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JANUARY, 1997

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as the spring rains that water the earth."

(Hosea 6:3, R.S.V.)

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THEME:

KNOW THE LORD!

"Why We Must Think Rightly About God"

(Alex V. Wilson) / A. W. Tozer

The title to this editorial is the title of chapter one in the late A. W. Tozer's book, THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY, written in 1961. Tozer, a preacher, writer and editor, wielded a profound influence on me and many others. (Though he departed from this life in 1963, a number of his writings continue in print. Take advantage of them.) I praise our Heavenly Father for this brother's clarion call to make knowing the Lord the top priority in life.

To introduce this issue on some of the blessed attributes of the Most High God, I'll share with you quotes from his book mentioned above, plus another one.

This book is called forth by a condition which has existed in the Church for some years and is steadily growing worse. I refer to the loss of the concept of majesty from the popular religious mind. The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshiping men. This she has done not deliberately, but little by little and without her knowledge; and her very unawareness only makes her situation all the more tragic....

With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine Presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence....The only way to recoup our spiritual losses is to go back to the cause of them and make such corrections as the truth warrants. The decline of the knowledge of the holy has brought on our troubles. A rediscovery of the majesty of God will go a long way toward curing them. It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God is erroneous or inadequate.

* * * *

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us....No religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move

toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech.

From THE PURSUIT OF GOD, also by Tozer:

The modern scientist has lost God amid the wonders of His *world*; we Christians are in real danger of losing God amid the wonders of His *Word*. We have almost forgotten that God is a Person and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can.

* * * *

The truth of Wesley's words is established before our eyes: "Orthodoxy, or right opinion, is at best a very slender part of religion. *Though right attitudes cannot exist without right opinions, yet right opinions may exist without right attitudes.* There may be a right opinion about God without either love or one right attitude toward Him. Satan is a proof of this." [The emphasis (italics, etc.) throughout the article is ours, not Tozer's. --AVW]

There are today many millions of people who hold "right opinions," probably more than ever before in the history of the Church. Yet I wonder if there was ever a time when true spiritual worship was at a lower ebb. [Written in 1948; thankfully, in *some* places there has been improvement in this area.--AVW]

Sound Bible exposition is a must in the Church of the Living God. Without it no church can be a New Testament church. But exposition may be carried on in such a way as to leave the hearers devoid of any true spiritual nourishment whatever. For **IT IS NOT MERE WORDS THAT NOURISH THE SOUL, BUT GOD HIMSELF**, and unless the hearers find God in personal experience they are not the better for having heard the truth. The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may delight in His Presence and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the center of their hearts.

May these quotes from Tozer, and the following articles as well, stimulate us not merely to **know about** our God, holding right opinions, but also to **truly know Him**: to fear, adore, love, obey and serve Him--having right attitudes.

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

R. H. Boll, 1930

Sometimes a man will be found who is paralyzed by the thought that God knew beforehand what would become of him, and that by no chance could the outcome ever be different than God foreknew it would be. On the heels of this conclusion another idea sometimes follows: "If God foreknew that certain ones would go to perdition, why did He let them come into existence and live?" Or even, almost blasphemously, "What right has God to bring beings into existence and let them go their way, knowing beforehand that they would go to an endless hell?"

To such an attitude as that last question, the only answer is that of Rom. 9:20, "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" If God were minded to do any man a wrong, none of us could by any possibility help ourselves. We would not have as much come-back as the little worm that is trodden down on the pavement. But, blessed be His Name--He never treats any one wrong, and Himself will not and cannot do wrong. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." Moreover, His name is Love, and sometime with clearer eyes we shall see that all His thoughts and ways were only good and right, prompted by faithful-ness and love.

The mistake underlying these fatalistic difficulties is that foreknowledge is thought to be equivalent to predestination or foreordination. It is not. In its simple sense foreknowledge is simply knowing beforehand. In this sense it is the same whether the foreknowledge is predicated of God or of a man. A man may foreknow with accuracy that a thing is going to happen--as an astronomer may with great precision predict an eclipse; or an onlooker may foreknow that a falling body will strike the earth. We are aware that God could at any time arbitrarily interfere with the working of His natural laws, and that in this light His foreknowledge becomes predestination. When God deals in mere matters of *natural law* we may even grant that, though even in that God can do nothing "arbitrarily," but only what is in accord with true wisdom and goodness.

But if it is a question of what *a man wills to do*, there (within the limits of the man's free will and choice at least) God's foreknowledge is simply a knowing beforehand; for the determining of a man's course

lies with the man, all limits granted; and God keeps faith with men in this matter.

Who Fixes His Fate?

Two men were debating the old "Predestination" doctrine. "My brother," said the Predestinarian, "do you believe that God knows all things?" "Certainly," replied his opponent. "Do you believe He knows the future as well as the past?" "Of course." "Do you believe that God foreknew from eternity every man's eternal destiny?" "Yes." "And that God saw the stream of humanity flowing down the river of Time, and separating, one part going to perdition and the other to salvation?" "No doubt." "Then tell me, my brother, did God foreknow that as uncertain or as certain and fixed?" "If God foreknew it at all," conceded the other, "He must have foreknown it as a certainty." "Very well," said the Predestinarian--"if God foreknew it as a fixed and certain fact, who fixed it? Who made it certain beforehand? The man himself was not there to fix it, for he had not been created. Who then fixed it, and how was it fixed?"

The Predestinarian champion was wrong. Upon his own argument and premises that man *was* there, in the foreknowledge of God, and the man himself fixed his own fate; and God foreknew the man's destiny as fixed only as He foresaw the man himself fixing it by his own will and choice. So much for that.

How God Does Not Know

Moreover there is a sense in which God did not foreknow what the man would do; God takes no *official* knowledge and cognizance of a man's action until the man has committed it. To illustrate: Mr. Hoover knew instantly when his election to the Presidency of the United States was assured to him. But officially he was not supposed to know until he is formally apprised of the fact by the duly authorized committee. Not until then does he take official knowledge of it, or act upon it in any official manner.

So with God. We grant that He knows all things. Past and future lie as an eternal present before Him. But He does not in the case of a free moral agent presume upon His foreknowledge of what the man will do until the man has himself settled it. For example--we may safely assume that God knew perfectly well what was in Abraham's heart, and whether he would or would not obey God's command to offer up Isaac his son. But God waited until the child lay on the altar before He recognized Abraham's obedience. "*Now I know* that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." (Gen. 2:12). God does not presume on His foreknowledge. He gives men a fair chance to choose and to act according to their choice before He estimates their action and attitude. Thus He tested out Israel

that He "*might know*" what was in their heart, whether they would keep His commandments or not. (Deut. 8:2). Thus He left Hezekiah to pursue his own course without any interference "to try him that he *might know* all that was in his heart." (2 Chron. 32:31).

