



Holy Heartburn

Vic Reasoner

Cleopas and someone else, probably his wife Mary, were heartbroken as they returned home from Jerusalem. This Emmaus Road was about seven miles. One look at their faces told their story. They were downcast and sad. They had lost hope. Mary had been at the cross when Jesus died, and he had been dead for three days.

They had heard rumors about some women who could not find the body of Jesus when they had gone to the tomb. Then some of their friends went to investigate and found the situation was just as it had been reported. Sometimes, however, we can get so tired and discouraged we cannot think straight. Why didn't they connect the dots? If Jerusalem was buzzing with speculation, why not stay in town long enough to find out what really happened?

Their eyes were restrained from recognizing the stranger who caught up with him on the road. They may have even resented his intrusion and the annoying questions he kept asking. Yet he kept referencing Scriptures regarding the Messianic prophecies, beginning with the writings of Moses. He probably began with the first promise in Genesis 3:15, that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. Perhaps he went next to Genesis 22 where a substitute was provided by God for Isaac. In Exodus 12 the blood of the lamb was put on the doorframe so that the angel of judgment would pass over them.

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They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

He probably reminded them of Leviticus 16 where two goats were chosen. One was sacrificed as a sin offering. The high priest laid his hand on the head of this goat and confessed all the sins of Israel before killing it. Then the other goat, the scapegoat, was led away and released in the desert. Both animals depicted the ministry of the Messiah, who died for our sins and carries them away.

Perhaps the stranger on the road explained how Israel was under divine judgment in Numbers 21 until Moses lifted up a bronze serpent on a pole. Everyone who looked at it was healed. Did they remember how Jesus had explained the direct relation of this story to himself? "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32).

There are 332 distinct prophecies regarding the Messiah in the Old Testament. Every one of the thirty-nine Old Testament books contains a distinct reference to Jesus Christ except for the little books of Nahum, Jonah, and Habakkuk—which comprise only ten chapters. I wonder, how many of these prophecies were discussed along that road?

By the end of those seven miles, the dejected couple had seen more than ever before. Their heartache had turned to a holy heartburn. Once their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus, they immediately returned to Jerusalem. This time they walked as fast as they could walk—maybe they even ran. Their lives were changed by

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Faith Is the Victory

Ron Smith



Ron Smith, president of the Francis Asbury Society, is a theologian, professor, and pastor. He especially enjoys meeting with people of all ages for spiritual growth and study. In this article, Ron explores how Charles Wesley found in Jesus Christ the direct object of faith: God who invited him into his eternal love through his Incarnate, crucified, risen Son. For our readers then comes the resulting joy: Jesus says, "The one who comes to me I will never turn away. Whoever wants to may come!"

In the two days following Charles Wesley's May 1738 evangelical conversion experience, Charles (younger brother of John) wrote a hymn about his coming to saving faith. The hymn seeks to tell in poetic fashion how a soul may, with full assurance, profess to be living in God's salvation. He begins the hymn by asking the central question: "Where shall my wandering soul begin, and how shall I to heaven aspire?"

In my 45th year of Christian ministry, I would say Charles's question is one that ranks near the top of the list inasmuch as to the frequency of being asked. People then—and now—want to know if it is possible to have assurance that they are saved from their sins and therefore are going to heaven. How about you? As for me, I want to know as earnestly as Charles Wesley wanted to know. How can we have that certainty of faith? I believe the answer to that question is very clear in Charles Wesley's conversion hymn where he writes:

*Come, oh my guilty brethren, come,
groaning beneath your load of sin!
his [Christ's] bleeding heart shall make you room,
his open side [referring to a wound Jesus received in his crucifixion]
will take you in.
He calls you now, invites you home:
Come, oh my guilty brethren [sisters too!], come.*

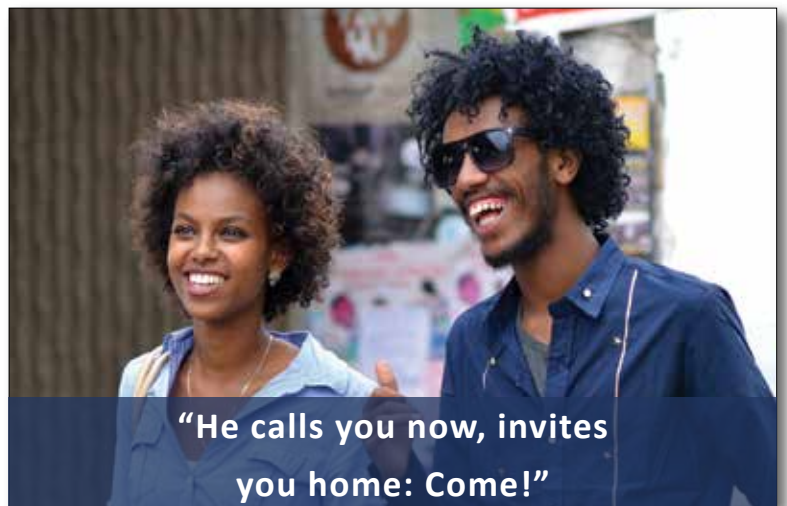
There are two ultimate realities revealed in this verse that definitively answer the question of how one can know they have faith that will save them. Both realities have Jesus at the center: his bleeding heart will make you room, and his open side will take you in.

Scripture says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Because all have sinned, all can feel the pain of falling

short. Charles Wesley grew up in a conspicuously religious family. Falling short in anything, let alone in his religious experience, greatly exaggerated his feelings that he was nothing but a disappointment to those around him. First, his older brother was John Wesley! Second, he was the eighteenth child of Susanna Wesley—and that may have been worse than being John's younger brother. His mother, by everyone's description, had a BIG engine! It's easiest to feel you've missed the mark around people who have the highest expectations because one already feels inferior in such a relationship. Finally, Charles's father was the pastor! How can he have escaped the logical feeling that he was a religious disappointment to God and his own family because *he fell short*?

When any of us fall short we begin to believe that our own failures translate to God's disappointment in us. Also, people around us wound us as they express their disappointment with us. Imagine the incomprehensible joy he must have felt when he realized "His [Christ's] bleeding heart shall make you room!" Martin Luther's commentaries played a role in enabling Charles to see the Christ who loved him. The very week of his conversion he was reading them. While John had been deeply affected by Luther's commentary on Romans, Charles found Luther's commentary on Galatians particularly

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Where Shall My Wondering Soul Begin?

Charlie Wesley

*Where shall my wondering soul begin?
How shall I all to heaven aspire?
A slave redeemed from death and sin,
a brand plucked from eternal fire,
how shall I equal triumphs raise,
or sing my great deliverer's praise?*

*O how shall I the goodness tell,
Father, which thou to me hast showed?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God!
Should know, should feel my
sins forgiven,
blest with this antepast of heaven!*

*And shall I slight my Father's love,
or basely fear his gifts to own?*

*Unmindful of his favors prove,
shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,
refuse his righteousness to impart,
by hiding it within my heart?*

*No, though the ancient dragon rage,
and call forth all his host to war,
though earth's self-righteous
sons engage,
them and their god alike I dare:
Jesus the sinner's friend proclaim,
Jesus, to sinners still the same.*

*Outcasts of men, to you I call,
harlots, and publicans, and thieves;
he spreads his arms to embrace you all,
sinners alone his grace receive.*

*No need of Him the righteous have;
he came the lost to seek and save.*

*Come, O my guilty brethren, come,
groaning beneath your load of sin;
his bleeding heart shall make you room,
his open side shall take you in.
He calls you now, invites you home:
Come, O my guilty brethren, come.*

*For you the purple current flowed
in pardon from his wounded side,
languished for you the eternal God,
for you the Prince of Glory died.
Believe, and all your sin's forgiven,
only believe—and yours is heaven.*

Have You this Living Faith?

