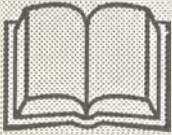


*"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."*



# The *Word and Work*



*"Holding forth the Word of Life."*

OCTOBER, 1993

## OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

There are two ways to enrich our worship of God. One is to concentrate on worship. The other is to concentrate on God.

Our August issue sought to do the former, emphasizing the meaning and process of worship. Now we seek to do the latter, emphasizing the glorious Object of our adoration and praise -- the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy.

# OUR GOD IS MIGHTY

"Declare his glory among the nations" (Psalm 96:3)

Margaret Clarkson

Our God is *mighty*, great beyond all praising,  
Sing unto him a glad, triumphant song;  
He is the Lord, the King of earth and heaven--  
To Him all majesty and strength belong!

Our God is *gracious*, infinite in mercy;  
He bridged the hopeless gulf our sin had made;  
He gave His Son to purchase our salvation--  
In Jesus Christ we meet God unafraid.

Our God is *faithful*--he will work within us,  
Fulfilling all the purpose he has planned;  
Cleansing our hearts and filling with His Spirit  
To make us strong to keep his last command.

Our God is *human*, Son of God and Mary;  
He lived our life, He suffered all our pain;  
Now He calls us to live his love and mercy,  
To show our world God's word made flesh again.

Our God is *sovereign* over all creation,  
And soon his earth shall hear his mighty voice;  
His is the Kingdom--hail the conquering Savior!  
Lift up your hearts, sing out his praise, rejoice!

## Refrain:

Declare his glory among the nations,  
Through all creation his triumph sing,  
Till all earth's peoples bow in adoration,  
And Jesus Christ be everlasting King!

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# THE WORD AND WORK

*"Declare the whole counsel of God"*

**Alex V. Wilson, Editor**

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## Theme:

# OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Alex V. Wilson

There are two ways to deepen and enrich our worship of God. One is to teach more about worship. The other is to teach more about God. Our August issue sought to do the former, emphasizing the meaning and process of worship. Many of you expressed appreciation for that. Now this issue and the next two will seek to do the latter, centering our hearts on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, respectively. As we focus on our one God, the *object* of worship, may our lives and meetings overflow with the praise He deserves so much.

If the above paragraph raises questions about how Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be "one God," then read Carl Kitzmiller's column.

### A "Father Moment"

**The Forgotten Father** is the title of a book by Thomas Smail of England. He makes some points we need to ponder and reveals some imbalance we need to correct:

"When one looks at vital modern Christian movements of any kind, one has to admit that emphasis upon and devotion to the Father has not been a main characteristic of many of them. Evangelicals have been concerned chiefly with Christ the Son, his divine person, his adequate atonement, his real resurrection . . . but not made much of the fact that the Son is only the Son because he comes from the Father.

"Charismatics on the other hand have often switched the emphasis from the Son to the Spirit as the sovereign source of renewal, power and spiritual gifts and fruit . . . .

"To put the same thing another way, we have had in recent years a Jesus movement and a charismatic movement. The one has almost disappeared and the other is threatening to run out of steam, perhaps because each is in a different way inadequate to the gospel, which is basically a Father movement . . . . [May] we realise anew with praise and wonder that in Christ we have, not only forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit, but above all access to the Father." (Pp. 19-20, 22)

May our hearts be stirred this month as we consider some of our heavenly Father's marvelous attributes--glory, wrath, grace, holiness and majesty.

# THE TERROR AND THE GLORY

## Is God pint-sized or transcendent?

The Bible gives us some clues.

A.W.Tozer

Do you ever think about God's transcendence? It is discussed so much in the Bible that you can find it practically anywhere you look.

God's omnipresence is a contrasting idea which means that God is as near to us as our soul so that our thoughts are to Him as loud as our shouted statements. A line from a song says, "They who seek the throne of grace find that throne in every place. They who live a life of prayer find that God is everywhere." One of the most useful things we can find out is that we don't have to go somewhere to find our Lord. Wherever we need Him, He is there.

But the transcendence of God means that in His uncreated being God is so far above all that is created that we cannot conceive it. This doesn't mean altitude. We are victims of time and space and are in the peculiar position of being eternal creatures in a temporal body. Our thought patterns become spatial so that we tend to think materially about God. Physical magnitude--distance, elevation, size, mass, speed, time--means nothing to God. Our highest skyscraper is not large enough to be observed as a bump on a curve of the earth to the one at God's right hand.

But when we speak of God we must use analogies and so we speak of God as being "far above." To illustrate: A mother takes her three-year-old daughter to the beach where she sits down to read a book while the little girl plays in the sand with her shovel and bucket. For a while the mother glances up every third line or so to check on the safety of the child. But then she gets involved in a paragraph, and when she looks up the child is gone. The sea is beautiful, covered over with a sky full of sea gulls banking and turning, with a white sail off to the left and the plume of smoke telling of a passing freighter to the right: pure artistry. Yet the woman isn't remotely interested because her baby is gone and she is sure she's drowned. So, she dashes wildly about.

Now why is she so worried about 30 pounds of humanity that can scarcely speak three sentences without a mistake--a little girl that only knows a tiny circle of friends and yet to her mother is worth more than all the beauty of the world's sky and sea?

It's because the sea can't smile, the clouds can't throw their arms around your neck and the shore can't pray or sing or worship. It's not size or weight that give value to the child but her quality of life. If we raise this to infinity, we can say that in talking about God being "far above," we do not mean that He is high astronomically, but that in quality of life He is a Being infinitely removed from everything and everyone, dwelling in unapproachable light.

We tend to think in terms of levels. We start with a cell and then a fish, go on to a land animal and to man and perhaps to an angel, then an archangel. Then we put God on top. God is the master of all orders of life, but God isn't merely the chief of the ascending order of creation. God is unique in being God, and there is nothing to which He can really be compared. He made man like Him but not completely like Him; otherwise we would be gods ourselves. And God would cease to be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the apostles of the church.

### BIBLICAL BASIS

The Scriptures are full of statements about how far He is above us. "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:11).

We find it in Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? . . . Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand" (Job 11:7, 8; 26:14).

Isaiah says in the 55th chapter, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

And this is echoed in 1 Timothy 6:15, 16 with the words, "[God} is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen."

Let's look back into Isaiah for a moment, to the 40th chapter. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one

faileth." Isaiah was caught up in a flight of imagination here. He is picturing God as a shepherd and calls us to lift up our eyes at night and behold the heavenly hosts, the sheep of God's pastures who are called by His name by the greatness of His power. We think of a green field and a shepherd leading out his flock, knowing them by name and numbering them every night. Yet in the metaphor it is God who walks through the infinite stretches, leaving behind Him the stars and galaxies. The Milky Way, of which our solar system is a part, is composed of billions of stars; yet the California telescope reveals that there are perhaps a hundred million milky ways, each with its billion stars. God knows them all and they follow Him across the vast spaces of the sky, even while we find such vastness hard to comprehend.

This is the God we adore. How can I speak of that which is beyond words? If some Watcher from on high came down and entered our little world and honored us for a moment with his presence, he would not talk about any of the things we discuss. He would smile at our religious discussions and be deeply grieved when he hears most of the sermons preached, for the Watcher has lived his uncounted millennia beside the Throne of God and has gazed with veiled face upon the Trinity, the Triune God. He would charm and fascinate us not by talking about doctrine only, but by describing what he has seen. And when he did it, I think we would not want to live on earth very much longer.

Maybe that's why God has not sent such a Watcher and why heaven above is only sketched vaguely in the Scripture. If it were described so that we could get hold of it and know how high God is and how wonderful, our burning zeal to walk into the very presence of God would be too much for gravitation and would take us away. The Scriptures that speak of God are "but parts of His ways, and a little portion that is heard of Him." All we can see of God is just a little portion of His way.