Did not the great Heart-knower know everything before? Yea, but such foreknowledge does not enter into His judgment of men: *they* must choose and *they* must act before God can and will take cognizance of their way. He does not even profess to know apart from man's self-determination. Where it seems that He spoke and acted on man's sin before it was done it was always because the man's decision was already made, and the rest was foregone conclusion. Even then He took nothing for granted, but waited and pleaded and warned if by any means the sinner would yet be turned. So fair is He.

In no case did He deal in judgment with a man for what he was going to do before he had done it. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me." (1 Sam. 15:10). Was God's choice of Saul a blunder? It *needed* not to have been. Saul had a fair chance. But did not God know what Saul would do? Doubtless--in His omniscience. Yet no such foreknowledge entered into the matter. God took Saul as he was, helped him, made good promises to him, and was sorry when he went wrong--exactly as He would have done if He had not known anything about it beforehand. Such instances are numberless; and surely if *God* does not presume on His own foreknowledge, *men* ought not, nor have they any occasion to stumble at it.

There is only one connection in which foreknowledge is equivalent to foreordination, and that is when God declares beforehand, *what He Himself is going to do*. In that case it is not only a thing foreknown but also afore fixed and determined. "Known unto God are all *His works* from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18, KJV). "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and *I will do all my pleasure*." (Isa. 46:10) It is in this sense that Christ was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23); and in this sense was He "foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world." (1 Peter 1:20). For God foreknew that *He* would send Him into the world for the redemption of the world; and by God's plan (the Lord Jesus Himself also entering into it) He was "delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4:25).

Adapted from a message given at the
Kentuckiana Ladies Retreat, 1996

THE AWESOME POWER OF GOD

Joyce Broyles

The little heart song says it all - "Our God is an awesome God, He reigns in Heaven above with wisdom, power, and love." For this to leap from our heads to our hearts, we have to realize that God chose us! That should make us want to know him better, and to get every fiber of our being involved in the same thing He cares about. To do that, we must know Him!

When my husband and I met Prince Charles in New Zealand, he came right up to Douglas, shook his hand, and asked him some questions. Now, we knew about him, but we could not have approached him. He came to us, but even so, we could not ask him questions. We had to let him take the lead. We could not delve deep into his personal life. Unlike the prince of England, Jehovah God, King of Kings, wants us to approach Him! He has taken the lead, and He wants us to delve deeper. In John 15:15, Jesus says "I no longer call you slaves or servants, but now I call you *friends!*" The awesome God of the universe gave us His story in the Bible with his Holy Spirit to help us know Him.

I chose Moses and John to help me tell you about the awesome power of God. They tell about His power through words about His Glory, His Grace, and His Truth.

His Glory

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God . . ." In my 8th grade literature class, we study 15 types of literature. When we read mythology, I point out that the Greeks, Romans, Persians, and others had gods who began after the universe was created. They were produced in wondrous ways, like Athena popping out of her father's head, and so on, but they could not be trusted. You never knew what mood they'd be in each day. Zeus might want to kill you or Athena may want your husband. And they all came after the creation of the universe.

As important as the creation story is in Genesis, I have come to believe that Moses was not so much writing to tell how things were created as he was to remind the Israelites that Jehovah God, their God, began *in the beginning*. His power came before the universe was created. When we catch a glimpse of His glory, we are empowered with

His strength and we see that He is more powerful than any god that has ever been imagined!

Later, in Exodus 16:6 and 7, after much wandering in the desert, hungry, and grumbling, the Israelites hear Moses tell them they will see God's glory when He provides for them in the morning with manna - *bread from heaven*.

Then, in the last 4 verses of the book of Exodus, Moses tells us that the glory of the Lord filled the *tabernacle*. They could not enter it because the cloud settled on it and filled it. In all their travels, the Israelite were led by the cloud by day and the fire by night. It "tabernacled" with them.

John introduces Jesus in the New Testament, writing in his gospel "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.*" In verse 14, he says, "The Word became flesh and '*tabernacled*' or made his home among us, and we saw his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Jesus mission was to let us see the glory of God. Instead of grumbling like Israel, we should try to catch the morning glory of the Lord!

Then in chapter 6:35, John tells us that Jesus is the *bread of life*. As Israel saw God's glory in the manna, their bread, we see his glory in Jesus, the bread of life. To catch a glimpse of His glory, and to help others get it, we must see it ourselves. Devotion time is *not* an option! We have to have regular devotions, a regular scheduled time with God, to keep us on an even keel, and looking for His glory.

Now sometimes we do not have an inkling of what God's glory can lead to. The Israelites did not know what they would eat, but God provided manna. All things work together for good. When Douglas was sent to Vietnam on the eve of our wedding, I was troubled, but God worked it out so that now, together with other events we have endured, we can empathize with others and comfort them.

His Grace

John writes in 1:14, "we saw His *glory*," but he did not stop there. He added, "full of *grace* and *truth*" to the verse because when we see God's glory and His power, it may overwhelm us and give us a feeling of inadequacy. After we see His glory, we must hear about His grace. We need to know He loves us in spite of our unrighteousness.

In John 4, the woman at the well needed grace. Hearing about the grace of God pointed her life toward God, toward the power of His grace. Then we see how God's glory changed her life. She had received the hope of His glory!

God is so Holy, He has to be righteous; but He cares, so He forgives. He gives grace. He is holy, but he isn't a tyrant. Remember, though, grace is not a license to sin. We must not misinterpret grace's message. We cannot abuse God's love and forgiveness just so we can do what we want to do.

Remember Moses asked "Who is like you, O Lord? Holy in all your ways?" Above all else, God is holy. Jehovah God takes law seriously, but he does not just write us up every time we goof. He is interested in our penitent hearts, so He is serious about grace, too. He insists on exacting standards of conduct, but then He gives us grace when we fail. His love takes us where we are and leads us to where we can say, "God of grace, God of glory."

Jesus' forgiveness knows no bounds. After Peter denied Him three times, He did not say, "That's the cut-off, Peter. You blew it. I need those keys back. Three strikes and you're out!" No, his forgiveness knew no bounds. He told Peter to feed the sheep.

And after he forgives, Jesus forgets. Do you believe that? Who preached on Pentecost? *We* would have given Peter probation, had him come forward and ask for prayer, wait to see if he was sincere! The other apostles probably thought they would get to speak!

