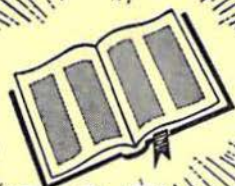
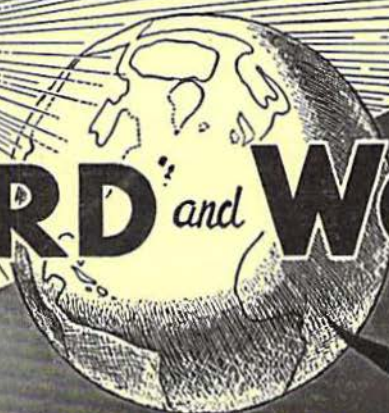


"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



The **WORD** and **WORK**



"Holding forth the Word of life."

MAY, 1991

PRAISE GOD MOST HIGH WITH PSALMS AND HYMNS

"I ask people to PRAY THE PSALMS so they get exposure to the immense range . . . of prayer. Untutored, we tend to think that prayer is what good people do when they are doing their best. It is not. Inexperienced, we suppose there must be an 'insider' language that must be acquired before God takes us seriously in our prayers. There is not . . .

"The intensity of these raw, ancient prayers still shakes my praying to the roots."

—Eugene Peterson

* * * * *

"Writing a HYMN . . . is a matter of looking on the face of God, of worshiping in His presence, of embracing His will, of accepting His cross and living daily under its obedience; then, having learned the disciplines of good writing, of singing His grace."

—Margaret Clarkson, contemporary hymnwriter

(If that is so, should not our SINGING of hymns be more heartfelt and profound? —Editor)

A Psalm in a Hospital Corridor

Joseph Bayly

Lord
my heart fears.
I know that you have said
Fear not
but my heart fears.
Thoughts flash
across the track of my mind
thoughts of evil
not good
loss
not gain
suffering
not joy
My thoughts are out of control.
They exhume the past
bury the future
make the present
a heavy heavy burden.
Lord I cannot control
these fears these thoughts.
I cannot look at the future
with peace.
But I trust You.
These fears run wild
careering thoughts of evil
may make it seem
that I don't
but I do.
I trust You Lord.
I know Your thoughts toward me
are of good
not evil
I fear evil
not You.
Yet fearing wild
I know that even evil
from Your hand
is purest good.
I fear
I trust.
I trust You Lord
I trust Your wisdom
life spanning
Your love
death taming.
I trust You
to know the end of this long beginning moment.

From *Psalms of My Life* by Joseph Bayly (David C. Cook Publishing Co.).
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THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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EDITORIAL:

GOOD FOOD FOR HUNGRY HEARTS

Alex V. Wilson

That's what we want this magazine to provide, by God's enabling. And there are many indications that He is helping us accomplish that goal: A word of thanks on the phone from a preacher in Louisiana. An encouraging note from Tennessee. A phone call from a Louisville woman saying one article was "the best I've ever read anywhere!" An appreciative letter from Canada, with several new subscriptions. A two-year renewal from Indianapolis, expressing interest in a topic we recently touched on. A preacher who quoted an entire article in his sermon.

I usually take a stack of old *Word and Works* to any conferences or retreats I attend, distributing them free and praying we will gain new subscribers. Back in November, 1988, therefore, I took a box full of magazines to the Restoration Forum at Akron, Ohio. Having set them up on a table before dinner, I was surprised after the meal to find them all gone! "Who moved the *Word and Works* from here?" I asked in alarm, only to discover that folks had gobbled up all the free samples with great speed. Just a month or so ago a veteran preacher, unknown to me, wrote saying he had gotten a *Word and Work* at Akron (over two years ago) but never read or examined it then. It probably got stuck in a stack of materials somewhere. "Recently I got around to reading it," he admitted—and subscribed for a year.

But that is topped by the following: A lady who knows neither me nor the magazine was in Heid Printing Company the day that our March issue was completed and about to be taken to the W & W office. Seeing the 1,000 magazines loaded up for delivery, and their theme, "When Life Falls Apart," she expressed great curiosity and was given a copy. The next day she phoned, wanting 50 subscriptions so her friends and the people she visits as a church worker could all get it! It seems she underestimated the cost, so that deal didn't go through. But the incident again confirmed that the Lord is graciously using this ministry.

The Other Side of the Coin

Other folks, however, fall out of love with the magazine and quit subscribing. Win some, lose some. We realize there's lots of competition out there, and "one man's meat is another man's poison."

Reading a church bulletin one day we saw these words, and were gladdened by the free advertisement: "How about subscribing to the *Word and Work*?" Then we saw the next sentence, and a sigh replaced our smile. It said, "The church has stopped buying a bundle of *Word and Works* since few were picked up. But you can still get one for yourself for only \$6 for 11 issues. Send your address and money to..."

The preacher and at least one elder of that church are backers of *W & W*. Yet few members became interested. No doubt that's true in various places. Longtime readers are loyal, but it's hard to attract new ones. We haven't the money or staff to make the magazine look more appealing through artwork, full color printing, etc. That's why **WE NEED YOU, OUR READERS, TO ACT AS OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS STAFF!**

TWO SIMPLE PLANS

We aim to double our number of subscribers during this year. And that won't be really hard IF YOU WILL HELP in one (or both) of two simple ways. *Plan #1:* Stop for a minute right now and jot down the names of three or four people you know who would benefit from *W & W* but don't get it now. That should take only a minute. Then ask yourself if it isn't worth \$6.00 to give a subscription to at least one of those 3-4 people. Pray about which one needs this monthly dose of spiritual vitamins the most ... or even if you could provide it for *all* those people whose names you jotted down. Six dollars isn't much, and perhaps other subscribers you know can help you with this. For example, maybe your Sunday school class has a few folks who already get *W & W* but several who don't. The readers' offer of a one-year subscription to the non-readers might make a valuable difference in their lives.