### **BASIC MODERN PROBLEM**

This leads me to state a great concern of mine. What is basically the problem with modern Christianity? It is not worldliness, or unbelief, or the division among Christians. Basically, the father of this unholy brood is an unworthy concept of God.

Today's God is not the God of our fathers. The God of today is not the God of Jonathan Edwards. We present a female Jesus, weak, curly bearded. He is not the mighty Lord who rose like Samson coming out of Gaza having ripped down the pillars of the temple, alive forevermore.

The Jesus we approach in such flippancy today is not the Jesus that John saw in Revelation. He fell down before Him in a faint and had to be lifted up. I once heard a Christian businessman say, "I want to be reverent, but I'd like to say that God is a good fellow and I like Him." Can a Christian ever stoop to call God a good fellow? Can a Christian who has seen God ever say, "I like God?" "Like" is not the word we use about deity, nor is "fellow." God is great and it is our blindness that prevents us from seeing the light. I suspect that none of the techniques that we are now trying will ever bring a rebirth of true Biblical Christianity. We treat God as a little God you can barely love and can't respect. But when we confront the God who led forth Abraham, Isaac and Jacob like a flock, the God who dwells in the burning fire over Israel during its long desert journey, the God of Isaiah that struck him down in terror in his own uncleanness, and when we present that God in our preaching, He will return the Church to a reverent, fearful but joyful gathering together, and we will have revival.

We need evangelists--but we need the ones who preach the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hear a little God preached and something inside tells us, "This isn't it; this isn't it." We read about the God of suffering Job and compare it with the God of the modern day and we see two different persons.

Jonathan Edwards said that as he was walking across a meadow in New England one night with the moon shining here and there on puddles of water, he was so overwhelmed with a sense of the majesty of God that he was almost knocked senseless by it. This can happen to the least and the greatest, and Edwards is supposed to be one of the six greatest men that America has ever produced.

Not that we need such an experience in order to be converted, but if we allow God to have His proper place in our theology, doctrine, thinking, hymnology, churches, testimonies, prayers, we would get more of this kind of conviction.

### **WANTED: A GLIMPSE OF GOD**

We are witnessing a generation of Christians who have never felt the terror and glory of the vision of the great God of our Fathers. We need a noble conception of the transcendence of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some say that God is unknowable and unreachable. And it is true that no one can come to God apart from Jesus Christ, because He has honored us by taking human flesh and becoming a bridge, an easy bridge that we can come across to God. Christ lays His hand upon us, taking us in our slimy human sin while touching the eternal Father with His other hand and by suffering in death and resurrection brings us together.



Conversion is an introduction into the realm of grace for a sheep that has been astray, a boy that has been lost, a sinner that has been away.

But the contrast is so vast between what we are and what God is that it is stunning, devastating, shocking. We need this devastation in modern evangelism. Little shocks us except the conduct of people. There is little that beats us down and humbles us. I have little hope that there will be a revival of consequence anywhere until we confess our sin, our deep sin of irreverence, our deep sin of thinking ignobly about God. I won't worship a God I can't respect. I won't get on my knees to anything or anybody unless I can respect Him. I can only bend my knees before that which I can adore. But adoration is the true response when we are faced by this awe inspiring God.

Wherever I go I find people starving for God. We go to church for so many reasons. We must go to church to meet God. Even if all the great of this age were there, we still couldn't feed on them, for only Jesus is the bread of life. And He said, "I am the Bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

Job said, "What shall I answer thee, I will lay my hand upon my mouth." Daniel said, "I set my face toward the ground, I became dumb, there remained no more strength in me, neither is there breath left in me." Was he a fanatic? No, he was a noble and learned man, one who carried a share of the weight of an empire on his shoulders. Yet this man went down before God until he was dumb. He was struck by a sense of self depreciation.

When someone comes to me for counsel about the things of God, I want to know whether they are simply asking questions or are hungry to know God. I wonder whether they have ever gotten close to this burning bush, and if they have not, then there is little I can do for them because you can't talk your way into this holy presence. Isaiah was struck by his sense of impurity and cried out, "Woe is me, I am undone, I am unclean." He felt profane before God. The same sense drove Zinzendorf to his knees in trembling confession. When Jonathan Edwards preached, men fell into the snow as though dead, so strong was their sense of profaneness before the transcendent God.

I pray that God will send prophets back to His church to preach again the transcendent one, men who are not so fluent, not so flippant and not so funny, not so eloquent in the presence of God. They must be those who lay their hands upon their mouths and say "I have spoken, but O God why did I speak?"

We must pray and search the Scriptures if we wish to meet the transcendent God. There is no other source of light. Read them anew as you have never read them before and find in them again the great God, high and lifted up with his train filling the temple.

I believe that what is now evangelicalism will be liberalism in one more generation unless it finds God again, getting past the doctrine to the God of doctrine who spoke and caused men to speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The Scripture is the means and God is the end. The work of Scripture is to bring me to this God in solemn reverence and self-effacement, in personal devaluation, in sorrow for what I am, in eagerness to be like Him. We'll never get this any way but through the Scripture. We must allow this Book to be a gate to the mighty, transcendent God.

*O Lord, we pray that thou will open the eyes of our understanding to see the One walking amidst the golden candlesticks. We're willing to be silent in fear and awe if only we might see Him. We see great men but we don't see Him. Open our eyes that we may see Him whose head is white as snow and whose eyes are like flames of fire and who is girt about with a golden girdle and dressed with a white linen garment, and out of whose mouth comes the two-edged sword, and whose feet are burnished brass.*

*Help us to see Him. We don't see Him as we should. Take self-centeredness out of us, take the veil away that we may see Him walking in His glory so that we may recapture the wonder, worship, awe and delightful adoration that thou dost long for the Church of God to have.*

---

## EMBARRASSING DOCTRINE?

John White

"Sinners in the hands of an angry God" was what Jonathan Edwards called it. Quite a title.

And it must have been quite a sermon if you can go by the people in the church that night. Horror at the thought of God's anger so gripped them that they couldn't move when the preacher stopped. Unutterable anguish for sin rooted men to the floor. And a revival got under way.

But God has cooled down a lot since then. At least the image that filters through to us via His public relations officers (even the evangelical ones) is a bit different.

Liberal theology insists that God is a loving Father: ideas about His anger belong to the days when the Hebrew religion was still half heathen. Jesus, they say, set the record straight--though unfortunately

Paul did not quite get the picture. Paul's God was still breathing wrath. That was because Paul, a genius in his way, was grappling with a kind of syncretism between the prophets and Jesus. He did a good job of it, but he rather spoiled what Jesus had done in emancipating God from the Old Testament. If we want to know what God is like, we should see Him as Jesus shows Him to be: a kind, loving Father of all men, and not prone to fits of anger. "Anger in every shape and form is foreign to God whose mercy is infinite," wrote a modern author.

Now there are two points behind this liberal concept of God, one theological and one practical. The theological idea had to do with the atonement. The New Testament tells us that Christ's death, among other things, appeased God's wrath against sinners. "He is the propitiation for our sin." (1 John 2:2) This idea deeply offends liberal theologians. It smacks of bribery, they say.

There is the practical point too. Modern "enlightened" man has outgrown "childish" ideas about God's anger. If the Christian message is to make any headway it must fit the modern mood. It has grown fashionable therefore to drop the idea of an angry God.

Today the tide of these ideas seems to be ebbing. But as it does, it leaves rubbish on the beach. Rubbish about God that confuses our thinking.

We hasten (a little too quickly) to agree when somebody deplors "fire and brimstone" preaching. Sinners should be drawn by love, not hounded by fear. Modern people will be repelled by an angry God.

Deep down we tend to agree that God is probably as angry as Jonathan Edwards made Him out to be. And we're a little embarrassed about it. And about Him. So, conscious that if we're to get people to vote for Him we must be careful about the "image" we project, we play up His vote-getting qualities.

