

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## EDITORIAL



### Let the Spirit of Christmas Prevail

Suddenly attitudes of people are beginning to change! People seems to have become religious, loving and kind during this month. This though is nothing new, because this takes place each year in the month of December, when people get in the mood of celebrating Christmas, the so-called birthday of Christ. During this season a spirit of love and concern become evident among those who believe in Jesus Christ. They want to help in religious works. Suddenly they begin to see that there are some people who are in need of clothings and food. Those who have not given any thought to Christ for months, are now talking about Christ every day! They are even planning to attend the church service alongwith their family members, and in some cases even at midnight! How about that! Many are seen practicing singing day and night, as they are planning to go house to house to sing songs of Christ for praising and honoring Him! Joy and happiness prevails everywhere. They are visiting others and are inviting people to their homes to share with them what they have. Estranged friends and reletives are being reunited. Those who had vowed that they would not speak any more to certain ones are now getting ready to repent! Now they want to forgive and forget.

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So they are seen shaking hands, hugging and exchanging greetings. What a change in people, indeed!

How wonderful, however, it would be if people stay that way, even after the month of December is over, all the time, the year around. Helping the poor and needy, loving all people, giving, praying, worshipping, singing for Christ, rejoicing in Him and forgiving others, are the things one need to practice every day, the year around. Christ, taught: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you". (Matthew 5:44). Continuing He said, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses". (Matthew 6:14,15). "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you do also to them. . . ." (Matthew 7:12). These things, and others that Christ taught, about which we read in the New Testament of the Bible, needs to be practised every day the year around. Christianity is not "once in a year" religion, as some have made it. Christianity is every day religion. Again, Christianity is not Christmas, but Christianity is Christ. One's Christianity should be Christ centred.

God, the Creator of man, knows him perfectly well. He knew from the beginning that man has the tendency of idolizing, that is, it is easy for man to take and set aside something and worship and honor it and thus make it the centre of his religion. This is evident reading through the Old Testament of the Bible, again and again. That is why through Moses God had warned His people, saying, "You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. . . ." (Exodus 20:4,5). Our God wants us to worship, honor and serve Him, and Him alone. He wants us to glorify Him and not something else on earth or above the earth. He wants us to give Him the importance and not to some object or to some thing or to some day. He wants us to worship Him and remember Him every day in our lives. Whatsoever we need to

know about Him and about His will for us today, He has revealed all for us in His book, the Bible. He has not left out any thing that we were supposed to know and He hasn't told us. He has told us about His only begotten Son whom He sent on earth and who became the propitiation for the sins of the world by dying on the cross. How He was crucified, how He was buried in a grave and how He was resurrected on the third day to become a living Saviour of the World, everything about Him that we need to know has been written for us in the Bible. But, notice, if you will, He hasn't allowed anything that belonged to Christ on earth to survive or exist. Why? Simply because God knew that as human being we would take those things and would begin to give importance to them, more than God Himself and His will for us. Here is the point we are making: Suppose, if God had allowed a real picture or image of Christ to survive in the world, what would have happened? Copies would have been made, sold and circulated the world over, and people would garland them, would burn incense before them and would bow before them to offer their worship. The same would be true about anything else that belonged to Christ on earth, if God had allowed them to exist. What if people knew today about the place or the grave where the body of Jesus was buried after His death on the cross? They would go there, atleast once in a year, to worship the tomb, and if there was no tomb they would have erected one, and then they would put flowers and garlands around it and would burn candles and incense upon it. Imagine, if they had found the old wooden cross or a part of that on which the body of Christ was placed? Certainly, they would have caged it somewhere on earth and millions of people would go there to worship the cross. But God in His providence did not allow any of those things to survive and exist. Because He wants man to worship Him and give all importance to Him alone. For the very same reason He has not told us in His Bible in which month of the year and on what date of the month and in what day of the week His Son Christ was born on earth. Sad to say, however, man has created a date for His birth on earth, anyway, without God's approval.

Not only good things, but many bad things, such as drinking alcohol and dancing, and killings which results from drunken—

ness, are also committed while celebrating Christmas. I have often said that even if God had desired for people to observe the birthday of His Son, that is, if He had revealed to us a specific date and command, would He expect such things, as mentioned above, to go with it?? In fact, to be honest with you, every work of the flesh that is mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21 is practised in one way or another, intentionally or unintentionally to celebrate Christmas. No doubt, many good and wonderful things are also done, as we have already seen in the beginning of our article, during the Christmas season, but after it is over everything is forgotten. Many remember Christ only because of Christmas day. They even sing a song during this period of time which says, "Emmanuel lives forevermore, because of Christmas day!" They pray, and sing and worship and give and do all the other things of religious nature only because of Christmas. Then let Christmas go, and everything is reversed. Shouldn't we practice every day what Christ has taught? Love, forgiveness, concern for others, giving and helping, praying and worshipping, doing everything to others that we want them to do for us should characterised one's every-day Christianity.

