

Ministers:  
the congregation

Kenny Chumbley  
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Sunday:  
8:00 AM: WGCY  
9:00 AM: Worship

Wednesday:  
7:00 PM: Bible Study

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Christ.com](http://gibsoncitychurchofChrist.com)

**This Past Week:**  
Worship—33  
Wednesday—  
Contribution—\$

**For meditation:**  
Ecclesiastes 2.18–20  
Men derive a great amount of their self-esteem from their work. But this week's passage introduces one of the great frustrations and discouragements in building a business, a company, an empire. What is it?

**Radio program:**  
WGCY FM, 106.3  
Sundays at 8 AM

## *The church—the bride of Christ*

**As a bride adorned for her husband.  
Revelation 21.2**

By implication in John 3.29 and Matthew 25.1–13, and directly in Revelation 21.2, it's right to think of the church as the bride of Christ—a thought that leads to others.

### **LOVE'S REVELATION**

A marriage is to be utterly transparent. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2.25). This verse isn't a comment on the perfect climate in the Garden of Eden that rendered clothes unnecessary; rather, it's the acknowledgment that lovers should have nothing to hide from each other. "The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will *reveal* Myself to him" (Jn. 14.21, NASB). "Part of the wonder of love," someone wrote, "lies in the unveiling between those who love of the deeper thoughts of the heart."

### **LOVE'S RESOURCES**

Wedding vows used to say something like, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." That may not have amounted to much in many marriages, but the Bridegroom of the church gives to His bride "the unsearchable riches" of His grace (Eph. 3.8,20).

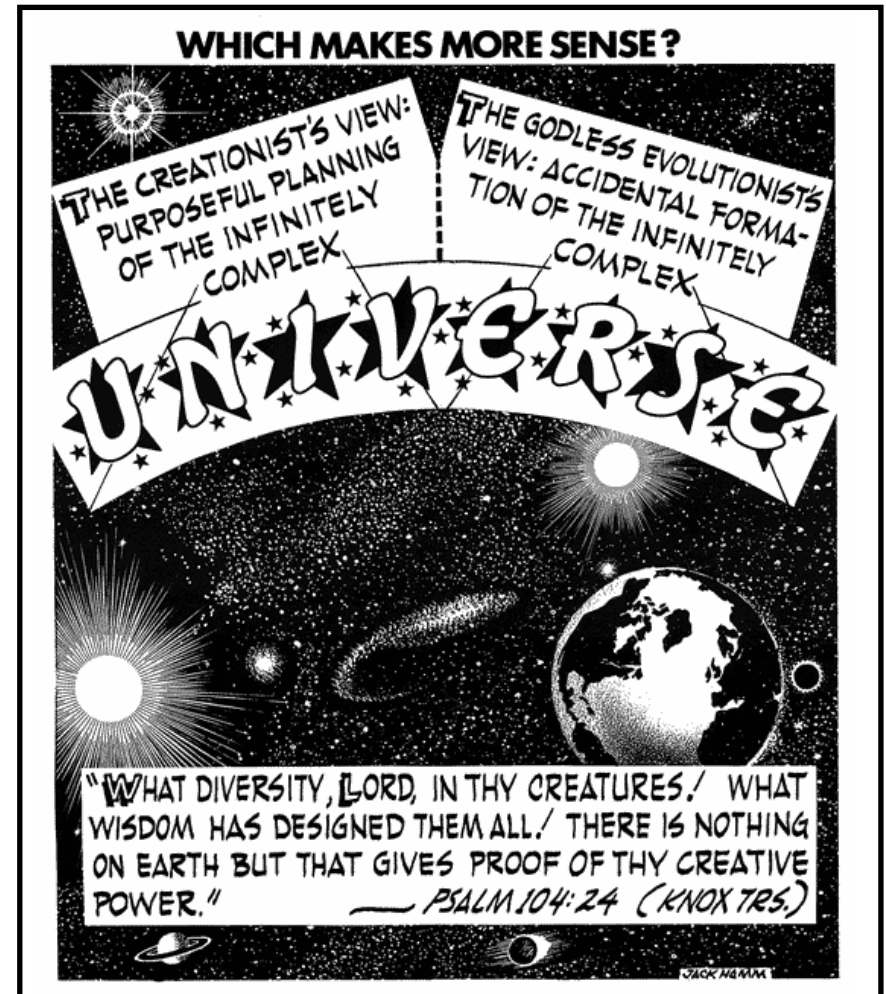
### **LOVE'S RADIANCE**

Does a wife ever look more beautiful or radiant than on her wedding day when she walks down the aisle? The wisdom books of the Old Testament comment on the radiance of a bride. "Look to him, and be radiant" (Ps. 34.5). When Moses came down from Sinai, his face shone (Ex. 34.29). As we grow in likeness to the Lord, a glorious radiance comes over us (2 Cor. 3.18) so that the bride of Christ may reflect the glory of her Groom.

