

# THE COMING WORLD CHURCH

## Chapter Six

### "The Way of Escape in a Day of Apostasy"

by

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The institutions of men tend to decay. The reason lies in man himself. The sentence of death is upon him because he is a sinful being. This principle of decay applies to the organized church also, for unless it is periodically revived by the Spirit of God it, too, will decay at the touch of man.

With regard to the organized church, however, there is more to contend with than man's natural influence. The visible church has come in for singular attacks by satanic forces from the very beginning. So it is no wonder that a reading of church history discloses the tendency of every generation to turn from the truth once for all delivered to the saints.

In his final instructions to the Ephesian elders, Paul warned that this would be the case: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31 [NKJV]).

To the Philippians he wrote: "Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things" (Phil. 3:17-19 [NKJV]).

Peter is likewise explicit concerning the presence of false prophets and false teachers among God's people. He said, "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed" (II Pet. 2:1,2 [NKJV]).

John, the beloved apostle, also warns of the presence of false teachers. He wrote: "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us" (I John 2:18,19 [NKJV]).

An outstanding characteristic of these ministers of Satan is their denial of the deity of Christ: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world" (I John 4:1-3 [NKJV]).

Jude likewise tells of apostasy in the church and points out, as does Paul in II Timothy and Peter in his second letter, that such a movement had already begun. Jude apparently summarizes all the various aspects of the apostasy as revealed to the other New Testament writers. At the same time, he adds details that help bring into sharp focus the vast gulf existing between the true gospel with its moral and spiritual benefits in lives, and the evil doctrines of the false teachers with their pernicious results in individuals and society.

A careful study of the passages just cited and others in the New Testament indicate that this departure from the truth will gather new impetus toward the end of the Church age. We have reason to believe that that time is upon us. We must never lose sight, however, of the fact that in none of these New Testament epistles is there any hint that the individual believer should become gloomy or depressed in the midst of unbelief. There is a way of escape, a way whereby a Christian can be faced with heartbreaking religious declension all around him and yet be free from it. Just as a certain kind of spider lives at the bottom of a body of water encased in air it has gathered from the atmosphere, so can the Christian live and grow in a hostile environment if he will obey God.

Jude indicates the way of escape in the following verses: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (vv. 20-23, ASV).

This is God's way of escape for His people in a day of apostasy. Five energetic words in this passage serve as directions for the road we are to travel, at the same time emphasizing the personal responsibility of each believer to be alert, obedient, and full of faith. God is saying in effect: "This is the way, walk ye in it."

### **1. Building**

These guideposts or instructions are in logical sequence. They are not arranged haphazardly, nor are they to be followed haphazardly. "Building up yourselves in your most holy faith" is primary and essential to all that follows. The persons addressed are those who are already members of the family of God and who, by the new birth, are partakers of the divine nature. Only such as these can build in the sense intended by Jude.

The figure of building, picturing growth and expansion in the Christian life, is frequently

employed in the New Testament (I Cor. 3:14; Eph. 2:20; Col. 2:7). The underlying principle is stated by Paul in this fashion: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." We begin the Christian life through faith, and we continue advancing in the Christian life through faith.

Another figure used is that of babes who should grow to maturity (I Cor. 3:1,2; Heb. 5:12-14; I Pet. 2:2). We are to grow up spiritually so that our profiting will appear to all (I Tim. 4:15).

What we are to grow in is the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is similar in its meaning to Paul's statement that Christ is the foundation on which we are to build (I Cor. 3:11,15). We must, however, be careful to avoid one of the glaring errors in Christendom today--that of seeking to divorce Christ from the truth of the New Testament concerning Him. When some would claim that their teachings are Christ-centered but not Bible-centered, we have the right to ask them what Christ they speak of.

The Christ of the Christian is the Christ of the New Testament. The Christian who is going to build himself up on his most holy faith will have to build on the revelation concerning Christ and salvation as given in God's Word. This means that there is a certain body of truth based on historical facts and recorded in the Bible that we must believe with regard to Christ. It also means that the spiritual forces released when faith is placed in what God has said concerning Christ should be allowed to work in the human heart. It was to this that Jude had reference when he said, "Building up yourselves in your most holy faith."