Of course both the wisdom and ethics of doing this are open to question. More important still is the matter of what God really is like. Is He angry? Ought He to be angry? And if the answer to both these questions should happen to be yes, what line should we take with the public?

### **The Bible's View**

The bible unquestionably shows God to be a God capable of anger. The Old Testament has a lot to say about God's wrath. Jeremiah says "At his wrath the earth shall tremble and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation." The book of Ruth and the Song of

Solomon are about the only two Old Testament books that don't refer to God's anger.

The prophets had a well-defined philosophy of history. In His anger God brought judgment to bear upon man. Catastrophe and war were the whips with which He chastised nations. More than this, His anger would result in judgment in the coming future days. A day of wrath was stored up for those who persisted in rebellion.

The New Testament has less to say, but what it says in no way modifies the Old Testament ideas. In fact, it builds on them. Paul says, "The wrath of God is continually being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness." The writer to the Hebrews quotes the Old Testament "So I swore in my wrath ..." In the book of Revelation John gives vivid pictures of God's anger.

And Jesus Himself? On more than one occasion He behaved as though He were angry. Do you remember how He denounced the Pharisees in scathing language? And how He overturned the tables of money changers, cracking a whip of cords at men and animals? He talked about God's anger, too.

No, you cannot hold to the thesis that the Biblical God is not angry. Not unless you are prepared to change practically every book in the Bible.

### **The Nature Of God's Anger**

Part of our problem is that we have wrong notions of what God's anger is like. We try to swallow what our minds reject. And the devil's policy goes along with this. From his point of view it's better for us to struggle gallantly to "accept" a blasphemous notion of God's anger than to find out what it really is like.

What are the facts?

In the first place, God's anger isn't a matter of moods. His anger is a settled hostility to certain things. This is important. It's true that we read that God's anger "waxed hot" against people on certain occasions, but this is an anthropomorphism.

In one sense God's anger is constant. It merely becomes evident when man violates His laws.

My anger isn't like this. My son may burst noisily into the house after school and I'll greet him with a welcome and mild reproof for his noisiness. But if I'm all on edge when he comes in I'm apt to go off the deep end. My son is the victim out of my righteous anger but of my moodiness.

God's anger is also constant in its direction. It is directed only against sin and people who engage in it. I get angry over a variety of things: a missed train, a noisy radio, a lost pencil. Nine-tenths of my anger is about personal inconvenience.

In fact a lot of our anger arises from frustration. As children we cried with rage over the piano piece that refused to be played properly. As adults we're furious with a traffic jam when we're in a rush.

But God isn't a victim of frustration. He is infinite. He has no limitations except self-imposed ones. He isn't even frustrated with humanity (however much we may be).

God's anger is also controlled. It never gets the better of Him. If it did, He wouldn't be God: His anger would be stronger than He is. This is why the Bible says He is "slow to anger." His actions are tempered by patience and long suffering. God doesn't "blow His stack." His anger is turned into action only after His patience and mercy have been rejected.

But in saying this I must be careful not to water down the idea of God's anger. It is as intense as His love. If you want a God with tepid anger, you'll also have a God of tepid love. But if you want a God with a burning, glorious love, you must look for one whose anger is white hot and consuming.

You see, anger is the measure of love. Even here on earth we can see that. A normal man is terribly hurt and very angry if his wife is unfaithful. If this hurt and angry man loves his wife enough to accept her back, to forgive her and treat her tenderly, then we know he really loves her. On the other hand if he just shrugs his shoulders at her adultery, we can be pretty sure he doesn't care for her at all. In fact, a man who is never angry is a feeble, shallow, selfish kind of man.

So we must be careful not to think that there is something contradictory about a loving God being angry. God is angry over injustice. He is angry about human suffering and the sin that causes it. He is angry with you when you sin. And the heat of His anger with you is the measure of His love for you. If you reject the idea of His anger, it is because you find His love too interfering in your personal affairs.

### What We Say

Some people, of course, are glad that God is angry. They remind me of the bratty little girl who came to me one day at school and said, "The teacher's *really mad* at you." You could tell she was just hugging herself with joy. In our witness we aren't called on to play the part of that little girl. God's anger at others isn't something to gloat over. It should move us to fearful concern for them.

On the other hand we shouldn't avoid the subject. We aren't called to be God's public relations experts, but to be witnesses. The only image we must project is the correct one. We aren't to aim for effect. God's character is not a subject for interpretation.

How people react is God's responsibility. And as a matter of fact, people's reaction will depend upon the extent to which the Holy Spirit convinces them of the facts we present. Once you are convinced that Mr. Smith is mad at you, your main worry is the fact of his anger. You may resent it. You may fear it. You may feel that Mr. Smith is unjust. But you don't go around arguing that Mr. Smith couldn't be angry because he isn't like that, or that you don't believe in Mr. Smith.

Naturally our witness has to do with other aspects of God and not just with His anger. At times it's a puzzle to know how much to stress any particular aspect. At certain times in history there was less need to stress God's anger because people were already aware of it. We should be guided, then, in deciding how much to stress God's wrath by how much people are aware of it. (Once again, our duty isn't to make either ourselves or God popular, but to let people know what He is like.)

That is, I think, what Jonathan Edwards tried to do. He didn't crack a whip. He showed no fiery eloquence. If the record is true, he read his sermon in a thin, reedy voice, peering shortsightedly at his manuscript by candlelight. But his idea of God was Biblical. And it rang a bell in people's minds because the Holy Spirit was working. It's been said that no man should speak to a non-Christian friend about God's wrath without tears in his eyes.

The story is told of the "modern" parents who were careful to allow their little girl to express her personality. They never showed anger or disapproval. One day after she had jumped up and down on the grand piano for a while, she paused and asked in frustration, "Won't anything I do make you get mad?" Their indifference had convinced her they did not care.

I may be wrong but I feel that men and nations are jumping on pianos right now. Among the things that make them do this, I detect a wistful longing to know *a God who cares enough to be angry*. It's time we got back to preaching about sinners in the hands of an angry God.

# MEDITATIONS ON THE MOST HIGH

## What Kind of God Have You?

What a God some Christians have! A God who does not know them or care for them in particular; a God who can do no good or harm, except as the laws of nature bring it about in the course of cause and effect; a God not to be reckoned with--a dummy, a figurehead; a God who cannot fulfill His promises, whose love we have to buy with good works and service; a God who bids us go through the motion and mock performance of prayer, when it is understood that it can have no vestige of effect anywhere, except on the one who offers it; a God unfaithful, untrustworthy, malicious; a God who, if He were a man, would not pass for a gentleman! No wonder they do no more for Him! The wonder is they do as much as they do. How densely, deeply ignorant we are of Him, because we "know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God;" no, nor yet His goodness, love, faithfulness; His dread holiness on the one hand, and His tender compassion and grace on the other. For to know Him aright is eternal life; to know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to serve Him, and to serve Him is peace past all understanding and joy unspeakable and full of glory.

--R.H. Boll in *TRUTH AND GRACE*

\* \* \*

## How a Third-Grader Sees God

*One of God's main jobs is making people.* He makes these to put in the place of the ones that die so there will be enough people to take care of things here on earth. He doesn't make grownups. Just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way He doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that up to the mothers and fathers. I think it works out pretty good.

*God's second most important job is listening to prayers.* An awful lot of this goes on, as some people, like preachers and things, pray other times besides bedtime, and Grandpa and Grandma Dutton pray every time they eat (except snacks). God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV on account of this. As He hears everything, not only prayers, there must be a terrible lot of noise going on in His ears unless He has thought of a way to turn it off. I think we should all be a little quieter.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere. Which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting His time asking for things which aren't important or go over your parents' head

and ask for something they said you couldn't have.--Danny Dutton, *Evangelical Beacon*.