Plan #2: We realize there are some people who would not be helped by *every* issue, but greatly need the teaching in a specific issue *now and then*. An unconverted friend would probably not take time to read the February issue on prayer, but might be deeply stirred by articles in March about "When Life Falls Apart" (anxiety; why doesn't God stop the troubles; etc.). Your friend who is being visited by the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses might not be ready to get *W & W* monthly, but the April 1990 issue might be a lifesaver to her. Your son studying in university might never bother to glance at "Women Serving the Lord" (June '90), and yet desperately need the next issue, "Can We Still Trust the Bible?" Some pregnant girl's baby might find that the articles every now and then against abortion are literally a matter of life or death. And that sectarian preacher you know might have his eyes opened by articles on "Liberty and Unity" (Oct. '90).

So what is plan #2? It is that you get *two* issues monthly—one to keep and one to give away to someone else! This could be a ministry of evangelism, edification and bridge-building all in one. Sometimes you would like to speak a word of instruction or correction to an acquaintance, but talking to him face to face just seems too abrupt and confrontational. In such cases perhaps you could say, "There's an article here you might find helpful; let me know what you think of it." This might open hearts and doors, as you show interest but refrain from battering-ram tactics.

Won't you right now consider following plan #1 or #2 or both? We want to be of help to you. Please pray that we shall. We are grateful for each one of you.

Our Favorite, Neglected Scriptures

Ronald B. Allen

The psalms are poetry. This is the dominant issue in reading the psalms. In the book of Psalms we are at a great distance from the prose books of the Old Testament such as Samuel and Kings, and we are worlds away from the New Testament epistles such as Ephesians and Romans.

The psalms are poetry. This is their definition. It is also something of a problem.

To be sure, believers through the ages have always treasured the book of Psalms. It has been regarded as a remarkable repository of piety, prayer, and the praise of God. But it is also a book of marvelous literature.

The book of Psalms is meant as music; it was the hymnal of ancient Israel. Though the musical notations are lost to us, we still have the lyrics, the poetry. *It is the poetry of the psalms that seems to trouble people today.*

I find that many people in our churches feel alienated from the psalms. Once one goes beyond a small collection of the very familiar texts, such as Psalms 1 and 23 and a few favorite verses, many people seem to draw a blank when they turn to the book of Psalms. Perhaps this is because *reading poetry has become a lost art.*

Although I have heard it numerous times, I'm still a little startled to hear people say, as they reflect on preaching and teaching from the psalms, how unexpectedly they encountered the richness of these texts. It's almost as though they are saying, "We expect depth and richness from Romans and Ephesians, but we are surprised to find such deep meaning in a little psalm."

God and Man

Astute readers can find the psalms' riches in two basic directions, one having to do with God and the other with man.

The psalms present the person of *Yahweh* (the Hebrew name translated "Jehovah" or "Lord") in a startling, wondrous manner. We can find ourselves in awe before the display of his wonder in these poems as they describe him fashioning the skies with his hands (Psalm 19:1), setting in place the elements of the heavens with his fingers (Psalm 8:3), sitting in regal majesty (Psalm 93:1), and thrice-holy as he reigns over a shaking earth (Psalm 99:1, 3, 5, 9). The psalms can also stun us with God's immediacy (Psalm 90:1), his nearness (Psalm 91:1), his intimacy (Psalm 23), and especially his loyal love (Psalm 89:1).

One of the most significant words in the psalms to describe the person of Yahweh is *hesed*, variously rendered as "loving kindness," "merciful goodness," "mercy," and "love." Many scholars prefer to translate this word by the phrase "loyal love," as it combines both the Lord's loyalty to his people and the love by which he manifests that loyalty.

The *hesed* of Yahweh is the principal motivation the psalms give for praising God. Psalm 106:1 presents just one of these calls to praise Yahweh for his goodness and everlasting loyal love.

The psalms also speak of man. Better, they speak *for* man, especially for the believing person who wishes to express his faith and joy in God—as well as his fears and pains in working out the life of faith in a world where so much is often so very wrong.

In psalms such as Psalm 13 we find an amazing candor, an openness before God who knows us so well. It is in the hurt of the psalms that believers may learn to express their own hurts to God and, with the psalmist, learn to await God's mercy.

Forms of the Psalms

Many of the psalms fit within two broad literary categories: *psalms of praise* and *psalms of lament*.

In psalms of praise, the psalmist celebrates the wonder and goodness of God and calls for others to join him and the believing community in a joyful response (see Psalm 33; Heb. 13:15).

Psalms of praise call for a response to God's goodness and wonder. God is good, and a good God is to be praised.

But life is tough! And the rigors of life sometimes bring a believer to a point of great stress where he screams out to God for deliverance, for help, for an answer from on high. In the psalms, these cries are termed *psalms of lament* (see Psalms 3-7 and 54-61).

As Poems

Many people simply do not know how to read the psalms because they have not learned to appreciate them as the Bible's distinct, unique collection of poems.

Most Americans regard poetry as impractical. Imagine a cab driver reading Tennyson while waiting for a fare, a stockbroker taking a Dickinson collection along to lunch, or a chemist reading Frost in the lounge. Real people, we feel, do not read poetry.

