

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

In Acts 11:26 we learn that the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were first called ‘CHRISTIANS’ at Antioch. The city of Antioch was in Syria, outside the land of the Jews. Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were working together for the Saviour at Antioch at the time the Holy Spirit sent them forth on their first missionary tour (Acts 13:2). They returned to Antioch and reported to the Christians at Antioch what the Lord had done through them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles more than ten years after His death and resurrection (Acts 14:27). The Jews called the Lord’s disciples ‘NAZARENES.’

The word ‘CHRISTIAN’ is found just three times in the Bible. We have mentioned Acts 11:26. In Acts 26:28 we learn that King Agrippa used the word “Christian.” Then note I Peter 4:16, “if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.” In the days of the apostles the Lord’s disciples were expected to suffer for His sake. When Saul was converted the Lord told him he would suffer for Him. (Acts 9:15). Then the apostle Paul wrote, in II Timothy 3:12, “all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (especially if they obey II Timothy 2:1 to 4). The apostle Paul wrote to other Christians to be followers of him (Philippians 3:17). Then he wrote, in II Corinthians 12:10, “I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, ‘FOR CHRIST’S SAKE.’ One of Paul’s last statements was, that he left one of his faithful fellow-workers sick. (II Timothy 4:20). To another faithful, spiritual, uncompromising, courageous fellow-worker he suggested a remedy for his oft sicknesses (I Timothy 5:23). Thus we learn that a person who becomes a Christian has no guarantee or assurance that he will enjoy the best physical health or be free from infirmities of the flesh. All Christians groan, waiting for the day of the redemption of their bodies (Romans 8:23—II Corinthians 5:1 to 8—Ephesians 1:14).

The Christian is expected to have a real ‘know-so’ salvation; know that by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus and His perfect work of redemption he has eternal life (I John 5:13).

Note the Holy Spirit’s instructions to Christians in Philippians 4:6, “be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Then in Romans 15:13 the Christian is told that he should be filled with joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. But while the Christian is rejoicing in the knowledge of salvation and is conscious of the joy of salvation and the peace of God, he knows that living the Christian life entails sacrifice, self-denial, tribulation, persecution, hardship and suffering. But if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed (I Peter 4:16). In Colossians 1:24 we read of the peculiar suffering of the apostle Paul for the sake of Christ and for the sake of other Christians. He suffered as a criminal, unto chains (II Timothy 2:7 to 9). (Ephesians 6:19 and 20) (Colossians 4:3 and 4).

SAVED BY CHRIST’S SUFFERING

No amount of human suffering, or deeds of kindness and acts of mercy, or faithful observance of religious ceremonies will save, or help to save, any child of Adam. God’s verdict is “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:8). The most moral, respectable, religious person must be saved in the same way that the vilest reprobate in society must be

saved. If we are going to God's heaven, we certainly should know we are going there in God's way. Did not Jesus Christ mean what He said when He said, "I am the WAY, the truth and the LIFE; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me?" (John 14:6). Note this all-important Divine truth recorded in I Peter 3:18, "for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the JUST for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit." Note how very similar truth was written in different language by Paul in Ephesians 2:13; "but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." In this same chapter, Ephesians 2:1 to 9, we learn that the adults of the human race are divided into just two groups, 'DEAD SINNERS' and 'LIVING SAINTS.' There is no third group. In those verses we learn that dead sinners do not become living saints by what man does for God, but by what is done for the believing sinner, the Divine work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The living saint, or Christian, is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:10). "By grace were ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8 and 9). But Ephesians 2:10 makes it very clear that after a person is worked upon by the Tri-une God, that person is expected to go to work for God; for he is created in Christ Jesus 'UNTO GOOD WORKS.'

Satan will, if possible, keep religious people confused and ignorant as to the difference between, 'NOT OF WORKS,' for salvation, and 'UNTO GOOD WORKS,' after being saved by faith in the once-for-all suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hear the good news in Hebrews 10:10 and 10:14, "by the which will we are sanctified (made saints) by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once-for-all". . . "by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." This is such wonderful news, such glorious, good news, that religious people just think that it cannot mean what it says. They are afraid to believe II Timothy 1:9, that God saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. They seem to prefer Israel's tribulation and kingdom message, "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13).