Richard Treffry (1771–1842)

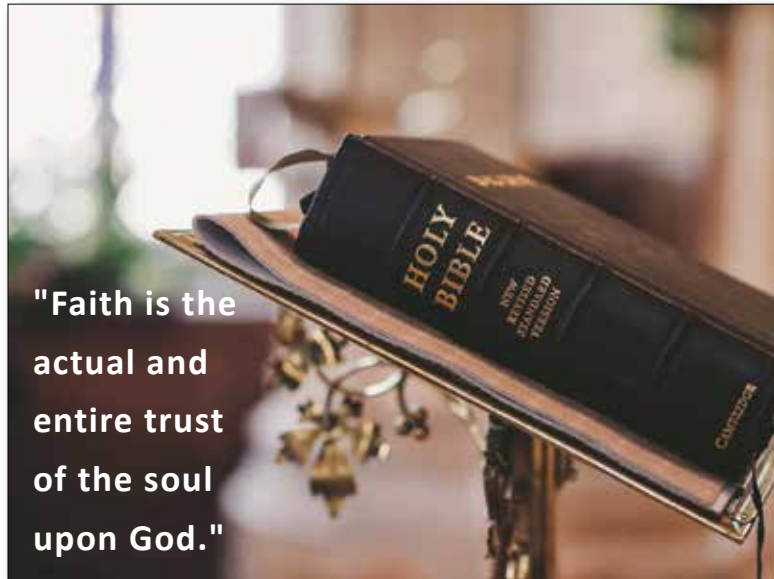


Richard Treffry joined the conference of the English Wesleyan Connection in 1792. He served as its president in 1833. This article is excerpted from his sermon "On Justification," published in 1838. This excerpt is an exhibit of the typical evangelical preaching of the early Methodists. It is crucial that we have living faith before we seek a deeper work of the Spirit.

Faith is the condition upon which justification depends. Of course, this implies a knowledge of the record of evangelic blessings. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17) and an admission of its truth. These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31).

A cordial acceptance of the scheme of gospel salvation as a suitable provision, the most suitable and the only suitable provision, will be evidenced by true repentance and entire self-renunciation.

Faith is the actual and entire trust of the soul upon God, through the merit of Christ for a present and continued salvation. The specific object of this faith is the atonement of Christ. And it is the lack of discerning this fact that many sincere persons remain long without the enjoyment of the pardon of sin. So long as the soul is possessed of vague notions of the imputed righteousness of Christ, without any distinct object to excite the trust by which we are justified, the consequence is obvious. And here is one of the harmful results of this doctrine. It tends to generalize the views of the penitent and consequently draws off his attention from that which is of the ultimate importance—Christ crucified. Yet its confusion may be resolved. It is saving faith which is imputed for righteousness and the



"Faith is the actual and entire trust of the soul upon God."

object of that faith is not Christ in his general obedience, but Christ in his sacrificial character.

Our text, Acts 13:38–39, suggests to us the perfection of this condition:

Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

Through Christ, *everyone* that believes is justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. The provision of the gospel is more perfect because it promises, even to the end of time, *everyone, all things*. The least in the kingdom of God is greater than those who heard this law of Moses read every Sabbath. The most obscure pagan who meekly trusts in Christ is a nobler being than the most learned rabbi that ever wore a phylactery or the loftiest priest that ever passed the sacred veil. O glorious faith! Simple yet noble; ample yet intense; born in tears yet parent of joy; rooted in the humble heart yet spreading its branches and shedding its fruit by the throne of God.

Have you then this living faith? Are you justified from all things? I do not inquire if you have knowledge or good morals or an attachment to Methodism, but have you faith? Remember that the object of faith is one who possesses our nature, that the preaching of the gospel is God's pledge to all nations to the end of time that he will save those who believe.

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"Not on Your Life!"

Charles Blondin, whose real name was Jean François Gravelet, was a French acrobat who first walked a tightrope 1100 feet across Niagara Falls in 1859. He performed this feat many more times. More than once he walked across the falls while carrying his manager, Harry Colcord, on his back. After one such trip he said to a man in the crowd, "Do you believe I could do that with you?"



The man answered, "Yes, I've just seen you do it."

"Well, then," Blondin said, "Hop on and I'll carry you across."

But the man replied, "Not on your life."

Saving faith goes beyond mere mental assent that affirms certain statements as true. Faith must also involve the consent of our will. We must trust in Christ.

Faith: the Gift of God

Adam Clarke (1762–1832)



Is not faith the gift of God? Yes, as to the grace by which it is produced, but the grace or power to believe and the act of believing are two different things. Without the grace or power to believe no man ever did or can believe; but with that power the act of faith is a man's own. God never believes for any man, no more than he repents for him: nor

does he believe necessarily or impulsively when he has that power; the power to believe may be present long before it is exercised, else, why the solemn warnings with which we meet everywhere in the Word of God and threatenings against those who do not believe? Is not this a proof that such persons have the power but do not use it? They believe not, and therefore are not established. This, therefore, is the true state of the case: God gives the power, man uses the power thus given and brings glory to God; without the power no man can believe; with it, any man may. (Excerpt taken from *Commentary*, 6:439).

The Full Assurance of Faith

Daniel Steele (1824–1914)



Daniel Steele was a member of the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a successful pastor for twenty years, then became the first president of Syracuse University. Later he taught theology at Boston University. He became a well-known and respected advocate for Christian holiness. Steele preached this sermon in 1883. The full sermon is found in his *Half-Hours with St. Paul* (1894). The value of this sermon is the understanding that as we grow in the life of faith our assurance also grows

stronger. While such assurance is the birthright of every believer, those who are struggling to believe should not despair.

By full assurance we mean a certainty, excluding all doubt, that I am now a child of God. The Spirit who imparts this wonderful knowledge of present salvation is called the spirit of adoption. “For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Rom. 8:15 ESV).

This is not mediate through the inspired Word of God, but immediate and direct to our consciousness by a contact of the divine Spirit with the human. “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit [two witnesses] that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16).

How can I be sure that love, the first fruit of the Spirit, exists in me, till I am divinely certified that I have been taken out of the class on whom God frowns—for he is angry with the wicked every day, and I have been wicked—and have been put into the class which God loves? I cannot love God till I am sure that he loves me and has pardoned my sins. This must be certified to me by the blessed carrier-dove of the skies—the Holy Spirit. Without this telegram from the throne of God to my personal consciousness, I can have no valid basis for my inference that I am a son of God by adoption. The Bible does not contain this important fact. The convict in the state prison cannot ascertain his pardon by studying the general statutes. He must have a document direct from the governor authenticating his pardon.