Men tend to be especially harsh: Poetry is for little old ladies with lots of time, for young girls filled with silly dreams, for shaggy beatniks hung over from the '60s, and for little men with limp wrists. May I say it? Many men (including preachers) suspect that poetry is somehow effeminate. Real men not only don't eat quiche, they don't read poetry either!

I commonly find this fear of poetry among my students, and I am confident that many people in our churches also have little interest in poetry. So the psalms may remain largely unread, not enjoyed, their messages stilled. This scripture is a neglected scripture.

Poetry and Experience

Poetry is a special use of language. The principal issue in poetry is not its form (verse instead of prose), but the way poetry uses language that heightens our senses and causes us to feel something more deeply. For at its base, *poetry is essentially the language of experience*.

When some teachers begin to speak of the poetry of the Bible, they rush headlong into the distinctives of Hebrew poetry. But first we should remind ourselves of what is common to poetry in ancient and modern times. This is experience.

Because poetry is the language of experience, we may expect to find woven within the poem a high quotient of elements from the psalmist's world and culture. These cultural elements present part of the challenge of reading the psalms; they also present much of the reward.

Let's say that a writer of scripture wished to say that God is the protector of his people. He could do this in a logical, rational, prose account, and the reader could give assent to the truth of those statements.

But the inspired psalmist does not wish to say something just to gain assent. He desires his readers to *feel* that truth as well. *The poet not only touches our mind, but also reaches our senses and the root of our being.*

Think of some of the ways the poets of the Bible speak of God's protecting care. Psalm 23 causes us to feel something of what it means to be a sheep in the care of the Good Shepherd. A study of this psalm teaches us the art of shepherding; more, it makes us enjoy being sheep.

Psalm 61:3 places us in a fortified tower in an ancient walled city and compares that experience to the strong, protective arms of the Lord. And verse 4 describes one living in the Lord's tent. Then, with abrupt change of imagery, this verse speaks of being under the embracing, protecting care of the wings of Yahweh, as a chick cuddling in the warmth of the mother hen.

These are vivid, potent images. They affect us as whole persons. *We feel as well as think, we sense as well as acknowledge. This is what poetry can do.*

The poet might use various forms to express this experience. Certainly he will use imagery, word pictures, concrete and physical terms, common words applied in special ways, rare words that provoke thought, and special words that evoke wonder. And certainly the poet will be concise, compact. It is this tightly drawn compression of poetry that makes it a demanding kind of writing.

Like Caviar

One cannot skim a poem as one might a newspaper article. Reading a news article might be like eating peanut butter on a saltine, something done casually and quickly. Reading a poem might be like, something done with small bites and appropriate pauses—especially if you are footing the bill.

The poet also is apt to be concerned about the design of his words on the line and the structure of words on the page. Repetition, key words, pacing, and words with similar vowel or consonant sounds—a good poet uses all these and other tools to make the poem work more effectively.

The poet is concerned about words and the ways they relate to each other. Poets may have strong interests in message and meaning, but their primary focus is on the way words work to convey feeling, emotion, sense, and wonder.

Poetry is more the *how* of the matter than the *what*. *How* a poem means what it means is the principal issue. We are so accustomed to ask *what* a passage means that we rarely concern ourselves with the manner of the text. In poetry, the manner really matters.

In the poetry of the Bible, the meaning is certainly important. But if meaning were the only thing, it could have been expressed more clearly in prose. The meaning itself is shaped by the form in which it is given; it is a meaning we feel in a certain way because we learn it in a poem.

Poetry Calls

Poetry is a call to beauty. Unfortunately, many commentators on the psalms, obsessed with debating details of theoretical meaning, give little attention to the beauty of expression that has its own reason for being in great literature.

Beauty matters. God is beautiful. Jesus is our Beautiful Savior. The beauty of God and the beauty of his Word are twin discoveries that many believers still have before them. Far too much of our thoughts of God and the Bible are utilitarian, far too little are of the simplicity and delight of an encounter with beauty.

Poetry is a call to patience. Meaning does not come readily in a poem. A reason it may not be good to end a sermon with a poem is that if the poem is really good, many people may not fully understand it the first time through. Poetry takes time, repetition, sounding aloud, enjoying.

Poetry is a call to feeling. Deep emotions are tossed about, it seems, with abandon. The psalmists speak of pain in such excruciating manners as to make us wince. They speak of love of God with such gusto we blush. They rail against enemies with such umbrage we are embarrassed. In the psalms we rediscover our biblical birthright of feeling deep hurt, exhilarating joy, calm peace, awesome dread, and holy laughter.

Poetry is a call to the heart of God. If poetry is the language of experience, the primary experience we can find in these poems is the experience of God.

We learn about God in many ways through the varied literature of the Bible. It is in the psalms that we gain a unique sense of the experience of God. There is nothing limp-wristed about this. The poetry of the Bible is for real men and real women, for it presents experience with Real God.

[Reprinted by author's permission. This article first appeared in MOODY Magazine.]

PSALM 46:

Immanuel, God With Us

John R. W. Stott

The name of Martin Luther will always be associated with this psalm. His famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" is a free paraphrase of it. He and Philip Melancthon would sing it together in times of dark discouragement. It is a sublime expression of quiet confidence in God's sovereignty amid the upheavals of nature and history.

The original context was evidently some notable deliverance of Jerusalem from the attack of heathen invaders. *The city of God* (verse 4) was favored with several such deliverances. But the situation envisaged in the psalm, together with its resemblance in metaphor and phrase to some of Isaiah's prophecies, suggest the overthrow of Sennacherib's army in 701 B.C.