THE GIFTS OF GOD: ETERNAL LIFE—RIGHTEOUSNESS—THE HOLY SPIRIT

If it were not for the deceiving power of Satan, the god of this age, who is accused of the crime of deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9—II Corinthians 4:1 to 3), the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light (II Corinthians 11:13 to 15), and through his subtlety corrupts the minds of religious people from the simplicity that is in Christ (II Corinthians 11:3), it would be next to impossible to explain why poor, condemned, ruined sinners will not believe Romans 6:23 and Romans 3:24 to 27, that "THE FREE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD;" that the believing sinner is justified freely (without a cause) by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Hear the good news of Ephesians 1:6 and 7: "wherein God hath made us accepted (HATH 'GRACED' US) in the Beloved, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace." There is positively no way of measuring, computing, or describing 'the riches of God's grace.' (Ephesians 2:7). According to John 5:21 and 26, the Lord Jesus Christ had absolute authority and Divine power to say in John 10:28: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Read with this John 6:47 and John 17:3 and John 5:24. In John 3:36 is very good news and very bad news: "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:

and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” There is a great difference between ‘everlasting life’ and God’s ‘abiding wrath.’ This wrath is described in Revelation 21:8—Hebrews 10:28 to 33.

Hear again I John 5:11 and 12: “and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son . . . He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Right here on this earth the Christian can say with Paul, “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20), “as those alive from the dead” (Romans 6:13), “you hath He made alive.” (Ephesians 2:1 to 6 . . . Colossians 2:13). Christ as the Christian’s life (Colossians 3:3 and 4).

In I Corinthians 15:22 we are told that the Christians, whose bodies have gone to corruption, will be made alive when Christ comes. The dead in Christ shall be raised first and then Christians who are alive and remain until the moment of I Corinthians 15:51 to 54 and I Thessalonians 4:14 to 17, will with them be caught away to heaven. Then all Christians will appear with Christ in glory (Philippians 3:20 and 21—Colossians 3:3 and 4—I John 3:2). Thus we can understand something of the two-fold meaning of Christ’s statement the day He raised Lazarus from the dead: “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.” (John 11:25 and 26). Paul was able to say, “for me to live is Christ; to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21)

The word ‘CHRISTIANITY’ is not in the Bible. But we see that what the Christians understand by ‘Christianity’ includes resurrection life here and now, raised up and seated in the heavenlies in Christ (Ephesians 2:4 and 6). Then the guarantee of incorruptibility when the Lord Jesus, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, returns for the rapture of His Church.

According to Romans 8:2 to 4 and II Timothy 1:10, all of the spiritual and eternal blessings received by Christians are made available by “THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS;” Who hath abolished death and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light in the gospel (II Timothy 1:10—John 10:17 to 19—Hebrews 2:14).

Unto the apostle Paul was committed by revelation ‘the gospel of grace’ (Galatians 1:11 and 12—Acts 20:24), ‘the dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles’ (Ephesians 3:1 to 3) The dispensation was committed unto Paul (I Corinthians 9:17.), when and because of the FALL of Israel (Romans 11:11). Paul said to Israel: “seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46) (Romans 11:25).

Before the risen Christ, by revelation, committed to Paul ‘the gospel of grace’ and ‘the dispensation of grace’ for Gentiles, Peter preached to Israel, “repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38), “repent and God will send Jesus Christ.” (Acts 3:19). To Peter, Christ gave the keys of the kingdom and the gospel of the circumcision but not the dispensation of grace. After Paul received the ‘grace’ message and program, by revelation, he preached, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to God’s mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Titus 3:5 to 7). There is as much difference between the message of Peter in Acts 2:38, before the FALL of Israel, and the message of Paul in Titus 3:5 to 7, after the FALL of Israel, as there is between law and grace.