His Truth

The Awesome power of God included His glory and His grace, and also His truth. In 1980 my husband and I took our children to Washington, D.C. There we toured the imposing building which houses the Supreme Court. Inside were carved the words, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The tragedy about those words is that many people are not free. They are bound by the here and now, because that's all they look at and think about.

We need to look beyond the here and now to eternity. Dad had a nervous breakdown when I was ten, and the school kids teased me about my crazy Dad, saying I was probably crazy, too. My Sunday school teacher worked with me to show God's grace in forgiving those kids who taunted me, saying His power would help me do it. But she did not stop there. She taught me until I could say, "If I'm going to live eternally, I can take anything dished out for 70 years!" This is only a stop along the road Home!

The Most Awesome Thing of All

In Matthew 20:1 - 20, Jesus told the parable of the workers in the vineyard who went out at 6:00 a.m., 9:00, 12 noon, 3:00 and 5:00. At 6:00 p.m. everyone was paid, receiving the same amount! As a teenager, when I read that, it made me angry. I thought those early 6 a.m.

workers were getting ripped off! I considered people who accepted the Lord late in life as 5:00 p.m. Christians, and myself as a 6:00 in the morning one.

I was thinking, when I get to heaven, I will be wearing my Jesus tee-shirt, carrying my Bible under my arm, proud of my SCC training. My name tag will read, "Joyce Broyles, 6 a.m. Christian." But as I meet others, like the apostle Paul and early martyrs who have suffered and sacrificed, I am humbled. I realize I am getting the same pay Paul is! The vineyard owner promised a dollar a day and he gave it to everyone who worked. Jesus promised a mansion, and He will keep His promise.

Now I am on my knees. I discard my name tag as I realize that I am a 5 o'clock p.m. Christian. Where once I was angry and jealous, now I am praying, "Oh God, I am overwhelmed! I have caught a glimpse of your glory, your grace, your truth, your awesome power! Thank you for saving me! Tell me what to do and I'll do it."

"He . . . looked round about on them with anger." -- Mark 3:5

DON'T FORGET HIS ANGER!

Paul S. Rees

Let us face it--Jesus was not only capable of anger--there were times when He also displayed it.

Some of the critics of our Lord have sputtered at this, thinking to charge Him with a flaw and to cast a shadow upon the claim of His sinlessness.

Some of the friends of Jesus have been troubled too, though in a different mood and manner. They have found it difficult to reconcile His obvious indignation with His gentleness and self-restraint.

Perhaps we should not be surprised at this--either at the criticism of His foes or the perplexity of His friends. For one thing, all that Christ was, and is, in the total fact of His being, is not easy to grasp, not even by the reverent mind, to say nothing of the irreverent. We so readily form, especially in our childhood, a mental picture of the Master that is a one-sided stereotype. When such a picture, usually of the "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," fills our minds, we find it hard to explain such scalding sentiments and words as, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:29, 33).

For another thing, we find that, where anger is concerned, the experiences that we have had with it make it far from easy to fit in with the perfection of our Lord's character.

God knows we have had no lack of experience with it. Anger is among the universals in our emotional system. It starts early and spreads wide. Long before any Christian management of it comes into play, it has to be curbed or it will spoil the child and devastate the family. Anger is under every roof and out on every street. Few people can make a million, but anybody can "get mad."

What is more, if we are at all reflective we are bound to have noticed that when people are angry they almost invariably make fools of themselves.

Putting all these together, it is small wonder that the anger of Jesus, in certain circumstances, presents a problem. "How come?" we ask, in the phraseology of the street.

The first thing I want to suggest is not a direct answer to the problem at all, though I dare to hope that it will have the effect of letting in some light.

We are going to take a look at those who were the objects of our Lord's indignation and severity.

First, there were the Pharisees. We see them in clear, contemptible colors in the story from which our text derives. It was in the synagogue in Capernaum. The day was the Sabbath. The keen eyes of the Master fell on a poor man with a withered arm. Should not the man be healed, even though such a ministry to his body might violate the letter of the rigid regulations for Sabbath-keeping that the Pharisees so jealously guarded? When they refused, silently and sullenly, to admit that it was better to do good than to do evil on the Sabbath, the Master's eye was suddenly lit with a blaze of anger, in the flame of which He proceeded to make the man whole.

Pharisees, for whom religion had hardened down into rigid restrictions and regulations--these felt the heat of our Lord's aroused displeasure.

Then there were the disciples. Even they sometimes felt the lash of His wrath. Mark, again, is our narrator. In chapter 10 he tells of a day when many parents brought their children to Him for a touch of His hand upon them. The disciples, either out of cold appreciation for children or out of intense anxiety about the Master's time and strength, interfered. They tried to push the parents and their little ones away. It was a breach of love that Jesus could not pass by. As Mark describes

it, He "was moved with indignation, and said unto them, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God'" (Mark 10:14, ASV).

Again, there were the money-changers in the temple. God's house of praise and prayer had been turned into man's house of purchase and profit. The angry ardor of our Lord's holy soul laid hold of some things used by the cattle drivers and flailed out the greedy profiteers with their animals, leaving behind, on friend and foe, an impression of something flamingly awesome in character and face of the Galilean. As His disciples reflected on it, the only thing they could think of was a passage from Psalms: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (Psalm 69:9)!

Pharisees with their frigid formalism; disciples with their fussy, if brief, self-importance and unconcern about little children; merchandisers who exploited worship for profits--these were the people on whom the anger of Jesus descended.

Does this strike you as being in any way odd? Can you not think of others who were more wretchedly deserving of His indignation than these? What about the Roman soldiers who kept the Jewish people in what was to them a degrading subjection? If Jesus was ever angry with them, no a hint of it has leaked though into the record.

There was Herod. His life was indecent and cruel. Was there no anger poured on him? None that is reported.

There was Pilate. He was a rogue of a politician: ruthless part of the time, diplomatic part of the time, self-seeking all the time. No anger for him? None.

Or even Judas--Judas the betrayer--no boiling-over of deserved wrath upon him? None.

Strange anger, this! We had better ponder it well. Pharisees, disciples, money-changers--they were smitten by it.

If these were objects of our Saviour's indignation, what, in the next place, were the occasions when His feelings were loosed in severity?

I have already hinted at these matters but I want now to look into them more closely.

Take the case of the Pharisees who sit there scowling in the background on our text. Their dark eyes are saying, "If He heals this man on the Sabbath, we'll make it hot for Him!"

