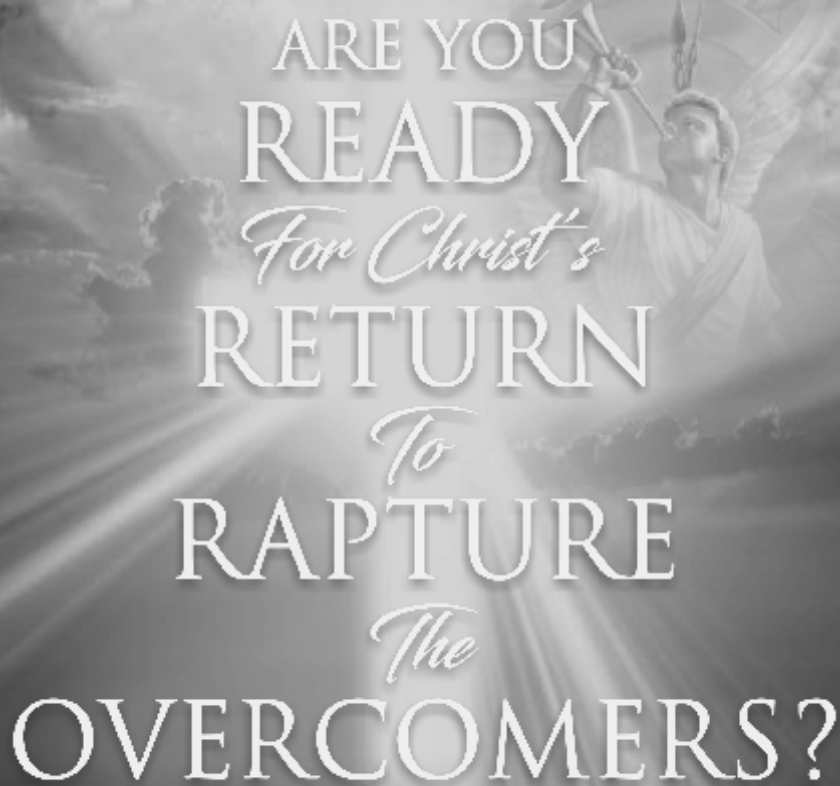


ARE YOU
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RETURN
To
RAPTURE
The
OVERCOMERS?

JOHN DEBY EDUKUGHO



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**ARE YOU READY FOR CHRIST'S RETURN TO
RAPTURE THE OVERCOMERS?**

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the indifference and even opposition which the doctrine of the second coming of Jesus encounters amongst the majority of our contemporaries, we believe that it is more urgent than ever to preach it. Without exaggeration, we can say the world is at this moment more troubled than it has been in any other era. Now, in the difficult periods when the worst of trials befall men, it is entirely normal for believers to lift their eyes towards Heaven from which their Saviour and Lord will return. When the moral bankruptcy, social menace, wickedness, aggravated lawlessness and ungodliness becomes too apparent, Christians must remember the prophecies which promise eternity with Christ. So it is that periodically in all the dark hours of history, the hope of the return of Christ has come to revive discouraged hearts. How we need that today!

More so, it is obvious that we are advancing rapidly toward the end of the earthly world. We are witnessing the collapse of civilization. Science and technology which ought to assure the positive happiness of humanity are deadly and ineffectual. As the Bible always announced, wars are becoming more and more prevalent, frightful and universal anti-Christianity has been let loose with

unprecedented audacity. More prophecies and the signs Christ gave to precede His return are being fulfilled – The Jews have returned to Palestine. We are moving by large steps towards the universal dictatorship reserved for the anti-Christ. Surely, no doctrine, in the word of God, presents a deeper motive for crucifying the flesh and for separation unto God and to work for the saving of souls as our hope and joy and crown of rejoicing than the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.



CHAPTER 1

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!

Readers, do you know that Jesus is coming again? Are you among those **“FOOLISH VIRGINS”** who are saying he would not come because after over two thousand years of His Promise, He is yet to show up. This is the absolute truth: He said He would come again (*John 14:3*); and *His word endureth forever (1Peter 1:25)*, for *Jesus Christ Himself is THE TRUTH (John14:6)*. The angels said He would come again. *“This same Jesus, in like manner that He has gone away to heaven, someday, just as He went, He will return” (Acts 1:11)*. The Holy Spirit, by the mouth of the apostles, had repeatedly said He would come again.

At His first coming, the world rejected Him. He came as a Nazarene Jew and was despised by His people. But when He comes again, He will appear as the **“BLESSED and only POTENTATE, the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS” (1Timothy 6:14-15)**. He is coming to sit upon the throne of His glory which His Father has rewarded Him with and to be admired by all those that believed in Him and to rule, in judgement and equity, all nations of the earth.

Jesus Christ is coming and it's very soon. We do not know the exact day nor hour when He will come. What

if He comes now? Would you be found of Him in peace? Will your conscience condemn you? Will you be found READY to meet Him? Or would you be left behind to endure the terrible things which shall come upon the world:

“Then there will be strange events in the skies, evil omens and portents in the Sun, the moon and stars; down here on earth the nations will be terrified and perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. The courage of many people will falter because of the fearful fate they see coming upon the earth” (Luke 21:25-26).

While Christians who have OVERCOME will be with Christ in the air, those who are not raptured will mourn, will be so terrified that they will pray to the mountains and rocks to hide them from the face of Christ. One of the solemn injunctions to Israel is *“Prepare to meet thy God”* and this is also to every one of us, both Jew and Gentile must meet Him, either in GRACE or in JUDGEMENT. If you are a Christian, then I point you to His return, as the true incentive to a holy life. Jesus is coming, *“therefore mortify your members which are upon the earth, that you may appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4-5).*

Strive and pray for purity of heart, that you may *“Be like Him and see Him as He is” (1John 3:2-3).* Search and obey the word of God, that you may be sanctified and cleansed by it and that *“your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”.* (1Thessalonians 5:23).

The grandest fact in history is that Jesus Christ, the Lord

of Glory, the absolute supreme authority of the universe has been in this world; the most important fact of the present is, He is now in Heaven making intercession for us. The greatest prophesied event of the future is that **“Jesus is COMING AGAIN!”** *And unto them that are watchfully looking forward and READY for Him shall He appear the second time” (Hebrews 9:28).*

Jesus Christ promised, *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2-3).* He gave us this promise as our HOPE AND COMFORT while He is away. He said *“In this world, you shall have tribulation... You will be sorrowful, weep and lament for certain experiences you will have but I will SEE YOU AGAIN and your heart shall rejoice” (John 16:16, 20, 22, 23).* Halleluyah! Glory be to God!!

Nothing can be more comforting to the church, the bride of Christ, than this precious promise which our Lord has left us with, that He will come and receive us unto Himself and that we shall be with Him to behold His glory. He has assured us of His promise by giving us the command to take the bread and the cup in remembrance of Him and to show His death till He comes (*1Corinthians 11:26*). We have this simple and loving memorial for a continual sign of this PROMISE, during all the earthly pilgrimage of the Church and through it, we look forward from the cross to His coming when He will drink of the cup at *“The Marriage Feast of the LAMB”* with us, in His Father's kingdom.

His precious promise is the constant reminder that points our eye of faith to His coming again. *“He is faithful that*

promised" and we are encouraged to have confidence and patience that we may "RECEIVE THE PROMISE", for yet a little while and HE that will come, will come and not tarry". Brethren, Jesus Christ is not like men who lie. He says He will come and be assured He is on His way! "Behold, the Lord Jesus Christ glorified is coming with clouds and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him with their Sword on the cross. And all tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen". (Revelation 1:7)

RAPTURE REVEALED!

One of the unfortunate happenings in Christianity today is the band of unbelievers and doubters of supernatural manifestations and encounters. Numerous pastors, ministers, reverends, vicars, bishops, preachers, men and women of God stand on the pulpit regularly to preach of the presence and awesomeness of God. They encourage the congregants to read the Bible and ask them to believe in the existence of God with whom **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. THE GOD OF THE MIRACULOUS!** Yet when someone stands up and says he or she has encountered **JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED** through supernatural manifestations, these same Christians and Church leaders are the first to stand up against such persons to say "No one can have a one-on-one supernatural encounter experience with Jesus Christ glorified".

To be strengthened by God is to be able to declare the fullness of His power in you. When you encounter the Lord through the divine light of His power, you must declare it, especially if He instructs you to do so. Every true believer and follower of Jesus Christ Glorified should

desire to have an encounter with Him; such encounter exposes you to higher supernatural dimensions of spiritual realities and elevates you from the level of believing to the level of knowing Him in a more illuminating dimension like Apostle Paul experienced on his Damascus road encounter.

Apostle Paul, who had a supernatural encounter with the risen Christ on his way to Damascus to persecute and rein terror on those who believed and followed Jesus Christ and became a convert. Paul also mentioned his **“out of body” journey to the third Heaven.** (2 Corinthians 12:1-3) Through these **SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTERS**, he believed the **REALITY OF JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED and this elevated him to a higher dimension of authoritative faith.** He never stopped at that level of a BELIEVER like many Christians do, instead he pressed further to KNOWING Him daily. So Paul graduated from the level of **BELIEVING** to that of **KNOWING HIS** Master, Saviour and Lord.

“That I may KNOW HIM and the POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto death” (Philippians 3:10).

“For this reason, I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed for I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED and I AM PERSUADED that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2Timothy 1:12).

Brethren, before you can be bold enough to boastfully say **"I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED"**. You must have experienced the supernatural one-on-one ENCOUNTER with Jesus Christ glorified.

An encounter with the greatest power in the universe, Jesus Christ glorified the SON OF GOD, is the most blessed grace after salvation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit experienced by a Christian on this earth. Everyone who seeks the truth in this crooked and perverse world must have the light of the power of the encounter either in the "BELIEVING" level or in the "I KNOW HIM" level to launch him into the reality of the divine realm.

"I had a supernatural experience where I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago, Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I do not know, only God knows. Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I know I was taken to paradise and was told things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to say ordinarily". (2 Corinthians 12: 2-3) said Apostle Paul.

Apart from Paul who believed and knows the risen Christ by the supernatural encounter, the other Apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ believed Him and know Him by the personal encounter. John testified to this when he said *"That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have*

looked upon and our hands touched, carrying the WORD OF LIFE" (1 John 1:1). John was testifying about the personal relational experiences the Apostles had with Jesus Christ (the WORD OF GOD incarnate); the **mount of TRANSFIGURATION** experience; the **Patmos supernatural encounters** that led to the writing of the Book of REVELATION.

Encounters with Jesus Christ differ as individuals differ, therefore, an encounter is designed by God in divergent ways for different individuals according to His Sovereign will and purpose. Apostle John, Paul, John Bunyan, St. Augustine, George Muller, Kenneth Hagin, Dr. T. L. OSBORN, the author of this book, other servants of God, thousands of Christians and even non-believers of Christ at different times have had different supernatural encounters with Jesus Christ glorified. God has not changed. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. The risen Lord Jesus Christ glorified is still revealing Himself supernaturally to human beings on earth.

Supernatural realities can never be understood or interpreted by human reasoning. They often compound the difficulties of those who endeavour to reason them out from their natural senses. To men whom the Lord Jesus Christ has prepared to have a PERSONAL ENCOUNTER with, there is no danger in His visitations to them or their ascents to Heaven. They see GOD THE SON and their lives are preserved. They feel His fire and are not consumed. They are overwhelmed

by the Excellency of His glory, yet survived, because of His immeasurable love and special favour towards them. This is the privilege of those who by grace have been prepared and purified for such encounters with Jesus Christ glorified. There are no special beings, only those favoured by God's choosing have this privilege.

I have been so favoured and privileged to have several visitations, encounters with our LORD and SAVIOUR – JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED since 1985, notably was that of December 26th, 2006 which spanned 100 days, especially the few times when I was taken to Heaven by Jesus Christ in an "out of body" experience. I thank our GOD and FATHER in Heaven who favoured me through His Blessed Son, Jesus Christ glorified to be availed such a blessed grace. The Lord is gracious to me and I am humbled!

BREAKING NEWS! THE RAPTURED REVEALED!!

Brethren, at about 4am on the 5th of December, 2015, the Lord Jesus Christ gave me a DREAM VISION of THE RAPTURE and the great happenings that followed. It was FEARFUL and TERRIFYING.

Suddenly, I saw the mountains, rocks, buildings being uprooted from their foundations, crashing upon human beings. There were great signs in heaven, the sun, moon and stars forced into an ominous and terrifying course; fear and terror gripped everyone, people were running helter-skelter and everywhere was chaotic with

pandemonium; the BODY OF CHRIST WAS RAPTURED and those LEFT BEHIND SCREAMING FOR HELP AND CRYING FOR MERCY. Some professing "CHRISTIANS" were amongst those LEFT BEHIND, they were crying and calling the name of JESUS CHRIST for help because the rocks and buildings were falling on them. IT WAS TOO LATE because the HOLY SPIRIT THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE WITH CHRIST WAS GONE TO HEAVEN WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Let's see the confirmation of the vision in: (Revelation 6:14-17)

"Then the sky receded like a scroll when it is rolled up and every mountain and island were moved out of their original place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, the common people hid in the caves and the mountains and said to the mountains and rocks "Fall on us and hide from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb (Jesus Christ)! For the great day of His wrath has come and who can stand?"

After this terrifying dream vision, the Lord Jesus spoke to me saying "John, I want you to see and have a foretaste of what the Rapture will look like.

1. You GO URGENTLY AND TELL THE UNSAVED SINNERS TO REPENT QUICKLY AND TURN THEIR HEARTS TO ME.
2. YOU GO AND WARNED MY PEOPLE

(CHRISTIANS) THAT "TIME IS UP" what they are enjoying now is "THE MERCY TIME OF THE FATHER". As I begin to ponder about the "Mercy Time". The Lord explained to me "John, It's LIKE THE EXTRA TIME REFEREES GIVE DURING SOCCER MATCHES AFTER THE NORMAL 90 MINUTES". Then I asked the Lord Jesus Christ about those "CLAIMING THEY ARE CHRISTIANS THAT WERE LEFT BEHIND" He said "THEY ARE THE CARNALLY MINDED AND LOVERS OF YOUR WORLD"

These Bible scriptures suffice:

"Brethren, you have NO OBLIGATION TO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH (CARNALLY). For "If" You choose to keep living carnally (In the flesh) you are lost and you will perish" (Romans 8:12-13)

Brethren, the **RAPTURE IS REAL!** Words are inadequate to explain the terrifying moments of those human beings who were left behind and unrapturable. Let's walk worthy now till the end with our **GARMENTS UNSTAINED (UNDEFILED)** so that our Lord Jesus Christ will **RETAIN OUR NAMES** in the **BOOK OF LIFE.**

"As you know how we ENCOURAGED, COMFORTED and IMPLORED everyone of you, as a Father does to his Children, THAT YOU WOULD WALK WORTHY OF GOD who called you into His kingdom and glory" (2Thessalonians 2:14)

THE CARNAL MAN

This is the second category of the human family Apostle Paul categorizes in *1Corinthians 3:1-2*. They are **spirit born**. We know of a truth that *“all men have fallen short of the glory of God”* whether good or bad, cultured or primitive, rich or poor and are therefore lost sinners in peril of eternal doom. But among the sinners saved by grace in Christ or the regenerate, Apostle Paul distinguishes two classes **CARNAL** and **SPIRITUAL**. **Both of these have crossed the borderline from sinners to Sonship.**

The carnal man is, in one sense, spiritual, in that he received the gift of the Holy Spirit in the moment of his acceptance of Christ as his personal Saviour. Though born of the Spirit, nevertheless, he lacks the properties of grace by the Spirit. He is not **TRANSFORMED** nor **RENEWED** in his mind and consequently, is unable to comprehend, relish and mature in spiritual things. A carnal saint is the one that is dominated by **SELF, WORLDLINESS, SENSUAL PERCEPTION** that ultimately results in a life of sin. He professes Christ but he is unspiritual and practices unrepentant lawlessness. He is the one who has been born again with God's life but instead of mortifying the flesh, he is being overcome by his flesh. This hinders God's salvation plan from being wholly manifested and prohibits him from realizing the full potential of it in his life as a believer.

The fleshy or carnal mind is a mind in subjection to the unregenerated nature as opposed to the new nature and results in the rejection of the provision of divine victory over the flesh which all saved people should have. **This**

UNSPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN has no power to resist the devil but easily succumbs to the influences, pleasures of the **WORLD**, the **FLESH** and enslaved by lust, eventually stumbles and then falls into apostasy.

The heart of the carnal person is in the wrong direction, instead of thinking of God's thoughts after Him; he follows the dictates of his self-life and the mindset of the world. **A carnal-minded Christian does not do things that please God; he does not enjoy the principles of God, except his natural inclinations. He is against the principles of living by the Holy Spirit but lives according to the world and the flesh; though he seldom shows some spark of religion. He professes faith in Christ, but never submits to the rules of Christ in his heart.**

The Bible says in **Romans 8:7** that **"the carnal mind is enmity against God and therefore cannot please God"**. The fall of Adam was our fall. We fell in and with him. We were equal sufferers. It is the ruin of our own house that we lament, **"The carnal mind"**, that very same mind which was once holiness and has now become carnal **"is enmity against God"**.

A carnally minded Christian stands on the platform of GRACE, betrays it to perpetuate a selfish, sinful and worldly lifestyle. He loves the opium of lasciviousness; the fear of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are at a worrisome variance with his heart in all his tempers and employment. The word of God has become a mere social message to him, it can no longer afford a guide to life. The commandments of God are confrontational to Him. Jesus said of him "His spirit is willing but his flesh is weak". A carnally minded Christian was so backslidden that he would spit at spirituality and quarrels

with sound doctrines of the church. He gets offended whenever the truth of the gospel is told. He is being held captive by these five defined enemies of his soul:

- i. The Lust of the eyes**
- ii. The Lust of the flesh**
- iii. The Pride of life**
- iv. The Love of the world**
- v. Satan and its devils**

He resembles the children of satan in every one of his conducts. He is antagonistic to the laws of God. **He might know the scriptures, communicate it, yet has no godliness in his conduct and works in order to reflect the principles of Christ: goodness, righteousness and truth.**

Let's not be CARNALLY MINDED but SPIRITUALLY-MINDED. Carnal mindedness leads to death. The Bible in the book of first Corinthians distinguished for us the status of three kinds of men: the **natural man (1Corinthians 2:14)**, the **carnal man (1Corinthians 3:1-2)** and the **spiritual man (1Corinthians 2:15-16)**. Apostle Paul has grouped the human family in the aforementioned threefold groupings.

THE NATURAL MAN

“But the Natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1Corinthians 2:14). The Bible describes this group of human beings as **those without the Holy Spirit**. Such a man we understand is unregenerated, not reborn in Christ, unrenewed, totally Adamic by nature, disposition and consciousness. The natural man is the “Old man”, the

sinner before the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, whereby the penitent, believing sinner becomes a "new man". He is called the natural because he is under the influence of unchanged and unchangeable inherited Adamic nature, which all human beings receive while they were conceived in their mother's womb and with which they were brought forth at birth. It is the essence by which all human beings were "born in sin", that is, with a conscious or unconscious bias towards evil; an inheritance from Adam and Eve who poisoned the entire human race with their SIN-GENE because of their transgressions. The natural man because of his unrenewed mind and will, is ever inclined towards the consciousness of SELF and SENSE only. The spirit of the fallen or natural man is dead and dominated by the soul and body unto sin. Since he does not have the Holy Spirit, he is helpless to divine revelation and understanding (*Jude 1:9*).

He can only obtain knowledge by senses and natural understanding because the only spirit the natural man has is "the human spirit", therefore he possesses human wisdom only. This is why he cannot understand spiritual truth. He may be learned, gentle, intelligent, eloquent and fascinating but the spiritual content of scripture is hidden from him. All his acquired education and wisdom of this world cannot help him know the deep things of God.

An unsaved man no matter how educated in sciences, arts, or even in theology is utterly incapable of receiving the simple truths of divine revelation. Such ability comes from the indwelling Spirit of God and not from his natural senses. The natural man thus represents a person whether intelligent or ignorant that has no

experience or contact with Christ as his Saviour and with the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier, Revealer, Enabler and Teacher. He does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are foolish to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

YOUR CHOICE

To share the nature of Christ is to share His Victory. We do not achieve it; we receive it, for Christ, Himself *“became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption”* (1Corinthians 1:30).

To be dominated therefore by the flesh is to be dominated by the devil and to be dominated by the Holy Spirit is to be dominated by God. The flesh is that perverted principle in human beings that perpetuates satan's proud hostility and enmity against God. In our fallen condition, every person's soul is dominated by the flesh and destitute of the Holy Spirit. We all are born in this unregenerated condition.

The Holy Spirit and the flesh are inveterate foes: *“For the flesh lust against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another”* (Galatians 5:17). That's why any step God takes to re-establish His laws in our hearts is resisted. **Therefore for a Christian to be carnally minded is a consequence of choice.** We have been informed and changed by the word of God on how we ought to conduct our lives as Christians; how to walk with the Spirit of God and how to please God. We have been told to walk worthy of the Lord if we want to make Heaven (1Thessalonians 2:18,

Revelation 3:4) We are also informed about not abusing God's Grace; though we are saved by GRACE, not by WORKS, we must not take it as liberty to perpetuate CARNALITY:

“For God did not call us into Himself through Christ to be like the children of disobedience and wrath, but He called us in HOLINESS so that we can possess our vessels in SANCTIFICATION and HONOUR in all of our duties and tempers. Therefore, any Christian who rejects this SOUND DOCTRINE did not reject the servants of God but God Himself who enabled these preachers of truth and holiness by the Holy Spirit”
(1Thessalonians 3:11-13; 4:1-8).

The soul of a born-again Christian unites with God and His will through his regenerated spirit. The soul must decide whether to obey the spirit, that is, to accept to do the will and commandments of God or yield to the flesh and all the temptations of the material world. For a Christian to become carnally minded, to remain unrepentant in that state is an audacious decision.

CHAPTER 2

THE HEAVENLY RACE

If you ask many Christians today what is their number one priority in life, it will amaze you that winning their "Heavenly Race" and making Heaven will be at the far bottom of their preference index. For the majority of them, top in their preference list are issues about life here on earth and now; it's much about temporal things not about things that pertain to making Heaven and with eternal benefits.

Apostle Paul in *1Corinthians 9:24-25* describes the Christian life as a race:

"In a race, everyone runs, but only one person gets the first prize. So run your race so that you may obtain. To win the contest you must deny yourselves many things that would keep you from doing your best and obtaining the set prize".

We continually declare that salvation is not of works, but grace. This is one of the very first doctrines of the gospel. *"Not of works, lest any man should boast". By grace are you saved, through faith and not by your self-efforts. It is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:9).*

But it is equally necessary to outline the **ABSOLUTE NECESSITY** of a religious life for the attainment of Heaven. **Although we are not saved for the sake of our works, yet we are equally sure that no man will be saved without them.** Anyone who leads an ungodly life and neglects the great salvation can never inherit that "**CROWN OF LIFE which fades not away**" (*1Corinthians 9:25*).

On one hand, **SALVATION** is wholly the **WORK OF GOD**. Yet there is a high and important responsibility through which we must "**STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE**" Jesus said it very clear in **Luke 13:24** "**the Door to Heaven is NARROW, STRIVE HARD TO GET IN**". We must **RUN A RACE**. We must wrestle even to the agony of the flesh and its desires. We must **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH** before we can **INHERIT THE CROWN OF LIFE**. The course of Christianity is set down in (**1 Corinthians 9:24**) as a race. Apostle Paul went further to explain that many are enlisted for the race but only one is rewarded. He gives us, therefore the practical exhortation **TO RUN SO THAT WE MAY OBTAIN OUR PRIZE (CROWN OF LIFE)**. He who is not a winner is a loser. He who makes a profession of being a Christian and does not at last **OBTAIN THE CROWN OF LIFE** is a loser by his profession, for his profession was hypocrisy or else a formality. There are many Christians who are running this heavenly race but are not running to obtain the

crown of life. They are just being religious.

The true Christians are distinguished from the carnally minded and the children of this world. They have no leisure for ephemeral things, they are not sucked into the vanities of this world, they are not friends of this world; their eyes are fixed and their thoughts are engaged upon THE NARROW and the STRAIT GATE to HEAVEN they have to tread and the CROWN they hope to receive; they have counted the cost and come out from the world and their only wish is to RUN AND FINISH WELL WITH THE JOY OF CERTAINTY that they will win their prize by the help of the Holy Spirit. But the carnally-minded Christian is not so, his race is threatened unless he progresses to become heavenly minded.

The Christian life is not cheap, it's not merely a race it's full of trials and tests. It's a conflict and a conflict not only with others but with oneself of which we must conscientiously endeavour to subdue our corrupt propensities, bring everything into captivity to the Redeemer.

IMPETUS FOR YOUR RACE

I will like to urge those who are already running the Heavenly race to stay focused and their eyes fixed like a flint towards the NARROW GATE that leads into Heaven. Please understand that many Christians have run the race before us and finished well winning their heavenly prize:

Apostle Paul said "Many have gone before us and we are encompassed with a great cloud of witnesses".

When zealous horses race on level wasteland, are pacing across the plain; seeking to obtain the prize, the stand is covered with multitudes of persons who are eagerly gazing upon them and no doubt the noise of those who cheer them stretches every nerve as they press on with vigour. While they run, they are surrounded by observers, supporters and spectators who cheer and urge them forward with kind voices. Likewise, many heavenly witnesses are looking down upon you as you run your heavenly race. From heaven, angels look down upon you and are crying today to you with a sweet, silvery voice, saying "You shall reap if you faint not, if you run well and end well! You shall be REWARDED if you continue steadfastly in GOOD WORKS and FAITH in Christ". Also, the saints that have arrived in Heaven look down from there upon you; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, Martyrs and confessors and your pious relatives who have gone to Heaven look down upon you, clapping their hands, bidding you be steadfast, run and overcome till the end. They clap when you have resisted temptation and overcome the enemy. I wish your spiritual eyes could be empowered to see their suspense when you are lagging in the race and you might hear their friendly word of caution as they bid you gird up the loins of your heart and lay aside every weight and still press forward, never resisting until

YOU OVERCOME TO THE END attaining the flowery beds of heaven where we enter the **REST OF CHRIST FOREVER.**

Remember, these are not only the eyes that are looking upon you. The whole world look upon a Christian. He is observed by all observers. In a Christian, every fault is seen. A worldly man may commit a thousand faults and nobody notices him, but let a Christian do so, he will soon have his faults published to the world. Everywhere men are looking at Christians and it is quite right that they should do so, "a city set on the hill cannot be hidden" The eyes of the world are upon you. "We are encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us". Also, there are darker and yet more malignant eyes that scowl upon us, there are evil spirits that are around us in the unseen realm, who are under the rule and influence of Satan the prince of the power of the Air Kingdom who watches for our sins, faults and failures to accuse us day and night before our Father in Heaven.

Let us remember again those who have gone to heaven before us, those who made it at last! Men who were of like passions; who did not neglect their daily employments and cares and

yet they gave their hearts in devotion to God. They were **HEAVENLY MINDED**. They have shown that race can always be run by those who have the will. Yes, they were flesh and blood like ourselves and yet by grace, they became new creatures; and by faith, they obtained a good report (Hebrews 11:2,39). Grace exceedingly abounded for them and they fought a good fight and finished their course and kept the faith. The race you are running has been run by millions before, they had their trials, sufferings, affliction and some were martyred. The path in which you tread has been trodden by others, the valley of the shadow of death has been securely passed by the "cloud of witnesses". "There is no temptation that befalls you that is uncommon to man", you have no excuse not to make Heaven, keep striving to enter there. Heaven is a glorious eternity you cannot miss for anything.

Considering, that your race is **WIN** or **LOSE**, **DEATH** or **LIFE**, **HELL** or **HEAVEN**, **ETERNAL MISERY** or **EVERLASTING JOY!** Knowing that you are running for your life, you need not faint but **RUN TO WIN!**

Also, in your heart, there is the need to consider the Apostle's advice to "**LAY ASIDE EVERY**

WEIGHT". By this, he means we must give up everything that is encumbering our spiritual life that can hinder our speed in our heavenly race. We must cast away everything which hinders us on the road towards Heaven; **the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life; the love of riches, worldly pleasures, men's applause, life principles and customs that are against the principles of God.** We must discard spiritual lukewarmness, carelessness with sin and indifference about the things that God instructs us on; we must mortify the deeds of our flesh, crucify our affections for this world; we must look well to our habits and inclinations and employments to find anything standing as a stumbling block between ourselves and salvation; we must quickly lay it aside no matter how much pain it will cost us. But above all, we must take heed and lay aside the sin which from our age, or habit, or taste, or disposition, or feelings, possesses the greatest power over us. There are particular besetting sins of which each Christian can furnish an account; every single one of us has some **WEAK POINT**; each of us has got a thing, a shaking spot in our wall of defense against the devil; each of us has a traitor in his camp ready to open the gates to satan and he that is wise will never rest

until he has discovered where his weak point is.

The backslider and carnally minded Christian may disregard some besetting sin. But you the child of God who is spiritually minded searches the chambers of your imagination to see whether you can find some seed of evil, some "darling sin" which you have tenderly spared, maybe you considered them as small ones. Let's do away with them now! There must be no mercy, no compromise for them. It must be laid aside, plucked up, torn up from its roots, or it will one day trip you up and prevent you from running your race towards winning your heavenly crown. All these and the love of the world must be uprooted out of our hearts and forsaken if we are eager for the prize at the end of our race.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ let us ***"Labour, therefore, to enter into this REST. Seeing that there are many who shall NOT ENTER in because of UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE" (Hebrews 4:11).***

You are to run onward, always LOOKING UNTO JESUS who waits for you at the end of the race. He holds the CROWN OF LIFE. ***"My reward is with Me" (Revelation 22:12).*** Let this word encourage and strengthen you in this race. I beseech you my

beloved, press forward, for **"I know that there is laid up for me a CROWN of LIFE which fades not and not for me alone, but for all of them that love Christ to the end and are earnestly looking forward to seeing Him"** said Apostle Paul.

