

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

The mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16) where the Incarnation leading to the sinless Life, Death, Resurrection and Ascension has brought us the full gospel through the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God as the only message of hope for all humanity; it the mystery revealing the full truth of and about God as the triune God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor. 13:14) in one Godhead (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9) for Jesus Christ to be the Son of God by the resurrection (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3, 4); and as the embodiment of Christ to deal with sin (1 Jn. 3:5, 8) therein lies the gospel's power to save and the evidence of salvation for believing (Acts 5:29-32; Rom. 1:11-17; 1 Cor. 1:6, 18-24; 2:1-7; 4:1, 2, 15-20; 15:1-11; Eph. 1:13, 14; 6:18-20; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; 1 Pet. 1:2-5, 10-12; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4; 1 Jn. 2:20-27). In the Bible, godliness (Gk: *eusebeia*) suggests a notion of fear or respect towards the one true God, as Creator and Redeemer, and requires an active obedience to his revealed will and a personal devotion that surpasses lip-service, mere trepidation, or bare admiration (Prov. 1:7; Is. 11:2; 33:6; Lk. 2:25; Acts 10:2; 22:12).

Hence, in the New Testament the word godliness (Gk: *eusebeia*) meaning piety or well-directed reverence is applied also to pious unbelievers like Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 7, 27:23; 11:14) as well as to pious believers (1 Tim. 2:2; 4:7, 8; 6:3-11; Tit. 1:1-4; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; 2 Pet. 3:11). Godliness or pious living is therefore attributable to either power of effort of humanity as outward holiness or to power or holiness from God (Acts 3:12-16; 4:7-12; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4). Thus, people can display a form of godliness (Gk: *eusebeia*) as professing Christians and Church-goers but deny its power from God as stated in 2 Timothy 3:5. "...⁵*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*" (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

However, Jesus our unique God-man Redeemer set not only the example but the redeeming transfer of godliness as the godly One in His death (Acts 2:27-36; 3:14-16; 13:33-35; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6), whose prayers were heard because of his 'godly fear' or 'reverent submission' to the Father (Heb. 5:5-10 v. 7). His death and heavenly exaltation makes it possible for others to offer to God, through him, acceptable worship or service, 'with reverence and awe' rooted in kingdom life and true godliness (Heb. 12:28, 29). Godliness is a God-honouring manner of life, issuing from a true knowledge of God and his grace in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 3:16; 4:7-10; 2 Tim. 3:10-12; Tit. 1:1; 2:11-12). A genuine devotion to God transforms relationships and behaviour in every context. The mystery of godliness always thus has reference to true godliness that is rooted in Christ, and which releases

grace for producing saving faith and life (Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Tim. 2:2; 6:11; Heb. 11:6; 2 Pet. 1:1-11).

Godliness means to live in the reverence and awe of God; to be so conscious of God's presence that one lives just as God would live if He were walking upon the earth. It means to live seeking to be like God and His Son; to seek to possess the very character, nature, life and behaviour of God. In short, godliness means to be Christ-like, to live upon earth just as Christ lived. Godliness alone can make a believer live in contentment (1 Tim. 4:7, 8). Godliness alone can take a person and make him ... *fulfilled, satisfied, complete, and sufficient* in this world and in the world to come (1 Tim. 4:6-8; 6:7-12).

In the Bible, all unbelievers are classified as ungodly (Gk: *asebes*), who are basically godless, without fear and reverence of God (Rom. 4:5; 5:6; 2 Pet. 2:5). However, some unbelievers are religious and even devout (Gk: *asebes*), who have the fear of God (vv. 1-2), and yet unsaved without the gospel or Christ (Acts 10:1-3, 33-44; 11:14). We need, therefore, to clearly distinguish between true godliness of truly converted Christians or believers as depending of the **mystery of godliness** (1 Tim. 3:16) and godliness of any kind of unconverted people both religious and irreligious or unbelievers in the gospel as the form of godliness without power to save from sin (1 Tim. 6:5).

Religious piety (Acts 10:1-3; Phil. 3:1-6) without the gospel believed and obeyed a way of life for genuine Christians (Phil. 3:7-14 see Acts 11:19-26 v. 26; 26:26-29 v. 28; 2 Thess. 1:3-12 v. 8; 1 Pet. 4:12-19 v. 16) is common today as was among merely professing Christians and pious religious people in Bible days (Acts 10:33-43; 11:13-14, 18; 19:1-20 vv. 1-3, 13-17; Rev. 2:12-16; 20-24; 3:14-18). Since Religion is the number one avenue for satanic deception and attack against true worship of God since the days of Adam (Gen. 3:1-9; Matt. 4:1-10; Rev. 12:9-11), we must promote doctrinal purity (2 Cor. 11:2-4; 13-14) which is according to godliness and is from the gospel that leads us to hold on to eternal life (1 Tim. 6:1-6, 11-21 vv. 12, 19).

We know that some ungodly or unsaved people are not irreligious, some professing Christians whose religion is not pure because they are spotted from the world, and there may be those who actively practice false religion as the exact opposite of what the fear of God demands of pure religion. James says; "*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" (Js. 1:27). When godliness *eusebeia* is from the unbelieving people who are referred to as ungodly *asebes* people (Rom. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Tim. 1:9; 4:18), it is still characterized by immoral and impious behaviour (2 Pet. 2:5; 3:7; Jd. 1:4, 15). This is often opposite of godly *theos* and righteous or just *dikaiois* behaviour (Rom. 1:17; 3:6) that is available to only believers through the righteous God (Jn. 17:25; Rom. 3:26) and the Son,

Jesus Christ as the God-Man (Matt. 27:19, 24; Lk. 23:47; Acts 3:14; 22:14; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1; Rev. 16:5).

What is the meaning of the mystery of godliness, then?

This is the only reference to it in the Bible, and note the truth of it that it is “without controversy,” that is, indisputable, undeniable, beyond any question. It is the truth that all genuine believers confess to be saved in order to gain godliness; and indeed, what is being confessed really happened, factually in human history. The revelation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, and also the *Logos* of God in human form which began with His Incarnation on earth unto His Glorification back in heaven. Thus, the kingdom, power and glory of God (Matt. 6:9-13), vested in the Lord Jesus for the Church through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15-20; 2 Cor. 4:3-7; Eph. 3:4-10, 14-21; 1 Thess. 2:12, 13; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 6:3-5, 11-16; Rev. 1:1-20 vv. 1-3, 7-11, 17-18, 20) is the subject of the mystery of godliness. Scripture says; “*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory*** (1 Tim. 3:16). It is a great mystery! God has done six wonderful things for man to provide us the basic message about God and Christ that guarantees our great salvation (Heb. 2:3, 4; 6:1-3; 1 Jn. 2:18-29 vv. 20-27).