FRUSTRATING GOD’S GRACE

No greater injustice has ever been done the members of Adam's race than has been done by religious church leaders who have frustrated the grace of God by imposing on Christians some man-made religious ceremonies, some church ritual, or bringing over into the present age and dispensation of grace some message or religious program that had its rightful place in a former Bible dispensation. If religious teachers had taught, before God ushered in 'the dispensation of grace for Gentiles' (Ephesians 3:1 to 3), "ye must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:24— Acts 15:1 and 5), it would not have brought the anathema of God that it brought after the FALL of Israel. (Galatians 1:6 to 9).

Many messages and ordinances and religious practices had their rightful place in God's spiritual program while Jesus Christ was under the law, a Minister of the circumcision (Galatians 4:4 and Romans 15:8), which have no place in God's present 'grace' program. The gospel which the twelve apostles preached in Luke 9:1 to 6 is not God's message for today and has not been since the risen Christ gave Paul his gospel by revelation (Galatians 1:11 and 12—Romans 16:25—Ephesians 3:1 to 3). Even the gospel of I Corinthians 15:1 to 4, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, by which believing sinners are saved, was wholly unknown to the Twelve when they were preaching the gospel of Luke 9:6. This is plainly taught us in Luke 18:31 to 35 and John 20:9.

The gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23) included Israel's deliverance from Caesar, and 'the sure mercies of David.' (Acts 13:34 and Luke 1:67 to 73). It meant the restitution of all things, beginning with Israel's national redemption, the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, Israel's freedom from Gentile political domination. So also the gospel of the circumcision, committed to Peter (Galatians 2:7), included God's covenant and oath with Abraham to give Israel all the land of Canaan (Genesis 17:8— Genesis 22:15 to 18) (Amos 9:11 to 15).

Many individual Jews received Christ as Messiah and Saviour, and yet the statement is recorded in John 1:11, that Christ came unto His own and His own received Him not. Though Christ had performed many miracles, Israel did not believe on Him, that Isaiah 53 might be fulfilled; and Israel could not believe, that Isaiah 6:9 to 11 might be fulfilled. Read John 12:37 to 41. This the Lord Jesus explained after His resurrection when His disciples said, "we trusted it had been Christ which should have redeemed Israel." (Luke 24:21). Christ proceeded to explain to them that His suffering had to precede His glory (I Peter 1:11). Then He added, "thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." (Luke 24:46). With this statement read Acts 17:3, and Acts 2:23, and Acts 4:25 to 29, and Acts 3:18, and Matthew 26:24, and John 18:11, and John 3:14, and you will better understand why Christ agreed to give one more sign to Israel (Matthew 12:39 to 42), why He told Israel their sin against the Son of man would be forgiven (Matthew 12:31 and 32), why Christ on the cross prayed that their great sin might be forgiven, because of ignorance (Luke 23:34), and why God was willing to do that very thing. (Acts 3:14 to 17). God was willing not only to charge Israel's sin to ignorance and pardon it, but Jesus Christ stood in heaven as the Son of man (Acts 7:51 to 58), ready to return to establish the kingdom foretold by Samuel and Moses and other Old Testament prophets. (Acts 3:19 to 21—Acts 3:24).

After Christ was raised from the dead and had spent much time teaching the apostles concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3), they asked of Christ, "wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" This is evidence that Acts 1:3 does not mean that Christ told Peter and the Eleven anything concerning the Body of Christ or the dispensation of grace.

Peter continued with the 'kingdom' message to Israel, baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins which John the Baptist had preached. (Luke 3:3 and Acts 2:38). To bring either

message, Luke 3:3 or Acts 2:38 into the dispensation of grace and make either a part of the gospel of grace will frustrate the grace of God and pervert the gospel of grace. This is true if we bring Acts 10:34 and 35 or James 2:21 to 24, justification or righteousness by works into the 'grace' message and program of Romans 4:4 and 5, Romans 3:24 to 28, Titus 3:5 to 8, or II Timothy 1:9.