This corresponds to the direct witness of the Spirit, sent forth not into the Holy Scriptures but into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6). This is thus defined by Wesley:

It is an inward impression of the soul whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me, and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

The direct witness of the Spirit is usually intermittent in the early stages of Christian experience. Young Christians are needlessly

True Faith Brings Assurance

John declared, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1, 5). However, this statement is followed by, “He who believes in the Son of God” has assurance (1 John 5:10, 13). William Burt Pope wrote, “The faith that saves is attended by the privilege of assurance; and then the blessing assured of becomes testimony to itself.” But he also cautioned, “Supreme as the inward witness is, it must be checked, controlled, and regulated at all points by the external and written word.”

The message of John’s first letter is assurance. Forty times he said that we can know and four times he said we can have confidence. Present-tense faith produces a present assurance in a present salvation. True faith brings assurance (Heb. 11:1). William Lane translated Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith celebrates the objective reality of the blessings for which we hope.”

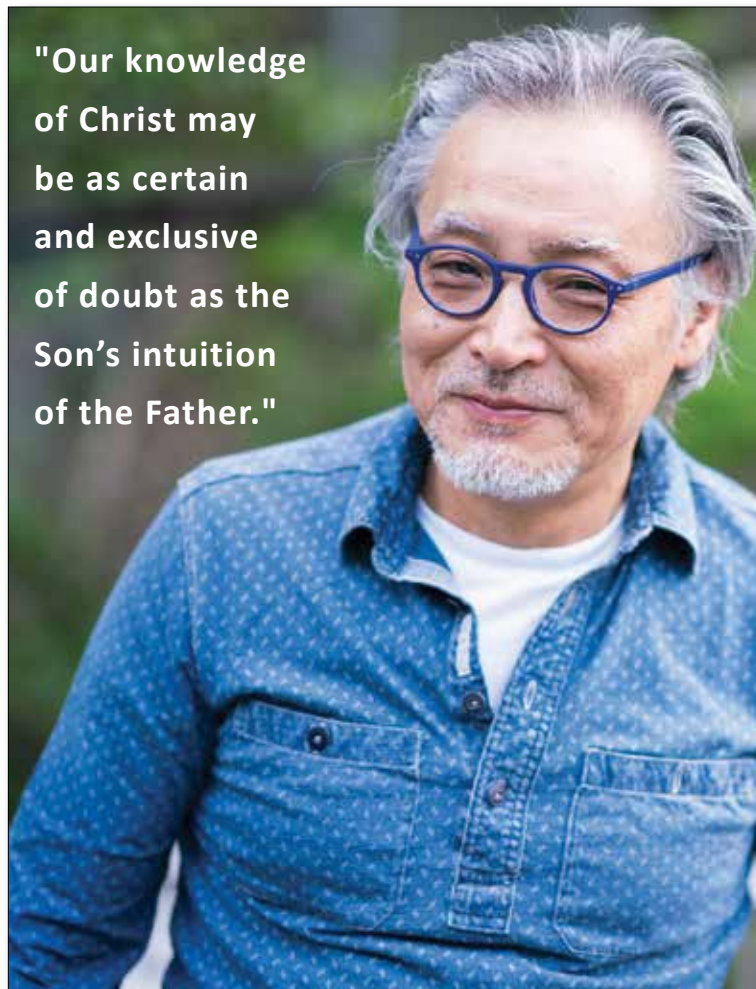
alarmed by fluctuations. After careful self-examination, if there is found no condemnation for any act of willful sin, the person should go forward, walking by faith, till the cloud withdraws and the sun pours his rays again directly into the soul.

In that advanced experience called full assurance, there are fluctuations in degrees of ecstatic joy but never a descent into the region of doubt. The witness to adoption is not intermittent but abiding in the heart of everyone who claims his full heritage in Jesus Christ in the Pentecostal dispensation. Hence the strength of such a Christian. Doubt always weakens. It also saddens the soul. We urge all Christians to seek full assurance because doubt is full of peril. Wesley testifies that ninety-nine percent of those converted under the preaching of the early Wesleys had the direct witness to their pardon and could tell the exact time of their translation out of darkness into the marvelous light of salvation. Says he, “The general rule is, they who are in the favor of God know they are so.”

Yet he did not teach that every doubter is lost. There is a difference between unbelief and doubt. Unbelief paralyzes the soul so that there is no movement Godward; doubts distract so that such movement is difficult and painful yet possible.

Our knowledge of Christ may be as certain and exclusive of doubt as the Son’s intuition of the Father. This certitude is the glorious privilege of every persevering believer in Jesus Christ. This is that spiritual manifestation of himself which he promised to every believer whose love to him is evinced by keeping his commandments (John 14:21). This manifestation of Christ is no vision or phantom addressed to the natural eye but an awakening of the soul’s spiritual perception to an undoubted and joyful realization that Jesus lives and loves even me. ✠

“Our knowledge of Christ may be as certain and exclusive of doubt as the Son’s intuition of the Father.”



Looking at Invisible Things

Richard Watson (1781–1833)



“Orthodox or Evangelical Methodism, and indeed Protestantism in general, owes Richard Watson a great debt. He showed that Methodist theology was not just ‘lay’ theology or ‘revival’ preaching but was just as capable of producing systematics as the Lutheran or Calvinist traditions. . . . Watson’s Institutes and Wesley’s Standard Sermons were the original required reading for all Methodist ministers in the mid to late 19th century in North America”

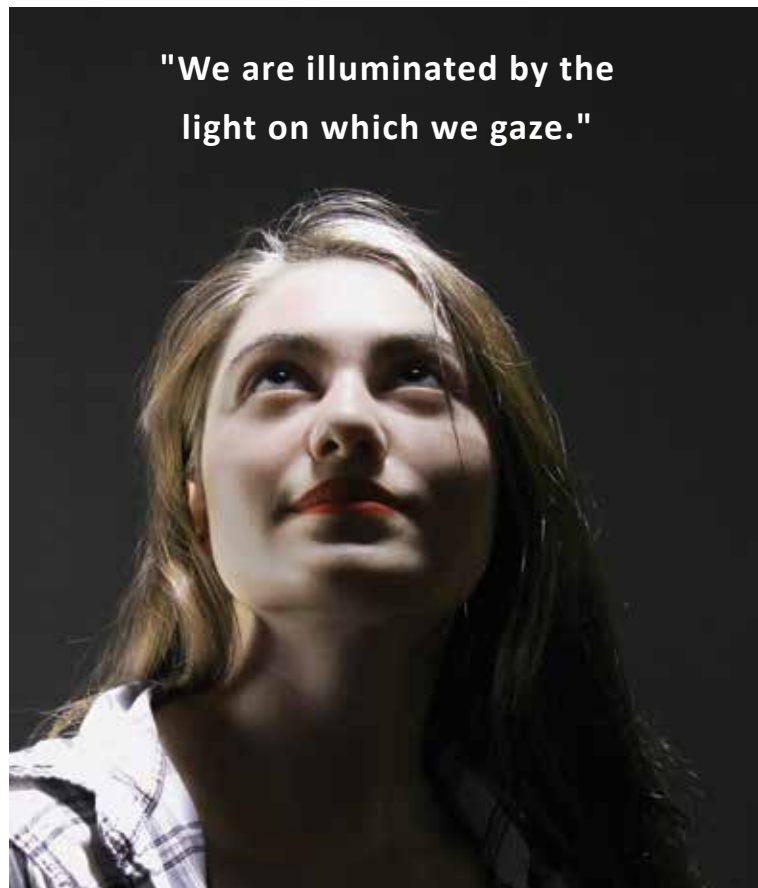
(Ben Witherington III). This article is taken from Watson’s sermon, “Looking at Invisible Things,” based on 2 Corinthians 4:18 and first published in 1834 [Watson, *Works*, 8:439–52].