This is the mystery of godliness, the mystery that has now been revealed to man, through the Person and Work of Christ Jesus the Lord in these six (6) facts:

- a) ***God was manifested (revealed) in the flesh.*** Jesus Christ by the Incarnation is 100% God and 100% Man (Jn. 1:1-5, 14-18; Phil. 2:5-11). Jesus Christ as God is the Son of God (Matt. 1:16, 118-23; 16:16; Mk. 1:1; Jn. 1:18; 3:16; 10:36; 20:31; 1 Jn. 4:15; 5:1-5, 1-13, 20) and the *Logos* Word of God (Jn. 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13). Jesus Christ identified with man perfectly (Matt. 1:21-23; Lk. 2:4-7; 16-24, 42, 52; Jn. 1:1, 14; 18:30; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-15; 4:14, 15), especially in His public baptism to begin the gospel (Matt. 3:16, 17; Mk. 1:1-15; 1 Jn. 5:6-8) and death, burial and resurrection to provide the gospel that saves (Jn. 19:5, 30-35; 1 Cor. 1:18-24; 2:1-7; 15:1-11 v. 3, 4; 1 Jn. 5:6-13). **Main Reasons:** Jesus Christ became man to take away the sins of all men (Is. 53:4-6; Jn. 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:24). Jesus Christ became Man to be our perfect substitute, sin bearer, kinsman redeemer and advocate to pay in full our eternal salvation and to destroy all the works of the devil (Is. 53:11, 12; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13-16; Col. 2:14, 15; 1 Jn. 2:1, 2; 3:8). Jesus Christ became Man to taste death and by that to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, Satan (Heb. 2:14-15).
- b) ***Christ was justified or vindicated in the Spirit.*** The Spirit of God vindicated Him; the Spirit of God proved His claims. **The Spirit of God did three things:** i) *The Spirit of God enabled Christ to live a sinless and perfect life* (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). He knew no sin and never sinned ii) *The Spirit of God vindicated Christ by giving Him the power*

to do the mighty works of God (Acts 1:1-3; 2:22; 10:38). The point is this: no man could do the works that Christ did. Only God Himself could perform the kind of miracles Christ did. Therefore, the very works of Christ were proof that He is who He claimed: the Son of the living God (Jn. 6:25-28; 14:11; 21:25). Iii) *The Spirit of God vindicated Christ by raising Him from the dead* (Rom 1:4). Jesus knew no sin and did not see corruption in His death (Acts 2:22-36 vv. 27, 31; 13:26-39 v. 33-35; 2 Cor. 5:14-21). By the bodily resurrection He is the proven eternal Son of God (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:1-5; 5:5-10). He the capacity as God to grant not only repentance and forgiveness of sins but repentance unto life, life everlasting (Acts 5:29-32; 11:18; 1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Tim. 1:16, 17). He is the embodiment of eternal life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3, 4; 1 Jn. 5:10-13, 20).

- c) ***Christ was seen of angels.*** The angels are heavenly beings who have always seen and beheld Christ. Angels are the ministering spirits of Christ who saw all that happened to Him. Holy Angels saw Christ - *preparation for conception and birth* (Lk 1:26f; 2:8f); *temptation* (Mk 1:13), *trials* (Lk 22:43), *resurrection* (Matt 28:2f) and *ascension* (Acts 1:10, 11). The point of the mystery is that angels assured the believers of Christ's return as they saw Him ascend to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). These angels are living beings who have lived with Christ in a real place throughout all of eternity. Therefore, the promise of Christ that we too shall live with Him eternally is true, for heaven and angels are real. There is a real world, a spiritual world and beings where God and Christ actually exist; as promised to all believers (Jn. 14:1-3).
- d) ***Christ was preached to the Gentiles,*** to all the nations of the world. This aspect of the mystery of godliness rooted in the mystery of gospel through a similar but another mystery, the mystery of Christ defines the formation of the Church to include both Jews and Gentiles believers in Christ by the gospel (Eph. 3:4-6). The Gentiles were given a special door of faith in the gospel through the ministry of Paul (Acts 13:46-49; Rom. 1:1-17). The primary duty of the Church is to preach the gospel and teach the full Christo-centric message (Acts 28:30, 31); and to give prove to Christ and Him crucified (Matt 24:14; 1 Cor. 2:1-7; 15:1-11 vv. 3, 4). The preaching of Christ is the only way for the Church to show obedience to Christ towards the building of His Church (Matt. 16:16-21; 28:16-20; Acts 5:29-32; 8:1-5; 13:26-39; 20:21-27; 15:1-11). This is the reason for the vicarious death to provide the gospel and the sending of the Holy Spirit to provide the proving power to the testimony of the Church (Matt. 16:16-21; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:1-8; 5:20, 29-32; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Rev. 1:1-6).

- e) ***God destined all to be saved even from among the Gentiles who truly believed on Christ***; the early Church rested their past, present, and future upon Him as Lord and Saviour (Acts 2:32-36; 10:22, 33-44; 11:19-26). This has become the family or household of God, the Church that is born through the promise of God in Christ by the gospel to be priests and servants of Christ (Eph. 3:4-6, 14-21; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10; Rev. 1:1-6). All believers in Christ are to cast their souls and lives upon Him; and be totally committed in their lives and all to Him. In the early Church, the believers gave Him all they were and had in exchange for His eternal life by willingly choosing, denying self, and taking faith steps in order to follow Christ (Mk. 8:31-38; Jn. 17:1-3, 17-26; Acts 2:38-42; 2 Cor. 8:1-9) such that they enjoyed His abundant life (Jn. 10:10; Eph. 1:3-23). This kind of belief is missing today. The belief that so many have is a belief about Christ; that He is the Saviour of the world. We must believe not just ***about*** Christ but ***on*** or ***in*** Christ to make Him both Lord and Saviour (Rom 16:26). Believing will produce godliness (Tit 2:11-15).
- f) ***Christ was received up into glory***. Jesus Christ has completed the great work of salvation. He has been taken back into heaven, back to the very place from which He had come (Acts 1:1-11). He is there as the Head, Apostle, High Priest and Governor of the Church that He is building (Matt. 16:16-19; 28:18-20; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21, 32-36, 38-47; 9:1-9, 15-17; Rom. 8:34-39; Eph. 1:18-23; Heb. 3:1; 4:15, 16; 7:25). He serves as Advocate with the Father to propitiate for the sins of believers and that of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:1, 2). The Lord Jesus is now exalted and glorified to send the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39; Acts 2:33) and to be able to save and glorify believers in Himself at the point of salvation (Acts 3:13-16; Rom. 8:29-30; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 5:5-10; Rev. 1:12-18). This provides believers firmness in faith through the glorious hope of the gospel (Col. 1:23; Tit. 2:13, 14). There is first the mystery of the hope of glory, which is Christ in you (Col. 1:26, 27) and then the mystery of the resurrection and rapture of the saints in Christ (1 Cor. 15:50-55; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). This is to permanently transform our vile bodies to be like His glorious body by His endless power at His appearing (1 Tim. 6:14; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 Pet. 1:7; 1 Jn. 3:1-3).

So, the mystery is that through Christ the Church can receive grace, life, truth and godliness from the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:14; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 5:8, 9; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 1 Jn. 1:1-3) to deal with all ungodliness (Gk. *asebeia*) (Jn. 14:5-11; 10:33; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Tit. 2:11-14). Undoubtedly, ungodliness brings the wrath of God, and excludes from the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). This is because ungodliness involves suppressing the truth about God, worshipping created things rather than the Creator, and pursuing unrighteous and ungodly relationships and behaviour (Rom. 1:18-25; 1 Tim. 1:9-11).

So then, ungodliness is a condition from which we can only be rescued by trusting 'him who justifies the ungodly' (Rom. 4:5; cf. Rom. 5:6; Tit. 2:11–14). Now, godliness from God and Christ is always backed by kingdom power (1 Cor. 4:20; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4, 6). Gospel ministers and believers in general as in the Pauline Pastoral Epistles must use the terminology “sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to godliness” to counter its misapplication by false teachers (1 Tim. 6:3–10; 2 Tim. 3:4–5).

The mystery of godliness working in the believer

Godliness from God to man as a mystery revealed to the believer who is a true disciple of Christ as the custodian of the mystery of the faith is about love releasing **life, righteousness, holiness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness**. **1 Tim. 6:11 reads**; “*But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.*” **1Ti 2:2** also reads; “*For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*”. Finally, **2Pe 1:3** reads; “*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*” The mystery of godliness in the believer, therefore, conveys both inner and external piety

In 1Timothy Chapter Two (2) where both inner or heart purity and external decency or purity in Church or public worship services are explained, two Greek words *eusebeia* (v. 2) and *theosebeia* (v. 10) are used, respectively. Scripture reads; “*For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness **eusebeia** and honesty.*” (1 Tim. 2:2). ... “*But (which becometh women professing godliness **theosebeia**) with good works.*” (1 Tim. 2:10). This divinely generated godliness (Gk: *eusebeia*) in the mystery of godliness (see 1 Tim. 3:16), which here refers to the simple true worship of the believer, in 1Timothy chapter 2 and verse 2, is coupled with the word honesty. It is only when *godliness **eusebeia** and honesty **semnotes*** work together, that believers can *profess godliness **theosebeia** with good works*.