A thing we are assured of; in this Christian race, is the **SUFFICIENCY OF THE GRACE OF GOD. "He will make all grace abound towards you, that you, ALWAYS having ALL SUFFICIENCY in ALL THINGS that you may have an abundance for EVERY GOOD WORK"** (2Corinthians 9:8).

The emphasis of this verse is **"ALWAYS, ALL, EVERY"** It means every provision of grace that we need to run our heavenly race and win has been provided for us in Christ before and during our race. Every wise counsel that we need has been provided and always availed to by our Heavenly Father, through the Holy Spirit if we ask in Jesus name. We also have the Holy Spirit who is our **HELPER, GUIDE, EMPOWERER and COMFORTER** always with us. **"You will guide me with your counsel and afterward receive me to glory"** (Psalm 73:24).

I beseech you to run your heavenly race well with the utmost aim to win the prize, that is the CROWN of RIGHTEOUSNESS, don't allow the brief

moments on earth to jeopardize your eternity with God. Jesus Christ glorified, our LORD and SAVIOUR is waiting to receive you.

CHAPTER 3

WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION

“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for IT IS GOD who works in you BOTH TO WILL and TO DO HIS GOOD PLEASURE” (Philippians 2:12-13).

This exhortation by Paul is not to all men but is directed to the people of God. They are epistles without a doubt directed to the saints of Christ in the universal church; to those who are already saved through a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the believers, Paul charged *“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling FOR IT IS GOD WHO WORKS IN YOU”*. In a certain sense, the salvation of every person who believes in Christ is complete without any working out on his part. **The salvation of Christ is a gift to those who believe in Him with a repentant heart, seeing that “HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK IS FINISHED” and we are complete in HIM (Colossians 2:10).** We must, however, observe that there are two parts of your salvation; the one complete - **THE COMPLETE WORK OF CHRIST!** The other as yet incomplete, though guaranteed to be brought to perfection. The first part of our salvation consists of **A WORK FOR US BY CHRIST**; the second of

A WORK IN US. The work for us is **PERFECT**. It was finished on the cross of Calvary. No one can add to it. **Jesus Christ by his VICARIOUS DEATH** on the cross at the red hill of Calvary on the outskirts of Jerusalem over 2000 years ago, offered a complete atonement for all the offenses of mankind. *"HE will be the SAVIOUR OF HIS PEOPLE"* (Matthew 1:21). He took His people, that is, those that believe in Him into union with Himself and by that union, they became entitled to all **THE MERIT OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**; they became partakers of His **EVERLASTING LIFE**, inheritors of His blessedness, the riches of His glory.

The majestic last words of our Lord Jesus on the cross **"IT IS FINISHED"** re-echoes in eternity forever. It is perfectly secured with His blood. **The eternal life in His SINLESS BLOOD** finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in **EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Thus, *"He perfected forever those who are sanctified by Him"* (Hebrews 10:14). We were never told by Apostle Paul to meddle with the complete work of Christ but to receive it by **FAITH**. The blessings of **THE SAVING GRACE** from Christ comes to him who works not, but **BELIEVES IN HIM**, who justifies the ungodly. **Therefore, Justification is not at all by human efforts but by the FREE GIFT OF GOD.**

Nevertheless, the second part of salvation consists of **A WORK IN US** and this is the operation of **God the Holy**

Spirit. Thus, Salvation is like the two sides of a coin. What this simply means is: the first side of the coin is **Christ's complete WORK OF SALVATION FOR US.** The second side is the **TRANSFORMATIONAL WORK IN US which is the RENEWING OF OUR MIND. This is done through the DIVINE AGENCY of the HOLY SPIRIT.**

“But, when the time came for the kindness and love of God our SAVIOUR to appear, then He SAVED US not because we were good enough to be saved but because of His KINDNESS and MERCY, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”
(Titus 3:4-6).

Since the primary purpose of God is to make all that is reborn in Christ become His children, they are to conform to the image of His Son Jesus Christ who is the firstborn among God's children (**Romans 8:29**). We are predestined by God to be the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ; we are children of the Most High God; Christ is the express image of His Father; we must be like Christ if we are God's children. This implies when the scripture in (Ephesians 2:10) says *“We are RECREATED IN CHRIST unto DOING GOOD WORKS, which have been preplanned for us by God before the foundation of the world”*. Those who are saved by the Lord Jesus Christ are recreated to produce good works, thus, bear fruits of righteousness without which **FAITH IS DEAD** (James 2:17) and all pretenses to a **SAVING**

CHANGE are not only **VAIN** but **INSOLENT**. Yet it testifies to us that our Salvation and acceptance with God is not to be ascribed to these, but His Divine Mercy. This mercy operates by sanctifying our hearts, through the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures in (Philippians 2:12) speaks of working out "Your Salvation". Now, the matter to be worked out is something which Apostle Paul says have been worked inside every obedient believer in Christ. The first business of a Christian should be to see that all his graces are in a vigorous condition, that repentance always weeps for sin, that faith always looks to the cross, that patience becomes stronger to bear her cross, that hope's eyes are clear to behold the coming glory. We are never to sit down and fold our arms and say "My Life Work is over; I am saved; I have no race to run to the celestial city of Heaven; I have no war to wage against the enemies of my soul which are not flesh and blood". We know the time of our rest will come after we arrive in Heaven to meet Christ and the saints who have gone ahead of us, but before then it is for you to press forward like the racer whose prize is not yet won and to war like a warrior whose conflict is not yet ended.

We work out, bring out, educe from within ourselves to our exterior life, that which God constantly works inside us in the interior secret recesses of our spiritual being. We walk out our Salvation by exhibiting

externally the indwelling life of Christ inside us. Working out within your soul that which God has worked in you. **YOU HAVE FAITH**, work it out then, act like a believer and trust God in daily life. **YOU POSSESS THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED**, bring its fruits out then, let your whole conduct be incorruptibly pure and heavenly. Be Christlike, in as much as the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. This is the matter Apostle Paul says we must attend to "**Working out Your Salvation with fear and trembling**" the life of bringing out, the working out and developing the divine grace which God has worked in you when you got reborn in Christ.

The scripture further says "Work out your Salvation "with fear". What kind of fear is that? Brethren, this is not the kind of fear that 'has torment' and is cast out by perfect love. The fear Paul speaks about here is that which is to offend a good and merciful God, that is, a childlike fear reverential of offending. This is the fear which is to be cultivated by us. It is not the fear induced by the enemy, but it is the fear which is **OPPOSED TO CARNAL SECURITY, LICENTIOUSNESS, GLARING ABUSE OF GOD'S GRACE** and ungodly lifestyle.

We are also commanded to "**work out, our salvation with trembling**". What kind of trembling? Is that the slave's trembling? No, such belongs not to heirs of divine grace. **Before the Lord, we are heirs of Salvation, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, we do not tremble with fright, but**

we are moved to quaking with holy awe! Under a sense of the presence of God we tremble lest we should sin, we tremble lest, that presence of our Holy God should leave, lest we should grieve the Holy Spirit and vex the Almighty God our Heavenly Father.

A true Christian and converted believer of Christ, Holy Spirit filled, knows what it is to contend with sin under a divine impulse and to be filled with tremulous anxiety while wrestling with this foe. Sin is to be trembled at and God also, so that there is a double cause for solemn awe in the business of sanitizing the chambers of our soul. Brethren **"Working out our salvation with fear and trembling"** is a blessed and good work for every obedient Heavenly minded Christian, otherwise, faith will be dead.

GRACE NOT A LICENSE TO SIN!

"For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:14,15).

Brethren in Christ, the essence and substance of the true Gospel is the DOCTRINE OF GOD'S GRACE. Grace is the theme of the Gospel. It is the soul of the Gospel, without it, the Gospel is not worth preaching, not worth believing. Without Grace, the gospel will be meaningless. God out of free favour provided the

atoning death of His Son Jesus Christ to justly bestow His mercy on sinful mankind. He accepts all those who place their **FAITH** in **His atonement as the way of SALVATION**, that it may be **ALL BY GRACE**. Everything in God's plan of redemption for the fallen man is the salvation of man's soul from the curse of sin and death is of **GRACE** and **Grace alone!** All is of divine charity from God, nothing of merit, that is, no self-effort from man. It is entirely God's plan, His prerogative that men are to be saved by **DIVINE MERCY**; that they must, as condemned criminals receive pardon by the exercise of His mercy or else perish in their sins. This is what gives birth to the doctrine of **JUSTIFICATION**. Every man faces the judgement seat of God and must answer to God for himself. The church cannot shield him from this. Every man is a sinner by nature and practice, a non-conformist so far as God's law is and can only expect God's wrath and rejection.

JUSTIFICATION is God's judicial act of pardoning the guilty sinner accepting him as **RIGHTEOUS** and receiving him as a son. The **SOURCE OF JUSTIFICATION** is **GRACE**, not human initiative or effort. The ground of justification is Christ's **VICARIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS** and **BLOOD SHEDDING ATONEMENT**, not man's merit. **THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION IS FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST** as **LORD** and **SAVIOUR**. Nevertheless, the fruit of faith, the evidence of its reality is a **MANIFESTED REPENTANCE** and a life of **GOOD WORKS** (*Ephesians 3:20; James 2:24*).

There is a worrisome and devilish trend in the church today, some false teachers and apostles are teaching a false doctrine of "**cheap grace**". They have armed themselves with the message of "**ONCE SAVED EVER SAVED**". Those who are preaching that the Grace of God is a license for Christians to perpetuate SIN LIFE because their present and future sins have been paid for by the atonement of Christ through the shedding of blood; that Christ has forgiven their sins, so they can disobey and rebel against God's commandments carelessly. **These irrational graceless hands are perverting every truth of God; turning the Grace of God into lasciviousness. It is a true saying: Morals must be in a poor way when immoral persons become their guardians! What these false teachers are preaching is that, the more loving God is, the more rebellious we may be; they feel that against the God of Goodness and Mercy it is a good thing to rebel against His laws. They say "You are Saved, you can steal, lie, commit adultery, murder, be proud, hate, live in unforgiveness, commit robbery, abort unwanted babies, just at your whims; practice covetousness, drunkenness, homosexuality, rape, practice witchcraft and idolatry" etc. They claim it does not matter because your sins have been forgiven. GO AHEAD, BE CARELESS, SIN AGAINST GOD YOUR SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN!**

SANCTIFICATION IN HOLINESS

These false teachers of the doctrine of "**CHEAP GRACE**" deliberately give prominence alone to the doctrine of

JUSTIFICATION while deliberately undermining the doctrine of **SANCTIFICATION** and **HOLINESS**. So much is said about a **SAVIOUR**, as if the **GOSPEL** was meant simply to **SAVE MEN FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN AND NOT FOR THEM TO REPENT FROM THEIR SIN**. We know the gospel presents salvation and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. We know that its chief relation to men is to **SAVE THEM FROM THEIR SIN** and to become their **SANCTIFICATION**, but that's not all. It first of all demands that all should come to **REPENTANCE** of their sins before accepting salvation in Christ. Everywhere in Scripture, Christ and the Apostles always preach **REPENTANCE** before **REMISSION** (Cancellation and Forgiveness of Sin).

"For God did not call us to uncleanness but into HOLINESS" (1Thessalonians 4:7)

Brethren, this is absolute truth: the **Grace of God** that gives birth to the pardoning of those who put their faith in Christ, leads them to **REPENT** and **HATE SIN**, God's grace gives a heart to **LOVE HOLINESS**, not the **LIBERTY** to **LOVE** and **PERPETUATE SIN**. Grace enables a true believer of Christ to choose against the **FORCE AND DOMINION OF SIN**. The doctrines of Grace, the whole plan of salvation by grace promotes **TRUE REPENTANCE AND HOLINESS**. Wherever God's grace reigns, it helps us to say, "**GOD FORBID**" to

the question *"Shall we continue in sin because we are not under the law but under grace"?*

When we preach salvation to the vilest of men, some suppose we only mean a mere deliverance from hell and an entrance into heaven. Though it means all that results in that, that is not what we mean! *What we mean by salvation is this: deliverance from the love of sin, rescue from the habit of sin, freedom from the desire of sin.* Brethren, if the gift of DIVINE GRACE is the gift of deliverance from sin, in what way will that gift produce sin or license the practice of sin? Let's do away with prudish morals of those who are preaching that grace warrants Christians to live ungodly and wicked lifestyles and enjoying their sins and yet escape the penalty. These are false teachers from the realm of hell even if they look like angels of light. Apostle Paul whom Christ gave the message of the DOCTRINE OF GRACE never preached the GRACE that approves perpetuating SINFUL LIFESTYLES, neither did any of the Bible Apostles nor Old Testament prophets. Paul warned us against the emergence of this gang of false teachers with sugar-coated messages:

"For the time will come when people will not like to hear sound doctrine, listen to the truth, but will go around looking for teachers, preachers who will tell them just what they want to hear. They would not listen to what the Bible says but will blithely follow the misguided

ideas of fables and false doctrines" (2Timothy 4:3-4).

Apostle Peter also forewarned against these false teachers: **who proudly boast about their SINS, their comfort with perpetuating their SINFUL LIFESTYLES and conquests and using LUST as the bait, they lure back into sin those believers who have escaped from such sinful living:**

"You are not saved by being good, by living right they say to their audience; so you might as well live your sin life and don't worry about it. DO WHAT YOU LIKE, SIN FREELY! But these very false teachers who offer this message of "FREEDOM FROM THE LAW OF GOD" are themselves slaves to sin and destruction. When a person has escaped from the wicked and sinful ways of the world by hearing about Jesus Christ, believe in Him, then goes back to entangle with the ways and sin of life of the world and becomes slaves to it again, he is worse off than he was before. He fits the proverb that says "A dog returns to its vomit" (2Peter 2:18-20).

Apostle Paul, the one that revealed the GRACE doctrine has this to say to these **FALSE "CHEAP GRACE DOCTRINE"** teachers, preachers and followers:

"For the FREE GIFT OF ETERNAL SALVATION is now being offered to everyone; and along with this FREE GIFT

OF GRACE COMES THE REALISATION that GOD WANTS US TO TURN FROM UNGODLINESS, UNRIGHTEOUS LIVING and SINFUL PLEASURES and LIVE GOOD AND GODFEARING LIFE DAY AFTER DAY" (Titus 2:11).

Brethren, there is nowhere in the Bible that God has condoned SIN nor given GRACE to His people to live ungodly, unrighteous, sin pleasure lifestyle. No Apostle of the New Testament scriptures ever preached the doctrine of grace that licensed Christ's believers and disciples to live an ungodly and sinful lifestyle. They all encouraged them to live holy lives daily pleasing to Christ. They warned them about the consequences of "GOING BACK TO THEIR OLD VOMIT" that is, their old life which was premised on SINFUL LUST that Christ gave them escape.

Apostle Paul said:

"Try to stay out of quarrels and seek to live a clean and holy life, for one who is not holy will not see the Lord.... Watch out that no one becomes involved in sexual sin or becomes careless about God as Esau did" (Hebrews 12:15-16).

Brethren to play with sin, to be careless and carefree about sin is to be abusive of God's grace and joking with the severity of God. Whoever deliberately abuses God's grace by so doing takes God's love and mercy for granted will suffer for it. We have been made holy to live

holy lives by God's GRACE. God's Grace teaches and empowers us through the Spirit of Grace, the Holy Spirit to do GOOD WORKS not to earn SALVATION, but to live a holy life, love holiness because we are free from the DOMINION OF SIN AND ITS ENSLAVEMENT; we are free to DO GOOD THINGS and BEAR FRUITS of RIGHTEOUSNESS. This is the privilege and inheritance of God's people, not a harsh law. Holy living is the response of God's chosen and special people to the redeeming love and immeasurable grace of Jesus Christ. Moreover, it's irreconcilable to LOVE GOD AND NOT LOVE HOLINESS. Thus, GRACE is to make us burn with zeal and enthusiasm to do good works that will please, honour and glorify God. *"God the Father has chosen you before the foundation of the world and foreknew you would become His children.*

And the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of GRACE HAS BEEN AT WORK IN YOUR HEARTS CLEANSING YOU WITH THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST AND MAKING YOU DO THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM" (1Peter 1:2).

This is absolute truth, God freely and of infinite Grace is willing to renew men and women and make them a new creature in Christ Jesus! No matter our past condition, God can renew us according to the power of His grace so that we who are to him like dry bones can be made to live by His spirit. That renewal, "NEW CREATURE" we have in Christ will be seen in holy thoughts, pure words and our righteous acts to the glory of God.

"Be holy in all your conducts" (1Peter 1:15).

Truly, Christians that love God and desire to please Him WILL NOT LOVE SIN BUT GRAVITATE TOWARDS LOVING HOLINESS. INIQUITY IS MADE TO BE EXCEEDINGLY BITTER BEFORE IT IS FORGIVEN OR WHEN IT IS FORGIVEN. WHEN GOD BEGINS TO DEAL WITH A MAN WITH A VIEW OF BLOTTING OUT HIS SINS AND MAKING HIM HIS CHILD, HE USUALLY CAUSES HIM TO SEE HIS SINFUL AND EVIL WAYS IN ALL THEIR HEINOUSNESS AND DEMANDS A GENUINE HEART OF REPENTANCE. True! Absolute Truth!!

SANCTIFICATION is a process; a progression. The law of growth is a fundamental principle of all nature and redemption. The experience of the soul is growth. True, it must have a starting point. We cannot grow into Christianity; we must first be born from above and then grow. And so sanctification is a progression and yet has a beginning. Christ is completely formed within His true believers, but we begin as infants in Christ and grow up to the maturity of a perfect man in our life journey here on earth until our spirit exits to meet our creator. This perfecting process is made possible with the help of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is Holy, His works in a Christian will always gravitate towards holiness, it cannot be otherwise.

In 2 Corinthians 6:11, Apostle Paul said *"Let your heart also be enlarged"* It's only the truly consecrated Christian

that grows. The others tread the ceaseless circle of the wilderness. **Consecration by sanctification is experienced by the Christian who has wholly died to SELF AND SIN and has taken Christ for full salvation and is ALLOWING CHRIST TO WORK IN HIM TO DO GOOD WORKS (BEAR FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS) John 15:1-5.** The more we live a sanctified life the more we manifest the fullness of the LIFE OF CHRIST.

Finally, brethren, the operations of God's grace in a Christian's life is to make him or her hate sin and its imaginary pleasures and to be wary of it and this is readily possible with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit inside them. We can therefore boldly say **"WE ARE NOT SAVED BY CHRIST TO DO WHATEVER WE LIKE, WE ARE SAVED FROM SATAN, THE POWER OF SIN, BUT GIVEN THE POWER TO SERVE GOD WITH REVERENTIAL FEAR AND OBEDIENCE"**.

THE CONTINUITY OF GOD'S LAW

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily, I say to you until heaven and earth pass away, not one dot or line shall pass away from the law without being fulfilled. Whoever breaks the least of these commandments and teaches men to also break them shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does these commandments and teaches them, he shall be

called GREAT in the kingdom of Heaven" Jesus said these words in (Matthew 5:17-19).

Although, born again or regenerated believers are delivered from the curse burden of the law which is a covenant of works, they are as well neither justified nor condemned by it. Nevertheless, the moral law is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ who fulfilled it and endures the curse in their place and for their good. This must provoke them to more thankfulness to Christ and their obligation to obey the laws. The laws of God are not burdensome nor are they wicked. *The practical benefits of obedience to all God's laws are entirely contributive to human good and fulfilling to those who apply them to their lives because it prescribes holy things; just in propounding rewards and punishments and good in respect to the end, leading to holiness and happiness. We must also understand that God who is the author of the law, is Holy, just and good; so is the doctrine or matter contained in the law. Thus, the Law of God is Holy in principle, requirement, operation and tendency as a whole and each commandment bears His character, expressed mind and will, because He is infinitely Holy and requires only what is holy and pure (Micah 6:8).*

"But we know that the law of God is good, if we use it lawfully. The law of God is holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12; 1Timothy 1:8).

The Old Testament with its emphasis on the Law was not devoid of grace. The new covenant with its emphasis on Grace is not devoid of the Law. Therefore, law and grace functions in the lives of God's people, noting that the law and the gospel are only different concerning the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION, but agree regarding the doctrine of SANCTIFICATION IN HOLINESS: God's law continues as a guide and rule, even unto those who are regenerated believers in Christ.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW:

- To reveal sin (1Timothy 1:8)
- To humble sinners and drive them to Christ.
- To teach believers (Christians justified by Christ) their duties.
- To reflect, restrain and reprove believers defects (weakness).
- To keep them humble and dependent on Christ.
- To spur believers forward in obedience, living godly and pleasing lives that glorify God.

God in His majesty, mercy and loving kindness cannot give what is not good to man. His laws are good. They still reveal His divine purposes for the lives of His children. The Christian liberty in Christ does not release Christians from obedience to the LAWS OF GOD, but it only releases them from the curse of (SIN DEATH) and bring them the SPIRIT OF LIFE which enables them to obey the LAWS OF GOD. The Spirit of

LIFE is the Spirit of GRACE, the HOLY SPIRIT that indwells Christians, that works out the DIVINE POWER AND NATURE OF CHRIST IN THEIR NEW LIFE in CHRIST.

IT IS WORTHY TO NOTE THAT:

- Christ freed us from the law as a covenant of works, that is, as a condition upon which we should expect life through its obedience.
- Christ freed us from the law in its curses against the lawbreakers (*Galatians 3:10*); in the account that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ" (*Romans 8:1*)
- Christ freed us from the law in its "**indictments and accusations**", particularly unto condemnation though it still **convicts** and **humbles** us.

No matter how much liberty GRACE has given to believers, they are not freed from the moral law as the authoritative guide for their lives. The law of God is the very gate of heaven: "*Blessed are they that do the commandments of God, that they may have the RIGHT to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city of Heaven*" (*Revelation 22:14*).

Therefore, though we are justified by faith in Christ alone and not by good works of obeying the law; nevertheless, our justifying faith must produce a holy

life (bearing good works) in us. Apostle John warns in *1John 2:4* "*those who claim to know God but do not keep His commandments are liars*". Finally, it is true that our liberty in Christ because of grace does not release us from obedience to the law. God's grace gives us the Holy Spirit to enable us to obey God's law, hate sin and lawlessness.

Divine life comes from God and He has richly given us in His beloved Son Jesus Christ "All things that pertain to ETERNAL LIFE". God desires nothing else than we enter into deep communion with His Son Jesus.

We have access to the very heart and love of God the Father, therefore the object of our fellowship with Him must be to have more of Him in our lives. This will only be possible if our knowledge of Him and trust in Him is grounded and rooted in GOD'S MARVELOUS LOVE.

Our Christian life becomes deeper in the measure by which we allow the Holy Spirit WORKING-IN-US the things that please and glorifies God. In its simplest term deeper, spiritual life is to kill the flesh daily by taking it to the Cross and to enter into deeper fellowship with God and Christ by the help of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE

Practicing a deeper Christian life devoted to God is a sacred duty demanded of all Christians who are watchfully preparing for the second coming of Jesus Christ glorified. A deeper Christian life is that of devotion, personal holiness, charity and doing good works. It is the life that is God-centered and Christ-minded. It is that which is lived wholly to glorify and please God. It is not the life of SELF and SELF-PLEASING. A devout Christian does not live to please himself or pursue the way and the spirit of the world but to do the sole will of God. He considers God first in every of his conduct, employment, he serves God in everything, makes all the parts of his common life parts of sincere piety, under such rules as are comfortable to God's glory.

It is very observable that scriptures abound in the Holy Bible mentioning that God calls us to Himself and it is a call to a life devoted to bringing Him Honour and glory. Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ and His Apostles taught doctrines that differ from worldly lifestyles. This is to enable the Christian to renounce the world and all its goods, to hate all of its evils, to reject its pleasures and

have no value for its revelry, to live as pilgrims in spiritual watching, in holy fear, aspiring for another life in heaven, to take up our cross daily, to deny ourselves, to profess the blessedness of spiritual sanctity, to seek the blessedness of poverty of spirit, to forsake pride and vanity of earthly riches, but set our mind on the true riches of Heaven, to take no thoughts and worries for tomorrow, to live in the most profound state of humanity, to rejoice in worldly sufferings, to reject the lust of the flesh, the lust of eyes and the pride of life, to forgive and bless our enemies and love mankind as God loves them; to give up our whole hearts and affections to God and strive to enter through the STRAIT GATE into a life of ETERNAL GLORY.

Our call to the life of devotion unto God must be our sacred obligation. This will enable us to understand that the discipline of the SPIRIT LIFE does not allow us to live in the common ways of men, conforming to the folly of customs, gratifying passions and lifestyles in which the unsaved people who are possessed by the spirit of the world delight and practice. It also enables us to know that all the virtues of grace worked out in us by the Holy Spirit can make us live above and contrary to the world, in all common actions of our lives. This is God's word: TO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH IS DEATH; TO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH THE GOD (Galatians 6:8, James 4:4).

If our daily life is not a common course of humility, self-denial, renunciation of the world, poverty of spirit, charity and heavenly affection, we do not live the lives of Christians. Though this sacred duty of Christians devoting their lives wholly to God is thus plainly stated and this alone is true Christianity when all the aforementioned virtues are visibly practiced by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet it is unfortunate and worrisome that this kind of life is increasingly lacking amongst the generality of today Christians. You see them often at church and pleased with fine preachers, but looking into their lives you discover that they are not different from unsaved people of the world or the carnally minded Christians. They have the same taste of the world, the same worldly cares and worries, the same mindset, equally vain in their desires. You see them having the same fondness for state and equipage, the same pride and vanity of dress, the same self-love and indulgence, the same foolish friendships, groundless hatreds and gossips, the same levity of mind, trifling spirit, the same idle dispositions and reveling as the rest of the world.

Hence, Apostle Paul said *"To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient and disqualified for every good work"* (Titus 1:15-16).

Brethren, to have the right notions and lifestyles with relation to this world, is as essential as religion has the right notions of God. It is as possible for a man to worship a snake and yet be a pious man, displaying so much piety and dutifulness in the church. Nevertheless, if the doctrines of Christianity are dutifully and devotedly practiced, they would make a man as different from other people, as to all worldly lifestyles, sensual pleasures and the pride of life; just as a wise spiritual minded Christian is different from the natural man whose common life and sensitivity are enslaved in folly.

For it is malignant notoriety that so many Christians are now not only like men of this world in their common conduct, in their frailties, weaknesses and moral depravity, though this is very worrisome, the real complaint is, they are like heathens in all the main and chief articles of their course of life. They are lovers of the world and live every day in the same mannerism, same designs, same indulgences just as those who do not know God that lives. We must repent, we cannot worship and pray as Christians and live like heathens. We must be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, as we watchfully wait for the coming again of Christ.

"You are the light of the world, a city that is set on the hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it

under a basket but on a lamp stand and it gives light to all who are around. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE before MEN that they may SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS and glorify Your Father in Heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

A man's character is the end for which he lives. Now a man who lives unrepentantly in any sin and any form of SELF-PLEASING and SELF-SEEKING way, cannot be a Christian. He must be devoted to God and deliberately shun every appearance of evil and thoroughly withdraw from all forms of sin and ungodliness. This is his reasonable service unto God. He must be living to please God; living for God; living for the same end that Christ lives; identifying with Christ and everything good that Christ stands for. This is the character of a true Christian; this is the transformational work inside a true Christian, wrought out by the Holy Spirit. If the love of God rules in our hearts, Jesus Christ says we should obey His commandments.

Personal Holiness is a product of DIVINE GRACE. Grace promotes holiness and not ungodliness, licentiousness and evil ways in the life of a true Christian. The man who is seeking to be SANCTIFIED, desires to be searched that he may not be resting in any degree upon an uncertain and unsafe foundation because he is more afraid of sin than anything else; he is more ready to forsake sin, than anything else in the world. Don't say this is extreme because it is a universal

truth, if religion implies supreme love to God, that is, if we supremely love any being, we shall supremely delight to please him. This is the universal characteristic of the children of God doing His will and pleasing Him. Grace saved us from sin and did not entrench us to it. Before hope can be cherished, the conditions of salvation must be fulfilled. **YOU WILL NEVER BE SAVED AT ALL UNLESS YOU ARE SAVED FROM SIN. YOU MUST BECOME HOLY TO BECOME HAPPY. WHEN YOU BECOME HOLY THEN YOUR PEACE SHALL FLOW LIKE A RIVER.** When we give up our sins, give our heart to God and rely upon the truth, then the peace which passes all understanding shall rule in our hearts.

The Christian is a redeemed man. He was one of those for whom Christ became surety in the eternal '**COVENANT OF REDEMPTION**', to pay his debts, to pay for the penalty of his sin; to earn him life and to free him from **SIN'S GUILT** and who now lives inside him to deliver him from **SIN'S POWER**. **If redemption by Christ is the heart of Christian doctrine, then faith and love to Christ must be the heart of Christian devotion. The Christian is a REGENERATED MAN, a NEW CREATURE in Christ. A new principle of life, the habit of obedience, has been implanted in him. His old nature (lifestyle) that disobeys, dodges and defies God's law and the truth is crucified with Christ.**"*Old things are pass away*" (2Corinthians 5:17). This is the prophesied circumcision

of the heart (Romans 2:29). Whereas the blindness, obstinacy and stubbornness is sin, that is in us by nature, with the prejudices which possess our minds and affections, hinder us from conversion unto God, but by this circumcision of our heart, they are taken away at our first act of true, saving faith in Jesus Christ. Our conscious conversion is its immediate result. This act is directly caused by the Holy Spirit that now dwells inside the Christian, working a regenerative operation in the depths of his being.

Anyone who experiences a NEW BIRTH receives the Holy Spirit to maintain a victorious holy lifestyle, patterned after that of Christ. Regeneration makes a man's heart a battlefield, where 'the flesh' (the Old man) tirelessly disputes the supremacy of 'the spirit' (the New Man). The Christian cannot gratify the one without interference from the other (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:23). Sin, from which by repentance a Christian has formally disassociated himself, seems to take on a life of its own; Apostle Paul likens it to a person, a living person, called "the old man" with his faculties and properties, his wisdom, craft, subtlety, strength yet active and insistent. The 'old man' is always at work in the heart; a temporary lull in its assaults means, not that it is dead; he is a monster that is very much alive. Sin is never quiet; its strategy is to induce a false sense of security as a prelude to a surprise attack. Sometimes a soul thinks or hopes that he may through grace be

utterly free from this troublesome "old man" upon some secret enjoyment of God, some full supply of grace, some deep affliction, some thorough humiliation, the poor soul begins to hope that it shall now be freed from the law of sin, but after a while, the monster called sin acts again, makes good use of its old station - the FLESH.

