

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

BEYOND OUR THOUGHT

Text: "Now Unto Him That Is Able to Do Exceedingly Above All That We Ask or Think, According to the Power That Worketh in Us." Eph. 3:20,21.

How do we think of God? That is what we should ask ourselves when the light of faith within us grows dim. The cause of the spiritual anemia that makes so much of our Christianity pallid and weak at times is that our comprehension of God is too small.

In Paul's letters, the thought of God that fired his imagination and kindled his energy is always breaking through in striking language such as that of our text.

Note his words. He is able to "do" far more abundantly than we can ask or think. When you think of God, you must reach beyond the bounds of your own intellect. As Browning put it, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

The men engaged in advanced scientific research fling out their hypotheses beyond the boundaries of their knowledge. The Creator has created and perhaps is creating far beyond their comprehension.

When we use certain words we do go out of bounds in our thinking. Space is within bounds; infinity lies outside. Who knows what infinity means or is? We live in time. What of eternity? Eternity lies beyond our mind's comprehension. We use the word beautiful, but for beauty we are still on search. We follow the scientist to the outer boundary of knowledge and we learn of the intelligence of God, but what is the wisdom of God which makes all things work together for good? We know what righteousness and love are to a degree, but what is holiness? Glory is a word which we fling out into the great unknown. "Our Father who art in heaven," we are taught to pray, but who can define or describe heaven?

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that they should know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. That's where we should live and move and have our being--beyond our knowledge; in the infinite, eternal, ineffable, holy, glorious, heavenly God. We merely do not live and move and have our being in the small and the pretty and the understandable.

Our minds must be active in the greatness of God. It is the great God who can do more than we can ask or think.

It is easy to fall into a mood of discouragement and retreat into a little backwater of personal piety while the world goes on its way. We need to breathe again the bracing and victorious atmosphere of the New Testament and rediscover its source in the vision of God and of His boundless resources. He is at work and His wisdom and love are unailing.

How do we think of man? The power works within us; that is, within the lives of men, especially within the lives of Christian men. Our thinking about man is kept too closely within bounds. Again we must kindle our imaginations that our energies may be fired. Do we ever cry out with the psalmist, "O Lord, . . . when I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"

Leap beyond the boundaries of knowledge concerning man. Reach for his infinite worth in his creation in the image of God and in his redemption from sin by the love of God and in his service in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Imagine what comes about in the lives of men and in the life of the world when God's power, above all that we can ask or think, pours into them like a torrent. J. B. Phillips speaks of a positive torrent of love and wisdom, sanity and courage, which has flooded human life and



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is always ready to flow wherever human hearts are open.

Because of our out-of-bounds vision of God and our out-of-bounds vision of man, God is able to do exceedingly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

What is this out-of-bounds vision of God and man? Is it not faith? It is faith in God's power and faith in man's potentiality. It is faith which enables God's power to get to work. It is faith that has imagination to see what God is able to do and waiting to do. Why should we tell ourselves that human nature being what it is, there must always be war and strife, or that such barriers as race or class prejudice must always make brotherhood an impossible dream? Again the faith for which God waits is a faith that asks. How great is the range of our prayers? How far do they respond to God's willingness to give? Nothing in Christ's teaching was more urgent than His call to pray. "Ask and ye shall receive," he said; "knock, and it shall be opened unto you." What can that mean except that God's hands are held out to us, waiting for us to receive, and that his door awaits our knock in order to swing open? Have we thought out what this means in terms of the faith and confidence that should flow through our prayers?

But the faith we need is also a faith that acts. James, the apostle, was right. "Faith without works is dead." We all should remember that faith without action is not enough. Live your belief in God from day to day through good works and the light of faith will never grow dim.

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Confessions: Saturday, 4-4:30 and 7:30-8 pm
Adult Classes: Monday and Friday, 7:30 pm
Child Classes: Monday, 4-5 pm; Saturday, 9-10:30 am
Rosary: Daily, 7:30 pm except Sundays

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But even though the three officials awarded the decision to their fellow-Chicagoan, it would seem that a vast majority of the comparatively small crowd of fans present figured that the home-town boy received a gift. If the verdict had been left up to the cash customers on hand for the live show, Machen undoubtedly would have received the duke by a landslide margin.

THOSE BROAD SMILES creasing the mugs of Buck West, local medico, publisher and disciple of Isaac Walton, and his partner in piscatorial pursuits, Sid Bishop, earlier this week were attributable to an uncommonly rewarding foray on Lake Mead over the weekend.

"You can tell the folks the crappie are really biting again," Buck reports. "We must have hauled in 30 to 40 apiece, not to mention several nice bass. Happy days are here again."