During the reign of law, including the years of Christ's earthly ministry, God imposed a very rigid religious program upon His people. He demanded both righteousness and religion. During the years Peter was using the keys of the kingdom, God demanded righteousness and permitted certain religious practices. After the Fall of Israel, after the full revelation of the dispensation of the mystery (Ephesians 3:1 to 3), God demanded righteousness and forbade religious practices. See how God provided that righteousness for ungodly sinners. (II Corinthians 5:21—Romans 4:4 and 5—Romans 10:10).

In Galatians 3:10 we read, "cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God; for by the law is the knowledge of sin; and by that law let every mouth be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. (Romans 3:19 and 20.) What the law could not do for sinful humanity Christ did. (Romans 8:3 and Hebrews 7:19). By Christ all who believe are justified from all things, from which no one could be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39). By Adam is the entrance of sin. (Romans 5:12). By Moses is the law, the knowledge of sin. (John 1:17—Romans 3:20 and Romans 5:20 and Galatians 3:19 and Romans 7:7). By Jesus Christ is the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 13:38—Ephesians 1:6 and 7—Colossians 1:12 to 14). So we read, in Galatians 3:13, that, because the holy, spotless, eternal Christ became a curse on the cross of Calvary, believing Israelites were delivered from the curse of the law, which was their tyrannical child-trainer to bring them to Christ to be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:24 and 25).

When Israel went from 'not under the law' to 'under the law' (Exodus 20), about 1500 B.C., or about 2500 years after sin entered by Adam (Romans 5:12 and Romans 5:20), they experienced a most radical change. They seemed to want it. (Exodus 19:8). When they were given the grace message that delivered believers from the yoke of bondage (Acts 15:10—Hebrews 12:20—Galatians 5:1—Acts 13:39), from the curse of the law, most of the Israelites were not well pleased. (Romans 9:29 to 33). They did not want to pass from 'under the law' to 'not under the law.' (Romans 6:14—Romans 7:1 to 6). They wanted to be delivered from Caesar, but not from Moses.

Neither did they want the uncircumcised Gentiles to believe that they could be saved by the gospel of grace without the deeds of the law and circumcision and some other religious ceremonies. God's anathema was pronounced upon them. (Galatians 1:6 to 9). The believing Gentiles, who received their perverted gospel, were called 'foolish.' (Galatians 3:1 and 2). Paul was led to write; "I would that they were even cut off which trouble you." (Galatians 5:12). If all of the preachers, who today pervert the gospel of grace by mixing law and grace, or by mixing the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God, or the gospel of the circumcision with the gospel of the uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7), were cut off, thousands upon thousands of pulpits would be vacant; and the majority of the congregations would be without a pastor who qualifies according to I Corinthians 4:1 to 4, a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, and Galatians 2:21, a preacher who in no manner doctrinally frustrates the grace of God.

Paul reminded the foolish, bewitched, believing Gentiles that they did not receive the Holy Spirit by works of the law or by any work of the flesh, but by the hearing of faith.

(Galatians 3:1 to 4). Then he added, that, because Christ died on the cross, believing Gentiles might have righteousness as Abram, in uncircumcision received God's own perfect righteousness. Abram was declared righteous by faith 430 years before God gave the law to Israel. (Galatians 3:14 to 17—Galatians 3:6 to 8—Romans 4:7 to 11—II Corinthians 5:21—Romans 10:10—Romans 4:4 and 5). Of course, we must understand that this 'all grace' salvation of Ephesians 2:8 and 9 and Romans 3:24 to 28 was sent to Gentiles when and because Israel was cast away, when and because of the FALL of Israel (Romans 11:15 and Romans 11:11), when and because of Israel's unbelief and blindness. (Romans 11:30 and 25).