I must now point you to some of the happy effects of looking at the things which are unseen and eternal. We obtain an object towards which our whole life may be directed. We now live for eternity. We feel we are accountable creatures who are hastening to appear before God the Judge. Our great concern is to prepare to meet him. We now feel that we have one thing to do. All our hopes are directed to one object and all our efforts are bent to secure it.

We are furnished with a rule of conduct which will never fail us. We know how to act. We are safe while we continue to look at things not seen.

We find the principle of moderation. Paul said, “Let your moderation be known unto all men” (Phil. 4:5). But, had he stopped there, the direction would be given in vain. The human heart is ever prone to excess. Therefore, he places things invisible and eternal before us by adding, “The Lord is at hand.” He whose heart is controlled by the habitual view of the things unseen and eternal is neither overwhelmed in the sorrow of the word nor conquered by worldly pleasure.

A new source of pleasure is opened to us. When true religion enters the heart, it not only gives a new and right direction to all the faculties but also opens sources of enjoyment altogether unknown



"We are illuminated by the light on which we gaze."

before. Those uninstructed in the ways of God fancy that piety is always clothed in gloom. Their thoughts of eternity always make them gloomy. But Paul looked forward with delight to the house not made with hands, the building of God, eternal in the heavens.

Such spiritual contemplation raises us from our groveling earthliness. The sight of eternal things quickens us in every holy desire and leads us to apply ourselves constantly and earnestly to the great work of our salvation. When Paul approached Rome as a prisoner, he was met by a few of the brethren. He thanked God and took courage. The believer joyfully anticipates entering the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, and joining the church of the firstborn. When these hopes brighten in the soul, they bring ease and vigor to our spirit. We thank God and take courage. We catch the spirit of the heaven into which we hope to enter. We are illuminated by the light on which we gaze. And having this hope, we purify ourselves even as he also is pure. ✨

Faith Counted for Righteousness

Charles Wesley

*Father of Jesus Christ my Lord,
My Savior, and my Head,
I trust in thee, whose powerful word
Hath raised him from the dead.*

*Eternal life to all mankind
Thou hast in Jesus given;
And all who seek in him shall find
The happiness of heaven.*

*O God! thy record I believe,
In Abraham’s footsteps tread;
And wait, expecting to receive
The Christ, the promised seed.*

*Faith in thy power thou seest I have
For thou this faith hast wrought;
Dead souls thou callest from their grave,
And speakest worlds from naught.*

*Things that are not, as though they were,
Thou callest by their name,
Present with thee the future are,
With thee, the great I AM.*

*In hope, against all human hope,
Self-desperate I believe;
Thy quickening word shall raise me up,
Thou shalt thy Spirit give.*

*Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done!*

*Obedient faith that waits on thee
Thou never wilt reprove,
But thou wilt form thy Son in me,
And perfect me in love.*

The Joy of Rejoicing

Hugo and Joyce Lategan



Joyce was born in Dundee, Scotland. She has always loved history. Hugo served a term as the chairman of OMS South Africa. He pastored for six years in Binghamton, NY, then returned to South Africa to assume the position of executive director for OMS South Africa. He served on the pastoral team of his local church as pastor of church care until his retirement at age 80. The Lategans help us know how to respond when our faith is under attack. Living by faith involves more than an initial act of believing.

It was the year 1971.

After a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord in the church where my wife Joyce and I had been ministering, we were plunged into a “Dark Night of the Soul.” We had been witnessing people transformed by the grace and power of God. In some cases, demons were exorcised and people delivered from their bondage and slavery to sin.

Calamity came suddenly and without warning from an unexpected source. After a Sunday morning service, I was approached by two strangers who warned me of dire consequences if I continued to minister to a woman delivered from demonism. They informed me that they had control over her and that she was their agent of communication with the devil. I paid no attention to them at the time.

However, shortly thereafter, during a session of exorcism with a dear colleague in the ministry, Joyce became very ill and began to suffer extreme pain in different parts of her body. This continued for a period of six months. The pain was so severe that no medication would bring any relief and no diagnosis could be made as to the medical source of her suffering. The only relief found was when I would pray for her and the pain would subside for a while.

During this time of great duress, I received an invitation to speak at a well-known convention in Cape Town. In the invitation letter I also was asked to bring a Bible study on divine healing. In anguish of soul, I cried out to the Lord and was in two minds about accepting the invitation as I had all but lost faith in praying for the sick.

Furthermore, I did not know how we were going to make the long distance from Johannesburg to Cape Town as my dear wife was suffering so severely. I was at the point of declining the invitation to speak when the Spirit whispered to my heart, “My child you have trusted me for many things before, and I want you to trust me with this trial too.”

So, with our nine-year-old daughter Sharon, we commenced the journey. I had arranged for us to stay at Carmel Guest Farm, a Christian convention centre, prior to going to Cape Town. The purpose of this stay was to fast and pray both for Joyce and the preaching assignment ahead of us.

After three days of seeking wisdom from the Word, I sensed the Lord urging me to no longer pray for Joyce but to start thanking him in

advance for his answer to our dilemma. I remember coming into the room where Joyce was lying on the bed. She looked up at me and said, “Has the Lord spoken to you about our situation?” As I looked at the emaciated condition of my wife, I hesitated to tell her what was on my heart, but when I eventually did, she burst into tears.

That night as I knelt at the bed and began to silently thank God for his mercy and providence in all things, Joyce suffered her most severe attack of excruciating pain and cried out for me to come and pray for her. I wept before the Lord saying, “Father, I do not understand your ways and my mind cannot fathom Your intent, but Lord with your help I am going to abound in thanksgiving.”

I recalled the many occasions of God’s grace and provision given us. I praised the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I thanked God for his promises. I sensed the Holy Spirit urging me not only to thank God for the many blessings bestowed on us but also to thank Him for the difficulties we had gone through.

Joyce fell into a peaceful sleep and, utterly weary and exhausted, with no more energy to pray and no more tears to shed, I fell asleep too.



A new day dawned. For the first time in many months, Joyce’s pain had diminished considerably. We continued in prayers of thanksgiving not really knowing what to expect. To our delight Joyce was completely healed and never in the many years since has she had an attack of that nature again.

A few days later we arrived in Cape Town, and I felt so privileged to be able to preach God’s Word.