God's ultimate purpose for the Christian during his life on earth is SANCTIFICATION to make them CONFORM WITH THE IMAGE OF CHRIST. Sanctification is the immediate work of the Holy Spirit of God on the soul of believers, purifying and cleansing of their old natures from the pollution and uncleanness of sin, renewing in them the IMAGE OF CHRIST, thereby enabling them from a spiritual and habitual principle of grace to HATE SIN, to YIELD OBEDIENCE UNTO GOD. Our holiness then becomes the FRUIT and EFFECT of this work:

"For God is at work within you, helping you to obey Him and also helping you to do what He wants"

(Philippians 2:13).

Thus, holiness is nothing but the implanting, writing and realizing of the gospel in our souls; that is, the WORD OF GOD changed into GRACE in our hearts; the "Holy Spirit working in us both to will and do the things that please GOD".

Holiness is both God's promised gift and man's

prescribed or given duty, neither can we perform our duty herein without the **GRACE OF GOD**. He who would be holy must have due regard both to God's law, which is itself holy, just, good, binding and imperatively requires him of all those good works of which holiness consists and to God's promise of strength through Christ to keep this law. Sanctification has a double aspect. Its first side is **VIVICATION**, that is, the growing and maturing of the **NEW MAN**, it's another side is **MORTIFICATION**, that is, the weakening and killing of the **OLD MAN (FLESH)**. We grow in grace by the deliberate stirring up and exercise of the **NEW POWERS** and **INCLINATIONS** which **REGENERATION** by the Holy Spirit has implanted in us.

The frequency of our acts naturally increases and strengthens some of our habits, whether they are good or sinful, or spiritual e.g. faith, hope, love, it is so, moreover, by God's help they grow and thrive as we exercise them. **The Christian, therefore, in his dutiful devotion must use the means of grace assiduously, reading, meditating, watching, praying, worshipping, he must incline his heart to all-round, all-day conformity to God's revealed will and he must persevere in it with resolution and resilience.** Yet, he must remember the power to do all there is from God, not himself and he must do it all in the spirit of prayerful dependence, or else he

will fail. This is because "*without Christ, he can do nothing*" (John 15:5).

The actual help and internal operation of the Holy Spirit in the life of a true believer in Christ are necessary unto the PRODUCING of every HOLY ACT of their minds, will and affection, in every duty whatsoever. This continual assistance could be withheld from those who forget their need for it and omit to ask for it. Seeking to grow in grace means battling directly against the world, just as mortifying sin means battling directly against the flesh. Thoughts must therefore be guarded, the heart must be watched and habits of disciplined meditation formed, otherwise one will never be able to sustain the spiritual mindedness that is the main key of true growth in the life of GRACE and HOLINESS.

For a Christian to experience a devoted life, the CROSS and the HOLY SPIRIT must be two focal realities. Christ merited the gift of the Holy Spirit to the redeemed and elect sinner by dying for him; the Holy Spirit comes to the believer in Christ to show him what the CROSS reveals of Christ's love for him; also to bring home to him the PARDON Christ won for him, to change his heart and to make him love his Saviour. On the eve of Christ's coming, we are summoned to sacred duty, to live a life wholly devoted to Christ, so that He will commend us thus: "*Well done faithful servant*" "*Enter the Kingdom your Father has prepared for you*".

THE CHRISTIAN ZEAL

**"It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good"
(Galatians 4:18)**

Apostle Paul said to Titus: "*Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His own, zealous to do WHAT PLEASES GOD*" (Titus 2:14). Jesus told the Laodicean Christians "**Be zealous and repent**" (Revelation 3:19) Christ pleaded the cause for zeal for His believers.

Zeal was in our veins for what we love and against what we hate. Zeal is an enforced passion, an inner force within a man that propels him into action. We so passionately love some things, such as family, careers, reading, sports, charity, houses, etc. and we are willing to make considerable sacrifices for them. Conversely, we hate oppression, a bad political or personal decision, or gross injustice. But Christians are not called to generic zeal but to godly or sacred zeal, which is simply missing today in Christendom. **Zeal in Christianity is a burning desire to please God, to do His will and to advance His glory in the world in every Holy Spirit inspired way. It is a desire which is not natural to man. It is a desire the Holy Spirit puts in the hearts of every believer when they convert to Christ in their heart.**

Zeal is the fire of the soul. I love to call it "THE ELECTRICITY OF THE SOUL". Every man and woman

in the world is set on fire of hell or baptized by the fire of the Holy Spirit for heaven. Zeal is the running of the soul. If you are not zealous for God, you will be zealous for the things of the world. Zeal is a qualification that should attend us in the exercise of grace and the performance of every duty. The Christian zeal enlivens and compels, stirs and empowers, directs and governs us as it sets our affections ablaze for the glory of God and the good of His church and mankind at large.

The Christian must not be zealous in one or two things; rather we are to be zealous in all graces, in all virtues and against all vices and sin. This type of zeal is what is lacking in the Church and Christian hearts nowadays. Who amongst us has not seen the decay? Who cannot see a difference between the ancient church and the modern church? In the former days, a fire burned within the hearts of Christians, but nowadays our hearts seldom. Hitherto, Christians seemed fired up by a holy passion, but now little seem to motivate us except selfish pleasures, love of self, the world and money. Christians of old were at war with their sins and strove for holiness by heavenly strength, but we seem to tolerate sin rather easily and make it our lifestyle and are satisfied to do the minimum of what God requires of us. The fashions, vogue, the social engineering of society have manipulated our conduct and mindset. The Church is gradually succumbing to the affronts of modernity and cultures. Some churches are ready to change holy and

biblical doctrines to placate the demands of the changes of modern civilization that are being fashioned by the anti-Christ. What has happened? God did not change, the power of salvation did not change; the threat of the enemy did not change, it has even intensified. Why are so many Christians drowsy rather than being on fire for God? Christians who are baptized by fire by Jesus Christ are displaying smokes instead of holy fire. Their fervent pursuit of earthly possessions, the opium of sensual pleasures, the allurements of ephemeral vanities have doused the fire of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Like the church in Laodicea, too many of us have grown lukewarm. We are not zealous for the things of God. Are we no longer zealous for the honour and glory and holiness of God? Where is the zeal to cut off the offending hand and pluck out the offending eye? Where is the zeal for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom which overcomes all obstacles and perseveres to the end? Where is the zeal, that electrifying enthusiasm to witness Christ to the unsaved after we received our salvation? Where is the zeal that makes us hunger and taste for righteousness? Where is our reverential fear of God? Where is that old-time zeal that makes a Christian cry for the touch and visitation of the Holy Spirit? How often do we now romance sin and gauge its consequences with levity? Our lives are no longer marked by a dogged passion for Christ, nor do we reflect the sacrifices necessary to strengthen, embolden the true Christian zeal.

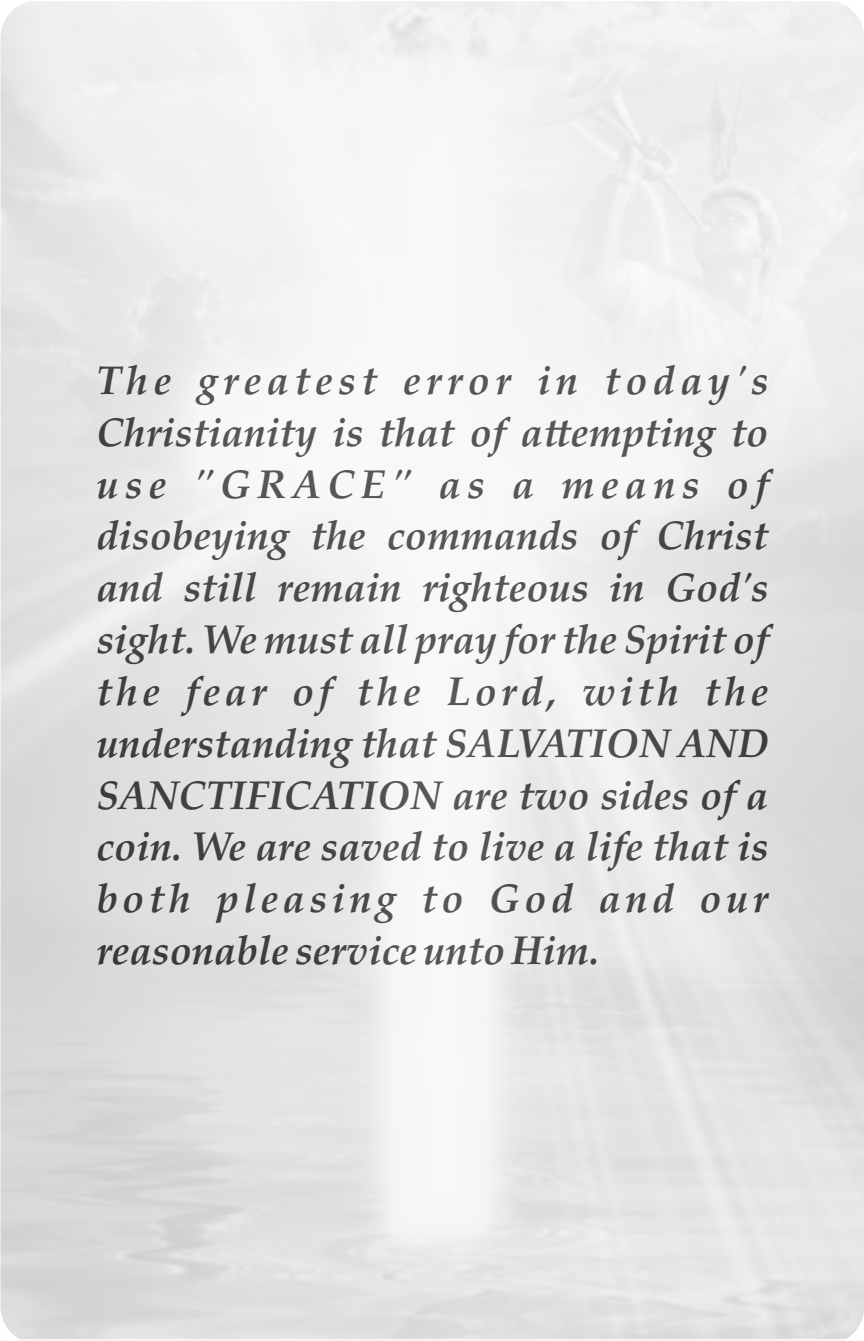
Given the lukewarm spiritual temperature of the church today, we could safely assume that most Christians have decided that **holy zeal** is not necessary, sadly there is a new generation that sees it as "old fashion" or being "legalistic". **Are you as zealous about God's glory as you are about your reputation? Are you as zealous about communing with the Holy Spirit as you are in talking and gossiping with friends? Many Christians pant after the dust of the earth; they pant for cares of the world; they invest their time hugely in social media surfing; other sports and pass time, they are also eager in their pursuit of the world that they almost run out of breath (Psalm 59:6). Oh! how many are panting after the earth and its things, yet have no breathe to run the heavenly race?**

Some have blind zeal, which Apostle Paul describes in **(Romans 10:2)** as pretending to honour God without truly knowing Him. People with such zeal make great sacrifices, yet they fall into a pit because their heart does not know God! They expend all kinds of energies but in the wrong direction and to the wrong end. Apostle Paul was an example; he was inflamed by blind zeal before the Lord converted him on his way to Damascus to commit blunders. **(Acts 22:3-4). The true zeal for God's glory is joined with a true love for men. Our true love for God will make Him develop in us a God-centred life.**

The heavenly fire of Christian zeal is so different from

the strange fire of false zeal. It has its fervency in the spirit, not in show or bragado; in substance, not in circumstance; not for humour or enticing eloquence of human wisdom; it's tempered with charity, not with bitterness. True and active zeal is the divine grace that inclines all affections for God. This zeal is God-centered. It is set on course to glorify God. It is ordered by knowledge and wisdom, it is a servant to Christ and the saints; It is knowing God whom we love and devoting ourselves to the duties required of us in the gospel. The zealous soul is continually saying to himself, what shall I render unto the Lord? The zealous Christian is ready to perform whatever duty places upon him.

True and holy zeal for God will bring us into the point of self-examination to know when our Christian experience is low and carnal and make us desire to enter into full life of God. It will also bring our hearts to the state where it is set on perfect integrity without any reservation and our will wholly subservient to God's will. It will by God's grace be able to bring us to an end where we can be said to have "wholly followed the LORD our GOD" like it was said of Joshua. Zeal is indeed the heart of a flame, but the flame is the fire of love. Let us burn with the love of God that will make us obey His commandments, as we run our heavenly race so that we can finish well to embrace our princely crown of righteousness. Amen!



The greatest error in today's Christianity is that of attempting to use "GRACE" as a means of disobeying the commands of Christ and still remain righteous in God's sight. We must all pray for the Spirit of the fear of the Lord, with the understanding that SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION are two sides of a coin. We are saved to live a life that is both pleasing to God and our reasonable service unto Him.

CHAPTER 5

A CASTAWAY!

“But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection lest by any means after I have preached to others I should be a castaway, that is, disqualified” (1Corinthians 9:27).

What Apostle Paul who was the first preacher of the **DOCTRINE OF GRACE** by the help of the Holy Spirit as given to him by Jesus Christ glorified implies, is that, **after having taught others with propriety and faithfulness of the word of truth, he should incur the judgement of condemnation in the sight of God.** Paul symbolizes the Christian life as a Heavenly race that Christians qualified to participate in, when they repent and put their trust in Christ; but that they must run and end well to win the prize, which is, the **CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** set before them. He warns that just like natural athletic races are run, **not all who start win eventually, some are disqualified along the way, others ran well at the start of their race but never ended well to win the prize.** The ability to run and end well is what Christ Himself calls **"OVERCOMING TO THE END"** (Revelation 2:7,11,17, 26; 3:5,12, 21; 21:7).

Athletes who broke the rules were disqualified: Paul's illustration stresses the necessity of discipline and the danger of flaunting one's liberties. Believers must practice self-denial and self-control in morally indifferent matters. Christian liberty has its limits, scriptures illustrate the danger of practicing sinful life and self-indulgence. The Israelites were God's covenanted people who had redemptive experiences that parallel water baptism and eating and drinking the Lord's Supper, but many sinned and were destroyed (1Corinthians10: 1-10). This same lesson applies today to believers of Christ:

"All these things happened to the Israelites as examples and as object lessons to us, to WARN US AGAINST DOING SAME THINGS; they were written down so that we could read about them and learn from them in these last days as the world nears its end"

(1 Corinthians 10:11-13).

And to prevent this, Paul ran his Christian race, he contended, he denied himself and brought his body (flesh) into subjection to his spirit and had his spirit governed by the Holy Spirit. Had this heavenly-minded man of God lived in our days, he would have been deemed a legalist by a certain class of people: a people who conform to the world; a certain group of ignorant and carnally minded Christians. Yet, this same Apostle

of Christ was the first preacher of the DOCTRINE OF GRACE given to him by Jesus Christ. Then if Paul, so great a man, one who had preached and laboured so much; one who met the risen Lord Jesus Christ on his way to Damascus; one who was caught up to Heaven where Christ revealed mysteries to him, dreaded being a castaway, that is, being disqualified by the sole judge of all destinies of mankind, Jesus Christ the Alpha and Omega, what cause have we else to fear than being a CASTAWAY?

This is a warning instruction from Paul to all confessing and professing Christians, that they should not allow the lusts of the flesh, the ungodly pleasures that their body and soul crave for to govern their lives, otherwise they could be encumbered from OVERCOMING TO THE END, thus stumble and fall away and in the end, being disqualified from entering Heaven. It means though the elect (Born Again Christian) are predestined to eternal life by God's grace if they choose to abuse the privileges of their grace, those very elect persons will become reprobate, that is, be a castaway.

Apostle Paul was certainly an elect person if ever there was one; and yet he declares he might become a reprobate, that is abandoned to eternal damnation if he had not kept his body (flesh) under discipline. **What of you? Do you have this type of yearning?**

WHO ARE THE 'CASTAWAY'?

They are those who will get to the gate of Heaven and not be allowed to enter because they never did the will of God. Those, on which that Christ pronounced His judgement of *"I KNOW YOU NOT"; "Not everyone who says to ME 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but only those who DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER who is in Heaven. Many will say to me on that DAY, 'Lord, Lord we prophesied in your name and cast demons and in your name perform many miracles and mighty works"*

And then, I will tell them plainly, *"I NEVER KNEW YOU: DEPART FROM ME, DOERS OF LAWLESSNESS"* (Matthew 7:21-23).

Brethren! This judgement of *"I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU DOER OF LAWLESSNESS"* is what Apostle Paul meant by "CASTAWAY". Christ made this pronouncement, not to **Muslims, Buddhists and Idol worshippers** but to those who have prophesied in His name; cast out demons in His name; did outstanding miracles and great works in His name.

"Not everyone who says to me "Lord, Lord" describes the character and spiritual condition of those who make an external profession of Christ as their Lord, but walk unworthy of its precepts, yet connected with the impossibility of their entering in such a state into the

Kingdom of Heaven. A person may have all the religious credentials, external marks of Christianity which bears the semblance of piety, yet he is far from the gate of Heaven. The aforementioned scripture of Christ's verdict may also refer to lukewarm, indifferent and carnal Christians. This was Christ's written verdict to the Christians in the church of Laodicea: *"I know your works, that is, the kind of fruits you bear, you are neither cold nor hot, so then, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will VOMIT YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH"* (Revelation 3:15-16).

Brethren, this vomit implies a condemnable judgment from Christ. Jesus said these CASTAWAYS are those who practice lawlessness, perpetual unrepentant sin life of ungodliness; those who "DID NOT DO THE WILL OF HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN", those professing Christians who are careless about the LAWS OF GOD; those Christians who are unrepentantly taking God's Grace and loving-kindness for granted. "I will vomit you out", the image is intensely strong and denotes deep disgust and loathing at the indifference which prevailed in the lives of the Christians in the Church of Laodicea. The idea is they would be utterly rejected and cast off - a threatening from Christ the SAVIOUR Himself. It may be remarked, also, that what was threatened to that church may also be expected to occur to all churches, if they are in the same condition; and that all Christians and churches that are lukewarm, have a special reason to

dread the indignation of the SAVIOUR who also is the Judge of all souls and spirits.

Christ and His Apostles exhort all Christians that active obedience to the precepts of Christianity is the proof of the Love of God and the surest mark of a genuine Christian believer. Also, that the religion of Christ is to be practiced; for the teachings of Jesus are only understood as they are put into practice. We must understand clearly that Christ is honoured and proved loved by His believers when we are "NOT ONLY HEARERS OF HIS WORD BUT DOERS".

Brethren, let us not be carried away nor be deceived by strange doctrines, teachings and preachers of error, Christ has declared that the true **QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION** into the Kingdom of Heaven are:

- **To be BORN AGAIN by the Holy Spirit.**
- **Then to DO THE WILL OF HIS FATHER "He that doeth the will of my Father in Heaven".**
- **OVERCOMING TO THE END in our Christian race.**
- **TO BEAR FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

It is a delusive hope for all those who cherish admission into Christ's Kingdom in Heaven through other qualifications, their hope will deceive them into eternal damnation in hell. Such persons went a long way in religion, kept it up for a long while, but they are fatally

mistaken and missed out terribly. When they got to the gate of Heaven and it is closed and they heard the voice of the Lord saying "I KNOW YOU NOT, DEPART, YOU WHO PRACTICED LAWLESSNESS".

We are here being warned that hypocritical and carnal Christianity makes admission into Heaven impossible. The first pretense is saying to Christ, "Lord, Lord", a mere profession of Christianity that promotes the edification, while separate from a holy life. That is, prophesying, casting out demons, preaching, working miracles and great works all in the name of Jesus Christ, yet lacking the 'fruit of righteousness. Jesus says again and again "I KNOW YOUR WORKS". It worthy of note, that all our works are being recorded by Jesus Christ, He surely knows our works; we shall all stand before Him to give an account of all our works while we are on earth.

A 'CASTAWAY'! The Tophet of him who has offered mercy to others which he has despised, urged truths on the credence of others that he has disbelieved, enforced laws on others which he transgressed, will become a castaway. Let's be careful to stand well so that we don't fall and be CAST OUT!

Finally, Christ is saying: A mere professing religion that is, confessing that "I AM A CHRISTIAN" without continuously doing the will of God will not be sufficient

to enter Heaven; and that **ONLY BELIEVERS WHO LIVED LIVES WORTH PLEASING HIM AND HIS FATHER WILL BE ADMITTED INTO THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM**. Christ means that actions are a greater discovery of a principle than mere words that we profess. The testimony of good works (fruits) is louder and clearer than that of words. *"By their fruits, you shall know them"* Brethren, let us know this truth: It's not your **GIFTS** that will earn you heavenly rewards but your **FRUITS**.

In **John 15:1, 2, 6** Jesus Christ said: *"I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit HE TAKES AWAY and those that bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" verse 6. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gathered them and throw them into the fire and they are burnt"*.

Who are the branches? The Muslims? The Buddhist? The Hindus? The Heathen? The Idol Worshipers? The unsaved sinners? No! They are born-again Christians. Christ is saying here categorically that Christians who chose not to **ABIDE IN HIM** nor bear fruits of righteousness shall be plucked out and thrown into the fire and be destroyed. Thus, **CAST OUT** branches shall be destroyed. Brethren, let us continually abide and be fruit-bearing Christians while we watch and wait for Christ's second coming.

SOLEMN WARNING TO GOD'S SERVANTS!

Apostle Paul in **1Corinthians 9:27** has clearly warned Christians especially God's servants and preachers that deliverance from Hell deserves the most earnest SELF-DISCIPLINE. He insists we must subjugate our body (flesh) to the mind that is renewed in Christ. The body (Flesh) was intended to be an organ, an instrument and a servant of the mind, but since the fall of man due to sin, it has become the master. **THE SUPREMACY OF THE BODY (FLESH) IS THE CURSE OF THE WORLD AND RUIN OF MAN.** Though the mind is false, selfish, disloyal to Christ, there is no discipline by it, therefore, it must be subjugated to the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST** for a Christian to live a sanctified life. The mind must be the servant of Christ to be legitimately sovereign over the body.

To the preachers, indeed, there is much in the work of preaching that tends to operate against personal spiritual culture.

- Familiarity with sacred truths destroys for us, the charm of freshness.
- A professional handling of God's word could interfere with its application.
- The opinions of audience, favorable or otherwise, exert an influence unfavorable to the life of the soul.
- Satan is especially active in opposing the growth of spiritual piety in the preacher's soul. So, there is a terrible danger for the preacher; whilst the preacher

Are You Ready For Christ's Return To Rapture The Overcomers?

is cultivating the vineyards of others, he neglects his own.

- THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PREACHING MAY BE FOLLOWED BY ULTIMATE RUIN.

CHAPTER 6

GUARD YOUR HEART!

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Our heart is the fountain where every influence on all matters of life concocts. It is the warehouse of all our virtues and vices. **We live from our hearts.** This is the part of you that drives and organizes your life, it is not the physical, but a spirit within you and it has been formed inside you when you were flesh and blood in your mother's womb, where it has taken a specific character. In **Psalm 58:3-4** the Bible says *"The wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies"*. Because he came from the womb with the character of a usurper, grasper and schemer, that Isaac and Rebecca called their junior twin son, **JACOB**.

The spirit within us, that is, our heart, takes on an innate character from when we are still in our mother's womb and combines with the experiences we have lived through and the choices we have made in life after birth. **The depths of our heart are where we understand our world and interpret reality, from there we make our choices,**

actions and reactions. The heart is the man. It is the seat of all spiritual life, health, strength and growth. It is the hinge and turning point in the condition of a man's soul. If the heart is alive to God and quickened by the Spirit, the man is a living Christian, if the heart indeed has not the Spirit of God, the man is dead before GOD. What a man's heart is, certainly establishes what he is. *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is"* (Proverbs 23:7).

The Bible teaches that the heart is the part of man that God looks at. *"Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart"* (1Samuel 16:7), *"Every way of a man is right in his eyes; but the Lord weighs the properties of his heart"* (Proverbs 21:7). Man is naturally content with the outward part of religion, with outward morality, outward correctness, outward regular use of means of grace, outward attendance at the communion table, but the eyes of the Lord look much deeper. He sees our motives. *"He weighs the spirits"* (Proverbs 16:2) *"I the Lord search the heart; I try the reins"* (Jeremiah 17:10).

IT IS CLEAR FROM THE AFOREMENTIONED SCRIPTURES THAT WHEN GOD JUDGES MAN, THE HEART IS THE RULE OF JUDGEMENT. The condition of our heart is very important before Christ who is the sole judge of all Souls.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART

The Bible is starkly clear about the condition of man's

heart. Prophet Jeremiah, for example, says *"The heart is DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS and IT IS BEYOND CURE. Who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9) Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself called the heart of man a den of evil. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, theft, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19).*

Let's consider the humbling truth which Jesus Christ the Saviour sets forth. He tells us that out of the heart all sorts of moral evils proceed. He selects not the milder forms of sin but the grosser shades; adulteries, murders, blasphemies, these are words of no common import and stand for sins of no common dye. Christ did not mince words in any degree, neither did He choose a smooth form of speech. **Some men say their sins are mistakes of their judgement; Christ has traced their offenses, not to the head and its mistaken judgments, but to the heart and its unholy affections, undoubtedly the affections of man are sources of his crimes. It is because man does not love God his maker with ALL HIS HEART AND SOUL AND STRENGTH, but loves himself, so he consequently breaks his maker's laws to please himself. Whether you interpret the word "heart" to mean the central core of the man or to signify his affections, you come to the same conclusion that it is the man's vital "SELF" which is wrong, thus, it is his essence that is evil. It is the propensity of "SELF" that propels him always to disobey the laws of God. "SELF" is against the rule of God; "SELF" never loves God except himself; the heart is the settled habitat of "SELF".**

THE NEW HEART

Christ the Saviour is the perfect mediator that removed the enmity between the man who is a habitat of SELF and God who is LOVE and the means of achieving this is "**You must be born again**". Man must be born again, he needs a **NEW HEART** to relate harmoniously with God, His creator, a new heart that will enable him to love and serve God and allow the indwelling of the Spirit of God who will enable him to walk in the ways of God and not satisfying the lust of his flesh (SELF) the lust of his eyes (SELF); the pride of life (SELF), but rather living in the will of God and doing the things that please God his creator, this is what it means to **LOVE GOD**.

To be born again is to receive a **NEW HEART** and a **RIGHT SPIRIT** (Psalm 51:10). This is the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ! We tell you that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved and the process of salvation consists in the part of the implantation of a **NEW HEART** and a **RIGHT SPIRIT**. By trusting in Jesus Christ you come to love Him and the love of Him, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, overcomes your selfish passion. He gives you a new heart, by which you war with your old passions, trample them underfoot and subdue them. As soon as you see in your soul by the Holy Spirit that Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you, then you have a new object of your love; instead of loving "SELF" you love God in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ and that new love

becomes to you the HEART which overcomes your old inborn nature, your old corruption; and prompts you to walk in holiness and the fear of God.

You must get a new heart or you cannot be holy. Your old heart; the chamber of "SELF" must be recreated, regenerated and transformed. It is very necessary we have a broken and contrite heart that loves God, fears God, loves His will and loves doing the things that please God, because a CARNAL HEART, that is "SELF" pleasing and willfully choosing not to follow the laws of God does not obey the truth, but obeys unrighteousness (**Romans 2:8**); and cannot possibly enter Heaven. **If the carnal heart is a great barracks of evil having several gates from which black warriors of sin are continually streaming, how can such abomination ever pass through the pearl gates of Heaven and be where the HOLY GOD is, before the eternal throne?**

We need to know this truth, a CARNAL MAN with his CARNAL HEART whether he professes Christianity or any form of religion **WILL NOT BE RAPTURED** when Christ comes back for His spotless elects; His holy angels will separate the elects from the unsaved sinners, but the carnally minded "Christians" and the unsaved sinners because they resemble in character and conducts will not be familiar with the voice of Christ. *"My sheep will hear my voice and they will hearken,"* Jesus said.

When the voice of the archangels sound only a few elects who have 'OVERCOME' will understand that sound and will join Christ in the air, while the men with "carnal hearts" with no real love for God, who haven't served God in spirit and truth will be left behind.

Brethren, your HEART! Rend it! Examine it always! Be diligent about its properties. David asked in **Psalm 24** *"who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand before Him in His holy place in Heaven? He who has clean hands and pure heart, who does not lift his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully"*

A pure heart is a good heart; it is a NEW HEART (*Ezekiel 36:26*). It is not a heart with which a man is born, but another put in him by the Holy Spirit. It is a broken and contrite heart (*Psalm 51:7*) because it is broken from pride, self-conceit and self-righteousness; it's a heart that loves truth, righteousness and God's gracious discipline. It is a purified heart (*Acts 19:9*)

It loves holiness and hates sin. A pure heart strives daily to cleanse itself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit (*2Corinthians 7:1*). It delights in the law of God. (*Psalm 119:70,77*), It longs to keep the laws of God with the help of the Holy Spirit. It loves God and man; its affections are set on things above. It never feels so happy as when it is most holy; and it looks forward to heaven with joy.

These are properties of a pure heart! It's worthy to note also that Jesus said only *"THE PURE IN HEART WILL SEE GOD"* (Matthew 5:8).

A question to reflect on is "What is your heart condition? Is it right with God? Is it a good heart or it is a carnal heart? Is your heart plagued with carnality and the love of this world? Is your heart displeasing to God? Take heed now and search your heart because it will be the object of judgement when you come before God. If you have a CARNAL HEART and you are unrepentant, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath, in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgement of God, who will RENDER TO EACH ONE ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS (Romans 2:5-6). Know this day that if your heart is wrong in the sight of God, you are hanging over the brink of hell. There is but a step between you and everlasting torment in hell, it is REPENTANCE! REPENT! REPENT!