What vexed the soul of Christ was the warped state of mind and the perverted condition of heart that could give petty rules of Sabbath-keeping more importance than the welfare of men. This crippled man could remain crippled all his days so far as they were concerned. All that mattered was the preservation of a man-made tradition of Sabbath-reverence.

Because the ancient law of Israel prohibited the carrying of a needless "burden" on the Sabbath, the Pharisees had forbidden a tailor to have a needle in his pocket on that day, or any person to wear shoes with nails in them! The legal technicalities were everything; the spirit of the law was nothing. This blindness and distortion of mind put a flame in Jesus' eye and drew down hot rebuke from His holy lips.

Do you think that His eye is less flaming or His lips less reproving today? I don't.

When property values are more important to us than human values, when interest in money surpasses interest in men, there is still a searing fire of indignation within Him. God, "who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," has revealed in His Son a burning anger against the inhumanity of man to man. And it is all the worse when it is "doctored up" into something like piety.

Or, take the case of the disciples who interfered with the little children when they flocked around the blessed Master. Let us concede that these men meant well. They were nevertheless far out of line with the mind of Jesus. He was indignant with them for even imagining that He did not want to be bothered with women and their little children. The worth of a child--how could they discount that? How could they be in such a fog about it?

Maybe we had better give the question another pitch: How can we be so careless about getting our children to Christ? How can we be so complacent about the swift breakdown of marriage loyalties and the resulting damage to the emotions of our children?

How can we be so erratic and irrational in our treatment of our own children--part of the time indulgent, part of the time cruel--that the terrified creatures know not what to expect of us?

How can we deceive ourselves into thinking that we can rear our children well by proxy? Between the day nursery, the public schools, the movies, the comics at the corner drugstore, the alley gang or even the Boy Scouts, the son is all taken care of, while you, father, take it easy at the club or raise the glass in the tavern.

How can we be so content to let the beer and liquor industry, through television and magazines, make our homes the dumping ground for their "Madison Avenue" camouflaged but none the less poisonous products?

How can we rest so quietly while millions of America's children grow up in empty-minded ignorance of the Bible and empty-hearted ignorance of the way to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord?

Or take the case of those money changers in the temple. They drew the holy ire of the Son of God because they made a financially profitable traffic out of the sanctities and spiritualities of the temple. They made religion serve their own greedy ends and not the purposes of God. That was both selfish and hypocritical.

And hypocrisy, let us never forget, struck from Jesus the spark of such angry protest and rebuke as to make one shudder in its presence. Still, there was the churchman, of whom a distinguished friend of mine told me, who in his dying hours was covered with remorse when to a brother-minister he confessed, "I have used the offices of the church as stepping stones to gratify my own ambitions." Had he no stinging sense that the anger of His Lord was kindled against Him while he did it?

These are the evils that ignite anger in Christ: the warped mind that rates religious form above the welfare of needy men; the preoccupation with other things that keeps us from bringing little children into the waiting arms of the Saviour; the self-centeredness that turns the church into an "accommodation train" on which we ride to the realization of our own egoistic ends.

Let me close by gathering up certain **observations on the anger of Jesus** that, in part, grow out of what has been already said and, for the rest, spring from our knowledge of the Bible's account of Him. I shall name three.

(1) Christ was never angry for personal or self-regarding reasons. Therein may be seen immediately the difference between His anger and the kind so common among us.

Was He angry when he was personally insulted? Never. When He was falsely accused and slandered? Never. When they spit in His face? No. When they plucked at His beard? No. When they mocked Him as a make-believe king? No. When they whipped Him with scourge? No. When they nailed Him to a cross? No. Not a trace of it!

Our stupid anger is usually shot through with selfishness or occasioned by pettiness as when a motorist cuts in ahead of us, a clerk be-

hind the counter doesn't please us, a member of the family contradicts us.

As Dr. Charles Jefferson once said: "We become indignant over trifles. But in the presence of gigantic outrages perpetrated on the helpless and the weak, some of us are as calm as a summer morning." To our shame!

(2) That leads readily to my second observation: **The anger of Jesus was not only a sinless but a necessary part of His perfect holiness of character.**

Because Christ's love was so superbly and tenderly shown, a mass of people in our day have run off with the false notion that Jesus was nothing but an incarnation of sentimental good-naturedness. They should learn that the Christ of their soft fancy is not the Christ of the New Testament. Within the perfect tension of His personality Jesus held both gentleness and severity, love and hate, for he who does not nobly hate cannot magnificently love. In the first chapter of Hebrews it is said of Him that He "loved righteousness and hated iniquity." The hatred, the anger, if you please, is but the negative side of His holiness, whereof the positive side is love.

Do you see what that means if you and I have His nature and Spirit in us? It will take the selfishness out of our temper and give it a holy quality. It will increase our capacity to be angry with the giant evils that are blighting bodies and damning souls all around us. When we can put up with these evils tolerantly and calmly, we have parted company with the virile Christ who now and again makes us fall back in awe at His withering indignation.

(3) The final observation is this: **The anger of Jesus was tempered and textured with grief.** The sentence of which our text is part goes on to say that Jesus "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart."

So there was grief as well as granite in the Master's anger. If His love were all gentleness and no indignation, it would become intolerably soft and mushy. If it were all indignation and no compassion, it would turn out to be hopelessly hard and cruel. It is the blending of both.

Moreover, the indignation, I suspect, actually was for the hardening of their hearts. the grief was for them. In that compassion lay their hope--and ours, too, if we have the humility to recognize it.

Seeds of Contemplation about "I AM WHO I AM"

(Exodus 3:13,14)

God's Holiness and Creation's Health

"God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition needed for the health of His universe. Whatever is holy is healthy and sound; evil is a deadly moral sickness. Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health--that is, its holiness--whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. [Rev.11:18.] When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from moral ruin, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgment of God in the world's history has been a holy act of preservation. **The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health and wellbeing of all creation are inseparably united.** God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates evil as a mother hates the cancer that threatens her child."

--A. W. Tozer, in *The Knowledge of the Holy* [Emphasis added]

* * * *

God's Refrigerator

"May I share with you a favorite verse of mine? I like it so much I wrote it on the first page of my Bible.

'Because he delights in me, he saved me' (Ps. 18:19).

"And you thought he saved you because of your decency. You thought he saved you because of your good works. Sorry. If that were the case, your salvation would be lost when your works got weak. There are many reasons God saves you: to bring glory to himself, to demonstrate his sovereignty. But one of the sweetest reasons God saved you is because he is fond of you. He likes having you around. 'As a man rejoices over his new wife, so your God will rejoice over you' (Isa. 62:5).