This faith was "once for all" revealed. It is not something that can be expanded or subtracted at the whims of men. God has revealed the truth He wants us to believe, and on that we are to be built up.

This calls for a knowledge of doctrine and a personal knowledge of Christ. These go together to make an adequate Christian. Doctrine alone is not enough. And a true knowledge of Christ cannot be had apart from what the Bible teaches.

This is a point of major importance today, for this is a day not only of indifference toward doctrine, but also actual opposition to it. The cry we hear on every hand is "doctrine divides." The cooperative ventures which have seen fruition in the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches have not only played down the matter of doctrine but are united practically on the basis of unity for unity's sake.

### Misused Scripture Passages

Two passages of Scripture are wrenched out of context and used by ecumenical spokesmen to make it appear as though unity of organization were the great New Testament essential, and that organizational difference is a scandal before men and God.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For a very full and excellent discussion on the principles involved in Christian unity, see *The Basis of Christian Unity*, an exposition of John 17 and Ephesians 4 by D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W. D. I, England.

The first of these passages is John 17, particularly verse 11: "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are" [NKJV]. It should first of all be noted that the reference in this verse is to a special company of people. They have eternal life (vv. 2,3). They are a separated people, separated from the world and unto God (vv. 14-17). Our Lord prays for them especially, for they were given Him by God (v. 9). He also prayed not only for "these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (v. 20). So whatever unity is involved here belongs only to the true family of God. Judas [Iscariot], for example, did not belong (v. 12). This is not an all-inclusive company.

In this chapter the Lord Jesus addressed the Father, not the disciples. To the Father He said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." This is not an appeal to Christians or a group of religious people to become united. Instead, it is a prayer concerning the preservation of a unity which is already a reality. It is a unity possible only to those who are doctrinally in agreement with regard to Christ and His work on Calvary. It is a unity patterned after the nature of the Trinity itself. Christ prayed to the Father: "that they may be one, even as we are one" (v. 22).

It is a gross misuse of Scripture to employ this text as proof of God's endorsement of a superchurch organization. It is equally wrong to try to bring about organic union apart from doctrinal agreement. The unity spoken of in this chapter is based on a relationship possible to men only as they believe the Bible concerning Christ.

There are cooperative ventures in one form or another among Bible-believing Christians today, and have been for many years. Interdenominational efforts such as Bible institutes, Bible colleges, faith missions, and gospel broadcasts supported by gifts of Christians in many denominations are evidence of this. There is a unity of heart and spirit in supporting such enterprises that no mere organizational union could produce.

#### Ephesians 4

Ephesians 4 is the second major passage of Scripture used by ecumenical advocates as proof that all members of so-called Christian churches--Protestants and others--should be united in one organization. The words usually quoted are found in verse 3 which reads: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The unity spoken of here, however, is not one that we are to work up, or form, or create; rather it is one that we are to try to keep, for it already exists.

As in John 17, the unity spoken of is not something apart from doctrine. The apostle says in verse 1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." The word "therefore" refers back to the doctrinal basis laid down in the first three chapters of this remarkable epistle.

Clearly stated for us is the believer's position in Christ. We learn that each child of God is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (1:3). He has been chosen

from the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame before God in love (1:4). He has been predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ (1:5). He has been accepted in the Beloved (1:6). His redemption is through the blood of Christ, and his forgiveness of sins is according to the riches of Christ's grace (1:7). He has an inheritance in Christ and has been sealed by the Holy Spirit, who is the first payment of that inheritance until the consummation of salvation at Christ's return (1:11,13,14).

This is only part of the "vocation wherewith we are called," but is enough to show that the unity of Ephesians 4 is a unity based on doctrine. As Lloyd-Jones so well says, the Apostle Paul "does not start with unity, and then proceed to doctrine; he takes up unity because he has already laid down his doctrine" (*The Basis of Christian Unity*, p. 18).

