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The first American thanksgiving.

Jesus not only passed by but also heard their cry. No longer were they embarrassed by their ostracism. They had no dignity to preserve. They cry out “unclean” and then “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Jesus always responds to such confession and faith. They demonstrated their faith through their obedience. On the way to fulfill the command of Christ, which was based on Leviticus 13–14, they were cleansed. They had a *katharsis* experience. But only one returned to give thanks. We are not whole until we give thanks. Jesus asks the rhetorical question—where are the other nine? If we were to answer his

question by giving an account of ourselves, we would have to admit that often we never pray nor give thanks nor even go to church until we find ourselves in another predicament that we cannot fix.

Jesus declared that the faith of the one who gave thanks had made him whole. Actually, the word is *sozo*, the Greek word for salvation. While all ten had been healed of leprosy, one was healed from self-absorption. He was the only one who looked up.

The rest received God’s grace, but they were missing-in-action. They may have felt that because they were Jews, God owed them their healing. It is hard to be grateful as long as we feel we deserve more. Pride says, “I deserve it.” Greed says, “I deserve even more.” Anger asks why he did not do it more quickly. Jealousy says the rest are not

Where Are the Nine?

Vic Reasoner

We are commanded in Psalm 100 to “enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name” (v. 4). We probably break this command more frequently than any other commandment.

In Luke 17:11–19 Jesus healed ten lepers. Their disease was incurable. They were under quarantine and required to keep a hundred paces from anyone who passed by. They were required to cry out “unclean.” Some were without eyes, nose, or hair; they all were without hope.

Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Ordinarily Jews went the long way around Samaria in order to avoid contact with the marginalized. In John 4 Jesus was in Judea, traveling north to Galilee. Samaria lay in the middle. Instead of taking the bypass, Jesus cut through seven hundred years of prejudice and went through Samaria.

Here in Luke 17 Jesus is in Galilee and wants to go down to Jerusalem, which is south in Judea. At the border between Samaria and Galilee he encounters these ten lepers. It really did not matter that nine were Jews and one was a Samaritan. Their common disease and misery broke down all other barriers. Although some might attempt to exploit racial, economic, and social distinctions, the entire human race has more in common—we are all sinners.

Thanksgiving and Other Macaroni Necklaces

Renita Koehn



Renita and her husband, Daniel, are music evangelists with FAS. She has a DMA in vocal performance and serves as the worship pastor at Cornerstone Church of the Nazarene in Frankfort, KY, where Daniel pastors. Dr. Harold Burgess, one of our co-founders, felt Renita had a gift for writing and encouraged her to share her gift more. In this article, she encourages us to look at the “scrapbook” of our lives through eyes of thankfulness.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever! Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. . . . Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to the sons of men! (Psalm 107:1–3, 8 RSV)

While taking care of my mom’s estate, I ran across an old folded piece of notebook paper tucked away in the back of a drawer with some of her treasured keepsakes. As I unfolded the paper, I recognized my own young handwriting. It was a poem I had written to my mom long ago. It expressed how she was my hero, how I wanted to be just like her when I grew up, and how much I appreciated all the things she did for me. I stopped everything, sat down, and re-read the poem, deeply touched that Mom had kept it all those years. Why are those handwritten notes, misshapen clay bowls, and clunky macaroni necklaces kept and cherished? It is because even though they are childish and crude, they are tokens of the transparent love and sincere gratitude of a child.

What love notes and mementos of thanks does God have tucked away in some celestial drawer? Wouldn’t our heavenly Father also cherish our expressions of love, gratitude, and appreciation? Psalm 91:14 seems to indicate that God is moved by our love and our acknowledgement of gratitude to Him: “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name” (NIV).

At Thanksgiving, we customarily give voice to a number of things for which we are thankful. We have signs that say that we are “blessed” or “grateful” or that remind us to count our blessings. All of these, while good sentiments, are still lacking a crucial component. They miss the *giving* part of thanksgiving. It is one thing to *feel* blessed or to *feel* grateful or even to enumerate things for which we’re thankful. But it is quite another to look a person in the face who has given us what we did not earn and say, “Thank you for this or that specific thing you did that really made my life better.” To come to that place of outward acknowledgment, we have to first come to the humble recognition of our indebtedness.

You see, the act of thanksgiving by definition must have at least two parties involved: the recipient of a grace who is the giver of the thanks, and the recipient of the thanks who was the giver of the grace. The concept is so simple that we often miss it altogether. We have received! We have been blessed by others. And Thanksgiving is a time to say so.

Instead, our homes on Thanksgiving Day often consist of frantic food prep, incautious indulgence, snoozing in the recliner to the background of the football game, and online Christmas shopping.

From our forbearers’ initial jubilation over God’s abundant goodness and provision, the celebration of Thanksgiving in many homes today has depreciated to maybe a short prayer and feeding gladness of heart.

Psalm 107 bids us to *consider* all our heavenly Father has done in redeeming us and to *express* our thanks to him. The psalmist counsels us to reflect on the goodness and faithful love of God. In order to reflect, we need to come to a full stop. This calls for an intentional action that says, “WHOA!” to all forging ahead—to be still and know that he is God in this context—and not just roll through Thanksgiving without stopping to reflect. Thanksgiving can become a holy sabbath of remembrance. And remembering that we are not self-sufficient, but rather needy recipients of innumerable generousities of grace and mercy is important to our spiritual health.

Here’s a suggestion for this year: Take an intermission. Take a look around you, and take a look back. Allow objects, events, and memories to congregate in your mind like all the actors in the drama of your life appearing together for a curtain call. But instead of receiving the applause, they all point in unison to the One who deserves the applause.



Take some time to sit down with your heavenly Father and let him show you his “scrapbook” of your life. Observe how the Lord has gathered you in from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west. Allow life events to touch each other and reveal themselves in the light of the whole. Let awe emerge. As it grows larger, we grow smaller in our own eyes, and we find ourselves unwittingly unwrapping the priceless gift of humility and true gratitude. He, in the context of life, has redeemed many troubles, masterfully and

lovingly bringing things together for the purpose of full and perfect salvation. What a Savior, indeed!

Perhaps the objects, events, and memories are reminders of pain—even anguish. But here you are. You survived. God helped you through all that. You’ve grown. All that bad weather helped you appreciate the sunshine even more. Suddenly you are awestruck that your heavenly Father trusted you with all that. You have come to know a fellowship with him that would have otherwise been impossible. You now see how all that mess you went through has actually caused flowers to grow where there were no flowers before. And there it is again: an overwhelming awe, the deep knowledge that you are held fast in the Everlasting Arms.

Thanksgiving is a time to let the puzzle pieces come together to start making a picture. That can’t happen if we don’t stop to allow God to reveal the marvel of what he has done. Then thanksgiving becomes more than a nod or a list of positives; it transforms into a spontaneous overflow of genuine joy, peace, and gratitude. From that overflow, the *giving* part of thanksgiving can and should freely flow. Let those the Lord has redeemed, say so!

So, as we reach for the macaroni box this Thanksgiving, let’s remember to string together our humble garland of thanksgiving to the Lord for his artistic and masterful creation of redemption taking place in our lives. ✨

Give Thanks, for God Is Holy

Matt Ayars



Matt currently serves as the president of Wesley Biblical Seminary. Prior to serving at WBS, Matt was the president of Emmaus University of Haiti as a career missionary with One Mission Society. He is also a published author, and he and his wife Stacey have four children. Though often we give God thanks only for what God does *for* us, in this article, Dr. Ayars reminds us to be thankful for who God *is*.

I'm thankful that God is holy.

All non-biblical worldviews are founded on the idea that there is continuity between the physical and spiritual realms. What is true in the physical world is also true in the spiritual world and vice versa. The physical and spiritual worlds are locked in-step.

This way of thinking has a major impact on everyday life. Superstition and fatalism, for example, result from this kind of thinking. These two concepts alone will fundamentally determine how someone behaves in the world. If everything is left to fate, then I might as well do what I want. Fate, in other words, undermines human responsibility and free will. It tells us that what we do doesn't matter. If superstition is real, then we should all be very afraid because it means that we are all subject to suffering and hardship that we simply cannot control. Once again, you might as well do what you want.

The greatest implication of this way of thinking is that things will never change. If things in the spiritual world are just like things in the physical world, then the gods are merely superhumans. They are



subject to fate, death, betrayal, dishonesty, infidelity, murder, and the list goes on. If everything in reality is locked together, then there is no such thing as the sacred; there is no possibility for anyone or anything to be set apart, holy, different.

Reality as the Bible describes it is completely different. According to the Bible, God is not part of the cosmos. God is outside of time and space. He is not subject to fate and death. He is holy. That is, he is truly set apart; and, it is precisely because he is set apart that there is hope for change. He can break into the cosmos and change things. He can do things that are brand new (Isa 43:18-19). Life doesn't have to just keep going around and around! There is hope for real, actual change! History isn't simply repeating itself endlessly. To the contrary, history is actually going somewhere precisely because God is not tied to it. God can actually break into the world and set things in another direction.

God is adamant throughout the Old Testament that Israel understand that he could not be contained by the creation; that no statue could encapsulate him. He is not synonymous with any created thing. He cannot be summed up in an idol.

This Thanksgiving week, I'm thankful for the fact that God can change our circumstances; that he can break into our lives and set things on a different course. I'm thankful that life is not dictated by impersonal fate or destiny. I'm thankful that human choice *matters*. Most of all, I'm thankful that God is holy, set apart, different than this broken human world. ✠

A Gratitude Adjustment

David Yarborough



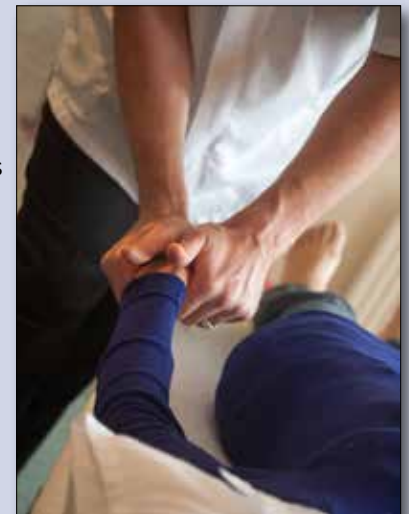
David Yarborough is the lead pastor for Church on the Hill in Dalton, GA. In 1991, he graduated with a B.A. in Public Relations from the University of Georgia and from the Grady School of Journalism. He received his MDiv from Asbury Theological Seminary in 1998 and was a speaker at FAS Hemlock Inn Retreats in 2022. In this article, David explains that, because of the Fall, we all are out of alignment and frequently need a spiritual chiropractor.

Do you need a gratitude adjustment as we head into this holiday season of Thanksgiving and Christmas? We have often heard of someone needing an "attitude adjustment," but I also believe many of us could use a "gratitude adjustment" every so often. The last 2½ years have been a pretty hard season, even for the people of God. Our worlds have been shaken, and so many have not been at their best. As we are moving on past COVID, have you found your heart softer, or has it gotten harder to Christ and others?

It seems the moment in which we live is marked with division and polarization instead of unity and oneness. It has become much easier for people to criticize than to praise, to complain than to give thanks, and to count one's losses instead of one's blessings. I am convinced if we can learn to live a more grateful life it will

indeed adjust our attitude in the right way. And I also believe it is important to our Heavenly Father.

Jesus told a story of 10 lepers who stood at a distance and cried out to him for mercy. They wanted to be healed. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priest at the temple, and as they went, they were healed and cleansed. One of the ten, a Samaritan, came back to Jesus. Scripture tells us, "Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face and Jesus' feet, giving him thanks" (Luke 17:15-16, RSV). I love the response of this one man. He came back praising and thanking God for the miracle.



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Living with Hope in a Hopeless World: Learning from C. S. Lewis

Daryl McCarthy



Dr. McCarthy is the executive director of *The Leadership Anvil*. This article is adapted from an address he gave to the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians in Prague in August. Hope is a scarce commodity in the academy and in our secular world. Even though he faced strident opposition and bore up under many disappointments, C. S. Lewis maintained a deep sense of hope. We can learn from Lewis to live as persons of hope.

DEFINING HOPE

Hope was a major theme for C. S. Lewis. He directly rejected the popular saying that some people are so heavenly minded they are of no earthly good. In fact, he turned that saying on its head by declaring that unless you are sufficiently heavenly minded, you will definitely be of no earthly good.

In *Mere Christianity* Lewis classifies hope as a “theological virtue.” He then defines hope as “a continual looking forward to the eternal world.” He declared, “Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at earth and you will get neither.” But he quickly assures us



that Christian hope is by no means “escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do.”

In fact, Christian hope is not only opposed to escapism; it is just the opposite. Our hope, Lewis declared, serves as the reason why we don’t leave the world as we found it. He points out that the great Christian change-agents throughout history—he lists the apostles, missionaries, and those who fought slavery as his examples—were effective “precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven.”

Here is the balance. We practice gratitude and appreciation for the “earthly” blessings we have, but we must take care “never to mistake them for the something else of which they are only a kind of copy, or echo, or mirage.” The secret, Lewis says, is that we keep alive our desire for our “true country” which we “shall not find till after death.” He warns, “I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same.”

In his famous sermon, *The Weight of Glory*, Lewis clearly lists five “promises of Scripture” about our hope and heaven. “It is promised (1) that we shall be with Christ; (2) that we shall be like him; (3) with an enormous wealth of imagery, that we shall have ‘glory’; (4) that we

shall, in some sense, be fed or feasted or entertained; and (5) that we shall have some sort of official position in the universe—ruling cities, judging angels, being pillars of God’s temple.”

THE SOURCE OF HOPE

His hope was grounded in an unwavering confidence in Christ and the truthfulness of the Word of God. Because of Jesus, Lewis showed that we can look at even the worst things in life with an eternal perspective. Indeed, our eternal hope gives us perspective.

Prayer Sustains Hope

Lewis was many things, but he was definitely a man whose life was given to prayer. It is tempting to view his stellar career as a scholar at Oxford and Cambridge as idyllic, dreamy good. But he was definitely not living in paradise. He was repeatedly rejected for the promotion he rightfully should have had at Oxford as the leading authority in his field. He was treated with contempt and dismissive sneers because of his vocal allegiance to Christ. As if his professional life didn’t produce pressure enough, his life at home was marked with non-stop quarreling and conflicts with Mrs. Moore and her daughter whom he had taken into his home in fulfillment of a promise to his college buddy who was killed in World War I.

Lewis’ response to all these tribulations? He turned to prayer. Prayer was the norm for him throughout the day. After studying Lewis’ walk with God, Lyle Dorsett observed that “prayer became absolutely essential for him to keep that relationship with God strong.”

In his correspondence and speaking he repeatedly urged believers to pray. In one letter he provided some wise counsel after an initial disclaimer:

I very much doubt if I’m good enough at prayer myself to advise others. First thing in the morning and the last thing at night are good times but I don’t find that they are the best times for one’s main prayers. I prefer sometime in the early evening, before one has got sleepy—but of course that depends on how your day is mapped out.

For Lewis, prayer—ongoing communion with God—was integral to his walk with Christ. Sherwood Wirt, writing an article for Billy Graham’s *Decision* magazine, asked Lewis about his view of “the daily discipline of the Christian life—the need for taking time to be alone with God.” Lewis responded:

We have our New Testament regimental orders upon the subject. I would take it for granted that everyone who becomes a Christian would undertake this practice. It is enjoined upon us by Our Lord; and since they are his commands, I believe in following them. It is always just possible that Jesus Christ meant what he said when he told us to seek the secret place and close the door.

Hope and the focus on heaven motivated Lewis to pray. Even though his life was packed and pressured, he spent much time in prayer.

Hope Is Grounded in Theology

Lewis’s hope was in Christ and the future in heaven God has prepared for us. Heaven was a favorite theme of his and it appears over and over in his writing on a variety of subjects. For him, the hope of being

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in heaven in God's presence was real, vital, enervating, personal. In *The Problem of Pain* he declared:

For it is not humanity in the abstract that is to be saved, but you—you, the individual reader, John Stubbs or Janet Smith. Blessed and fortunate creature, your eyes shall behold him and not another's. All that you are, sins apart, is destined, if you will let God have his good way, to utter satisfaction. . . . Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand.

Part of the reason why Lewis put so much stock in heaven and our future there is that he recognized that only there will we be truly what we were created to be. In the same book he rhapsodized about the hope of becoming complete:

To enter heaven is to become more human than you ever succeeded in being in earth; to enter hell, is to be banished from humanity. What is cast (or casts itself) into hell is not a man: it is "remains." To be a complete man means to have the passions obedient to the will and the will offered to God: . . . heaven is the home of humanity and therefore contains all that is implied in a glorified human life: but hell was not made for men. It is in so sense *parallel* to heaven.

His hope was always God-centered. In one lecture Lewis simply stated that the best thing about heaven is "the vision and enjoyment of God." That is the essence of our hope. In fact, for Lewis, hope meant a full realization of God's love as well as the love he had for others here on earth. In the closing paragraphs of *The Four Loves*, he explained:

When we see the face of God we shall know that we have always known it. He has been a party to, has made, sustained and moved moment by moment within, all our earthly experiences of innocent love. All that was true love in them was, even on earth, far more his than ours, and ours only because his. In Heaven there will be no anguish and no duty of turning away from our earthly Beloved. First, because we shall have turned already; from the portraits to the Original, from the rivulets to the Fountain, from the creatures he made loveable to Love himself. But secondly, because we shall find them all in him. By loving him more than them we shall love them more than we now do.

HOPE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Our hope in Christ and our future with him in heaven should affect every detail of our lives. Hope radically transformed Lewis's scholarship and his life. Lewis's life gives abundant evidence of his determination to "press on to that other country" as he put it. He definitely invested his life and writing in helping "others to do the same."

Looking Forward, Not Back

Lewis was propelled by his hope in his future life with God. It was a part of his daily life. Not too many months before he died, he wrote these words in a letter to a friend:

Think of yourself just as a seed patiently waiting in the earth: waiting to come up a flower in the Gardener's good time, up into the *real* world, the real waking. I suppose that our whole present life, looked back on from there, will seem only a drowsy half-waking. We are here in the land of dreams. But cock-crow is coming. It is nearer now than when I began this letter.

Obedience to Christ, the Judge and Savior

His hope motivated Lewis to obey Christ. He earnestly sought an unapologetic, undiluted total obedience to God in all things. Lyle Dorsett says that Lewis practiced "radical obedience to everything

that the Lord Jesus required, regardless of how small or mundane it seemed."

In his sermon, *The Weight of Glory*, Lewis used a fascinating phrase about our progress in faith as it related to hope. He said, "Longing transforms obedience, as gradually as the tide lifts a grounded ship."

Lewis explained that much of his motivation for stressing the importance of obedience was the prospect of standing before God the Judge. What an awesome, even terrifying prospect. The Church of the twenty-first century does not spend much time talking about God as our Judge. But for Lewis, contemplating the moment when we will stand before the Judgment Seat of God brought sobriety and focus, obedience and faith. Listen to how he described this:

In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. . . . It is written that we shall "stand before" him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God . . . to be a real ingredient in the divine

**"For Lewis,
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happiness . . . to be loved by God, not merely pitied but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.

Putting Earth's Joys and Pains in Perspective

One of Lewis's secrets to his outlook on life was that he viewed problems and even pain and grief in the context of God's larger plan for humankind. In other words, he viewed life and particularly our pain and suffering through the lens of his hope. Lewis was able to keep this perspective because he was constantly aware of the temptation to view this world as our real home. Pain and problems can make us long for heaven; or to put it another way, pain and problems can prompt us to grow in our hope.

Zest for Life

Many who met Lewis were immediately struck by his hearty laughter and his love of life. Lewis loved life because he had hope. His approach to life seems to be summed up in his declaration, "Because

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The Magnetic Pull of Gratitude

Cricket Albertson



Cricket is the director of Titus Women at the Francis Asbury Society. She is also the granddaughter of one of our co-founders, Dr. Dennis F. Kinlaw, and worked with him as his assistant for many years before his death in 2017. Since then, she has labored to publish several of his writings posthumously. Her perspective is that thankfulness is more than just a spiritual duty—it is the anticipation of God’s master plan fulfilled.

It was an empty, sleepy, country station and there was hardly anyone on the platform except themselves (Lucy, Edmond, Susan, and Peter). Suddenly Lucy gave a sharp little cry, like someone who has been stung by a wasp.

“What’s up, Lu?” said Edmund—and then suddenly broke off and made a noise like “Ow!”

“What on earth”—began Peter, and then he too suddenly changed what he had been going to say. Instead, he said, “Susan, let go! What are you doing? Where are you dragging me to?”

“I am not touching you,” said Susan. “Someone is pulling me. Oh-oh-h-stop it!”

“Look sharp!” shouted Edmund. “All catch hands and keep together. This is magic—I can tell by the feeling. Quick!”

And so begins the Pevensie children’s second journey into Narnia. An invisible force pulls them out of their own world and into the world of Aslan. He has a future for them—a job for them to do and he draws them to himself.

Living as a thankful Christian has more to do with the future than it has with the past. Thanksgiving is about having something to live for and not just remembering the past or attempting to be content in the present. Living with a thankful heart involves responding to the tug of the Holy Spirit pulling us out of ourselves into a world oriented around and toward the living God.

Most often, thankfulness is seen as a spiritual duty. Taking Paul’s command seriously to be thankful in all things (1 Thes 5:18), we remind ourselves to be thankful in seasons of suffering, at the start of hectic days, and throughout the weary afternoons. We are encouraged to keep a list of those things for which we are thankful, remembering even the smallest details of everyday life... the taste of fresh coffee or the sound of the wind in dry grass. Sometimes when our pain is intense, we find ourselves clutching at thankfulness, perhaps attempting to make the world seem more hospitable to human life than it feels to our souls. Remembering God’s action in the past and believing in his goodness for the future *does produce* a stabilizing strength in our lives. Learning to live with a grateful heart *does require* effort and intentionality, for we are pitifully self-centered and ungrateful when left to our own distracted thoughts. And yet, the heart of a thankful life is in the future—the mission and relatedness to which God calls us, the identity, purpose, and calling we find in him. The presence of God calls to us, beckons us to live in hope and

to live with a wonder that we have been called out of darkness and into this story of light. The Incarnation, Cross, and Resurrection are not only historical events to be remembered and celebrated but living realities through which we are called to live with God. Paul, even in prison, understood reality in a way that created this pulsing atmosphere of gratitude. He lived in light of something in front of him rather than simply remembering something. In Titus 1:1–4, Paul gives us his own sense of identity and mission. In his prepositions we find a key to living a life of thanksgiving:

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior; To Titus . . . (ESV)

First, Paul lived under *the authority of God*. He was a man who did not control his own destiny but lived under the direction of another as a servant and with the calling of an apostle. Hence, he was free to live in relationship and in dependence. Modern ideas of independence have brought us to a place of societal collapse, but

Paul knew nothing of the shame of living under the authority of God. To be God’s servant meant to be free from every other form of servitude, and Paul gladly lived in this place. He exchanged a life of power, position, and prestige for a life of freedom, dependence, and calling. He possessed the thankfulness of a free heart.

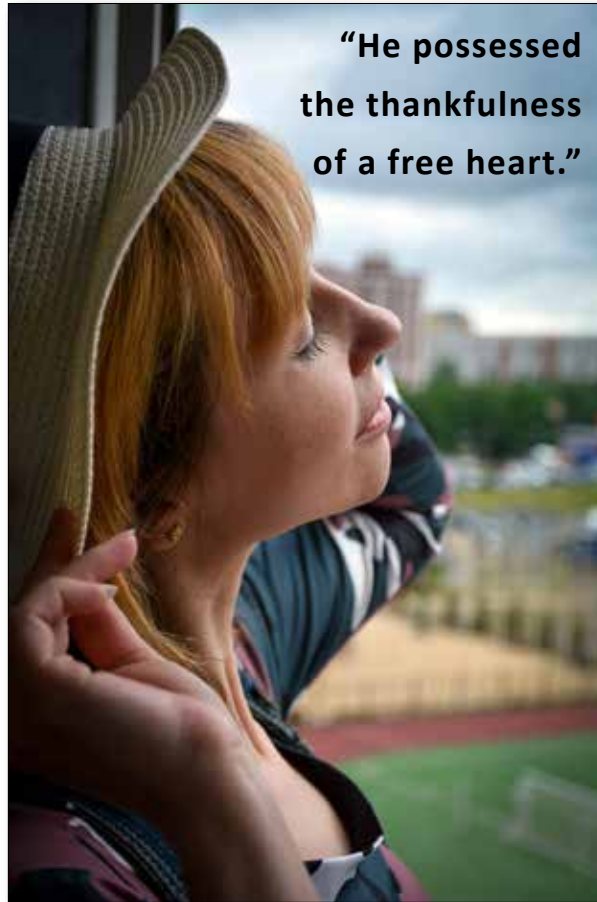
Second, Paul lived *for the sake of another*. His goal was not simply to live in intimacy with God; he was called to live for another. Called out of himself to live beyond himself—for the “faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of truth which accords with godliness.” He lived so that others could know a truth which resulted in a transformed life, a life of worship and holiness. He knew the thankfulness of a divinely given purpose.

Next, Paul lived *in hope of eternal life*. If we only live for the sake of another, we will quickly become disillusioned and exhausted. Needs never end, and strength runs out. Paul understood that looking beyond the needs of the other and looking in hope towards God himself was the answer to all human discouragement and cynicism. He

looked beyond to the horizon of eternal life which had been promised by a God who does not lie. Paul staked his life on the faithfulness of God and his Word, and he lived in that hope. His eyes looked beyond the immediate—to the living presence of God. He lived in the thankfulness of a vibrant hope.

Paul lived *through the preaching which had been entrusted to him*. He had been given the grace to preach, and this was how he accomplished God’s plan for his life. God always equips those he calls and gives a way to fulfill the calling he has given. In this provision is a

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“He possessed the thankfulness of a free heart.”

The Unspeakable Gift

Richard Watson



Richard Watson was the first Methodist to write a systematic theology. His *Theological Institutes* were first published between 1823 and 1829. This article is extracted and lightly edited for a modern audience from his collection of sermons, Sermon #92, published in 1834. He reminds us that the gift of Christ is an inexpressible gift. All other gifts flow through him.

Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (2 Cor 9:15)

It would be easy to present you with a large enumeration of the blessings which have flowed down to us, which have been put within our reach, or have come actually into our possession by the gift of Christ. We could trace all of them into their effects and consequences both in time and eternity and acknowledge how truly the gift in which they all originated may be described as unspeakable. But we will select a few examples which may serve to impress us with the importance of the subject.

By the gift of Christ, *we receive the gift of religious truth*. Mankind is deeply interested in religion. Error on this subject affects both our present peace and our future salvation. The great variety of opinions which prevail prove the interest we have in the subject.

The differences which exist prove our lack of light and direction. But what we could not reach, divine mercy has supplied. From the cloud of the divine presence came the tables of stone, in which all the principles of love and duty are inscribed by the finger of God himself. The Son of God appeared incarnate, illuminating that awesome letter into a more expressive spirit, providing atonement in his own sufferings and death, displaying the abounding grace of God in his promises, rising from the dead in his might, throwing back the veil which had been hidden the glories and terrors of another world, pouring upon the present time the clear light of eternity. This mighty demonstration of the gospel saves us from the anxieties about what is true. We may obtain pardon and peace and a light on our path which dissipates the gloom of death and leads us up to the very gate of eternal life.

By the gift of Christ, *we receive the gift of conscience*. Conscience is a divine rule by which our actions and character are determined as right or wrong. It includes a sense of guilt and fear of the future or a sweet and tranquil assurance of divine favor. Where there is no truth, there is no conscience and no check to vice. Such is the state of the pagan world. But the divine rule has been revealed. The fearful consequences of offence are shown and our consciences sprinkled by the blood of Christ. The distinctions between right and wrong are kept visible by conscience. It restrains in all, and when we are fully awakened by the convicting Spirit, it turns guilty wanderers, like the prodigal in the parable, to the house of the Father. Our sins are forgiven by him, and our conscience is at rest. It is a Christian conscience which makes a Christian person and adorns his character with the respectability of integrity and the softness of charity.

By the gift of Christ, *we receive the gift of righteousness by faith*. Only by Christ we come to know that God whom we have offended is placable and that it is in his gracious purpose to forgive. How can we express the value of this hope when it breaks upon the darkness of a self-condemned and awakened spirit? Can we conceive of the mercy and wisdom of that method of pardon which bring us from penances and pilgrimages, painful inflictions and tortures, the tormenting tyranny of superstition and the hopeless efforts for self-deliverance prescribed by Pharisees. The grace of our Lord Jesus does not leave us in doubt, but when this great change in our condition has taken place, he sends the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to assure our conscience of pardon and to bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God. God gives this sure title, indestructible by anything save our own apostasy.

By the gift of Christ, *a new order of affections has been opened in our hearts*. "Do good unto all men" is a sympathy fed by the love of Christ who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, so that we by his poverty might become rich." Such charity was never conceived of even by the best and wisest heathen—and even if it was conceived, they had no means of attaining it. The value of the gift is not diminished by the fault of men, however. It has shed this

sanctifying and softening influence over multitudes of hearts and its triumphs in society, though far from being complete, are yet eminent and glorious.

By the gift of Christ, *we receive the privilege of public worship*. Worship has been practiced in all ages, but the character of Christian worship is peculiar and stands in its own majestic simplicity. It forbids both pride and despair. Everything in the worship appointed for earth is connected with heaven itself—with its great High Priest in the holiest of all. There the



mercy seat is sprinkled with the blood of atonement and there the prayers of saints are presented with the intercession of Jesus. Our praises on earth are connected with the echoing sounds of grateful joy rising from the Church triumphant and our solemn silence with the deeper awe of the prostate seraphim. It presents a sweet picture of the better world which is prepared from them that love God. Our Sabbath is but an emblem of that rest—the rest that remains for the people of God after life's toil is ended. Our assemblies are but shadows of that general assembly. Our worship is but a faint resemblance of that eternal application of the intellect and heart to ever-unfolding mysteries, and every brightening glory, of the Godhead. Generation after generation are trained up on earth for the blessings of the heavenly world, and they pass in succession from these outward courts to that most holy place separated only by the curtain of a frail mortality. We can no more express the innumerable benefits which are silently flowing from this worship on earth than we can trace the silent but mighty influence of the spring which penetrates every root, clothes the naked tree with budding foliage,

Continued on page 11

Joy of Every Longing Heart

Joseph D. McPherson



Joe is the son of a Methodist pastor and evangelist. His mother, Anna Talbott McPherson, was a well-known author. Joe has been researching early Methodist literature since 1961. Here, Joe discusses the relevance of a Christmas hymn written by Charles Wesley. This article was taken from *Exploring Early Methodism* (Fundamental Wesleyan, 2018), 362–363. Used by permission.

Out of the more than nine thousand hymns written by Charles Wesley, eighteen Christmas carols were penned for his *Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord* (1745). When writing these carols, however, this fellow-leader of the great eighteenth century revival was not content with merely portraying in verse the manger scene. In the hymn below he begins by making references to biblical prophecies of Christ. Throughout the long centuries of waiting, the prophets had repeatedly assured God’s people of the Messiah’s coming. His advent was with glorious purpose—that of setting his people free from both sins and spiritual fears that have torment. What wonderful and gracious rest, strength, and consolation he intends to give to every expectant soul. Let us, during each Christmas season, make these verses our sincere prayer.

*Come thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free,
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee:
Israel’s strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring:
By thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone,
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.*

Although Christ was truly the “desire of every nation, he is also the joy of every longing heart.” Not only is he the child born with the “government . . . on his shoulders” (Isa 9:6), he is also born to “reign in us forever.” ✠



A Special Announcement from the FAS Board Chair

Chris Bounds

On October 27, Ohio Christian University (OCU) announced that Dr. Ron Smith has been selected as their new president-elect. Dr. Smith will transition from the presidency of the Francis Asbury Society (FAS) to his new role as president of OCU in the next few months. His full duties as president at OCU will begin on January 1, 2023.

While it is a loss for FAS, we know that Ohio Christian University is getting a great president and we want to pray blessings on our brother as he follows the Spirit’s leading. The Executive Committee of the FAS Board of Directors will meet soon to work with Dr. Smith and Ohio Christian University on the logistics of the transition.

Dr. Smith assures FAS that he will “continue to work fervently as a covenant member of the Society to fulfill its mission in the world.” Please join us in praying for Dr. Smith, Ohio Christian University, and the Francis Asbury Society throughout the next few months of transition. ✠

Empower the Nations Update

The mission of the Empower the Nations initiative is to equip a network of leaders in all nations to reach those in their local communities to:

- Bring times of refreshing and spiritual hope—revival/awakening—through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Provide resources that promote the message of Scriptural holiness, the self-giving love of God.
- Offer support, encouragement, and accountability through discipleship and mentoring groups.

The Francis Asbury Society is working with OMS missionary Troy Gentry in Mexico City to coordinate our first Empower the Nations conference on June 5–9, 2023. Our main presenters



have been confirmed: John Oswalt (FAS and ATS), Colleen Weaver (OMS), Joy Griffin (FAS and ILI), and Matt Friedeman (FAS and WBS). Also, a group of OMS Mexican leaders already have been invited to this first event! Please continue to pray for this initiative. ✠

MEXICO CITY, JUNE 5–9, 2023



John Oswalt



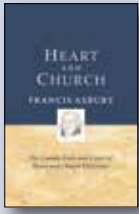
Colleen Weaver



Joy Griffin



Matt Friedeman



Heart and Church

by Francis Asbury; A Book Review

\$50 (paperback; 224 pages)

Francis Asbury only wrote one book, *The Causes, Evils, and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*—unless hymnals, conference minutes, and disciplines are counted. It was first published in 1785 or 1792. Asbury extracted from the works of Jeremiah Burrough and Richard Baxter, two seventeenth-century nonconformist pastors. Burrough had written *Heart Divisions, the Evil of Our Times* and Baxter had written *The Cure of Church Divisions*.

It was during a period when the Methodists were threatened with division over the ordinances that Asbury arranged extracts from both books. The controversy was whether the American Methodists would receive the sacraments from “unconverted” Episcopalian priests who were ordained or from unordained Methodist preachers. All of the ordained Methodist “missionaries,” except for Asbury, had returned to England. It looked as though the Methodist Societies would split.

Then James O’Kelly did foster a division in 1792. Asbury, with the heart of a pastor, concluded that “rigid, harsh, sour, crabbed, rough-hewn spirits are unfit for union: there is not sweetness, no amiableness, no pleasingness in them.” Asbury wrote that he “earnestly wished, prayed, and strove for unanimity.”

While every generation has to deal with its own controversies, Asbury traces the source of church division to heart division. The message of heart holiness is thus connected with unity. We are to pursue peace with all men and women as well as holiness before God. Thus, there is a timeless quality about these reflections on an undivided heart and a united, orthodox church.

With the disunity in the church today, Francis Asbury’s charge to those reading his book has particular resonance:

DEAR BRETHREN: In the course of my reading, some years ago, I met with an old book, written by a worthy pastor in the Church, Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs, on *Heart Divisions, the Evil of our Times*. Feeling at that time the pain of a partial separation in spirit and practice from some who were as my brethren and sons in the gospel, that book proved as a balm and a blessing to my soul. I saw so clearly the evil consequences of a division, and how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, that I began to abridge my obsolete but valuable book, and earnestly wished, prayed, and strove for unanimity.

Soon after, I met with another old book entitled, *The Cure of Church Divisions*, written by that venerable servant of God, the John Wesley of his day, in wisdom, affection, zeal, and a pacific spirit—I mean Mr. Richard Baxter, of precious memory. Being highly pleased with his evangelical sentiments, I concluded to make an extract from both, not doubting but it might be of great service to the Church of Christ.

And now I recommend it to all ministers of the gospel, and professing Christians of every denomination, into whose hands it may come; beseeching them to read it carefully, and with much prayer, that they may cultivate a spirit of unity and brotherly love.

I remain, dear brethren, your servant for Christ’s sake,

Francis Asbury ✠



A Theological Dictionary

by Richard Watson; A Book Review

\$50 (hardback; 560 pages)

Richard Watson was one of the greatest theologians the Church has ever known. He began preaching at age fifteen. He was regarded as an extraordinary preacher and often preached with unusual power. After the death of John Wesley, Watson became the theological leader of Methodism. Robert Chiles wrote, “Both in Britain and in America, Richard Watson was easily the single most determinative of the early Methodist theologians.”

He was secretary for the Wesleyan Missionary Society for fourteen years and was heavily involved in the abolishment of slavery. After the conference of 1821, he was relieved of pastoral duties so that he might oversee the work of missions and so that he could write. He wrote the first Methodist systematic theology, which was published between 1823 and 1829. After this monumental project was completed, the Methodist book committee asked him to compile a biblical and theological dictionary. This dictionary was published in sections between 1831 and 1832. He was only 52 when he died.

The value of his *A Biblical and Theological Dictionary* was the theological entries. The Watson family attended Calvinistic congregations before transferring to the Methodist chapel when Richard was a teenager. Thus, Richard understood keenly the differences. At first, he began to debate Methodist doctrine but soon embraced it. Even on his deathbed, he rejoiced in the light that came though the Spirit into his darkened mind.

Before we can enter into theological dialogue, we must begin with a proper definition of terms. Watson’s revised *A Theological Dictionary* is very valuable in this regard. This edition contains 220 entries ranging from a paragraph to several pages. However, the entries for names, plants, animals, and locations that are not controversial and thus can be defined in any standard reference work have been omitted. Watson addresses philosophical issues, comparative religions, apologetics, matters of hermeneutics, and basic Christian beliefs. His definitions and historical accounts, as well as his exegesis and citation of primary sources, will strengthen this generation of ill-equipped Armenians to defend their faith. Also included is a 15-page account of the Synod of Dort, as well as Watson’s definition of terms such as calling, election, foreknowledge, necessity, predestinations, reprobation, will, and vocation. ✠



we love something else more than this world, we love even this world better than those who know no other.”

Worship

In his *Letters to Malcolm*, he remembers how he learned to worship and adore God in prayer with the simple rule, “Begin where you are.” He would thank God for the brook, the moss, whatever he could see, as an introduction to praise. “I have tried . . . to make every pleasure into a channel of adoration.” He closes his thoughts of praise and adoration by asserting, “Joy is the serious business of heaven.”

Evangelism

His hope in the next world spurred on his evangelism, making him a “hot-gospeler” as he called himself. If our hope is truly for the next world, then surely we should make it a priority to tell others, so that they too can have this hope. He would “quote with approval General Booth’s remark to Kipling: ‘Young man, if I could win one soul for God by playing the tambourine with my toes, I’d do it.’” John Wain, who often heard Lewis make this statement, reflected, “Lewis did plenty of playing the tambourine with his toes, to the distress of some of the refined souls by whom he was surrounded at Oxford.”

Facing Death

When it was clear he was near death, he was prepared to die. His brother Warren said, “Jack faced the prospect [of death] bravely and calmly. ‘I have done all I wanted to do and I’m ready to go,’ he said one evening.” He was a man at peace because of his hope.

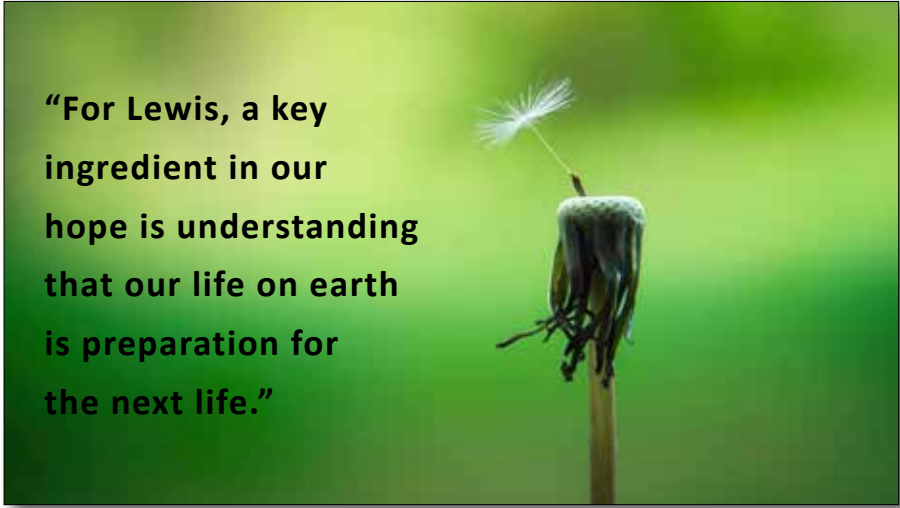
His hope in looking forward to heaven was very real for Lewis. He thought about it. He talked about it with others. He lived with this as a reality. In one of his *Letters to an American Lady*, he wrote:

What a state we have got into when we can’t say “I’ll be happy when God calls me” without being afraid one will be thought “morbid.” After all, St. Paul said just the same. If we really believe what we say we believe—if we really think that home is elsewhere and that this life is a “wandering to find home,” why should we not look forward to the arrival. There are, aren’t there, only three

things we can do about death: to desire it, to fear it, or to ignore it. The third alternative, which is the one the modern world calls “healthy,” is surely the most uneasy and precarious of all.

So, for Lewis, a key ingredient in our hope is understanding that our life on earth is preparation for the next life, life with God if we have surrendered to his will.

We can benefit from Lewis’s example in several ways which are basic to Christian discipleship. But in particular, our hope should motivate us to be more faithful in praying. In the depressing decline of Western civilization, his example of “looking forward to the eternal world”



can provide a much-needed boost of faith and perspective in our own dark days, by anticipating an eternity in the presence of God. “Looking forward to the eternal world” should mean we become more like Christ in a host of ways. It might mean we are more willing to speak the truth of a Christian worldview boldly and graciously in a cancel culture of Christophobia. It might mean we are more willing to share the Good News with unbelieving colleagues who don’t even believe there is an “eternal world.” It might mean we address individuals ensnared in various politically correct sins because we love them so much we don’t want them to miss enjoying the bliss of the eternal world. ✨

Messianic Prophecies
A Series for Advent

A 3-WEEK BIBLE STUDY BY JOHN N. OSWALT

When: Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. ET

Where: The Francis Asbury Society
1580 Lexington Rd
Wilmore, KY

Starting November 29

Deadly Sins 7 Cardinal Virtues

A STUDY OF CONTRASTS

Pride	Humility
Greed	Charity
Lust	Chastity
Envy	Patience
Gluttony	Temperance
Wrath	Kindness
Sloth	Diligence

Starting January 24, 2023

Praise is when we celebrate God for who he is and what he has done. Praise is often mixed with thanksgiving. This former leper fell at the feet of Jesus. When people fall at the feet of Jesus, wonderful things happen. There is no higher place on earth than the feet of Jesus. Jesus then asked, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” (Luke 17:17–18). Jesus was truly blessed by the one who returned to give thanks, but he was also disappointed in the nine who did not care to show gratitude for their healing.

There are a few simple things about gratitude I once heard mentioned by Dr. R. T. Kendall during a retreat at the Billy Graham Training Center at the Cove. Dr. Kendall mentioned the following thoughts:

1. God loves gratitude.
2. God hates ingratitude.
3. Gratitude must be taught and continually practiced.

I have often pondered and come back to these same principles in my journey with God and his people. There is no escaping the fact that God loves gratitude. Just look at the Bible. It is a book that overflows with thankfulness to our God. We are called to sing and say thanks to the Lord repeatedly throughout Scripture. We are told by the apostle Paul, “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thes 5:16–18). We are not called to give thanks only in the moments of good times. God calls us to always give thanks in all things. The Lord knows that thanksgiving has benefits for us. He wants us to seek for his blessing and grace even in the hard seasons. The Lord loves our gratitude, and he knows it will impact our mental and emotional health.

