

# STRAIGHTWAY

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"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

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## CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

The Witness Outreach

Foundations Bible College

P.O. Box 1166

Dunn, NC 28335

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### **"A CHILD IS BORN"**

by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder & President  
Foundations Bible College

**"For unto us a child is born,  
and unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be  
upon his shoulder: and his  
name shall be called Wonder-  
ful, Counsellor, The mighty  
God, The everlasting Father,  
The Prince of peace"** (Isaiah  
9:6).

Another one of the blessings of Christmas is that there will be many Christian scholars and teachers who will once again seek more light into the wonderful hypostatic union of God and Man through the incarnation and virgin birth. This should bring a strengthening of our faith. There is much insight remaining to this precious and distinct miracle as revealed by the Holy Scriptures.

Another benefit will result from the blessings of Christmas in that still others will be brought to a need to investigate their own conscience about believing in the Christ Child as

more than a baby. They will be brought to the judgment bar of decision of what to do with Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth.

These two extremes, a greater insight into the miracle birth of Jesus, or, a greater distance will be decided by others in rejecting the biblical claim of Him both as a "child" and a "son," as Isaiah prophesied Him to be. Jesus was born a "Child"; He had always, back in eternity, been a "Son." Isaiah makes this very clear: A Child was born; a Son was given. Jesus was born in time, space, history, having always, and eternally, pre-existed as God's Son.

#### **Modern Christmas Belief**

The question to ask is "What makes Christmas an important day"? Although nine out of ten people in America identify themselves as Christians, only one-third (33%) of Americans said, this Christmas Season of 1996, the birth of Jesus is what

makes Christmas important for them. It was also asked why is Christmas so important to them if not because of Jesus? Forty-five percent said it gave more family time to them. Six percent gave other, personal reasons; five percent gave nothing as a Christmas purpose; five percent said they didn't know why Christmas was important at all; three percent spoke of Christmas as a holiday, a day off from work; and three percent spoke of Christmas as a time for clubs and parties simply for a fun-occasion.

It is hardly believable that a Christmas in the United States of America could be appraised as the above statistics reveal. However, we are assured by these statisticians that the margin of error would only be plus or minus three percent.

Whatever the reason for this lack of the knowledge of the biblical purpose of Christmas, there remains the fact that America is more and more a secular society instead of a country founded by puritans and pilgrims of the Holy Scriptures and the Protestant faith.

## **Why Such a Change in America's Christmas?**

Many true answers could be given of this radical change in the meaning of Christmas in America, and this writer chooses to respond with what he believes brought about the greatest change in our modern twentieth century in the light of the Christmas of the New Testament Bible.

This writer does not seek an answer outside of Christianity itself. We have always had infidels, lampooners, atheists, agnostics, and secularists. The change in our understanding of Christmas lies in our time as a change in the very definition of Christianity itself. A central illustration would fall into the very lap of Dr. Billy Graham. He has changed the definition of Christianity, and brought an easy believism and cheap teaching of the grace of God to our country. Of course, many others were of the same mind and heart and were seeking a leader of this sort. Also, they wanted this change to have the countenance of respectability and accommodation so that Christianity, as a religion, would not be utterly rejected. These greatly desired the Christian face, particularly. The American world of pastors and churches were seeking a fresh, new (**neo**) approach to what they had come to believe as an unlovely period produced by the fundamentalists and literalists of the Word of God.

This neo-christianity took us away from the biblical base of inerrancy, infallibility, and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures which had formerly caused the triumph of the Bible through the dogmatics of the early

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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councils and creeds, as well as the doctrinal power manifest through the Protestant Reformation

This situation has become so acute that the biblicist now seeks to make the Gospel plausible, if not credible, to an audience which has become estranged from the historic Christian faith. The vacuum had to be filled with something in its vortex, and the charismatic liveliness, the liberal's unsupernaturalness, and the Roman Catholic beauty of form in tradition swallowed up those who had any vestige of Christian likeness. The power of the Christ-Child is not thought of as formerly. An ecumenical fellowship has sprung up like a "green bay tree," and marks the spot where the Cross of Calvary use to be.