Our heart is the reservoir of our life, we must keep it pure; for if the heart is not pure, the life cannot be pure. A man's heart is exactly who he is. You see a man whose whole conversation is impure and unholy; when he speaks he lards his language with oaths; his mind is low and groveling; none but the things of vainness, unrighteousness is sweet to him, for he has no soul above the dunghill.

You meet with another man who professes he is a Christian, understands enough to avoid violating the decencies of life; but still at the same time he likes filthiness; anything that will in some way stir unholy thoughts is just the thing that he desires. For the ways of God, he has no relish; in God's house he finds no pleasure; God's commands, he is very uncomfortable with; in His words, no delight.

How does a Christian make his heart pure?

Take that tree on which Jesus the Saviour was hung, the cross, put it in your heart, that cross applied by the Holy Spirit will transform it into the nature of Christ and make it pure. Christ Jesus in the heart is the sure purification. *"And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30)*

Elijah cast salt into the waters, but we must cast the cross and the blood of Jesus into our hearts. Once we know and love Jesus; once we let His cross become the object of our adoration and the theme of our delight, our hearts will beam its cleansing and our life will become pure also. O, Christian man! Learn this sacred lesson of fixing the cross into your heart! The cross in the heart is the purifier of the Soul; it purges and cleanses the chambers of the mind.

You need also to keep your heart right. Do not let it smite you. The Holy Spirit says of David, "David's heart smote him". The smiting of the heart is more painful than the rough blows of the fist. Keep your heart in a good temper. Seek the peace of God which passeth all understanding that it may keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

OCCASIONS WHEN IT IS OF THE UTMOST MOMENT TO ATTEND TO THE DUTY OF GUARDING YOUR HEART!

- When you draw near to God in Solemn exercise of religious duty. Be upon your guard against those vain excursions of the soul that eat out all the life and spirit of devotion.
- When you are surrounded with an abundance of worldly enjoyments. There is something in prosperity that tends to intoxicate the mind.
- When God afflicting hand is upon you. "In the day of adversity consider"; for consideration and guard upon the heart are needful.
- When under provocations from your fellow human beings. These are very trying periods and the spirit that is in us often lusteth to resentment and retaliation. Do not be too sensitive to offense and injuries.
- When your hands are full of worldly business

even in religious duties, we walk amid snares. It is no easy thing to keep our souls disengaged and to live above, while we are in the world. Love nothing in the world with a strong affection that is not immortal as thyself and immutable as thy God.

- When you find any tumultuous passions are excited within you. Think what inflammable matter you carry in your heart and be watchful so that it does not kindle into a flame.
- See to it that your mind be well furnished. Lay in a stock of useful knowledge from the word of God, from observations of providence, from converse with fellow human beings.
- When sin tempts you with a romantic gesture, offering you an alternative name other than what the Bible calls it.

If you would keep your heart, be often looking up to God Almighty who made it; to find our hearts taken off dependence on ourselves and fixed upon God, is a token from good in every area of our Christian journey on earth. A pure heart loves the principles of God and serves Him with a sanctified hope at the eve of the second coming of Christ to rapture the OVERCOMERS.

CHAPTER 7

DON'T MISS HEAVEN

"What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul or what shall a man give for the exchange of his Soul" (Matthew 16:26). This is a self-searching question for all mankind that Christ asked.

Brethren, there is nothing in this cursed and dying world of planet earth that is worth comparing Heaven. The glory of Heaven can never be compared with the spiritual darkness that reigns overwhelmingly over this sin-infested world. **Everything here on earth is fleeting, temporal and degenerating; they appease our cravings but never truly satisfy, that's why we always want more of things, our tastes and desires are insatiable.** But it is a different experience with life in Heaven. Jesus gave the woman at the Samaritan well, a foretaste of what life in Heaven looks like. *"This water that I will give you is different from the water you fetch from the well (Earth); when you drink of it you will thirst no more" (John 4:13-14).* This is the living water that flows from Christ who is the fountain of life. In Heaven everything is alive, there is no hunger, no sorrow, no pain; nothing dies there; life is experienced in peace, righteousness and joy in the Holy Spirit more abundantly, that is, without measure everlastingly. In

the community of Heaven, there is nothing that defiles or offends there; the glory of God is their light, there is no shadow of darkness there, but everlasting enjoyment of the immeasurable riches and blessedness of Almighty God. Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, He who was and is and is to come. To Him be all glory, power, blessings, adoration and thanksgiving forever. Halleluyah!

If the soul of a person perishes, it is, once more, an irreparable loss, a loss that cannot be retrieved. A man may lose health and yet, by the blessing of providence upon medical aid, he may become healthier than before; a man may lose property, his all in the world and yet, by industry and the smile of providence, he may become richer than before; a man may lose friends or family members, God may raise others in their room; but, Oh, if the soul is lost, it is lost not for a day, a month, or a year, but for eternity; and it is that word "eternity" which emphasizes bliss or woe, to ease our pain, to hell or Heaven. There is no proportion between one or the other. There is some proportion between a particle of matter and the globe, there is some proportion between a drop of water and the ocean; but there can be none between the little drop of time and the shoreless, fathomless ocean of eternity. The man that gains the whole world for a time and loses his soul for eternity, can gain no profit. Comparatively, it is as though a man should choose to enjoy a great estate for a few days and to be extremely poor the remaining part of his life. What a ruinous exchange?

We may consider the world a poor reward for all the pains of getting it. "If a man could gain the whole world" which supposes labour and sorrow, trouble and expense, venture and hazard and so much time expired in its acquisition and purchase, that besides the possession, is not secured to us for the term of life, our life here on earth is short spanned; so our lives are almost expired before we become bound in our acquisition and purchases; before we want to be consummated in its enjoyment, old age and the grave becomes imminent: This is why Jesus Christ asked us to build treasures in Heaven and apostle Paul exhorts us to pursue things of above. (Matthew 6:19-20; Colossians 3:1).

"What shall a man give in exchange for his life?" Life in its origin and destiny is a deep mystery. It's the only solution, as it's only worth, is found in faith and religion. To be, to act and to suffer or enjoy, is to live. All these conducts and experiences are products of forces and principles. Its unfolding may take place around either of two centres: GOD OR SELF. Life offers us in this direction either bondage or freedom, both of which are determined by our choices. He who decides to live to himself becomes the slave of sin, passion and lust. He who chooses God through faith in Christ attains freedom. *The WORTH life will secure for us depends upon what we BELIEVE and PRACTICE.* Belief and knowledge will have their effect upon character and conduct and will manifest themselves in what we

become ourselves and in what we help others to become. Thus, we must make life worth living to the glory of God because God gave it to us; God has redeemed it through Christ's death for us, to give it worth; more so, we shall give an account of it when we come before Christ the Judge of all mankind. Brethren, having considered the great glory set before us in Heaven, which is our inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ; there is nothing in this world worth missing Heaven and going to hell for. Nothing! Nothing!

The heart or will in man is the seat of virtue or vice. Actions are our invariable touchstone of truth whilst we sojourn in this state of imperfect knowledge and comparative obscurity, where expressions are the only avenue to sentiment and action the only publisher of intention. Actions are the only public representatives of our thoughts and private sentiments. They are the channels through which the heart discharges its flow of various passions; the mirrors by the reflection of which the internal dispositions of the soul become externally visible.

When our actions are viewed in a moral light, they are to the soul what streams are to the fountain and what branches are to the root. Branches have no existence but what they derive from the root. Streams have no existence but what they derive from the fountain. Our actions have no existence but that which they derive from the heart.

The heart, having the principle of religion so strong as to prevent an unlawful enjoyment, will likewise be sufficiently strong to prevent a sinful resolution; it is the chamber where our decisions are formed, fabricated and our resolutions are made. A depraved heart is before God of the same criminality as the depraved life and exposes unto the same punishment from God. Let us, therefore, renounce every inclination against the obedience of the commandments of God and being reproachful to humanity. Let us cultivate the purity of heart, as we preparedly wait for our soon coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ glorified.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in (Matthew 5:29) also warned us about any members of our body that will constitute a hindrance to our entering Heaven, that, such should be cut off at all cost. In other words, rather than anything, though ever so dear and precious to you, should hinder you in your Christian progress or become a means of ensnaring your soul from making Heaven, decisively forego it. Whatsoever opposes God, disobeys His commandments in your heart, or keeps Him out of it, must be hated, forbidden and eased out completely. All sin and temptation formed in the heart must be uprooted and resisted and the outward act of any sin must be avoided and discouraged. Some temptations are against our righteous desires, against our prayers, against our possessions and enjoyment of Christ, against peace in our lives, against time, against passage

to eternity with Christ and all our hopes. We must therefore engage in the mortifying of our lusts; we must war against sin. We must make bold efforts with the help of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to cry to God and be idle. Our hatred for sin must be hot red as we watchfully wait for the return of Christ. Sin is that monster, Apostle Paul encourages us to identify, confront and crucify in our lives daily.

STRIVE TO ENTER THE STRAIT GATE

"Lord", someone asked Him, "will only a few people be saved?" Jesus answered, "Strive, exhaust every effort to force your way in through the NARROW GATE" He answered; for many, I tell you will seek to enter into the gate that leads into Heaven and they will not be able. As soon as the Master of the house has risen and may have shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us! Then he will answer and tell you, "I don't know you or where you come from" (Luke 13:24-25).

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to guide men's conscience, not to gratify their curiosity. Ask not, how many shall be saved? But, Shall I be one of them? What shall I do and what will become of me, if Christ comes now, will I be raptured? 'STRIVE, MAKE CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO ENTER THE NARROW GATE' This command of Christ is directed to every believer of Christ; it is, strive, brethren, strive more. ALL THAT WILL BE SAVED

MUST ENTER IN AT THE NARROW GATE that must change the whole man. Those that will enter must strive to enter; Christ has paid the price for your salvation and redemption, but you must work out your salvation with fear and trembling. The straitness and difficulty are in ourselves not in God's imposition. The entrance into eternal life is like a narrow gateway, enough to admit every individual; if a man comes to it with a great bulky burden upon his shoulders, he will find it impossible to force a passage; but he has to lay down his load of pride, pleasures, lusts, worldliness, instead of attempting to carry them with him on the way to Heaven, then there will be nothing to impede his entrance and he will travel in that narrow way comfortably. Just in proportion as we renounce sin, will the pathway to Heaven become plain and easy.

But here, my brethren is difficult enough; God has revealed the way of life clearly; It is Jesus Christ, by His work on earth and in Heaven, provides that way and renders it accessible to all; **BUT THE GREAT MATTER IS TO PERSUADE HIS BELIEVERS TO "OVERCOME TILL THE END"** that which in themselves would hinder their entry into Heaven. (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). Every part of redemption is connected with striving and the Christian under its influence must work out his salvation with fear and trembling. Within his household, that is his soul there are enemies; for his **"HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS** and

DESPERATELY WICKED" and He must watch, be sober and pray. To reach the goal he must lay aside every encumbering weight and with his eyes steadily fixed like a flint on the prize that is the "**CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**" in the coronation chamber in Heaven. **HE must not faint by the way, nor cease to strive till he has overcome to the end. From fears without and fighting within, the Christian is kept ever active and "through much tribulation, he must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 4:22).**

The first difficulties of a holy and religious course of life are here represented to us by a strait gate. For the gate at which we enter and how we walk, can signify nothing else but the beginning and progress of a holy and religious course. Now, these difficulties are either from ourselves or from something outside us. **From ourselves; from the original corruption and deprivation of our Adamic nature and the power of evil habits and customs, contracted by vicious practices. Our nature is vitiated and depraved, inclined to evil and impotent to good; besides that, being habituated to sin and vice. It is a matter of infinite difficulty to break off a custom inbred in our Adamic nature and to turn the course of our life another way. Now, because of this difficulty of our first entrance into religion, it is presented by a strait gate, which is hard to get through. There are, likewise, other difficulties outside us, as namely, the opposition and persecution of the world; the allurements and seduction**

of the world and its pleasures; the frantic wicked opposition of demonic forces of darkness, all ranging against us daily. Yet, because Christ lives in us we have been empowered to **OVERCOME** all of these enemies of our soul.

The heart of a Christian is a field of action in which two powerful armies are engaged; **GRACE** and **CORRUPTION**. New strength is required by the help of the Holy Spirit to enable him to mortify the power of corruption in his flesh. The gate to eternal destruction is described by the Lord as wide. There is no difficulty in entering in. There is no need for self-denial, no striving, no mastery over ourselves to enter it. Our hearts naturally carry us towards it. And as the gate entrance is wide, so is the way broad. It is broad because it admits many paths and all leading but to one end. The way of sin is various; the devices of Satan for man's destruction is manifold.

It is easy traveling the wide road to eternal hell because it is smooth and pleasant to the flesh. The gate of destruction is wide and stands open before us, inviting us to come in. But the gate to eternal life is **NARROW** and **DIFFICULT**, it is not easy to enter. Has God made it **HARD**? Surely not. But our corrupt hearts love it not. Standing before the entrance of the **NARROW GATE** that leads to life is the plain banner saying "**WITHOUT HOLINESS, NO MAN SHALL SEE GOD**" And what is

HOLINESS? *It is to believe in Jesus Christ, to love God and to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us; to deny ourselves, that we may do the will of God; to raise ourselves by faith and prayer above the world and to set our affections on things above. No wonder, then, that the mark of the way of life is this: "ONLY FEW that find it" It is a difficult way and this is why few traveled there into Heaven.*

Brethren, the gate of life is hard to enter, not in the sense of admitting only a few, but because everything that is unchristlike; anything that defiles is refused admission. Then, we have to take off and lay in the dust self, pride, worldliness, sinful lifestyle, carnality and every speck of idolatry. Moreover, the gate is a strait one in another sense. The porter is particular. Certain qualifications are necessary. Only **Workers of Righteousness** are admitted; those that bear the image of Christ and **"WALK WORTHY OF HIM"**. For God did not call us to uncleanness but to holiness **"WALK WORTHY OF GOD who calls you into His Own Kingdom and glory"** (1Thessalonians 2:12).

Godly living is characterized by a life lived to please God. Through Jesus' sacrifice, we have already found favour in God's sight; therefore, we are to live a life that reflects that favour. Like Jesus our work is to flow from faith and love, honouring God in all that we do. We are to behave so that when unbelievers see our lives they

will recognize and honour God, who is our source of godliness. We must understand that godly living includes: **work that flows from faith, labour that flows from love and patient endurance that flows from a living hope.** Pray that these virtues would characterize your life, remembering always that we are the ambassadors of Christ, the light of the world. **Indeed, we are fully and completely sanctified, made holy in Jesus. It is equally true that God calls us to work out sanctification in the way that we live our lives. Pursuing holiness means living a life worthy of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, always remembering that you are called into His kingdom and glory.**

Therefore, brethren, on the eve of the second coming of Christ, conduct your life so that it reflects the glory and kingdom of God, to which you belong. Set as your daily goal to live worthy of the Lord, doing things that please Him. Live in holiness for this God has called you. Remember too, that God has given you His Holy Spirit, His power is in you; draw on it for all the graces that will enable you to live a life of honour, love, obedience and purity until Christ comes, so that He will find you **"WALKING WORTHY" and readily rapturable.** Therefore, submit your spirit, soul and body completely to the sanctifying work of God.

"Therefore, we also pray always for you that our God would COUNT YOU WORTHY OF HIS CALLING and

fulfill all good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you in Him" (2Thessalonians 1:11-12).

Knowing that any time from now Christ would come as He has promised. We ought always to strive to enter the strait gate, that is, be ready always to be rapturable. That is to say, there must be a thoroughgoing earnestness, throwing ourselves with our whole heart in it, resolving never to give up but with God's help to win and overcome to the end. Are you striving? Are you letting anything keep you back? **Jesus Christ said, "If your hand or leg will hold you back, just cut them off. For it is better to enter Heaven with no leg or one hand than to end up in eternal hell". This is a tough call, Yes! Because the way to Heaven is difficult, it's not cheap; it costs God's Son Jesus Christ His blood on the cross, it's no joke.**

Nevertheless, the difficulties of a holy and Christian life are not so great and impossible as to be a ground of discouragement to our endeavours, that is, our striving to overcome to the end. Consider the assistance which the gospel offers us; the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to us, we may conquer all difficulties. The more we submit ourselves to God and walk by the Holy Spirit, the more our customs, our conduct will make our Christian walk easy for us. More so, if we consider our **"HOPE OF GLORY"** that which eternity with God in Heaven offers us, this should encourage us and mitigate all the troubles and difficulties that confront us.

BEAR FRUITS!! BEAR MORE FRUITS!!

In **John 15:2**, Jesus said, "**Every branch in Me**". These are true believers, who by faith have an interest in and are in union with Christ, are the branches of the vine here spoken of. "**That beareth no fruit**", that is, answerable to his advantages, fruit suitable to the relation in which he stands to Christ and the union which by faith he has with Christ; that Christian whose faith in Christ and Christ's gospel does not work or continue to work by love and whose love does not bring forth, with constancy and perseverance, **the INTERNAL and EXTERNAL Fruits of the Spirit, namely all goodness, righteousness and truth (Ephesians 5:9)**; such Christians must also cultivate and maintain toward themselves, **temperance in all their conduct, chastity, self-denial, purity and universal holiness (Hebrew 12:14)**. Such unfruitful branches the vinedresser who is God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ cuts off in His righteous judgement and entirely separates them from Christ. "**He taketh away**".

What Christ says here plainly is, if we do not bear fruits of the Spirit, thus become a fruitless branch, our grace not being exercised but abused, is withdrawn and lost. We are cut off from Christ as unfruitful branches. A Christian becomes unfruitful when lacking such principles as love to God, faith in Christ, obedience to God's commandments, the practice of righteousness, hatred for sin, humility and repentance. As we get ready for the second coming of Christ let us utilize our divine

capacity in Christ to bear fruits of the Spirit and even bear more fruits as we respond patiently to the pruning of the Lord.

We must not resist the pruning of the Lord, the vine dresser and husbandman of our branch life in Christ. What a great mercy it is to believe that it is **pruning** with him and not '**cutting off!**'. The fruitful branches (Christians) are not perfect. If they were, they would not need pruning. **Whenever the sap within them is strong, there is a tendency for that strength to turn into evil. The gardener desires to see that strength in clusters, but alas! Instead, it runs into the wood. When the sap comes into a Christian to produce confidence in God, through the evil that is in him, it often produces confidence in himself. When the sap would produce zeal, how very frequently it turns into rashness, suppose the sap flows to produce self – examination, very generally instead of the man doubting himself, he begins to doubt His Lord. How often have we seen the joy of the Lord in a Christian's life turned into pride; how often has the Lord bless some Christians and such blessings are wrongly managed to become the pin that deflates their spiritual accomplishments. Meekness, which is a fruit of the Spirit, how often that becomes an excuse for holding your tongue when you ought to boldly speak!**

Pruning is the lot of all the fruitful saints. It is generally thought that our trials and troubles should purge us,

sometimes they do. Yes! the Lord uses trials and troubles to either make us discover some of our graces or grow in them. Nevertheless, in (John 15:3), Jesus said it is His word that prunes a Christian. Affliction is the handle of the knife, the grindstone that sharpens up the word; it is the dresser which removes our soft garments and lays bare the diseased flesh, so that the surgeon's knife may get at it. Affliction and trials make us ready to feel the word, but the true pruner is the word in the hand of the Great Husbandman Jehovah our Heavenly Father. Sometimes when you lay stretched upon the bed of sickness, disappointment, devastation, hardship, misfortune, frustration; deep inside the furnace of affliction, you think more upon the word than you did before, that is one great thing; a great spiritual gain.

The object is God's pruning of our life in Christ is never condemnatory or punitive. God chastens but He cannot punish Christians for whom Jesus Christ has been punished; He will not punish those who have the capacity for fruit-bearing, who are not fruitless Christians. You cannot say when a Christian is afflicted, that it is because he has done wrong; on the contrary, it is just the branch that is fruitful that gets the pruning-knife; and it is because the Lord loves His people.

Brethren we should not be contented with a "little fruit" but "much fruit" because it is not contemplated by Christ at all. Christ desires that we embrace an incessant culture

of fruitfulness and that will prevent us from degenerating to the point of unfruitfulness in good works. Our abiding in Christ will produce character rich in manifold graces; a little union will have little fruit. So let us draw near to Christ more as we anticipate His coming so that we can have fruit to His praise.

As we get ready for the second coming of Christ, let us earnestly seek a more fruit-bearing life. Christ will not come to rapture fruitless Christians, they will be left behind or are scarcely saved (1Corinthians 3:15). *"If the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and wicked end up in"* of course, eternal Hell.



CHAPTER 8

DON'T JEOPARDISE YOUR HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

Jesus Christ told His believers that their eternal country is Heaven: *"Though you are in this world, you do not belong to it"*. Just as there can be no comparison between an angel and a worm, there should be no comparison between the lifestyles of Christians and the people of the world. It should not be a comparison but a distinct contrast. No scale of degrees should be possible; the believer should be a direct and manifest contradiction to the unbeliever. The life of a saint should be altogether above and out of the same league as the life of a sinner. Paul says in *Philippians 3:20* *"Our conversation is in heaven"*. We converse as citizens of heaven, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem, we are only strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. **The CITIZENS OF HEAVEN, that is, those who are believers of Christ; the purity of our Character should be such that the people of this world must acknowledge that we are of another and superior race. WE ARE THE HEAVENLY PEOPLE! THE SONS OF GOD!**

So, all who are in this Heavenly country must

understand that though we are strangers and foreigners on the earth, we share all the inconveniences of the flesh. No exemption is granted to us from a common lot of mankind. We are born to trouble, even as others and have tribulations like the rest, as we bear our cross daily. When famine comes we hunger; when war rages, we are in danger; we are exposed to the same climate; we know the whole range of afflictions, even as the citizens of the earth know them. When God in mercy scatters liberally the bounties of His providence, with both hands, we take our share.

Being citizens of Heaven means that we are under heaven's government. Christ the King of heaven reigns in our hearts; the laws of glory are the laws of our consciences; our daily prayer is *"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:10). The proclamations issued from the throne of glory are freely received by us; the decrees of the Great King Jesus Christ glorified we cheerfully obey. We believers of Christ should not be lawless to Christ. The Spirit of God rules in our mortal bodies, grace reigns through righteousness in our lives; and we wear the easy yoke of Jesus. As citizens of heaven, our walk and actions must be consistent with the dignity of our position. We must not jeopardize our heavenly citizenship with the temporal pleasures and vanities of this cursed and passing world. Let our lives be conformed to the glory of our citizenship. In Heaven, they are holy so must we be;

they are happy, so must we be rejoicing in the Lord always. In Heaven they are obedient, so must we be, following the faintest whispers of the divine will of God. As we hear and know the will of God, so must we obey.

There is a great reason why we should live like foreigners here on earth because Christ is coming soon to take His own to Himself. *"Where I am there you will be also"* This is an exceedingly great promise He gave to us. **Everything we have, we do, we see, we admire, we labour for and thirst for here on earth are all temporal; we meet them here and would leave them behind, all in the moment of our last breath. Solomon, the wisest man ever, called them VANITIES! Let's not stress ourselves on these, but *"look up to things in heaven above"*.**

Let us not ruin our heavenly citizenship because of anything here on earth, but let our comfort and excitement be that Christ, our Saviour will soon come from heaven to take us to our heavenly country. The joy that **"we shall forever be with the Lord"** should excite us. *"Forever life, forever light, forever joy, forever love, forever peace, forever rest"*. *What a chain of delights! What more can a heart imagine or hope or desire? If you drink from them, you will have a glimpse of the blessedness that heaven reserves for you. Our union with Christ should always make us heavenly minded. We are with Christ in this life in a high spiritual sense. We read in*

*(Colossians 3:3), "For you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God". Were you not "buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through because of your faith in the mighty power of God that raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). Do you not know what it is to be dead to the world in Christ and to be living a pleasing life with Him? **Are you not risen with Christ and do you not understand in some measure what it is to be raised together and made to sit together in the heavenly in Christ Jesus? If you are not with Him, you are not a Christian at all, for the mark of a true Christian is that he follows Christ and abide always in Him, bearing fruits of righteousness.** It is essential to salvation to be a sheep of Christ's fold, a partaker of Christ's life, a member of His mystical body, a branch of the spiritual vine. It is our privilege to follow Him wherever He goes and we must see it is a sacred duty to be prepared as He comes to take us to **Heaven** where He is.*

*As citizens of heaven, we share heaven's honour. The glory that belongs to beautiful saints belongs to us, for we are already sons of God, princes of royal blood; Christ is our eldest brother, the firstborn from the resurrection, we are joint-heirs with Him; God Almighty is our Father and a crown of immortality is our reward. We share the honours and blessedness of citizenship for we have come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. *"Beloved, now we are God's children but He has**

not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like Him; for we will see Him as HE is. ALL WHO HAVE THIS EAGER EXPECTATION WILL KEEP THEMSELVES PURE, JUST AS HE IS PURE” (1John 3:2-3).

We must thus, live a life of purity that is required of us who are citizens of heaven; we must keep ourselves pure as we eagerly expect the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DO YOU HAVE AN ASSURANCE?

If there was a person, a true Christian who had an assurance of the **LIVING HOPE**, It was Paul the Apostle (*Romans 1:5-6*). Let us mark the following words of Paul as he consummates the assurance of this heavenly hope:

*“I am now **READY** to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at the day; and not only to me but unto all of them also that love Christ’s appearing (2Timothy 4:6-8).*

Paul looks downward to the grave and he does it without fear. Consider what he says:

*“I am **READY** to be offered”, I am like an animal brought to the place of sacrifice and bound with cords to the very*

horns of the altar. The wine and oil have been poured on my head, according to the Jewish custom. The last ceremonies have been performed, it only remains to receive the deathblow and then all is over.

"The time of my departure is at hand" I am like a ship about to unmoor and put to sea. All onboard is READY. I only wait to have the moorings that fasten me to the shore cast off and I shall sail on my voyage. Brethren, these are glorious words, expected to come from the lips of a child of Adam like ourselves. Paul states vividly that he was not afraid to exit this world.

Let's consider furthermore the words of this great Apostle and follower of Jesus Christ. He looks over his ministerial life and he says:

"I have fought a good fight" There he speaks as a soldier. I have fought that good battle with **the world, the flesh and the devil**, from which so many shrink and drawback.

"I have finished my course" There he speaks as one who has run for a prize. I have run **the race marked out for me; I have gone over the ground appointed for me, however rough and steep. I have not turned aside because of difficulties, trials, sufferings nor been discouraged by the length of the way.**

"I have kept the faith" There he speaks as a steward. I

have held fast to that glorious gospel which was committed to my trust. I have not mingled it with man's traditions, nor spoiled its simplicity by adding my inventions, nor allowed others to adulterate it without withstanding them to the face. *"As a soldier, a runner, a steward", he seems to say "I am not ashamed"*.

Brethren, any Christian who is watchfully waiting for Christ to rapture him should be happy to exit this world leaving behind him such testimonies like Paul's. That Christian has an assurance of heavenly hope. Let us consider the Apostle once more. He looks forward with a confident assurance to the great day of reckoning and he does it without a doubt. Mark his words:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to be alone but unto all of them that loves Christ as an unseen Saviour". Please observe that the Apostle speaks without mincing words. **He regards the crown as a sure thing; as his own already. He declares with UNFALTERING CONFIDENCE the firm persuasion that the righteous Judge will give it to him.** Paul was no stranger to all the circumstances and accompaniments of that solemn day to which he referred. **The great white throne; the assembled world, the open books, the revealing of all secrets, the listening angels, the awful sentence, the eternal separation of the lost and saved, all these were things with which he was well**

acquainted. But none of these things moved him. HIS STRONG FAITH OVERLEAPED them all; he only saw Jesus, his all prevailing advocate and the blood of sprinkling and sin washed away; and "A crown" he says "is laid up for me".

As we watchfully wait for the second coming of our Lord and Saviour, let our hearts be rekindled with assurance, knowing fully that we have a LIVING HOPE. The word of truth in the Bible necessitates our assurance and that it should be well grounded. Job said, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my body is destroyed by worms in the grave, yet in my flesh, I shall see God*" (Job 19:25-26).

Does David not say "*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*" (Psalm 23:4).

Isaiah says "*The work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever*" (Isaiah 32:17). Paul also says these:

"*We are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*" (2Corinthians 5:6), John the Apostle says "*We know that we have passed from death unto life*" (1John 3:14).

Let us have confident assurance of the hope that Christ

will surely come again and that we shall be amongst the FEW that He will take back to our heavenly home.

“We are elected by the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the Sanctification of the Holy Spirit for the LIFE OF OBEDIENCE and also cleansed by the Blood of Jesus Christ” (1Peter 1:2).

“If you call God Father and you know HE is holy and HE will without partiality judge each one according to his work; CONDUCT YOURSELVES throughout your stay here on earth in holy fear” (1Peter 1:17)

Apostle Peter says in these two scriptures:

We are washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, which makes us holy; and that the Holy Spirit sets us apart FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBEDIENCE and HOLY LIVING. Therefore, he exhorts us to live in holiness and honour the Lord, knowing that our salvation was not cheap, but was bought at a great and precious price of the Blood of Jesus Christ. In appreciation for what the Lord has done for you, devote your life to living holy and in obedience to God, doing His will throughout your stay here on earth, until Christ comes back.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD!!!

“Therefore become imitators of God (copy Him and follow His example), just as well-beloved children imitate their father; and walk continually in love, that is,

value one another, practice empathy and compassion, unselfishly seeking the best for others, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God slain for you, so that it became a sweet fragrance. But sexual immorality and all moral impurity, indecent, offensive behaviour, or greed must not even be hinted at among you, as is proper among saints for as believers our way of life, whether in public or in private, reflects the validity of our faith. Let there be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse obscene or vulgar joking because such things are not appropriate for believers; but instead, speak of your thankfulness to God.

"For be sure of this: no immoral, impure, or greedy person for such one is in effect an idolater has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God; for such a person places a higher value on something other than God. Let no one deceive you with EMPTY ARGUMENTS THAT ENCOURAGES YOU TO SIN, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (THOSE WHO HABITUALLY SINS). So do not participate or even associate with them in the rebelliousness of sin. For once you were in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light, live as those who are native-born to the Light; for the fruit (the effect, the result) of walking and remaining in the Light consists in all GOODNESS, RIGHTEOUS-NESS AND TRUTH, as you try to learn by experience what is pleasing to the Lord and letting your lifestyles be

examples of what is most acceptable to Him. Your behaviour always is to be expressing gratitude to God for your salvation" (Ephesians 5:5-10).