\* \* \*

### **Why Bother to Know God?**

As it would be cruel to an Amazonian tribesman to fly him to London, put him down without explanation in Trafalgar Square and leave him, as one who knew nothing of English or England, to fend for himself, so we are cruel to ourselves if we try to live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and who runs it. The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it is a disappointing and unpleasant business for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfold, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul. --James Packer, *KNOWING GOD*.

\* \* \*

### **How Great He Is!**

When man began to place satellites weighing a few hundred pounds into space to circle the Earth, the nations gave great acclaim to science and to man's modern achievement.

But did you know that the Earth's weight is estimated by astronomers to be 6,600,000,000,000,000,000 tons, and that our great God and Creator spoke it into being, placed it in the sky to whirl at one thousand forty miles per hour, and upholds it and all life upon it? --Clyde Dennis

\* \* \*

### **Thanks for what YOU are in spite of what I am!**

There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion Him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench His determination to bless me. There is certainly great cause for humility in the thought that He sees all the twisted things about me that my fellow-men do not see (and am I glad!), and that He sees more corruption in me than that which I see in myself (which, in all conscience, is enough). There is, however, equally great incentive to worship and love God in the thought that, for some unfathomable reason, He wants me as His friend, and desires to be my friend, and has given His Son to die for me in order to realize this purpose --James Packer, *KNOWING GOD*



# THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE COMING OF CHRIST

R. H. Boll

The doctrine of Christ's second coming necessitates the doctrine of the grace of God. It is only as we are *saved by grace* (Eph 2:8) and are *standing in grace* (Rom. 5:2) that we can look forward with any sort of hope and confidence to His return from heaven. This explains much of the general neglect and disregard of this great Bible theme. For, if the coming of our Lord is sudden and unexpected, liable to occur at any time--what will become of us? For we are all more or less conscious of failure and imperfection--the truest Christians often most of all. Now if the Lord should come suddenly, at some hour when we think not; and if (as is commonly thought) we are to be arraigned before His judgment throne, there to be judged on our worth and merit, every man according to his works--how could the prospect of Christ's return be anything but a dread and a terror to the Christians?

We are naturally so constituted that we dismiss dark and unpleasant things from our minds--certainly we do not dote on them or occupy our thoughts with them. This explains much of the general indifference even among believers, to the Bible teaching concerning the Lord's coming. It carries a foreboding of judgment and possible condemnation to them. The prospect of death seems much more comfortable. Of course death does sometimes strike suddenly, but ordinarily that is not the case. Most of us would count on "getting ready to die," and "making our peace with God"--procrastinators as we are apt to be--before we go hence. But the coming of Christ? That hangs over our head like the sword of Damocles--unless we know, and are standing in, the grace of god.

## THE HOPE OF EARLY CHRISTIANS

The converts of Paul's preaching had no such dread at the thought of Christ's coming again. They looked forward joyfully, expectantly, to his return. It was their "blessed hope" (Tit. 2:15). At Thessalonica they "turned unto God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come." So intently did they expect Him that they were troubled when some of their number died--lest for some cause these had missed that blessed hope; and Paul had to comfort and reassure them "concerning them that fall asleep" (See 1 Thes. 4:13-18).

How could that have been? How could these have looked for Christ's coming with such confidence and hope? Were they paragons,

extraordinary people, examples of saintly perfection and holiness? Not at all! They were common folk, like ourselves, sore beset with trials and temptations, having the same conflict and difficulties that we also experience. Yet they looked for the Lord's return as their hope. The only explanation of this lies in the fact that *they stood in the grace of God.*

## THE GRACE OF GOD

Now when God deals with us in grace, He does not deal with us on the basis of our personal worth and merit. ". . . God reckoneth righteousness *apart from work*" (Rom. 4:6). Our good works are not the basis of our acceptance and salvation, but rather the fruit and outcome of it. We are saved by grace, and in grace do we stand before God. And God give us "eternal comfort and good hope through grace" (2 Thes. 2:16). "Wherefore," He says, "girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and *set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*; as children of obedience not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts, in the time of your ignorance, but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:13-16). It is not, then, that we must first be holy so that we may have a hope for the coming of Christ; but this hope is the power and incentive of holiness. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. *And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself even as he is pure*" (1 Ju. 3:2,3).

The hope of Christ's returning is a purifying hope. How impossible it would have been if He had said, "Everyone that purifieth himself even as He is pure shall have a hope!" That were the voice of the Law--the "letter that killeth." But the hope is given to you freely that in the power of it you may purify yourself "even as He is pure." But the sure prospect is that when He comes we shall be wholly like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Whoever you are, whatever your state and condition, lay hold on this promise and make it your hope. This is the grace of God.

## IS "GRACE" A DANGEROUS DOCTRINE?

Many people think so. Honest and conscientious men have feared that the preaching of the free grace of God might compromise God's character of righteousness and justice. So they are tempted, Uzzah-like, to put forth a hand to keep the ark from falling. Another fear comes in also--may not the doctrine of God's free grace result in carelessness and loose living? Might it not cause Christians to grow lax in sacrifice and good works? They feel that something of the threats and

terrors of the Law must be invoked along with the doctrine of grace in order to prevent its abuse. "I got our people told," said a certain preacher-- "I told them yesterday that if they didn't give more they'd all go to hell." "Well, did you get more after that?" said I. "No--not just then; but I hope it may bear fruit in the future." "Did you tell them how much more they must give in order to escape going to hell?" "No," he said, "I left that with them." "That wasn't exactly fair; if they had to give more or else go to hell, you should have told them exactly *how much* more they must give, or else they would never know whether they were going to hell or not." "Oh well, Brother Boll," he said, "you know that if people don't give they are going to hell." "That may be so," I replied, "but it won't be because they are not giving a certain amount; the cause would lie deeper." This may be an extreme instance, but it illustrates a principle and a spirit of preaching which is not at all uncommon.

### **GOD IS RIGHTEOUS**

Let us understand at once that the grace of God, as set fourth in the New Testament, would compromise the righteousness and justice of God and would indeed be a blot on the Name of the holy God--*except for one thing*, namely, the sacrificial death of God's Son, which atoned for our sin, and left God free to act in grace toward sinners (Rom 3:26). We need not fear for God's integrity. As Paul said, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid." "Just and right is he," and we need not trouble to help Him out even if He does justify the ungodly and offers grace abounding to weak and sinful men.

### **THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

The other question--whether the doctrine of grace might result in careless living--Paul himself takes up in Rom 6:1--"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" And here again he says, "God forbid." But surely Paul must have said something wonderful concerning the grace of God so as to give occasion for raising such a question as that of Rom. 6:1. So indeed he had, and over and over again. We need only go back two verses. In Rom. 5:20 he says, "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." So someone might say, "Well, grace is a good thing, and if the more sin, the more grace, then why not keep on sinning so that there may be the more grace?" No honest man, knowing Paul and his teaching would make such an argument; and Paul refutes the very thought in the verses following (Rom. 6:1-11). Indeed he speaks of grace as the antidote of sin ("Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace," Rom. 6:14). It is the very secret, the strength and power of the new life, enabling us to stand against sin and the world's temptations (2 Cor. 12:9; 2 Tim. 2:1). It maintains us in a

state of forgiveness and acceptance before God. It is the secret also of glad and abundant service to God. "By the grace of God I am what I am," Paul writes. "And his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). And it is that which enables the Christian to look forward in unclouded hope to the second coming of our Lord. Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2).

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## THE HOLINESS OF GOD

### *Part One*

Alex V. Wilson, 1963

Any Bible student will agree that to know God at all we must understand His holiness. If any one attribute of God could be called more important than the rest, then His holiness would be that one. The heavenly beings in God's presence are unceasingly saying, "Holy, holy, holy." The third person of the triune Godhead is called the Holy Spirit. Jehovah is repeatedly called "the Holy One of Israel" in the Old Testament, especially by Isaiah.