On the morning I was to bring a study on divine healing, I gave a short introduction to the subject and then Joyce gave her testimony of what God had so recently done. Many people responded to the Word proclaimed and sought the Lord for help and healing.

The crowning blessing and God’s seal to His extravagant grace to us was that shortly after, after almost 10 years of waiting, Joyce was able to conceive and Lydia, our second daughter, was born. Both Sharon and Lydia have served the Lord with all their hearts, and today we are blessed with six strapping grandsons and one great granddaughter.

In retrospect, what we have learned has been to thank God in advance for his will being done. All too often—in our experience at least—there has been far more time spent in prayer and relatively less time in thanksgiving and praise.

Let’s look to the Scriptures for instruction. What better place to begin than to look at the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? Was he not after all a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?

Luke 10:21 gives us an insight into the life of Jesus. We are told that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, or more correctly, was triumphantly elated at the news that his disciples had been successful in their mission.

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Walking by Faith

Dennis F. Kinlaw (1922–2017)



Dr. Kinlaw was a co-founder of the Francis Asbury Society. He was a scholar and a college president. But he was also a gifted preacher. This article is excerpted from chapter 6 of *Malchus' Ear and Other Sermons* by Dennis F. Kinlaw (Francis Asbury Press, 2017). In this sermon, Dr. Kinlaw beautifully describes what a fully surrendered life looks like. Used with permission.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives the roll call of the heroes of the faith. Surprisingly, almost twice as much space is devoted to Abraham as to anyone else. Not even Moses gets the attention that Abraham does, and I could make an easy case that Moses was the greatest man outside of Christ who ever lived. Despite Moses' greatness, Abraham is presented as the model for Christians. In God's wisdom, he made the first major character in Scripture the model for the rest of us. Abraham's story lets us know that the basic pattern of living by faith does not change. Abraham's life of faith is the pattern for all of us.

I can see the divine wisdom in how God begins his story because it lets us know that law, the Church, and liturgy are not the essence of the gospel. These are not the heart of what God wants out of his followers. Ultimately, they are all secondary to God's main purpose.

Sometimes I think of God's plan like this: I fell in love with Elsie, not with the institution of marriage. When we got ready to get married, people began to give us books. I found all sorts of books on marriage, but I never found a single book on Elsie. That is the way it was for fifty-nine years. It was not marriage that I was after; it was Elsie. Through those years, the one I wanted, the center of that life, was not a perfect marriage or the institution of marriage or the patterns established for it; it was simply Elsie.

God wants this kind of relationship with us, and so he gives Abraham as the model. He just says to him one day, "Follow me." God's call to Abraham is just that simple. God says to Abraham, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). God wants Abraham to forsake all and attach himself to God—not to an institution or to a moral code or to any liturgy or ritual. God invites Abraham into a personal relationship with the living God. God calls Abraham to leave all that he had known and embark on an adventure following God himself. Any commitment of this magnitude to a person has certain costs that accompany it. God wants Abraham to attach himself to God alone, which means he has to detach from many other things.

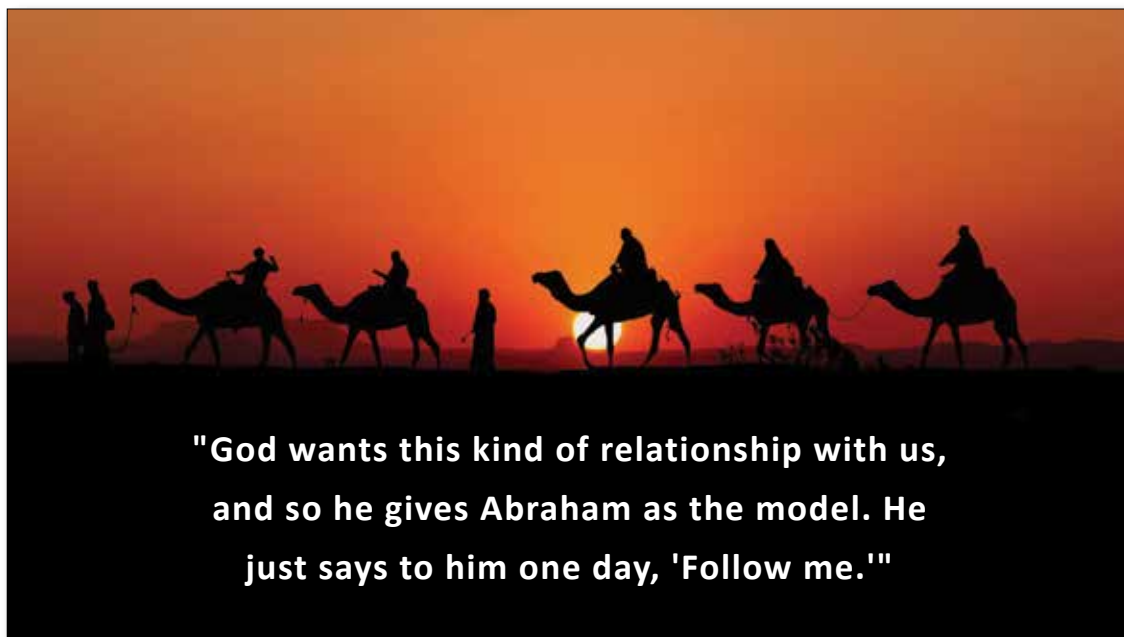
It is significant to me that the first thing God says to Abraham is to leave his country. Our nationality is where many of our securities and much of our identity comes from. God wants our security to be in himself alone and in our relationship with him. God asked Abraham to put him above the land and culture to which he belonged. Do you have the kind of personal relationship with Christ that you are willing to give up your standard of living or your security for him?

God next asks Abraham to surrender his "people." Our people groups are another source of identity and security, perhaps even on a more

intimate level than our country. God put Abraham through all of that, and then he asks for one more thing. He asks Abraham to leave his father and his mother and walk with him. This is the kind of claim God makes on those he calls to himself. The end of the Bible is the story of all the nations of the earth coming to Christ; the beginning of the Bible is about one man being stripped of his ultimate allegiance to his own nation. I love the international nature of Scripture because God is building a kingdom bigger than any of our groups and bigger than any of our normal loyalties.

Another thing that I love is that when Christ asks us to surrender certain things, he always gives back more than he asks. You cannot out-give our God. He always gives in amazingly creative ways. God has a family for Abraham even better than the one he has left behind. He wants to put us in a supernatural family, and he wants to give us a family of great joy. God will never take anything away but that he gives you something infinitely better.

Finally, God gives Abraham and Sarah a country, he gives them Canaan, and even more, he provides them with an eternal kingdom,



that kingdom which is to come when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That eternal, unshakeable Kingdom is Abraham's inheritance as well as the inheritance of all believers. Scripture's record of Abraham is beautiful to me because it brings us to the essence of what really matters. Abraham is given all those things, but the great thing is that Abraham got God.

God desires Abraham to live with him, follow him, and trust him, and he promises that good fruit will come from it. That is the word he wants to say to you: if you will keep your relationship to Christ the central reality of your life and the most important thing in your life, your life will cast a shadow like that.