God has always warned his people to be separated from the world. The world refers to the world systems; all its values, mindset, philosophies of life, thought pattern, lifestyle and priorities that run contrary to the will of God. This also means the sphere of evil operating in our world under the dominion of Satan (1 John 4:4; 5:19).

"Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

The subject of a Christian's separation and not to love the world touches vast importance in religion. It demands the best attention of all who profess and call themselves Christians. In every age of the church, separation and loving not the world has always been one of the grand evidence of a work of grace in the heart of a mere believer in Christ. He who has been born of the Spirit and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, has always endeavored to "come out of the world", live a separate life and ought not to love it. Those who only bear the name of Christian, without the reality, have always refused to "come out and be separate" from the world. It

might be difficult to understand this subject unless one understands what a true Christian is. This subject perhaps was never more important than it is at the present day. **There is an orderly spread indulgence to make things more pleasant in Christian life after following the patterns, maxims, fashions, amusements, pursuits, customs of the world; to socialize the gospel; to slash off the corners and edges of the cross and to avoid, as far as possible, self-denial and audacious efforts that encourages the excuse of sins. At times like this, wisdom compels us to raise a warning voice, to draw the saint's attention to the teaching of God's word. In the eve of the "coming soon" of Christ to rapture those Christians who have OVERCOME, it's most important to announce repeatedly that which is written in God's word: "COME OUT AND BE SEPERATE FROM THE WORLD".**

When I speak about the world, I mean those people who think only, or chiefly of this world and things in it and neglect the world to come (ETERNITY); people who are always thinking more of this EARTH than HEAVEN, more of TIME than ETERNITY, more of BODY than of the SOUL, more of MATERIALISM than of SPIRITUALITY, more of PLEASING SELF AND MEN THAN OF PLEASING GOD.

It is of them and their **ways, habits, customs, opinions, practices, tastes, aims, tone and spirit**, that I am speaking

about when I speak of "the world". This is the world God tells us to "come out and be separate" from and love it not and its things.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, such does not love the Father. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of eyes and the pride of life, they are not from God the Father, but of this evil world itself. And this world is fading away and all these evil and forbidden things will go with it, but WHOEVER KEEPS DOING THE WILL OF GOD WILL LIVE FOREVER" (1 John 2:15–17).

Brethren, in the aforementioned scripture Apostle John was cautioning Christians especially the young ones in Christ Jesus not to love the world and the things the world affords and that any Christian who loves the world, the love of God the Father is not in him or her, no matter the religious conducts they vigorously engage in. **We are here being cautioned against this present evil world under the captaincy of the wicked one satan himself and not to love it.** So that we can understand and be separated from the spirit, the customs, maxims, systems, values, the priorities, designs of the men of the world: who have turned back on Christ; renounce and will have nothing to do with Him; who in all their aims, conducts, designs, life pursuits, are guided and influenced to pursue that which leads to self-gratification.

By the world, we mean everything connected with the present life, apart from the kingdom of God and the hope of eternal life. So, it includes the corruptions of every kind and the abyss of all evils. In the world are pleasure, delights, all those allurements by which man is captivated to withdraw himself from God.

We are in this world, Christians cannot go out of it, we cannot have a Christian only: roads, shops, businesses, commerce and trading; we are not to omit ourselves from the worldly business and employments, except where it is necessarily offensive to our Christian belief and draws us from loving God. We are to marry, to bring up children; to enter into trades; to carry out business and to be diligent as well in them. It is no sin to be industrious; to get wealth; to have large concerns; except that all this may be done and performed in the name and faith in Christ.

We are cautioned only "not to love the world", that is not to love it with an inordinate affection, so to get one's heart upon it and highly esteem it as our treasure and portion. We must not love the world nor its temporal beauty, as if our hope, happiness even some real good are found in it. The world and the things which are in it can never be the ultimate source of true joy, nor that which gives the soul of man longing for a lasting satisfaction. There are with vast possessions, flourishing trade and businesses, plenty of riches, a

noble retinue and enjoyed everything possible but still found no real satisfaction at all. This great experience is published in the scripture. The title is Ecclesiastes or the Preacher. This was his conclusion of the world and what it could offer man: "Vanity upon vanities" (Ecclesiastes 12:8). He is King Solomon, the richest man that ever lived on earth. If Solomon could find no real substantial good in all his worldly pursuits and possessions, then, where, or who is the man that can compare with him in terms of earthly riches and wealth.

LOVE NOT THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD!

Whatever is in the world's systems, values, custom, axioms, aims, practices and spirits are not of God and the world introduces parenthetically three kinds of lusts: *the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*. These are examples that briefly show the pursuits and thoughts of men who live for the world. It is from these alone, all our danger arises; yet there is nothing in these that worth a single thought; it is wholly impossible to reap one moment's real satisfaction from them. They are in the world! They are the impulse of the things of the world.

The first commonly explains all sinful lusts in general; for the flesh means the whole corrupt nature of man. **(Romans 13:14). The word lust signifies here is desire.** So that it may include the desires of the mind, as well as the body; and may also refer to a worldly disposition; and a

thirst for the outward worldly company and earthy things with no eternal values. It may also be an experience of bodily corruption; the lust of the eyes is enumerated as one of the principal things which are in the world. This consists of looking at what is outside of us that surrounds us like beauty, dignity, honour and fame; seeing others in the possession of these, we lust or desire to be partakers of them. It was by this very means "**lust of the eyes**", that the first woman (Eve) who was the mother of us all, was overcome. *"And when the woman SAW that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the EYES and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also to her husband and he ate"* (Genesis 3:6).

The abundance of sin is drawn from the mind using the eyes. We all take in more sins with our eyes. It can summarily be expressed as inordinate desires after finery of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb material possessions, expensive equipage and luxurious things.

The third mentioned as being in the world is "the pride of life". Which consists of hunting after honours, titles and pedigrees, blind love of self, contempt of others, ego-driven ambitions; boasting of attainments, honourable acquaintance and the like. All these are not of the Father; nothing of these inordinate attachments either comes from or leads to God. They are of this

world; here they begin, flourish and end. They deprive the mind, divert it from divine pursuits and render it utterly incapable of spiritual enjoyments. This is in the world. It is the spirit of the world! This is why Paul appealed to all saints:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you should present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

If any man loves the world and things in it, the love of the Father is not in him. The love of God and the love of earthly things are incompatible; they are distinctively opposite; the love of God is a spiritual heavenly pull while the love of the world is an inferior downward pull that only gratifies the flesh which is the chamber of sin and death. If you give a place to the love of the world, the love of God cannot dwell, flourish in you; and if you have not his love, you can have no peace, no holiness, no heaven. When a man becomes so degenerated, that they are satisfied with the present life in this world and does not bother about being an enemy of God, such have made himself, thus, a slave to earthly lusts and he is possessed by carnal stupidity. *Therefore, be consciously watchful of Christ's second coming, let us have nothing to do with loving the world and the things in it. Let us turn*

our back on it. Let us be careful so that we are not found in the spirit of it.

The last part of our aforementioned scripture shows the vanity, temporal satisfaction and emptiness of the whole world. "And the world fades away and with all its lusts therein, forever". There is a huge contrast here. There is no continuation in the world. Everything in it is temporal. The world and its people are always changing. But those that do the will of God will live everlastingly. The minds of carnal and earthly-minded persons are always changing; so are their customs, their pleasures, their amusements, their joys, their pursuits. It is this change or temporal mode that satan uses to deceive the world more and more. They sought happiness yesterday and were greatly mortified in not enjoying it, they will be as earnest in seeking it in today, as if they have always found it in the same object. They can only measure their pleasurable satisfaction in themselves and their gratification of their senses.

In James 4:4, the bible says "*friendship with the world is enmity with God. Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*".

If friendship with the world brings enmity with God; the love of it brings separation with Him because such a person does not love Him. **Christ is not coming to rapture those who are God's enemies in their hearts, but those who love Him and are watchfully waiting for Him.**

One of the terrible foes a Christian must overcome if he will be saved is "**the world**". Scriptures suffice readily to highlight the evils of "**the world**":

- (1). *Christ gave himself for us, that He might deliver us from this WORLD (Galatians 4:4).*
- (2). *We have received, not the spirit of the WORLD, but the Spirit which is of God. (1 Corinthians 2:12).*
- (3). *In time past you walked according to the course of this WORLD (Ephesians 2:2).*
- (4). *The WORLD knows us not because it knew Christ not (1John 3:1).*
- (5). *We know that we are of God and the whole WORLD lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19).*
- (6). *Jesus said, "the cares of this WORLD choke the word and it becomes unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).*
- (7). *If you were of the WORLD, the WORLD would love its own. But because you do not belong to the WORLD, I have chosen you out of the WORLD, for that reason the WORLD hates you (John 15:19).*
- (8). *In the WORLD, you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the WORLD (John 16:33).*

These aforementioned scriptures speak for themselves if anyone can read them carefully, they will see clearly that "**the world**" is an enemy to the Christian's soul. Nothing robs Christ of his professing believers so much as *the love of the world; the fear of the world; the cares of*

the world; the business of the world; the money of the world; the pleasures of the world; and the desire to keep in with the world.

The world is the great rock on which thousands of Christians especially the young ones are continually making shipwreck. They do not object to any article of the Christian faith; they do not deliberately choose evil and openly rebel against God. **But they hope somehow to get to Heaven at last; they think it's okay to have some form of religion, but they cannot give up their idols: "the world and the things in it."**They begin with Abraham and Apostle Paul and end like Demas and Lot's wife. The last day alone will prove how many souls "the world" has slain before Christ comes back again. Thousands will be found to have been trained in religious families and to have known the gospel from their very childhood and yet missed Heaven. They left the harbor of home with bright prospects and launched forth on the ocean of life with a father's blessings and a mother's prayer and then got out of the right course through the seductions of the world and ended their voyage in shallows and misery! God forbid!

Nevertheless, we must caution that they "**come out of the world and love it not with its things!**"The way to come out of the world and never to love it is by steadily and habitually refuse to be guided by the world's stand ard of right and wrong; just as it's becoming commonplace

that many of our dear sisters in Christ are buying so dearly and tenaciously the satanic principles of "feminism" and nude dressing perpetuated by the anti-Christ spirit; some of our brothers have girded their hearts with the idolatry of mammon and selfish ambition.

The commonsense rule of the majority of mankind is to go with the fashion of the times; to be influenced by worldly opinion and trends and to set the watch of their lives by the town clock. The true Christian will never be content with such a rule as that. He will simply ask; what does the scripture say? What is written in the word of God? He will maintain firmly that nothing can be right which God says is wrong; that the customs, lifestyle and opinions of the world can make trivial, that which God calls serious; or that to be no sin, which God calls sin. Unfortunately, many Christians have gone the way of the common sense rule of worldly principles and not led by the Holy Spirit. We must be wise and quick to understand that most customs, maxims, principles, lifestyles, cultures of the world excuses sin and are anti-Christ so we must deliberately bring them under the scrutiny of the WORD OF GOD AND THE SEARCHLIGHT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Brethren, to come out from the world and not to love it and its things, is not an easy thing. It cannot be easy so long as human nature is what it is and a busy devil is always near us. It requires a constant struggle, war,

exertion inspired by the Holy Spirit and His enabling help; it entails incessant conflict and self-denial; it seldom places us in exact opposition to members of our own families, relations and neighbours; it sometimes obliges us to do things which give great offenses and bring on us ridicule and petty persecution.

The first secret of victory over the world is THE RIGHT HEART. By that I mean a heart renewed, changed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; a heart in which Christ dwells; a heart in which old things have passed away and all things become new; a heart that desires always to please God and do His will. The grand mark of such a heart is the bias of its tastes and affections. The owner of such a heart no longer likes the world and the things of the world and therefore finds it no trial or sacrifice to give them up. He no longer has any appetite for the company, the conversation, the amusements, the occupations, the things of the world he once loved and to "come out" from them seems natural to him. Let him who wants to OVERCOME THE WORLD, come out and love it not and its affairs, making sure first and foremost that he has got a NEW HEART. If the heart is right, everything else will be right in time. Jesus said the heart of a man is the factory of everything that defiles him.

The second secret of victory over the world is a lively practical faith in unseen things. The Bible says in (1 John 5:4) "*This is the victory that overcomes the world, even*

our FAITH". To attain and keep up the habit of looking steadily at invisible things, as if they were visible; to set before our minds every day, **as grand realities, our souls, God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Heaven, Hell, Judgement and Eternity; to nourish an abiding conviction that spiritual realities are just as real as what we do see and ten thousand more important. This is one sure way to be conquerors over the world.** This was the faith that made the noble army of the saints described in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, obtain such a glorious testimony from the Holy Spirit. **They all acted under a firm persuasion that they had a REAL GOD, A REAL SAVIOUR and a REAL HOME in Heaven, though unseen by mortal eyes. Armed with this kind of faith, a Christian regards this world as a shadow, fake, of no significant note compared to the world to come, that is, being with Christ in eternity and cares little for its praise or blame its enmity or its rewards.**

Another secret of victory over the world is to attain and cultivate the habit of boldly confessing Christ on all proper occasions. Repeated acts of confessing will produce habits. Habits once formed will produce a settled character.

OVERCOMING is a military terminology, suggesting combat against the forces of the devil. The Bible says "the world and the things in it"; its systems, maxims,

customs, fashions, aims, pursuits, priorities, affections, bias, lies under the control and dominion of Satan the wicked one (1 John 5:19); satan exercises dominion over the world as its ruler and god (John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12). And only those that overcome him and the world that are promised Heaven.

HEAVEN HAS NO PLACE FOR THOSE SATAN AND "THE WORLD" HAVE OVERCOME. Christ is not coming for them either. These are the eternal benefit Christ will give to the saints who have come out of the world and loved not the world and its things, but **OVERCAME** it and Satan it's ruler:

1. They will eat from the tree of life in paradise (Rev. 2:7)
2. They will be given the crown of life (Rev. 2:10)
3. They will not experience the second death (Rev. 2:11)
4. They will be given some hidden manna to eat and a white stone and on the stone, a **NEW NAME** written which no one knows except the overcomer (Rev. 2:17)
5. They will be given power over nations, also the morning star. (Rev. 2: 26 – 27).
6. They shall be clothed in white garments and have their names retained in the book of life (Rev. 3:5)
7. They shall be made pillars in the temple of God in Heaven. They shall have the name of God, the name of the city of God, the **NEW JERUSALEM** and the

new name of Christ written on them (Rev. 3: 21).

8. Christ will grant them to sit with Him in His throne in Heaven (Rev. 3:21).

What an exceeding glorious benefit that Christ kept for those of His saints that **OVERCOME** the world till the end. This is Amazingly Awesome! *"Things which the eye has not seen and the ear has not heard and which have not entered the heart of man, all that GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM (who hold HIM in affectionate reverence, who obey HIM)"* (1Corinthians 2:9).

Brethren, think about it, there is nothing "the world" can afford or satisfy us with, compared with the eternal benefits Christ has lined up for us if we overcome it. Nothing! Nothing!! Solomon, the preacher summed it all - he says the ultimate best the world can afford us is "Vanity upon vanity". We must not believe, be overcome by the lies, deception, shadows, ephemerals, illusions, the world has much to offer; the lust and pride that is its stock in trade as we watchfully wait for the sudden return of Christ in the skies into the world. Let us separate ourselves from the idols of the world; be pure and holy in our love for God.

True religion is wholly the work of God, yet there are high and important responsibilities in which we must "STRIVE TO ENTER IN A STRAIT GATE". We must run a race; we must wrestle even to agony; we must fight battles of life; we must overcome this world and its god - the devil before we can inherit THE CROWN OF LIFE.

In this race, you either win or lose. This is a clarion call! Let's run focused to win the prize: CROWN OF LIFE set before us. We are to run onward remembering who it is that stands at the winning post-JESUS! Remember His agonizing suffering for you on the Cross; remember what befell LOT'S WIFE when she looked backward; remember Jesus promise to prepare a mansion for you in Heaven. Finish your race well and win.

CHAPTER 9

AUTHENTIC RELIGION

Scriptures abound in the Holy Bible warning Christians against practicing hypocritical and unauthentic religion.

The greatest deceit on earth is the soul that has a form of religion that takes him to hell.

"Jesus noticed a fig tree in a distance covered with leaves, He went to see if He could find any fruit on it. But when He came to it, He found NOTHING BUT LEAVES"
(Mark 11:13)

"For although they hold a form of true religion, yet, they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it in their conducts and genuineness of their profession".
(2Timothy 3:5).

Jesus said, "You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (Revelation 3:1).

If we profess to have any religion at all, let us be careful it is authentic. I mean that which is genuine, sincere,

honest and thorough and Christ-centered. I mean that which is not just formal, not hollow, not false, nominal and not counterfeit. Authentic religion is not a mere show, pretense and dutifulness; it is not a deep feeling and temporary profession that works only on the outside. It is something inward, solid, substantial, intrinsic, alive and lasting until one is raptured unto Christ for an eternal relationship with Him.

The times in which we live demands attention to this subject especially when we choose to be among those Christians who are watchfully ready to receive Christ at any moment He returns. **A desire for authenticity is a striking feature of a vast amount of not only religion but those who profess they are Christians. If we measure the religion of the age by its apparent quantity, there is much of it and new ones entering the stage in many forms. But if we measure it by the truth of the Word of God in the Bible on every side we would realize the need for more authenticity.**

Let us consider and examine scriptures fairly and then we shall see the importance of authenticity in religion and the danger of not being authentic. Let's observe how many parables were spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ that is intended to put in strong contrast the true believer and the mere nominal disciple in name only:

The parables of the sower, of the weeds, of the net, of the

two sons, of the wedding garment, of the ten virgins, of the talents, of the great banquet, of the ten minas, of the two builders, all have one great point in common. **THEY ALL BRING OUT IN STRIKING COLOURS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHENTICITY AND UNREALITY IN RELIGION.** They all show the **USELESSNESS AND DANGER OF CHRISTIANITY** which is **NOT AUTHENTIC, THOROUGH and TRUE.**

Let us look for another thing, at the language of our Lord Jesus Christ about the scribe and the pharisees who practiced some kind of piety in their religion. Eight times in one chapter we find Him denouncing them as "**HYPOCRITES**" in words of almost fearful severity "*You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?*" (*Matthew 23:33*).

What can we learn from these tremendous strong expressions? How is it that our gracious and merciful Saviour used such cutting words about people who are rated morally decent than tax collectors and prostitutes; who are rated highly as very religious devout and pious. **It is meant to teach us the exceeding detestability of false profession and mere outward religion in God's sight. Open wickedness and willful submission to fleshly lusts are no doubt ruinous sins, if not given up. But there seems to be nothing which is so DISPLEASING TO CHRIST AS HYPOCRISY AND UNREALITY.**

Let us glimmer from some certain facts to show us there is hardly a grace in the character of a true Christian of which you will not find a counterfeit, even true doctrines of the Bible are ceaselessly counterfeited or imitated. Many of which are described in the word of God for us to learn lessons from them.

Is there not a "FALSE REPENTANCE?" Without a doubt, there is Saul, Ahab, Herod and Judas Iscariot had feelings of sorrow about sin. But they never really repented unto salvation. Is there not a false "FAITH?" Without a doubt there is. It is written of Simon Magus, at Samaria, that he "believed", yet his heart was not right in the sight of God. It is even written of the devils that "believe and shudder" (Acts 8:13; James 2:19). Is there not a "FALSE HOLINESS?" Without a doubt there is. Joash, King of Judah appeared to everyone very holy and good, so long as Jehoiada the priest lived, but as soon as he died the religion of Joash died at the same time (2Chronicles 24:2, 17-22). Judas Iscariot's outward life was as correct as that of any of the apostles up to the time that he betrayed his Master. There was nothing suspicious about him. Yet in reality, he was "a thief" and a traitor (John 12:6).

Is there not a "FALSE LOVE AND KINDNESS?" Without a doubt there is. There is a love which consists of words and tender expressions and a great show of

affection and calling other people "dear brethren" while the heart does not love at all. It is not for nothing that John says "LET US NOT LOVE WITH WORDS BUT WITH ACTIONS AND IN TRUTH". Is there not a "FALSE HUMILITY?" Without a doubt there is. There is a pretentious meekness of demeanour that often covers a very proud heart. Paul warns us against a "false humility" and speaks of "*having an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship, their false humility*" (Colossians 2:18, 23). We all must be careful because it is very easy to unconsciously put on false humility and holiness especially in the absence of brokenness in our hearts. Is there not a "FALSE WORSHIP?" Without a doubt there is. Our Lord said of the Jews: "*These people honour me with their lips but their hearts are afar from me*" (Matthew 15:8). They had plenty of formal services, bountiful offerings in their temples and their synagogues, but the fatal defect about them wanted authenticity and purity of heart.

"I hate all your show and pretense, the hypocrisy of your religious festivals (programmes) and solemn assemblies. I will not accept your offerings. I won't even notice the robust ones. Away with your noisy hymns of praise! I will not listen to the music of your instruments. Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice and an endless river of RIGHTEOUS LIVING" (Amos 5:21-24).

What shall we say about these things? They show clearly the immense importance which scripture attaches to authenticity in religion. They show we need to be careful in our Christian profession and heavenly race, lest our Christianity turns out to be merely nominal, formal, unreal and hypocritical. The subject is of deep importance in every age but even more, as we are on the eve of the sooner coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The true religion of being a Christian is living a Christ-centered life. The goal that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has placed before each of us is that we grow up into His glorious and perfect likeness through a progressive sanctification process being worked in us by the Holy Spirit. It was for that purpose that Christ, in His grace and mercy, identified Himself with us. *"HE is not ashamed to call us His brethren"*. One other thing about this God-appointed goal for us is that it is the highest possible mark at which we can aim. To be Christlike means that every possible grace and ability to do good is provided and vitalised by the Holy Spirit in our lives and will be developed to its greatest extent. It also means that every faculty will be used with the highest possible motive to the glory of God.

If you want to know whether your religion is authentic, try it by "the place it occupies" in your heart. It is not enough that it is in your head. You may know the truth

and assent to the truth, believe the truth, yet your lifestyle, conduct and tempers are wrong and not pleasing in God's sight. It is not enough that it is on your "lips". You may say "Amen" to public prayer, speak in marathon tongues, shout the loudest "Halleluyah", give the highest amount of offerings in the church and yet have nothing more than an outward religion. It is not enough that it is in your "feelings". You may weep under preaching one day and be lifted to the third heaven by joyous excitement, yet another day, be dead to God. Your religion, if it is authentic and driven by the Holy Spirit, must be in your heart. It must sway the affections; it must lead your will; it must direct your tastes; it must influence the choices and decisions you make; it must fill the deepest, lowest, inmost seat of your soul. Is this your religion? If not, you may have good reason to doubt whether it is "authentic" and true. (Acts 8:21; Romans 10:10).

If you want to know whether your religion is authentic, try it by your "feelings towards sin" which it produces. Christianity which is from the Holy Spirit will always have a very deep view of the SINFULNESS OF SIN. It will not merely regard sin as a blemish and misfortune, which makes men and women objects of pity and compassion. It will see sin as the abominable thing which God hates, the thing which makes a man guilty and lost in his Maker's sight, the thing which deserves

God's wrath and condemnation. It will look at SIN AS THE CAUSE OF ALL SORROW AND UNHAPPINESS, OF STRIFE AND WARS, OF QUARRELS AND CONTENTIONS and OF SICKNESS AND DEATH; THE CURSE WHICH CURSED GOD'S BEAUTIFUL CREATION (MAN).The cursed thing makes the whole earth groan and struggle in pain. Above all, it will see in sin the thing which will ruin us eternally, unless we can find a ransom; will lead us to captivity, except we can get its chains broken; will destroy our happiness both here and hereafter, except we confront it, fight against it, even unto death: apply the Blood of Jesus as it's antidote and repent of it. Is this your religion? Are these your feelings about sin? If not, you should test if your religion is "authentic".

If you want to know whether your religion is authentic, try it by "the fruit it bears in your heart and life". Christianity which originates from a union with Christ will always be known by its fruits. It will produce in the man who has it, repentance, faith, hope, love, humility, spirituality, kindness, self-denial, unselfishness, forgiving spirit, moderation, self-control, truthfulness, hospitality, patience and the fear of God. The degree to which these various graces appear may vary in different believers, nevertheless, the germ and seeds of them will be found in all who are the children of God. By "their fruits they will be known". Is this your religion before Christ returns? If not, you must examine the "authenticity" of your religion.

Brethren, we must do a proper examination of our religion, find out the character of our religion; with the Bible in your hand and honesty in your heart, resolve to find out. False and hypocritical christianity at the eve of Christ's return to rapture His "Wise Virgins" and those Saints who OVERCOME to the END is the greatest risk and danger to a man. False Christianity is sure to deceive and fail a man in the end. It will wear out; it will break down; it will leave its possessor like a wreck on a sand bank, high and dry and forsaken by the tide; it will know no peace, no comfort in the hour when peace and comfort are most needed in the time of affliction and on the bed of death. If you want to avoid being comfortless in death and hopeless in the judgment day of the Lord, be genuine, be authentic, be true to your religion.

The time is fast coming when nothing but authenticity will stand the fire (1Corinthians 3:13). Authentic repentance towards God; authentic faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; authentic holiness of heart and life; authentic services and the sacrifice offered unto God; authentic love for God and our neighbour; these are the things which will stand the judgement at the last day. It is a solemn saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and your name cast out demons and perform miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly 'I never knew you'. Depart from Me! (Matthew 7:22-23). This is Christ's verdict to those whose "Christianity" was not authentic.

THE LAW OF GOD'S HOUSE IS HOLINESS!

In our humanistic day of watered-down sentimental Christianity, we have lost the sense of **HOLY** in the church, with all the ruckus, noise entertainment and mostly the "**SOCIAL GOSPEL**" that is preached nowadays in the Church; there is little room to cultivate a sense of holiness unto the Lord. When will today's Christians learn that gathering together for worship and service in the **HOUSE OF GOD** is **not about exciting ourselves, but has everything to do with hallowing and pleasing God. God is only pleased with HOLINESS.**

The church is the only thing on earth that can properly be called the **HOUSE of GOD**, for He dwells not in temples made with hands, thus, buildings made from the material substance. The finest architecture could never constitute a proper shrine for **JEHOVAH THE MOST HIGH GOD!** Look at the boundless space, the cosmic heavens and imagine what kind of temple built by the hands of mortals will fit, within what walls would you hope to house the infinite, omnipresent Jehovah? He has decided, however, to choose a peculiar people, redeemed and covenanted to Him for His habitation. The saints in Christ are built together as a spiritual house, a habitation of God through the Holy Spirit. He resides among His people according to His promise, "*I will dwell in them and make my home among them*" (Ezekiel 37:27). Hence, the church is the House of the Heavenly Father, where He dwells amid His family.

The **Church is God's house**, for there He makes Himself known and manifests Himself to His **Children and Family**. **Apostle Paul calls it the "Household of God" – The New Covenant Zion**. His Saints are a people near unto Him, they enjoy the holy intimacies of love between the Great Father and His Children! They have access to Him at all times, for they dwell in His house and are His dearly beloved children. The Lord links His name with the Church as a man does with his house. **It is the house of the Lord God Almighty and He is the Lord of the house.**

"And this is the BASIC LAW of the house: ABSOLUTE HOLINESS! The entire top of the mountain where the house is built is holy. Yes, this is the basic law of the house" (Ezekiel 43:12).

Brethren, if you have the privilege to be admitted into God's house and to be a member of the Household of God, that is, God's family, it is exceedingly necessary that you should know **THE LAW OF THE HOUSE**. This is desirable of our entrance and equally necessary as long as we remain in the House of the Lord, more especially if you are one of those members of God's family who are watchfully preparing for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy with this instruction:

"That you may know how you ought to behave yourself in

the house of God, which is the church of the living God". To this end, all Christians ought to know that God's house is not LAWLESS. Though it is the abode of spiritual liberty, but not of a license to live lawless life. They that dwell in the Household of God are in His immediate presence and our God is a consuming fire! He had better be Holy, any Christian who dwells with the thrice Holy God – HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! Is the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY! The Lord will be sanctified in them that come near Him and if any of His children enters the House to misbehave themselves, they will find that judgement begins at the House of God and anyone that abuses God's grace will pay for it. How terrible are those words "If any man defiles the Temple (House) of God, he will attract the wrath of God". Let us then be careful and with great attention look at what constitutes the LAW OF THE HOUSE OF GOD. O that the Holy Spirit may help us to understand and then lead us to obey.

Let's see our leading scripture: (Ezekiel 43:12).

"This is the LAW OF THE HOUSE: ABSOLUTE HOLINESS! THE ENTIRE TOP OF THE HOUSE IS HOLY. Yes, THIS IS THE BASIC LAW OF THE HOUSE".

We can see from this scripture that from the length, breadth, height of the house. **HOLINESS IS THE LAW OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.** That everything about it is Holy. All things in the Church must be pure, clean, right, gracious, commendable and be in the "BEAUTY OF HIS

HOLINESS. Everything that has to do with the Church of Christ must be Holy. That's what the scripture says "**The entire top of the House and the whole limit around about it shall be most Holy**".

The secular matters which touch our religion are to be made religious whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to glorify the name of Lord Jesus Christ. Holiness should be far-reaching and cover the whole ground of a Christian's life. He should be sanctified, "Spirit, Soul and body" and in all things, he should bear evidence of having been set apart unto the Lord. Apostle Paul prayed that "*the very God of peace would sanctify us wholly*" (1Thessalonians 5:23). So let it be!

We noticed once again from the leading scripture (**Ezekiel 43:12**) that this holiness was to be conspicuous. The church is not a house hidden in a valley, or hidden away in the woods; it is the temple which was set upon the top of a mountain where anybody could see it from afar. The whole of that mountain was holy. **Conspicuous holiness ought to be the mark of the Church of God. We should be a peculiar people, not as the people of the world are, distinguished as a race dwelling alone that cannot be numbered among the nations. We ought to be noted, not for talent, not for wealth, not for loud professions but for HOLINESS.** Jesus said the same to us "*You are the light of the world you are like a city on top of a hill that*

cannot be hidden". (Matthew 5:14). Grace cannot be put under a bushel. It would gladly be sheltered from its enemies by its obscurity, but the Holy City always stands on a hill and it cannot be hidden. To Christ, the church to which we belong, the HOUSE of GOD should only be acknowledged for her HOLINESS. To Christ what people should acknowledge in our lives as God's children is our HOLINESS, GOOD WORKS that glorify God and bless men.