kenny

# Gibson City church of Christ

Highway 47 South, Gibson City, IL



Sermon: James 3.13–18

## Getting to the heart of the matter

9 February 2025

## On the reading of books, part 3

The reading technique recommended in Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book* (last article) is the basic protocol for expository study. There are times when topical lessons are appropriate, but for the long haul, expository lessons and sermons should be the bread-and-butter of a church's teaching program. It is easier for a teacher's/preacher's personal opinions to slip into topical studies. But expository study, which adheres closely to the Biblical text, is a better way for feeding and nourishing the flock on the word of God. Once the theme/main idea of a section (e.g., Bible book, chapter, or paragraph) is understood, and the major subdivisions that develop the theme are identified, you have your lesson/sermon outline. In *Living by the Book*, the late Dallas Theological Seminary professor, Howard Hendricks, adapted Adler's technique specifically to the matter of Bible study. Hendricks' book is well worth acquiring.

One of the great blessings of the internet is that books long out of print are now readily accessible, often within a matter of minutes. Amazon and eBay allow rare titles to be located worldwide. (Just a few days ago, Ian Maclaren's rarely seen volume, *Church Folks*, arrived in my mail via an eBay purchase I made.) I use Gutenberg.org and the Internet Archive constantly; they are worth their wait in gold for finding and immediately accessing out-of-print books. There has never been a time in the history of the world when readers/students have been better positioned to quickly access books worth reading.

When I began preaching, more or less full time, at the age of twenty, I relied heavily on my dad's copies of N. B. Hardeman's *Tabernacle Sermons*. These were transcripts of sermons preached by Hardeman at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee, in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. (Hardeman's nephew, Pat Hardeman, baptized my parents in 1952.) It's been a long time since I last opened one of these books, but I still remember certain sermons, such as the one on "God's Immutable Laws."

When I arrived at Florida College in 1971, Almon Williams (whom I rise and call "Blessed"), put me onto R. L. Whiteside. Whiteside's *Doctrinal Discourses* and *Reflections* cover a host of Bible subjects that have bailed me out of my ignorance many times. A set of five volumes known as *Sound Doctrine*, which Whiteside coauthored with C. R. Nichol, are first principle lessons still worth reading. And Whiteside's commentary on Romans should always be close by when studying that epistle.

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## The mark of Cain

**And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Genesis 4.8**

From Adam Clarke's commentary on the book of Genesis:

**The Lord set a mark upon Cain**—What this mark was, has given rise to a number of frivolously curious conjectures. Dr. Shuckford collects the most remarkable. Some say he was *paralytic*; this seems to have arisen from the version of the Septuagint, *Στενών και τρεμὼν εσθι*, *Groaning and trembling shalt thou be*. The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel says the sign was from the great and precious name, probably one of the letters of the word [UNKNOWN] *Yehovah*. The author of an Arabic Catena in the Bodleian Library says, "A sword could not pierce him; fire could not burn him; water could not drown him; the air could not blast him; nor could thunder or lightning strike him." The author of Bereshith Rabba, a comment on Genesis, says the mark was a circle of the sun rising upon him. Abravanel says the sign was Abel's dog, which constantly accompanied him. Some of the doctors in the Talmud say that it was the letter *ntau* marked on his forehead, which signified his contrition, as it is the first letter in the word *nteshubah*, repentance. Rabbi Joseph, wiser than all the rest, says it was a long horn growing out of his forehead!

At first glance it seems God put some kind of mark or stigma on Cain—a visible and indelible mark of infamy—that would cause people to "hoot at him but not hurt him" (Matthew Henry). But in contrast to the wild speculation illustrated by Clarke, I think a better view is to understand that the Heb. word used is translated *mark* only in this one place in Scripture; elsewhere it is rendered *sign*, *token*, or even *miracle*.

What likely happened is that God promised Cain protective custody and then gave him some sort miraculous confirmation of His word—similar to what He did with Noah (the rainbow is called "the *sign/mark* of the covenant, Gen. 9.12), Gideon and the fleece (Judg. 6.36–40), and Elijah (1 Kgs. 18.38).

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## News about us

- We seem to slowly be getting over the crud that has swept the country. Continue in prayer for Mike and Kellee, Nancy, and others.