### **The Children Suffer the Most**

"Geneva (AP) – From the brothels of Asia to the construction sites of Egypt, nearly twice as many children are working full time in developing countries as previously thought, the International Labor Organization of the United Nations said Tuesday" (November 11, 1996).

I read this extended article in a English newspaper in Seoul, South Korea, when I was on a preaching-teaching mission there last month.

The article goes on to state that "these latest calculations from the U.N. labor agency show that 250 million 5-to-14-year-olds are employed—half of them full time, up sharply from earlier estimates of 73 million full-time child workers. The ILO report found nearly 153 million children are working in Asia, 80

million in Africa and 17.5 million in Latin America. Three areas of the harshest forms of child labor were stated as: slavery, prostitution, and work in hazardous industries. It is said that an international sex network takes Latin American children to Europe and the Middle East, and southern Asian children to northern Europe and the Middle East."

Of course, this is not the only tragedy or root of child abuse. The abortion clinics function without interruption by our own government in the United States and child prostitution increases and increases in our own midst. There is also the violent abuse of children by some parents, and this is not to be construed as one and the same as child training and discipline. They are entirely different, as the Word of God reveals.

The deterioration of the public proclamation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus in the pulpits of America must take this blame upon them. Whenever the public preaching according to the literal truths of the fundamentals of Christ are neglected there will always arise error and weak religion if not an entirely secular concept of religion itself.

### **The Power of the Gospel is Ever the Same**

No one must take the conclusion because of the integrity of these words that the Gospel itself is lacking in the world. The power of the Gospel is ever the same; there will never be a time when it will not be preached, set forth, witnessed to, and fail to live out itself in the lives of God's people. We are encouraged: "And this gospel of

the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). There is both the power and the admonition here: first, the preaching of the Gospel will continue to the very end of the age; and second, however, there is a distinction implied here that although the Gospel is preached it does not mean that the Gospel will be believed and lived equal to that preached power.

There may be a public demise of the clarity and orthodoxy and orthopraxy in our time, but there will never be the complete deficit of its preaching and practice by a remnant that will certainly be evident in the world.

This identifies and demands that the fundamentals will always be available to the individual who desires to know and believe the biblical Gospel. We must remain true to this acknowledgment.

### **A Child is Born**

Many years ago I asked one of my apologetics classes, in my early teaching ministry, “Why do we believe in the incarnation and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ”? Remember now, this question was asked in an apologetics class. Of course, several good answers resulted from my students: “Because the Bible reveals it;” or, “Our mothers taught us so;” or, “because theologically there is no other way for the Son of God to become flesh and die for us on His Cross;” or, etc.

However, the answer I was seeking in an apologetic class was singularly

important: “We believe in the incarnation and virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ because it is a historical fact.” Yes, it is a genuine fact of history; “a child is born,...a son is given.” That is the truth. The Bible, itself, simply prophesied it; but history records the event after the fact. This is why we should remember Christmas every year as it returns in the rhythm of the calendar of the years.

### **Why Is A Child Important to the World?**

There are a number of theological views concerning the infant child, and all of them have significance. In my own faith, the child is quite an important member of the human family.

In the case of David’s child, the offspring of the sin with Bathsheba, David was indeed comforted by his own faith and hope in God’s destiny for both of them.

**“But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (II Samuel 12:23).**

The dead infant was not only to meet David in the fact of death one day, but also in the destiny of heaven.

Of course, the words of Jesus are wonderful and worthy of our consideration concerning the infant child, too.

**“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not**

**enter into the kingdom of heaven.** (Matthew 18:3).

**Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven”** (Matthew 18:10).

**“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 19:14).

It is impossible to read these words and not be enlightened, instructed, and encouraged by the study of the infant child. We are also enabled to see that the coming of Jesus into the world as “a child” was a worthy entrance. He Who came from heaven speaks of children as entering into heaven. He Who speaks of angels which accompanied Him on occasions on earth speaks of children in heaven when “their angels do always behold the face of” God the Father. He Who brought “the kingdom of heaven” to earth, and fulfilled it, indeed, yea, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2b), announced to all that children, one of the stages of human life, would also be in “heaven.”

