ARE doing; or Don’t even think of starting this type of conduct.

Stop Loving the World. Two concerns: 1) What does it mean to Love?, and 2) What is “the world”?

LOVE

The dictionary list at least six different definitions for the verb ² in terms of the object.

Let me suggest the following: To love something is to give it first place in your heart/mind/affections. What we love commands our attention...period. Day and night. Moment following moment. Uncontrolled or bridled, it becomes Lust. Jesus pointed out for us a truism: you cannot love two things at once. (Matt. 6:24 & Luke 16:13). Why not? Because what we love becomes the focus of our service/efforts/allegiance.

THE WORLD

Obviously, it is not a reference to Creation or the universe for the universe declares the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). God declared creation to be Good!

Nor is it necessarily the things of creation, for “...he giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17).

Interestingly, in one of His parables, Jesus made reference to the experience of the “...seed sown among thorns...”. In this case, the fledgling growth was killed off by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things...” reminiscent of John’s three categories.

Jesus told his disciples “the world hated him” (John 15:18, 24, 25).

Well neither creation nor the things of Creation hated Jesus. Only persons “hate” (which speaks to the personhood of satan, eh?)

Who did “hate” him?

The then current religious establishment (John 1:10,11) and later, the Roman Empire. Might we not then conclude “the world” represents the Secular and/or Religious establishments opposed to the Jesus of the Bible as well as the innate nature of man?

Individual men and human systems are capable of hating Jesus.

WHY THE ATTRACTION TO THE WORLD?

We are creatures of God who inhabit a physical body but who are more than a physical body. Far more! St. Augustine said it best, based upon Ecclesiastes 3:11, “...Our hearts are restless til they find their rest in Thee...”.

As a result of our first parent’s transgression, we are prone to trust more in the material than spiritual.

Religion and the Secular tend to focus primarily on the physical; the here and now. Hence, the tension we experience, daily.

We are spring-loaded to trust in what we can see, feel, smell, hear, or taste. We are committed to the premise that what we can experience with the senses is all there is to reality. This, in a nutshell, is the lure of “The World”. (As an aside, God created us to be Pre-Suppositionalist, and the failure of our first parents plunged us into the pit of Empiricism!)

Our nature wants to “touch, taste, feel, and smell” before we believe. In contrast, God expects us to “...believe to see...” (Psalm 27:13; Hebrews 11:3; and John 7:17).

We are more prone to Lust, Loot, and Leverage. Hence John’s three-fold focus.

In contrast, God, who is pure Spirit and who dwells in a spiritual realm invites us to begin to experience that reality on this side of the “veil”.

He invites us to “believe” His word in terms of its description of reality and declaration of Truth. If we “believe”, we then see, that is, see with understanding

OUR APPLICATION?

STOP

DON’T EVEN BEGIN

¹ Best Loved Poems (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing, 1936), pages 345-347.

² <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/love>