Paul reminded the foolish, bewitched Gentiles that, by their faith in Christ and His redemptive work, without working or struggling or striving or tarrying, they received all of the Holy Spirit, as God's free gift. (Galatians 3:14—Romans 5:5). The words 'after that ye believed' in Ephesians 1:13 are translated from 'pisteusantes,' which should be translated, 'believing.' So the believer receives the Holy Spirit at the time he receives salvation and righteousness and eternal life, which is at the time he meets God at Calvary and receives Christ as Saviour (II Corinthians 1:20 and 21). The anointing abides in the believer (I John 2:26 to 28). At the time the believer is saved he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). The believer is then and there sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:14—Ephesians 4:30). The words 'ANOTHER COMFORTER' of John 14:16, compared with 'ADVOCATE' of I John 2:1, as well as Acts 13:2—Acts 5:3—Matthew 28:19 and 20—Romans 8:26 and 27, should convince any Christian as to the truth of the statement that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. The Greek word referring to Christ as 'ADVOCATE' is the same as the word referring to the Holy Spirit as 'COMFORTER' - 'PARACLETOS' - 'Another Paraclete' means 'another Person' in the God-head.

Every Christian should be conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19 and 20) Who desires to witness that the Christian is a child of God (Galatians 3:26—Ephesians 1:4 and 5), an heir of God and a joint-heir with God's only begotten and well-beloved Son (Romans 8:15 to 17—Galatians 4:4 to 8—Ephesians 3:6—Hebrews 1:2 and I Corinthians 3:21 to 23).

All Christians live in the Spirit. But all Christians do not walk in the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25). Because the Christian is saved by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus from the penalty of sin and receives the Holy Spirit as God's free gift, he lives in the Spirit. But only as the Christian yields himself to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, and walks in the Spirit by the operation of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, knowing Christ in the power of His resurrection, will he fulfill the righteousness of the law and manifest the fruit of the Spirit. (Romans 8:4—Philippians 3:10—Ephesians 1:19—Galatians 5:22 to 24).

SERVING GOD AND WAITING FOR HIS SON

According to I Thessalonians 1:9 and 10, the Christian has been turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead; Jesus, Who delivered us from the wrath to come. Wonderful truth in these two verses. What glorious truth, "delivered from the wrath to come," because the Lord Jesus Christ was delivered for our offenses (Romans 4:25). Is it any wonder that the Christian is told "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father, by Him?" (Colossians 3:17). Then remember the words of the Lord Jesus, in John 12:26, "if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." While the Christian is waiting for

God's Son from heaven he should be like Mary, occupied with Christ, and like Martha, occupied for Christ (Luke 10:38 to 42.). No one is delivered from the wrath to come because that one serves God and Christ; but because of the death and resurrection of the eternal, sinless Son of God. The Christian serves, or should serve, because he is saved. Every Christian is instructed to behave as becometh a saint. (Ephesians 5:1 to 4—I Timothy 3:15—Ephesians 4:1 to 3). No one becomes a saint, or a Christian, by behaving, but by believing. Believers are not saved by joining some church organization. Believers are made members of the Body of Christ by grace through faith in the Son of God. But Christians gather with the Lord's people of like precious faith because they are saved by grace and are on the way to heaven, waiting for God's Son from heaven.

Surely we know that living the Christian life is a full time job; that God's spiritual standard for His redeemed people is a high and holy standard, to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of god." (Colossians 4:12). The Lord's will concerning all of the members of His Body is recorded in Colossians 1:9 and 10: "that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." You will agree that this is a large order, as is also I Thessalonians 5:22, "abstain from all appearance of evil."

A person may be saved by hearing and believing one or two verses of Scripture; born again by the Word of God (I Peter 1:23). Faith cometh by hearing and believing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Then Christians are to begin with the sincere milk of the Word (I Peter 2:1 and 2), go on unto perfection, from milk to the strong meat (Hebrews 5:11 to 6:3), built up by God's Word of grace (Acts 20: 32), no longer children (Ephesians 4:14—I Corinthians 3:8 to 13), but established according to Romans 16:25. So the Christian should join with the prophet of old and say: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart," "more necessary than my daily food." (Jeremiah 15:16—Job 23:12). Therefore, the Christian should day and night study and search the Scriptures diligently under the guidance and instruction of the infallible Teacher, the Holy Spirit, and find God's Word a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path way.

As Christians we should ever know that "God, Who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (II Corinthians 4:6). As we walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called (Ephesians 4:1), seeking those things which are above (Colossians 3:1 to 5), we are expected to be faithful ambassadors of reconciliation, beseeching sinners, and begging them, to be reconciled to God and become new creatures in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17 to 20), being ever mindful of the great reconciling truth of II Corinthians 5:21.