I do not think Abraham knew how big a business God had involved him in, but he knew God planned to bless the world, and understanding that was enough for Abraham. I remember hearing Henry Clay Morrison preach when I was a student at Asbury College. I love the fact that Morrison always believed he was in the greatest business in the world because he was preaching the gospel. He would

Continued on page 9

John Wesley on Worry

John Wesley (1703–1791)



John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist movement. We admire him greatly as an organizer, evangelist, and theologian. However, he is often misrepresented both by his detractors and his disciples. The Internet contains many urban legends. This article addresses one of the "quotes" attributed to Wesley.

An Internet search will bring up these supposed words of John Wesley, with some variation:

I have never known more than fifteen minutes of anxiety or fear. Whenever I feel fearful emotions overtaking me, I just close my eyes and thank God that He is still on the throne reigning over everything, and I take comfort in His control over the affairs of my life.

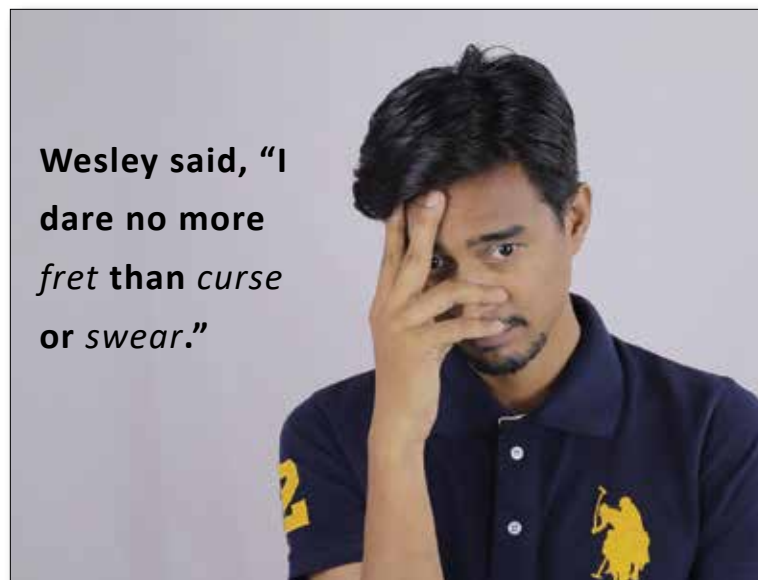
Like several other statements attributed to Wesley, this statement cannot be found in his writings. However, if we piece together four sources, we can gain a better grasp of what Wesley actually said and how he was able to rise above anxiety and fear.

To believe in God implies to trust in him as our strength, without whom we can do nothing, who every moment endues us with power from on high, without which it is impossible to please him; as our help, our only help in time of trouble, who compasses us about with songs of deliverance; as our shield, our defender, and the lifter up of our head above all our enemies that are round about us. It implies to trust in God as our happiness; as the center of spirits, the only rest of our souls; the only good who is adequate to all our capacities, and sufficient to satisfy all the desires he hath given us.¹

Wesley continued to explain that the words of Jesus, "Take no thought," does not imply that we should shirk our responsibilities. Matthew 6:25 actually means "do not be anxious."

What he here condemns is "the care of the heart": the anxious, uneasy care; the care that has torment; all such care as does hurt, either to the soul or body. . . . He forbids only that care which poisons the blessings of today by fear of what may be tomorrow; which cannot enjoy the present plenty through apprehensions of future want. This care is not only a sore disease, a grievous sickness of soul, but also an heinous offence against God, a sin of the deepest dye. It is an high affront to the gracious Governor and wise Disposer of all things; necessarily implying that the great Judge does not do right, that he does not order all things well. It plainly implies that he is wanting either in wisdom, if he does not know what things we

1 Wesley, "Upon our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, IX," §4.



Wesley said, "I dare no more fret than curse or swear."

stand in need of, or in goodness, if he does not provide those things for all who put their trust in him.²

Therefore, Wesley said, "I dare no more fret than curse or swear."³

If a dinner ill dressed, a hard bed, a poor room, a shower of rain, or a dusty road, will put them [his traveling companions] out of humor, it lays a burden upon me greater than all the rest put together. By the grace of God I never fret; I repine at nothing; I am discontented with nothing. . . . The doctrine of particular providence is what exceeding few persons understand, at least not practically, so as to apply it to every circumstance of life. This I want—to see God acting in everything and disposing all for his own glory and his creatures' good.⁴

Twenty-five years later he wrote that he did not remember to have felt lowness of spirits for one quarter of an hour since he was born.⁵ However, in the edition of Wesley's sermons edited by Albert C. Outler, there is a footnote explaining that Wesley's memory was blurred on this point. While statements of deep concern, and even depression, can be found in Wesley's *Journal*, he must be given credit for cultivating a general spirit of contentment and trust in the providence of God. This same grace can also help us to be more content, more joyful, and more trusting. ✠

2 Ibid., §17.

3 Luke Tyerman, *Life and Times of Wesley*, 3:658.

4 Wesley, Letter to Ebenezer Blackwell, 31 August 1755.

5 Wesley, "Spiritual Worship," Sermon #77, 3.2.

Zechariah: The Beauty of Holiness

Titus Women Winter 2022 Bible Study



In this 7-week Bible study on the book of Zechariah, Laura Ury, a missionary painter, comes alongside Beth Coppedge to illustrate the beauty of God's Word. A workbook filled with beautiful art and study questions is available for weekly homework, and four frame-worthy prints of the artwork are also available for purchase from the Francis Asbury Society. In the next several weeks, Titus Women also will produce podcasts and a YouTube playlist from the recordings of this study.



1
Man Among
Myrtles



2
Wall of
Fire



3
Cleansing
of Joshua



4
Candelabra

not have traded places with anyone in the world, because he could share the good news of Jesus with the world. He knew that if you will walk with Christ, he will put you in big business. The world may not recognize it, but you will know its reality deep in your heart, and there will be a contentment inside you because you are living for eternal things.

This God of Abraham always goes before you. He never asks you to go where he has not already been, and he will never ask you to do anything that he has not already done. His mode of relating to us is exactly opposite the world's way. He does not operate as a boss who tells his subordinates what to do. He has entered our world, assumed our pain, and borne it with us and for us. You will never find any place where he is not ahead of you to lead you, to guide you, to protect you, to care for you, to be there with you. He will never ask you to do anything that he is not willing to do.

The best example is in Genesis 22 when God asks Abraham to give up his son. "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you" (Gen. 22:2). The next verse says that early the next morning Abraham "got up and loaded his donkey." I cannot imagine how much he suffered through that night, but when daylight came, he was headed for Mount Moriah to obey the One with whom he walked. As they were going up the mountain, Isaac turned and said, "Father? . . . The fire and wood is here . . . but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7).

Abraham said, "God himself will provide a lamb." Then Abraham laid his only son on that altar, bound him, and raised the knife to put it in Isaac's breast; there was total obedience in Abraham.