"If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If he had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. When you want to talk, he'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and he chose your heart. And the Christmas gift he sent you in Bethlehem? Face it, friend. He's crazy about you.

"The last thing you should worry about is being a nuisance to God. All you need to concentrate on is doing what he tells you to do."

--Max Lucado, in *A Gentle Thunder*

[Editor's introduction: In 1992, the last year that he published RESTORATION REVIEW, Leroy Garrett wrote a series of articles entitled "What Must the Church of Christ Do to be Saved?" He meant, saved from futility, irrelevance, sectarianism, obsolescence, etc. The following article is from that series. He is addressing primarily "mainline" Churches of Christ of the Stone/Campbell movement. While *Word and Work* has always stressed God's grace, let us not think we need no reminders. Legalism is an ever-present menace to all Christians, always. So let's read and heed.]

WE MUST STAND IN THE GRACE OF GOD

Leroy Garrett

This is the true grace of God in which you stand.--1 Peter 5:12

Every member of the Church of Christ believes in the grace of God. They would all readily acknowledge that we are saved by the grace of God and not by our own works. No one among us has the slightest interest in minimizing the significance of the grace of God.

[But] if the Church of Christ is to be saved it must, as the above passage indicates, *stand* in the grace of God, and not simply believe in it. The Church of Christ has a head knowledge of grace, but at the gut level it does not, generally, know the grace of God. To put it another way, we must come to terms with the grace of God, recognizing that it is a reality to be realized. It is like living in a house wired for electricity and not being plugged into the power. This is why we're not going anywhere, we're not plugged in.

When we consider what grace does for people, we do not appear to have "seen the grace of God," to quote Acts 11:23, even though we believe it is around. Grace makes believers more and more like Christ, but we are not known for our Christlikeness. Grace causes them to exult in their blessings, filling them with joy, good humor, and laughter; but we are not known for those qualities. Grace makes people gracious, less critical, more tolerant and more accepting; but is this where we are? Grace is never what one deserves, but is this what we have emphasized? Grace is God's free gift, unconditionally bestowed, no strings attached, but haven't we attached strings?

To put all this another way, the Church of Christ may be guilty of doing to the grace of God what Paul took pains not to do, as in Gal. 2:21: "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain." The RSV has it, "I do not nullify the grace of God," but Phillips may best express it with, "I re-

fuse to make nonsense of the grace of God," or perhaps the Jerusalem Bible, "I cannot bring myself to give up God's gift."

This shows that it is quite possible for Christians to leave unopened God's precious gift of grace, which is to lay it aside unclaimed, or to make nonsense of it. Being the pragmatic individualists that we are, a "do it yourself" people, we can't believe there are really any free lunches, not even in religion. Grace can't really be a completely free gift, we figure, for we have to do our part--by repenting or being baptized, or going to church, or something!--for it is illogical that God would freely bestow his grace apart from our cooperation. It is our pragmatism, our humanism, our fleshly pride--yes, our logic--that causes us to do what Paul sought to avoid, nullify the gift by failing to realize that it was free, unconditionally free. Of course it is illogical, that is what makes it grace. There is no logic in giving heaven itself to people that do not deserve it.

President Nixon's pardon illustrates this. He was guilty before the eyes of the law. He did not deserve the pardon. There was nothing he did or could do that merited it. He was utterly helpless. A representative of President Ford delivered the pardon. Nixon only needed to accept the free gift by signing a document of acceptance. He said it was the most difficult thing he ever did.

Why was it so difficult? For the same reason grace as a free gift is always difficult for the pride of man to accept. If Nixon had been told he deserved the pardon for his devoted service to his country, it would not have been difficult for him to accept. Neither would it have been grace. Nixon's pardon was an unconditional free gift of grace, no strings attached. Only the enjoyment of the grace was conditional. He had to accept it.

An illustration I borrow from Alexander Campbell may be better. Campbell wanted to show that God's grace is unconditionally bestowed to all mankind, apart from any worth, merit, or works on man's part. But the appropriation and enjoyment of the grace is conditional. To illustrate this he told a story of a ship at sea in peril in a raging storm. It was sinking and all on board were lost. An old captain of the sea saw their predicament from the shore, and out of the goodness and mercy of his heart sent his son in a lifeboat into the dangerous sea to the doomed ship. The son cried to them amidst the storm that they were saved, beckoning them into the lifeboat. That is grace, Campbell said, sheer grace, apart from any initiative on the part of the lost. The bestowal and presence of the grace was unconditional.

But, Campbell goes on, to appropriate the free gift of grace and to enjoy its benefits, the men on the doomed ship had to get in the lifeboat. Like Peter did on Pentecost in Acts 2, the son could have cried

out to the men on the doomed ship, "Save yourselves," but this can only mean something like "Accept the gift" or "Take advantage of what my father has done for you." It would be nonsense to say that the men did anything to merit the grace. They merely reached out and accepted an unconditional free gift of grace. That of course they had to do, but that made the grace no less free.

That is where baptism comes in. It is God's way of having us accept the gift. And even baptism is not something we do as much as it is something done to us. Baptism is an act of grace, appropriating for us the free gift.

And even if the men did, once in the lifeboat, cooperate with the son in maneuvering the boat through the tempestuous sea to shore, all of them rowing for their lives, their salvation was still only by the grace of the father. They "worked out their salvation with fear and trembling" because they had already been saved by grace, not in order to be saved by their own works. That is why we do good works, not to be saved but because we are saved.

While no illustration is perfect, that one goes far in showing what grace is and how we are to respond to it. Donald Barnhouse is credited with saying that love that goes upward is worship, love that goes outward is affection, and love that stoops is grace. That says it. Grace always stoops, to the point of being extravagant. Why should God give his Son to die for a recreant bunch like us? We are saved only because the great God of heaven chose to stoop to our level and lift us up.

The Church of Christ must boldly claim such great texts on grace as Eph. 2:8-9 as its own: "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." And Paul's great conclusion must be our own: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). And we must plug into some of Paul's not's--"Not having our own righteousness which we have done." (Tit. 3:5). Let's claim the free gift and make it our own. It is by God's grace, not by our works. It is mercy that makes us righteous, not our own goodness. It is by nothing that we do ourselves.