## What Difference Does it Make ?

J. C. Choate

In this physical life it makes a lot of difference what we think, what we say, what we do, where we live, where we go, how we treat one another, and so on with thousands of other things. In real estate, banking, and any other type of business where profits and losses are registered, there is much concern as to whether to invest or not to invest. Isn't it strange that while men are so concerned about such matters in this physical realm, they go to the opposite extreme when it comes to religion? It is as though they lose all sense of balance and logic in this department, feeling that it is unnecessary to investigate thoroughly. This would also indicate the kind of importance they attach to the physical one over the spiritual, which is the very opposite of what it should

be. Those who are wise would turn these extremes around, and spiritual things would be first while material or physical things would come second in terms of importance.

On the spiritual side, what makes the difference between a thing being important and not important? It is not that man said it, that the majority do it, or a lot of other things, but rather the question comes down to one of authority. Who said it? Who commanded that it be done? My friends, Jesus said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth". (Matthew 28:18). The word power here is another word for authority. Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth. What He says is law, it is final.

What difference does it make what one believes in religion just so long as he is honest and sincere? It makes a lot of difference since people can be taught error as much so as truth. Surely error and truth are not equal, and surely it will make a difference whether one believes the one or the other. Christ said that it is the truth that makes men free. (John 8:32). But if truth makes us free then false teachings will enslave us. Who would settle for error when he can have the truth? That would make a difference, the difference between right and wrong, the difference between freedom and slavery, the difference between salvation and damnation.

What difference does it make whether one is baptized or is not baptized? Or whether one is buried in water or has some water sprinkled on his head? It perhaps wouldn't matter to that person who doesn't respect God and His word, or who has been led to believe by some false teacher that these things are not important. But when you know what the scriptures teach then these things do matter. Christ said that one must believe and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16). Peter and the Apostles told the people on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). Paul said that we are buried with the Lord in the waters of baptism. (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12). Now this makes a difference only if you want to be saved. If you are not interested in being

saved, then you can forget the whole thing.

What difference does it make about the church, whether there is one or many, whether you are a member of Christ's church or not? Most religious people put the church down, yet they turn around and become a member of one church or another. Somehow they cannot believe that the church is important. But the scriptures clearly teach that Christ promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18,19), and also according to the scriptures He kept His promise. We read in Acts 2 that it was established when the Apostles preached the gospel for the first time and some three thousand people obeyed the Lord, were saved, and were then added to the church. There was but one in the first Century and there is but one true church today. That is the one which belongs to the Lord, the one He died for, the one He is saviour of, the one that wears His name, and the one He is coming back for one day. (Ephesians 5:23-25; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). At it made a difference in the days of the flood whether one was in the ark or whether he was not, the same will be true when the Lord returns for His church one day. Paul tells us that Christ is the saviour of the body or church, so that means if we are to be saved that we must be members of that church. (Ephesians 5:23). True, we may think that makes no difference now, but the time will come when it will be the difference between salvation and damnation.

What difference does it make about the name one wears? Religious people usually say that the name isn't important, that there is nothing in a name. It is strange that religious people are the only ones who make such statements, and their logic doesn't make sense when you realize that the scriptures tell us that salvation is in the name of Christ. (Acts 4:12). In other words, we wear the Lord's name both as followers of Christ and as members of His family or church. As individuals we are Christians and as His church we are the church of Christ. (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:16). That identifies us and declares to the world that we belong to Christ. We either belong to Christ or we do not. We either honor Christ by wearing His name or we dishonor him by not wearing His name. Which would you

prefer? My friends, it does make a difference concerning the name you wear. Surely the name of Christ would be preferred to the name of Satan or the Devil. We belong either to the one or the other and we declare that ownership by the name we wear.

Oh yes, it does make a difference in religion who we follow, which church we are members of, the way we worship, what we preach, how we live, and where we will live in eternity. To deny these facts is to reject the truth of God and all that is rational and sensible. Everything relating to God and our relationship with him is important. We would be wise to admit this truth and to act accordingly.

## Is The Lord's Day Important To You ?

Margie Overton

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."  
(Acts 20:7).

I read with interest that J.C. Penney, founder of the J.C. Penney chain of retail clothing stores is credited with the following statement: "If a man's business requires so much of his time that he cannot attend the Sunday morning and Sunday evening services, and Wednesday night prayer meeting, then that man has more business than God intended him to have."

What about today's businessman? Does he have too much business? Or is he just too busy? Perhaps it could be that some are lacking in spiritual things.