It may well be finally said that all the abortions of violent men will one day triumph in heaven. We are told that six out of ten babies born will die before two years old. This, too, could cause the multitude of Christians to swell in number, possibly “innumerable,” granting to the grace of God a larger number in heaven than in hell. Innumerable is used only relative to

man’s ability for mathematics. In fact, it appears that the only creatures who will be in heaven are “the children of God.” This is especially distinctive in view of the fact that even adults have to be converted, and become as little children, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus was born a child. This is remembered in the phrase, “Jesus of Nazareth,” because Jesus was conceived there, in spite of the fact that he was born in Bethlehem. He was a baby before Bethlehem, yea, in the Seed the Holy Spirit did conceive. God always said He would bless Abraham’s seed, and this especially included the Seed of Messiah. The word for “babe” (Luke 1:41 & 43) is a Greek word **brephos** and is the very same word used of the “Babe” in the Manger. A babe is the same whether pre-natal or at birth.

So, unto us a child was born for the redemption of children and the children of God.

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*Graduate, & Seminary*

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*8:00 AM*

*Worship & Registration*

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*The Twenty-Third Year*

# THE BLACKSMITH'S BIBLE

During the reign of England's Bloody Mary, in the village of Harrant lived a blacksmith whose prize possession was a leather-bound Bible.

To possess or to be caught reading a Bible subjected one to the penalty of death. The blacksmith's wife was dead but his little blue-eyed daughter Elsie, loved to play in the shop and watch the sparks fly heaven-ward.

Entering the premises on a certain morning she saw her father standing behind the door reading the precious Book. Finally taking a stick, he reached up, opened a panel in a log and carefully hid it to safe keeping.

Turning he saw Elsie and said sternly, "How dare you spy on me. Don't you know if the Queen knew I had this Book she would take my life?"

The child's blue eyes filled with tears and she said, "Father, I will never tell anyone. I love the Bible as you do and would guard it with my life."

Again warning little Elsie that their lives depended on secrecy, the blacksmith turned to his anvil. Then followed darker days for Elsie and the blacksmith of Harrant. Others who believed as they did suffered with them. Agents of Queen Mary were sure there was a Bible somewhere in the village. They searched again and again, but the people of the neighborhood shoutingly refused to accept the Queen's religion.

Finally the blacksmith was thrown into prison since he seemed to be the one to whom the villagers looked for comfort and counsel. Elsie's heart was sad and she spent many lonely days in spite of the kindness of her neighbors. Her rosy cheeks grew paler and her heart sadder as she thought of her dear father in jail and the treasured Bible he could not handle and read.

One day soldiers came to Harrant, searched every house but without success. Finally they decided to burn the blacksmith's home and shop in case the Bible was hidden there, and if it was "it would be destroyed" they said.

As the soldiers approached the house Elsie fled down the garden path and out upon the moor where she laid flat on her face amidst the rushes. She was terror-stricken lest the soldiers find her and she be compelled to tell where the Bible was, for she counted that precious volume of greater value than the Queen's crown jewels.

She began to breathe more freely when the soldiers marched away. Then she smelled burning wood and fresh terror struck her heart. Looking up she saw the thatched roof of their home and the shop all ablaze.

Remembering that her father had told her that their Bible was the only one between Harrant and the sea, she hurried back unnoticed in the darkness. Flames scorched her hands and face as she entered the shop. Quickly she climbed to where the Bible was hidden, clasped it firmly and ran again into the garden.

To make sure of its safety, she removed her skirt and wrapped the bible and buried it in a hole dug with her blistered hands. Elsie then crawled to the garden spring and tried to bathe her face and hands. She was found unconscious by the villagers and soon revived to tell them where the Word of God was

buried. They followed her to that spot and the precious volume was uncovered, every man pledging himself to defend it with his life.

This true story has been told over and over again for the children's children of that group. It has caused many eyes to be dimmed with tears. Time grew brighter until freedom of worship was granted throughout England. Elsie's granddaughter, followed her Puritan husband to America and brought that Bible with her.