There is every need, then, for the believer to build on the most holy faith. He can build because he already has been placed on the foundation through faith in Christ. Through this faith he is not only united to Christ, but to all who belong to Christ. In order to be kept free from the snares and wiles of evil men who would come into the organized church from the outside, or who would betray its interests from the inside, the believer must become mature in spiritual truth (Eph. 4:11-14).

## **2. Praying in the Holy Spirit**

The next guidepost on this way of escape reads: "Praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 24). This means to pray in the sphere of the Holy Spirit's influence. No person can truly pray to God apart from this. The way of access to God is through the shed blood of Christ (Heb. 10:19). Knowing what to pray for and how to pray is taught by the Holy Spirit. Praying in the Spirit is continual praying, for Paul says in Ephesians 6:18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. . . ." Where we lack, the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings or yearnings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26).

In contrast to this are the persons described by Jude in verse 19 who "separate themselves, having not the Spirit." This raises a very basic and provocative question with regard to present-day thinking in church circles. We are told that we should come together and pray together and fellowship together looking toward organizational union. But how can two pray together who pray in altogether different spheres? How can a man who does not have the Holy Spirit, and even denies His Personality, pray on common ground with one who has life in Christ and who prays in the element of the Spirit's influence?

This is only one of the many areas where the doctrinal void of present-day Christendom is in evidence. The believer in Christ can approach the throne of grace only on the basis of Christ's finished work for him (Heb. 4:14-16). Our sufficiency is of God and not of ourselves. The very burdens of Spirit-filled prayer are laid upon our hearts through the Spirit. We are to ask in the Name of Christ (John 16:24), for in no other Name will we be granted our requests. We are to ask in prayer believing and we will receive (Matt. 21:22). Our motives must also be directed by the Holy Spirit; otherwise, we will ask amiss and God will refuse our requests (James 4:3). Thus it is imperative that a person praying to God pray in the Holy Spirit who works always in conformity to the revealed Word of God.

Without the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, none of us could be built up in the faith. As we live in obedience to God and read His Word, seeking to know more of His mind so that we might do it (John 7:17), our spiritual minds are illuminated. Our spiritual grasp of the Scriptures is increased, and the mind of God for us becomes more clearly understood.

This in itself shows the futility and the absurdity of seeking to do God's work apart from knowing God's truth. Any unity of persons that would honor God must first of all be a unity that God himself has produced. It must be one in which the persons involved are united through faith in Christ and cleansed by His blood. Israel of old was forbidden to plow with the ox and the ass together. Seemingly many in our day need to learn the principle in that prohibition with regard to spiritual things. God's work is not done by believers and unbelievers joining together in one super organization.

The man who believes that the Bible is full of myth and folklore is a rebel against God and rejects the Book which the Holy Spirit inspired. How can such a person work in harmony with another who believes that the Bible is God's Word and that he should live in subjection to its teaching? The fact of the matter is, the Bible is so explicit with regard to separation from unruly church members and from false teachers that for the true Christian to work in the same harness with them is disobedience to the Word itself.

We must not deny the principle of unity. At the same time we recognize the application of it can be very wrong. Careful discrimination is obligatory. Men without the Holy Spirit are not brothers in the Lord. Our Saviour did not counsel that wolves should be given leadership of the flock. Instead He warned that we beware of wolves in sheep's clothing.

As God has done before in the history of the church, when the visible church becomes corrupt so that He cannot use it, He calls His people out and forms a new visible church.

### **3. Keeping**

The third signpost says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21). There is no problem about the love of God keeping us, for we learn in Romans 8:38,39 that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. It is the safest place for any of us to be. It is like a fortress that cannot be entered. Shielded by that love, we can defy all the forces of the enemy in the entire universe. This is true so far as our standing or position before God is concerned. But unless we keep ourselves in the love of God, our walk or conduct as Christians is in danger. We can be tripped up, and our witness for Christ can be destroyed.

The late Dr. Ironside illustrated the meaning of the expression "Keep yourselves in the love of God" by "keep yourself in the sunshine." We do not create the sunshine in order to bask in it. We merely stay where the sun is shining and enjoy the benefits of its rays. So it is with the love of God. It has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), and we are to keep ourselves in that love.