Christians are to be careful to maintain good works. This we are told in Titus 3:8 and 14 after the 'grace' salvation message in Titus 3:1 to 7, that no person is saved by his works, but by the work of the Tri-une God. Then note Titus 2:11 to 14: "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope, appearing in glory of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If only one message had been preserved for Christians, none could be more comprehensive and important than this one. Here we see what the grace of God teaches. It teaches a very high and holy standard. In somewhat different language the same high spiritual

standard is contained in II Timothy 2:19, “let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity”

Christians are instructed, in I Corinthians 3:9 and 10, that they are workers together with God and they are to recognize the apostle Paul as the wise masterbuilder and with him they are to take heed how they ‘BUILD THE HOUSE TOGETHER’ upon the foundation which Paul laid. The Greek word, translated ‘BUILDETH’ is ‘SUN-OIKODOMEO,’ ‘BUILD THE HOUSE TOGETHER.’ With this task God has given another assignment to Christians, in Ephesians 3:9, “make all see what is the dispensation of the mystery” . . . this according to God’s eternal purpose. (Ephesians 3:11—Ephesians 1:11 and Ephesians 1:4 and 5, and II Timothy 1:9). If the Christian is to be a success in the work assigned to him, he must put on the whole armour of God to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11 to 20).

In order that the Christian might maintain the high and holy standard given him in the Bible, God has made available His power (Ephesians 3:20 and Ephesians 1:19 to 23), His ‘ALL GRACE’ (II Corinthians 9:8), all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), the guarantee to supply every need. (Philippians 4:19—I Corinthians 10: 13) .

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

In II Timothy 2:15 Christians are instructed to rightly divide the Word of Truth, so that they might be approved by God as workmen not ashamed. Christians are also expected to be like the noble Bereans, who received the Word with all readiness of mind and then searched the Scriptures daily to determine whether the message they heard was true. (Acts 17:11).

Ministers of Christ are expected to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. (I Corinthians 4:1 to 4). In Paul’s writings we read of ‘the mystery of God’s will’ (Ephesians 1:9); ‘the mystery of the gospel’ (Ephesians 6:19 and 20), ‘the mystery of Christ’ (Colossians 4:3 and 4 and Ephesians 3:1 to 3); ‘the dispensation of the mystery’ (Ephesians 3:9). We read this truth in Romans 16:25: “Now to Him that is able to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of ‘the mystery’ kept secret since the world began.” In Ephesians 3:8 the Holy Spirit referred to the mystery kept secret since the world began as ‘the unsearchable (past-tracing-out) riches of Christ.’ If that truth was kept secret since the world began, ‘hid in God’ from the beginning of the world (Ephesians 3:9), ‘hid from ages and from generations’ (Colossians 1:26), it was not prophesied or mentioned in any of the Books from Genesis to Malachi. Therefore it was not ‘searchable,’ as was the truth of Acts 17:3 to 11.

Paul testified that he received his ‘grace’ gospel, by revelation, from the risen Christ. (Galatians 1:11 and 12). Paul testified that ‘the dispensation of the grace of God,’ ‘the mystery,’ was given him by revelation; that Christ revealed it unto him after it had been hid for more than 4000 years. (Ephesians 3:1 to 3).

In Romans 11:25 we learn that God ushered in a period of very special favour for Gentiles when and because He sent blindness upon Israel (Romans 11:9 to 15). This period and reign of grace is now running its course, and will end with the realization of the blessed hope, the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13), at which time the members of his Body will appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:3 and 4—I John 3:2—Philippians 3:20 and 21).