Only grace will free us from our legalism. Only grace will deliver us from the backwater of our sectarianism. Only grace will give us the assurance of our salvation. So long as we are deceived into believing that we have to do it" and that righteousness is at least partly our own doing, we can never be sure of our standing with God. We must realize that God's grace is not auctioned off to the highest bidder. We can do nothing to merit it, we cannot work enough to earn it, we cannot be good enough to deserve it, we cannot be rich enough to buy it, we can-

not muster enough power to wrest it. Grace is God's free gift, all because he loves us, abundantly and extravagantly.

When we "stand" in the grace of God, trusting in his goodness and mercy, then love, joy, and peace will flood our hearts. We will then be a more gracious people, magnanimous, full of life and enthusiasm, eager to praise God for his great mercy. We will take ourselves less seriously and be able to laugh at our foibles. We will not be so uptight, we'll quit worrying, be less critical of others, more accepting, more forgiving.

It is the grace of God that has made the Church of Christ a great people, but that grace is waiting to do much more with us. If we will resolve now to be a grace-empowered people, not laying aside the free gift, not nullifying it, we will be destined for spiritual heights that "you would not believe if told" (Hab. 1:5).

The grace is there, stooped at our feet. Let's bend down and plug in and get going!

--condensed from *Restoration Review*

What the Bible Teaches...

II. ABOUT OUR ONE GOD: FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

Alex V. Wilson

[Due to the complexity of this topic and to widespread misunderstanding about it, this article is longer than those of this series will usually be.]

The One and Only

The Bible repeatedly stresses the ONENESS (or perhaps better, the ONLY-NESS) of the true God. It also stresses the implications of this truth. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord (Yahweh) our God is one Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and...soul and...strength" (Deut. 6:4-5). If there are two or more gods, our devotion would need to be divided up between them: 80% to 20%, or 60% to 40%, or 50% to one, 30% to the second and 20% to the third. But since "the Lord is our God, the Lord alone" (another possible translation of Deut. 6:4), He deserves our total allegiance: 100%. Loyalty we give to anyone else is insulting to the one true God, and also harmful to us-- for we give it to a non-god who cannot help us and to whom we owe nothing.

Through the prophet Isaiah the Almighty said, "I am the Lord, and there is no other: apart from me there is no God...." (45:5-6). And the

apostle Paul wrote, "...There is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live...." (1 Cor. 8:4-6). Other passages which echo this truth include Deut.4:35 & 39; Isa. 43:10; 44:6-8; & 46:9; Mark 12:28-32; 1 Tim.2:5. Thus polytheism is totally rejected, with its gods who are in charge of certain geographic regions only or of certain areas of life only (war, love, agriculture, etc.). Our one true God is supreme *in every place* (Deut. 4:39; Psal.139) and *over every aspect of life* (1 Cor.10:31; Col.3:17). He is the only true and living God.

If only One God, then what about Jesus?

BUT the one God is revealed to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit: **THREE in One!** All who claim to believe in the Biblical God agree that the **Father** is God; there is no dispute there. But in addition, **Jesus Christ** was the eternal Word who in the beginning was with God and also himself was God. He created all things that exist but also became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:1-18.)

Can we really believe such things? Unitarians and other "Christians" of liberal theological views, plus Jehovah's Witnesses, plus devotees of other religions surely don't agree. Let's try to see Jesus the way His Jewish contemporaries would have seen him. Of course, they all were totally dedicated to the idea that there is only one God. Then a peasant from an out-of-the-way town started saying incredible things. This ex-carpenter made such **PERSONAL CLAIMS** as, "I and the Father are one," and also, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well....Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." Again, he told the people, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world....If you do not believe that I AM [the one I claim to be], you will die in your sins." Put yourself in his audience; imagine hearing him make such staggering statements! (John 10:30, 14:7-9, 8:23-24.)

In the Sermon on the Mount he said, "Many will say to me on [judgment] day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name...perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matt.7:22-23.) This is obviously a claim that he will judge the human race. Another time, speaking of himself, he declared, "When the Son of Man comes in *his glory*, and *all the angels with him*, he will sit on *his throne in heavenly glory*. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." He went on to claim that he would decide the eternal fate of all those people! (Matt. 25:31-46.) Re-read that last quotation again. Remember it was uttered by a wandering rabbi, a peasant. On other occasions too he spoke of "my angels," "my kingdom," "my glory" and "my throne"! (For example, Matt. 16:27-28, 19:28.) What if the Pope, or Martin Luther, or Billy Graham uttered such astounding words? Would we not say they were crazy?

Reasonable Alternatives and Strong Evidences

Any man who makes such claims forces us to examine them and the evidence put forward to back them up, and then reach a decision about him. Jesus' claims were so extravagant that if they were **false** he must be either *a total lunatic* (if he was sincere but deceived), or the *biggest liar in all history* (if he was a deliberate *deceiver*)!! (Think about it.) But if they were **true**, then He was and is the unique, glorious Son of God, the *divine-human Lord and only Savior*. EVIDENCES supporting His claims were His wonderfully wise moral teachings; His uniquely righteous character; the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in His birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection; the many miracles He performed; and most of all His rising glorified from the dead. (John 5:31-47; Matt.12:38-41.) Strong evidence indeed, and firm as a great rock!

The early disciples believed in Him, though after His death shattered their faith it took an empty tomb and repeated appearances by the Risen One to convince them. When Thomas saw Him he exclaimed, "My Lord and *my God!*" and Jesus accepted such worship. (John 20:28-29.) In the rest of the New Covenant scriptures, the inspired writers often exalt Jesus as divine Lord and Savior ("Lord" itself was an Old Testament title of deity). Here are some examples: "Christ Jesus...**BEING IN VERY NATURE GOD**, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness....Therefore...every tongue [should] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." "In Him dwells **ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE DEITY** in bodily form." "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and **THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF HIS BEING**" and is far "superior to the angels." In *heaven* the apostle John heard a universal chorus worship the Son *equally with the Father*: "To him who sits on the throne *and to the Lamb* be praise and honor and glory...." Thus we see that both the Father and the Son are fully divine, within the One God. (References: Phil.2:6-11; Col.2:9; Heb.1:3-4; Rev.5:13. Other passages could be added, including the ones listed below which bring together the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)

Spirit of the Living God

In addition the Holy Spirit is set forth as fully divine. Jesus promised that He would pray to the Father, who would therefore give the disciples "another-of-the-same-kind" (Greek wording) of Comforter/Counselor/Helper as He, Jesus Himself, had been to them. Jesus identified that Counselor as the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-17 & 26.) He went on to say that the disciples would actually be better off with Him (Jesus) gone, since the Holy Spirit would come in His place. (John 16:6.) Surely the One who replaced the divine Christ would also be divine. Again, we see that to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God. (Acts 5:3-5.) In addition, New Testament writers

quote Old Testament sayings of *the Lord* but claim that "*the Holy Spirit* spoke" them, thus equating the Spirit with the Lord (compare Acts 28:25 with Isa.6:1-13, & Heb.10:15-17 with Jer.31:31-34).