In the Bible the attribute holiness is basically--that is, first of all--used to show God's position or relationship to all other beings. Its primary meaning denotes *separation* rather than any moral character. This may be seen from Psalm 99:1-3, portions of which follow: "The Lord reigns . . . He sits above the cherubim . . . The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the peoples. Let them praise thy great and terrible name: Holy is he." Here there are no moral qualities ascribed to God, but rather terms which show His supreme divinity. In fact, the word "holy" is sometimes synonymous with "divine," as when God's holy arm or holy name are spoken of.

Thus in this non-moral sense God's holiness means His "separation from all that is human and earthly," His "distinction from the creature" (J.C. Lambert). Many passages show this aspect of His holiness: "For thou, Lord, art *most high above* all the earth: Thou art *exalted far above* all gods" (Ps. 97:9). "The Lord is *high above* all nations, and his glory *above* the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath his seat *on high*, that humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven *and in the earth*?" (Ps. 113:4-6). "Thus saith the *high and lofty One* that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is *Holy*: I dwell in the *high and holy place*" (Isa. 57:15). "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, *high and lifted up*" (Isa 6:1). "Thine, O Lord, is the *greatness*,

and the *power*, and the *glory*, and the *victory*, and the *majesty* . . . and thou art *exalted as head above all*" (1 Chr. 29:11).

This separation and exaltedness of God is terrible--that is, awesome and dread-inspiring--in its effect upon the creature: "Shall not his *majesty* make you *afraid*, and his *dread* fall upon you?" (Job 13:11). "O God, thou art *terrible* out of thy *holy* places" (Psa. 68:35). "For the Lord *Most High* is *terrible*; he is a great king over all the earth" (Psa 47:2). "For the Lord your God, he is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the *great* God, the *mighty*, and the *terrible*" (Deut. 10:17). Thus one theologian, Berkhof, refers to god's holiness as "absolute unapproachability" and "absolute overpoweringness."

So the holiness of God means basically His separation from all created beings because of His *greatness*, referring mainly to His *power*: He is the self-existent Source of all; He is infinite; He is over all the earth and heavens and men and gods. All of this is implied when the Bible speaks of God as being holy. And the realization of that holiness produces in men a deep "self-abasement," "creature-consciousness," (Berkhof) and feeling of total dependence.

But holiness has also another meaning, derived from its primary meaning. The apostle Peter wrote. "As he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy: for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). Obviously men cannot be holy as God is holy in the sense that He is divine, separate from all that is human, and exalted over all. Therefore god must be holy in another sense as well, having a type of holiness which men can possess. This is His *moral* holiness, as seen from the context in several scripture passages. In 1 Peter 1, just quoted, the writer exhorted his readers to be obedient to God and completely separate from their former lusts, since God had said, "Be holy for I am holy." So we conclude that God's holiness mentioned in that passage must involve separation from evil. The moral aspect of His holiness may also be seen in the context of the Old Testament passage from which Peter was quoting, Lev. 19:2-4: "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy. Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father; and ye shall keep my sabbaths; I am the Lord your God. Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God." So we find that holiness in men means obedience, separation from sin, and purity or freedom from defilement. In God it implies moral perfection: separation from all evil, and infinite purity.

When we say that God is pure we mean that His will conforms to His nature; the two are in harmony. "He is not in conflict with Himself" (Charles Hodge). He is all that He ought to be without inconsistency. What a great gulf exists between God and men in this respect! The apostle Paul describes the experience of mankind in Rom. 7: "I

do not act as I would, but I do what I loathe . . . What I do is not the good deed I desire, but the evil deed I do not desire." The field of the arts also illustrates this gulf for us, with its opposing schools of idealism and realism. The idealist in his painting or sculpture or literature portrays men and life as we know they *ought* to be. The realist, though, scoffs at this and instead portrays men and life as they really are--far different from the ideal. But in God Most High, ideal and reality are identical. The apostle John said it this way: "God is light, and in him is *no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5).

An important aspect of God's moral holiness is His righteousness and justice. He Himself does only that which is right, and His rule over His kingdom is fair and just. "Of a surety, god will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert justice" (Job 34:12). These characteristics are stressed in Psalm 99, which--as we saw before (2nd paragraph)--emphasizes God's exaltedness in verses 1-3. In verses 4,5 and 8 His moral holiness is shown: "The king's strength also loveth justice; thou dost establish equity; thou executest justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy." Thus the two aspects of holiness are both presented in this psalm.

Thus far we have seen the importance and the meaning of God's holiness. Lord willing, next month we shall see the implications His holiness should have for our lives. To review and summarize the major points of this present article, we quote from James Packer: "When God is declared to be holy, the word refers to all that sets Him apart and makes Him different from His creatures: His *greatness* ('The majesty on high'--Heb. 1:3 & 8:1) and His *purity* ('Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity'--Heb. 1:13)." These are the perfections of our God; let us worship Him.

With His seraph train before Him,  
With His holy Church below,  
Thus conspire we to adore Him,  
Bid we thus our anthem flow:  
"Lord, Thy glory fills the heaven;  
Earth is with its fullness stored;  
Unto Thee be glory given,  
Holy, holy, holy Lord."

# QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

*Explain the Trinity and the question, "Is there one God, or three?"*

Folks sometime show little interest in certain subjects, believing them to be matter for the theologians to discuss but of little use otherwise. And because theologians are sometimes perceived as being interested in questions like how many angels can stand on the head of a pin, theology may tend to be regarded as impractical. Theology is simply the study of god, and whether it is practical or not depends on whether it is Biblical or not. Students in this field may indulge in a lot of human speculation, trying to be wise where God has not spoken, and therefore this is sometimes considered of questionable merit. The study of what the Bible reveals about the nature of God is certainly profitable, however, seeing that all scripture is profitable "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Many of us have grown up in an environment where the trinitarian\* concept of God is so prevalent that we are hardly aware of any denial of it. It gives me quite a jolt the first time someone accused me of believing "in three Gods." This is not an uncommon charge, however, from some who are unitarians\*--especially, in my experience, from United Pentecostal adherents. The usual trinitarian concept is not that of three Gods at all; rather it is the belief in one god manifested in three Persons--Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many of the folks we deal with will not have any difficulty with this issue. This does not mean that it is easy to understand or to explain, but it is recognized as the Biblical concept. There are others, however, if we are to teach effectively the gospel of Christ and the proper concept concerning Him, with whom we cannot be effective without a workable understanding of these things.

From New Testament times this has been an issue. The Jews of old were taught that God is one. One of the reasons for the Jews' conflict with Jesus was His claim to be one with the Father. "He makes Himself equal with God!" was the charge they made. It seems evident that their failure to understand the nature of the Godhead was one of the factors leading to Jesus' rejection. Even today, those who make an effort to evangelize among the Jews must deal with this issue. (A helpful little booklet--*One God or Three?*--is published by The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry.) The earliest creeds that were formulated reflect this concern with the issue in the early church. The Arian controversy (@ 320 A.D.) took its name from Arius who taught

that there is a difference between God the Father and Christ the Son which makes the latter secondary. Socinianism (named after Socinus 1539-1604) was a deviation during the reformation period which denied the full deity of Christ and which led to the development of the Unitarian Church. Again, the whole movement known as modernism (a development of the late nineteenth century and of the twentieth century), with its denial of the deity of Christ, constitutes a form of unitarianism.

As the above suggests, not all unitarianism is the same. Jehovah's Witnesses assign to Jesus the place of a lesser God while assigning the name Jehovah to the Father (in Bible usage, Jehovah is used to speak of all three Persons). The United Pentecostals, on the other hand, comprehend all under the name of Jesus. The Father and the Spirit are seen as works or offices of Jesus. Still another form is found in the Unitarian-Universalist Church. This group has moved so far from the Biblical concept that atheism is tolerated, even though the unitarian foundation remains. It should be evident that any attempt to evangelize or to teach seriously among the above mentioned groups surely requires that we have a solid Biblical concept of the nature of God.