THE FALL OF ISRAEL FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD

Many sincere, religious, conscientious, zealous church members unintentionally pervert the gospel of the grace of God (Galatians 1:6 to 9), ignorantly frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21). Few of these commit this spiritual crime in the manner the first century religious leaders and teachers did. They taught the Christian Gentiles, “except you be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” (Acts 15:24—Acts 15:1— Acts 15:5). They were sure that they had to add to ‘the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 8:2), at least a part of the law that was given by Moses, the ministration of death (II Corinthians 3:7), to make the grace gospel effective. They did not believe Galatians 3:25, that Israel was no longer under the schoolmaster. They apparently did not want to believe: “ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14). They had little idea of the meaning of Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 8:13; that the law was added to the gospel (Galatians 3:8) until Christ died on the cross and blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that were against us and contrary to us, taking it out of the way by nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:14 and 16—Galatians 3:19).

Today many of our sincere, earnest, faithful, spiritual Christians, outstanding Fundamentalists, men of God, who are Premillenarians and messengers of grace, unintentionally frustrate the grace of God with their faulty dispensationalism, teaching that the FALL of Israel took place when Christ said, “your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:38), and therefore, that ‘the dispensation of the grace of God’ (Ephesians 3:1 to 3) began with Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:14 and Acts 2:39).

All ministers of Christ, who are faithful stewards of the mysteries of God and who rightly divide the Word of truth, teach that at the time of Israel’s FALL, mentioned in Romans 11:11, God suspended or interrupted or postponed His prophesied kingdom program, and inaugurated a new program, a program of ‘grace,’ ‘the dispensation of the grace of God’ for Gentiles. (Ephesians 3:1 to 3). They know that God has not altogether abandoned that ‘kingdom’ program. After stating the mystery of Romans 11:25 the Holy Spirit declared that, because God’s gifts and calling are without repentance, and for the sakes of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Romans 11:26 to 29), God will save His ‘kingdom’ nation after this present period of special favour for Gentiles has run its course. Note in Luke 21:27 to 33 how this will take place. Note in Isaiah 9:6 and 7, “the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Then Christ as the Son of man will be a Judge and a King on the throne of His glory reigning and judging in the kingdom of God prepared from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25:34). Then there will be a new Israel and a new Jerusalem, ‘Hephzibah’ and ‘Beulah’ (Isaiah 62:1 to 4). In the meantime, during this parenthetical age and dispensation of grace, God is making the ‘ONE NEW MAN’ of Ephesians 2:15.

Let us carefully and prayerfully note Israel’s FALL in Romans 11:11. We learn in Acts 13:39 that Paul was directed to preach to Israel that all who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ would be justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. Some Israelites received this message of grace with gladness. Others rejected it, hated and persecuted Paul for preaching it to Jews. They then forbade him to preach it to Gentiles, and stoned him, they thought, unto death. (Acts 14:19 and 20). This was another sin added to their other great sins, all mentioned in Acts 13:45, Acts 7:51 to 55, Matthew 21:35 to 40—Matthew 23:31 to 33, I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16. They filled up their sins that brought God’s wrath to the uttermost. (Matthew 23:32—I Thessalonians 2:16). Thus ended Israel’s all-day-long. (Romans 10:21).

The Israelites who rejected the message of Acts 13:38 and 39 stumbled (Romans 9:29 to 33). Now the question of Romans 11:11: “have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their FALL salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy.” Note in Romans 11:5 to 10 the two groups of Israelites, the elect remnant, the remnant according to the election of grace: the rest, blinded by God. A blind person will stumble. Israel has been a blind, stumbling people ever since.

Note in Romans 11:12, that Christian Gentiles are rich because of the FALL of Israel. In II Corinthians 8:9 Christian Gentiles are rich because the rich Christ became poor. In Romans 5:10 and 11 we learn that believing Gentiles are reconciled to God because of the death of Christ. In Romans 11:15 we read that they are reconciled because Israel was cast away. In I John 2:2 we learn that saved Gentiles obtain God’s mercy, because Jesus Christ on the cross became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. In Romans 11:30 we learn that believing Gentiles receive Divine mercy because of the unbelief of Israel.