Finally, we see that several times Scripture mentions the Holy Spirit along with the Father and the Son, as distinct and yet working together in divine oneness. Here are major examples of this: (1) *At Jesus' baptism* (Matt.3:16-17) the Father's voice was heard, the Son was being baptized, and the Spirit appeared as a dove). (2) *In the Great Commission* (Matt.28:19) we are told to "baptize in the Name [one] of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" [three]. That's bad grammar but good theology! If the Holy Spirit is merely "the spirit of Jehovah--that is, Jehovah himself--just as your spirit is you, not someone distinct from you" [as Jehovah's Witnesses claim], then why would He be mentioned here as *distinct* from the Father and Son? On the other hand, His being put *alongside* them in this and other passages clearly shows His full deity. We would rightly cringe from reading of "the Father, the Son and the angel Gabriel...or the apostle Paul...or Martin Luther." But the Holy Spirit belongs alongside the Father and the Son in the one Godhead. (3) A third passage where this is revealed is in *a wonderful prayer* where blessings are sought from each of the three: read 2 Cor.13:14. Other such passages include John 15:26, 16:7-10 & 20:21-22; Acts 1:4-5, 2:32-33, 5:30-32, & 7:55; Rom.8:14-17; 1 Cor.12:4-6; Gal.4:4-6; Eph. 4:4-6 & 2:18; 1 Pet. 1:2 & 4:14; 1 John 3:21-24, 4:2-3 & 12-14; etc. Notice how many references there are. It is absolutely false when some cults claim that "believers in the so-called Trinity base this doctrine on just a very few obscure verses, which they misinterpret."

Conclusions regarding God's Tri-une Nature

We conclude from our study of Scripture that there is only one true God. Yet the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. But the Father is not the Son nor the Spirit; the Son is not the Father nor the Spirit; and the Spirit is not the Father nor the Son--for Jesus prayed to the Father (not to Himself); and the Father sent the Spirit (He didn't send Himself); etc. This is truth which logic cannot understand. But since God's Word clearly teaches all three of these points, we should accept it by faith. Someone observed, "A God small enough for our minds would not be big enough for our needs." Or as John Wesley said, "Bring me a worm that can understand a man, and I will show you a man that can understand God."

So we summarize our study in this way: God is One-in-Three, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being united yet distinct in one Deity. There is still more to be said, for we must deal with verses such as Jesus' statement, "The Father is greater than I," and Paul's declaration, "The head of Christ is God." We shall look at this aspect of teaching about the relationships within the Deity in our next article, Lord willing.

A Little Revelation Of God

R. H. Boll

The fifth verse of the eighty-sixth Psalm is a precious revelation of God, His character and ways; and it constitutes a call to prayer. The entire psalm is a call to prayer, but the whole of it focuses in the fifth verse: "*For thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness unto all them that call upon thee.*" Here we have three distinct statements: the first an inducement and invitation; the second, an assurance to those who come; and the third, a great promise. "Thou Lord art good"--in that lies the inducement and invitation. "And ready to forgive"--that is an assurance to any who may feel hopeless because of personal unworthiness. "*And abundant in lovingkindness unto all them that call upon thee*"--that is the sure promise to those who make the approach. Let us take a closer look at these items.

How God Is Good

The Lord is *good*. We are obliged to Paul for giving us a clearer view of the meaning of that word. "Scarcely for a *righteous* man will one die: for peradventure for the *good* man some one would even dare to die," he says in Rom 5:7. So then a good man is something more than a righteous man. A righteous man is honest, upright, honorable, just, irreproachable. A good man is all that, plus something more. He is warm-hearted, sympathetic, loving. He does not merely mete out justice--he shows undeserved mercy. He is "kind toward the unthankful and evil." (Luke 6:35.) He is bighearted, friendly, unselfish, concerned for *your* happiness and welfare. He lays himself out for you. He goes to trouble and goes out of his way to make sacrifice on your behalf, when no such things could fairly be expected of him. In every trouble and difficulty you have his interest, counsel, help. He overlooks your faults--he loves you in spite of yourself. For such a man someone would dare to die.

Perhaps you have had such a friend at sometime. Perhaps, and more than likely, it was *mother*. She was *good* to you. You could go to her in every joy and distress, and she entered into your joys and woes with you, as only mother could and would. And she helped and encouraged and comforted. Well--those are some of the things we associate in our minds with the thought of *goodness*. Now, *the Lord is good*. That is your invitation. If you seek Him you are not coming to an enemy, to a critic, to an austere judge, but to One who is good--good, like mother, the warm, faithful friend. On this bosom, as it were, you can sob out the whole story of your failure and sin and loss--and there'll be no ridicule, no upbraiding, no condemnation: only love, interest, mercy, comfort, help, all backed with infinite wisdom and power. "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good: blessed is the man that

takest refuge in him." (Ps. 34:8) Come, come. In that heart of goodness there is rest and home, such as your wandering soul has long sought and has never found.

God Ready To Forgive

The second item in Ps. 86:5 is the great assurance. The Lord is "*ready to forgive*." What would bar us from that Presence and that all-encompassing goodness and mercy? Is it not the stain of guilt upon the conscience, the consciousness of past sin, and the sense of condemnation that goes with it? Somehow it appears bigger and looks worse as we approach the circle of light. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," said Simon Peter. "Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips . . . and my eyes have seen Jehovah of hosts, the King!" exclaimed Isaiah when he saw the Holy One of Israel. His light judges us, and yet--there He is, *ready to forgive*. And when He forgives, we are forgiven. It is God that justifieth--who is he that condemneth? The forgiveness is there, all ready to be bestowed. The returning prodigal needs not stand and knock and plead for admittance: his father has seen him when he was yet a great way off and runs to meet him. He is ready to forgive. The only reason why one should go unforgiven is that he has never turned to God in humble trust and penitence, to be forgiven. Be sure, "a broken and contrite heart the Lord will not despise." (Ps. 51:17.) And, once forgiven, the way of prayer is clear.

"To God I'm reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I need no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
and 'Father, Abba, Father,' cry."