We should never allow anything to come before our worship to God on the Lord's Day.

Sickness is unavoidable. God knows when we are unable to

attend worship. What about that headache on Sunday? Would one go to work on Monday with a similar headache?

Do you let things hinder your worship? I have known parents who stayed home with a sick child. Both stayed home, but one could have easily cared for the child. I strongly believe that God expects us to take care of sick children, but I do not think he would want both mother and father to miss worship when one could do the job of caring for the ill one.

I am reminded of the two men who were fishing. One said to the other, "What day is this?" "Sunday," replied the other man. Then he said, "Well I couldn't have gone to church today anyway, because my wife is sick."

I like what I read about James A. Garfield, a Christian who was president of the United States. He certainly was a good example of putting worship first. During the first week of Garfield's presidency, a member of the cabinet insisted that he should attend the cabinet meeting which had been called for 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. It was a matter dealing with a national crisis, but President Garfield refused on the grounds that he had another appointment. The cabinet member insisted that he break his appointment since the meeting on Sunday was of national importance. Still Garfield refused. Then the cabinet member remarked, "I should be interested to know with whom you could have an appointment so important that it cannot be broken?" President Garfield replied: "I will be as frank as you are. My engagement is with the Lord, to meet him at his house, at his table, at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow and I shall be there." President Garfield put the Lord first; the crisis passed, and our nation did survive.

We need more men to take a strong stand for putting the Lord first.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." (Psalm 122:1).



Christians should look forward to the Lord's Day. We are privileged to meet with other Christians to blend our voices in song, and humble our hearts in prayer, to be edified by God's word, to meet around the Lord's table to proclaim his death until he comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26), and to lay by in store as God has prospered us. (1 Corinthians 16:2).

We should rejoice at such a wonderful opportunity. If we do not feel this is a great blessing, then it is a sure thing that something is wrong with our faith.

## Watermelon Seed

W.J. Bryan

I was eating a piece of watermelon some months ago and was struck with its beauty. I took some of the seeds and dried them and weighed them, and found that it would require some five thousand seeds to weigh a pound; and then I applied mathematics to that forty-pound melon.

One of these seeds, put into the ground, when warmed by the sun and moistened by the rain, takes off its coat and goes to work; it gathers from somewhere two hundred thousand times its own weight, and forcing this raw material through a tiny stem, constructs a watermelon. It ornaments the outside with a covering of green; inside the green it puts a layer of white, and within the white a core of red, and all through the red it scatters seeds, each one capable of continuing the work of reproduction.

Who drew the plan by which that little seed works? Where does it get its tremendous strength? Where does it find its coloring matter? How does it collect its flavoring extract? How does it develop a watermelon?

Until you can explain a watermelon, do not be too sure that you can set limits to the powers of the Almighty and say just what he would do or how he would do it.

# The Use Of Honorary Titles

Shelby G. Floyd

In the latter part of the life of Christ, his disciples were concerned about the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1.) They had been discussing among themselves for some time which of them would be accounted greatest in the coming kingdom. Their conception of the kingdom was worldly in nature. Jesus had just announced to them his impending suffering and death in Jerusalem; but they could not hear and understand what he had to say because of their concern over who would be the greatest. Jesus answered them on this occasion by calling a little child unto him, and sitting him in the midst of them, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3-4.) Jesus answered the question, not by pointing out the person who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, but the type of character which would be accounted greatness. Therefore, everyone may be great in the kingdom of heaven by bearing the character of a little child.

One of the ways in which men exalted and distinguished themselves from other people in the days of Christ was by the use of honorary titles. Since the apostles were concerned about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus warned them about wearing honorary titles to exalt and distinguish them above other men. The scribes and Pharisees did just about anything to gain the attention of the people; they were fond of the popular applause which was poured out upon those who wore honorary titles; they delighted to be seen of men, and therefore, they distinguished themselves by making broad their phylacteries and the borders of their garments. All of this tended to make them a special class among the Jews, and gave them special power over the people. This was clearly wrong, and Jesus condemned such in no uncertain terms. He said that they loved, "...greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your

Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." (Matt. 23:7-10).

Concerning the use of the word *Rabbi* as an honorary title, Albert Barnes said, "This was a Jewish title conferred somewhat as literary degrees now are, and meaning literally a great one, and was applied to a teacher or master in the Jewish schools. It corresponded with the title Doctor. Our Saviour solemnly forbade his disciples to wear that title." (*Barnes on the New Testament*, "John", p. 187.) Concerning the word *Rabbi*, Barnes further remarks, "It was a title given to eminent teachers of the law among the Jews; a title of honour and dignity, denoting authority and ability to teach. They were gratified with such titles, and wished it given to themselves as denoting superiority. Every time it was given to them it implied their superiority to the persons who used it, and they were fond, therefore, of hearing it often applied to them. There were three titles in use among the Jews—Rab, Rabbi, and Rabban—denoting different degrees of learning and ability, as literary degrees do among us." (*Barnes on the New Testament*, "Matthew", p. 242).