Quoted From The Newsletter of  
Dr. Gerald Johnson,  
Missionary to Korea

Seven Statements  
for  
Those Who Teach the Child  
(Psalm 51:10-13a)

1. Every Christian is a teacher of something to someone.
2. Spiritual revival precedes all true Christian education.
3. The spirituality of a Christian teacher is part of his classroom preparation, too.
4. If we never rise above the material elements of desk, text, test, curriculum, and chalkboard to prepare ourselves spiritually to teach, then we in Christian education really have not improved on the problems of the public schools.
5. A Christian teacher can never expect from his students that which he does not teach by *example* before them—including character and spirituality.
6. Only when a Christian teacher himself is right, spiritually, with God will he be able to discern and to deal with spiritual problems, both potential and actual, in his students.
7. Following the six petitions of Psalm 51:10-12, there is much wrapped up in the phrase “**Then will I teach**” (Psalm 51:13a); it implies *enabling* (“Then will I be enabled by God to teach”), *substance* (“Then will I really have something to teach”), and *desire* (“Then, and only then, will I teach”; or, “I refuse to walk into the classroom again without Psalm 51:10-12 present and active in my life”).

by Dr. Douglas Wilson  
Dean of the School of Christian Education  
Foundations Bible College

# THE KINDERGUARDIAN TEACHER

by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, President  
Foundations Bible College  
A REPRINT

**In this modern world** of apostate voices in all the compartments of life, including education, there yet remains the noble hungering to be a good teacher. Only the Holy Scriptures reveal the possibility of such a person on earth.

Of course, the very problem of the age is a part of the plague that decimates the wholeness and balance among us.

Either we enslave ourselves into the mediocrity of a bland, blasé, subnormal; or we tolerate our proud lot as a specialist in our major only to override the major of another into a minor place.

Either the mind flows with a meticulous boast of grammatical syntax, while the voice reiterates the reverse; or our speech succeeds without the companion of grammar at all.

Either the exactitude of our mathematics boasts our superiority, or speculative philosophy precludes truth entirely.

Either the physical sciences bolster the ego of our law, order, and design; or the social sciences obliterate the hope of any ideal at all.

**Of course, the teacher** that God seeks never forgets that he commenced from ignorance in the Kindergarten to the academic maturity and Biblical character to become a Kinderguardian soldier. A Kinderguardian? Yes. We who were the children move from that most kind garden to the gate house to guard the lives of others.

This place, reserved by God for a few, will become a reality for only mature leaders when their full learning process takes hold of a classical, plenary

Christian education.

The Kindergarten teacher begins the Kinderguardian climb with grammar, speech, and spelling in the very presence of the class a first an **exampler** rather than an **instructor**. For who could teach an alphabetic-phonetic unless first the articulation were there? We fool only ourselves if we think we teach at all unless we example our subject before their very eyes.

**Then, the First Grade** appears. And that First Grade pleads, in addition to the necessary curriculum guides, for the longest climb of all—from the simple to the profound, from the meager etiquette of eating with the mouth closed to the full practice of discipline in the chair. We must teach them this, too, from the very First Grade. It must start there.

And then on to the other grades—the Second through the Twelfth—and on to college, too.

The grades will follow on too fast for us—for us, if we are subnormal ones. Yes, the subnormal teacher only fulfills the study guides, which are the very least to complete, though we must complete them.

But we must move on—pursue the greater knowledge of the child himself.

That noble gown that stands before the class must bring every private room of thought in that dear child into the singular auditorium of full learning and classical flow.

**It is often because** the teacher himself, when but a child, saw and studies only the lesson of the island-compartments floating around a partial mind that he now only sees the very same lesson



plan before the student and therefore negates the larger epistemological increase.

When will that teacher catch up on the homework of his own deficiencies of his earlier education?

What of the shoddy habits and ruined compartment he has abandoned to the past?

Do you and I, dear teacher, detect early the tendency towards gossip in the student before us? It commences in them at an alarming early age.