God intervened. He did not want Isaac; he just wanted to know that Abraham was still living detached from all else and attached to God and to God alone. God's salvation depended on Abraham's obedience, and as soon as he knew Abraham's heart, he stepped in

to save Isaac. Henry Clay Morrison used to describe this scene in a powerful way. He would say:

I thought I heard a conversation on Mount Moriah. It wasn't between Abraham and Isaac, it was between the first Person of the Trinity and the second Person of the Trinity. The second Person of the Blessed Trinity said to the first of the Blessed Trinity. "Father, this is not the last time we're coming to this mountaintop, is it?"

And the Father said to the eternal Son, "No, Son, this is not the last time we're coming to this mountaintop. It will be about two thousand years and we'll be back here."

"Father, when we come back the next time, it won't be one of them on this altar, will it?"

The eternal Father replied, "No, Son, when we come back the next time, it won't be one of them on this altar; it will be one of us."

"It will be me, won't it?"

And the Father said, "Son, yes, it will be you."

The eternal Son looked into the face of the eternal Father and he said, "Father, when we come back the next time, and it's me on that altar, and the knife's raised or the spear is raised, and they're ready to push it in, are you going to say, 'Don't touch the lad'?"

"No Son. We never ask them to do in symbol what we are not willing to do in reality."



The power and poignancy of that scene has never left me. I have remembered that story all my life. That promise of God was fulfilled.

You have a future, but the future is not in you; it is in him. Finding your future is keeping your personal relationship with Christ clean and clear on a day-by-day, hour-by-hour basis. Your attachment to him means that, compared to that attachment, every other relationship in your human experience is a detachment. Simply put, he comes first. And if you make him Lord and leave all to follow him, the rest of us are going to spend eternity listening to the stories you will tell about the outworking of his plan in your life. ✎

Empower the Nations

Elayaraj Mariyanandam



Elayaraj is a volunteer at the Francis Asbury Society, helping us to launch our Empower the Nations initiative, which will equip a network of international Christian leaders in the theology and practice of holiness and how to set up and reproduce mentoring and discipleship systems in their own communities. "Raj" is also a PhD student at Asbury Theological Seminary and an FAS Fellow.

This initiative aims to engage with international Christian leaders to proclaim scriptural holiness—the message that, through the in-filling power of the Holy Spirit, every person in every nation can be transformed to live wholly for God and embody his self-giving love. The Francis Asbury Society, in partnership with several other ministry organizations, is planning to host regional conferences around the world to educate, equip, and encourage participants in the theology and practice of holiness, especially how to set up and multiply mentoring relationships and discipleship systems in their

local communities. Our desire is to see these long-term covenant relationships become established and grow so that an increasing number of international Christian leaders can network together to proclaim the message of scriptural holiness everywhere.

The first regional conferences are being scheduled for 2023. The conference curriculum will be designed and taught by international leaders and professors. Participants will receive a starting library of holiness resources, and we also plan to provide some scholarships through an application process.

Please pray and consider how much you can contribute today. We will need around \$750/attendee for travel, food, lodging, materials, and conference costs. For more information about Empower the Nations, please visit our webpage at www.francisasburysociety.com/ministries/empower-the-nations.

The devil was defeated, and precious people were set free from their bondage to evil. For this Jesus gives thanks.

I believe that this exultation and thanksgiving in the heart of Jesus resulted in greater anticipatory joy as he spanned the centuries and saw what the faithfulness and results of these disciple-making disciples would accomplish. The gospel would reach the far corners of the world and ultimately usher in Christ's reign on earth.

We read in Hebrews 12:3–4,

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

It was an anticipatory joy that filled the heart of our Lord as he watched the onward march of his church and the rich harvest that would be reaped as his glory filled the earth.

As we contemplate the account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11:1–44, there are some salient points that call for our attention. The disciples had no idea what anticipatory prayer was all about. In verse 15 Jesus tells them that his purpose in delay was to teach them the value of faith even when the impossible had already presented itself.

We also see the compassionate heart of Jesus. Twice we read that he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled—so deep that he wept. He then orders the stone to be moved, an unheard-of thing.

The watching mourners were amazed as they heard Jesus pray, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me” (v. 41–42). We need to remember that Jesus always lived in an uninterrupted communion with his Father. He knew that his Father always heard his prayers; he could with a loud voice cry out, “Lazarus, come out!”

We need to note that Jesus expressed his thanksgiving *before* Lazarus rose from the grave.

As the life of Abraham is described in Romans 4:18–21, we also can note the testimony of anticipatory prayer and praise:

Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. (NKJV)

We have come to terms that some healings and answers to prayer will only reach a perfect fulfillment in eternity. We have learned to

praise God, and even though at times we did not fully understand his will, it became God’s sweet will and providence for us.

While we are in the furnace of affliction and trial, it becomes difficult indeed to give anticipatory praise and thanksgiving. Take heart, however, that we are admonished to do so:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:1–5)

Now may the God of hope [unshakable confidence] fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

“Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4–7)

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God,

that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (Hebrews 13:15–16)

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. (Psalm 34:1)

Our churches need a revival of joy! 🙌

Have You this Living Faith? continued from page 3

To those who have already believed, let us add a few words of exhortation. Frequently resort to first principles. Faith introduces you and faith alone can keep you in divine favor. Keep your heart with all diligence. Be careful to maintain good works; faith is not only evidence but also nourished by its fruits. Strive to recommend to others and to extend to the ends of the earth the preaching of the only name given among men whereby we may be saved. Be encouraged to expect great blessings. “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). If faith has changed you from enemies to children, how will it not give you all the blessings which belong to the family of God? And if God has triumphed over your unbelief and stubbornness, surely the conquest of a world is not a difficult achievement. Would Christians unite in cultivating these views and acts under their influence, it might be fairly said that the millennial glory already has begun to beam on the earth. 🙌



**"I will bless the
LORD at all times;
His praise shall
continually be
in my mouth."
(Psalm 34:1)**

this encounter with Jesus, and they could not wait to tell someone. Although he had vanished from their sight while he was praying with them, he was still with them in spirit. It is often the case that we see more while our eyes are closed in prayer than we do while they are open in doubt.

John Wesley had been ordained in the Church of England thirteen years when we heard the preface to the book of Romans read. In 1522 Martin Luther had written:

Faith is not the human notion and dream that some people call faith. When they see that no improvement of life and no good works follow—they fall into the error of saying, “Faith is not enough; one must do works in order to be righteous and be saved.” This is due to the fact that when they hear the gospel, they get busy and by their own powers create an idea in their heart which says, “I believe”; they take this then to be a true faith. But, as it is a human figment and idea that never reaches the depths of the heart, nothing comes of it either, and no improvement follows.

Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1:12–13. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. It is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them and is constantly doing them.

Whoever does not do such works, however, is an unbeliever. He gropes and looks around for faith and good works but knows neither what faith is nor what good works are. Yet he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times.