It is becoming more and more common to see preachers in the church addressed as Dr. so and so. For instance, in a bulletin which recently crossed my desk, we read: "Dr. ....preached the word with clarity and force in each service. It is easy to see that he is the most practiced evangelist in the church." This is clearly a violation of the teaching of Christ in Matt. 23: 7-12. If it is permissible to address a preacher of the gospel as Dr. so and so because that person has a doctor's degree, then would not it also be permissible to address a man who has a master's degree as Master so and so? But why should we stop here? If a person who is a minister of the gospel has a bachelor's degree, why should he not be addressed Bachelor so and so? Why is it that we have reserved the use of honorary titles for those who have a doctor's degree only, and have excluded all the rest?

But someone will say, the only reason you criticize those who

have doctor's degrees is because you are envious and would like to have one yourself? For the sake of argument, suppose that this might be true. Would that nullify the soundness of one's criticism? Furthermore, if that argument were true, then Christ could be accused of being envious of the doctors of the law, for he criticized the use of such titles. Did Christ criticize them because he was envious of the titles which they wore? Jesus was often called by his friends and disciples Rabbi and Master, but he never once condemned the use of those titles when applied to himself. However, he absolutely prohibited his disciples to wear those titles.

While Jesus does not mention such titles as Reverend, Pastor, Pope, Doctor and other titles of modern usage, they are clearly condemned in principle just as much as Rabbi, Master and Father. It is noteworthy that we do not read in the Bible of Archbishop Timothy, The Right Reverend Barnabas, Pope Peter or Doctor Paul. Jesus said that the relationship which remains between the members of the church is that of brethren. (Matt. 23:8).

Let us be content with the affectionate and simple appellation *brethren*. Have we outgrown the title which Jesus authorized his people to wear? Have we come to the place where we are too great, or too good, to wear that title and find some worldly title to distinguish our ministers one from another?

## How Can I Show My Care For The Church?

Roger Johnson

In II Cor. 11:21-33, Paul enumerates the hardships and sufferings he endured for the sake of the gospel. What a challenging list it is! Imprisonment, stripes, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, perils, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness. Most of us have never so endured and suffered because of our

attachment and devotion to the Lord.

But in addition to the stripes and rods and stones, etc., there was another burden that constantly rested upon Paul. He speaks of it as "anxiety for the churches," referring, no doubt, to the numerous congregations he had established and which needed constant care and supervision. Many of these brethren were young in the faith, faced with the danger of divisions and various other problems, and Paul felt a tremendous responsibility towards them.

Leaders in the church who have been entrusted with such a great work need to emulate Paul's genuine care for the church. Such care, however, should not be limited to the leadership but should characterize every member. The question is, how can members manifest sincere care for the Lord's church?

First, members show their care by attending the worship and study opportunities which are provided. What a great day would dawn if every member would really give the fullest possible support in attending on every possible occasion.

Second, care is shown for the church by *extending* it. Christians need to realize the tremendous work which can be rendered to Christ and the church by introducing others to the gospel. It is the Lord's commission, not mere permission, that we evangelize. Only the uncaring fail to do so.

Further, Christians manifest their care for the church by *defending* it. Numerous dangers constantly threaten the church, and it is from these dangers that we must defend her. Some of the dangers are the infiltration of error, the snare of worldliness, the peril of complacency, the paralysis of pride, the bane of cliquishness, the demon of disaffection. These sins are deadly and will dampen and hinder the work of any congregation.

Lastly, our care for the church is revealed by commending it. Most of all we, commend it by what we are! Our lives must be Christ-like and "adorn the doctrine of God" (Titus 2:10). Then, we commend it by what we do. Our actions must not belie the great profession we make of faith in our Savior (Matt. 5:16). And, of course, we commend it by what we say. Our

words should "be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6) that our hearers may know our sincere care for the church.

In what more effective way can Christians demonstrate their care for the church than by attending, extending, defending, and commending her? Has your life demonstrated such care?

## Faith And Doubt

David L. Lipe

It is false to say that doubt is an integral part of the nature of faith. Much evidence in the Bible attests to this claim. Paul says in Romans 14:23, "And he that doubteth (diakrinomenos) is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Further James 1:6 says "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering (diakrinomenos). For he that wavereth (diakrinomenos) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." The RSV makes the matter even clearer by saying, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." Concerning Abraham's faith, Paul says, "He staggered (diekrithe) not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Romans 4:20, 21.) The word "staggered" is from the same root words as that expressed by the KJV "wavereth" (James 1:6) or the RSV "doubting." Further evidence that Abraham's faith was not one of doubt is seen in the expression "being fully persuaded" from *plerophoretheis* which describes the reason for his trust in God. Abraham was fully convinced. He was certain that God would do what he had promised.