The writer to the Hebrews says, "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1). This is speaking of the love that is ever present. Love never fails; it is eternal. Our responsibility is to see that it continues in its manifestation in our hearts.

Here again is a much needed message for us in our day. In Ephesians 4:15 Paul tells us that we are to speak "the truth in love." This verse might well serve as a summarization of the three things we have been considering, namely, building ourselves up in the most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, and keeping ourselves in the love of God. "Speaking the truth" covers the first two, and "speaking the truth in love" covers the last. There is a balance here that must be kept. In many a church circle today the word "love" is used almost to the exclusion of truth. Men emphasize speaking in love, but often fail to remember that the Scripture says we are to speak "the TRUTH in LOVE."

There is no imparting the love of God, either by word or by action, if we separate it from the truth of God. It is the cup of cold water given in the name of Christ that brings reward and honors God. It is God's truth spoken in love that wins the unregenerate, bringing him or her to a saving knowledge of Christ. But it is not speaking the truth in love if we gloss over a person's lost condition or fail to warn of an eternal hell. Love can speak only as it speaks God's truth. We cannot divorce the one from the other.

We will have to admit that many of us who are Bible-believing Christians have failed to keep a balance in these matters. We have not always spoken the truth in love. But to the man who does not know Christ at all, the love of God is unknown and the truth of God is unknown, so his failure is twofold. With out greater light, however, and with the fact that we have the life of God within us, we who trust in Christ have no excuse for not speaking the truth in love. After all, 50 percent is a very poor grade in "God's school of obedience."

Love is needed in speaking the truth to our fellow believers. There is not enough agreement among us at times to keep us united against our common enemy. The movements of the day are complex and often confusing. Not all Christians or Christian leaders see these movements in the same perspective. We must heed the inspired admonition of Jude not only to defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but also to keep ourselves in the love of God. This does not mean we are to compromise or trim our doctrines. It does mean, however, that we seek to keep our hearts under the power and influence of the wisdom that is from above (James 3:17). It is easy to defend the faith in the power of the flesh (James 3:14-16).

#### **4. Looking**

The next guidepost says, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). This is a provocative phrase, and like many other portions of God's Word, sparkles like a jewel with many and varied hues of truth. Eternal life is the believer's present possession. It is a quality of life, not merely a duration of life. It is the life of Christ that He gives His own and that makes it possible for them to walk with Him now and throughout all eternity.

Eternal life is a gift; it is not earned. It is not a reward for work well done. It is bestowed on each one who trusts in Christ at the moment that trust is manifested (John 5:24). Nevertheless, Paul wrote to Timothy exhorting him to "lay hold on eternal life." Eternal life is not only a quality of life the believer possesses, but it is also a quality of life that is to be manifested from day to day in the believer's walk.

In this verse in Jude, the reference to eternal life apparently has to do with the full manifestation of it when the Lord Jesus returns for His own. It will be at that time that His mercy will be fully realized. A parallel passage is Titus 2:11-13 which says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" [NKJV].

Paul referred to this again in I Corinthians 1:8 where he said, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." So it is no wonder that he said to the Thessalonians, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (II Thess. 3:5).

We know from a number of Scriptures that preceding the Lord's return there will be apostasy in the church. However, our minds and hearts are not to be occupied with that apostasy, but with Christ himself. We are not to shut our eyes to the apostasy, but neither are we to let it be the center of our message. Christ is that.

The Scriptures reveal that in the last days men's hearts shall begin to fail them for fear. This should not be our condition, because when we see the things coming on the earth that cause this fear, we know that the consummation of our salvation draws near.