"In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:16).

There is one thing the world admires and as well hates, yet, cannot deny its existence and power that thing is HOLINESS, which is at once the GLORY OF GOD and the STRENGTH OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches and members of the Household of God.

Our lives must be such that observers may peep into the doors of our lives and see nothing for which to blame us. Our moral cleanliness must not be like that of a bad housewife who sweeps the dirt under the mats and puts away rags and rottenness in the corner of the cupboards. We must clear from our lives every accursed thing that even if they dig in the earth they will not find an Achan's treasure hidden there. *"God desires truth in the inward*

parts and the hidden part and He will make us know wisdom" (Psalm 51:6).

Moreso, there is no holiness without total separation from SELF LOVE, THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD AND THE PLEASURES OF THE WORLD. Holiness consists largely of consecration. The holy things of the sanctuary were holy because they were dedicated to God. So must it be with us if we are to be holy, we must belong to Jehovah; we must be consecrated to Him and be used for His purposes. As Christians we are not our own. "We are the Lord's, His vows are upon us as His holy possessions, therefore, we must be holy unto Him. The likeness to Christ must be seen in every single member of the House of God, in the whole body and all its corporate acts. The Father is Holy! Christ is Holy! The Holy Spirit is Holy! We must likewise be Holy! This is the LAW OF THE HOUSE OF GOD – THE CHURCH OF CHRIST!

"Holiness adorns your house O Lord, forever" (Psalm 93:5)

Brethren, the church of God is with a Holy sacrifice and dedicated to Holy service. Her great glory is the Holy Spirit, whose influences and operations are all Holy. Her LAW-BOOK is the Holy bible, her armory is the Holy covenant, her comfort is Holy prayers, her convocations are Holy assemblies, her members are Holy men and Holy women; she exists for Holy ends

and follows after Holy examples until her Holy bridegroom Jesus Christ comes to rapture His Holy bride (THE WISE VIRGINS AND OVERCOMERS).

Let me then ask, are you part of her? That is, the saints who are "HOLY TO THE LORD?" Are your thoughts pure, solemn unto glorifying the Lord? Does the current of your desires run in a direction pleasing unto God? Are you compatible and at home with the ungodly and carnality of the world, does their sin vex you? Let's examine our hearts properly, even as we herald the sudden return of Jesus Christ glorified. Where there is Holiness God comes and there is an assurance of love, the fullness of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the regenerated spirit is love both to God and man. On the other hand, imagine a church without holiness. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord and if the church cannot ever see her Lord, what is her condition?

Go to Zion and see what happens to God's house whenever it is defiled by sinfulness and lawlessness. Mark how the holy house was desolate and burnt with fire. Remember how God hated Zion and asked her enemies to cast her down. Remember Christ's indignation against the Church (God's House) in Laodicea:

"But since you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! You say I am rich, I have everything I want. I don't need a thing! And you do not

realize that you are WRETCHED AND MISERABLE and POOR and BLIND and NAKED (Revelation 3:16-17).

Like the brethren in the House of the Lord in Laodicea, let us not give ourselves to laxity of principle, but practice of the **LAW OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD** which is **HOLINESS!** So, the Lord does not "spit us out of His mouth" and we become naked. Brethren, let me tell you this mystery: nobody enters heaven naked, the naked are destined for hell. Those that arrived at the Holy gates of Heaven are adorned with their "**GARMENT OF SALVATION**". Yet, many Christians in the church in Laodicea have been pronounced naked by Christ. How many will Christ pronounce naked in our Churches today if Christ sends us His assessment of them?

Lastly Brethren, let us learn obedience to the **LAW OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD**. I believe Jesus Christ is always working in His way for the purity of every true church.

"His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor". God's melting fire is not in the world where the dross contains no gold, but "His fire is in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem". The Church of Christ is the **NEW COVENANT ZION**. "The Lord will judge His people". He will try the professors and their professions. Those who call Him "Lord, Lord, Lord".

Since we are members of the Household of God and are aware of the Law of the House which is Holiness and because **God is Holy, let us strive to devote ourselves to Him in purity, holy worship and holy service. "But now you must be Holy in everything, just as God who chose you is Holy", HOLINESS! HOLINESS! HOLINESS!** is the law and standard of the House of God, let us live by that standard as we watchfully expect Christ's return.

CHAPTER 10

GODLINESS THE UNIFORM OF THE SAINTS

"Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11).

We live in an age of spiritual danger that the world has never witnessed. An immense amount of ungodliness and on the parallel side, an amount of immense mere outward profession of religion. A painful large proportion of all the congregations in the universal church of Christ consists of unconverted people, who know nothing of heart religion, who have mental and not heart acceptance of Christ in their lives.

Myriads of these who are always running after preachers and crowding to hear special sermons especially those **Social Gospels** that borders on material and temporal prosperity and humanism. It is cautious to observe how history repeats itself and how much sameness there is in the human heart in every age. Even in the early church, many persons were found at church for the great Christian ceremonies and theaters, or even the temples,

for heathen spectacles. The sermon was listened to like the display of rhetoricians; and eloquent preachers were cheered with clapping of hands, stamping of feet, waving of handkerchiefs and in nowadays Church we have added blowing of whistles, blasting of piano keys and pumping of trumpets; we even have altars equipped with DISCO LIGHTINGS and ELECTRONIC SMOKE MACHINES.

There is a very bitter word of lamentation from prophet Hosea that can be used to describe the present-day Christian:

"Ephraim, he has mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a bread not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength and he is not even aware: yes, he is now very old with gray hair all upon him, yet he does not know the situation he is into" (Hosea 7:8-9).

Many Christians fit into this parable, they have mixed themselves up with the world, many ministers of God have also mixed themselves up with the world, some are even in covenants with powers of darkness. **Like Ephraim, they are like "unturned bread", unperturbed; undiscerning; they grope in the allurements of the world, drinking from the wine of the "Queen of heaven" – that great harlot of Babylon. The worse thing is that they have become spiritually deaf and blind, that they ignore divine warning signals from the Holy Spirit.**

Anyone who looks at the spiritual state of the present-day church will know that a lot is wrong. The flaming fire that descended upon her on the day of Pentecost has lost its glow on many Christians; many who were baptized by the fire of the Holy Spirit are now exhibiting spiritual smokes.

Are we not seeing many Christians come to church services, attend Sunday school, listen to Holy Spirit-inspired sermons, attend prayer meetings yet no change in their conduct and lifestyle? Their moral state is so much like unbelievers of the world. Many are alpha-grade hypocrites. They put up a different attitude in the church and a contrary attitude outside. Many come to meetings and receive miracles but they do not come across the God of miracles. Many have a lot of people around them that will never follow them to church because their lifestyle does not glorify Jesus. How can a Christian sister convert her coworker when she dresses provocatively to seduce them in their workplace? When you indulge in taking bribes from people to change the direction of justice and equity, which Jesus Christ will you direct them to? Many Christians are carefree with everything in life, including the matters of heaven, they joke with sin, abuse God's grace, dare His anger, damn Christ's most solemn word "Depart from Me".

Because of the seeming lack of spiritual depth, many have been carried to and fro by a wind of doctrines; by

embracing some senseless, unreasonable heresy. Surely, in times like this, especially on the eve of the coming of Christ, there is a great need for self-examination. When we look around us, we may well ask, **"Is it well with our souls?" Are we on the right path? Do we ever, in the first place think about our souls at all?**

"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon and my reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work" (Revelation 22:11-12).

Brethren, have you examine the condition of your soul, because, we are on our way to see God, maybe Christ may come earlier to take us to Heaven, none knows that which may happen first. We have been invited to meet the Holy one face to face. To meet the thrice Holy One, the living God Himself. Oh! the infinite grace, the inconceivable blessedness, the only wise God! **All our schooling here on earth in the life of holiness is simply for the preparation for that meeting and that vision.** *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8); "Pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrew 12:14).*

Since the time God said to Israel, **"Be Holy, as I am holy"**, holiness was revealed as the only meeting between God

and His people. To be holy was to be the common ground on which they stand with Him, the one attribute in which they were to be like Him, the one thing that was to prepare them for the glorious time when He would no longer keep them away but admit them to the full fellowship of His glory, to have the word fulfilled in them: Jesus Christ glorified has spoken: **"He who is holy let him continue being holy. He who wants to be carnal, ungodly and does not want to repent should remain so, I'm waiting for all souls to appear before me"**.

Apostle Peter reminds believers that the coming of the day of the Lord is to be preceded and accompanied by the most tremendous catastrophe of the dissolution of the heavens and the earth. **He pleaded with them to be diligent in holy living so that they may be found by Christ without spot and blameless in His sight. He asked them to examine the condition of their souls and ask them what manners they ought to be in "Holy conducts and godliness"**. Peter is saying that **believers who are expecting the coming of Christ ought to understand that holiness must be the one and universal characteristic of our Christian life.**

All through the book of Revelation, we have read about the wondrous grace and practice with which God has made known and made us a partaker of His holiness, all in preparation for what is to come. **We have heard God, the Holy one calling us, pleading with us, commanding us**

to be holy, as He is holy. And we expect to meet Him and to dwell through eternity in His light, holy as He is holy. It is a living reality. We are looking forward to it as the only thing that makes life worth living. We are looking forward to our Holy Father welcoming us as His holy children.

WHAT IS TRUE GODLINESS?

Apostle tells us that the true Christian faith is the knowledge that leads to godliness. Today, unfortunately, many are found to glory in the Christian faith but do not have even the barest knowledge of the truth. More so, many believers are found to have some knowledge of the truth but not enough to produce godliness. **"They profess that they know God, but deny him in good works (fruit-bearing)".** True godliness is a gift from God, by which man is made willing and able to serve God. He no longer lives according to the lusts of the flesh, as the ungodly do, but according to the will of God, revealed to us in His word. For this reason, the godly life, in which we give ourselves over to the service of God so that we live no longer for ourselves but God is called **"our reasonable service"**. That means we regulate our service to God according to the direction of the "milk of God's word", not according to our notion or understanding.

True godliness shows itself in these ways:

First, a sincere resolve to live a Godly life, according to God's word, from henceforth, walking in the ways of the

Lord and making God's glory the chief end of all that one does. This was David's resolve in *Psalms 106*, "*I have sworn and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgements*". Apostle Paul was also of the same mind when he says, "*For we trust we have a good conscience in all things willing to live honestly*" (*Hebrews 13:18*).

The Second holy exercise by which a Christian practices true godliness shows itself is this, that consequently having resolved in his heart, one does his utmost to carry out his hearty resolve into effect, which is practicing godly life with the help of the Holy Spirit. It will be a mere mockery for one to resolve to live a godly life and do not show any determination in that wise.

Whoever wants to be a godly person must not only resolve to live a godly life but must do his utmost to demonstrate that he esteems godliness as his greatest gain. Take note that no one can do in his strength, but in the power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the strength of our life and by whom we can do all things. (*John 15:5; Philippians 4:13*).

The Third way that true godliness reveals itself is that in practicing true godliness with heart and mind, we prepare to be all that God wants us to be. We are willing to do this both in temporal and spiritual things. This means letting God's Spirit lead and work in us as he pleases and according to what He considers best. In the

same way, a godly person must be content to be whatever God wants him to be, whether rich, poor, sick, healthy, honoured, insulted, rejected, or privileged. This means, that he must be willing to do the will of the Lord our God, whatever the circumstances.

Additional proof of godliness is prompt forsaking of sin. We have seen how in the three holy exercises described, true godliness powerfully reveals itself. Nevertheless, we know that the godliness of the holiest saint in this life is still imperfect. It is very defective, *"for we all stumble in many ways"* (James 3:2). The best of us are sometimes overcome by a certain sin. However, when we have been overtaken by sin, whether great or small, we do not remain or persist in our transgression as ungodly people do, for they feel comfortable living in their sin (1John 5:19). By contrast, as soon as we discover that we have been overcome by some sin, we must jump back from it as quickly as if we had fallen into a fire or had been taken like a fish out of water. Then we must quickly return to God our Father who is love. Godliness, also means we must hate sin, confront it by all the holy graces the Holy Spirit has given unto us. "The Holy Spirit knows our weakness and therefore, makes intercession for us to our dear Heavenly Father".

Godliness teaches us to be steadfast in doing God's work not just sometimes when we are spiritually motivated but at all times; and with great earnestness, diligence and

perseverance. The godly life is not like a morning dew, which soon disappears, rather it is like a fountain from which living water flows. **Those who do not practices true godliness and yet serving God, will sooner than later become entangled in worldliness again. They have the form but not the power of true godliness. True godliness is the believer's pathway to heaven.**

The doctrine of Godliness is rampantly being resisted in the church of Christ especially this present day. Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, came also to sanctify and purge them from their sins. Those who believe in Jesus Christ must be careful to maintain good works and to live a godly life. This godliness is not such an easy and slight thing; true godliness consists of exact conformity of the whole man, heart and life to the whole will of God and it is eternally profitable. This is what Apostle Paul meant while addressing believers in his preaching: "That Christ might be formed in you". My desire and aim of writing about this doctrine is to establish in you true godliness through the influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit, so that, you become possessors and partakers of that grace which accompanies salvation; that your faith might stand not in the wisdom of men, nor the deception of false teachers and satanic agents that have invaded the Church of Christ. The sweet talking and flattery preachers who have armed themselves with stupendous material wealth and "goldfish" fame they have acquired in their

ministerial office and their cronies have removed the STINGS OF GOD'S LAW from their messages which makes the GOSPEL a more 'social gospel'. The gospel they preach has become less demanding, only meant to make Christians happy, but not measure them against God's holiness nor prepare them to go through the narrow gate and difficult way which leads to a life in Heaven of which Christ said only a few will find. *Jesus did not come to help people find a little more happiness and success in life. His life was filled with suffering, under the long shadow of the cross. He showed His believer" THE CROSS" as the way to GLORY in HEAVEN. He not only took God's wrath upon Himself for us, but He also gave us His righteousness. In response to His invaluable love and work, let us show appreciation by walking in a manner pleasing to Him, as we earnestly prepare for His return. Godliness has value for all things, holding promises for both the present life and the life to come.*

WALKING IN THE FEAR OF GOD!

"Since we have a Kingdom nothing can destroy, let us please God by serving Him with thankful hearts and with HOLYFEAR and AWE" (Hebrew 12:28).

The fear of God is the fuel for living a godly life. Christians must be fearers of God. A child may have the assurance of his Father's love, yet possesses a fear of offending him. For a Christian, this is but a holy fear not

a hellish fear, a fear sweetened with love. The fear of God is the soul of godliness, lack of fear of God will frustrate the life of godliness since the lack of the fear of God is the innate cause of all wickedness. There must be an excess of sin where the fear of God is lacking. We live in a godless age; would men dare to sin at the rate they do if the fear of God were ruling in their hearts? Would Christians hide under grace and make their hearts a den of sin? Would they dare to swear, be unclean, dress seductively to church services and prayer meetings, hate purity, deride God's pruning discipline, plot wickedness in their hearts, joke with hell, lax with evangelism, profane holy sermons and jest at preachers who call for godly living and holy conducts?

It is becoming worrisome, especially as we herald the coming of Christ that the fear of God is vanishing from the hearts of those professing Christianity. Some fear shame, poverty, sickness, death, others fear danger, but where is he who fears the Almighty God? Many have made their profession a cloak to cover sin. Absalom palliated his treason with a religious vow (2 Sam 15:7). The Pharisees made long prayer a preface to the oppression of the people. The sins of professors of Christianity are more odious; the sins of the wicked anger God, but the sins of professing Christians grieve him. God has never enjoyed, encouraged, or tolerated the sin of his people at any time, even though He loves His children, temper them with merciful kindness and

long-suffering. Many Christians have become used to the ungodly way of living that they have become secure in sin that they are not afraid of the torments of hell. A secure sinner lives as bad as the worst, yet hopes to be saved as well as those who live godly; a secure sinner lies in Delilah's lap, yet hopes to be in Abraham's bosom; a secured sinner thinks since all is well, all is in peace but unknowingly to him ungrounded peace presages an earthquake in the conscience.

He who wants to live godly and pursue holiness must have the fear of God planted in his heart: *"Happy is he that fears the Lord always"* (Proverbs 28:14). The fear of God would influence all our actions; it would make us holy towards God and righteous towards men. The fear of God is the very badge and uniform of a saint. All the moral virtues in their highest elevation do not make a saint, but here is his true character, he fears God. The one Christ calls His elect "His Sheep". Sheep are trembling creatures. The saints are tremulous; they dare not take liberties for a license as others do. The fear of God is a main branch of wisdom; it is called the head *'the beginning of wisdom'*. *The fear of God is the Christian's godly wisdom. It makes us 'consider our ways'* (Psalm 119:59). A great part of wisdom lies in consideration. He who fears God considers how vain the world is and therefore dares not love it; how short time of living in this world is; how precious salvation is and dares not neglect it. The fear of God is wisdom, as it preserves us from hell, keeps us out of danger and makes us flee from

danger. The fear of God is the best certificate to show for heaven, it is our evidence for heaven; it is what differentiates us from satan and his children who are "the children of disobedience".

It is impossible to be devoted to God if one's heart is not filled with the fear of God. It is this profound sense of veneration and honour, reverence and awe that draws forth from our hearts the worship and adoration that characterizes true devotion to God. The reverent and godly Christian sees God first in His transcending glory, majesty and holiness before he sees Him in His love, mercy and grace. Just as obedience to the Lord is an indication of our love for Him, so is it also a proof of our fear of God.

Finally, brethren he who fears God keeps his commandments: "*Fear God and keep His commandments*" (*Ecclesiastes 12:13*). One of the great reformists of the church from Europe – Luther, said "I RATHER OBEY GOD THAN WORK MIRACLES". A holy and godly heart knows there is nothing lost by obedience. Knowing therefore that the Gates of Heaven are opened only to those who obey God's commandments (*Revelation 22:14*), let us journey on the pathway of godliness so that we can enter the gates of Heaven and our Lord Jesus Christ will receive us to Himself saying to us "welcome and well done great pilgrim from earth to Heaven your eternal home of rest".

We are called not just to be "BORN AGAIN" in order to escape hell; not just to receive forgiveness of sins; not just to enjoy the benefits of being a child of God, but to transform to become a FRUIT-WORK BEARING disciples of Christ who submit to His lordship.

A carnal Christian develops in directly opposite ways, CONTINUING A SIN-LIFE with a seared conscience inclined to abuse God's grace. Unless he repents from his backsliding state, he will eventually stumble and slide out of the blood covering of Jesus Christ by his own volition. O backslider! Repent lest you will be cast out into hell. (John 15:6,8).

CHAPTER 11

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Brethren, we are not ignorant that the earth is covered with the enemies of Christ, who are also the enemies of His Church and many are propagating heresies in the very bosom of His Church to disfigure His mysteries. There is this satanic doctrine from the pit of hell being preached and propagated in the Church of Christ by some apostate teachers "ONCE SAVED EVER SAVED". Meaning that once a person accepts Christ as his Lord and Saviour, he automatically has eternal security no matter the kind of life he or she lives after their salvation experience till they exit this world through death. To such deceitful teachers and "apostate apostles", it does not matter whether the professor of Christ continuously practices "LAWLESSNESS", even witchcraft, sorcery and the occult, as far as he professes Christ and has a badge of religion, such professor is saved and saved eternally. But we thank God that Jesus Christ who is the **LAWGIVER, LORD OF ALL, SAVIOUR and THE JUDGE OF ALL FLESH AND SPIRITS** has debunked those heresies.

"Not all who profess to be religious and call me Lord will enter God's Kingdom. The only people who will enter are those who do WHAT MY FATHER IN HEAVEN WANTS. On that last day, many will call me Lord. They will say, 'Lord, Lord, by the power of your name we spoke for God. And by your name, we cast out demons and did many miracles'. Then I will tell those people clearly 'Get away from Me, you people who have been practicing LAWLESSNESS, I never knew you: Whoever HEARS the teachings of mine and OBEYS THEM is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. "Whoever HEARS these teachings of mine and DOES NOT OBEY them is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. It rained hard, the flood came and the winds blew and beat against that house. And it fell with a LOUD CRASH"
(Matthew 7:21-27).

Jesus Christ used many metaphors here to explain the truth about ETERNAL SECURITY:

- Those who profess Him as their LORD – Yet, practicing LAWLESSNESS, that is, THEY DON'T DO WHAT PLEASES HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN NOR DO WHAT HE WANTS THEM TO DO. He will not allow them to enter Heaven. They will be DISQUALIFIED from entering the Holy gates of Heaven.
- Those who HEAR HIS TEACHING and OBEY them are like houses built on a ROCK. Here, rocks

symbolize SECURITY, ASSURANCE, GUARANTEE. Then, here comes the question; what are the TEACHINGS OF CHRIST? Did Christ teach people to CONTINUE IN THEIR SINFUL NATURE? Did Christ encourage His believers that because He has come to save and redeem them, they are licensed to perpetuate LAWLESSNESS? Not at all! Christ was always preaching REPENTANCE and OBEDIENCE unto God, the KINGDOM of God and its RIGHTEOUSNESS. He preached that his coming to save man was to usher them into a KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, not SIN and LAWLESSNESS. Thus, those who HEAR and OBEY HIS TEACHINGS are those who chose to REPENT, BELIEVE IN HIM and pursue RIGHTEOUSNESS and godly living; Christ said such believers are guaranteed eternal security because they chose to do the will of His Father, what His Father wants. Therefore, He described them as a House built on the rock. But those who hear his teachings and refuse to obey and yet are identifying with Him as their Lord, such he describes as HOUSE built on sand. They have no guarantee of eternal security and will crash because on the day of Judgement they have nothing of a guarantee because He will tell them "DEPART FROM ME I KNOW YOU NOT" From

the words of Christ there are two key factors that are capital to ETERNAL SECURITY:

- **OBEDIENCE**
- **DISOBEDIENCE**

The Christian proof of loving God is OBEDIENCE of His TEACHINGS (HIS WORDS) not just standing on the platform of grace, betraying it to perpetuate a life of DELIBERATE DISOBEDIENCE and unrepentantly sinning against God. For anyone that claims Jesus Christ is His Lord and a beneficiary of the Grace of His Salvation to deliberately perpetuate a SIN LIFE, is on the mercy of God. Such are those God said, "mentions Him with their lips but their hearts are far from Him". Christ said it is those who do what pleases His Father and yet have a relationship with Him, that is like a house built on the Rock. Does living in sin unrepentantly and deliberately pleases God whether a person believes in Christ or not? NO! NOT AT ALL!!! There is nowhere in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation where God takes lightly to the matter of SIN or anywhere He condones sin and encourages His people to continue a life of sin against Him. Never! Nowhere! Are we saying Christ died for us, saved us, redeemed us, justified us and lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit to perpetuate sin, unholy and ungodly lifestyle? Apostle Paul who taught us the doctrine of Grace gave us an explicit answer to

these questions: **"GOD FORBID"!!! Are we saying the Spirit of Grace who is the Holy Spirit is living inside a Christian to enable him to steal, lie, hate, gossip, fornicate, live in unforgiveness, murder, commit abortion, think and do evil, practice witchcraft, practice occult, practice homosexuality; dishonor parents and those in authorities? GOD FORBID!!!**

Brethren, the Bible tells us clearly what the **GRACE OF SALVATION** brings into a Christian life: **Apostle Paul warned us that any teacher and preacher that comes to us with "NEW DOCTRINES" that is different from the Gospel he and other Apostles have preached, we should discard them.**

"We have told you the true Gospel, so anyone who comes to tell you different Gospel should be condemned, even if it is one of us or an angel from heaven" (Galatians 1:8).

It must be noted that there are many false teachers, apostate apostles recently traversing the church of Christ universal, **their doctrine implies that the GRACE OF SALVATION has come to save all men and to license them to perpetuate sin life; that is, they can live like the unbelievers of the world; they can rebel against God and displease Him, it will never matter.** Brethren, everything in their doctrine is against the Gospel the Apostles of the Bible preached to us. Holiness in God's

sanctification process in our lives does not mean we shall attain the perfection of SINLESS LIFE here on earth. **Holiness is the moral state of willing to give up every habit and practice which is wrong in God's sight. Holy living for a true Christian is the crucifying of his flesh daily and living to do the will of God with the help of the Holy Spirit as he submits to Him. We can only overcome sin by walking according to the rule of the Holy Spirit in our lives and we cannot overcome sin at the same time having a separate truce and embrace with any PARTICULAR SIN which we love.**

A Christian must appreciate that holiness and godly living is militant to all sins. Therefore, he must count all sins as his deadly enemies; hate all evil because they could "STAIN HIS GARMENT" (Revelation 3:4) and cause his name to be REMOVED from the Book of Life. Whether small or great, open or secret, all his sins must be thoroughly renounced. They may struggle hard with him everyday and sometimes almost get control over him but he must never give way to them. Brethren, let no one deceive us, Christ our Saviour does not encourage His believers to condone and perpetuate sin life. He told us in (Matthew 5:29-30), that we must part with those sins we love, hug, cleave to and delight in. They must be done away with; the parting must come if a particular sin can stop you from entering heaven.

"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw

it away. You should lose one part of your body than having your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right and causes you to sin, it is better you cut it off and remove it from your body; for it is more profitable for you to lose one of your hands than your entire body be cast into hell fire"

Do these words of Christ indicate that He encourages His Believers to practice sin and lawlessness? **We must be enemies with sin if we would be friends with God. We dare not have a weak view of sin, see it as mere imperfections that poke through our conceived ideas or the 'License to sin doctrine of Grace' those false teachers present to us nowadays, rather we must see sin as our failing to conform to God's laws and "not doing the will of the Father of Jesus Christ". Christ is willing to receive any Sinner, but He will not receive them if they will stick to their sins, refusing to repent of them.**

The first step Christ preached to those who come to Him for SALVATION was always "REPENT", even to those whom He had saved who are not living right and are in a backslidden state is to "**REPENT AND RETURN TO THEIR FIRST LOVE**" (Revelation 3:3). "**Be zealous and REPENT** " *said Christ and the Spirit (Revelation 3:19). Many Christians have easily forgotten the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who both professed Christianity, but their hearts were not right with God in their conduct.*

**THIS IS JESUS CHRIST ASSESSMENT REPORT OF
THE CHURCH IN SARDIS:**

"I KNOW what you Christians in the Church in Sardis are doing. People say you are alive, but you are DEAD. Wake up! Revive yourselves, make yourselves stronger, strengthen the little things that remain for they too are about to die completely. YOUR DEEDS ARE FAR FROM RIGHT (NOT GOOD) IN THE SIGHT OF GOD. GO BACK TO THE WORDS YOU HAVE RECEIVED, TAUGHT and BELIEVED AT FIRST; HOLD ON TO IT FIRMLY, OBEY IT, REPENT AND TURN YOUR HEART BACK TO ME AGAIN. Unless you do this, I will come to you and surprise you like a thief and punish you.

But you have a few believers in your Church in Sardis WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS, who have kept themselves PURE. They will WALK with me in Heaven. They will wear WHITE GARMENTS BECAUSE THEY ARE WORTHY. Everyone WHO OVERCOMES WILL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE and I WILL NOT ERASE (REMOVE, BLOT) THEIR NAMES FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE, BUT INSTEAD ANNOUNCE THEM BEFORE MY FATHER AND HIS ANGELS" (Revelation 3:1-4).

Verse 4, mentions about the **BOOK OF LIFE!** It mentioned that those believers in the church in Sardis whose "**Spiritual Garment**" have not been stained (by INIQUITY) but have lived a life of purity, walking worthy

of the Lord should be **ASSURED THAT THEIR NAMES WILL NOT BE REMOVED FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE – THEY ARE ASSURED OF ETERNAL SECURITY.**

The following truth can be deduced from the aforementioned scripture:

- **The message is not to unbelievers but to Christians in the Church of Sardis.**
- **This message is from Jesus Christ who has the seven spirits and seven stars (Revelation 1:12,16) It is an assessment report of the moral condition and spiritual state of the Christians in the Church of Sardis.**
- **It was a message of warning of the backslidden state of the majority of the Christians in the Church of Sardis; a wake-up call for them to REPENT and OBEY all the word of truth they had received and believed at first when they got saved. It was a message of warning that only a FEW of them were alive because they still have their names RETAINED in the BOOK OF LIFE and the majority of them were dead, why? Because their names were not in the book of life anymore, they have DEFILED THEIR SPIRITUAL GARMENTS and are NOT WALKING WORTHY OF THE LORD (Not living their lives to please God).**

There is a **BOOK OF LIFE** and the names in the book can be **INCLUDED OR ERASED, DELETED, REMOVED** or **BLOTTED** at any time by Christ alone, which means that a Christian's name being in the **BOOK OF LIFE** is not a guarantee, it could be removed and erase at the prerogative of Jesus Christ the Saviour and judge of all mankind.

WHAT IS THE BOOK OF LIFE AND WHO ARE THOSE THAT HAVE THEIR NAMES INSIDE IT?

The **BOOK OF LIFE** is God's eternal record of the redeemed. It is where all the redeemed of the Lord's names are recorded. (Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:12).

*"And I saw the dead, small and great standing before God and books were opened. Another book was opened which is the **BOOK OF LIFE**"* (Revelation 20:12).

It is called the **BOOK OF LIFE OF THE LAMB (JESUS CHRIST)** in (Revelation 13:8). Jesus Christ owns the Book of Life as the Sole Judge of the eternal destiny of all human souls, He decides whose name that will be retained or removed

from it. He made His verdict clear, only a few names of the Christians whose "GARMENTS of SALVATION" (Isaiah 61:10) have not been defiled that have been found faithful working worthy of Him will have their names **RETAINED (NOT REMOVED)** from the **Book of LIFE**.