It may be objected that Abraham's faith did contain an element of doubt based on Hebrews 11:8 where it is said of Abraham, "By faith, Abraham... went out, not knowing whither he went." That Abraham was not "fully persuaded"

as to his destination in no way argues against Abraham's faith. It is consistent to say that Abraham's faith contained no element of doubt in so far as he was convinced that God would keep his promise, though he did not know other things; namely, where God intended him to go. Obviously, since Abraham did not know where he was going, he had doubt as to where he was going; however, concerning what God would do, Abraham's faith was unshakable. He believed God and trusted (put into action) in what God said.

It should be noted at this point that there is nothing wrong with one raising doubts about his faith. Thompson observes, "Doubt does not destroy faith; doubt tests faith... Faith has its own response to doubt, for doubt is the occasion for faith to examine itself and its cause." (p. 78.)

Sometimes we find that our faith is unfounded. For example one may be taught as a child by one's parents that baptism is essential to salvation. The child believes what the parents say and perhaps acts on the parents' teaching. Only later does the child (now older) begin to question his belief and the action which followed. There is nothing improper about this, since it is the case that human testimony can many times be called into question. Thus, the young adult begins to raise questions about a certain belief and action; namely a belief that baptism is essential and the action of being baptized. He discovers that what he has been taught is in harmony with the word of God and thus, he still has the right to hold on to his faith. He, after this doubting process, can be certain of his faith since his faith is now not based merely on the testimony of his parents but on certain propositions from the Word of God. And, since God exists, and is perfect in integrity then the word of God must be true. Thus, any faith based upon the Word of God must be true and reliable and no longer a matter of doubt.

This concept of biblical faith is the antithesis of the teachings of some who hold that faith is just a step removed from a certainty, that faith involves a kind of leap into the uncertain. Such a concept can be avoided if one will keep in mind that faith must

be preceded by knowledge. Admittedly this is not a popular view in contemporary society. Francis Schaeffer wrote, "Knowledge precedes faith, this is crucial in understanding the Bible. To say, as a Christian should, that only the faith which believes God on the basis of knowledge is true faith, is to say something which causes an explosion in the Twentieth Century world." (*The God Who Is There*, Downer's Grove, III.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968, p. 142).

### **Faith and Testimony**

Faith may be based on the testimony of others. Although it is not recognized by some, the Bible teaches that one may have faith and knowledge based on the testimony of another. It is simply not the case that one cannot be sure of something unless one experiences it firsthand. Thomas Paine, in *The Age of Reason*, wrote that something revealed to one person and "revealed to any other person is a revelation to that person only." That which is revealed ceases to be a revelation when it is told to other individuals and thus others are not under obligation to believe it. A careful study of the Bible shows this is not the case.

After the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene, she told the others who had been with the Lord but they "believed not," (Mark 16:9-11.) Later the Lord appeared to two of the disciples and they told the rest, but "neither believed them." (Mark 16:12-13.) When the Lord appeared later to the eleven he, upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. (Mark 16:14).

Thus, Jesus rejected the view that one can know only what one personally witnesses and established as a general principle that knowledge can be attained based on credible testimony. This raises the issue as to when testimony is credible. Obviously, there is false testimony. Any belief based on false testimony would necessarily be a false belief and such belief can in no way be likened to biblical faith. Although this is a problem with fellow human beings on occasion, it is no problem given the integrity of the Scriptures. As surely as God cannot lie (1 Samuel 15:29;



Hebrews 6:18) and as surely as God has spoken through holy men of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21), then, we can accept the testimony of the Bible as unfaltering. If we can do this, then we can both believe and know the truth.

## The Story Of Two Bears

Edsel Burleson

One of the greatest needs in the church today is to match our doctrine with living. It isn't any wonder that the multitudes cannot hear a thing we say because of the manner of life of so many who profess to be Christians. Paul said the Saviour will come one day for a church "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27).

There may not be anything wrong with our external features or with our overall plea but we need to give a tremendous amount of attention to keeping ourselves pure. Paul said: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

The story is told of a man who came to the watchmaker with the two hands of a clock and said: "I want you to fix these hands of this clock. They haven't kept time for six months."

"Where is the clock?" asked the watchmaker.

"Why, I left it at home," was the answer.

"But, I must have the clock," insisted the watchmaker, "if I am to make these hands run."

"Didn't I tell you that there is nothing wrong with the clock? It's only the hands that need fixing."