There is a varied approach on the part of people to the present world situation. Some in their arrogance and false optimism believe that man can solve his own problems and that everything will turn out all right one of these days. Others refuse to look at life as it really is and try to shut out its grim and often sordid realities by living for personal pleasure only. Others again have become despondent and gloomy. None of these should be the attitude of the believer. We have been forewarned as to what is coming on the earth. We are not looking for man to solve his own problems, nor are we looking for the consummation of evil in the end times or the person of the Antichrist or his evil government. Rather, we are looking for the Lord from heaven even as Jude says, "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

In the organized church are many who have their schemes for world betterment. They have been seeking to patch up the world system for many years. Today these very persons tell us to disregard entirely the regeneration of the individual and seek instead to change conditions by legislation--legislation spearheaded by the World Church and its national affiliates. This is a direct violation of the final guidepost which states most specifically where our efforts should lie.

## 5. Saving

Our fifth guidepost comes from Jude 23 where the thought is "try to save," since, after all, that is all any of us can do. A believer who leads a fellow believer back to Christ or who leads an unbeliever to Christ is an instrument in that one's "salvation" and so is said to "save" him.

This passage, following as it does the reference to looking for the Lord's return, reminds us of Paul's statement concerning the Thessalonians where he said, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven" (I Thess. 1:9,10). Idleness is not a mark of the Christian life. We were saved to serve. Neither is self-centeredness a mark of genuine Christianity. It is true we have been admonished to build ourselves up in the most holy faith and to look for our Lord from heaven. In this we meet two of the great responsibilities every believer faces. He has responsibility first to God and last to himself. But in between there is responsibility to others, including both believers and unbelievers. This guidepost is no less essential for the way of escape in the day of apostasy than is any one of the others. Without this we would fail to reach the end of the path marked out for us by God.

There are three classes of sinners mentioned in this portion of Jude. The American Standard Version of 1901 makes this very clear: "And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (vv. 22,23).

There are many kinds of sinners, and what is good treatment for one kind is not necessarily good for another. So, for the three classes of sinners identified in this passage there are three divine prescriptions for treating them.

### Class No. 1

This class is described in the words "and on some have mercy, who are in doubt" (Jude 22, ASV). The American Standard in a footnote says, "Some ancient authorities read, 'and some refute while they dispute with you.'" This could have reference to dealing with Christians who have fallen into sin but who justify themselves in what they are doing. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear" (I Tim. 5:20, ASV). Or, as the same apostle instructed Titus: "The bishop must be blameless . . . holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers<sup>2</sup>" (1:9, ASV).

False doctrine always leads to wicked conduct. The two are inseparable. Christians need to be exhorted by the truth, and if they are out of fellowship with God they need to be brought back into fellowship with Him. Paul did not hesitate to exhort Peter when he found him living in Antioch in a manner misleading to Gentile Christians. Apparently Peter accepted the exhortation as from the Lord (Gal. 2:11-14).

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2 Those who contradict.

Church discipline is almost a lost factor in local congregations these days, but it is needed if the lives and testimonies of those in the churches are to count for Christ. To restore fellow believers is a saving work on the part of God's servants. James said concerning this, "Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

A word of warning is needed here. The destruction of our brother's testimony in Christ, or the belittling of it, should not be the aim of any of us if we find a brother who does not do things exactly as we would do them. There are areas hard to pinpoint (Rom. 14:1-23). It is a serious matter for a servant of God to go beyond what the Scripture says with regard to dealing with fellow servants. Each of us must give an account to God, and we will do this regardless of how our brethren may consider our actions. The final evaluation of what any of us do is with God (I Cor. 4:3-5).

### **Class No. 2**

"And some save snatching them out of the fire" (Jude 23, ASV). Here we would apply the message to unbelievers primarily. They are to be plucked as "brands from the burning" (Zech. 3:2). Sin builds its own fire. It ignites it and furnishes its own fuel to keep the fire burning. Were this life all, the consequences of sin would still be terrible. But the "fire" of sin will end in hell fire for eternity if there is no repentance. Our Lord described hell as the place "where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48).

Conditions in or out of the organized church are never to be allowed to blind us to the need of men and women who need Christ. They are lost and perishing while the fires of sin are already burning around them and their destiny is the lake of fire itself. These need Christ even though they also live in a day of apostasy. They must be witnessed to, and pleaded with, to turn in faith believing to Christ.