The word honesty or decency or gravity is the Greek word *semnotes* meaning having ability not only to perform well one's duties as a citizen, but also to adhere to the highest principles and ideals of earth and heaven, and thus drawing respect and approval as for greatly beloved people of God as in 1 Tim. 2:2. See also 1 Tim. 3:4; Tit. 2:7; cf. Dan. 10:11.

Hitherto, the word honesty or decency (Gk: *semnotes*) which also further refers to the use of proper attire or dressing as a believer to produce or promote decorum, proper standards accepted by God and His people in propriety, orderliness, and seemliness (1 Tim. 2:2). Such combination of godliness (Gk: *eusebeia*) as reverence with decency (Gk: *semnotes*) should not be flashy outlook or appearance for the purpose of making an impression upon others but as true godliness (Gk: *theosebeia*) (1 Tim. 2:10). Strangely,

this Greek word for godliness *theosebeia* meaning reverence towards God is that which places emphasis on the relationship to God (*Theos*) as undergirded by the fear of or reverence for God in public worship. It is used only once here in the entire New Testament (v. 10); and as indicated in the context of overall modest appearance in dressing, attitude and manner of women in worship of the true God and good *agathos* deeds as services to God (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

The effects of being in Christ with regard to worship

Being spiritually and mentally renewed in Christ affects the rational and moral powers of man (Rom. 5:1-11; 7:4-6, 22; 8:1-16; 1 Tim. 1:5-14; 2 Tim. 1:3-14; 2 Pet. 1:3-11). The line of distinction has been drawn in Christ between the righteous and the unrighteous in the world through the gospel (Rom. 1:11-23; Tit. 1:15, 16; Rev. 22:9-15). Man can now be redeemed from sin through the gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal 4:4-6) and re-created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 2:4-10; 4:23-24; Col. 3:1-4, 10-14).

- a. Man can thus be delivered from the *legalistic bondage and rules of a man-conceived* righteousness and holiness (Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-22; Col. 3:5-9) to worship God acceptably (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:5, 6; 5:9-14).
- b. It is only in Christ that all humans who believe thus: become godly being rooted to godly righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:23, 24; Col. 3:10); be linked to godly wisdom and prudence (Matt. 11:25-30; Eph. 1:8; Js. 3:17, 18); become visionary leaders (Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 1:5-14); become full of the blessings of the gospel, the love of God and God's nature (Rom. 15:18, 19, 29; Eph. 3:23, 24); and become divine channels or transmitters of these (Eph. 1:3-19; 3:4-19; 2 Tim. 1:3-14; Js. 3:17, 18; 2 Pet. 1:1-11).

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS AND THE CHURCH

This is the glorious truth of the church, the truth that all true believers confess and witness to before the world. It is the only truth that offers hope and salvation for man beyond the grave; and in the next life. It is the truth which the church and its believers must keep and defend but never deny, neglect, ignore, or question. To deny and destroy this truth, is to choose to walk on the road that leads to destruction; where all are lost and doomed to death and hell fire forever. To know, believe and confess this truth is to choose to walk on the way that leads to God and eternal life. This is not man-made and self-proclaimed truth that is rooted in earthly wisdom and end in the grave. This great "mystery of godliness" is the truth will never die, for it is the truth of God's unbelievable love shown to the world (Jn. 3:13-16; Eph. 3:4-10 v. 6) and given in the custody of the Church for the kingdom faith (Matt. 16:16-19; 1 Tim. 3:9, 14-16).

The Mystery of godliness and the Church as pillar and ground of the truth

The Church is to be the household of God, with the people of the living God serving as the foundation and pillar of truth (1 Tim. 3:15). What truth? **It is the truth of the faith that must be kept and taught or preached by the Church** (1 Tim. 3:1, 2, 9, 13-16; Jd. 1:3). It is the truth of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the living God and *Logos* of God, the only God-Man of the Universe who is Lord and Saviour of the world explained in the **mystery of godliness** that provide sound doctrine as good theology of reality about God, man, salvation and eternal heaven (Jn. 1:1-5, 9-18; 14:6; 18:35; Acts 2:22-36; 1 Tim. 3:16; 6:3, 5 Rev. 19:13).

All Church officers or leaders (bishops, deacons, etc) must be apt to teach sound doctrine as the basis for all Church practice (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 3:1, 2, 9, 13-16; Eph. 4:11-13). The minister of the gospel and all others must know how to conduct themselves spiritual and morally in the Church which is the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim. 3:14, 15). Godliness, righteousness and other divine virtues as the bedrock of kingdom of God to deal with sin or lust are provided at salvation through the gospel and the Holy Spirit in the mystery of godliness (Rom. 1:16-18; 1 Tim. 3:16; 6:11-16; 2 Pet. 1:1-11). Any form of ministry in the Church (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:28-31; 1 Pet. 4:7-11) without teaching of foundational truths as rudiments linked to ministry of the word and prayer first (Acts 6:1, 4) is not New Testament-type Church (Acts 2:28-47; 1 Cor. 3:9-17; Heb. 6:1, 2).

The mystery of godliness sums up New Testament Theology as follows; *“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.**”* (1 Tim. 3:14-16).

Good Theology is from Sound Doctrine

Such good New Testament Theology is, however, inseparable from Sound Doctrine. The Scriptures say in 1 Tim. 4:6, *“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained”* and then in 1 Tim. 4:16, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”* These and others the commands from the Lord and the Apostles beginning with the command to preach the gospel and ethical commands to obey (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mk. 16:15, 16; Jn. 15:14, 17; Acts 1:4-8; 10:33, 42; 13:47; 1 Thess. 4:1-12; 2 Thess. 3:4-12; 1 Tim. 4:11).

The Church must at all cost prevent people from teaching and practicing false doctrine in any form. Paul painfully warns Timothy; *“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”* (1 Tim. 6:3-5). Further, the Apostle to the Gentiles exhorts Titus; *“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”* (Tit. 1:9).

The Sin Nature, God’s Image and Likeness in the mystery of godliness

- a) **The essence of the Sin Nature:** The Old Man or Sin Nature through the choice of man to know good and evil and yet without ability in himself to overcome evil has essence of **three categories** in about **five dominant modes (two areas, two trends and one pattern)**. These are namely: a) **Category One in Area One** – Area of Weakness (Mk. 7:21-23; Rom. 7:5; 12:1; Eph. 2:1-3), b) **Category One in Area Two** – Area of Strength (Is. 64:6), c) **Category Two in Trend One** – Trend towards asceticism (2 Cor. 11:13), d) **Category Two in Trend Two** – Trend towards lasciviousness (Gal. 5:19-21), and e) **Category Three in Pattern One, Only One Pattern** – Lust Pattern (Eph. 2:1-3).
- b) **Filthy rags of human righteousness and goodness:** Even though there is the area of strength in every human being which generates human good in the human being, the Bible calls it filthy rags in the sight of God (Isa. 64:6). This is where we generate all forms of human righteousness whether in the flesh of the believer or unbeliever alike (Gal. 5:19-21). Self-effort, self-will and self-justification (Phil. 3:1-9) out of knowledge of good and evil exist in the human being (Gen. 3:22) but it is classified as filthy-rags before the holy and righteous God. Within the strength, there are two trends in every Old Sin Nature of man: one is toward *asceticism*, the other is toward *lasciviousness*. Generally, a person will habitually move in the direction of one trend when he is under the control of his old sin nature. That is why we have people who behave like Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand, and playboys or radicals or public artists on the other. However, there is no fixed pattern.