Although Hezekiah was King of Judah, he was a vassal of Sennacherib and was obliged to pay tribute to him. When he rebelled, the mighty army of the Assyrians came sweeping west and south like the irresistible waves of the sea. Jerusalem was soon surrounded. Sennacherib boasted that he had shut up Hezekiah "like a caged bird" and demanded his surrender.

The situation was critical. Twenty years previously Sennacherib's predecessor had taken by storm the northern capital of Samaria and depopulated the land of Israel. It looked as if Judah was to suffer the same fate. Hezekiah appealed to the prophet Isaiah, who spoke to him the word of the Lord: "Do not be afraid... for I will defend this city to save it." Suddenly and dramatically, as the secular historian Herodotus bore witness, God intervened. "That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up early the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!" So Sennacherib withdrew. See 2 Kings 18 and 19.

The psalm is in three parts, expressing first a general confidence in the power and providence of God, then a particular experience of it in the deliverance of the city, and lastly an assurance that He will establish His universal kingdom of peace. The second and third stanzas are followed by the refrain: *The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress* (verses 7, 11). The demands of symmetry suggest that the same refrain originally concluded the first stanza also. It is not only a statement of God's protection, but that He who is our fortress is both the powerful *Lord Almighty* and the faithful *God of Jacob*, who is bound to His people in a solemn covenant.

A GENERAL CONFIDENCE (verses 1-3)

The psalmist affirms that *God is our refuge and strength and an ever present help in trouble*. It is this confidence which

enables him to add almost with defiance: *Therefore we will not fear*. Even the worst convulsions of nature—earthquake, storm, tempest—which strike terror into the hearts of defenseless people, will not make us afraid (verses 2, 3).

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE (verses 4-7)

In contrast to the sea whose waters *roar and foam* (verse 3), the psalmist now mentions other and calmer waters, those of a *river whose streams make glad the city of God* (verse 4). The original reference must be to the waters of Siloam, whose gentle flowing Isaiah used as a picture of the quiet, beneficent providence of God (Isaiah 8:6). The symbol reappears in the visions of both Ezekiel (Ezekiel 47:1-12) and John (Revelation 22:1-5).

Under God's gracious rule His city is made glad (verse 4) and simply cannot *fall* because *God is within her* to protect and help her (verse 5). Let the nations "roar" like the sea and kingdoms "quake" like mountains (the same verbs are used in verse 6 as in verses 2 and 3), yet God has only to speak and *the earth melts* before Him. That is, before the voice of the Lord, the Assyrian army was scattered.

A FINAL ASSURANCE (verses 8-11)

The writer now summons the people to take note of God's decisive intervention in the protection of Jerusalem and the *desolation* of her foes (verse 8). This divine deliverance is seen as a pledge and foretaste of the day when God will finally overthrow all warmongers and establish His kingdom of peace: *he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire* (verse 9). The vision recalls the prophecies of Isaiah about the beating of swords into plowshares and spears into pruninghooks, and the using of military boots and bloodstained garments as fuel for the fire (Isaiah 2:4; 9:5).

No sooner has this promise of peace been given than God Himself, its guarantor, is heard to speak: *Be still, and know that I am God*. It was His voice which overthrew the Assyrians (verse 6); and is already here and now (probably a present tense) exalted in the earth (verse 10). This majestic affirmation prompts His people to respond in the refrain: *The Lord Almighty is with us*. Again, the words have an Isaianic ring, reminding us of his great prophecy about Immanuel, "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8, 10).

We also live in an epoch of crisis. The old order has gone. The social revolution begun 150 years ago continues and grows in pace. We hear wars and rumors of wars. People's hearts fail them for fear. Can we say: "We will not fear"? Indeed we can; but only if we believe the other affirmations of this psalm: *I am God and The Lord Almighty is with us*. As John Wesley said with his dying breath: "The best of all is, God is with us."

(From *Favorite Psalms*, published by Moody Press, ©1988. Used by permission.)

PSALM 139:

The EVER PRESENT GOD

Paul S. Rees

Many years ago this country had a vigorous Christian journal called the *Ram's Horn*, edited by one Elijah Brown. In an issue of that paper there appeared this description of God: "God—that Being whose throne is justice, whose atmosphere is love, to whom all time is now, all space is here, and whose only inability is to sin." The presence of *that* God, in His world and in human experience, is a tremendous and inescapable fact. It got hold of the psalmist one day and exploded in his soul. The explosion sent out tongues of light and fire which still may be seen in this amazing composition that we call Psalm 139.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit?" cried David, "or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

THE SEARCHER

In David's contemplation he is occupied, first of all, with what we may call *the searching of God's presence*. "O Lord," he confesses in verse 1, "thou hast searched me, and known me." This thought of God's complete and all-covering knowledge of His creatures is then developed through the five following verses. Listen to Moffat's way of bringing the original Hebrew across into vivid English: "Thou knowest me sitting or rising, my very thoughts thou readest from afar; walking or resting, I am scanned by thee, and all my life to thee lies open."

David feels that no circumstance, no posture, no shift of time from day to night keeps God from walking into his life and reading the books of his soul.

Then he goes on: "Ere ever a word comes to my tongue, O thou Eternal, 'tis well known to thee; thou art on every side, behind me and before, laying thy hand on me" (vv. 4, 5).

Overwhelmed with this vision of the ever-present, all-knowing God, David bows in self-confessed awe: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is far, far beyond me" (v. 6).