Total war against satanic forces includes the telling out of the gospel. To lose sight of this fact is to allow the enemy to win a major victory. Our concern for the lost should be such as is voiced by the language in Jude. We are to recognize that they are endangered by fire--a most terrible death! Snatch them out! Their condition is desperate; their time is limited! Now is their accepted time, and now is their day of salvation! The urgency of this matter should bear down upon all our hearts, for the plight of the lost is just as real as the apostasy around us!

### **Class No. 3**

The third class are those on whom we are to "have mercy with fear; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23, ASV). There is a balance of attitudes suggested in dealing with this third group. There is to be compassion on our part, and at the same time there is to be the fear of being contaminated by the very errors or sins of those we are trying to reach. We can never hope to win lost persons to Christ, for example, by joining with them in their rebellion against God. Neither can we win false teachers, the liberals of our day, or neo-liberals, or neo-orthodox, or whatever may be their category, by joining with them. We must expose their false teaching even while we seek to win them to faith in Christ.

The inspired apostle wrote: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is u clean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty'" (II Cor. 6:14-18 [NKJV]).

Briefly notice some of the key words in this passage. The idea back of the expression "unequally yoked" in the original language was not so much an "equality" as a "difference in kinds." This is proved by what follows. The expression, "what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness," is literally "what sharing is there unto righteousness and lawlessness?" These are opposites by their very nature.

"Communion" means "joint participation in a common endeavor." How could light and darkness join forces? They are mutually exclusive.

"Concord" is the translation of the Greek word from which we get the word "symphony." This word is translated "music" in Luke 15:25. Can we imagine Christ and Satan symphonizing together? To raise such a question is to answer it. The application is also inescapable.

"What part has he that believes with an infidel?" How can one headed for heaven and another for hell join hands to do the work of God?

The word "agreement" carries the idea of voting the same way with another. It also has the thought of setting down a thesis, the formulating of a complete philosophy of life. How much agreement is there between the truth of God and the lies of demonic religions? An unbridgeable gulf separates them. How could it be possible for a genuine Christian and a heathen idol worshipper to draft a thesis together on eternal things?

This is what we are confronted with in this World Church Movement. There are believers in it, but it is apparent that though some of them claim they are witnesses to the faith, their voices are not being heard. Only one admonition makes sense when a Christian finds himself in such a situation. He must come out from among the false leaders, divest himself of their false philosophies, and separate himself from their unscriptural practices and control.

In this connection, the admonition given by God to His people in Revelation 18:4 is worth pondering. Just before God brings His great judgment upon Mystery Babylon, He instructs His people to come out of her so that they will not partake of her sins and will not receive of her plagues. This is not a popular position to take today, but it is a necessary one if we are to please God. As the apostles said of old, "We must obey God rather than men."

Many a rescuer has been lost in flood waters while trying to save a drowning person, but this should not be the lot of the soul winner. He should so walk with God and so love Him and hate evil that he will not be engulfed or even defiled by the sins of the persons he is trying to bring to his Lord.

If we will earnestly follow this path laid out by God, we will not fail. So let us build up ourselves in the most holy faith, pray in the Holy Ghost, keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and try to save floundering believers in Christ and lost men and women outside of Christ.

Chapter Six, "The Way of Escape in a Day of Apostasy," by John I. Paton from *The Coming World Church* (The Good News Broadcasting Association, 1963). **Note:** The text has not been modified, except that KJV-era pronouns and verb forms have been modernized and the NKJV has been used where noted.

Though the above article was published in 1963, its message has become even more important today. Here is a sermon, "This Is What We Preach," that was recently delivered by well-known minister, Alistair Begg, Senior Pastor of Cleveland's Parkside Church. At the risk of offending some leading evangelicals, he describes at some length certain doctrines held by the Roman Catholic Church that are diametrically opposed to the teaching of Scripture. Bible-believing evangelical Christians and denominations should have no favorable association with the Catholic Church. We encourage those who have read the above article by Mr. Paton of Back to the Bible Broadcast, to listen to this important and timely sermon on sermonaudio.com. Simply click this link:

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=52511110020988>