Brethren, Jesus Christ who is the final decider of the eternal destinies of the Redeemed (Christians) has made us understand that the name of a **REDEEMED** could be **REMOVED** or **BLOTTED OUT, DELETED** from the **BOOK OF LIFE**. So let us not be deceived by those false teachers, lying preachers who tell us "**ONCE SAVED IS EVER SAVED**". That is, once you have faith in Christ, you have eternal security no matter the kind of lifestyle you live after your salvation experience. Jesus said in **Revelation 3:4**, **only a FEW FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS in the Church in Sardis will have their names RETAINED, that is, NOT REMOVED from His BOOK OF LIFE; but the majority that were UNFAITHFUL, He classified them as DEAD because their names must have been removed. Nevertheless, he encouraged them to REPENT and RETURN to all the Word of truth they first received.**

God has always throughout the ages warn men to **REPENT** and **TURN** their hearts back to Him,

especially his people, the chosen and the redeemed. Never has God or His Servants of Bible days encourage men to perpetuate sinful, ungodly and unholy conducts, tempers and lifestyles. **Such exhortation or Gospel never exist!**

Apostle Paul the messenger of the original doctrine of Grace never in any of His Gospel encouraged Christians to love sin or joke with sin or condone sin. Hear what he says:

"And let us encourage one another to stir up LOVE and GOOD WORKS, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves, as some believers do, but encouraging one another, more consistently as we approach the DAY OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Let us note the words **LOVE and GOOD WORKS!** These are the two mottos Paul encouraged believers to have in their Christian life until the second coming of Christ, they do not suggest license to perpetuate and condone sin till Christ comes again. **LOVE AND GOOD WORKS** are reasonable and blessed service Christians are supposed to render to God and men and Christ has promised great rewards for them. The Bible says *"LOVE cancels multitude of sins". Blessed are those who died in Christ and they will enter the rest*

of Christ in Heaven and their GOOD WORKS will follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

Nevertheless, brethren will you be amongst those believers who will continue in LOVE and GOOD WORKS, living to please God as you yield your body, soul and spirit as reasonable service unto God as we approach the second coming of Jesus Christ glorified? Will your name be retained in the Book of life like the FEW Christians in the Church in Sardis whose GARMENTS have not been STAINED (DEFILED)? May the Holy Spirit help us run our Christian race and finish well so that we can enter the ETERNAL REST OF CHRIST. The verdict is very well pronounced; ONLY THOSE WHOSE NAME ARE IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE will enter Heaven. Amen!

KEEP YOUR GARMENT UNDEFILED!

Let us hear again what Christ Himself, who is the lawgiver, the Saviour and Judge also warned Christians about possible disqualification or rejection says here:

"You have a few names even in Sardis who have not DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in WHITE GARMENT and I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME from the BOOK OF LIFE"

(Revelation 3:1-3)

Among all the messages to the churches, there is no other

which is appalling like this to the church in Sardis. **The condemnation and denunciation are emphatic.** The need of the hour for the Christians in the church of Sardis is for the warning, only warning. **There is shortness in the threat: "If thou shall not watch" etc.** This does not condescend to say more than needed. The church of Sardis knows, after what has been declared that this **"Coming like a thief in the night"** can only be for judgement and is left to meditate on the nearness and suddenness of the doom. Even in the acknowledgement that there are FEW FAITHFUL persons in Sardis, **"A FEW NAMES WHO HAVE NOT DEFILED (STAIN) THEIR GARMENTS"** and the promise made to **"him that overcometh"** shows that these few reserves are maintained.

So deep is the sin of the Christians in the church of Sardis that it's difficult to have been free from Christ's condemnation and renunciation. So dire is their doom that, for those who have escaped it, to have their names NOT BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE is enough. The Lord will confess their names in Heaven because it is a scarcity to find faithful and god-fearing people at the Church of Sardis.

How many Christians of today apprehend the spiritual condition of the Christians in the church of Sardis? **Perhaps Sardis was a worldly church with carnal Christians and this is undoubtedly true. "She that giveth**

herself to pleasure is dead while she liveth" Addictedness to carnal ephemeral things is both the sign of a languid inner life. Or we may say Sardis was an impure Church. Discipline was unknown in it; even the pretense of discipline must have been wanting, that is why the Lord said "Only a few did not defile their garments". Nevertheless, In Sardis there is a special word of comfort to the faithful because they have found fidelity so hard. "Thou hast a few names". The promise is itself an implied charge against the many; they are defiled as well as heartless. So it must ever be; the pollutions of the world, the flesh and the devil are sure to overtake those who are not steadfast in their piety. All the more impressive is Christ's assurance that He has not overlooked the few who have been steadfast that 'Kept their garments undefiled', especially, that their names will not be blotted out of the book of life.

He who has the SEVEN SPIRITS is quick to discern fidelity in the lives of Christians anywhere; HE watches to discern and to acknowledge them. Fidelity, steadfastness and overcoming to the end are acknowledged as eternal virtues. The company of those who OVERCOME, Christ reserved an utterance: "I will not blot out his name" and the book in which the name is written is "BOOK OF LIFE".It is no small honour which the Lord conferred on the clean souls; those whose garments remain white and undefiled in the church of Sardis, when they are declared "Worthy" to walk with

Christ in white. There is a touch of exquisite consideration of appreciation of what their life had been like. Heaven shall be to them the consummation of what they had worked for and striven after on earth.

In cognizance of the words of Jesus Christ in the Bible which says "NOTHING WHICH DEFILES SHALL ENTER HEAVEN" (Revelation 21:27). It means those multitudes of Christians in the church of Sardis who have their garments defiled (Spiritually Stained) may not enter Heaven if they fail to repent. Christ said only the FEW whose garments are unstained that have escaped general defilement will enter Heaven and walk with Him. The warning is to the many that have fallen, the promise is to the few who have not defiled their garments. "They shall work with me in white, for they are worthy".

The church in Sardis also represents the state of the present church as well. There are two kinds of people in the Church of Christ: the sheep and the goat, the wheat and the chaff; the wise and foolish virgins; those who have kept their garments undefiled and those who have defiled their garments. The question is at the eve of the sudden coming back of Christ, which of these groups will He find you?

Christ exhorted the fallen and carnal Christians at

Sardis Church, first of all to WATCHFULNESS. "BE WATCHFUL!" so that they should reflect upon their spiritual condition; they were in a state of spiritual consumption; they were in a state requiring prompt and urgent attention, an alarming danger; a majority of them will be cast away, disqualified because of the defilement of their garments. That being the case, if you appropriate this case of the Christians of Sardis to your spiritual state, will you be rapturable if Christ comes back today? Is there any part of your garment that has been defiled (stained)?

Jesus also told the church in Sardis **"I have not found your works perfect before God"**. Their works were imperfect in the principles from which they emanated and in the ends to which they were directed. They were forms without life, professions without fruits; there was the absence of the life of godliness. It is true that in the visible church of Christ, many have a form of religion but it's lifeless and worthless. They bear Christian names, engaging religious duties and sacraments, but are destitute of Christian principles and Christian tempers. They are externally clean and internally impure. They employ language expressive of Christian experience without possessing correspondent conducts. **Be warned! Genuine Christians are subject to a "falling away" in religion.** Backsliding usually begins in the state of being lax and negligent relative to the most secret

exercise of religion. The steps of a backslider Christian are visible only to God and the individual himself. A chief symptom of this state is worldly-mindedness. Others could be the love of novelty; a censorious spirit; irritability and defiance of temper under trials and afflictions; and a conscientious rejection of the truth, that "it is an evil thing and bitter, to sin against God".

The principal lessons we have learned from the counsel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the church of Sardis are:

- The Lord knows every man's ill courses. He knows what men are and what they have been and what they will be, as He knows all their thoughts, words and works. He knows all their dispositions, their natures, their affections and ends and aims and motives and estates; He knows how many are rotten though they profess never so much; how many are unsung though they are never well esteemed in the church; He knows what estate every man stands (Job 11:11). God knows those who are abusing His grace and those who love Him; He knows how people carry themselves towards all His commandments and worship; it is part of His perfection to know it.
- Nevertheless, this is to comfort those who are steadfastly bearing fruits, that is, continuing in their good works; for if God sees all men's sins, then He also sees their goodness much rather. Does God know all men's sins? Then this should

make us afraid to do evil at any time; or in any place, yes, in the most secret place. The knowledge that God possesses of all our works is the powerful means to all God's elect, to do them good and to quicken them and to make them take heed of all manner of sin. When Christ declares, "*I know thy works that thou has a name that thou livest and thou art dead*", with what solitude should everyone inquire, Lord is it I?

"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walks naked and everyone sees his shame"

(Revelation 16:15).

GOD'S LOVE!

It is very important to emphasize that God's love for man is immeasurable. Man as a creature represents God's highest and best, made in His image and intended for His glory. God is so constrained by His love for man that He will work very hard not to let any of them go to hell, especially those who have accepted His Son Jesus Christ as their Saviour. He will work harder not to let them come out of "THE BLOOD COVERING OF JESUS CHRIST" except by their own volition through UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE. He is not looking for ways to cast any of His own aside. But instead through the covering of the Blood of Jesus Christ, He has made provisions for our daily living. We should count on His love and rejoice in Him.

"It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to REPENTANCE and be saved through their knowledge and faith in Christ"

God loves mankind that He desires that all should return to Heaven and be with Him eternally. Nevertheless, their names must be written in the Book of Life to qualify them for the citizenship of Heaven.

God has made it easy for people to find Him and hard for them to get away from His great, overwhelming and incomparable love. Also, we need to understand Satan and his cohorts do not want any person to go to heaven, so he too is working hard to stop them. Going to hell or heaven is by a man's choice. **Let's reciprocate Christ's love for us by being HEARERS and DOERS of His words. Let's not be hard-hearted like the rebellious Jews, who although were God's chosen and the covenant people eventually did not enter the rest of God as a result of DISOBEDIENCE and UNBELIEF.**

GET READY!

THIS IS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED VISITS TO WORLD MISSIONARY EVANGELIST JOHN DEBY EDUKUGHO.

" I John Deby Edukugho, HAVE BEEN FAVOURED AND PRIVILEGED TO BE VISITED BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED SEVERAL TIMES, SINCE 1985...BUT THIS ONE OF 7TH MAY, 2018, BY 8pm was DIFFERENT.

SUDDENLY, I FOUND MY SPIRIT OUT OF MY BODY TO BE PRESENT WITH THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED. THE COUNTENANCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS FIERCE AND FEARFUL. HIS EYES WERE LIKE FIRE BOLTS I COULD NOT LOOK INTO THEM. (*Revelation 1:14*). THIS ENCOUNTER WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES I HAD WITH THE LORD JESUS GLORIFIED. I SAW MULTITUDE OF ANGELS PROSTRATE AT HIS FEET IN ADORATION. HIS VOICE WAS FULL OF URGENCY AND WARNING AS HE GAVE ME THIS MESSAGE TO MANKIND:

"JOHN, GO AND TELL MANKIND TIME IS UP AND THE TRUMPET IS ABOUT TO BE BLOWN. TELL THEM TO REPENT AND STOP DOING EVIL. I HAVE RELEASED MORE ANGELS UPON EARTH TO GATHER MY REMAINING HARVESTS, THEY WILL WORK WITH MY "11TH HOUR SERVANTS" AND THIS WILL BE A QUICK WORK! TAKE MY WORD IN ISAIAH 56:1 AS A CONFIRMATION FOR THIS MESSAGE. I AM REVEALING MYSELF TO YOU THIS TIME AS "THE LORD IS A CONSUMING FIRE".

"Thus says the Lord: Be fair to all and do good for my SALVATION is about to come and my RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED" (Isaiah 56:1).

I will like to dwell on this little word "READY" and we

would find it to be a word of immense depth and suggestion power, as used by the Holy Spirit in the scriptures.

In **1 Peter 1:5** the word "READY" was used in connection with the word "SALVATION". Believers are said to be **"kept by the power of God through faith unto SALVATION, READY to be REVEALED in the last days for all to see. Here, we are taught that SALVATION is 'READY' to be REVEALED at any moment; for Apostle John tells us that we are in "the last times". We must please understand that "salvation" as used here does not confine us to the mere matter of the deliverance of our soul from hell and perdition; it refers rather, to the deliverance of the body of the believer from the power of death and corruption. Nevertheless, it simply connects with the glorious coming again of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As we can see from the scripture in 1 Peter 1:9, we already possess the salvation of our souls: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."This symbolizes the rapture! Also, the scripture says in 1Peter 1:13**

"Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you AT THE REVELATION OF CHRIST."

The **REVELATION** occurs when Christ comes, with His saints to end the Tribulation, by the execution of **RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT** upon the earth(2 *Thessalonian*1: 7-10; *Jude*14,15).

We can learn to deduce from these scriptures that the *"Salvation READY to be revealed"* is linked to *"THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST."*

Also, Hebrew 9: 28 says "Christ was offered to bear the sins of many and unto them that seek Him shall He come again the second time but not to deal with the matter of sin again but for THEIR SALVATION". That is their RAPTURE.

From all these scriptures we learned that the **SALVATION** which is 'READY' TO BE REVEALED is at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is the rapture of His people that He saved. For this reason, we Christians are warned to be **READY** at all times for the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. **There is nothing so far as God is concerned, nothing so far as the work of Christ is concerned, nothing so far as the testimony of the Holy Spirit is concerned, to hinder our hearing "THE SHOUT OF THE ARCHANGEL AND THE TRUMPET OF GOD"**, this very night, this very hour, all is done that is needed to be done by the triune **GODHEAD**; The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit for the immediate return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Atonement is made,

redemption is accomplished, God the Father has been glorified by the work of Christ, as is proved by the fact of Christ's present place on the throne of the Majesty in Heaven. From the moment that our Lord Jesus Christ took His seat upon that throne, it could always be said that **"SALVATION IS READY TO BE REVEALED"**. But it could not have been said before, until the divine groundwork was laid in the death and resurrection of the Saviour. When Christ accomplished His glorious work, it could at any moment be said that **"SALVATION IS READY TO BE REVEALED"** I refer once more to our principal reference scriptures in *Isaiah chapter 56 verse 1 which the Lord Jesus Christ gave me as confirmation: "For my SALVATION is about to come and my RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED"*. This SALVATION from sin is **"READY"** and the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of Christ to be revealed refers to the judging of the world of righteousness after Christ has **RAPTURED** His people: *"But in fact, it is best for you that I go away because if I don't, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate won't come. If I go back to Heaven, then I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will CONVICT THE WORLD OF ITS SIN and OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS and THE COMING JUDGEMENT"* (John 16:7-8).

Apostle Peter gives us another instance and application of our word **"READY"** in *1Peter 4:5* where he says: to some *"who shall give account to Christ that is 'READY' to judge the living and the dead"*. There the word **"READY"**

stands before us in a form of awful solemnity. If on one hand, it is true that SALVATION (RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS) is READY to be revealed for the everlasting joy of God's redeemed, it is equally true on the other hand that CHRIST RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT IS READY to take its course for the everlasting misery of those who neglect God's professed Salvation. There is no delay in respect to the judgement more than to the Salvation they are both READY. God has gone to the utmost demonstration of His grace and man has gone to the utmost in demonstrating his guilt. Both have reached their climax in the death of Christ and when we see Him crowned with glory and seated on the throne, we have the most powerful evidence that would possibly be afforded that nothing remains but for SALVATION to be revealed on the one hand and for this RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT to take its course on the other.

This is a solemn appeal to your heart and conscience in the immediate presence of "Him who is READY to judge the living and the dead" to be READY! This leads us to the third passage of the Holy Scripture in which our weighty word "READY" occurs.

In Luke 12:40 Jesus Christ said, "*Be READY at all time for the Son of Man will come when least expected*". If SALVATION IS "READY" to be revealed and if JUDGEMENT is "READY" to be executed, what is our

sacred duty than to be **"READY"** also? And in what does this READINESS consist? How are we to be READY, there are two ways that we should: **First, we must be "READY" in the title; and secondly, we must be "READY" in our moral state, that is READY in conscience and READY in the heart.** The first (Title) is founded upon the work of Christ FOR US; the other (Moral State) is connected with the work of the Spirit IN US. If we are simply resting by faith on the finished work of Christ, that is, leaning exclusively on what He has done and what He is, then we are truly "READY" in the title and we may be assured of being with Him when He comes to rapture His Own. God cannot accept anything besides Christ as our title. To bring up anything else is to declare that Christ is not needful: therefore, Christ is our all-essential and all-sufficient title.

Not only must we be READY in our **"title"** that is, our salvation through faith in Christ, but we also ought to be READY as well in our moral condition. We are thankful for the imparting of the gospel that has brought millions to profess faith in Christ, but we cannot neglect the fearful amount of **laxity, carnality, self-indulgence going hand in hand with the evangelical profession.** There are many Christians nowadays that says **"provided we have Christ in our heart we have a license to live the way we want, it does not matter as far as grace is our insurance cover"**, but the truth is, if we have Christ in our hearts, it will regulate our lifestyles, tempers and conducts. If we

truly have Christ in our hearts, Christ should be seen in our lives. Our lives should be the compass that leads sinners to Christ.

Let this question be ever before us in every moment of our life, "Am I READY? READY in the title, READY in the moral state, READY in conscience, READY in the heart?" The times are very solemn and it behooves us to think seriously about our true state. God only knows how many who are not READY; many who would be taken aback and surprised by death or the coming of the Lord "Depart from me, I know you not" will be Christ's verdict for them.

The fourth and last passage where our motto "READY" occurs is in *Matthew 25:10*. "*And while they (the foolish virgins) went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were READY went in with Him to the marriage and the door was shut*"

How gloomy! How solemn! Those who were READY went in and those who were not READY were shut out. Those who have the life of Christ, whom "Christ dwells richly in their hearts," by the Holy Spirit, will be READY. But the mere professor, the ones who have truth in their heads and on their lips but not in their heart; who has a lamp of Christ but no oil. No Fruits! Will be shut out of the Holy Pearl Gate of heaven.

Brethren, I earnestly beseech you to think and examine your religion, to think seriously of the fate of the FOOLISH "UNREADY" VIRGINS. Think about them now because the bridegroom who is Jesus Christ is on His way back to earth. Think of how unspeakably dreadful it will be to find your lamp of profession going out and leaving you in obscure darkness, the outer darkness of an everlasting night. How terrible to find the door shut behind that brilliant train which shall go into the marriage feast with the Bridegroom, but shut in thy face! How agonizing the cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us! How withering, how shocking, how crushing the response, "I know you not."

Give these weighty matters a place in your heart now, while yet the door is open and while yet the day of grace is lengthened out in God's marvelous long-suffering. Stop abusing God's grace; repent and do not practice evil and ungodliness, yet professing your Christian title. The moment is rapidly approaching in which the door of mercy shall be closed against you forever. May God's spirit rouse you from thy fatal slumber and give you no rest until you have oil in your lamp before Christ appears.

"Now, brothers, about exact times and dates we did not need to invite you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, 'peace and safety', destruction will come on

them suddenly, as labor pains come on a pregnant woman and they will not escape. But you brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should take you unaware like a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

Christ warned us severally that we must be **watchfully READY** not to be taken by surprise as to His **COMING AGAIN**; the Apostles also exhort us in this wise. A Christian who is not watchfully prepared for the rapture (Christ second coming), Christ says: "**HE IS A FOOLISH VIRGIN**".

Jesus is coming again to end history, to raise the dead "in Christ" and judge the world (John 5:28 – 29); to impart to God's children their final glory and to usher in a reconstructed universe. But the exact times and dates He never told us except the **SIGNS** that will precede His return. The New Testament specifies much that will take place before this second coming, the predictions point to processes rather than single identifiable events. The Gentile world will be summoned to faith by the preaching of the Gospel to all the ends of the earth (**Matthew 24:14**); Jews will be brought into the kingdom (**Roman 11:25 – 29**) there will be false prophets, false teachers and false Christs; there will be an apostasy from the faith and persecutions for the believers of Christ; a seemingly unidentifiable 'man of lawlessness' is due to appear (**2 Thessalonian 2:3 – 12**). No dates, however, can be deduced from this data; the exact time of Jesus' return remains completely unknown.

Nevertheless, Christ warned us in **(Matthew 24:36 – 51)** against **unpreparedness** and **unreadiness** and that it will be a tragic disaster if the rapture – His return finds anyone in an unprepared state. Rather, the thought of what is to come should be constantly in our minds, encouraging us in our present Christian service and teaching us to live "worthy of the Lord" in all our conducts, pleasing Him in all things, living every moment **READY** to go to meet Christ at any time **(Matthew 25:1 – 13)**. **Apostle Paul in His exemplary mission ministry always lived and worked with the Lord's coming before him, taking it as an attraction, an incentive, a goal and a warning; wrote severally in his epistles to Christians, encouraging them always to LIVE SOBERLY AND WATCHFULLY READY for the Lord's coming.**

CHAPTER 12

DO NOT BE LEFT BEHIND!

The Bible records these words regarding the second coming of Jesus. *"Beloved, I show you a mystery; We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed"* (1Corinthians 15:51-52).

Brethren, when the last trumpet finally sounds, what then will the condition of your soul be? Because there shall be a separation that which Christ Himself promised during His first coming that will happen. **Have you been truly born again? Are you a new creature? Have you put off the old man and put on the new? Have you felt convicted of your sins and repented of them? Do you love Christ? Do you hate your sins and war against them? Do you hunger and thirst for living the right life that pleases God and strives after it? Have you come out of the world? Do you love righteousness and hate iniquity? Do you delight in studying and meditating on the word of God? Is reading your Bible a delight to you? Do you try to do good to people of the world especially members of the household of God? Do**

you live like a Christian at work and every of your employment? Does your private lifestyle validate you being a true Christian? Do you still follow vigorously the fashion, vogue and customs of the world in your mindset, dress code, temper and conducts? I implore you not to turn away from these questions, however unpleasant they may be, they are simply **self-searching SOUL EXAMINERS** at the eve of Christ's coming.

"His winnowing fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with UNQUENCHABLE FIRE" (Matthew 3:12).

There were two classes in the day of Noah's flood those who were inside the ark and those who were outside; the two in the parable of Gospel net: those who are called the good fish and those who are called the bad; two in the parable of the ten virgins: those who are described as wise and those who are described as foolish; two in the account of the judgement day: the sheep and the goats; two sides of the throne: the right hand and the left; two abodes when the last sentence has been passed: heaven and hell. And just as there are only two classes in the visible church on earth; those who are in their natural state of unbelief and sin and those who are in the state of grace; those who are living carnally and those who are living by the Holy Spirit as Christ dwells richly in their heart enabling them both to will

and to do things that please God; those who are on the narrow road and those who are traveling on the broad road; those who have been converted and those who have not; those who are with Christ and those who are against Him; those who gather with Him and those who scatter; those who are "chaff" and those who are "Wheat". Those who got to the gate of Heaven and were allowed in and those who thought they are qualified to enter but were not allowed in. Into these two classes, the whole professing church may be divided. Apart from these two classes, there is none.

As we look forward to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ glorified, which is any moment from now, you must examine yourself! Are you among the wheat, or among the chaff? Are you among those who are **STRIVING TO ENTER THE NARROW and DIFFICULT ROAD**, which leads to Heaven and Christ said only a **FEW** made it? or the multitudes who are rushing to enter the **BROAD ROAD** that leads to eternal **HELL**? Neutrality is impossible, you are either in one class or in the other.

There is no separation yet. Good and bad, goat and sheep, the carnal and righteous living are now mingled together professing Christianity in the Church of Christ on earth. The converted and unconverted; those who are waiting and watchfully expecting Christ and those who are not and careless are all to be found calling

themselves Christians. They sit side by side in our churches; they kneel side by side in prayer; they listen to the sermons side by side; they sit side by side at the Lord's Table and receive the same bread and wine for sacramental Holy Communion from our hands. It will not always be so. Christ will come the second time with His winnowing fork in His hand. He will purge His church and then the wheat and the chaff will be separated and each will go to their places; whilst the wheat will be raptured with Christ, the chaff will be left behind to face the great tribulation.

Nevertheless, before Christ's second coming, the separation is ongoing and being made by Him and not all that are claiming they are Christians will enter Heaven; at the death when their spirits depart their mortal body, Christ said only those who are doing the will of His Father will enter heaven but those who are practicing lawlessness will not enter (**Matthew 7:20-21**).

It is not in any man's power to make this separation. No minister on earth can read the hearts of every person in his congregation to know those that have oil in their lamps like the five wise virgins and who has not like the five foolish virgins; who are those who have GRACE as well as PROFESSION and who have profession only and no grace. All these are questions which in many cases we cannot accurately answer. The winnowing fork was not put into our hands, it is in the hand of Christ, the Saviour and Judge.

There are some Christians whose grace is sometimes so weak and feeble that they look like unbelievers. While unbelievers sometimes are so convincing and well-dressed and behaved that they look like Christians. I believe that many of us would have said that Judas Iscariot was good as any of the Apostles; and yet he proved to be a traitor. I believe that we would have said that Peter was a reprobate when he denied his Lord; and yet he REPENTED IMMEDIATELY. We are fallible men. *"For we know in part and prophecy in part"* (1Corinthians 13:9). We scarcely understand our hearts, talk less of reading the hearts of others. But the one who will never make a mistake in judgement and is perfect in knowledge is Jesus Christ glorified. He will purge His floor. Jesus will sift the chaff from the wheat inside His church. *"Judgement will start from the House of the Lord,"* said Apostle Peter in (1Peter 4:17) *"Even so as Moses said to Korah, "the Lord will show who belongs to Him" (Numbers 16:5).*

Many profess they are Christians, but Christ knows those who truly belong to Him. He knows His sheep. If you know that your heart is not right in the sight of God, you should fear and tremble at the thought of Christ's return. Anyone that lives and dies with nothing better than a pretext of religion will have his true colour exposed on the day that Christ comes and separate the chaff from the wheat; any Christian living a carnal life of lawlessness will hear the Lord Jesus Christ say "I do not

know you, you workers of iniquity" in that day He appears suddenly in the sky and mankind on earth will see Him at a glance, as He comes to take with Him to Heaven those who are "the wheat" and those who are the "foolish virgins" and "chaff" are left behind. You may deceive your pastors, ministers of God, friends, family members, neighbours and co-workers but you cannot deceive Christ. The paint and varnish of hypocritical Christianity will never stand the fire of the day of Judgement. This same God who is LOVE, the writer of the book of Hebrews say "He is a CONSUMING FIRE". The Lord is the God of knowledge and He will examine and judge every one of our thoughts and actions. "*God will judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ according to the word of God that has been preached to them*" (Romans 2:16).

You will find that the eye that saw Achan's sins has also read your secrets and searched out hidden things of your heart. As we herald the second coming of Christ sooner or later we must clearly understand hypocrisy is a losing proposition in any Christians' life. Surely acting the part of a Christian without its reality will fail. Hypocrite Christians will suffer the same fate as Ananias and Sapphira who pretended to give something to God and yet kept back their heart. They were both Christians! They were disciples of Christ. Oh! Let's tremble! tremble and repent!

When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to clear His floor, He will punish all who are not His disciples and those who are mere hypocrite disciples with a fearful punishment. **All who are found to be UNREPENTANT and UNBELIEVING; who practice lawlessness; who have suppressed the truth by their wickedness and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; who have clung to sin and hypocritically hiding under grace to perpetuate ungodliness; who loved the world and set their affections on things below here on earth; who is without Christ. All of them will come to an awful end. Christ will "burn up the chaff". Their punishment will be severe. There is no pain like that of burning, yet fire is the doom to which Christless and unbelieving will come to. Christ will burn up the chaff with fire. Their punishment will be eternal, that fire will never burn low and its fuel will never be consumed. It is unquenchable! Yes! It is a blessed thing to be Christ's Wheat. Death locks the door of the unbeliever and shuts him out of hope, but death opens the door to the believer and lets him into paradise. Halleluyah! The Lord will care for His believing people who OVERCOMES until the dreadful day of his appearance. The flaming fire will not come near them. The voice of the Archangel and Trumpet of God will not proclaim any terror to their ears. Sleeping or waking, alive or dead, going about their daily duties and employments, they will be like Mount Zion, secured and immovable. They will lift their heads with joy when they see their redemption drawing near.**

They will be changed and will put on their beautiful heavenly robes in the twinkling of an eye. They will be caught up *"to meet the Lord in the air"* (1Thessalonians 4:17).

"Immediately after those times of tribulation; the sun will be darkened, the moon will not shed its light, the stars will fall from heaven and the forces that control the heavens will be shaken and disordered. Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in the Sky; all tribes, all nations on earth will mourn and lament, when they see the SON OF MAN coming in the clouds of the sky with great power and glory. And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet blast and they will bring together His people to Him from the north, south, east and west, from one extremity of the world to the other"

For as it was in the days before the flood in Noah's days, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving into, marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark and the people did not know until the flood came and took them all away so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field and one will be taken and the other left behind. Two women will be grinding in the mill and one will be taken and the other left behind!! (Matthew 24:29-31:38-42).

There will be a manifestation of Christ in truth and UNMISTAKABLE REALITY. But till the moment of His

coming, it will be possible to deceive. False prophets were the bane of the Old Testament Bible time; false representatives and representations of Christ are the banes of the New Testament dispensation. Christ will be manifested in universality very soon. In a single glare, all eyes will behold Him at once. At present He is here and there, He indwells all those who believe in Him and are carrying His message everywhere. His coming then shall be like the lightning flash, which penetrates everywhere. Christ will manifest as in search of His own. "The son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost", not secretly as before; but His Angels shall consciously gather His own from all ends of the earth.

ONLY FEW WILL BE RAPTURED!

In the aforementioned scripture verses 40 and 41 of Matthew the 24th Chapter, Christ stated clearly that when He comes to take His own with Him back to Heaven, thus, the RAPTURE, not all will be raptured, some people will be LEFT BEHIND. In a time of indifference and carelessness, the Lord will appear with startling suddenness. Some will meet with Him, while others will be left. It will be a SEPARATION DAY. We may apply it to divide the gospel of Christ especially at the first preaching of it; it divided the world; some believed the things that were spoken and obeyed and were taken to Christ by His angels who did the separation; others believed not or believed but were disobedient and were left to perish in their UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE.