Mark another aspect of God's searching, as David pictures it. It is very personal: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me." A community census was being made. At a certain door the questioner asked the woman who answered his knock what children she had. She began, "Well, there's Willie, and Horace and Ethel." But the census-taker interrupted, "Never mind names, I just want numbers." Then *she* grew impatient and a bit indignant. "They haven't got numbers," she protested. "Every one of them's got a name." Quite so! They were *her* children. She was *their* mother. They had personalities that spoke with all the eloquence of their individual characteristics. She knew them not by number but by name.

So God looks upon His human creatures. Why, according to Isaiah He even calls the stars by names. Nor does He do less, but rather more, with John Brown and Ruth Anderson. He knows the very number of their hairs.

God's presence in His world means that you, dear man, or woman, or boy, or girl, *you* are neither too little for His notice or too unworthy for His care. You are under His eye. Never, for one moment, are you anywhere else but under His eye. And if that eye is like a burning-glass to judge and condemn your sin, it is also like a healing ray to bring health to your forgiven and cleansed soul. If in the Old Testament we read, "Thou hast searched *me*, and known *me*," in the New Testament we read, that He "loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*" (Galatians 2:20).

EVERYWHERE!

Consider next *the scope of God's presence*. With the question, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" David proceeds, in the second division of the psalm, to answer his own query. He summons all the grace of lofty and elegant speech as he cries: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." Here we have what might be called the *vertical* extremes of the universe—the heights and depths. One is never beyond the upward or the downward reach of the divine Presence.

Next we have the *horizontal* range of the Presence: "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (vv. 9, 10). God is universal. God is inescapable. That is the insight that David is sharing with us.

But suppose someone says, "I shall try no longer to run away from God. I'll remain here until the daylight fades and the night creeps in. In the dark I'll be really alone." "That," says David, "will do you no good," for, "if I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me." Moffat's translation here is tremendous: "If I say, 'The dark will screen me, night will hide me in its curtains,' yet darkness is not dark to thee, the night is clear as daylight" (vv. 11, 12).

The story is often told but its innocent irony never loses its point. It concerns the atheist father who sought to impress upon his little son the non-existence of God. He wrote on the black-board: "God is nowhere." But when he said, "Son, you read it," the little fellow read, "God is now here."

"Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Nowhere! Flight is futile. Escape is impossible. Recognition is the only wisdom. Such is the scope of His presence.

ASTOUNDING INGENUITY

Moving on to the third division of the psalm, we find that the leading thought is that of *the satisfaction of God's presence*. The section covers verses 13 to 18. Let me give a few samplings from this paragraph, as translated by Moffat.

Take verse 13: "For thou didst form my being, didst weave me in my mother's womb." Whereupon, in verse 14, David declares, "I praise thee for the awful wonder of my birth; thy work is wonderful."

Have you ever taken time to read up on the wonders of those two mechanisms with which you eat every day, or tie your shoes, or write a letter, or tinker with the jewels in a watch—your hands? Have you ever gone to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and turned to the "E" volume, and there read the section on the human eye?

A little left of the center, behind our fence of ribs, we have a small muscle about the size of our fist. It is called the heart. It is our body pump, and the blood is its "stock in trade." How much blood does our heart pump every twenty-four hours? Fifty gallons? A hundred? Five hundred? Well, according to Dr. Peter J. Steincrohn in *Forget Your Age*, it is closer to five thousand gallons. It is possible, says Steincrohn, for that little muscle to exert itself sufficiently to pump fifty *tons* of blood between one sunrise and the next. If we live to the age of seventy, this amazing contrivance of nerve and muscle, weighing a little more than half a pound, has ejected not less than 150,000,000 gallons of blood. How can it do it? That is part of the wonder of it. It is so constructed that it can rest without stopping, thanks to the law of rhythm on which it operates. In a lifetime of seventy years our heart spends nearly forty years resting.

Does such astounding ingenuity as this point to the presence of an intelligent, creative Mind in the universe? Or is it smarter to sit on what brains we have in our cranial cavity and parrot the prattle of some pseudo-scientist who says glibly that he can account for the origin of all things by the theory of the "fortuitous concourse of atoms," which is simply high-brow lingo for the word "chance" or "accident"?

Much more satisfying to the poet-king of long ago and, I should like to add, much more satisfying to me who am neither king nor poet, is the view that the presence of the living God in the world explains more things than any other view. And where it doesn't explain them, where in fact it leaves some things still mysterious, it leaves the way open for faith that there is an explanation—an explanation that God may some day share with us.

This, I take it, was David's brave and tolerably satisfying conviction when he cried in verse 17, "O God, what mysteries I find in thee! How vast the number of thy purposes! I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I wake from my reverie, and I am still lost in thee."

THE GOOD GOD'S SEVERITY

Moving ahead with David, we come to a short paragraph which suggests to us *the severity of God's presence*. "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked," we read in verse 19, "depart from me therefore, ye bloody men."

These "wicked" ones are described thus: "They speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain" (v. 20), to which the psalmist adds, in vivid Oriental style, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with them that rise up against thee?" (v.21).

Some people get terribly worried about these harsh-sounding passages in the Psalms. I doubt if our worry is necessary. Are we never moved to pray passionately, for example, against the liquor traffic and the war system? Now, if we were Orientals we would know how difficult it is for one of their mental temper to talk in abstractions. Instead of saying, "God, overthrow the saloon business" we would probably say, "God, smite down the drink merchants," but the meaning would be no different.

David once had a chance to take personal vengeance on Saul, but he deliberately spared the evil king's life. He was no more vengeful than the man who has never prayed in such intense and colorful language as he uses in a few passages in the Psalms.