One can have a general trend toward *asceticism* and sometimes move toward *lasciviousness* because they both exist in you. The mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:15, 16) will tell you to abandon human righteousness to pursue Christ’s righteousness (Phil. 3:10-14). **1 Tim. 6:11 reads;** *“But you, O man of God, flee these*

things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.” However, even among believers because no two persons are the same (for each one of us is differently wired in thinking in our minds and hearts – Prov. 23:7; Rom. 12:1-3; 2 Cor. 10:1-6), we must not compare ourselves with ourselves but with the standards of righteousness and goodness set by Christ in the gospel (1 Cor. 1:30, 31; 2 Cor. 10:7-18 v. 12).

c) All unbelieving humanity is unfruitful in life.

The darkness in the unbeliever means that man is unfruitful in life without Christ (Eph. 5:8, 11). Outside Christ, a person is an unbeliever is incapable of the good by God’s standards of the gospel and moral law (Rom. 3:20-23) and all his or her:

- i) Good works or righteousness is as filthy rags (Is. 64:6).
- ii) Good works or righteousness is counted fruitful in the site of men but unfruitful in the sight of God (Eph. 5:11).
- iii) Good deeds or righteousness works are earthly, legalistic, humanistic, sensual or self-righteousness; not fulfilling the law of Christ which is agape love in character and ministry (Matt. 5:17-20; Gal. 6:1, 2; Phil. 3:1-11; Js. 3:11-18).

d) Godliness and true gain: The essential nature of the human makes him religious because that is the drive to eternity whether expressed or innate. This is why even unbelievers who are religious and carnal believers can have a form of godliness (*eusebeia* meaning piety or devotion) but deny its power (2 Tim. 3:5). Such people only live out of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:22) and suppose that gain (*perismos* meaning to have gain of any sort) is godliness (1 Tim. 6:5). However, gospel-believing, Word-based, Christ-centered and Spirit-filled believers derive their godliness from believing and knowing the mystery of godliness which is in the power or godliness (holiness) of Christ as the Son of God (Acts 3:12; 1 Tim. 3:15, 16; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

Such people live not just out of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:22) but from the renewed inner man having the mind of Christ (Rom. 7:4-6, 22-25; 8:2-4; 1 Cor. 2:15, 16; Eph. 4:23, 24; Col. 3:10-14) and know rather that godliness is great gain *perismos* (1 Tim. 6:6). So, while unbelievers shall gain or gain (*kerdaino* or *kerdos* meaning profit from) the world (Matt. 16:26; Mk. 8:36; Lk. 9:25) or filthy lucre (Tit. 1:11), believers gain *kerdos* Christ (His life, love, kingdom, power, righteousness, obedience, glory, etc) (Phil. 1:21; 3:7). The measuring is the evidence of grace (Acts 11:19-26 v. 22) seen in the obeying God through demonstration of faith in the Lord and love for all the saints (1 Jn. 3:18-24).

The nature of believers' good works

In the New Testament, the English word meaning *good* when describing good works or words or things or actions and behaviour or character uses two Greek words *agathos* (Rom. 2:7; 13:3; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 1:16; 2:5, 10; 3:1; Heb. 13:21) and *kalos* (Matt. 5:16; 26:10; Mk. 14:6; Jn. 10:32-33; Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; 1 Tim. 5:10, 25; 6:18; Tit. 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12). The Greek word *kalos* (meaning *being intrinsically or constitutionally good, that is **benevolent or beautiful** but not necessarily doing those good to benefit others*) and *agathos* (meaning *both being and doing good, being good and beautiful or benevolent within and doing it for the benefit of others and the kingdom of God, that is, **beneficent, useful or beneficial***) when describing good works.

The believer is to be filled with goodness *agathasune* (Rom. 15:14; Eph. 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:11) having the benevolent capacity to do those expected good (*agathos*) works (Rom. 2:7; 13:3; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 1:16; 2:5, 10; 3:1; Heb. 13:21) and doing those good (*kalos*) works (Matt. 5:16; 1 Tim. 5:25; Tit. 2:7, 2:14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12). The Scriptures require then that the believer must do both *agathos* and *kalos* works in varying combinations beginning with the preaching of the gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit so as to make others obedient by word and deed (Rom. 15:14-19). In his Epistle to Titus, Paul does this wonderful combination of word usage (Tit. 2:1-14 vv. 5, 7, 10, 14; 3:1-15 vv. 1, 8, 14). We read; ¹⁰*Not purloining but shewing all good **agathos** fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* ¹⁴*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good **kalos** works.* (Tit. 2:10, 14) and also; ¹*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good **agathos** work,* ⁸*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good **kalos** works. These things are good and profitable unto men.* ¹⁴*And let ours also learn to maintain good **kalos** works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.* (Tit. 3:1, 8, 14).

In the case of good deeds including words and acts from love in Christ (Rom. 15:18, 19; Col. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:18), believers can also always do what they are created in Christ to do good *agathos* works (Rom. 2:7; 13:3; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 1:16; 3:1; Heb. 13:21). Such good *agathos* works proceed from the redeemed heart and renewed mind that is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 6:1-13, 17-23; 7:14-8:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 19, 20; Gal. 6:6-10; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 4:1-9; Tit. 2:1-14; Js. 3:1-18; 1 Jn. 4:18-24); it a heart that is zealous for good *kalos* works (Matt. 5:16; 1 Tim. 5:25; Tit. 2:7, 14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12).

Character as fruit of goodness *agathasune* and faithfulness and truth (Eph. 5:9) is developed in the heart and in the renewed mind of the believer (Matt. 22:37; Rom. 7:22, 25; 12:1-3; Eph. 4:17-24; Phil. 4:4-9; Col. 3:3-17; Heb. 10:16-25). Growth and development begin right from the seed of God that we gain in the heart at New Birth that cannot sin or remain in sin (1 Jn. 3:9; 5:18). Christian formation is the goal of the believer and the Church and it is Christ and the faith being formed continually and continuously in us (Rom. 6:17; Gal. 4:19; 1 Tim. 3:9, 15, 16). This is the way to be nurtured to grow into maturity into the unity of the faith and fullness of the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:1-16 v. 13; see Gal. 5:16-26; Heb. 5:11-6:3; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; 3:17, 18).

Good *kalos* (intrinsically good without being benevolent) works by believers or in the Church (Matt. 5:16; 1 Tim. 5:10, 25; 6:18; Tit. 2:14; 3:8, 14), therefore, become good *agathos* (benevolent and beneficent; that is, both useful and beneficial) works in the believer (Acts 9:36; Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 3:1; Heb. 13:21). This happens only when we do works (*argon*) of service or of the ministry (*diakonia*) with New Covenant gifts of God's grace (Rom. 12:1-21 vv. 3, 6; Eph. 4:1-16 vv. 7, 12). To this end, Christ's ascension gifts are; "*For the perfecting (katartismos) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (oikodome) of the body of Christ*" (v. 12) together (Eph. 4:11-13 v. 12). All Christian ministry *diakonia* and use of all of the many ministry gifts *charisma* in the Church (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 18, 28; Eph. 4:7-16; 2 Tim. 1:5-7; 1 Pet. 4:7-11) must be in the measure of faith, in love and truth with a view of the goodness and severity or love and holiness or glory God (Rom. 11:22-33; 1 Cor. 3:9-17; 10:31-11:1; Col. 3:23, 24; 1 Pet. 1:13-16; Rev. 1:17-20).