Outside of Christianity (so-called), the people of the Islamic faith have a unitarian concept of God. While recognizing Jesus as a prophet, they believe in the one God, known to them as Allah. While missionary work among them is somewhat limited, still any effort to teach among these would demand an understanding of the unitarian-trinitarian question. Our concern, therefore, with the nature of God is not merely academic nor an attempt to split hairs. One's belief concerning Jesus can be greatly influenced by what is believed about the nature of God. And that which demotes Jesus from the position assigned to Him in the word is serious indeed. Except we believe on Him as the Christ the Son of God we can only perish.

Biblical Christians believe in one God, not in three Gods. I resent the inference (or downright accusation) that I believe in three Gods. such is the charge of some tracts in my possession. Of course polytheism is wrong. Christianity is known as a monotheistic religion. There is a great deal of material in the scriptures declaring the unity of God. (consider, e.g., Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 43:10; 44:6; 45:5; Mark 10:18; 12:29; Col. 2:9). God is one. This unity is seen in several ways. While the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct Persons in the scriptures, there is never any contradiction or conflict or antagonism between them. All possess the same qualities. The Father, for example, is not less loving than the Son. So interrelated are all of their activities that what one does may be also attributed to another. There is never any working at cross purposes. It is not surprising that our finite minds have difficulty in fully comprehending the nature of the in-



finite God, but we can believe what we cannot fully understand. God indeed is one God, not many . . . and not even three Gods.

But the Bible clearly shows this one God to be three Persons. (We use the term "Persons" for want of a better one. It is evident that the names used of God are not titles merely or have reference only to works or roles.) One member of the Godhead is seen as addressing another member. In the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 we see this sort of thing. God says "Let us . . ." To whom was He speaking? Not all translators agree on the implied presence of another Person, but this is in harmony with the Bible accounts throughout. Other Old Testament passages worthy of notice are Num 6:24-27; Ps 2; 110:1; Isa. 6:3

When we come to the New Testament, the material is abundant. Lewis Sperry Chafer (Systematic Theology, Vol. I, Pg. 303) declares; "The New Testament revelation is all but limitless. The mention of a name of Deity or its related pronoun is at once the declaration of a trinitarian distinction. . . . The triune mode of existence of Deity is everywhere present and assumed throughout the New Testament. It is so completely the sphere of all relationships that it defies analysis." At the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:13-17) we see the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as being in some sense separate. Christian baptism is commanded in the name of all three Persons (Matt. 28:19). Other notable passages include: Acts 2:33; 7:56; Rom. 1:1-4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 3:14-17; 4:4-6; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb. 1; Rev. 4&5; 22:3.

The traditional view of the trinity is probably as near as we can come to stating a difficult truth. While not all traditional teaching is right, neither is it necessarily wrong. The Bible certainly teaches the trinitarian concept of God. And while we are not saved by what we know, we need a sufficient understanding of these things that we do not demote Jesus in some way. The "Jesus only" concept results in a lot of confusion, but it basically gives honor to Christ. On the other hand, those views which make Jesus a lesser God or deny His deity are exceedingly dangerous.

\*The terms trinity, trinitarian and unitarian are here used for the lack of any better words. To be trinitarian does not mean a belief in three Gods but rather that the One God exists in Three Persons. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit together comprise the Trinity, the One God. Some suggest "Triunity" as a better word, but much that has been written on the subject uses the term Trinity. Unitarianism is the belief in one God which does not allow for any plurality in His being

# EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY

Max Lucado

*Christianity, in its purest form, is nothing more than seeing Jesus.*

*Christian service, in its purest form, is nothing more than imitating him who we see.*

*To see His Majesty and to imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity.*

For fifty-one years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn't see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness.

And then, he could see.

A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation and, for the first, Bob Edens had sight. He found it overwhelming. "I never would have dreamed that yellow is so . . . yellow," he exclaimed. "I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red.

"I can see the shape of the moon--and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is."

He's right. Those of us who have lived a lifetime with vision can't know how wonderful it must be to be given sight.

But Bob Edens isn't the only one who has spent a lifetime near something without seeing it. Few are the people who don't suffer from some form of blindness. Amazing, isn't it? We can live next to something for a lifetime, but unless we take time to focus on it, it doesn't become a part of our life. Unless we somehow have our blindness lifted, our world is but a black cave.

Think about it. Just because one has witnessed a thousand rainbows doesn't mean he's seen the grandeur of one. One can live near a garden and fail to focus on the splendor of the flower. A man can spend a lifetime with a woman and never pause to look into her soul.

And a person can be all that goodness calls him to be and still never see the Author of life.

Being honest or moral or even religious doesn't necessarily mean we will see him. No. We may see what others see in him. Or we may

hear what some say he said. But until we see him for ourselves, until our own sight is given, we may think we see him, having in reality seen only a hazy form in the gray semidarkness.

Have you seen him?

Have you caught a glimpse of His Majesty? A word is placed in a receptive crevice of your heart that causes you, ever so briefly, to see his face. You hear a verse read in a tone you'd never heard, or explained in a way you'd never thought and one more piece of the puzzle falls into place. Someone touches your painful spirit as only one sent from him could do . . . and there he is.

Jesus.

The man. The bronzed Galilean who spoke with such thunderous authority and loved with such childlike humility.

The God. The one who claimed to be older than time and greater than death.

Gone is the pomp of religion; dissipated is the fog of theology. Momentarily lifted is the opaque curtain of controversy and opinion. Erased are our own blinding errors and egotism. And there He stands.

Jesus.

Have you seen Him?

Those who first did were never the same.

"My Lord my God!" cried Thomas.

"I have seen the Lord," exclaimed Mary Magdalene.

"We have seen his glory," declared John.

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked?" rejoiced the two Emmaus-bound disciples.

But Peter said it best. "We were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

His Majesty. The emperor of Judah. The soaring eagle of eternity. The noble admiral of the Kingdom. All the splendor of heaven revealed in a human body. For a period ever so brief, the doors to the throne room were open and God came near. His Majesty was seen. Heaven touched the earth and, as a result, earth can know heaven. In astounding tandem a human body housed divinity. Holiness and earthliness intertwined.

This is no run-of-the-mill messiah. His story was extraordinary. He called himself divine, yet allowed a minimum-wage Roman soldier to drive a nail into his wrist. He demanded purity, yet stood for the rights of a repentant whore. He called men to march, yet refused to allow them to call him King. He sent men into all the world, yet equipped them with only bended knees and memories of a resurrected carpenter.

We can't regard him as simply a good teacher. His claims are too outrageous to limit him to the company of Socrates or Aristotle. Nor can we categorize him as one of many prophets sent to reveal eternal truths. His own claims eliminate that possibility.

Then who is He?

Let's try to find out. Let's follow his sandalprints. Let's sit on the cold, hard floor of the cave in which he was born. Let's smell the sawdust of the carpentry shop. Let's hear his sandals slap the hard trails of Galilee. Let's sigh as we touch the healed sores of the leper. Let's smile as we see his compassion with the woman at the well. Let's cringe as we hear the hissing of hell's Satan. Let's let our voices soar with the praises of multitudes. Let's try to see Him.

Has it been a while since you have seen Him? If your prayers seem stale, it probably has. If your faith seems to be trembling, perhaps your vision of Him has blurred. If you can't find power to face your problems, perhaps it is time to face him.

One warning. Something happens to a person who has witnessed His Majesty. He becomes addicted. One glimpse of the King and you are consumed by a desire to see more of him and say more about him. Pew-warming is no longer an option. Junk religion will no longer suffice. Sensation-seeking is needless. Once you have seen His face you will forever long to see it again.

