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### **THE GRACE OF GOD**

But however it may be, the Bible does not countenance disbelief. It is not anti-intellectual; it does not treat doctrine as unimportant, false, or "unintelligible." Rather it places considerable emphasis on truth and understanding.

"Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ...And ye shall know the truth.... I tell you the truth.... Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 1:17; 8:32; 16:7; 17:17; 5:53; 8:45; 16:13). In the face of these utterances it is difficult to understand how anyone can seriously say that we can be sanctified through false doctrine. Again, "We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we might know Him that is true" (I John 5:20. I Kings 17:24; Psalms 25:5; 43:3; 86:11; 119:43, 142, 147; Romans 1:18; 3:7).

The Bible teachings indicate that we can grasp God's meaning -that the truth can be known, and that God can be known. Christianity is not a religion of a fallacies and assumptions- it is a message of good news; it is a revelation or communication of truth from God to man.

Only if the propositions of the Bible are rationally comprehensible, only if man's intellect can understand what God says, only if God's mind and man's mind have some content in common, only so can Christianity be true and only so can Christ mean something to us.

Like many other familiar terms the word "grace" has a variety of connotations and nuances, which need not be listed here. For the purposes of this article it's meaning is that of undeserved blessing freely bestowed on man by God, a concept that is at the heart not only of Christian theology but also of all genuinely Christian experience. In discussing the subject of grace an important distinction must be maintained between common grace and saving, (regenerating) grace, if the relationship between divine grace and the human situation is to be rightly understood.

Common Grace. Common grace is so called because it is common to all mankind. Its benefits are experienced by the whole human race without discrimination between one person and another. The order of creation reflects the mind and the care of the Creator who sustains what He has made. The eternal Son, through whom all things were made, "upholds the universe by His word of power" (Hebrews 1:2-3; John 1:1-).

God's gracious provision for His creatures is seen in the sequence of the seasons, of seedtime and harvest. Thus Jesus reminded His hearers that God "makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). The Creator's sustaining care for His creation is what is meant when we speak of divine providence.

Another aspect of common grace is evident in the divine government or control of human society. It is true that human society is in a state of sinful φαλλενεσσ. Were it not for the restraining hand of God, indeed, our world would long since have degenerated into a self-destructive chaos of iniquity, in which social order and community life would have been an impossibility.

That a measure of domestic, political, and international harmony is enjoyed by the generality of mankind is due to the overruling goodness of God. Paul actually teaches that God ordains civil government with its authorities and that to resist these authorities is to resist the ordinance of God.

He even calls secular rulers and magistrates' ministers of God, since their proper concern is the maintenance of order and decency in society. Insofar as they bear the sword for the punishment of wrongdoers in the interests of justice and peace, theirs is a God-given authority.