To please God, such ministry out of love must be by word and deed or not by speech only but love in deed and in truth through Christ in the gospel and with the witness of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:18, 19; 1 Cor. 3:9-17; Eph. 5:18-21; Col. 3:15-17; 2 Tim. 1:5-14; 1 Jn. 3:18-24; Rev. 1:9, 10). Good *kalos* works are works that bring benefit to the kingdom (Matt. 5:16; 26:10; Mk. 14:6; Jn. 10:32-33; Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; 1 Tim. 5:10, 25; 6:18; Tit. 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14; Heb. 10:24; 1 Pet. 2:12). And such good *kalos* (kingdom useful, God-glorifying) works in word, deed, love and truth must always be for the furtherance of the gospel and the faith to make others also obedient to the gospel, the faith, the Word and God (Phil. 1:12, 25 see Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:1-17; 15:18, 19, 29; 16:25-27; 2 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:13; Tit. 2:5, 9-14).

When all these divine provisions with all other promises in Christ come together to provide believers in the Church eternal life as promised by God in Christ through the gospel (Gal. 3:11-17, 22, 29; Eph. 3:4-6; Tit. 1:1-4; 1 Jn. 2:24, 25), the pillars of **faith and love** give proof of salvation (Eph. 1:15; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24) or as experienced in the Church through the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:15-16). This is why sound or good doctrine (1

Tim. 4:6, 16; 6:3, 5, 11; Tit. 1:9) rooted in the gospel is the only way to promote and practice doctrine (Heb. 6:1, 2) as the doctrine according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3) in the Church (Acts 2:38-47; Eph. 4:11-16). As the gospel and the active presence of the Holy Spirit that make the intermarriage of two main wheels, means, sources, bases, fountains, rails and pillars of eternal salvation or Christianity available (Acts 5:29-32; 1 Pet. 1:10-12), all the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love are adequately placed at our disposal (1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5, 6; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8).

Godliness as the outcome of Christ's Atonement

There are several things the atonement or atoning blood does; but the true meaning of the blood of Jesus Christ is that the blood represents the three essentials needed for total salvation, hence, seen as:

- a) **SACRIFICE**,
- b) **SUBSTITUTION** and
- c) **SALVATION**.

The blood of Jesus equals Sacrifice plus Substitution plus Salvation. Sin estranged God and man. The Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Heb. 9:11-15) solves the sin problem by becoming the Sacrificial or Pascal Lamb (Jn. 1:29; Heb. 9:14, 22; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 13:8). In our Salvation there is the guaranteed Sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Kinsman Redeemer of all humanity on a Substitutionary bases (Jn. 1:1-5, 14-18, 29-34).

Salvation, however, depends on and involves the biblical activities of:

- a) **REDEMPTION**,
- b) **PROPITIATION**, and
- c) **RECONCILIATION**; and
- d) **ADOPTION** of all believers to become sons of God (Jn. 1:9-13).

Redemption, Reconciliation and Propitiation are by the blood which together support our Adoption as sons of God. Thus, in our salvation as the outcome of Atonement, there is Redemption, Reconciliation and Propitiation by the blood of Jesus and then there is the Adoption of believers to be mature sons or children of God who become joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 3:24-26; 5:6-11; 8:14-17; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:3-14; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Jn. 2:1, 2; 4:7-10).

The mystery of godliness as the present outcome of our Salvation

Entering the kingdom of God is the purpose of the New Birth or gaining salvation as eternal life in Christ. In John's Gospel we read; *"Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, If one is not generated from above, he is not able to see the kingdom of God.*

*Nicodemus said to Him, How is a man able to be generated, being old? He is not able to enter into his mother's womb a second time and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, **If one is not generated out of water and Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God.** That having been generated out of the flesh is flesh, and that having been generated out of the Spirit is spirit. Do not wonder because I said to you, You must be generated from above. The Spirit breathes where He desires, and you hear His voice; but you do not know from where He comes, and where He goes; so is everyone having been generated from the Spirit.” (Jn. 3:3-8 LITV).* Thus, regeneration is the only way or entry into the kingdom of God for obtaining our divine inheritance through the gospel or Christ and the agency of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38, 39; 20:21-32; 22:14-16; 26:18-20; Eph. 1:3-23; 1 Thess. 1:3-10; 2:12, 13).

Paul, therefore, emphatically states; *“Or do you not know that unjust ones will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous ones, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers shall inherit the kingdom of God. And some of you were these things, **but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.**”* (1 Cor. 6:9-11 LITV). Now, at regeneration many things happen including the following that are clearly stated above – **Washing, Sanctification and Justification** (1 Cor. 6:11).

The actions of God taken to get believers **washed, sanctified and justified** are packed in the New Covenant plan of salvation through Christ, the Son. *“But we know that to the ones loving God all things work together for good, to those being called according to purpose; because whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers. But whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”* (Rom. 8:28-30).

The mystery of godliness is about God's power, kingdom and glory

When Jesus taught the disciple's prayer popularly referred to as the Lord's Prayer, He mentioned that the **power, kingdom and glory** that belong only to God is to be seen among men (Matt. 6:9-13). Now the believer is called to the kingdom and glory and the kingdom comes in power (1 Cor. 4:20; 1 Thess. 2:12, 13). As soon as Repentance and Forgiveness of sins are granted by the Lord Jesus through the gospel, *Repentance from dead works* and *Faith towards God* are together received for New Birth (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:30, 31; 10:43, 44; 11:13-14, 18; 13:38, 39; 19:4, 5; 20:21; Heb. 6:1, 2). This is what is called repentance unto (new) life from receiving the words *rhema* of life as authority in the gospel from the risen Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-11, 45) to be saved (Acts 5:20;

10:22-34; 11:12-18 v. 14). In a few cases it comes directly through a direct encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ, the only life-giving Spirit (Acts 9:1-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-11, 45).

This is because the mystery of godliness must give proof to the power, kingdom, virtue and glory to which believers are called (Acts 1:1-8; 1 Thess. 2:12, 13; 2 Pet. 1:3). It is evidenced in a life of *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit* (Rom. 14:17-19) or *faith, love, holiness with sobriety* (1 Tim. 2:15) or *true holiness and righteousness* (Eph. 4:23, 24; 1 Tim. 6:3, 5, 11-21; Heb. 12:1-14; 1 Pet. 1:13-21; 2 Pet. 1:3-11) or *faith and love* (Eph. 1:13-15). It is shown on the scale of excellence or diligence in living out the three working Christian virtues of faith, hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 1:3) as healthy growth from **faith pistis to virtue arete to knowledge gnosis to temperance egrateia to patience hupomone to godliness eusebeia to brotherly love philadelphia and finally to love (charity) agape** (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Peter states this emphatically; “*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*” (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

Thus, godliness comes close to love; it is preceded by only brotherly kindness. Peter goes on to say; “*For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*” (2 Pet. 1:8-11). God through the mystery of the gospel, the faith and godliness has dealt with sin in order to keep believers in the kingdom and from falling from grace (1 Tim. 1:8-20; 3:9, 13-16; 2 Pet. 1:1-11 v. 11 see 1 Cor. 10:1-14; Tit. 2:7-14; Heb. 9:11-16, 22-28; 10:10-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-12).

The mystery of godliness linked to the gospel (1 Cor. 5:1-11 v. 3, 4; 1 Tim. 3:15, 16) has become the gate-way of displaying and expressing a life of kingdom *power, love and sound mind* (2 Tim. 1:6, 7; 3:5). This is what makes believers authentic as light of the word and salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16) through both purity and power or combined love (fruit) and gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1 see 1 Cor. 12:7-11; Gal. 5:22, 23). Since Pentecost, salvation is witnessed by God Himself, the Church and even on-lookers through the out-pouring and receiving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:6-11 v. 8 see Acts 2:1-11, 33; 8:12-20; 10:44-46; 11:15-18; 19:4-6) who also comes as seal and earnest (Eph. 1:3-15 v. 14).