Do we deal with this along with the curriculum guide with an earnest spirit? We must, you know. What about that other pupil over there whose mood did set the tone for the day against the learning process? Then we neglected to correct it, but after that neglect did overreact with panic amidst the loss of our own composure. At times, did we even lose control of the class? Did it master us that day? Where is our altar before Christ, then?

We must not comfort self because self knows the academic subject. We must remember: "the end of the learning is to know God."

Do we wait too long before we get the order of the class, only at last to surrender it again to our own anger and proceed to go further than we should have in a discipline which would have never been needed if we had seen the earlier pride of the child for an attention that child never deserved?

By the way, is there any connection or relationship between the anger of the classroom with a similar root of anger in our own marriages back home?

**But we must hasten** to another step on the ladder of our tutorial ministry. Do you, dear teacher, waste the semester days in pursuing your own pet subjects or unprepared lessons only at the end, before the academic dean appears, have to speed up in such a hurry that your student races on to oblivion and you wonder why he failed that last test?

Do you, in your own mind and in your own mind alone, really think your class is history, English, music, philosophy, speech or even Bible to be superior to the whole Christian education of the child himself?

O dear one, you and I are always and only a part of his or her ongoing education.

Do we wallow in the pride of our own blinded thought to contrive a position of learning that thinks it supersedes any other part of the *Academus*? No one part is as valuable as the whole—to the soul!

Do you stress to yourself your preparation and achievement in the subject as someone unusual, while your simple attendance to the class is tardy?

Did you notify the academic dean early, as early as you could, when you were to be absent? Even when you were sick?

Do we constantly run overtime in the class periods and the subjects to which we are assigned? They were assigned; we do not choose the day-by-day direction.

Will we ever regulate our class to the clock?

Do we carefully plan the content of the class, only to mar, scar, and bar the time-limit to complete it?

When we are corrected, do we feel the corrector has not the spirit of the Lord Jesus?

Do we demean the Lord by defending merely the argument of the subject before the class, while we descend to the lower precincts of disrespect before them all by being determined to win the argument?

**Possibly, yet, these questions** have not gained your heart and mine. Should we persist once again and enter through another door of thought?

What of our appearance, our diction, our habits in general before the class?

Do these contradict all that we have ideally presented in the content of the fleeting years?

Do we know that a teacher without character is truly a teacher unprepared?

God desires for us to teach, authoritatively, one, two or three subjects in a lifetime; yet they stand incomplete except as they contribute to the intercontinental place of total learning. It is possible to end up very knowledgeable in a tower of pride without a single weapon in the armory for the battle.

**Even if we do** resolve, by the grace of God, all that this treatise purports, you and I will still be only at the smallest speck of our potential in Christ and His power.

Unless we see the larger vision of it all—that of our deep ignorance of the very subject we claim as our proficiency—we will never mount up with eagle's wings to regions above—above our self-imposed boundaries.

If we still remain in our present state, pulling our own security blanket around us, manufactured by our own pride, we shall probably be remembered in the

longer photograph of life with our thumb in our mouth perpetuating our infancy.

If this burden laid deliberately upon us seems to undo us, then we have never soared where teachers thrill and thrive to voices beyond their time.

There is a Teacher far above us all Who stood for only three and one-half years upon this planet Earth.

With His life, words, deportment, carriage, culture, Literature (capital “L”), beauty, cleanliness, comeliness head, hand, foot, and all else of His Person, He taught the complete Christian epistemology so much needed in a fallen world. And His classrooms continue immortal and eternal!

There survives no secular or human education for Him! Unless Jesus is sufficient to change us from our past and puny receipts of roll books to a greater delivery of Christ, Character, and Culture for all our students, we will never become what we ought to become simply because this author wrote a midge of a matter through this meager script.

**Hark! Who is that** by yonder door, beckoning us on to that which we never dreamed?

O Dear Heavenly Father, it is Jesus with a child—both standing there awaiting our entrance into the classroom, to the desk, the Text, the test, and the chalkboard.

Dear God, I fall across the threshold. Will I ever rise again? Wilt thou raise me up from this floor so that I might see Infinity come down into the finite thimble of my teacher's hope?

If Thou wilt, then I will go into that classroom again.

Amen.

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