What this language does is to point pungently to the solemn, Scriptural, and sensible fact that in God there are both mercy and judgment. And it is our attitude and choice that determine which portion shall be ours—the divine grace or the divine wrath.

A college lad, well soaked with religious skepticism, was walking in a garden with a grand old preacher of the South. "Doctor," said he, "I don't understand how a man of your intelligence and learning can be a Christian." The preacher replied, "I think it is a perfectly intelligent thing to be a Christian."

"But the Bible—how can you believe that?" countered the youth.

"Why not?"

"It is full of contradictions."

"Oh," said the preacher, "I wasn't aware of that, and I've been reading it for years. What, for example?"

"Well," said the young man, "doesn't the Bible say that 'God is love'?"

"Yes."

"And doesn't the Bible say that 'God is a consuming fire'?"

"Yes."

"How do you reconcile the two?"

The preacher stopped in the garden path. The day was hot. Someone had torn off a lovely flower and it lay there wilting and fading. The preacher pointed to the flowers that were blooming profusely and said, "Aren't they beautiful? And they owe their beauty to the sun, don't they?"

"Yes," acknowledged the young man, "they do."

"But," said the preacher, "look at this poor flower lying here all wilted and curled. What causes it to wither like this?"

"Why, the sun, sir," said the young man, "the sun does it."

"So," said the preacher, "it is the same sun that feeds and nourishes on the one hand and that withers and kills on the other. That is the way with God. As long as the flower was in right relation to the sun, it flourished; broken off from that relation, it perishes. Thus when you and I are rightly related to God, His

love is our life, our salvation, our joy. But when we break away from Him, refuse His love, shut ourselves away from His life, we pass, by necessity, under His judgment and, if we insist on remaining there, we perish."

That young man got an insight into the character of God that sent his doubts flying, and led, before long, to a surrender to Jesus Christ. The severity of God's presence is all there is left to a man when he refuses the mercy of it.

HE IS HERE—SEEK HIM

And what is there more to say than the thing that David does in fact say as this great psalm comes to a close? We have now the *supplication for God's presence*: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" (Moffatt has it, "see if I am taking a wrong course"), "and lead me in the way everlasting."

Is the presence of God unreal to us? Is the assurance of God's forgiveness and favor unknown to us? Is the claim that our lives can be God-guided and God-controlled a matter of doubt to us?

Then let us remember this: We don't have to struggle and strain to find Him. All we need to do is to put ourselves in the way of His going. He is seeking us. He has come in Christ, and He is on a quest for us.

In revealing Himself God has no favorites, but He does have rules. Sunlight, in reflecting itself, has no favorites either, but it has rules. We just can't get the same reflection of sunlight in a dusty mirror as in a clean one.

When we get the point of that simple illustration we will have the reason for this prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart... See if there be any wicked way in me." And that carries with it the plea to take away everything in our lives that is displeasing to God. Then the light of His presence will be gloriously reflected. And with Him we will be led in the "way everlasting."

Valuable Insights About Psalms

(from various sources)

The great value of the Psalms is that "most of Scripture speaks to us, while the Psalms speak for us." That remark attributed to Athanasius captures something of the importance of the Psalter in the Bible. Here are scores of examples of the things we can say to God. They appear in Scripture as models of the prayer and protest, the thanksgiving and praise, which are acceptable to Yahweh the God of Israel, who is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF SPEAKING TO GOD

Parents customarily put in a great deal of effort to get their children into the habit of saying "please" and "thank you," and there remains something fundamental about these two types of human

speech. They appear also in men's speech with God, in the form of prayer and praise. There is a close link between prayer and praise. Prayer looks forward to praise, praise looks back to the incident about which prayer had to be made. It is not only God's specific recent deeds that he is praised for, however. In praise God's people rejoice in and testify to the fundamental deeds whereby he made them his people—to his acts of redemption. They praise him for his creation, for his revelation, for his presence in his city and in his temple with his people. They praise him for who he is: for after all, human speech does not begin with "please" and "thank you" but with a simpler recognition of and response to the person ("Daddy," "Mummy"). Beyond "please" and "thank you" this is where it ends, too, with "I love you" or "You are smashing" or a wordless gaze. So it is with God: he is named and acknowledged for himself.

—John Goldingay, in *Songs from a Strange Land*

LEARNING TO PRAY HONESTLY

I am a pastor charged with, among other things, teaching people to pray. To pray honestly. It's not easy.

Faced with the prospect of converse with a holy God, with a God who speaks worlds into being, it is not surprising we have trouble; we feel awkward, out of place: "I'm not good enough for this. I'll wait until I clean up my act and prove that I am a decent person." Or we may try to excuse ourselves from the task on the grounds that our vocabulary is inadequate: "Give me a few months or years to practice prayers polished enough for such a sacred meeting; then I won't be so stuttery and afraid."

My usual response when presented with these difficulties is to put the Psalms in a person's hand and say, "Go home and pray these. You've got wrong ideas about prayer; the praying on display here will help get rid of them." When I next meet the person I expect a reaction. I can predict the surprise. "Did you think these would be the prayers of *nice* people?" I ask. "Did you think the psalms' language would be polished and polite?"

I ask people to pray these psalms so they get exposure to the immense range and terrific energies of prayer. The church's primary text for teaching men and women to pray is the Psalms. Untutored, we tend to think that prayer is what good people do when they are doing their best. It is not. Inexperienced, we suppose there must be an "insider" language that must be acquired before God takes us seriously in our prayers. There is not. Prayer is elemental, not advanced, language. It is the means by which our language becomes honest, true, personal. And it is harder to forget that while reading the Psalms.