With repentance and faith coming together, the divine intermarriage of the **two main wheels, means, sources, bases, fountains, rails and pillars** that make eternal salvation

possible in the believer (Acts 15:6-11; Tit. 2:11-14). We have the **wheels of grace and faith** to be saved or and to inherit the kingdom of God (Acts 15:9, 11; Rom. 5:1, 2; Eph. 2:8, 9; Tit. 1:1-4; 2:11-13; 1 Jn. 5:1-13, 18-20; Jd. 1:20, 21); the **sources of grace and truth** from Christ through the gospel (Jn. 1:14-17; Col. 1:5-6); the **means of grace and mercy** at the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16), and the **bases of righteousness and true holiness** received through Christ (Lk. 1:75; Rom. 6:19; Eph. 4:23, 24). Repentance from dead works is done once from the purging of the blood and the eternal Holy Spirit for forgiveness of the sin of unbelief (Jn. 16:8-11; Heb. 3:12-14; 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:1-5) and must attract faith towards God to answer to foundations of truth including resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment (Heb. 6:1-2). Through that the **fountains of wisdom and prudence** are well provided in Christ for living in the world that now thrives on corrupted human wisdom (Matt. 11:25-27; Eph. 1:8). There is then the effective the interplay of the **two-way rail of His Sovereignty and human responsibility** by the enabling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:29-32; 1 Jn. 3:18-24; 4:12-21) which also provides obedience to God on the **pillars of faith in the Lord and love for the brethren**.

Thereby, the truly repentant and Spirit-led believer will produce fruit worthy of repentance (Acts 26:18-22) with multiplied peace and love from God (Rom. 5:1-5; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:2). The ultimate result is to live and walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort or refreshing of the active presence of the Holy Spirit to do His Will (Acts 3:19-26; 9:31; Gal. 2:19-20; 5:16-26; 6:14-17; Phil. 2:12-15; 1 Jn. 3:18-24).

Once the gospel is preached and received, the Holy Spirit works with it the active and quick Word to produce salvation and the overthrow of sin by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ beginning with saving faith and saving grace (Rom. 4:11-16; 8:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:17, 18; 4:15-20; 6:16-17; 15:1-11; 1 Pet. 1:12, 23-25). The immediate outcome is the spiritual transformation guaranteed through washing, positional sanctification and justification having become a new creation with imputation of the love, obedience, redemption, holiness, righteousness and faith of and from Christ as life and godliness (Rom. 1:16, 17; 4:22-25; 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 1: 23-30; 4: 6:9-11, 19-20; Eph. 4:23, 34; Col. 3:4-10; Heb. 5:5-10; 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:2-5, 15-19; 2 Pet. 1:3, 4).

There would also be a basis for receiving the gift of the Person of the Holy Spirit not for salvation but as the believers' divine Advocate to manifest Christ (Jn. 14:15-17, 20-26; 16:7-15, 23-26; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 16-21, 33, 38, 39; 5:29-32; Eph. 1:13, 14; 1 Pet. 1:1-12; Rev. 1:4-6, 9-11, 18-20). Furthermore, in the Christian journey from earth to glory, anymore or continued impartation of divine virtues and repositories through grace and faith like righteousness, peace, joy, godliness, kingdom, glory and virtue, power, faith and love from God (above) through the permanent indwelling and then filling with the Holy Spirit would be doubtful and counterfeit without the evidence of the gospel or the word

(Acts 2:16-21; 20:32; Rom. 5:1-5; 14:17-19; 5:18-21; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 6:17-23; Cor. 3:15-17; 2 Tim. 1:5-14; 1 Thess. 2:8-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-5; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; Rev. 1:1-20 vv. 9, 10)!

The love *agape* of God shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is the greatest of all virtues (Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 13:4-7, 13; 2 Tim. 1:6-7, 12-14). This *agape* love of God is one of the attributes of his perfections that is communicated to man for relations as in the example of intimacy that eternally exists in the triune Godhead, for God is love and love is of God (1 Jn. 4:7, 8). This love is demonstrated in Christ (Jn. 3:14-16; Rom. 5:6, 8; 8:29-39) as a drawing force or spiritual power to save sinners (2 Cor. 5:14-21). It is, however, conveyed afresh to us through the convicting and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3-7); who, thereafter, subsequently pours out more and more of this perfect love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 Tim. 1:6, 7) until we are made perfect in love (1 Cor. 13:10, 13; 1 Jn. 4:17, 18). It is seen in obedience to God's moral and ethical commands to do His will (Jn. 15:8-17; 1 Thess. 4:1-12; Heb. 5:5-10; 9:14; 13:20, 21; 1 Pet. 1:1-5; 1 Jn. 3:18-24).

Faith and love as pillars are the proof of our salvation

The two great pillars of Christianity are *faith* and *love* which work with *grace* that is in the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:15-23 v. 15; Col. 1:3-8 v. 4; 1 Tim. 1:14). *Faith* and *love* naturally and automatically embrace *hope* as the three cardinal and theological virtues of *faith, hope and love* (1 Cor. 13:8-13 v. 13; 1 Thess. 1:1-7 v. 3). As pillars of our common faith and the measuring and judging criteria for Churches and believers, the Scriptures describe them as *faith in the Lord Jesus* and *love unto all the saints* (Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:13; Phm. 1:5; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24). *Faith in the Lord Jesus* is the embodiment of faith that confesses Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:6-10, 16, 17). Such biblical faith and love rooted in the mystery of the gospel and of godliness, therefore, always embrace the six elementary teachings about Christ (*repentance from dead works, faith towards God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment*) in one piece together (Heb. 6:1, 2).

Christianity which thrives on such faith (Heb. 11:1, 6) must be rooted in or hooked to God's love communicated from the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 13:4-7, 13; Gal. 5:6, 22, 23; Eph. 1:15; 6:23; Col. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:5, 14; 2 Tim. 1:5-14 v. 7, 13; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Jn. 3:18-24). And this love is unending being the very nature of God who is love (1 Jn. 4:7, 8). In addressing obedience to the commands of God; while faith focuses upon the revelation of the power of God (Matt. 16:8, 17-21; 17:20, 21; Acts 14:9, 10), love focuses upon *God Himself including His nature and glory* (Eph. 3:14-21; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24; 4:7-21; 5:1-5). With the entry by faith into this grace of God to become godly or obtain life and godliness (Rom. 5:1-11 v. 2; 1 Tim. 1:3-14; 2 Pet. 1:3-4 see Eph. 2:8-10), we must diligently add on higher levels of the virtues in God ending in love (2 Pet. 1:1-11). Experience and nature itself

prove that faith and hope reach and grow people, but love reaches and grows people far more than any other gift or quality or virtue (1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 1:3).

The Church must understand that though parents can transfer covenant blessing to their children, in all matters of faith for salvation or eternal life and love, every individual must personally believe the gospel and confess Christ as Lord to embrace the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:9, 14-16 see Jn. 3:16-18; Rom. 1:11-17; 10:6-10, 16, 17; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; 1 Jn. 3:18-24; 4:7-16). This is a noteworthy principle of faith impartation which is individual in the transfer of the faith of the gospel and doctrine (Gen. 18:18, 19; Rom. 1:11, 12; Gal. 3:16-18). Thus, the God of Moses and of all believers is called the *God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob* or the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:6, 11-16; 4:5; 6:3; 9:5; Deut. 30:19, 20; Josh. 24:2, 3, 14, 15; 1 Kgs. 18:36; 1 Chron. 29:18; Matt. 22:32).

