

12. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Daniel, who pens these lines, was converted in the Autumn of 1955, will soon have been the Lord's for fifty-six years. In those years, many changes have been observed in the Evangelical Church scene which could fairly be described as nothing less than a transformation. Sadly, all of that metamorphosis has been from light to darkness. *The faith once delivered to the Saints* which *JUDE* demands *should be earnestly contended for*, has been abandoned. What a tragedy!

The denomination that was the home of my conversion, in which Bible College I graduated and in which, for a time ministerial credentials were held, could have been truly described as a "Pentecostal Holiness" movement. There was a very clear separation from the world. In truth, Church and world were poles apart. Tragically, today the Church is little more than a religious club where almost anything goes. This sea-change has been incremental over more than half a century. Insidious would be an apt description. It has been orchestrated from the underworld and overseen by the master tactician of darkness, even Satan himself. Few, in those long ago days, used the drugs, alcohol and nicotine. Worldly places of amusement were left for the world to frequent. Young Christians were encouraged to pray and seek for a Christian partner and were encouraged to keep themselves as virgins until marriage. Pre-marital co-habiting was unknown. Adultery and divorce were almost as rare. Homosexuality was seen for the abomination that God's Holy Word depicts.

For a major Pentecostal denomination to appoint an unfrocked homosexual as principal of one of its Bible Colleges as one best suited to train the next generation of "Christian Ministers" (for what we ask?), would have raised absolute "hell" in the evangelical world. Today, it does not even raise the neighbours, as this event has proved. We now present a poem of yesteryear. Old fashioned, yes, but what a telling and challenging message. It charts in graphic manner the descent of a once pure Church into the clutches of the world. It presents a host of clues as to why the Church and the world are almost indistinguishable from one another.



**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 then walk with me this way."
But the good Church hid her snowy hand
And solemnly answered, "Nay."

"I will not give my hand at all,
And I will not walk with you,
Your way is the way of eternal death,
And your words are all untrue."
"Nay, walk with me 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 way is narrow and thorny and rough,
While mine is flowery and smooth;
Your lot is sad with reproach and toil,
But in rounds of joy I move.
My way you can see, is a broad, fair one,
And my gate is high and wide,
There is room enough for you and me,
And we'll travel side by side."

Half shyly the Church approached the World,
And gave him her hand of snow;
And the false World grasped it, and walked along,
And whispered in accents low.

"Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I have gold and pearls to wear,
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair."

The Church looked down at the 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 were put away,
And the World gave in their place

Beautiful satins, and fashionable silks,
And roses and gems and pearls;
And over her forehead her bright hair fell
And waved in a thousand curls.
"Your house is too plain," said the proud World,
"Let us build you one like mine;
With kitchen for feasting and parlour for play,
And furniture never so fine."

So he built her a costly and beautiful house -
Splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her daughters met frequently there,
Shining in purple and gold.
And fair and festival - frolics untold,
Were held in the place of prayer,
And maidens bewitching as sirens of old -
With world winning graces rare.

Bedecked with fair jewels and hair all curled –
Untrammelled by Gospel or laws,
To beguile and amuse and win from the World,
Some help for the righteous cause
The angel of mercy rebuked the Church,
And whispered, "I know thy sin,"
Then the Church looked sad, and anxiously longed
To gather the children in.

But some were away at the midnight ball,
And others were at the play;
And some were drinking in gay saloons,
And the angel went away.
And then said the World in soothing tones –
"Your much loved ones mean no harm –
Merely indulging in innocent sports,"
So she leaned still on his proffered arm,

And smiled, and chatted, and gathered flowers,
And walked along with the World;
While countless millions of precious souls
Were hungering for truth untold;
"Your preachers are all too old and plain,"
Said the gay World with a sneer,
"They frighten my children with dreadful tales,
Which I do not like to hear."

"They talk of judgements and fire and pain,
And the doom of darkest night;
They warn of a place that should not be
Thus spoken to ears polite!
I will send you some – a better stamp,
More brilliant and gay and fast,
Who will show how men may live as they list
And go to Heaven at last."

"Thy Father is merciful, great and good,
Loving and tender and kind;
Do you think He'd take one child to Heaven,
And leave another behind?"
So she called for pleasing and gay divines,
Deemed gifted, and great, and learned;
And the plain old men that had preached the Cross,
Were out of her pulpits turned.

Then Mammon came in and supported the Church,
And rented a prominent pew;
And preaching and singing and floral display
Soon proclaimed a gospel new.

"You give too much to the poor," said the World,
"Far more than you ought to do;
Though the poor need shelter, food and clothes,
Why thus need it trouble you?"

Go take your money and buy rich robes
And automobiles fine;
And pearls and jewels and dainty food,
The rarest and costliest wine.
My children they dote on all such things,
And if you their love would win,
You must do as they do, and walk in the way,
The flowery way they're in."

Then the Church, her purse-strings tightly held,
And gracefully lowered her head,
And simpered, "I've given too much away,
I will do, sir, as you have said."
So the poor were turned from the door in scorn,
She heard not the orphans' cry;
And she drew her beautiful robes aside,
As the widows went weeping by.

And they of the Church, and they of the World
Journeyed closely, hand and heart,
And none but the Master, who knoweth all,
Could discern the two apart.
Then the Church sat down at her ease and said,
"I'm rich and in goods increased,
I have need of nothing, and naught to do,
But to laugh, and dance, and feast."

The sly World heard her and laughed within,
And mockingly said aside,
"The Church has fallen - the beautiful Church,
Her shame is her boast and pride."
Thus her witnessing power, alas, was lost,
And perilous times came in;
The times of the end, so often foretold,
Of form and pleasure and sin.

Then the angel drew near the mercy seat,
And whispered in sighs her name,
And the saints their anthems of rapture hushed,
And covered their heads with shame.
A voice came down from the hush of Heaven,
From Him who sat on the throne;
"I know thy works and what thou hast said,
But alas, thou hast not known

**"That thou art poor and naked and blind,
With pride and ruin enthralled;
The expectant Bride of a heavenly Groom
Is the harlot of the World!
Thou hast ceased to watch for that blessed hope,
Hast fallen from zeal and grace;
So now, alas, I must cast thee out
And blot thy name from its place."**

We close with a scripture portion for our readers to ponder. Dr A T Pierson wrote the following concerning these five verses of scripture:

"All words in the Greek language for expressing co-operation are used here. It seems that the Holy Spirit ransacked that most copious language and exhausted its resources to impress upon the believer that he must not unite with the world. "

2 CORINTHIANS 6 v 14- 18

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."