My prayer for my writings--without apologies--is that the Divine Surgeon will use them as delicate surgical tools to restore sight. That blurriness will be focused and darkness dispersed. That the Christ will emerge from a wavy figure walking out of a desert mirage to become the touchable face of a best friend. That we will lay our faces at the pierced feet and join Thomas in proclaiming, "My Lord and my God." And, most supremely, that we will whisper the secret of the universe, "We were eyewitnesses of His Majesty."

*[This is the opening chapter of *God Came Near*, copyright 1987 by Max Lucado. Published by Multnomah Press; reprinted by permission.]*

# THE CASINO SUPERVISOR WHO FOUND A SURE THING

## Part 2: "Believe What I Say, or Else!"

Joe Domico

[When his dreams were fulfilled--becoming a casino supervisor at nineteen--Joe found they were nightmares. Turning from empty religion to the Bible, he found a life-changing relationship with the living Christ. But then some fellow-believers tried to take away his freedom.]

After my conversion I continued to read God's Word. At the same time, I was being taught creeds which were neither written or spoken--though we claimed to have no creed but Christ. I questioned those which seemed to oppose the clear teaching of God's Word. This caused contention between brothers in the church and myself. I couldn't comprehend the unsaid, unstated and unwritten creed of amillennialism-only, with zero tolerance for other prophetic viewpoints.

When I entered the now defunct Northeastern Junior Christian College as a freshman in January 1985, I saw that my local church was not alone in that attitude. But in the Fall of that same year, upon entering Abilene Christian University, I thought that *I* was alone. I had never heard about brother Boll, the Restoration pioneers' diverse views of the end times, W&W, and most of all, the early churches' premillennial views. No one in Abilene talked about prophecy. I even tried to believe the a-mill view, but I knew it was wrong. So instead I spoke out against it and, in turn, was labeled a false teacher.

At ACU I was rebuked again and again and even challenged to a debate. Professors and "Bible Majors" either tried to set me straight or, as the majority did, shunned me. It was upsetting, because some of these boys who grew up in the church didn't even know their Bibles. Instead, these guys just were taught by men, both in college and in their home churches, many times without questioning it. There is nothing wrong with men teaching. The ascended Jesus gave men as gifts to the church (Eph. 4:11). Some traditions are also good. It was just that they accepted these unwritten creeds. And worst of all, they were *afraid* to discuss end-time prophecy. They are allowed, by these colleges, to study and read atheistic modernists who completely deny the truth. They are encouraged to do so because some of them worship "scholarship." But if one challenges someone on the book of Revelation, then they are anathema.

I was told that God is done with the nation of Israel, that Jesus is not coming to rule the earth in glory, and--the most shocking "fact" of

all to someone who lives on this planet--that Satan had been bound and is in the abyss. I knew in my heart that was wrong. (While I was unsaved and in darkness I saw Satan and his messengers.) These brothers never mentioned Christ's coming or the future. They were afraid of the book of Revelation. Why?

All this upset me, because of the fact that none of the leaders in the early Restoration Movement had taught non-tolerant amillennialism. They were either pre-mill or post-mill. It wasn't until 1993 that I found out about the move to destroy all of the pre-mills out of the acappella church by debaters and editors with the authority of a pope. Some of Foy E. Wallace's heroes, as I read now, were Moses Lard and J.W. McGarvey; did he know they were pre-mills?

What I don't understand is how this can be. These men talk as if they make their prophetic view a test of fellowship. In fact, that is exactly what they do. They have no authority to do this! But they did and continue to intimidate those who disagree.

In the last few years, I have been able to obtain several copies of Foy E. Wallace, Jr.'s books. After reading these books I have changed some of my views. I was so overwhelmed with Foy's commentaries. The first one was a commentary on *Revelation*. This is only an anti-pre-mill look at the book, not a commentary. His view of miracles and Satan's being bound scares me. Since Satan is not around, he thought that *he* must attack his brethren. The "commentary" only strengthened my firm foundation of the Book of Revelation. I thought Wallace wasted a lot of effort writing it. The second book is on *God's Prophetic Word*. It is very similar to the volume above. Its content also strengthened my pre-mill views on end times. The third is *The Instrumental Music Question*. After reading this book which combats the use of the "mechanical instrument," I am fully convinced in my own mind that the Lord is pleased with instrumental music (Psalm 92:1-3). These three books which were supposed to bring me to their "truth" showed me the error taught in them. They used quotes and Scriptures out of context, and led me to see the folly of his reasoning.

While in Abilene, I got to hear Dr. David Reagan, who has written for W&W. Then in my Restoration History class, I learned that there *used to be* pre-mills in the movement. I believe that the teacher might have mentioned brother Boll. I realized that I wasn't alone. Of course, I always was reading books and listening to tapes by Dallas Seminary people as well as Philadelphia College of Bible (which is near us here).

## An exciting, Difficult Work

Our congregation was established in March, 1992. We have members who wanted to establish a new congregation in Gloucester County, New Jersey (Philadelphia suburbs). They were joined by members of the independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (instrumental), who also wanted to do the same. Restoration Churches up here are none or rare. Some of the few that did exist closed their doors. The congregations around here are weak and small and looked cultic to outsiders. I was asked to be the minister at the new Gateway Church which was a merger of different people who have come out of these churches, and here we are!

Gateway Church is really exciting. We have several new believers, and several new transfers from other churches. We acknowledge the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so much that we have been labeled "charismatic" by the few Churches of Christ in the Philadelphia area. We are *not* charismatic, but believe God is powerful and able to do anything He wants. It is hard work here. We have no support from the outside and we are a mission church.

We are hoping that some churches might realize that there are so many people up here and send either financial support or missionaries. It is difficult with so many people around here to have a church with no one who is full time. I work at a high school as a Special Education teacher. It has really been a strain on the church and my family because I am not around for the sheep as much as I should be. Please pray for us that the Lord would establish us here and that we will impact this society with the Gospel. Pray also that I will be able to minister full-time and that He will send workers here. The fields are ready, but the workers are very few. If you would like to receive a free newsletter, write us at Gateway Church, Box 170, Westville, NJ 08093. By the way, we are always looking for Christians who would like to be transplanted here as missionaries or vocational missionaries. Nothing is more rewarding than establishing authentic, New Testament Christians.

# NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaas

## **Straight to the Point**

Dear Parents,

I'm one of your child's teachers. I have a problem. I'm afraid that I'm about to become one of the teachers who is getting tired and fed up. You see, I'm tired of devoting so much time to study in preparation for your child's class only to find that you child is absent again, and not because of illness.

You see, I do my best to teach your child that God must come first in their lives only to have you show them that it is okay to put everything else first. You allow them to go to sports events, school activities, community activities and other functions instead of worship. When you do this you are allowing worldly things to come first in their lives. How do you expect me to convince them to put God first in their lives when I only have them for such a short time?

Parents, please wake up before it is too late. Please make sure that God has first place in your life and then by example and teaching, strive to have your children put God first in their lives. Learn to tell your children "No" when it comes to activities that might come up when they should be at worship service. Saying "No" might save their souls in the end.

Parents, please wake up so that when your child is grown and on his own, you won't find yourself asking, "Why won't he come to worship services?" "Why is he unfaithful?"

Since I am your child's teacher, I might have some influence on him

but you have more. Please help him to put God first in his life.

Your child's teacher.

--Martha Gentry, via Turkey Creek, LA bulletin, sent to Word and Work by Locust Street Church of Christ.

## **Spread the Good News**

A Message Distributed by Iroquois Church of Christ (Louisville) to its Neighbors:

To help you learn more about the Bible, we are offering a free correspondence course. We have courses both for the saved and the unsaved. You have the choice of studying in the privacy of your own home or we can come and study with you. We must take advantage of every opportunity to study God's Word. If you want to enroll, please let us know.