The mystery of godliness explains the faith in Peter, Paul, John and all believers including Jude (Eph. 1:13-15; Col. 1:3-9; 2 Tim. 1:3-14; 2 Pet. 1:1-11; 1 Jn. 3:18-24) as uniquely the same (Rom. 1:11, 12; Tit. 1:1-4; Jd. 1:3, 20-21). We read; *“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”* (Rom. 1:11, 12). ... *“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”* (Tit. 1:1-4). ... *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* (Jd. 1:3). ... *“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”* (Jd. 1: 20-21).

The mystery of godliness and dealing with spots or stains

True religion towards a glorious, holy Church (Eph. 5:26, 27) requires that we pursue godliness and become unspotted from the false teaching that glues us to sin, the flesh, and the world (1 Tim. 6:11; Js. 1:27; 2 Pet. 2:1, 2, 13; 3:14; Jd. 1:12). This is because the blood of Jesus was without blemish (*amomos* - *without blame (blemish, fault, spot), faultless, unblameable*) and without spot (*aspilos* - *unblemished either physically or morally, without spot, unspotted*); and it is efficacious through the Holy Spirit and the gospel or Word to redeem us and purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18-23 v. 19).

Paul, therefore, commands his son Timothy to avoid first ungodly teaching and behaviours but to pursue godliness and other virtues; *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.”* (1 Tim. 6:11-21).

It is true that the Pharisees and the Sadducees with the Scribes and other religious leaders exhibited the leaven of hypocrisy and legalism in carrying out religious duties, because they were veiled or blinded to biblical truth while using the Old Testament Scriptures (Matt. 5:17-20; 23:1-3; 2 Cor. 3:1-3, 5-15; 1 Tim. 1:6-9). We, the Church believers, though saved and unveiled (2 Cor. 3:4-6, 16-18), yet **without the continued divine advocacy of the Holy Spirit** with the washing of the Word or gospel (Eph. 5:26) to pursue godly virtues may be plagued with stains or spots becoming rebukeable in our Christian lives and duties (Eph. 5:27; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Pet. 2:13; Jd. 1:12).

The source of Christian spots or stains: From the Scriptures where the command is given concerning our confession or profession and other relevant texts these spots or stains could be from (1 Tim. 6:11-21 v. 14 see also):

- 1) wrong or non-Christlike attitudes (vs 12) such as lack of: a) *humility* - Phil 2:1-11; b) *the fear of the Lord* - Acts 9:31; c) *gentleness & meekness* - Matt 11:29; d) *Compassion & consideration* - 2 Cor 10:1; Matt 9:36; Lk 7:11-15; e) *speaking the truth in love* – Eph. 4:15; f) *graceful speaking that is seasoned with salt* – Lk. 4:22; Eph. 4:25; Col. 4:5],
- 2) emptiness of the mystery of godliness and attendant virtues (vs 13): a) *thus not depending on God for morality, ethical behaviour and spirituality* – 1 Thess. 4:1-12; b) *thus only attaining without obtaining* – Jn. 7:25-44],
- 3) wrong doctrine of the mystery of godliness and attendant virtues (vv. 15-17): a) *thus not knowing the truths about God through the crucified, risen, ascended, glorified and*

- reigning Lord and King – 1 Tim. 6:14-16; b) thus only attaining without obtaining the truth about Jesus as the Christ – Jn. 7:25-44; Acts 9:20-22; 17:1-3],*
- 4) *false view of the mystery of godliness towards eternal life (vv. 18-19): a) thus not knowing the truths about Christ as the only begotten Son of God by the resurrection from the dead – Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; b) and not knowing that Christ was raised by the glory of the Father to give us newness of life (Rom. 6:4); thus not enjoying the power of the new birth or new life – Acts 5:20, 29-32; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 4:15-20,*
 - 5) *distorted view of the mystery of godliness leading to humanistic and scientific views towards eternal life (vv. 20-21): a) thus not knowing the truths about God through the crucified, risen, ascended, glorified and reigning Lord and King – 1 Tim. 6:14-16; where we will in future judge Israel (Matt. 19:28) and angels (1 Cor. 6:1-3) b) thus only attaining without obtaining true godliness and life through Christ in this earthly life – Jn. 7:25-44; 1 Cor. 6:1-13, 19-20; 2 Pet. 1:1-11],*

Additionally, without a grasp on the mystery of godliness with intentional pursuing of godliness and other virtues, there will be spots or stains from:

- 6) *bitterness (anger and resentment with revenge and no forgiveness) - [Lev 19:1-19; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:8-14],*
- 7) *the flesh [Rom 7:18, 25; 8:5; 1 Cor 6:9, 10; Gal 5:19-21, 24-26; Eph. 5:1-5; etc],*
- 8) *worldliness [1John 2:15-17] which includes (1) sensual, impure fleshly desires Eph. 5:3-5 (2) inordinate lust of the eyes, covetousness, etc - Eccl 1:8; Matt. 5:28; Eph. 5:4, 5 and (3) pride, ambition for honour, position, title, etc - Eccl 2:1; Matt. 23:6. Believer must display true religion as evidence by love for God such that:*
 - a. *true religion stirs people to separate themselves from the things of this world that arouse their fleshly desires and cravings.*
 - b. *true believers of true religion keep themselves unspotted from the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life - all of this world.*

This is a necessary preparation and faith with love positioning if a believer is to conquer the temptations and sins of this world (1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:22).
- 9) *legalistic traditions or legalism and dead orthodoxy - Gal. 4:1-31,*
- 10) *ritualistic traditions or syncretism, eclecticism and formalism – Col 2:8, 16-23,*
- 11) *humanistic ideologies including a level of postmodernism and secularism – Rev 2; 3,*
- 12) *insincerity and unconscious hypocrisy (as tributes we pay to truth and goodness; when we betray the Lord somewhat or fail to confess dualism in life – Phil 1:1-11,*
- 13) *lack of practice of pure religion. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (Js. 1:27). Hitherto, pure and undefiled religion as true Christianity does not become corrupted with false beliefs or false religion which come in through the crooked or perverse generation (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12) and morally corrupt heart (Matt. 5:8; 15:18-20).*

- a. Pure religion does not become entangled with the affairs and pleasures of this world or conform to worldliness that serve as spots from the world (Is. 55:11; Rom. 12:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:31; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6).
- b. Pure religion as true spirituality holds on to the purity of the gospel and the Word of God as the testimony of Jesus on earth through the active presence of the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:12; Rev. 1:9, 10; 19:10).
- c. Pure religion does not focus upon form, ritual and ceremony as tradition or commandments of men or ecclesiastical dogma (Matt. 15:1-9; Gal. 1:14; Col. 2:8).
- d. Pure religion apart from being compassionate focuses upon the power of God to change lives eternally and it reaches out to change people's lives with the gospel and good works (Matt. 5:13-16; 9:37-39; Js. 1:17-27; 1 Pet. 2:9-12).
- e. lack of evidence of grace among believers (Acts 11:19-26 v. 22) is hence seen through lack of:
 - a) wheels as grace and faith in the Lord (Acts 15:6-11; Rom. 4:16; 5:1, 2) *as enjoying the promise of God (eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit and rest) in Christ by the gospel (Gal. 3:1-17; Eph. 2:8-10; 3: 4-6; Tit. 1:1-4; 2:11-14; Heb. 4:1-16);*
 - b) sources of grace and truth from Christ through the gospel (Jn. 1:14-17; Col. 1:5-6) *to provide foundations and grounds for salvation and godliness (Jn. 14:6; 1 Thess. 1:5-6; 1 Tim. 3:15-16);*
 - c) means as grace and mercy from the Lord (Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Phm. 1:5) *as proof of the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16);*
 - d) bases as righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:23, 24) *as grace deposit and development of the image of God in Christ (2 Pet. 1:3-11);*
 - e) rails of Sovereignty and responsibility (Jn. 3:13-18; Eph. 1:3-14) *as the way of being in and doing the Will of God to please Him by grace (2 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 2:12-16);*
 - f) fountains of wisdom and prudence (Matt. 11:25-27; Eph. 1:8) *as proof that the wisdom of God is a work (Acts 6:1-8; Rom. 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 1:17-24, 30; 2:1-13; 3:19; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Js. 1:5-8; 3:12-13, 17-18); and*
 - g) faith in the Lord and love for all the saints (Eph. 1:15; 6:23; Col. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:5, 14; 1 Thess. 1:3; Phm. 1:5) *as proof of eternal life and the presence of God and love in the heart in the absence of hatred (1 Jn. 3:11-15; 4:12-21), proof of obedience to the commands of God (1 Jn. 3:23, 24) and being established in Him (1 Thess. 3:6-13; 1 Jn. 3:1-3).*