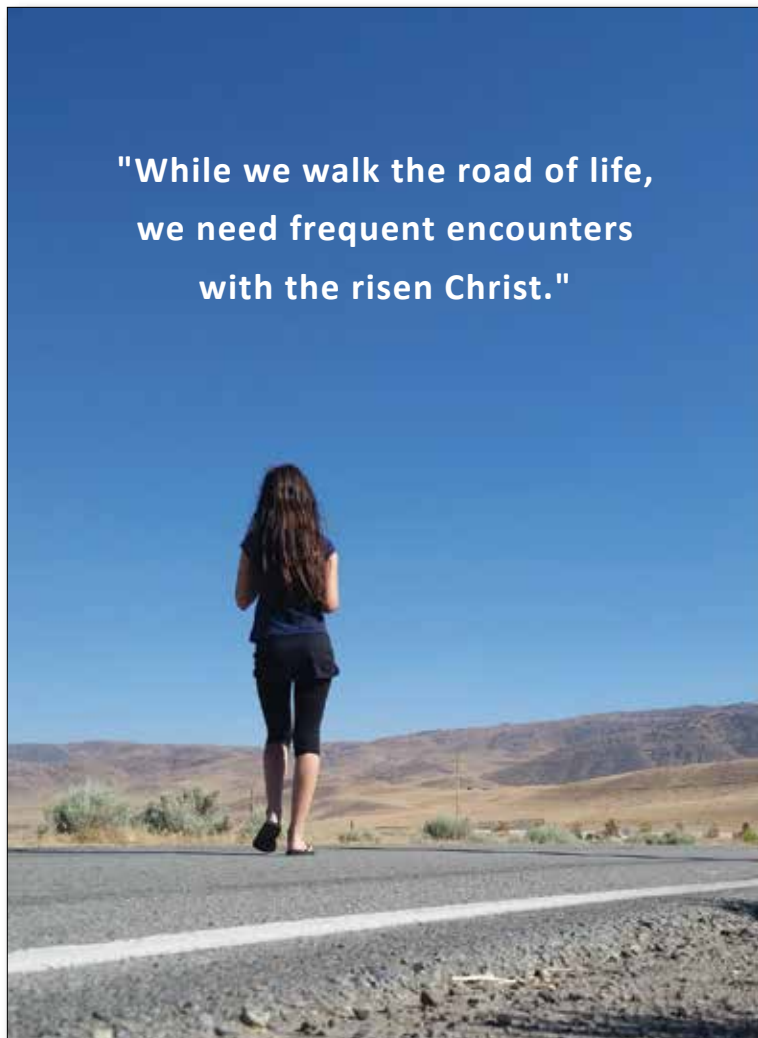
This knowledge of and confidence in God’s grace makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all creatures. And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith. Because if it, without compulsion, a person is ready and glad to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, out of love and praise to God who has shown him this grace. Thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of idle talkers who imagine themselves wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works and yet are the greatest fools. Pray God that he may work faith in you. Otherwise, you will surely remain forever without faith, regardless of what you may think or do.

As Wesley heard these words read while visiting a Moravian society meeting on Aldersgate Steet in London, he reported:

About a quarter before nine, while he [Luther] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

While we walk the road of life, we need frequent encounters with the risen Christ. Long ago Jeremiah wrote: “If I say, ‘I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,’ there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot” (Jer 20:9). Nothing but a living faith in a risen Christ can bring hope to a broken world.

The theme of this issue of *The High Calling* is *faith*. We are saved by faith, and those who are saved live by faith. May God increase our faith. ✠



"While we walk the road of life,
we need frequent encounters
with the risen Christ."

Faith Is the Victory continued from page 2

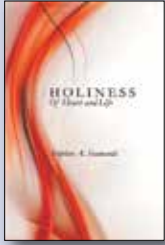
helpful. Also, one must not overlook the faithful believers’ witness that had been part of the group reading Luther with him.

So, Charles, with an artist’s mind, saw the Christ revealed in Scripture, proclaimed by believers, adored by the Church, and ministered by the Spirit through the convincing medium of grace. And when he did, it converted his soul in justifying and regenerating grace. Christ’s “bleeding heart” had room for him! God considered Charles welcome.

Secondly, Wesley saw in the wounds of Christ the opening into the God who saved him. “His *open side* shall take you in.” Much had been written of which Wesley would have been familiar regarding the *stigmata*—the wounds of Christ. In his successive hymns Charles would make frequent reference to the wounds of Christ that he saw as both inviting for people to believe and efficacious for the soul—they were meritorious. Christ was wounded so that those wanting to be converted from their sins and fallen state could find their way in by the merit of Christ’s saving work on Calvary.

The very heartbeat of Christ, through the opening in his wounded body, called Wesley—and still *calls us* today—into his body (defined as his Church). Christ and his life, death, and resurrection is the direct object of faith. But we are the direct object of Christ’s love. In May of 1738 Charles Wesley found his “home.” It was in the love and life of Jesus. Throughout the remainder of his life, through his hymns (more than 8,000 were published!), he would use poetry to call all who would believe to faith in Christ.

“He calls you now, invites you home: Come!” Come to the gift of faith by grace to the Christ who makes room for you. His “bleeding heart” and his “open side” invite you home. ✠

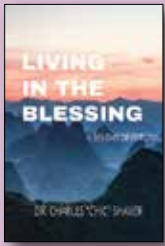


Holiness of Heart and Life

By Stephen Seamands

\$11.95 (paperback; 96 pages)

How do we recover a passion for the clear sense of identity and mission which John Wesley called “holiness of heart and life”? Drawing from Isaiah 6:1–8, Dr. Seamands sets the stage for that recovery by identifying the ingredients to holiness and their implications for us as people of God: God’s otherness, God’s glory and presence, God’s power, purity, and God’s redemptive love.



Living in the Blessing

By Dr. Charles "Chic" Shaver

\$19.99 (paperback; coming soon)

Living in the Blessing is a 365-day devotional book inspired by the faith journey of Dr. Chic Shaver, who has traveled the world winning people to Jesus Christ. The reflections are ordered to move readers from the basic tenets of the Christian life to the reflections of a mature and seasoned faith, “through the sanctifying work of the Spirit” (1 Peter 1:2).

Aligning Treasure with Heart

Charlie Fiskeaux, Special Assistant to the President for Financial Affairs

One piece of common wisdom is that “whatever gets your attention ultimately gets you.” The things to which we devote our attention, time, talents, and treasure become a significant part of our lives because our resources are limited. We must choose more carefully, then, that to which we devote our limited resources.

The biblical expression of this common wisdom is, “wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be” (Matt 6:21 NLT). In this statement, Jesus affirms the alignment between one’s treasure and the desires of one’s heart: they go together. As followers of Jesus, we affirm our heart’s desire to know Jesus intimately, to have a heart singly devoted to Him, to walk carefully in our daily lives reflecting His presence to others, and to devote our efforts to bring His Kingdom to full realization on earth. Therefore, because of this alignment of heart with treasure, it behooves us to consider where we “invest” our treasure, because that is ultimately where our heart’s desires will be placed.

If you are looking for a place to invest your earthly treasure that will enable alignment with eternally focused desires, consider the Francis Asbury Society, a ministry that proclaims God’s grace sufficient to enable us to be “wholly devoted to God.” Details for various methods of giving to the ministries of the Francis Asbury Society are available on the website www.francisasburysociety.com/support.

Sign up to receive our companion e-newsletter, *Ministry Matters*, at www.francisasburysociety.com

The High Calling—March–April 2022
The High Calling is a bimonthly publication of The Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.
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