"See to it brethren, that there is never in anyone of you as perhaps there may be, a SINFUL and UNBELIEVING HEART, manifesting itself in revolt from the ever-living God. On the contrary encourage one another, day after day, so long as today lasts, so that not one of you may be HARDENED through the DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, lest perhaps, while CHRIST still leaves us a promise of being admitted to His REST, some of you should BE FOUND TO HAVE FALLEN SHORT OF IT (DISQUALIFIED TO ENTER CHRIST'S REST) (Hebrews 3:10-13; 4:1).

"Because narrow is the gate and DIFFICULT is the way which leads to LIFE and there are FEW who find it" (Matthew 7:14)

Then the king said to his servants "The wedding is READY, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways and as many as you find invite to the wedding. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the King came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him 'Friend how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless... then the King said to the servants, bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness; where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many will be called but FEW will be chosen'" (Matthew 22:8-14).

“He saw there a man which had no wedding garment”

By the wedding garment, it symbolizes the costume or spiritual dress necessary for the enjoyment of Heaven; also holiness often described as a garment (Job 29:14; Isaiah 61:10; Psalm 45:13; Revelation 3:18; 7:9).

We can see from the aforementioned scripture that there was solemn scrutiny at the wedding hall. So there will be DIVINE scrutiny by Christ of the many that He has called. At the feast there was but one condition of acceptance – the wearing of a particular garment (Garment of Righteousness) which can only be obtained by faith in Christ.

The guest without the garment referred to did not comply with the condition. He was in the wedding hall; he desired to eat of the feast; he remained in the guest hall until the King came. He was speechless when the King, who is the host confronted him, because he could not plead ignorance of the will of the King who had invited him to the feast, he could not plead that in this case, the wedding garment was not within his reach. **He was overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, learned the worthlessness of mere profession (of being a Christian) and the necessity of being prepared for the coming Judgement.**

The wedding garment introduces imagery to show that **RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAITHFULNESS and**

OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD are principally important for the members of the new community of those who have accepted the **INVITATION (Calling)** of Christ to His Kingdom of the redeemed. **THE WEDDING GARMENT IS ESSENTIALLY A HABIT OF HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. IT DIFFERS, SPECIFICALLY, FROM THOSE VANITIES IN WHICH WE TAKE SO MUCH DELIGHT. IT IS A HABIT OF THE INNER AS WELL AS OUR OUTER MAN. A DRESS OF THE SOUL, THE EVERYDAY COSTUME OF THE DEVOUT AND OBEDIENT SPIRIT.**

Brethren, from this story, told by Christ, the imagery relates to some of His believers; those who accept His calling to be His believers, yet they are not faithful nor do His will. Is there any common way of dealing with God's invitation (calling) than that which this adopted? This guest had no deep love for his King, no grateful and humbling sense of kindness, no perception of what was due him; but with blundering stupidity of ungodliness, he thought selfishness would carry him through. His self-complacency, his utter blindness to the fact that God is holy and that holiness must therefore be the rule everywhere for God and His community. Holiness is what the wedding garment symbolizes. How hard it is for any of us to fully grasp the radical nature of the inward change that is required if we are to be "**inheritance of the saints in light**", brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ glorified.

Conformity to God, humble and devoted reverence, a real willingness to do His will and the things that please Him, after we are called in Christ, are the great attainments of true believers of Christ and these constitute our wedding garment; without which we cannot remain in His presence nor abide His searching gaze. IT IS THE HEART THAT YOU BEAR TOWARDS CHRIST THAT WILL DETERMINE YOUR DESTINY, NOT YOUR PROFESSION OF BEING A CHRISTIAN. YOUR HEART IS THE FACTORY OF YOUR FRUITS. "By their fruits, you shall know them" ONLY FRUIT BEARING BRANCHES WILL ENTER HEAVEN. Those that don't bear FRUITS, Christ said "will be cast into the fire"

A mere appearance of accepting and professing Christ as your Saviour, associating yourself with those who love God and are His true worshippers; your regular offering of sacrifices and sacramental duties will not qualify you as a guest at the wedding feast of Christ in Heaven. What is required of the few that Christ has chosen are: a real delight in what is holy, a radical acceptance of His will and the earnest desire to do His will. In other words, what is wanted is a state of HEART in you with which God can delight in, approve of and hold fellowship with. Then you are qualified to be amongst the CHOSEN FEW.

Brethren, the imagery Christ propounds here is very clear. **Many shall be called, but only FEW shall be chosen, not because Christ made it hard for it to be so, but because of the condition of the heart of those who failed to be amongst the chosen few.** Christ calls us, He gives us SUFFICIENT GRACE, but we shall run our RACE ourselves, it is our responsibility to "OVERCOME TO THE END". **Those that will overcome Christ said they are few.** May you be amongst those few that shall be raptured by Christ to Heaven and not amongst the multitude that shall be left behind on earth to be tortured and tormented by Satan and his cohorts. Jesus described the fate of those who are not amongst the chosen few: **"Bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"**

CHAPTER 13

BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY!

"Behold, I am coming quickly; and My reward is with Me, that I will give to every man according to His deeds" (Revelation 22:12-14)

When we believe God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, we believe all His promises. Confidence in a person involves confidence in all that He speaks: hence we accept all the promises of Jesus Christ as being sure and certain. We do not trust one promise and doubt another, but we rely upon each one as true and we believe it to be true to us so far as it has respect to the person of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ glorified. All He promised us while He was on earth including the sending of the Holy Spirit has happened. Therefore, to trust the Lord Jesus Christ and hope upon His promise is the climax of all virtue.

In the days of the Apostles, the disciples were comforted and encouraged by the prospect of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ told them He was going to come back and take them to where He had prepared for their residence in Heaven. This was the hope of the church; and thus it ought to have

remained so up to His actual return. His coming should have continued to be the HOPE of the church; but this, alas! for centuries has not been the case. In the confession of faith, the truth that the Lord Jesus will come again may still have a place; but practically, so far and with the greater number of His believers, it has been a mere doctrinal statement that has not been enjoyed and which has had no influence upon their lives. The truth is, very few Christians are mindful of the coming back of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the coming of Christ is becoming an endangered species; it's seldom preached; the majority of professing believers and disciples of Christ are not enthused about it, they are practically careless about it. The Lord, however, desired it should be otherwise. **He intended that His church should look for Him; that she should WATCH and WAIT for His return.** Again and again, during His ministry, the Lord Jesus foretold this great event; and after His ascension, the apostles referred continually to it. (*Matthew 24:15-31; 26:64; Luke 21:25-28; Acts 1:9-11; Acts 3:19-21; 1Thessalonians 3:13; 2Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2:8; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-20; 22:7, 12, 20*)

The second coming of Christ is "**The Blessed Hope**" Apostle Paul spoke about in his writing to Titus. He said, "**Looking for the Blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ**" (Titus 2:13). Most Christians when speaking of their hope mean their

Hope of Salvation, but we cannot hope for a thing we have and salvation is a present possession if we are trusting in Christ as our Saviour. **The Christian's hope then is the return of His Lord any moment.** For a Christian to die is to lose his physical body and he knows that he cannot get his body back until when Christ comes back to resurrect it. Therefore to him, Christ's return is "**The Blessed Hope**", not only that if he dies he will then be raised, but it is to him the Hope that if Christ will come back before he dies he shall be "**Caught Up**" to meet Him in the air without dying (**1Thessalonians 4:3-18**).

REASONS FOR CHRIST RETURN

From all scriptures and proofs of fulfilled Bible prophecies, it stands out clearly that Jesus Christ must return to complete His work. Not that there is anything to add to His **REDEMPTIVE WORK** of the **EXPIATION OF SINS** effected by Calvary, since Jesus was able to die with the cry, "**IT IS FINISH!**" but all the plans of God are not yet realized. **He has crowned His son with glory and honour, because of the death which He suffered and has left nothing which was not put under Him.** Nevertheless, after the ascension, the Lord in His grace wished to leave individuals and nations a long period of liberty during which they would have the leisure to accept the Gospel, which is the dispensation of **GRACE**. But when the time of God's patience shall elapse, then the unfolding of His plans shall again take its course. Jesus Christ returns to complete His work in the

following three domains:

- **To rapture (take with Him to Heaven) His own (Luke 21:28)**
- **To Judge the sinful world (2Thessalonians 1:7,8)**
- **To establish His eternal reign of justice and peace (Daniel 7:13,14).**

If the second coming of Christ should not produce this triple result, we should indeed be given over to despair, that is, having NO HOPE! He will surely return to complete His work because if He does not return the church which underwent the assaults of the enemy and the persecution of the world, would never be delivered. The unbelievers would continue indefinitely to sin and to shed blood and a reckoning of accounts would never take place. Evil would continue to reign on earth and to grow great and an era of peace and justice and true happiness would never come. **But thanks be to God Almighty, it shall be otherwise: Christ shall come again very very soon and He shall accomplish on earth as in Heaven the entire will of the Father!**

THE IMMINENCY OF THE SECOND COMING

Many Christians at the apostle's time misunderstood the claim that Christ's coming could anytime mean it should happen in their day and since He did not do so, it is proof that they were mistaken and that Apostle Paul in his later writings modified his statements as to the imminence of

Christ's return. It is a fact while Jesus said: *"Watch, therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into "Therefore you also be READY, for the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:42-44).*

He did not in these passages teach that He would return during the lifetime of those who listened to Him. In fact, in His parables, he intimated that His return would be delayed, as in the parable of the Talents, where it is said *"After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them" (Matthew 25:19).* Jesus wanted them to understand the sudden and unexpected character of His return. As to the Apostles, while they exhorted their followers to be **READY** for the **"night is far spent, the day of the Lord is at hand"** and **"the coming of the Lord is at hand"**, their language simply implied **imminence**, but not necessarily **immediateness**.

To help the church out of this misunderstanding, Apostle Peter reminds Christians of the things Jesus Christ said and that time is nothing with God *"A thousand years with God is like one day"* and **God will keep His promise as He has kept all of His promises, but according to His own appointed time.**

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to REPENTANCE, that is, (NOT CONTINUE THE LIFE OF UNGODLINESS AND SINFULNESS)”

We are in the last days of this present age when scoffers are making jest and saying "Ha, Ha, where is the promise of Christ's coming? As far as we can see, everything is going on in the world just as it was from the beginning of creation. Nature goes along in the general course of her way. There has been no sign of any radical happening. The promise of His coming has failed" says the scoffers. The Scoffers are evil men, but the sad truth today is that some Christians have joined them to scoff at the promise of Christ's coming. They make sport of this great and glorious hope of the Church. How illogical was their reasoning about Christ's not coming? Because our Lord has not yet come, shall we give up? No, indeed. Rather, we rejoice in the fact that His coming comes nearer every day.

We know the time is sooner than later and when God's clock strikes the hour, the earth will melt with fervent heat. The earth shall be burned up and in the great explosion, the heavens will pass away. Then a "new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2Peter 3:13) made by the power of God will emerge.

It was known to our Lord that certain events must come to

pass before His return, but to have disclosed that fact would have fully nullified the command to "**Watch**". This mystery is also in the seventh parable in **Matthew Chapter 13**, hid the fact that His return would be delayed. It would take time for the "**Sowing of Seed**", the growth of the "**Wheat**" and "**Tares**", the growth of the "**Mustard Tree**" and the "**Leavening of the Meal**". So rapid was the spread of the Gospel in the first century that the followers of Christ were warranted in looking for the speedy return of the Lord, but it was true then, as in every century since, that we do not know what the extent of the Harvest is to be and when it will be ripe, so the Lord can return (**Matthew 13:30**). **Uncertainty then, as to the time of the Lord's return is necessary to promote the watchful spirit. If the early church had known that the Lord's return would have been delayed for 21 centuries, the incentive to watchfulness would have been wanting.**

At no time in the history of the church have the conditions necessary to the Lord's return been completely fulfilled as at present; therefore, **His coming is imminent and will not probably be long delayed. Let us be READY and keep watching.**

THE FORCE OF EXPECTATION

Expectation is defined as the act of looking forward; to anticipate something. Expectation is a strong impetus that often precedes preparation, especially if the expectation is a blessed one. Of course, no expectation will be more

blessed to a Christian than that of the *"the coming back of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to take him to heaven."*

Expectation is a waiting period. Nobody expects what he already has or has consummated experientially. So is, the expectation of Christ the Bridegroom by His bride – the church of the saints of light; they are commanded by Jesus Christ not just to wait, but to wait watchfully for His second coming to earth.

"And they that were READY went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut" (Matthew 25: 10).

During the waiting period, the wise and the foolish virgins (**Matthew 25: 1-13**) seemed much alike, even as at this day one can hardly discern the false professor from the true. Everything turned upon the coming of the bridegroom. To the ten virgins, that was the chief event of the night. If it had not been for His coming, they would not have gone forth with their lamps. It was because they knew He would surely come that they prepare themselves to join in the marriage procession and came with their songs to the place of His abode. Yet, for a while, He did not come. The sun had gone down and darkness had taken over the whole landscape, but the bridegroom did not come. The dews of the night were falling fast yet, He did not come. **Why was the bridegroom so long in coming? They had been told to look for Him. They fully expected Him, yet he had not come. There were**

whispers that it was all a delusion and that He will never come.

Nevertheless, the bridegroom did come as promised. Brethren, in our case the Heavenly Bridegroom will come! However long we may have waited for Him, let us be assured that Jesus Christ will surely come. Assuredly as He came the first time, so, *"unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."* He has been here before, so He knows the way to come again. He will come back to receive the reward of His service; the Good Shepherd came to earth once to lay down His life for the sheep; He will surely come again as the Chief Shepherd to recompense the under-shepherds who have faithfully kept the right watches for Him. Jesus will come again, as surely as the bridegroom came at the midnight hour!

Alas! The bridegroom did come, the waiters were awakened by the sound of His approach, the herald that preceded Him cried, **"Behold, the bridegroom comes,"** and the sleepers were all around. Then the true adherents of the bridegroom, **THE WISE VIRGINS**, poured the oil into their lamps, they were *"watchfully READY"* and proceeded with the bridegroom, **"they that were READY went in with Him to the marriage and the door was shut."** But **THE FOOLISH VIRGINS**, those who had despised the secret stores of oil, those who had never gone to the Holy Spirit for His grace were separated

from their wiser companions. Not indeed by any special act of the bridegroom, **BUT AS THE NATURAL RESULT OF THEIR UNPREPARED CONDITION.**

They had to go away to buy oil from those who sold it and when they came back, it was too late for them to go into the **MARRIAGE FEAST**. They came to the gate of the place and found the door fast closed against them – **SHUT FOREVER** and **LEARNED THAT THE SEPARATION WAS ETERNAL** and they must abide in the outer darkness, to weep and lament that they were not found worthy to behold the bridegroom's face or enter into His **JOY** and **ETERNAL REST**.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”

The early Christians were led to detach themselves from the present things and go forth, in the spirit of their minds and in the affections of their hearts, to meet their Saviour whom they loved and for whom they waited. **It was not a physical movement of going forth from one place to another; it was not local, but moral and spiritual. It was the outgoing of the heart after a loved Saviour whose return was eagerly looked for day by day.**

Nevertheless, we have to do with the spurious as well as the true in Christendom. There are **"tares"** as well as

"**wheat**" in the kingdom of God; there are **ten virgins** mentioned by Jesus Christ the expected bridegroom; "**five were wise and five foolish.**" **There are true and false, the genuine and counterfeit, the real and hollow, in professing Christianity.** Yes, this is to continue unto the time of the end, until the bridegroom comes. The tares are not converted, nor are the foolish virgins converted into wise ones. No, never. **The tares will be burnt and the foolish virgins shut out.**

Despite the preaching of the gospel and the various beneficent agencies which are brought to bear upon the world, we find from all the parables and the teaching of the entire New Testament, that the kingdom of Heaven presents a most deplorable admixture of evil; grievous tampering of the work of God, on the part of the enemy; the implication not all will be converted despite the gospel that will be preached until Jesus Christ the Bridegroom will return.

Apostle Paul also affirms this by saying not all Christians that run the Heavenly race will win the **CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, but let us look closely at these **foolish virgins**. Their history is full of admonition for all Christian professors. It is very brief but comprehensive. "**They that were the foolish virgins took their lamps and took no oil with them.**" There is the outward profession, but no inward reality, no spiritual life, no vital link with the source of eternal life, no union with Christ. There is

nothing but the "Lamp of the confession" and the dry wick of a nominal, notional head belief. This is peculiarly solemn.

It bears down with tremendous weight upon that vast mass of baptized professors which surround us, the present moment, in which there is so much of outward semblance, but so little of inward fruit-bearing life. All profess to be Christians. The lamp of confession may be seen in every hand, but how few have the oil in their vessels, that is, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit dwelling in and ruling their hearts?

They may be the very highest professors; one may be baptized; he may receive the Lord's supper, be a regularly enrolled and duly recognized member of a Christian community; be a Sunday school teacher; an ordained minister of religion; one may be all of these and not have one spark of divine life, not one ray of heavenly lights, not one link with Christ of God.

Brethren, there is nothing more peculiarly awful than the thought of a man having just enough religion to deceive his heart, deaden in conscience and ruin the soul; just enough religion to pretend to live while dead enough without Christ, without God and without hope, in the world until the bridegroom comes, only to realize it is too late.

Thus, the foolish virgins seem to be very like the wise ones. An ordinary observer might not be able to see any difference, for the time being. They all set out together. All have lamps and all of the virgins turned aside to slumber and sleep, the wise as well as the foolish. All rose at the midnight cry and trimmed their lamps. Thus far no apparent difference. But here is a grand distinction, the broad demarcation, comes out with awful clearness: "*the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.*" This proves that their lamps had been lighted, otherwise, they could not go out. But it was only false flickering, transient light. It was not fed from a divine source; it was the light of mere lip profession, fed by head belief, lasting just long enough to deceive themselves and others "Our lamps are going out. Terrible discovery! The Bridegroom is at hand and our lamps are going out". Our hollow and false Christianity is being made manifest by the light of his coming. We thought we were all right; we professed the same faith, had the same shaped lamp, the same kind of wick; but alas we now find that we have been deceiving ourselves.

What shall we do? Wise virgins share your oil with us; give us a little. But it is all utterly vain, no one can give of his oil to another. Each has just enough for himself. Moreover, it can only be given by God Himself. A man can give a lamp but he cannot give the oil of the Holy Spirit. This latter is the gift of God alone; it's divine; it's

the spiritual life of Christ. When they eventually went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and those that were **READY** went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut.

What do you think of the solemn realities that Christ Himself laid before you and I? Are you a wise or a foolish virgin? Do you have the divine life of Christ indwell in you or you are just a mere professor of religion, content with the mere ordinary routine of church-going, having just sufficient religion to make you respectable on earth, but not enough to link thee with heaven? Beloved, give these weight matters a place in your heart now, while the door is yet open, while the day of grace is still lengthened out in God's marvelous and merciful patience.

The moment is rapidly approaching in which the **DOOR OF MERCY** shall be closed against the foolish virgins forever when all hope shall be gone and their precious soul will be plunged into dark and eternal despair into that place called **HELL FIRE!**

How terrible to find the door shut behind that brilliant train which shall go into the marriage; how agonizing the cry, "*Lord, Lord, open unto us!*" how crushing will be the response, "**I know you not you hypocrites and workers of lawlessness**".

Beloved in the Lord, "Behold the BRIDEGROOM comes" Awake! Awake! Let us shake off the sloth and the slumber of worldly ease and self-indulgence; let us rise above religious formality and dull routine; let us fling aside the dogmas of false theology and go in the spirit of life and in the affections of our hearts, to meet our returning Bridegroom Jesus Christ glorified. Let us continue to OVERCOME SIN, Satan, our fleshy lusts, the world and the things in it because only those who keep their oil in their lamps can OVERCOME and Christ will only RAPTURE THE OVERCOMERS. May the language of our hearts and our lives be "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

The Jesus Life seems foolish to many. However, accepting Him and following Him gives us a genuine life. Looking at the way Jesus lived, His priorities, His lifestyle, and life choices gives us a profound understanding of authentic Christianity. For our religion to be authentic in this dying world of sinfulness, unrighteous systems, and cultures, we must live a life of peace, of steadfast faith that overcomes the world, of an ever-abiding communion with Christ.

Authentic Christianity is a call to a way that pleases God, to follow after HOLINESS. Christlikeness is the hallmark of authentic Christianity; Christ being formed in us is the

CHAPTER 14

EVANGELISM! EVANGELISM!! EVANGELISM!!!

Those who look eagerly for Christ's second coming are most eager also to complete the task of evangelism. *"The gospel must first be preached unto all nations" "for a witness" (Mark 13:10, Matthew 24:14)*. There's no stronger incentive to immediate evangelism than the imminence of Christ's return.

The priority of Jesus Christ must be the priority of his believers, disciples, saints who are prepared by waiting watchfully for his second coming. The priority of God is that *"All should repent and be saved, that no human being should perish" (Ezekiel 33:11; Acts 17:30)*. All mankind are born sinners and that is their condition from birth and all they deserved is the wrath and death sentence of God, nevertheless, it is not God's desire and pleasure that any should perish in eternal hell. For this chief reason, He sent His beloved Son Jesus Christ to the world to save and redeem man from eternal death. Christ affirmed this when He said, *"for the Son of man has come to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)*.

The gospel is the power, that is, the divine instrumentality by which man will be saved. The power of the Gospel is centered in Christ. The gospel when preached and proclaimed is heard by men and when they hear Jesus Christ preached, receive it with faith in their hearts, repent and turn to Him for redemption and salvation, they shall be saved. *"Faith comes by hearing and by hearing the word of truth proclaimed."*

Apostle Paul was enthusiastic about the effect of the gospel on mankind as its spread was reaping a great harvest of souls for Christ and he says *"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven of which you heard, ever since the gospel first was preached to you. The same gospel that came to you is going out all over the world and changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very day you heard it and understood about God's grace in truth, that is, His great kindness to sinners"* (Colossians 1:5–6).

The priority focus and urgency for evangelism is very much important consideration for the church now than ever before. The second coming of Christ is imminent. The signs are everywhere. The reality of the end time is everywhere; with satan and his organized kingdom working extra hard to blind the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of

Christ. He and his cohorts hate the gospel of Jesus Christ being proclaimed to men, to hinder them from being saved from eternal damnation in hell; he wants to keep men perpetually as his bond slaves and prisoners; blind their hearts from hearing and believing the Son of God, Jesus Christ glorified. **The hope of Christ's imminent, personal, visible return is the strongest possible incentive to missions. It sounds a note of urgency. Those who are filled with the hope of His coming are also on fire for worldwide evangelism.** Were the opportunities for evangelism ever so great as now? Considering the magnitude of lawless practice by mankind worldwide; the worrisome rapidity by which satan is blinding the hearts of men from the word of truth which is the gospel; also entrapping their hearts from loving and serving God.

Now is the time of salvation; every moment is time to spread the gospel of salvation; Christians have no much time in their hand, time is running out! Our priority business now is to hasten the sinners. Christ is coming and He told us He will come like a thief in the night when no one expected. **We must be earnest in ourselves and the proof of this, is how urgent evangelism is to us; how committed are we to the task of evangelism that our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to do, especially on the eve of His coming. Our priority job as Christians now is evangelism! It is urgent, we must seek the lost sinners for Christ, we must seek millions of them who are**

rushing to hell every day. Every Christian must do all in his power by sacrificial giving and by prevailing prayer, to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" and to **DO IT NOW!**

The gospel is the true story of Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind. It is our testimony. **In Acts 1:8 Jesus said to His disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth".** To be a witness is to testify to the truth. Jesus has called all His believers and followers who have been 'Born of the Spirit of God' and have received the Holy Spirit to go everywhere on earth to testify about Him. Telling and preaching about Christ is the expectation of God and a desperate need in today's world. We are called and commanded to testify to the truth who is Jesus Christ; to testify to the Holy Spirit that dwells in us; to the truth that: "Salvation comes no other way; no other name under heaven has been given or will be given to us by which we can be saved except by Jesus Christ" (Acts 4:12).

Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, I am most proud to proclaim it, thus the extraordinary message of God's powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts in Christ, starting with Jews and then right on to everyone else". Now that Christ will sooner or later be on His way back to earth, is the time all

His believers must proclaim the gospel with earnest commitment and passion. **This is the heartbeat of Christ, He has commanded us to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. Apostles obeyed Him; the early church obeyed Him, believers till date are obeying Him. We must obey. Time is running out! The clock is ticking; if Christ appears suddenly in the sky now millions all over the world will not be raptured because nobody told them about the gospel of salvation, grace and the love of Jesus Christ; many of which will be your friends, workmates, classmates, relatives, neighbours; those you met at a point in life and you had the opportunity to witness to them but you did not.** They will be left behind to suffer the wrath of God and great tribulation. Some may die in their sin and go to hell before Christ returns because nobody persuaded them about the SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

The pathetic cry of such damned souls will be *"Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul"* (Psalms 142:4). Today, most of the lost millions of the earth could say the same. Most of them never had anyone earnestly seek to win them. They are lost, hopeless, desperate hungry hearts all about; waiting for you and I to win them, tell and show them the Saviour. How many hungry-hearted sinners like the Ethiopian Eunuch have come close to us and miss learning the way of salvation because of our complacency and impassiveness. Look around you today in the church; you will easily see the lack of concern for the lost and hopeless sinners who are

hurrying into eternal torments of hell every minute.

Apostle Paul, the great evangelist of the early church, besought men to be reconciled to God, nights and days with tears. So intense was his burden for his relatives, kinsmen, friends and fellow country that he wrote: " I am not lying my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my unsaved brothers, those of my race" (Romans 9:2,3). How many preachers, church leaders and Christians today are concerned for their unsaved friends, relatives, neighbours and countrymen? How many souls will die in their sins, lost forever in eternal hell because Christians are careless and not urgent with their evangelism; especially on the eve of the coming of Christ. **To delay in evangelism is a sin; deliberate disobedience. It is an act of wickedness. How many souls have ended up in hell because of your delay; your nonchalant attitude; your procrastination; your failure to give in support of evangelism works; your failure to act promptly?**

"When I say to the sinner 'O wicked man, you will die!' and you don't tell him that I say so that he does not hear and repent, that wicked person will die in his sins, but I will hold you responsible for his death. But if you warn him (by preaching the gospel to him) to repent and he doesn't, he will die in his sin and you will not be

responsible” (Ezekiel 33: 8–9).

KEY FACTOR FOR CHRIST RETURN

When His disciples ask Jesus what would be the sign of his coming back to earth again and of the end of the world, **Jesus predicted deception by false prophets, wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, persecution of His followers and abounding iniquity. He also added expressly that the end would not come until the gospel of the kingdom had been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations(Matthew 24:3 – 14).**Therefore, the fact that Christ is returning is directly and strongly factored on world evangelization; so long as the gospel has not to be preached to all mankind in all nations, there is a strong demand on the **urgency of evangelism.** Beyond all doubt, the day of Christ's second coming is fully determined in the eternal plan of God. Prominent among those events that are antecedent and prerequisite to Christ's return is the proclamation of the gospel to all nations. **The same divine decree that determines the day of Jesus Christ coming back to earth demands earnest and urgent worldwide evangelism before that day. The conclusion is fully warranted that evangelism contributes to Christ's second coming. The assertion is wholly so that by the preaching of the GOSPEL OF CHRIST, the church makes an indispensable contribution to His second coming also in the harvest of souls.**

Look THE HARVEST IS RIPE!

Do not say "there is still four months and the harvest will come? "LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND SEE, The HARVEST IS RIPE" (John 4:35).

Our Lord Jesus has directed our attention to the urgency of soul-winning- The Harvest is ready! Awaiting all Christians. We have been mandated to go and reap, bringing the precious fruits of the earth that is, the unsaved men to Christ. We must show some sense of urgency and a need for a paradigm shift in our thinking and commitment to soul winning. **The present postmodern era is vastly removed from the times when God was commonly at the core of human thinking about life. But a fundamental change has occurred. So much of society is impressed with its achievement, has gradually crowded God out of a central place in the thought and values of mankind. Still, the reality is that the human nature hungers for God and thereby many people cultivate private pursuits for Him on their terms, inevitably becoming confused especially with the world offering them many religions. The truth is, the vast majority of human beings are not looking for religion but a Saviour. We have a message for such a time like this, let us hurry up to tell them about Jesus Christ the only Saviour of mankind, otherwise, they will end up with the eternal damnation of God in Hell.**

Let's all obey the last commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ before He ascended into Heaven:

"Go ye into all Nations and preach the Gospel and make disciples, teach them the truth I told you". If you do not obey this commandment, it is a sinful act. Let us all arise and do the work of an Evangelist and do it urgently, it is profitable with great eternal rewards. Let's do it urgently! Jesus Christ is coming back very soon!

Christ coming to rapture us is the climax, the last act of a process of transformation. There is nothing in scriptures to warrant the idea that once we are saved we remain in a static condition, until suddenly, in a moment, we are transformed into the image of Christ at His return. We are expected to pursue a steady cause of being conformed to him, growing in grace and His knowledge; persistently putting on the new man, all with a view to that final miraculous transformation, when seeing him we shall be like him. (1John 3:2)

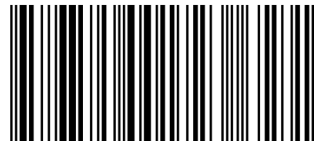
Finally, brethren, let's patiently and watchfully wait for our Lord and Saviour's return. He will surely come back again. *"So wait patiently, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmers wait expectantly for the precious harvest from the land, being patient about it, until it receives the early and late rains. You too, be patient; strengthen your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is near"* (James 5:7-8).



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It is impossible for any Christian to retain in any recognisable form of belief in the Divinity of Christ and the truth of Christian revelation while persistently neglecting the PROMISED RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST. JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN! He promised to return. We have His word for it. That is the main reason for expecting Him. Are you READY FOR THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST which is very imminent? When He comes to RAPTURE those Christians who have OVERCOME TILL THE END will you be amongst them, READY like the five wise virgins who made Heaven or like the five foolish virgins who were NOT READY and the gate of Heaven was shut against them? Will your GARMENT REMAIN UNSTAINED WHEN HE COMES?

Since we cannot predict the moment of His coming, we must live WATCHFULLY PREPARED and be found "WORTHY OF THE LORD" any moment HE comes. Jesus warned us against the eternal consequences of UNPREPAREDNESS and UNREADINESS. Be prepared to meet Him!



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