—Eugene Peterson in *Christianity Today*

MESSIANIC PSALMS AND PASSAGES

Many Psalms, written a thousand years before Christ, contain references to Christ, that are wholly inapplicable to any other person in history. Some references to David seem to point forward to the Coming King in David's family. Besides passages that are clearly Messianic, there are many expressions which seem to be veiled fore-shadowings of the Messiah.

Psalms most obviously Messianic are: Psalm 2: Deity and Universal Reign of the Messiah; Psalm 8: Man through Messiah to become Lord of Creation; Psalm 16: His Resurrection from the Dead; Psalm 22: His Suffering, and Psalm 69: His Suffering; Psalm 45: His Royal Bride, and Eternal Throne; Psalm 72: Glory and Eternity of His Reign; Psalm 89: God's Oath for Endlessness of Messiah's Throne; Psalm 110: Eternal King and Priest; Psalm 118: To be Rejected by His Nation's Leaders; Psalm 132: Eternal Inheritor of David's Throne.

Here are statements in the Psalms which the New Testament explicitly declares refer to Christ.

"They pierced my hands and my feet," 22:16; John 20:25.

"Zeal for Thy house hath eaten Me up," 69:9; John 2:17.

"Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God," 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7.

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," 45:6; Heb. 1:8.

"He trusted in God; let God deliver Him," 22:8; Matt. 27:43.

"Thou hast put all things under His feet," 8:6; Heb. 2:6-10.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" 22:1; Matt. 27:46.

"Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee," 2:7; Acts 13:33.

"Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord," 118:26; Matt. 21:9.

"They gave Me gall, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink," 69:21; Matt. 27:34, 48.

"My own familiar friend, who did eat My bread, lifted up his heel against Me," 41:9; John 13:18.

"They part my garments among them; and upon My vesture did they cast lots," 22:18; John 19:24.

"God has sworn, Thou art a Priest Forever after the order of Melchizedek," 110:4; Heb. 7:17.

"The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner," 118:22; Matt. 21:42.

"The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool," 110:1; Matt. 22:44.

"Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption," 16:10; Acts 2:27.

—Halley's Bible Handbook

THE DIFFICULT PSALMS

The particular psalms we find it hardest to sing are those which seem to us either self-righteous or vengeful (the so-called "imprecatory" psalms, in which the author calls for divine vengeance upon his enemies).

I do not find it hard to imagine situations in which holy men of God do and should both cry to God for vengeance and assert their own righteousness. Since God is going to judge the impenitent, a truly godly person will desire him to do so, and that without any feelings of personal animosity. It is not personal revenge that the psalmist seeks. He is not speaking as a private individual, but as a representative of God's people, and he sees his enemies not primarily as his own

but as the enemies of God. Thus, his vital concern is for the triumph of God's cause and the vindication of God's name. Besides, he knows that vengeance belongs to God, which is why he does not take the law into his own hands, but leaves it to him to act (cf. Prov. 20:22, Rom. 12:17-19).

If the same godly person is righteous, it is not wrong for him to declare his integrity (like St. Paul in e.g. Acts 23:1), if he can do it without personal conceit or superiority. I readily concede that I myself would find it hard to echo these sentiments. The reason for this is not, however, that they are beneath me, but that they are beyond me. It is not that I would not stoop so low; it is rather that I cannot rise so high. I cannot attain to desires for divine judgment without vindictiveness nor to assertions of my own righteousness without pride.—John R. W. Stott, in *The Canticles and Selected Psalms*

INTERPRETING THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

A consequence of the poetic nature of the Psalms is that they use imagery and symbolism more extensively than prose does. We should not be prosaic in interpreting them, therefore. When the author of Psalms 42-43 describes his affliction in terms of spiritual longing (42:1), weeping and personal insult (3), geographical isolation (6), drowning (7), mourning and oppression (9), physical attack (10) and injustice and deceit (43:1), we are not to look for one situation which might embody all these, but be open to the possibility that each of them is a poetic way of describing circumstances that are not literally described. Precisely this use of imagery, however, makes it easier for us to identify with the psalmist. He is not giving us a literal description of an experience we have not shared. He is describing what a situation felt like in terms we may only too often have used ourselves ("everything was against me," "God seemed miles away," "things got on top of me," "I was overwhelmed," "it was devastating").

—John Goldingay, in *Songs from a Strange Land*

SING ABOUT THE LAW!

Scripture does not present God's law as an arbitrary code plopped down on the world, but as something inevitable, ingrained in the universe.

In Psalm 119, the poet rhapsodizes on the priceless heritage of God's precepts. He makes the law musical. He longs to meditate on those statutes; he treasures every word in his heart. One is reminded of someone poring over the score of a masterful symphony.

It is hard for us to relate to that psalmist. The law, for us, is an impersonal entity imposed on us by impersonal institutions; our encounters with it generally involve traffic cops, clogged courts, convoluted tax codes, zoning ordinances, or a maze of unintelligible propositions on a ballot. But for the psalmist, the law revealed God; it was personal.

The precepts and statutes that inspired him were not isolated entries in a thick code book, but a series of notes in the great score that expressed God's character.

—Steve Mosley in *Christianity Today*

WORSHIP IN SONG

E. L. Jorgenson

Plainly, it was never the will of God that the religious service should be a "riot," or a circus, or a disorderly pandemonium. "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace." "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:33, 40).