Too many folks are "hearers only." They have a knack for striking an interested pose throughout a sermon, only to go away and forget what manner of person they are.

It is amazing how much greater the offense if done by someone else. Yet, how careful should be the inventory each of us

takes daily that we never become a "spot, or blemish, or any such thing" on the Lord's body. Perhaps it would be profitable to most to encounter "Two Bears."

It is said that in a certain village there lived an old couple who often had sharp quarrels. Everybody in town knew how much they quarreled. Then, suddenly, they quit and they were never heard to dispute after that. The town folk wondered what made the change, and at last one brave woman asked what had happened.

"Two Bears did it" said the wife.

"Two Bears?" the neighbor asked.

"Yes, two Bears which we found in the Bible, 'Bear ye one another's burdens' and 'Forbearing one another in love'."

## The Grace of God

Kenneth L. Randolph

There is no grander theme than the grace of God; it is marvelous in its power. The wonder of it is that "His grace reaches me." Titus 2:11-14 is a passage that answers three questions about grace.

I. What Has Grace Brought? "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men...." (vs. 11). Grace brought salvation in promise in the Old Testament: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. ..." (1 Peter 1:10.) Grace brought salvation in person when Christ came into the world. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and said, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,..." (Luke 2:30.) When Christ died, was buried, arose from the dead, and ascended back to the Father, and when the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to preach the gospel (Acts 2), it was then that grace brought salvation in perfection. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. ..." (Romans 1:16.) Wherever the gospel is heard, believed and obeyed, grace brings salvation.

**II. What Has Grace Taught? Grace teaches us how to live and where to live, grace teaches that there are negative and positive poles to Christianity. Negatively, we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. (vs. 12). Christians cannot be conformed to this world. Our associations, alliances and actions must be such as to keep us separate. (Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 6:17.) We are to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. (1 Peter 2:11.) Positively, grace teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly. (vs. 12.) Our lives say more than our words. Christianity is a life lived in moderation regarding things acceptable and in abstention from things sinful. It is a life that is governed by the two great commandments—love to neighbor and love to God; righteously and godly.**

Grace also teaches us where to live. God designed Christianity to be lived "in this present world" (vs. 12), which is this present evil world. (Galatians 1:4.) But the world never gets too wicked for God's grace to be manifested and for the Christian life to be lived. Christianity was born into a world filled with idolatry, inequity, and iniquity. Practically every known "god" was worshipped. Society was made up of the exceedingly rich and exceedingly poor, and of slaves and free, "Immorality was openly displayed. Divorce multiplied so rapidly that eventually family life decayed. Suicide and infanticide became so common as to cause no comment. One writer says that baby skeletons by the cartload could be taken from the bottom of the Tiber River" (Hester.)

Yet Christianity flourished in that evil world. It taught God Incarnated in Christ to abolish idolatry; oneness in the body of Christ to abolish inequity; and cleansing in the blood of Christ to abolish iniquity: The preaching and practice of the gospel will do the same today. But just as surely as grace teaches us how to live in this present world, it does so by setting our affections on the world to come. (Colossians 3:1-4.) It makes us always aware and keeps us ever expectant of "the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (vs. 13).

Although we live on earth our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for our Savior who shall change this earthly

body into the likeness of his glorious body. (Philippians 3:20, 21.) God's grace is never designed simply to make this world a better place to live; its aim is to make the inhabitants of this world fit to live in a better place. It keeps our hearts turned homeward and heavenward.

III. What has Grace Wrought? The grace of God satisfies the needs of mankind. Man was lost in sin and needed a vicarious sacrifice; he needed to be ransomed from sin and the grave, and he belonged to Satan and not to God. He was Christless, countryless, covenantless, hopeless and Godless. (Ephesians 2:12.) So what did God's grace accomplish? (1) Christ gave himself for us; (2) in order that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and (3) that we might become his people, purified and zealous. (vs. 14.) No wonder we sing:

"Marvelous grace, infinite grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within.

Marvelous grace, infinite grace, Grace that is greater than all my sin."

## The Need To Wake Up

Kyle McWhorter

I can remember that when I was young my mother would come up the stairway and call out to us. "Wake up, boys!" I always dreaded to hear those words, because it seemed to me that the most comfortable hours in bed were the hours just before it came time to get up. However, when mother called we knew we had to wake up and crawl out of bed.

Paul said a long time ago, "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light". (Ephesians 5:14). Paul again said, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed". (Romans 13:11).

It seems to me that it is still true today that most people are asleep in so far as the true values are concerned. People need to

see themselves as they really are in the sight of the Lord. They need to wake up to the things that are really important.