The Christian, who does not see the great crisis mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Romans, is anything but a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. The Christian, who does not see that every doctrine or event in the Bible must be studied, interpreted, appropriated and applied as to whether it is recorded before the FALL of Israel or after the FALL of Israel, is not a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, and he does not rightly divide the Word of truth. If God sent salvation to Gentiles before the FALL of Israel and then sent salvation to Gentiles when and because of the FALL of Israel (Romans 11:11), then it should be obvious to any intelligent, spiritual student of the Scriptures, that the message and program which God sent to Gentiles in the dispensation of the grace of God, after the FALL of Israel, was something new and different. (Genesis 17:14—Esther 8:17—Acts 2:10).

If before the FALL of Israel religious men had preached Acts 15:24, Acts 15:1 and Acts 15:5, they would not have committed the crime they did after the FALL, teaching Gentiles, saved by grace, that they should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. The Lord Jesus Himself was circumcised (Luke 2:21 and 2: 39), and in many ways He and His disciples kept the law of Moses while He was Jesus of Nazareth in Canaan in the midst of Israel, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. (Acts 2:22—Galatians 4:4 and 5—Luke 4:16). Christ on earth said He came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. (Matthew 5:17 and 18—Matthew 8:1 to 4—Matthew 23:1 to 3). In the matter of the forgiveness of sins, there is as much difference between Matthew 6:14 and 15, Matthew 18:34 and 35, and Colossians 2:13 and Ephesians 4:32, as there is between law and grace. God’s program and message of Matthew 10:5 to 9, ‘the kingdom of heaven’ for Israel, with miracles and signs, is as different from Titus 2:11, the grace of God for all the world, as law is from grace.

The little ‘kingdom’ flock of Luke 12:32 were told to sell their earthly possessions. They had received the kingdom message of baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins (Luke 12:33- Luke 3:3). That little ‘kingdom’ flock was increased on the day of Pentecost when 3000 Israelites (and proselytes Acts 2:10) responded to the kingdom message of Peter and the Eleven: “repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” (Acts 2:38). Then they too obeyed Luke 12:33, by selling their earthly possessions (Acts 2:44 and 45— Acts 4:34 and 35).

Then later on Saul of Tarsus was saved. He obeyed the message: “arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.” (Acts 22:16). Paul preached that Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Saviour, to give unto them the sure mercies of David. (Acts 13:34). Peter preached that Christ was raised from the dead to be Israel’s Saviour; and that the Holy Spirit was given to be

God's WITNESS of this truth. (Acts 5:31 and 32—Acts 2:27 to 33). All of this was BEFORE THE FALL OF ISRAEL.

There is as much difference between Acts 2:38, baptized for the remission of sins to receive the Holy Spirit, or Acts 22:16, be baptized and wash away your sins, and Titus 3:5 to 7, saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, as there is between law and grace. The message and order of Acts 2:38, 8:1 to 15— Acts 22:16 was God's program before the FALL of Israel, whereas the message contained in Titus 3:5 to 7 and Romans 6:3 to 5 and Ephesians 4:5 and Colossians 2:12 all belong after the FALL of Israel. To read 'water' into the sixth chapter of Romans is worse than a great blunder.

Men of God who revise and abridge Mark 16:14 to 18, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:1 to 15 and Acts 22:16 and include them in God's program of grace revealed to and through Paul after the FALL of Israel not only frustrate the grace of God, but they encourage the confused fanatical 'water regeneration,' 'tongues,' 'healing' religious people who also have the dispensation of grace begin with the commission of Mark 16:16 to 18 and with the message and program of Peter and the Eleven on the day of Pentecost.

Just think of the disunity, carnality, and the unpleasant controversies that have resulted from the faulty dispensationalism of Fundamentalists, even leading so-called 'grace' preachers, who have fixed the time of Israel's FALL with Matthew 23:38, before they committed the sins mentioned in Acts 7:51 to 55, Acts 13:45 and 46—Romans 9:29 to 33 and I Thessalonians 2:14 to 16. Read all of these Scriptures very prayerfully, with as little prejudice as possible, and read with them Acts 5:31 and 32 and Matthew 12:39 to 42.

After reading this message, perhaps all of us better understand what it means for a Christian to measure up to II Timothy 1:7 and be of power, and love and a sound mind.