Holding fast to godliness to be without stain or spot

Believers are to hold fast to the mystery of godliness to be without stain or spot (or without wrinkle, or un-rebukeable, blameless and that mar our Christian lives and ministry or duty according to the Scriptures (Eph. 5:27; 1Tim 6:14; Heb. 9:14; 2 Pet. 3:14).

This is possible through the gospel and godliness because Jesus was without blemish (*amomos* internal blemish) and without spot (*aspilos* external spot) (1 Pet. 1:19 see Lev. 1:10; 22:19-22; Heb. 9:14). He was the Son of God, the Holy One who sacrificially shed His eternal blood that was without spot and blemish to redeem us and make our souls obedient to obey the Word (1 Pet. 1:18-22 vv. 19, 22). We are, however, as a matter of responsibility to:

- a) *first* flee from all known sin (vv. 3, 5, 11); which includes false teaching, pride, envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, discontentment, disputing and the love of money as the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:3-11)
- b) *secondly* to pursue or follow after godliness, righteousness, faith, love, patience, meekness. in order to draw our eternal life from God (v. 11) and thereby
- c) *thirdly* be able always to fight the good fight of faith (v. 12) in our witness or testimony to that fact of godliness in life and ministry with the help of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:29-32; 1 Jn. 2:20-27; 3:1-24).

We are to fight the good fight of faith without stain or spot, unrebukable or without blemish or wrinkle but holy (Eph. 5:27; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Pet. 3:14) spiritually, morally and in doctrine (1 Cor. 1:4-10; 6:9-13, 19-20; 10:31-33; 12:1-13, 18, 28-31; 2 Cor. 11:2-4, 13-14; 1 Thess. 4:1-12; 1 Jn. 3:1-3) by remaining unveiled both before God and men while always gazing at the glory of the Lord through the Spirit of liberty (2 Cor. 3:16-18; 1 Jn. 3:23, 24).

Remember that in the Church mere professing and false believers or Christians may come among us (Acts 20:28-32; Phil. 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:1-22 v. 13; Jd. 1:4-13 v. 12) as un-removable spots and blemishes (2 Pet. 2:13; Jd. 1:12). Nonetheless, in the Church, leaders must lay hold on eternal life (v. 12) and command even the rich among us to do the same (v. 19).

Whatever the outcome of personal spots and spots among us in Church life and business, Christ is returning for a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing but made holy by Christ Himself through the Word starting from the gospel, the Blood, the Name and our fellowship in the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:26, 27; Phil. 1:9-30; 1 Pet. 1:2-5, 10-16, 18-25; Rev. 1:1-11, 18-20). The good news is that believers have capacity to pursue godliness and other virtues towards eternal life (1 Tim. 6:11-21 vv. 12, 19; 2 Pet. 1:5-12) and be able to make itself ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-11 see Eph. 4:1-8, 11-16). This comes by the connectedness of all the revealed mysteries of God beginning with the gospel by which we are born again to enter God's kingdom (1 Cor. 4:1-2, 15-20); and therein is truth embodied in Christ within the Church as the pillar and foundation of truth explained by the great mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:1, 2, 9, 15-16).

Christian character in Christ as kingdom pattern

There is a pattern of eternal life or salvation that has fixed character traits from Christ who has abashed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel or the Word and the active presence of the Holy Spirit (1 Tim. 1:3-20 v. 16). It is God's pattern of salvation obtained by the gospel or the Word preached with and the active presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-42; 5:29-32; 1 Pet. 1:2-5, 9-12). This pattern is designed after new birth to save the soul from the flesh or sin nature with the repositories of the kingdom of God beginning with the gospel and sound doctrine for a pattern of good *kalos* works (Tit. 2:1-14 vv. 1, 7, 14).

In this way, Christians will do good *kalos* works (Tit. 2:7, 14) that will be beneficial good *agathos* works in Christ after salvation (Eph. 2:8-10 v. 10). The truth is that we must regain the very life and glory of God in eternal life as called to kingdom and glory here on earth (1 Thess. 2:12). Believers are to remain both salt and light in virtues, values, precepts and principles of good character (Eph. 2:8-10; 5:8, 9) to do good works to bring glory to God (Matt. 5:3-20 v. 16).

Believers must maintain aggressive gospel cum Holy Spirit evangelism as a cutting edge in consciousness and practice of the faith of the gospel as a lifestyle (Phil. 1:27). Since character is not manufactured anywhere, you cannot train a bad nut to become good (Jer. 13:23). In making disciples nations of Christ, it is the gospel or the Word and the Holy Spirit that can change a person (Matt. 13:31-33 v. 33; Acts 2:32-47 vv. 38-42; 10:33-44 v. 44; 2 Cor. 5:14-21 v. 17). First, to be born again or born spiritually from above (Jn. 3:3, 5; 1 Cor. 4:15) and then to grow in grace (Acts 20:27, 32). It means that character begins as a seed in the heart (1 Jn. 3:9); so the heart must be changed by Christ first (Jer. 17:9; 2 Cor. 5:17).

There is the package to the general calling through *grace and faith* given to believers as righteousness and faith for eternal life (Acts 15:6-11; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:6-10, 15-17; Eph. 2:1-10; 1 Tim. 1:5-14). The package of saving grace and saving faith for salvation includes being born again by believing the gospel to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit and then willing to obey or even suffer for the gospel after the receiving of the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39; 11:13-18; Eph. 1:13-14). This is supported by faith and love (Eph. 1:15), in the very nature and character of the Father (Rom. 11:29; Eph. 5:1, 2). We must never gloss over Christian character as patterned after Christ is first the crucified life in Christ (Gal. 2:20, 21; 5:16-22 v. 24; 6:14-17). Then there must be the Spirit-led life in obedience to the gospel, the Word, Christ and God through the active presence of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:16-20; 2 Thess. 1:3-12 v. 8; 1 Pet. 4:1-19 v. 16; 1 Jn. 5:18-24).

Any special calling and gifts (grace and anointing) to do ministry as Charisma will work for His glory and kingdom only with Character as integrity of heart and the skillfulness of

hands (Ps. 78:72; Eph. 3:4-10, 14-21; 1 Thess. 2:12, 13; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14). This is the desires and design pattern for the Church as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1-7, 15-20). Christians must create environments for the glory of God anytime, anywhere through the equipping, ministering and edifying of all saints (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; Eph. 3:14-21). Equipping is the duty of God which He does through Christ Himself with the Holy Spirit, the equipping gifts and members themselves (1 Cor. 1:4-10; 2 Cor. 13:1-14 v. 9, 11; Eph. 4:11-13; Heb. 13:20, 21). This is practicable due to His two gratuitous *dorea* gifts of God - the gift *dorea* of Christ (Jn. 3:16; 4:10-14; 2 Cor. 9:15; Eph. 3:7; 4:7) and the gift *dorea* of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39; Acts 2:38, 39; 8:20; 10:45; 11:16), respectively.