Abundant Lovingkindness To Everyone

Finally, the great promise. He is "abundant in lovingkindness unto all them that call upon him." The term "abundant" arrests our attention. It means "overflowing." Not only a little, not only sufficient, not only enough to meet the need, but an excess and overflow of lovingkindness is given, not to some only, but to all them that call upon him. This is Old Testament teaching--never canceled or re-called in the New Testament, for it always forms the basis on which the New Testament builds. But the New is higher and greater. (Yet one would wish that Christians held even the Old Testament conception and acted on it!) To us God is *Father*. Here the Son, who from eternity has been in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) and knows all the secrets of His heart, gives us a deeper word. If even you, though you are evil, know how to bestow good gifts on your children when they appeal to you, (I am paraphrasing His words)--*how much more* will your Father who is in

heaven give good things to them that ask Him? (Matt. 7:11.) Just as much more as He is better than the best of these earthly fathers. He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." So it is written; so it is. And if we believe it, wouldn't we pray more?

A Safe Proposal

There never was such a proposition as that implied in Ps. 86:5. There is absolutely nothing to lose, and all to gain. He is good--you may come, even you, just as you are, and you will find Him so. In fact He has, at supreme sacrifice, opened a way that we may come and be received and heard. Then, He is ready to forgive. Every obstacle can be removed. Every sin can be cleansed, will be cleansed, even the scarlet and crimson ones. Then the promise of superabounding lovingkindness to everyone that calls upon Him. Why not take Him up on that, in faith? Oh yes, there are all the many if's and but's with which you have hedged yourself out these years. Leave them off at once; or break over and break through, and come with boldness to the throne of grace. Of course there are conditions of acceptable prayer; but they can all be reduced to one thing. Do you *mean* it? Is your face to the light of the Father's home and your back to the far country? Is it a believing and penitent heart that you are bringing? Then come confidently; and you will find Him better than you had dared to hope or dream.

ESTHER ELSTON FORCADE

Esther Elston was born at Covington, Indiana, April 14, 1902, and passed away November 21, 1996, at the age of ninety-four. She was the youngest daughter of Ben J. and Adella Ellmore Elston. She had three sisters and one brother all of whom preceded her in death. She was baptized into Christ at an early age by her father in Harper, Kansas.

She was married May 25, 1929, to James Miller Forcade and to this union three daughters were born. Virginia, the youngest, preceded her in death. She is survived by her spouse of 67 years, daughter Harriet Hawley and Gary; daughter Dorcas Brock and Tom; son-in-law David McClain; 11 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

She was a lifelong lover of music--singing and teaching music most of her life. She wrote spontaneous poetry, both serious and humorous. She practiced osteopathy in DeRidder with her husband for several years before they entered the foreign mission field. They served the Lord in Zimbabwe, Africa, Japan, and in several locations in the U.S. They retired in DeRidder, Louisiana.

She passed away quietly while her 2 living daughters and one of her sons-in-law were singing some of her favorite hymns.

Our Captain "DADDY BOB"

Mark Yarbrough

On November 28, 1996, the Creator of the Universe ushered home through the power of Jesus Christ the captain of our family ship. For many years the captain's callused hands faithfully directed our precious vessel through the waters of life. His steadfast wisdom, founded in an utter dependence on the truth of God's Word, is one that defined and taught Christian leadership.

While his impact goes far beyond what I can relate today, I do know that his godly servanthood was a specific model displayed for the "male" apprentices given to his care. As one of those understudies, I would like to relay my observation as I watched the captain move to and fro among his crew.

First, the captain viewed himself as one who was not just the captain, but part of the crew itself. In other words, on countless occasions he helped swab the deck, mend the nets, and repair broken masts. His years of patience and maturity allowed him to pass golden nuggets of spiritual wealth on to those he loved. When we were tired, he encouraged. When we were weary, he carried us. When we were frustrated, he provided solutions. When we were distant, he came near. And whether we knew it or not, at all times he prayed.

Second, the captain was not afraid to cry when the crew, or any of our associates hurt. He was gifted with the remarkable ability to stand and provide peace in the midst of chaos. He could calm storms when no one else could, and he could remind those in pain of the comfort that only God can give.

Finally, the captain daily reminded his crew to serve the Lord with joy. He was not above having fun with us. He laughed more than he cried. Smiled more than was humanly possible, and gave encouraging hugs and kisses in an attempt to break down any walls that would hamper an open line of communication. In short, he gave of himself in order to promote a full life of love that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

Our captain's name was Daddy Bob. Although it is comforting to know that he is with the Savior, his physical absence is one that tempts us to pitch our tents into the despair, hopelessness, and grief that plagued the disciples on Good Friday. However, their Friday grief is now overshadowed by the power of Resurrection Sunday. As a result, those in Christ are promised the same "imperishable" physical resurrection at His return. In other words, the resurrection of Christ, as the first fruits among the dead, assures us of the same promises and blessings.

Therefore, our prayer is that the fulfillment of God's promises will be soon. Maranatha - Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

In the meantime, our family ship must continue to sail. He taught two fine sons how to stand up and steer their respective boats in the direction they should go. While today we analogously stand in the sadness of Good Friday--remember this: Daddy Bob trusted Christ; and because of that--SUNDAY'S COMING!

WILLIAM CAREY

"FATHER OF MODERN MISSIONS"

PART 2 [Part 1 was in Oct.]

Paul A. Beals

Carey Was Committed to Church Planting

Carey always maintained his love for people, which was manifest in his ministry in India. He and his colleagues preached the Word on every possible occasion. Years passed. Finally in 1800 Krishna Pal, a Hindu, confessed Christ as his Savior. What rejoicing! Both Felix, Carey's oldest son, and Carey accompanied Krishna to the river for his baptism in the company of many eyewitnesses. John Clark Marshman, described the scene of Krishna's baptism:

"At the ghat, or landing stairs, the governor and several Europeans, and a large body of Portuguese, and a dense crowd of Hindus and Mahomedans, were waiting to witness this novel ceremony. To this assembly Mr. Carey explained that they did not believe there was any divine virtue in the river, but regarded it as the simple element of water; that Krishnu was formerly of their creed, but professed by the present act to renounce his belief in the gods, and to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. The most perfect silence and a feeling of deep solemnity pervaded the whole assembly, and the governor was melted in tears."

That afternoon the Lord's Supper was administered in Bengali. Other converts slowly joined the ranks, and by 1821 some 1400 believers were active in local assemblies. Local churches continued to be a centerpiece of the Serampore mission.

Carey Participated in Partnership Ministry

The year 1800 was a watershed in William Carey's life. Prior to this time, he had served virtually alone with his family. Dr. John Thomas, with whom Carey went to India, proved to be a disappoint-