### The World Needs to Wake up

1. The world needs to wake up to the awfulness of sin. Since the dawn of time sin has been a curse to the human race. The sin of our first parents brought sorrow, heartache, sighing and even the death of the whole family of man. (Genesis 3:1-19). Had it not been for the righteousness of Noah and his family, and the grace of Almighty God, the whole human race would have been destroyed in the great flood. (Genesis 6:22; 2 Peter 2:5). Sin had polluted the hearts of mankind and the results were the destruction of the whole population of the earth with the exception of Noah and his family. (Genesis 6:5-7, 13; 2 Peter 3:1-6). Sin also was the cause of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham and Lot. (Genesis 19:15-29). The awful sin of adultery, on the part of David, resulted in terrible suffering for him and his family. (2 Samuel 12:1-23). Sin is so awful it cost God the sacrifice of his only begotten Son that man might be redeemed from its terrible guilt, bondage and eternal consequences. (John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Yet, it is true, sin is awful.

2. The world needs to wake up to what God has done to save mankind from sin. God sent his Son into the world to die for the sins of man. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Christ shed his blood upon the cross of Calvary that man might be redeemed by it. (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). The Holy Spirit was sent in order that he might reveal and confirm the simple plan of salvation devised by God and made possible by the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 14:26; 16:7-13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4). It is no wonder that one is said to be saved by the grace of God, because the word grace includes all of the above. (Romans 3:24-26; Ephesians 2:8, 9).

3. The world needs to wake up to the simplicity of the gospel plan of salvation. (2 Corinthians 11:3). The salvation of mankind is by grace through faith. (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Grace includes all that God has done to make salvation possible. Faith is man's response to the grace of God (Romans 5:2). This

response of faith to the grace of God is not salvation by faith alone. Faith alone is a dead faith. (James 2:26). The faith that brings salvation is the faith that obeys. (Hebrews 11:7; Galatians 5:6; Romans 1:5). The simplicity of the plan of salvation is illustrated in the salvation of the Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts 8:35-39). In an examination of these passages it can be clearly seen that Philip preached the gospel to this man. The eunuch heard this preaching, and requested that he be baptized. Having made the confession that Christ is the Son of God, Philip baptized this man into Christ. Thus, he was saved by grace through an obedient faith. (Mark 16:16). The whole world needs to remove the film from their eyes that they might see clearly these simple truths. Yes, the world needs to wake up.

### Parents Need to Wake Up

There is a crime spree that is taking place in the world. It is being perpetrated by the youth of our lands. It is a sad commentary on the home-life of parents. Most parents are really unaware of the needs of their children. They need to wake up and provide the things needed to arrest this blight on this land of ours.

1. Parents need to wake up to the need of teaching God's word to their children. Moses gave instructions to the people of Israel that they were to teach God's word diligently unto their children, and that they were to keep his precepts before the eyes of their offspring continually. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). The faith of Lois and Eunice, the grand-mother and mother of Timothy, was transferred to this young man through careful and prayerful teaching on their part. (2 Timothy 1:5). Paul said that Timothy had known the holy scriptures from a child. (2 Timothy 3:15). If parents would wake up to the responsibility that is theirs to teach their children the word of the Lord there would be more young men like Timothy and less hoodlums roaming the land.

2. Parents need to wake up to the need for training their children. Teaching a child is important, but training is even more so. Solomon said, "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it". (Proverbs 22:6). Paul said that fathers are to bring their children up in

the nature and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4). Children need to be trained to fulfill their roles as wives and mothers, as husbands and fathers and as devout Christian men and women. There is a great need for parents to train their offspring.

3. Parents need to wake up to the need for love on the part of their children. There are many children who are unwanted and unloved. These are the young people who grow up to be emotional cripples. To properly grow and mature children must have love. Paul instructed Titus to have the aged women to teach the younger women to love their children. (Titus 2:4). If parents want their children to grow up emotionally they must let their little ones know that they are loved by mother and daddy.

### The Church Needs to Wake Up

Many members of the church are indifferent, unconcerned and asleep. Such was the case of the church at Laodicea. (Revelation 3:15-20).

1. The church needs to wake up to its need for Bible knowledge. There is so much ignorance on the part of members of the church. Such was true with the people of God in the Old Testament. (Hosea 4:6). Jesus was crucified, Paul persecuted the church, and the Jews rejected the gospel of Christ because of ignorance. (Luke 23:34; 1 Timothy 1:13; Romans 10:1-3.) Members of the church need to study (2 Timothy 2:15), and search the scriptures (Acts 17:11), that they might grow in knowledge of the truth. (2 Peter 1:5-11; 2 Peter 3:18.) The only way to keep the church from falling into error is for the brethren to carefully and prayerfully inform themselves relative to the truth of God.

