

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the subject of "worship". The first time "worship" is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 22:4: **"On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, 'stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you'"** The Hebrew word translated as "worship" is "shaw-khaw". It means to bow down, crouch, and do obeisance. The Greek word for "worship" is "proskuneo". Strong in his *Exhaustive Concordance* defines it as to crouch like a dog licking his master's hand.

This is precisely what Abraham and Isaac were doing in worshiping God (See Gen. 22:1-19). They were bowing down before God in total submission to His will. I'm sure you know the story. Abraham had been commanded by God to take his son Isaac, whom he loved, and sacrifice him on one of the mountains of Moriah. With total trust and obedience, like a dog licking his master's hand. Abraham and Isaac went to that mountain and "worshiped" the Lord. They arose early in the morning to begin the three day journey. In addition to Isaac, Abraham also took with him a donkey, wood for the burnt offering, and two servants. Isaac was old enough to carry the wood and also old enough to rebel against being sacrificed, but he did not rebel. Isaac too "worshiped" the Lord. Note! Abraham said to his servants: "we" will "worship" and then "we" will come back to you. Abraham reasoned that God could raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19). Abraham therefore built an altar, perhaps at the very place where Jesus would later be crucified. Isaac submitted to God and allowed his father to bind him and place him on the altar. The story, as you know, has a happy ending. Just at the time Abraham was about to slay his son, an angel of the Lord called out from heaven and stopped him. The angel showed him a ram to sacrifice that was caught by its horns in a thicket. Thus Isaac was spared and **"Abraham believed God, and it was credited unto him as righteousness, and he was called the friend of God" (Ja. 2:23).**

As we have said, the "worship" of God involves complete love, trust, and obedience. It is like a loving dog crouching down and licking his master's hand. In this regard let us consider a lawyer named George Graham Vest (1830-1904), and his most famous case that involved the death of a dog.

It all began on the night of Oct. 18, 1869 when a dog named Old Drum, was shot and killed by Leonidas Hornsby. The dog belonged to Charles Burden. Hornsby was his neighbor and brother-in-law. Hornsby had recently lost several sheep to dogs and vowed to kill the first dog he found on his property. Old Drum thus became his victim. Burden could not let the death of his beloved dog go unpunished and took his brother-in-law to court.

The case of "Burden vs. Hornsby" was tried three different times. The final trial was conducted in the Johnson Country Circuit Court in Warrensburg, Mo. on Sept. 23, 1870. It was at this trial that Burden sought the services of attorney George Graham Vest. It was then that Vest delivered his now famous "Eulogy on a Dog" that touched the hearts of the jury as well as dog lovers all over the world.

Vest said: *"Gentlemen of the jury: The best friend a man has in this world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and our good name, may become traitors to their faith. The money that a man has, he may lose. It flies away from him, perhaps when he needs it the most. A man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees to do us honor when success is with us may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads. The one absolutely*

unselfish friend that a man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him and the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous is his dog.

Gentleman of the jury: A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer, he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounters with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert, he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces, he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journey through the heavens.

If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him to guard against danger, to fight against his enemies, and when the last scene of all comes, and death takes the master in its embrace and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his graveside will the noble dog be found, his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even to death."

The speech won the case for Burden and he was awarded \$50 in damages for the loss of his beloved dog. Hornsby appealed the case to the Missouri Supreme Court where the verdict was upheld. George Graham Vest was a lawyer, a Congressman, and ultimately a U.S. Senator, but he is most remembered for his famous and eloquent eulogy on a dog.

The first time the word worship is found in the N. T. Scriptures is in Matt. 2:2. I'm sure you remember this story too. Wise men from the East came to Jerusalem and asked: **"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him?" (Matt. 2:2).** These wise men therefore bowed down and worshiped Jesus like a dog licking his master's hand.

Times have changed but Jesus has not. **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).**

WISE MEN STILL "WORSHIP" HIM! DO YOU?

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce