

GOD'S REVIVALIST

April 2020

and Bible Advocate



*Greater love
hath no man than this,
that a man
lay down his life
for his friends.*

John 15:13



about this issue

THE PROMISE OF RAIN

Rain is an important part of the water cycle, the process by which water on the earth's surface heats up and evaporates, or changes to water vapor, condenses in the clouds, and returns to the land as a form of precipitation. It clears the air, replenishes aquifers, allows plants to grow, and eventually fills streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds.

Rain is essential to humans. It helps trees grow and exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen so we can breathe. It helps crop plants grow so we can eat. It is integral to the makeup of our body. In fact, up to 60% of the human adult body is water. At 31%, even our bones are watery!

Modern developed cultures also desperately need rain. Yes, with all the dams, reservoirs, river diversions, and irrigation systems, we need water. Problems are intensified in developing countries without all the technological advantages of industrialized societies. Such was also the case in biblical times. People were often at the mercy of the weather, and they often called on God for rain.

At times, God withheld rain as a punishment—to bring people back to the realization that He was in control and that they needed Him. One account of such a time was during the evil reign of Ahab, when the prophet Elijah proclaimed, “There shall not be dew nor rain” for three and a half years (1 Kings 17:1). Then God told Elijah, “Go, shew thyself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth” (18:1). Elijah told King Ahab, “Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the abundance of rain” (18:41). Mind you, there was no rain as yet—just the promise of rain.

Elijah then bowed and prayed at the top of Mt. Carmel. He asked his servant to check the horizon for any sign of rain. There was none. This was repeated six times. On the seventh, the servant reported, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from the sea” (18:44 ESV). Elijah knew that the small cloud meant a big rain was on the way. He told King Ahab in faith, “Prepare thy chariot and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not” (18:44). Based only on the sighting of a cloud that was as small as a man’s hand, he knew substantial rainfall was on the way. The promised rain did indeed come.

The lesson for us is this: When we see God moving in even small ways among us, we should have great faith for a greater work to come. Anticipate the answer. Persist in prayer. Believe! Anticipate a great downpour of blessing! —KF

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the president's page



RUNNING THE RACE

Beginning with the “Wow”

by Rodney Loper, President

Recently my mind and my heart have been drawn to the book of Hebrews. It is unique in that the author's name is not mentioned, nor is there indication as to where this letter was sent. Given the title of the book, we can safely assume that the recipients were Hebrews.

Reading the opening paragraph (1:1-4) gives us a clear theme of the book—Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Hebrews 12:1 gives the call to “run with patience the race that is set before us.” The writer of Hebrews uses the metaphor of a race to describe growing in our relationship with God and being conformed into the image of His Son.

I will be focusing on Hebrews 12:1 for several of my upcoming columns. However, we first need to look back at the previous chapters and get some important background information to understand this race better.

Hebrews 1:1-4 presents us with a tremendous description of Jesus Christ. From this passage, I want to discuss the “wow factor” as we “head to the starting line.”

WOW FACTOR

In reading the book of Hebrews, you cannot fail to be impressed with Christ—Who He is and what He did. It is clear in the description given here that He is the very Son of God.

He is the brightness of His glory (v.3a). I believe this refers to the Shekinah glory of God that dwelt in the tabernacle and temple. This word “Shekinah” is the transliteration of the Hebrew word “to dwell.” Christ is to us what the rays of the sun are to the sun. He is the radiance of God's glory!

He is the express image of His person (v.3b). The exact imprint. In other words, He is the exact representation of the very substance of God! Christ is God's revelation of Himself to us. He came and dwelt among us.

He is the Creator (v.2b). He creates things by His word! If He spoke and this world came into existence, surely He can speak in your life and things will begin to fall into their proper place. There is nothing beyond the control of God to work a miracle in your life.

He is the sustainer of all things (v.3c). It is wonderful that He can create, but He is more amazing than just that. He also upholds all things by the word of His power. Colossians 1:17 puts it this way: "By Him all things consist," that is, they are "held together." I remember a discussion with a good friend of mine who had a great scientific mind. He said that we think of atoms as being very small, and they are. But, if you take atoms apart, you get subatomic particles, such as neutrons and protons. These in turn are composed of even smaller, fundamental particles. There is mostly empty space between the particles that form atoms. Science cannot explain how these particles are held together. In Jesus Christ all things are held together!

He is our Priest and King (v.3d). By Himself He purged our sins! The reason we can have forgiveness and true joy is because the sinless Lamb of God came into our world, dwelt among us, and gave His life so our sins could be forgiven. With His work completed, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (v.3)—our King is the Captain of our salvation!

As we start this race, it is comforting to know that the One who will help us can sympathize with us, be-

cause He became a man and dwelt among us. He understands our infirmities (4:14-16). He can sympathize with us! There is not a temptation or trial that we go through with which Jesus Christ cannot sympathize.

It is also comforting to know that, through His death and resurrection, He has granted us access into the throne room of God (10:19). We no longer have to go through all the rituals and rites to enter God's presence. The "Keep out" sign over the Holy of Holies was replaced with "Come on in." We are welcomed into His presence. We are welcomed to make our petitions known to Him. We are welcomed to bring our burdens and lay them at His feet. Why? Because by His very death He opened a way for us to come into the throne room of God. When the temple veil was torn in two, it was a message from God saying, "The debt has been paid; your sins are forgiven, your sins have been blotted out—you now have access into My presence because of the precious blood of Jesus Christ!"

No wonder the hymn writer Isaac Watts wrote:

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

WOW! Step back and just say, "Wow!" The race is before us. The good news is that we begin with a sense of awe, acknowledging Who Christ is and what He did for us. Armed with the assurance that His presence will be with us each step of the way gives us the strength and purpose to finish the race!

Dear friend, don't get lost in theology, but rather embrace the Christ of theology. What a difference He makes! Just step back and say, "Wow!" ■

Note: In my next column we will discuss the "Woe" Factor.



God's Bible School & College

ALUMNI RECEPTION 2020

Wednesday, April 22, 4:00-5:30

Dayton Convention Center, Room 305/306

A GRATEFUL DAY

by David Steindl-Rast

You think this is just another day in your life? It's not just another day. It's the one day that is given to you today. It's a gift. It's the only gift that you have right now, and the only appropriate response is gratefulness.

If you learn to respond as if it were the first day in your life and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well.

Begin by opening your eyes, and be surprised that you have eyes you can open—That incredible array of colors that is constantly offered to us for pure enjoyment! Look at the sky. We so rarely look at the sky. We so rarely note how different it is from moment to moment with clouds coming and going. Open your eyes. Look at that.

Look at the faces of people whom you meet. Each one has an incredible story behind their face, not only their own story, but the story of their ancestors. All that life from generations and from so many places all over the world flows together and meets you here like a life-giving water, if you only open your heart and drink!

Open your heart to the incredible gifts that civilization gives to us. You flip a switch, and there is electric light. You turn a faucet, and there is warm water and cold water and drinkable water—a gift that millions and millions in the world will never experience.

And so I wish that you would open your heart to all these blessings and let them flow through you, that everyone whom you will meet on this day will be blessed by you, just by your presence.

Let the gratefulness overflow into blessing all around you. And then it will really be a good day. 📌

Brother David Steindl-Rast was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1926, and spent all of his teen years in hiding under the Nazi occupation. After the war, he emigrated to the United States where he joined a Benedictine community in Elmira, NY. He has since touched the lives of countless people through his lectures, workshops, and writings. This transcript is of his impromptu video presentation found online at <https://gratefulness.org/grateful-day/>.



Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be emailed to revivalist@gbs.edu or addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of *God's Revivalist* nor those of the administration of *God's Bible School*. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

I appreciated Philip Brown's column on "Systemic Racism" in the Jan/Feb issue of *God's Revivalist*. I've read it through a couple of times now and recognize how ably he handled what is nothing short of a minefield in Christian conversation today. I am more than ever convinced that the Church, living out what Scripture teaches and valuing Christlikeness, is the answer to the racial divide that is causing such heartache for us in America today. Blessings and thanks again for a terrific column!

DAVID CROFFORD
Cincinnati, OH

I just read Dr. Philip Brown's column [Jan/Feb 2020] on systemic racism and could not agree more. This is a subject generally neglected from the pulpits of white churches. I still get a sense [that racism is one of the] "taboo subjects." Maybe there could be an opportunity to address other such topics.

DOUG HODNETT
Florence, KY

I look forward to each issue of *God's Revivalist*. The first issue of 2020 on "Race and Diversity" was particularly thought provoking and full of biblical insights. Excellent! Blessings,

WAYNE SCHMIDT
General Superintendent, The Wesleyan Church
Email

We always enjoy *God's Revivalist*—the good articles and the news from the Hilltop. We still miss being able to visit there. One thing we can do in these later years of life is to pray for all of you and the needs of the school. Praise God for a holiness college! Thank you for your faithful work of love.

REV. CARL & FRANCES DENNIS
Lenoir City, TN



AT CAPA CITY

by Sandy Mayle

A pastor friend of mine grew up near the railroad tracks, and as a youngster Dave often watched the trains roll by. Day after day, freight cars flashed past to the rhythm of clacking wheels, bearing the names of unknown places stenciled large: “LACKAWANNA... SUSQUEHANNA...UNION PACIFIC...and one he puzzled at: CAPA CITY. He’d never heard of that place. Then one day he realized that the configuration of the car had distorted the painting, and it was actually one word, not two: CAPACITY—followed by an estimate of how much the car could carry!

God’s Word teaches that whether we realize it or not, our words are a lot like freight cars coming out of our mouths. Each one has capacity. Each one can be a car that carries good (“Saying the right thing at the right time is like a golden apple in a silver setting.”—Prov. 25:11 ERV), or evil (“Anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”—Matt. 5:22).

But our words can also be full of nothing. Just empty words that don’t convey anything or serve any good purpose—which seems pretty harmless, except that Jesus said, “I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day

of judgment for every empty word they have spoken” (Matt. 12:36).

One day the big shiny engine of our life will pull into the station, and each (unconfessed) word we’ve ever spoken will be unloaded, weighed, and inspected. And we will give an account, not only for the good or evil ones, but also for the empty and pointless.

We understand judgment against speech that wounds, such as profanity, lying, and verbal abuse; but here Jesus is referring to words that carry nothing of worth. They may sound weighty, but they’re hauling air. What are these cars-full-of-nothing?

Words that don’t align with reality. Jesus warned the church at Laodicea, “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17).

Boasts. The proud and prosperous farmer in Jesus’ parable said, “I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.’” But God condemned his presumption, declaring, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you” (Luke 12:16-21).

Unfulfilled promises. “Then the father went to the other son and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go” (Matt. 21:30).

Powerless prayers. “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Matt. 6:7-8).



Wouldn't we rather send out a few intentional, Spirit-prompted words than a long string of clattering conversation that rides lightly on the rails of the listener's ears, delivering nothing to encourage, enlighten, or effect some good? We don't need more words; we need more full-capacity words.

Speaking "at capacity" is a work of the Holy Spirit. He is eager to help us believe in the potential of Spirit-filled words, grow in mindfulness of what we speak, and seek sensitivity and obedience to His inner warnings, developing that self-control that is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

He intends that the words we speak be effective, doing the Father's bidding and fulfilling His purposes, freighted with:

Affirmation and edification. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Eph. 4:29).

Truth. "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (1 Cor. 2:13).

Love. "Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ" (Eph. 4:15).

God-confidence. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.... If anyone speaks they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Power. "Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction" (1 Thess. 1:5).

Invitation. "How shall [the unbeliever] ask him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?" (Rom. 10:14 NLT).

Weighting our words will take time and discipline and the help of the Holy Spirit. A short-term exercise like the following will help develop word-awareness and purposefulness of speech:

For one month:

1. Memorize several Scriptures, such as Psalm 19:14, Ephesians 4:29, and Proverbs 10:19 and 16:24). Revisit them daily or more often.
2. Every morning, ask God for word-awareness; every evening ask Him to evaluate your words that day.
3. Pray frequent quick-prayers throughout the day, asking for ongoing Spirit-sensitivity and self-control of speech through His power.

The results? Our conversations will become more memorable and productive. Our prayers will be more effectively aligned with God's purposes. Our hearts will burst with joy when our full freight cars unload the Father's intentions and His purposes come to pass.

And always, to God alone be the glory. It's all Him. Without Him, our words will always tend to carry grief and harm, or rattle along like so many, many empty boxcars, as meaningless as Capa City.

But if God is at work in us, coupling up and sending out words that are Spirit-empowered to accomplish His purpose, then it's Capa City no more. Our words will have Capacity. Full Capacity. ■

Sandy Mayle is a freelance writer. She and her husband Dave live in Erie, PA. They have three adult sons and four grandchildren. All Scripture quotations are from the NIV, except where otherwise noted.



The other day, as I walked into the church to pray, my heart cried out, “Lord, tune my heart! Tune. My. Heart.” How easily the cares of life and influences in the world can knock our hearts out of tune! “Renew my mind, Lord!”

Keeping in tune is something that I understand. I started playing the violin at public school when I was ten. For an awkward, holiness girl who had very few sports abilities and no huge popularity ratings, playing an instrument became something I could do and a corner I could find where I belonged. I realized that I could practice and then compete on a district and even a state level. I would stay with my instrument through my difficult middle school years, buying a made-in-China instrument with my own paper-route money as a carrier. I remember walking down to the local music store with money I had earned myself to make yet another payment. This violin would mean so much to me. I have taken many violin lessons with that violin, and even today, it helps me understand spiritual lessons!

1. Always take time to tune!

I have heard groups play that did not retune. I’ve wondered why. Were they feeling pressure with the audience waiting until they tuned? Did they think it was not important? That they could “wing it”? Being in tune does not matter to everyone.

What is going on in my life that I do not have time to get alone and have my heart tuned? It is my vital need to be in step with Jesus. As this world pushes its values and thoughts in on my heart, I must refocus and get my moorings.

2. The more you play, the better you will be!

One of my mother’s joys was sitting in the living room and listening to me practice. How anyone could enjoy listening to a beginning violin player is more than I’ll ever understand! The thoughts of the squeaks, shrill notes, and out-of-tune playing make me shudder even now! But I

Tune My Heart

by Elizabeth Hamilton

improved. The hours of practicing and training my ear paid off, and I continued playing in high school—orchestra, band, small ensemble, and even a couple of youth symphonies.

When I went to God's Bible School as a high school junior, I would not have thought of leaving my violin behind! By the time I graduated from college, my musical ear was not the same as when I picked up the violin as a ten-year-old girl. The standard tuning pitch of 440 hertz was stamped in my mind!

Likewise, the more time I spend in the Word and listening to the Holy Spirit, the more my spiritual ear is fine-tuned. The spiritual "songs" that I bluster through become fine-tuned. As I walk softly before God, He awakens my heart to better carefulness.

3. When you tune your instrument, listen to the true pitch first!

They taught us in school that we were not to play our own note first when tuning. We were to listen to the true pitch, then we would tune our note to match it. We did not tune to each other (unless we were tuning to the first-chair violinist).

It is so tempting to look around for cues on what is acceptable! Instead, look at the Word! What does it say about forgiveness? Backbiting? Loving?

4. Stay out of the cold!

There are things that knock your instrument out of tune! When I traveled with the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble of God's Bible School, there were various instruments that were left on the bus overnight at times. The violin was never one of them! We string players would not have thought of leaving our instruments out in the cold!

A cold environment is hard, both on a violin and on your spiritual condition. Don't leave your heart out in the cold! Stay in the warmth of fellowship with God's children. Keep yourself, as much as possible, in a healthy atmosphere. Guard your heart like we used to guard our violins. Guard your eyes. Set a watch before your mouth.

5. Retune when the hard knocks come!

Sometimes, however, we could not help going out in the cold. Just walking from the vehicle to the building would sometimes cause our instrument to go out of tune. Accidental bumps would happen at times, and we would find our

instrument off pitch. We did not ignore it. We tuned again! One violin being out of tune affects the whole orchestra!

6. You play better when you are awake!

One year during a hot afternoon camp meeting service, my father-in-law fell asleep at the guitar. Well, not so completely asleep that he could not play. He was just asleep enough that he was one note off! He accompanied the special song playing in the wrong key—for the whole song! When he was

**Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.**

—Robert Robinson, 1757

informed of his error later, he said, "I don't want to do that spiritually. I don't want to be close, but still off!"

How wonderful for the times in my life when the Spirit has slipped up to me and said, "You're out of tune, Elizabeth."

Today, in my very full life, the violin does not hold the same place that it once did. I rarely play it anymore. When I do play it, I find that I have lost the intonation that I once had, and my fingers that were once more precise are now sloppy. You lose what you don't practice! I say, "Tune my heart, O God!" ■

Elizabeth (Smith) Hamilton (HS '89) lives in Independence, KS, with her husband Todd and four children. Todd and Elizabeth have worked at Independence Bible School (23 years), and taught vacation Bible schools, Sunday schools, and children's services. Elizabeth also has created visualized children's stories. This is an excerpt from her recent book, The Lord's Dealings, available at www.leavingalegacyministries.org/.

NEWS

from the Hilltop



STUDENT DEVELOPMENT DAY

On Tuesday, February 4, 2020, GBS hosted its annual Student Development Day. This day is set aside to discuss topics relevant to the lives of our students, and this year's topic was "Discipleship in the Work-

place." Four speakers shared their experiences of being a minister in the secular workplace and some important things to do and not to do for effective witnessing. A panel discussion followed with questions submitted by students, many of whom expressed appreciation for the day's content. The following is an email excerpt we received from one of the students.

"I just wanted to reach out to you and thank you and those involved for coordinating today's student development sessions. I wholeheartedly enjoyed the content of this morning. As

someone who isn't necessarily called to a full-time ministry position, I really appreciated hearing what the speakers had to say. God really convicted me this morning."

We are so grateful that God is still speaking to our students. We are counting on the continued work of the Holy Spirit in their lives!



Nathan Dahler speaks during Student Development Day.

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

DEATHS



Clarence P. Driftmyer, 87, of Mount Vernon, OH, passed away on Wednesday, December 5, 2018, at the Knox Community Hospital in Mount Vernon. He was born on November 8, 1931, in Gibsonburg, OH, to the late Paul and Nina (Starkey) Driftmyer. He attended GBS, graduating in 1955 with a BA with a major in social studies and three minors in Bible, English, and Greek. While there, another student, Gladola Todd (1952-55), caught his eye. They were married in 1955. Clarence was a pastor for the Church of the Nazarene and retired in 1999 after 41 years of service.

He is survived by his wife of over 63 years, Gladola; sons, Paul and Mark; step-grandson, Jordan Mahaffey; and brother, Carl. A service was held at the Lakeholm Church of the Nazarene, Mt. Vernon, with Rev. Scott Sharpes officiating. Burial followed in Memorial Gardens Cemetery.



Adam "Jack" Kabellar, 78, went home to be with the Lord on December 31, 2019. He was born September 14, 1941, to Adam and Annabel Kabellar in Barberton, OH. After high school, Jack went to Houghton College, Houghton, NY, for a year. He then transferred to GBS and earned his BA in history (1965). After his retirement from pastoral ministry, serving in several different states over a 30-year time span, Jack went on to serve in other ministries, most recently Christian Healthcare Ministries, where he was known as the "plant manager."

Jack is survived by his wife of over 56 years, Rosie (Poe) Kabellar; son, Kevin (1983-84, 1987); daughters, Annette Bail (1986-88) and Loren Kabellar; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and sisters, Jill Hotchkiss and Beth Kabellar. The funeral was held at Bacher Funeral Home, Norton, OH, with Pastor Henry Miller officiating. Interment followed at Greenlawn Memorial Park, Akron, OH.

Merrill David Braymer, 81, of Temperance, MI, passed away January 25, 2020, at Hospice of Northwest Ohio, Toledo. Merrill was born May 26, 1938, in Kalamazoo, MI, to George and Nellie (Hildebrand) Braymer.



The choir is all packed and ready to go.

COLLEGE CHOIR TOUR

February 20-24, the College Choir, directed by Tim Crater and accompanied by Martha Miller, ministered in six services across Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina, as well as to workers and travelers at the Tennessee Welcome Center en route

to Alabama. Joshua Wilson, Director of Public Relations, joined the tour as the GBS representative. We thank the Lord for safety and help as we traveled in the new coach (driven by Rev. Andy Cooley), and for His evident presence in the choir's ministry through song and testimony.

The tour was marked by enthusiastic praise and worship, both on and off the bus, according to Mr. Crater. "My heart rejoiced as I watched our students respond to the work of the Holy Spirit, giving their all in their crew work, in times of prayer and devotion, and in their ministry during the services. It was so beautiful to sense a spirit of corporate worship

from the wonderful people in the pews. It was an honor to reconnect with so many alumni, family, and friends."

ACADEMY REVIVAL

Aldersgate Christian Academy held its annual revival services ➡



Rev. Tim Keep preaches to the academy students.



Church was always a part of Merrill's life, and in his early teens he made the decision to follow Christ. In 1958, Merrill married Yvonne J. Rouse, a registered nurse. As he had received a call to the ministry, he enrolled in Olivet Nazarene University, graduating with a dual major in religion and philosophy (1964). He went on to Nazarene Theological Seminary and graduated in 1967. In June 1967, he started his pastoral ministry in Temperance, MI. After five years there, he transferred to Akron, OH, and the remaining years of his ministry were spent in the northern part of Ohio. In 2001, Merrill retired after serving 34 years in the pastoral ministry.

In 2015, Merrill was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He reported that this situation caused him to consider setting up a scholarship. During his college and seminary studies, he had received some grants that were very important to him, as there was no other financial help. As Merrill and his wife have always wanted to help financially needy students, they began praying about this matter and decided to create a scholarship at God's Bible School "because of its strong history of preaching the doctrine of holiness and strength of the institution."

Merrill is survived by his wife of 61 years, Yvonne; three daughters, Bonnie Stepanian, Yvette Saravolatz,

and Melinda Rummel; and seven grandchildren. According to Merrill's wishes, a celebration of life was held at a later date.



Jeffrey C. Brown, 55, of Knoxville, TN, passed away suddenly, February 1, 2020. Jeff was born August 16, 1964, in Knoxville, TN, to Otis and Martha "Faye" Brown. He graduated from West High School, Knoxville, TN, in 1982, after which he attended GBS (BRE '87). He then obtained his MED in mathematics from Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH, and taught at GBS in 1990-91.

He had a passion for teaching, always rooting for the underdog. Whether it was subbing for elementary grades, teaching at the college level, or teaching geometry at Hardin Valley Academy, his goal was to capture the attention of his students. Unfortunately, Jeff's marriage and life unraveled as he succumbed to alcoholism. As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, he continued to fight that battle to the end.

Jeff leaves behind his wife Tonya Freshley Brown, three stepchildren (Kevin Fisher, Becky Hostetler, and Joe Lanham); three children from his previous marriage to Joy Walker (GBS 1980-84) (Ryan, Tyler, and ➡



The high school praise team leads worship.

➔ February 24-28. Students from grades 5-12 met together in a time set aside as a week of spiritual emphasis—an effort to help us achieve part of our mission in giving students opportunities to grow

spiritually. Rev. Tim Keep was the special speaker for the week and did a great job presenting basic gospel truth and challenging the students. God met with us and the students responded to His work in their lives. We are thankful for God's presence with us and are praying He continues to work in our academy as we finish this school year.

LOCK-IN

On Friday, February 28, the annual Student Government-spon-



Students race go-karts at the lock-in.

sored lock-in was held at The Web in West Chester, OH. From 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m., GBS students, staff, family, and friends had exclusive use of the facility. They participated in go-kart racing, arcade

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➔ Brittany Presley); 13 grandchildren; father, Otis Brown; two brothers; and several nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held at the Church of the Nazarene, Wooster, OH, Pastor Nathan Ward, officiating.



Mary "Dot" Brown, 88, passed away February 14, 2020. She was born June 18, 1931, to Ervin and Mary Thompson. She was married to William H. Brown, who preceded her in death.

Dot came to GBS as a 63-year-old retiree after a long career in nursing. "Dot Brown was my first dean of women at GBS," recalls former President Michael Avery. "While I was still in Alabama preparing to go to GBS, I knew I would need a dean of women who could really bring a solid spiritual influence to the campus. While praying about it, God whispered to me 'Dot Brown.' That was Wednesday morning. I went to prayer meeting that night at Pell City Bible Methodist Church (Dot's home church). After service I said to her, 'Dot, I need to ask you something.' She responded by saying, 'I already know what it's about. God told me this morning you were going to ask me to be your dean of women.' She came to GBS serving as both dean of women and school nurse from 1995 to 1997. She made a huge impact on the students for those two years."

Dot is survived by her son, Leslie; daughter, Janeen Pierson; three grandchildren; an extended family of loving nieces and nephews; a loving church family; and a host of special friends. The funeral service was held at the Bible Methodist Church, Pell City, AL, officiated by Revs. Mark Stetler and John Parker. Interment followed at St. Clair Memorial Gardens, Pell City.



Janet A. (Bennett) Thompson, 87, of Indianapolis, IN, died February 28, 2020, at Community Heart and Vascular Hospital in Indianapolis. She was born in Belsano, PA, on June 7, 1932, to the late Clarence and Minnie (Williams) Bennett. On August 20, 1953, she married Dr. R. Duane Thompson, and he preceded her in death on May 6, 2009.

After graduating from high school in 1950, Janet attended Marion College (now Indiana Wesleyan University) where she received a BA in education. Later in life, she received an MA in education from Ball State University. Janet was a kindergarten teacher for many years. She also served at God's Bible School for 10 years as dean of women/dean of students (1977-87). After retirement, she owned and operated Creative Child Development Center in Beech Grove, IN, with her husband. Janet was a member of College Wesleyan Church and, after moving to Indianapolis,

games, a climbing wall, laser tag, miniature golf, and bowling, and enjoyed pizza and drinks. A good time was had by all.

ANNUAL BLOOD DRIVE

GBS held its annual blood drive on Monday, March 9. Organized by the college Student Government and hosted by the Hoxworth Blood Center, this was a wonderful opportunity for our campus family to give back to the community. Forty-three volunteers donated or attempted to donate, and 33 units of blood and platelets were collected from faculty, staff, and students.



Cameron Going happily makes a contribution.

“Hoxworth appreciates your... commitment to saving lives. The donors who participated in the blood drive have helped ensure that there is an adequate blood supply for the patients in our com-



Lily Rectenwald prepares for the needle.

munity,” wrote Hoxworth Blood Center’s Maria Schade. She said that the 33 units of blood donated by the GBS campus family during this year’s annual event equals “99 potential lives saved.” ■



was most recently attending Trinity Wesleyan Church. More than anything, Janet loved people and enjoyed spending time with others, especially her family, grandchildren, and close friends.

Survivors include her daughter, Renée Herlli; son, Rev. R. Duane II; two grandchildren; and two special friends who were like daughters, Phoebe Taylor and MaryGrace Taylor Spalding. A funeral service was held at Trinity Wesleyan Church with Dr. Jo Anne Lyon officiating. Burial followed at Grant Memorial Park, Marion, IN.

HITHER AND THITHER

Holy Joys—New Online Holiness Resources. On Saturday, January 12, 2019, a meeting was held to discuss the need for online resources (articles, sermons, podcasts, and more) from a conservative Wesleyan perspective, especially since many believers, including pastors, rely on web-based resources.

In the organizational meeting, Johnathan Arnold (President and Founder), Michael Avery (Chairman), David Fry (Secretary and Treasurer), and Paul Ryan (Managing Editor) were elected to the Board of Directors. Philip Brown, Mark Bird, and Richard Miles were also in attendance. In February 2020, Valorie Quesenberry (Director of

Women’s Content) joined the team and is working to promote Biblical and theological literacy for women.

Holy Joys exists for a holy, happy church through the promotion of robust theology and Biblical ministry practices. They pray that their growing library of resources will be formative in the lives of church leaders and disciples. Through a partnership with Shepherds Global Classroom, they will be able to provide some free online courses. A theological journal is being published in cooperation with the Aldersgate Forum.

Holy Joys launches on April 17, 2020, and can be followed on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Those interested may sign up for updates at www.holyjoys.org. ■



CHOICES:

GOOD AND EVIL ON THE PATH OF LIFE

by Gary Warinner

When I was growing up in central Indiana, there was a piece of playground equipment common to every community park. Two people sat on opposite ends of a plank which was balanced on a fulcrum in the middle. The heavier of the two would go down while the lighter went up or, by adjusting one's distance from the fulcrum, both could briefly stay level (which I think was called "setting the table"). As I recall, there were two names for the plank on the fulcrum: see-saw and teeter-totter.

More recently I was wondering why the different labels? I would here suggest a possible answer: "See-saw" refers to the up-and-down movement of the plank while "teeter-totter" refers to the balance of the person seated. To "teeter" is to be close to losing your balance leaning forward, while "totter" is close to falling backwards. So, this set of dynamics was presented in most every community park, although the greatest concern may have been that the other person would hop off when you were in the air.

This plank-and-fulcrum combination also provides an illustration of another set of dynamics—the "either-or" of moral focus. Discipleship cannot survive partial commitment, nor can Baalam die the death of the righteous (Num. 23:10). Spiritual progress is like a marble on an inclined surface—to stop forward movement is to start backward. The spiritual heart, apart from the grace of God, has a natural default status to which it slides: "The heart is desperately wicked, who can know it (Jer. 17:9)?" When the offers of God's mercy are rejected, any hesitation between good and evil tends to be short-lived, and, in the rush to wrongdoing, one runs roughshod over the cautionary barriers love has erected.

This may help to explain why a person's initial decision to follow Christ may feel like an uphill battle—and why children usually respond to discipleship more readily. A lifetime of catering to the path of least resistance can be hard to overcome, but not impossible. For to acknowledge one's woeful condition and embrace the kindness of God is to receive from Him the power to break free from wrongdoing from that moment onward.

We live in a culture that makes both moral right and moral wrong weaker—the one not as good as it is and

the other not as bad as it is. But life and Scripture plainly draw distinctions between behaviors, their end results, and the attitudes that lie behind them.

Perhaps because the full range of attitudes is possible in any one person, we do tend not only to consider them "normal," but also "acceptable." And it would appear that a person can easily fluctuate from one extreme to the other, somewhat like a pivoting wind vane—now kind, then hateful; now obstinate, then cooperative—so that indeed all attitudes are on the same footing.

And, as to their availability, this is true. Each attitude also has the potential to impact the world outside us, and every attitude is subject to recurrence, for attitudes are like ruts in a country road: once formed they are easily fallen into again and are progressively harder to get out of.

But attitudes are also like bottles stored in a cabinet—while all are found in one place, each has its own contents which have specific composition and resulting effect. When we reach for and open a bottle, we are giving consent. We pour out the contents in the expression of our emotions and the performance of our behavior. Scripture informs us that we are both responsible for the consent and accountable for the effect.

The attitude of "impermissible anger" may well provide here an illustration. Whether such anger smolders in resentment or blazes in exasperation, it will surely move us in a destructive direction. Scorning common sense and pouncing on any gesture of good will, it makes the "fur fly



in all directions." If given free rein, it will severely damage relationships, promote violence, and make us do things we will evermore regret.

The expression of the opposite attitude—however you may wish to label it—will just as surely move us in the opposite direction, welcoming sound advice and happily accepting gestures of good will. It enriches relationships and promotes peacefulness, making for pleasant memories.

It is noteworthy that we remember—from childhood, school, the workplace, etc.—the expression of either of these extremes. There may not be much gray in this black-and-white dichotomy.

But there is a complexity to our heart and to our life in the midst of living it. On one hand, for most people, the moral fluctuation of

adolescence gives way to a directional bias in adulthood. On the other hand, since we typically retain the possibility of a full range of attitudes throughout life, most people view eternity through that window—thinking that at the end of life, the good and evil get tossed onto God's scales, and hoping that His scales will tip in their favor. This weighing on scales would be possible if good and evil were some kind of material substance like air or water. However, they are not.

The whimsical portrayal of a forceful demon on one shoulder and a mild angel on the other shoulder is a ridiculous caricature that misses the target of reality. Closer to the truth would be a ravenous beast bent on devouring on one shoulder and a lightning bolt infused with power to conquer all obstacles on the other. This is because good and evil exist as specific directives of a person's will—the setting of one's face toward or away from God. Moreover, there is a vast chasm between the two, not merely differing shades along the same spectrum, but extreme opposites, neither accommodating the other—sworn enemies with unrelenting hostility.

The path of evil is not an alternate route to the same goal that goodness has for us. While evil is packaged as the superior approach to obtain yet something more, "ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5), it can only deliver less. So far less that it is nothing like what goodness offers. Evil promises an independence which is not really freedom at all; in fact it is bondage, and that of the worst sort. Reaching to taste the forbidden fruit brings the unexpected, and none of it is pleasant.

Goodness adds to us what evil would take from us. It sets before us the great privilege of a high goal, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8); it will sow seed which will bring a harvest for which we will rejoice; it bestows character that radiates outwardly from our innermost being; it is the gift of God to us when we respond rightly to Him, and joyfulness will continually splash into our lives.

It is ironic and lamentable that our society's concepts of moral good and moral evil are shaped most by something other than the Church. And, all too often within the Church, the glaring contrast between the two is veiled—the difference between the jarring discords of hell and the music of heaven is muted, and the declaration of eternal life and everlasting death is well-nigh discarded.

Too few people realize that today's decisions shape tomorrow's reality. Still fewer understand that no man can put forth his hand (p.23) ➡



Dear Phil



who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:45a). How does praying for our persecutors make us sons of God? Jesus doesn’t mean “sons of God” in the sense of someone who is saved. To say someone is a “son of X” means that they act like X or have the characteristic of X. “Sons of light” and “sons of day” are people who have the characteristic of daylight (cf. John 12:36; 1 Thess. 5:5). We are “sons of our Father in heaven” when we act like God does.

The very next thing Jesus says confirms this: “for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt. 5:45b). If God wanted to, He could have the sun shine only on the good. He did this in Egypt (Ex. 10:23). If God wanted to, He could have the rain fall only on the land of the righteous. But that isn’t how God acts! God shows basic kindness (sunshine, rain) to everyone, including His enemies (cf. Acts 14:16-17). We are acting like God when we show basic kindnesses to everyone, not just those we love. Tax collectors and pagans greet their friends! If we just greet those we know and like, we aren’t any more like God than they are. Jesus’ point is that God’s love is indiscriminate. He doesn’t leave anyone out. He loves everyone and shows His comprehensive love with sunshine and rain.

With that background, we can see that when Jesus used the word “perfect,” He meant “complete” or “indiscriminate.” We are complete or indiscriminate in our love for others as our Heavenly Father is when we show basic kindness to everyone, especially those who are our enemies.

Blessings,
Philip

Dr. A. Philip Brown II is the Graduate Program director and a member of the ministerial faculty at God’s Bible School and College.

BEING “PERFECT AS GOD IS PERFECT”

What does it mean to be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect?
—Louise

Dear Louise,

Jesus gives us this command in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:48 says, “Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” The first word is probably the most important word for understanding the verse. “Therefore” tells us that this command follows from something that was said before. We can’t understand what it means to be perfect without understanding what Jesus said before this. In Matthew 5:21, Jesus begins addressing misunderstandings of Old Testament laws. He says, “You have heard that it was said” five times in His sermon (Matt. 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43).

The final “you have heard that it was said” occurs in Matthew 5:43: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” It’s true that Moses commands love for one’s neighbors (Lev. 19:18), but it’s not true that Scripture says to hate one’s enemy. In fact, the law explicitly commands God’s people to help their enemies (cf. Ex. 23:4-5; Prov. 25:21-22). So, when Jesus says, “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”

(Matt. 5:44), He wasn’t correcting the OT. He was applying the OT!

How could someone think he should hate his enemy? We don’t know for sure, but perhaps a text like Psalm 139:21-22 was misinterpreted. Psalm 139:21-22 says, “Do I not hate those who hate You, O Yahweh? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies.” In the verses just before this, David described those who hate Yahweh as wicked, murderers, and those who speak against Yahweh (Psa. 139:19-20). After saying he hates those who hate Yahweh, he prays, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way” (Psa. 139:23-24). In light of the context, David was not talking about personal animosity or malice toward God’s enemies. He was using the word hate in the sense of “reject.” He wanted nothing to do with men who rejected Yahweh.

We are to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors “so that [we] may be the sons of [our] Father



student focus

CHRISTIANITY DISAPPEARING FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

The organization “Aid to the Church in Need” has warned that Christianity is “vanishing” from towns and cities in the Middle East despite the defeat of ISIS. For example, the Christian population of Iraq has fallen from 1.5 million before 2003 to below 150,000 in 2019—a 90% decline. The call is for the international community to “act now” to stop Christianity from disappearing in the Middle East.

RIGHT TO PRAY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Surrounded by people of various faiths, including Christians, Muslims, and Jews, President Trump signed documents that give guidance to public schools that is meant to loosen the tight grip around the right to pray for students and school staff. He stated: “This afternoon, we are proudly announcing historic steps to protect the First Amendment right to pray in public schools.”

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SURVIVED THE CULTURE WARS

The central finding of a new report released by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty was that broad public support for religious freedom has survived the culture wars. Their press release said: “After years of religious free-

dom being pushed to the center of polarizing debates, rather than reveal a partisan 50-50 split, at 67, the index scored in the upper third on the scale of favorability toward robust religious freedom protections.”

Given the nationally representative sample of 1,000 American adults in the study, it is clear that there is strong public support for religious freedom across all political lines and between people of faith or no faith.

SCOTUS TO RULE ON CHOICE OF TEACHERS IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear oral arguments for two cases, both involving Catholic schools in California that were sued after their religious teachers’ contracts were not renewed. The schools are now challenging rulings by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, which decided both teachers were not “ministers,” despite teaching religious subjects, and therefore did not fall under the court-created doctrine of “ministerial exception.”

Therefore, the justices will consider the scope of the “ministerial exception,” which was established to protect religious groups’ freedom to choose “ministerial” employees without interference from the government. Argument will be held in the spring with a decision expected by late June 2020. ■

TIMOTHY LONG was already studying music at a university back home when he felt that God was pulling him toward GBS. He had grown up in a Christian family, “was homeschooled, a music nerd,” but otherwise “had a pretty well-rounded upbringing” in Ponchatoula, LA. “God opened up doors for me, and I walked through them.”

He now considers himself to be “spoiled” by God’s goodness. “I have learned more about Him, how to serve Him, and what it means to be used by Him. He has given me more than I could ever say, and I want to spend the rest of my life serving Him out of gratitude for all that He has done.”

Tim is studying music education with a focus on violin performance and plans to graduate in 2021. After that, he would like to “get married, work, and be involved in ministry.” He also feels called to be in outreach. “I’m just praying for wisdom in making the right choices. I can’t wait to see where God leads me!” ■

Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBS. If you would like to support students with financial needs, you may send a gift to:

**Student Fund
God’s Bible School and College
1810 Young Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202**

**or give online anytime at
www.gbs.edu/givenow**



— Called Unto Holiness —

In this space we use writers both past and present to discuss various aspects of Christian holiness.

SUPPOSE WE TRY PENTECOST!

by Samuel Chadwick

The presence of the Spirit is vital and central to the work of the Church. Nothing else avails. Apart from Him, wisdom becomes folly, and strength weakness. The Church is called to be a “spiritual house” and a holy priesthood. Only spiritual people can be its “living stones,” and only the Spirit-filled its priests. Scholarship is blind to spiritual truth till He reveals. Worship is idolatry till He inspires. Preaching is powerless if it be not a demonstration of His power. Prayer is vain unless He energizes. Human resources of learning and organization, wealth and enthusiasm, reform and philanthropy, are worse than useless if there be no Holy Ghost in them. The Church always fails at the point of self-confidence. When the Church is run on the same lines as a circus, there may be crowds, but there is no Shekinah. That is why prayer is the test of faith and the secret of power. The Spirit of God travails in the prayer-life of the soul. Miracles are the direct work of His power, and without miracles the Church cannot live. The carnal can argue, but it is the Spirit that convicts. Education can civilize, but it is being born of the Spirit that saves....

Pentecost transforms the preacher. The commonest bush ablaze with the presence of God becomes a miracle of glory. Under its influence, the feeble become as David, and the choice mighty “as the angel of the Lord.” The ministry energized by the Holy Ghost is marked by aggressive evangelism, social revolution, and persecution. Holy Ghost preaching led to the burning of the books of the magic art, and it stirred up the opposition of those who trafficked in the ruin of the people. Indifference to religion is impossible where the preacher is a flame of fire.

To the Church, Pentecost brought light, power, joy. There came to each illumination of mind, assurance of heart, intensity of love, fullness of power, exuberance of joy. No one needed to ask if they had received the Holy Ghost. Fire is self-evident. So is power! Even demons know the difference between the power of inspiration and the

correctness of instruction. Secondhand gospels work no miracles. Uninspired devices end in defeat and shame. The only power that is adequate for Christian life and Christian work is the power of the Holy Ghost.

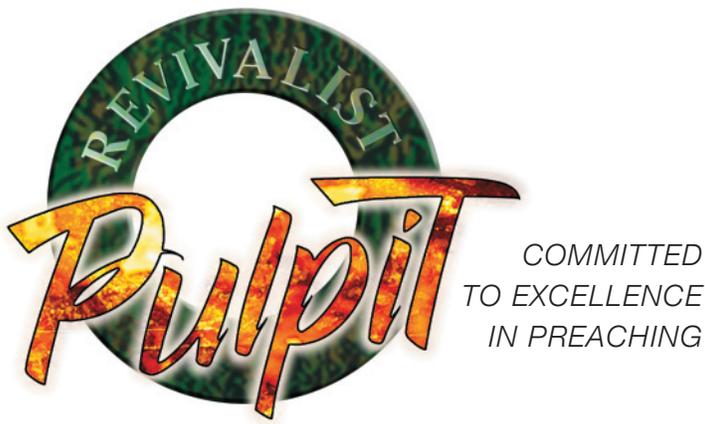
The work of God is not by might of man or by the power of men, but by His Spirit. It is by Him the truth convicts and converts, sanctifies and saves. The philosophies of men fail, but the Word of God in the demonstration of the Spirit prevails. Our wants are many and our faults innumerable, but they are all comprehended in our lack of the Holy Ghost. We want nothing but the fire.

The resources of the Church are in “the supply of the Spirit.” The Spirit is more than the Minister of Consolation. He is Christ without the limitations of the flesh and the material world.

He can reveal what Christ could not speak. He has resources of power greater than those Christ could use, and He makes possible greater works than His. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Witness, the Spirit of Conviction, the Spirit of Power, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Help, the Spirit of Liberty, the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Revelation, the Spirit of Promise, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of Meekness, the Spirit of Sound Mind, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Glory, and the Spirit of Prophecy. It is for the Church to explore the resources of the Spirit. The resources of the world are futile. The resources of the Church within herself are inadequate. In the fullness of the Spirit, there is abundance of wisdom, resources, and power; but a man-managed, world-annexing, priest-pretending Church can never save the world or fulfill the mission of Christ.

Suppose we try Pentecost! ■

*Samuel Chadwick (1860–1932) was a Wesleyan Methodist minister, author, and Bible college professor from England who served as president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, 1918–19. This excerpt is from chapter 3 of *The Only Way to Victory*, Light and Hope Publications, 1937.*



PERILOUS PITFALLS ON THE PATHWAY TO HEAVEN

by John Parker

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-16

INTRODUCTION

With the great “Faith Chapter” as the background, the writer of Hebrews makes a practical application. “Wherefore...seeing we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (the faithful), let us run the race...LOOKING UNTO JESUS!”

In this 16-verse passage, we see five “perilous pitfalls” which could prevent us from running the race. These are suggested by the word “LEST” in verses 3, 13, 15a, 15b, and 16.

1. THE PITFALL OF DISCOURAGEMENT

“...lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (v.3).

So many struggle with weariness and discouragement! While that battle may be strong, there is still hope to make it through discouraging times. The “saints” in the great faith chapter definitely persevered (Heb. 11). Jesus “endured the Cross...despising the shame” and did not succumb to discouragement. He made it! So can we! However, if we are to avoid the pitfall of discouragement, we must...

Lay aside every weight (v.1b). The weights we are talking about here run the gamut. There are materialistic weights (houses, lands, possessions), financial weights (money, budget problems), psychological weights (negative news, thoughts, problems), physical weights (unhealthy habits and practices).

Lay aside the sin that doth easily beset us (v.1c). Whatever our “encumbering weakness” or sin is, we

are to be aware of it and to lay it aside. The devil is certainly aware of our vulnerabilities and weaknesses. He also knows the most opportune moment to exploit them with a strategic attack.

Look unto Jesus (v.2). Exercising care to lay aside all these hindrances is not enough. We simply cannot accomplish this on our own. We must stay focused on Jesus to give us the guidance and strength we need to stay on the path and patiently run the race (Heb.10:35-39).

2. THE PITFALL OF DIVERSION

“...lest that which is lame be turned out of the way” (v.13).

The endurance with which we are admonished to “run the race” comes, not as a result of an emotional inspiration, but as the result of discipline and training. The picture is that of a “marathon runner.” The gain of winning comes as a result of the pain of training!

The “wherefore” in the prior verse (v.12) refers to the “chastisement” that will be suffered along the way. Each of us has “lameness” which needs to be healed, and the Father’s chastening achieves that. There is a danger that we may respond inappropriately to being chastened and get sidetracked from the race. While we know that our earthly fathers correct us to protect us and to profit us, we should also “be in subjection unto the Father of spirits” (v.9), knowing that He chastens that we might be “partakers of His holiness” (v.10). Without chastening and proper discipline, our uncorrected weaknesses tend to turn us out of the way!

There is added danger in that our failures can result in the failures of others. We have a responsibility to those who might be following us! When we veer off the path, they could as well. To avoid this, we need to “make straight paths” with our feet (v.13) and keep ourselves and others from turning out of the way. Staying in subjection to the Father (vv.9-10) will yield “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (v.12).

3. THE PITFALL OF DEFICIENCY

“...lest any man fail of the grace of God” (v.15a).

There is but one means by which we are saved and will make it to Heaven—GRACE (Eph. 2:8, I Cor. 15:10). I like Dr. Alan Brown’s definition of grace: “The outpouring of God’s love and mercy on undeserving people giving us the power to become what God wants us to be.” Grace is the “HOW” of the “wherefore, let us...” Grace affords us all that we will need to stay on the pathway to heaven. It leaves us no excuse for failure or deficiency. If there is deficiency, it is simply be-

cause we fail to receive His grace—and it is plenteous! This grace is made available because we have received (“receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved”). We receive this grace which enables us to “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (v.28).

This “gift” of grace is not an exemption from the penalty of ungodliness, but “salvation” and “disciplining” from the power of ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12).

4. THE PITFALL OF DEFILEMENT

“...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (v.15b).

When you see the word “bitterness,” think of it as “poison.” This verse refers to Deuteronomy 29:18: “Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.” The prescription for this poison, this defilement, is to look unto Jesus (v.2), be subject to the chastening of the Father (v.9), be healed (v.13), and follow peace with all men and holiness” (v.14).

The pitfall of failing to follow the prescribed preventives results in “bitterness.” In fact, a “root” of bitterness, which is hidden away beneath the surface, will produce a “tree” of bitterness! If this tree is allowed to “spring up” it will “trouble you” and “defile many” (v.15).

To help prevent this from happening, when pain comes into your life, it is always in order to search your heart. It is always right to make sure everything is submitted to God.

5. THE PITFALL OF DISINHERITANCE

“...lest there be any...profane person, as Esau...who for one morsel...sold his birthright” (v.16).

The Scripture here places Esau in the same category as a “fornicator, or profane person” for making such a choice. A “fornicator” is one who is immorally indulgent, a licentious person who puts fleshly desires ahead of spiritual. A “profane person” is one who treats the sacred as common and tramples the holy under foot.

Esau found no way to undo the consequences of his sin! “He found no place for repentance.” In his *Notes on the Old and New Testaments*, John Wesley put it this way: “‘No place for’ suggests lack of true

godly sorrow and though he sought diligently and with tears, ‘he sought too late.’”

Esau traded his sacred birthright for one “fleshly fling”—a morsel of meat. In doing so, he willfully dishonored his sacred spiritual inheritance—“his birthright.” He reaped the inevitable consequences of this profane choice. May God help us to escape this pitfall and stay on the pathway to heaven!

CONCLUSION

The faithful saints of the previous chapter (Heb.11) might seem to us to have been “Super Saints”! But did you ever consider how many of them had serious struggles and failures in their lives? Most of them would not have made it in the “Most Successful” lists of their peers. Even those who would have made the list survived horrific pain, struggle, and opposition.

They were not “Super Saints”—they were “Persevering Seekers.” You see that over and over in the chapter. They didn’t have it easy, but they made it! God inspired the writer of Hebrews to list them in the Great Hall of Fame!

They didn’t make it because everything went their way and life was easy! They made it despite peril, opposition, persecution, betrayal, and being misunderstood and abandoned! There were perilous pitfalls all along the way, but they made it anyway!

So the writer of Hebrews put pen to paper and wrote “WHEREFORE...seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...LET US...” and then he set forth these warnings and instructions to anyone who would run the race, that they might do so successfully and finish well.

The powerful concluding verses of this great challenging chapter present a picture of our unfailing, holy, and purifying God who invites us to experience His grace! He is a consuming fire who will purge us from our sin. He is a faithful God who, as a loving father, will discipline us to turn us from our weaknesses. He is a God of grace who will inspire us to run the race with patience if we will keep our eyes on Jesus! ■

John D. Parker (BRE '78) spent 29 years in pastoral ministry and 20 years in missions, eight years of which he was director of Bible Methodist Missions, and is currently president of the Southern Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. He and his wife Cathy (Horrall) (BRE '78) live in Pell City, AL.

The writer of Hebrews put pen to paper and wrote these warnings and instructions to anyone who would run the race.

A New Thing

by Stephanie Burley

Several weeks ago, late in the winter, I pulled into my driveway and was again surprised to see a hearty row of daffodils staring at me from along the side of my grandmother's house.

For the last six years, I have experienced the same surprise. Snow is falling, temperatures are cool, trees are bare, and all of a sudden, out of nowhere, beautiful, strong green shoots are proudly standing tall. It's almost as if they are saying, "Hey! We conquered, and we're back!"

Then come the flowers. Large, beautiful, yellow blooms. Right in the middle of the old and dead, probably while I'm griping about the weather, something new is happening. And I'm more than impressed. I'm even a little convicted.

It may sound silly. After all, the daffodil is just doing what she's supposed to do, right? Of course! And I think she has some lessons for us. Let's talk about it for a minute.

Versatile. The daffodil has preferences, but she isn't going to let her preferences dictate her ability to thrive. She prefers well-drained soil, but she will grow just about anywhere. She's happy to grow in sun, shade, or a combination of both. She tends to be found in yards or gardens; however, if she lands in a patio container, she'll make that patio shine.

Colorful. Show-stopping color is a favorite trait of the daffodil. She has a knack for making ugly places beautiful. In fact, everything around her can be drab and muddy, but she is not intimidated. She seems to understand that she can change the atmosphere just by her presence. She knows her purpose.

Reliable. Fortunately, the daffodil doesn't have to wait on me to help her rise above her circumstances each spring.

She just shows up right when she's supposed to and does exactly what she's supposed to do. Every single year. Not only that, she shows up earlier than most perennials, and is often the first bright spot in an otherwise dreary environment. She leads with confidence.

Self-sustaining. The daffodil's bulb uses the foliage to store her food for the following year. She is dependent upon her Creator alone to provide her nourishment. This allows her to be a giver rather than a taker and ensures that she will be able to produce even more blooms next time around.

Resistant. Animals and rodents could destroy the daffodil, but they don't even bother. They sense something within her that demands their respect.

Perpetual. Each year, the same bulb produces many blooms. By the time a bulb's life is finished, it has already created more bulbs which continue the process of producing even more blooms. Plant experts say the daffodil will likely outlive her spectators. Her influence lives on and on.

Are you and I ready for the new thing that God wants to do for and through us? Maybe it's time for us to do old things with new purpose or even new methods.

Different isn't wrong, and change doesn't equal compromise. Maybe He's given us a new challenge that threatens to throw us out of our comfort zone and causes us to trust Him more than we ever thought possible. Let's not be overtaken by fear or silenced by insecurity. The same God who gave us purpose will assist us in navigating every new path He sets before us. ■

Stephanie Burley (BA '98) teaches at Pilgrim Christian School in Lima, OH, and is very active in her local church. She and her husband Greg have four children. Stephanie is a regular contributor to Pilgrim News & Notes, where this article first appeared.



A Message to GBS Alumni from the Board of Trustees

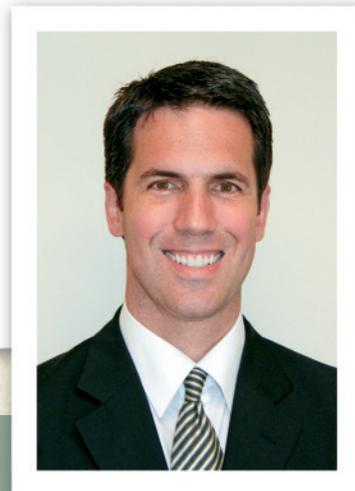
Over the past year, the Board of Trustees of God's Bible School and College has been hard at work reviewing and updating our Ministry Bylaws, a process that is critical to the ongoing vitality of our institution. We have spent many hours endeavoring to make this a helpful and accurate update and would now like to request your involvement regarding the proposed document. The board has given preliminary approval, but the bylaws stipulate that time must be allotted for public input prior to the board's final vote, which will be held at its spring meeting on May 18, 2020. **You are invited to access the tentatively-approved bylaws at <https://www.gbs.edu/bylaws>.** A public-comment space will be provided for you to share your questions and/or support of the 2020 bylaws update.

The vast majority of the changes in the bylaws are simply clerical in nature, but there are a few key changes:

1. The Alumni Council will be replaced with an Alumni Relations Committee on the board that will include several alumni representatives. This move is intended to strengthen the connection of the school with its most valuable asset—the alumni—and create new ways to encourage alumni involvement with their alma mater. (The current Alumni Council has voiced its support for this option and has voted unanimously to approve it!)
2. While the alumni restructuring will remove the position of alumni president and, subsequently, that seat on the Board of Trustees, the updated version of the bylaws stipulates that a minimum of seven trustees must be alumni of God's Bible School and College, therefore maintaining a strong GBS alumni perspective in the board room.
3. The denominational requirement remains in place, which prevents having a majority of any single denomination of board members. GBS has always been, and should remain, interdenominational. A provision has been added to permit adequate time to replace a board member who may resign or change church membership, thus causing the board to be out of compliance with this stipulation.

Please read through the bylaws and let us know what you think! Your perspective is important to us, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Robbie England, chair
Board of Trustees
God's Bible School and College



➡(p.15) to moral action and draw it back unstained. To trace the growth of any attitude to its ultimate fruition is to discover that a parade of consequences march in step with the drum major of choosing. It is to discover further that our choices carry us forward. More like reserving a seat on a train than in a restaurant, the act of choosing not only leaves tracks behind, it also selects which stations lie ahead.

Such choices also extend an invitation beyond ourselves which spiritual forces readily accept. It was when Judas embarked on a specific course of action that Satan entered his heart; and Christ, when invited by our discipleship, will come for tea and a meal and stay forever.

It is this acceptance of the invitation that compounds the vastness of the chasm and seals its effect beyond time. “Spiritual darkness” is not merely an absence or a vacancy—it is more an aggressive absence, combative, hostile, and violent. Devouring and consuming, destruction is its goal.

“Spiritual light” is a flooding into every nook and cranny of the heart, a fulness of that which is holy—the very nature of the Father. Bringing sight to the mind and health to the spirit, it is unstoppable, unconquerable power: “the gates of hell shall not prevail” (Matt. 16:18).

This reality is serious beyond words, yet most people, throughout life, have a long list of things they consider to be more important—many will go to their graves having cared more for their temporary possessions than for their own eternal souls.

None of us is “picture perfect,” and, thankfully, we all have access to restoration which is available in Christ Jesus. However, there is the danger of casually accepting that some sinning is commonplace in the Christian life. If God’s might can keep you from sinning this moment, why not the next? Is there not in every sin a desertion of the Father’s house, a rejection of His love, and a rebellion against Him? Is there no bitter remorse in our repentance, a repugnance of the soul so deep that we abhor even the possibility of our committing that offense again?

Because the choice of discipleship is an attitude and not a substance, each step away holds the potential for never returning, and each step closer holds the potential for never failing. But there is for all of us some juncture in the road of life at which a decision of finality is made. It may come early—some young children, having given their heart to Christ, do not ever turn back—or it may come late—there are aged people at death’s door who steadfastly resist redemption. It may be with lucid clarity, an awareness of the enormity of the decisive action, or it may be merely a continued obstinate clinging to one’s own self-lordship.

It is as if the two opposites of light and darkness—meeting nowhere else—cross paths for an instant in the heart, moving in such opposed directions it is impossible they shall ever meet again. You and I, by yielding in choosing, take unto ourselves and are borne along by the very extreme we embrace. Heaven and hell are as much a destination of character as they are of location. ■



by **Sonja Vernon**

THE SIZE OF THE CROP

“Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”
—**Matthew 13:8 (ESV)**

This time of year, the earth is burgeoning with life. The signs are everywhere—buds bursting open to reveal their flowers; seedlings stretching toward the sun; the browns of winter dissolving into the vibrant palette of spring. Everywhere we see signs that, when conditions are right, dormant seeds will reveal the life within. Perhaps it was during this season that Jesus told His followers the Parable of the Sower. The last time I read this story, I was struck with a thought that had never occurred to me. The seed that fell on good soil didn’t all produce the same amount. The point of the story was not to praise one seed over another, but to stress the importance of cultivating fertile soil. I don’t know about you, but it is awfully easy to compare the fruit of my ministry to that of others. I’m guessing you may do the same. Maybe you are confined to a small sphere of influence. Maybe the “crop” you’re producing doesn’t seem that large or significant. Maybe you’ve done everything “right” with few results. Maybe you hear the voice of the enemy telling you that you have little to show for the life you’ve lived. May I remind you, my friend, that your job is not to make the crop grow? Your job is to provide good soil, to remove any hindrance, and let the Master Gardener do His eternal work. The results are His business. He asks us to be faithful, and when we are, the outcome is pleasing to Him—whether it is thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold. ■

Sonja Vernon is Vice President for Student Affairs at God’s Bible School.

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