2. The church needs to wake up to its need to worship God scripturally. Some see no error in the use of the mechanical instrument of music in worship. There seems to be a tendency to place the instrument in the realm of opinion. Such is a sad commentary on some gospel preachers and elders in this day and age. The only kind of music in worship authorized by the Lord is vocal music. (Matthew 26:30; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16.) To do otherwise is to become guilty of

sin before God. (2 John 9-11; Revelation 22:18, 19.) One who worships God acceptable must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23, 24.) The church must wake up and worship as God directs in the New Testament. To worship otherwise is to worship unscripturally.

3. The church needs to wake up to its real mission in the world. The church is not a glorified worshipping society. The church has a God-given mission to perform. This mission is to carry the gospel of Christ to every creature in all of the world. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; 1 Timothy 3:14, 15.) This is a tremendous task. Every member of the body of Christ must become involved in this great work. (Acts 8:4, Hebrews 5:12-14.) Each member of the church needs to wake up, and realize that every one is responsible before God to teach others the gospel to the best of his or her ability. May God help us to carry out this great mission of the church of the Lord.

## “Prepare To Meet Thy God”

G.F. Raines

The prophet Amos, knowing that, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31), said: “. . . prepare to meet thy God, O Israel”. (Amos 4:12).

One of the greatest passages in the Old Testament is Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”.

One of the fundamental facts of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is that God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead”. (Acts 17:31; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15.) In that great day, “every one of us shall give account of himself to God”. (Romans 14:12).

To prepare to meet God, you must be reconciled to him



through Christ by obedience to the gospel. Please read John 14:6; Romans 1:16, 17; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.

Those who have been reconciled to God are "in one body" (Ephesians 2:16) which is the church (Colossians 1:18); and all who have believed and obeyed the gospel as the people did on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus by repenting and being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1-47) have been added to the same church to which penitent baptized believers were added by the Lord in apostolic times, for, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him". (Acts 10:34, 35).

All members of the body of Christ must make their calling and election sure by living "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and 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." (Titus 2:11-14).

The apostle Peter very clearly and specifically explains how it is that we live "soberly, righteously, and godly" in the following.

"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. 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 Peter 1:5-11).

"The only real way to 'prepare to meet thy God' is to live with thy God, so that to meet him shall be nothing strange".

(Philips Brooks).

You should begin to prepare to meet God Today; "for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth". (Proverbs 27:1).

"Go to how, ye that say, Today, or tomorrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:13, 14).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter 2:9, 10).

Leslie G. Thomas has well said: "To treat with contempt the judge on the bench in whose hands our life is held would be very unwise; but that does not compare with the senselessness of treating with contempt the judge of all the earth in whose hands is held our eternal destiny".

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". (Matthew 11:28).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7:25).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17).

## What Is Expected Of Me?

W.C. Anderson

"A certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called

Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them." (Acts 3:2-5).

Just as that man expected to receive something from the preachers, we can be sure that God expects to receive sincere obedience from us.

### **He Expects Us to Hear Him**

Jesus said to the church at Smyrna, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Revelation 2:11).

The only way we can hear what the Holy Spirit has said to the churches is to read the New Testament. What the Spirit says to the churches of today is in the New Testament. We will not hear the Holy Spirit saying anything to us by reading the books of human origin. There are books called church manuals, confessions of faith, disciplines, etc. When we read, believe, and obey these books, we hear man, not God.

### **He Expects Us to Believe in Him**

The author of the book of Hebrews said, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6.) We must also believe in his Son. Jesus said, "...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). We must show that we believe in God by obeying the commands of his Son. James said, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my work." (James 2:18).

Whatever we do must be done by faith. We cannot do anything by faith if we cannot find it taught in the Bible. "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Romans 14:23).

### **God Expects Us to Worship Him**

Jesus told a woman in Samaria that God wants to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. He said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship

the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23, 24.) We must worship God respectfully by doing his will.

God wants us to meet on the first day of each week to sing; pray, study, partake of the Lord's Supper, and give according as we have prospered.

### **He Expects Us to Control Our Tongues**

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29.) Whatever we say must be something that will build us up in the faith. If what we are about to say will not make others better people, it should not be said. James wrote, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. (James 1:26).

### **He Expects us to be Honest**

"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:2, 3). We are sure that these seven men were deacons. If deacons are to be honest men, the rest of us must be honest too. Christians are admonished to: "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." (Romans 12:17).

### **We Must Seek the Kingdom First**

In one of his sermons Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). The kingdom of heaven is the church of Christ. God expects us to put things concerning church work ahead of other considerations.

On Sunday we must go to the assembly of the church, not to the lake to fish all day. We should read the Bible often instead of reading filthy stories.

Our first concern every day should be to do our best to be holy. This is written: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14).