## **Resignations, Relocations and Retirements**

Bro. Joe Strunk has resigned as minister of Antioch Church in Franklin County near Frankfort, Ky. The church is seeking a person to fill the usual responsibilities of a local minister with the added privilege of superintending a Christian camp work. The facilities, the attitude of the local congregation, and the location provide unlimited opportunities to promote Christ's Gospel in Kentucky's Capital City. Interested ones write Asa Tipton, 828 Hillwood, Frankfort, Ky. 40601 or call (502) 223-8714.



### **Jennings, LA Church of Christ**

David Johnson now ministers at the Jennings Church of Christ, beginning Oct. 24. He and Karen have labored at Alexandria for several years, after returning from Louisville, where he studied at the School of Biblical Studies and helped minister at the Iroquois Church of Christ.

### **Pleasant Grove Church of Christ, Switz City, IN**

As is known by most Word and Work readers by now, Orell Overman has resigned from Pleasant Grove Church. As soon as God gives us a new minister, Orell and Francis will be off to visit the many friends and places that have given them great memories for all these years.

I remember him in Jennings, LA, about 31 years ago. I was a kid then, but even then he impressed me. Years later I got to work with him here in Indiana at Woodland and here at Pleasant Grove. What a man of God!

Orell has shared here at Pleasant Grove for some 39 years. A whole generation has died and another grown up while he was here. This marvelous feat, along with the tremendous monument called Woodland Bible Camp, leaves us without words to adequately honor and thank him. Yet we know God has kept the proper records and knows the great rewards due Orell. So we just publically thank him for all the years of work. His work was always honorable and always so unassuming, knowing that only through God can anything worthwhile be accomplished.

We also write to ask Word and Work readers to pray with us for God to send us the right man/family to share and work with us. Anyone

interested in coming to Pleasant Grove, please contact Tooger Smith, Rt. 1, Box 272, Lyons, IN 47443. (812) 659-2616.

### **Commendations are Appreciated**

From Westminster Church of Christ, Westminster, MD

As always I enjoyed the last issue of W and W. It is quite a value for \$6.00. Keep up the good work.

We are not a "premillennial" congregation although some here do hold premillennial views. We do not make millennial views or use or nonuse of instrumental music or other matters of opinion tests of fellowship. We have our struggles as a congregation in what is for the restoration movement a mission field but it is exciting to minister in a Church of Christ that truly tries to follow scripture alone without being bound by tradition. --Gary Pearson

### **A Great Idea at Cramer Church of Christ, Lexington**

Word and Work magazines are available in the vestibule. These are free of charge (the church pays for them), and each family is encouraged to take them and read them. Notice especially the News and Notes section. God is Alive! --Benjie Hill in their bulletin.

### **The Great Debate: Which Issue is Best of All?**

"Just wanted you to know I think the July '93 issue of W & W has to be your *best* one yet . . ."

--Lona Spurlock, Garland, TX

### **Ralph Avenue Church of Christ**

. . . We especially welcome our young people who have been busy this summer. Today is our fall kick-off for Bible Bucks. WHAT DOES

THAT MEAN? It means every time our young people come to church, every time they learn their memory work, every time they complete a project the teacher has assigned, they earn Bible Bucks. In December we will have a party and at that time there will be a store where they can use their Bible Bucks to purchase gifts for others or things for themselves.

### **Christian Youth Encampment, DeRidder, LA**

#### ***Summer Report Given:***

The reports given at the Corporation Meeting August 14 were very encouraging.

Junior Week continues to lead in number of campers with 118. Lessons were on the life of Joseph. It rained every day, but the week was joyful, though a bit mildewy. Services of outstanding adults helped.

Junior High Week had 45 campers with the lessons on nature study and New Testament characters: John the Baptist, Peter, Stephen, Philip, and Jesus. Eight baptisms were witnessed and two or three more were reported after the campers returned home.

Senior High Week had 63 campers, the most in a very long time. Reports were that it was an excellent week.

Camp season was completed without any major injuries or illnesses. No major problems were encountered with the facilities. God was very gracious and blessed the camp weeks.

Some 24 congregations in Louisiana and Texas participate in this camp work, representing an estimated 1500-2000 members.

"Ingallwood Echoes" is a quarterly newsletter from Christian

Youth Encampment, Rt. 4, Box 230, DeRidder, LA 70634, edited by Douglas Broyles.

### **Maple Manor Christian Home, Adult Division**

Remember that Maple Manor is a 24-hour a day, 365 day a year operation. There is a licensed nurse, a medication aide, and a certified nursing assistant on duty around the clock. So, whenever you pray for Maple Manor, remember those employees on duty as they care for our residents. (Recently, we have been the recipients of some very good compliments concerning the staff, the care they give, and how they act when one of our residents passes away. Credit to whom credit is due!!)

Of course, during the day, there are many more on duty. The kitchen opens around 4:30 in the morning and closes at 6:00 at night. Laundry and housekeeping go on for eight hours each day of the week. A larger crew of nursing, office staff, activities and social services, and administrator are in for the day shift. The Lord is so very gracious and we are truly grateful for all His blessings.

We have had several gifts above and beyond the regular during the month of August and they have been very welcome! However, we continue to be in need. As I write this, I am waiting for funds to come in, so some bills can be paid. Please be in prayer for our financial needs!

### **Christian Magazines**

There are two monthly magazines that may aid you in discernment for responsible television viewing. These two are the American Family Association *Journal* and *Focus on the Family*. The latter is part of the ministry of noted Chris-

tian psychologist James Dobson and the former is a publication of Donald Wildmon. If you would like to subscribe to these magazines the addresses are

### **Focus on the Family**

P.O. Box 35500  
Colorado Springs, CO  
80935-3550

Write for a sample copy -  
Subscriptions are free

### **AFA Journal**

P.O. Drawer 2440  
Tupelo, MS 38803  
Single Subscription \$15 / yr.  
Group of 10 or more \$4 / yr.  
(Free for ministers, I think)

### **Where's The Problem?**

The Boulevard Church of Christ in Baton Rouge, LA recently engaged in a study of the problem question: "Why are we losing our young people?" They made a very thorough study using that congregation and a cross-section of congregations throughout the brotherhood. The study produced some rather interesting and startling statistics. Over the years, they found they had been losing about 38% of their young people. The loss figure one year was as high as 73%. They found that where both parents were faithful and active in attendance, work and support, 93% of the children remained faithful and became

active in the work of the church. Where only one parent was faithful and active, 74% of the children continued faithful in the Christian life. Where parents were reasonably faithful in attendance at Bible study and worship, but inactive in the work, 54% of the children continued in their relationship with Christ and His church. Where parents only attended occasionally the children remained faithful in only 6% of the cases!

Why are we losing so many of our young people? To answer this question, parents should examine their own lives first. Parental delinquency is the real and underlying cause of juvenile delinquency in the nation and in the church. Parents, if your children are lost to Christ, it may well be because of your indifference and neglect in the matter of Bible study, worship and putting God first.

### **New Preacher at Highway Church in Pekin**

Jeff Mayeux, a student at the School of Biblical Studies in Louisville, is now part-time minister in Pekin, Indiana--effective Sept. 1.

Jeff, his wife Julie, and new daughter Lauren have moved into the church parsonage. Jeff will share the pulpit teaching duties with other men--Richard Paris, Bill Allen and Steve Hill primarily. He does this so he can concentrate on his full load of studies at SBS

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# YE SERVANTS OF GOD, YOUR MASTER PROCLAIM

Charles Wesley

(Tune: O Worship the King)

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,  
And publish abroad His wonderful name;  
The name all victorious of Jesus extol;  
His kingdom is glorious, He rules over all.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save;  
And still He is nigh--His presence we have;  
The great congregation His triumph shall sing,  
Ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

Salvation to God who sits on the throne,  
Let all cry aloud, and honor the Son;  
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
Fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore and give Him His right,  
All glory and pow'r, all wisdom and might;  
All honor and blessing, with angels above,  
And thanks never ceasing, and infinite love.

Amen.