Did you know that gratitude actually reduces our anxiety and stress? I truly believe focusing on thankfulness guards our heart with greater peace and joy. So, not only does God love to see his people give thanks but also I truly believe other people will find you more enjoyable, and you will probably like yourself more also.

Gratitude will also open your eyes to “daily wonder.” Author Ann Voskamp wrote her book *One Thousand Gifts* with the intent to write down at least 1000 things she could give thanks for. It took her a couple of months, but she finished the list. She wrote down every single gift she could see that God had given to her until she had reached 1000. She said her discovery was absolutely life-changing. Somewhere in the process of compiling her list, her heart and attitude of gratitude began to change her. She discovered more wonder and beauty than she had ever realized or imagined. Her daily hunt for God’s grace and glory ushered her into a greater life.

Do you need to find daily wonder, and God’s everyday glory in the midst of the mundane? Perhaps this is all closer to your reach than you may have imagined. Perhaps it is as close as finding things to be thankful for, instead of noticing all the things about which you might complain. Maybe, just maybe we could all use a good gratitude adjustment. Thanks be to God from whom all blessings flow! ✨

The Unspeakable Gift continued from page 7

turns the barren soil into a garden, and spreads abroad more life and loveliness than the eye can measure or the tongue express.

This inexpressible gift may be offered in vain, but the love of God is ready to save. Those who receive can experience inexhaustible blessing. Whoever makes use of what he has, to him who maintains his love for heavenly wisdom and truth, to him who consistently acts upon his convictions, who continually lives by faith and follows after holiness—to him will more be given. ✨

The Magnetic Pull of Gratitude continued from page 6

delight which causes thanksgiving. We realize that God is providing all we need to go forward to accomplish what he is calling us to do. Paul was grateful for practical means of accomplishing God’s plan.

Finally, because of this life of hope, Paul invites *Titus* to be a part of this family and fellowship in the work with God. Paul’s relatedness to God the Father and his expectant vision of the next chapter in God’s story created a generosity of spirit and an openness of faith that continually drew others into the circle. He was mission-minded because of his hope. Throughout all his letters, Paul expresses his thankfulness for like-minded believers in Lord Jesus.

We are called to be people of hope. We are people on a mission with the living God. He has pulled us out of darkness and into his eternal story, and his life flows through us to draw others into his redemptive story. During this Thanksgiving season, allow yourself to be pulled away into the next part of his divine story in and through your life. ✨



Where Are the Nine? continued from page 1

as deserving as I am. Some people must live by the motto: Why pray when you can complain!

Perhaps they did not want to take the risk of publicly identifying with Jesus. After all, he was controversial. However, they may have intended to return and offer their thanks, but they just never got around to doing it. Little more than a year later, Jesus was crucified, and they may have felt that they missed their opportunity. May we not miss any opportunity to give thanks!

In the seventeenth century, the famous Bible commentator Matthew Henry was robbed. In his attempt to give thanks in everything he wrote in his diary:

Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not very much; and forth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.

It was in that same century that the Plymouth colony organized a thanksgiving celebration. Governor William Bradford declared a three-day feast to begin on December 13, 1621. During the Revolutionary War, eight special days of thanksgiving were observed for victories and deliverance. On November 26, 1789, President George Washington issued a general proclamation for a day of thanks. However, there was not a regular national thanksgiving day until 1863, when Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November as “a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father.” Even sinners have reason to give thanks for common grace, but the church, those who have been made whole, should lead the way. ✨

Christmas Gift Suggestions

In response to the excuse, “But I have no taste for reading,” John Wesley told his preachers, “Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.” [Conference Minutes, 1770]

What are some meaningful gifts one can give a serious student of Methodist theology? Below are a couple excellent choices. You can find all of our 2022 recommendations on our online Bookstore (store.francisasburysociety.com) under Advanced Search>Books>Christmas Gift Suggestions.



ADAM CLARKE'S COMMENTARY \$374.95 (6 volumes)

A British Methodist theologian and biblical scholar, Clarke is primarily remembered for writing this commentary on the Bible, which took him 40 years to complete and established orthodox Methodist exegesis. Next to Matthew Henry, no work of similar scope and magnitude has had a wider circulation or is better known.



THE NEXT METHODISM Kenneth J. Collins and Ryan Danker, editors \$34.95 (Paperback; 400 pages)

The Next Methodism invites readers on a journey to discover the vitality, richness, and sheer goodness of the broader Wesleyan tradition. It includes 36 chapters written by 36 contemporary Methodist leaders.

A Cheerful Heart Leads to a Bountiful Harvest

Charlie Fiskeaux, Special Assistant to the President for Financial Affairs

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Cor 9:6–7 ESV)

Our internal thoughts have consequences: first, a heart that is cheerful; then, deciding to sow (give) bountifully; and finally, reaping a harvest. The internal driver of giving that pleases God is the cheerful heart. A prime reason for cheer is thankfulness. Through God's mercy and goodness, we are privileged to have an intimate relationship with the living God, and he directs our lives through the Holy Spirit. When we experience the downturns of life, he encourages us and enables us to be active citizens in his Kingdom. The realization of these blessings results in a cheerful heart that bountifully invests its time, talents, and treasures in our Lord's Kingdom, recognizing his bountiful mercies.

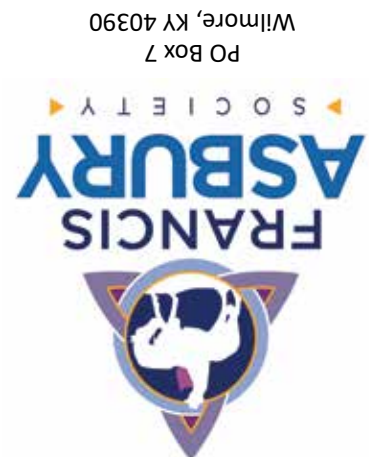
As you seek ministries and places in which to invest, consider the Francis Asbury Society. Our vision is to receive, model, and share the transforming love of God for the redemption of the world. We invite you to participate with us in sowing and reaping in our Lord's harvest field. Details for various methods of giving to the ministries the Francis Asbury Society are available on our website: www.francisasburysociety.com/support.

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

The High Calling—November–December 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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The High Calling

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