Yet, on the other hand, it is not the will of God that our meetings be too prim and precise, too formal and decorous, to allow the expression of our sacred emotions. "Be filled with the Spirit, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." In the Bible, "heart" is that which knows and wills and *feels*; how then can we deny that feeling has its place and rightful use in worship?

True, we are a sane, reasoning and decorous people. We are not of those religious groups that sometimes shout in church: but perhaps our song should be our shout! How else can we be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice with the righteous; and shout for joy, with all them that are upright in heart? (Ps. 32:11.) I speak not of noise as such, but of true emotion, of feeling that is rooted in understanding and capable of invoking holy feelings in another. If our songs are beautiful, esthetically beautiful in poetry and in music, well and good; it will help. But above all, let them be spiritually beautiful and beautifully true; true to scripture and true to the highest Christian experience. Let them be sung from the heart, heartily, and they will reach the heart; yea, they will reach to the gates of heaven.

We ought to sing much more *together*. After all, it is almost the only act of worship that we do together. Unless it be an occasional scripture portion read responsively, it is almost our only unison act. Some one leads the prayer, and some one preaches the sermon. One by one we break the bread; one by one we drink the cup, and one by one we lay by of our earthly goods; but when we sing we sing together. It is a good thing, a pleasant thing, and a unifying thing to do: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to sing together in harmony!

I now speak of the *center* of our assembly. That only center is the Lord Jesus Christ, our adorable Redeemer. One may go to the concert, the secular concert, and there he finds that the singer is the center of interest. The accompanist may have a moment of recognition, and a few may even think of the gifted writers of the words and music; but the singer is the center, and the chief object of praise.

One may go to hear the great symphony orchestra, and there the conductor is the center. A few will think of the men now gone, who composed the beautiful music. But when the finale is done, and the curtain has fallen, it is the conductor chiefly that men praise. And that is fair enough.

But in the church—there Jesus Christ is the center. There in the sacred worship service no one may intrude himself. As we

realise more and more that Jesus Christ is central we leaders will intrude ourselves less and less that we may exalt Christ more and more. I have been asked in many places about choruses and special singing groups; and I have always answered, "That is a work that calls for the humblest and most spiritual direction." Where we have that, well and good; where we have men in charge who know *Who God is*, who have themselves been humbled before Him, who have "seen the glory of the coming of the Lord"; where we have such men (and we do have some), there special groups may greatly glorify the Lord. Otherwise it may well become a snare.

It is, of course, not every spiritual song that is addressed to God. Sometimes we speak "one to another" by way of testimony, instruction, admonition, and invitation: but always, even when we speak "one to another," it is to be "with grace in our hearts unto God." The divine Being is ever before our minds—even as we are to do *all*, whatsoever we do in word or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus. From Him are all our gifts whatever they may be; and it is suitable that *all* our talents should be returned to Him in praise!

The Making of a Hymn Writer

Margaret Clarkson

"How did you come to be a hymn writer?" This question has often been asked me in recent years. My answer is a long story, for I can't remember a time when I was not fascinated and delighted by Christian hymns.

I heard and responded to the Gospel, coming to know Christ as Savior in my tenth year during a series of children's meetings based on *Pilgrim's Progress*. I was taught the Scriptures, memorized, and repeated at one sitting all 107 questions and answers to the Westminster Shorter Catechism when I was eleven, and professed my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and joined the church in the same year. I loved to sing, and exulted in hymn singing. The music I heard at church was the only music I knew, for radio was in its infancy then and little music was taught in schools. I loved the hymns with all the intensity of my young heart, and unconsciously absorbed into memory the words as well as the music I heard sung in church. I loved poetry too.

When I was ten, I read that a magazine was sponsoring a poetry competition for children sixteen and under on the topic of the New Year. Without telling a soul, within twenty minutes I had dashed off eight lines, collected two pennies from my hoard of half a dozen or so, run around the corner and mailed my entry, and returned home for supper. This was my first poem. A few weeks later I couldn't believe the letter that told me that my poem had taken second prize, the first place having gone to a sixteen-year-old. My astonished mother had to verify the letter before I would believe it was true.

Before long I was writing verse more or less regularly, and began publishing in parish magazines and Sunday School papers when I was twelve. There was no Junior Church in my childhood; children had to sit quietly through the 45-minute expository sermons. This would have been impossible for me—restless, fidgety little creature that I was—had it not been for the hymnbook in the pew. Only the words of the hymns were given; but even before I could read, those words were like magic to me, with their fascinating variety of shapes, rhymes, and rhythms. From the time I started school until I was old enough to sit through the full service, when the sermon began I would lose myself in the hymnbook, devouring page after page of poetry whose meaning I could only dimly comprehend, but whose beauty called out my soul after it and whose tunes I knew and loved.

By the time I was seven or eight, I had memorized enough Scripture to have earned a hymnbook of my own from the Sunday School. At home my dearest delight was to climb to the topmost boughs of the old cherry tree in our back yard, hymnbook in hand, there to sing to my heart's content, exulting in the treasure trove to which I now had unlimited access. I learned scores of hymns by heart just because I loved them. I used to put myself to sleep at night by repeating hymns to myself—something I often do to this day!

By the time I was twelve I was learning to play the piano, the hymnbook being my chief teacher. I began to read the Scriptures seriously each morning, and sought to pray personally rather than just to say my childhood prayers. Adding part or all of one or two hymns to my devotions helped me immeasurably here; I soon found that the petitions and praises of the hymnists expressed my own aspirations better than I could articulate them for myself. Though only a teenager, I began to experience a depth and richness of worship experience I could not otherwise have known, for I was nurtured in my spiritual growth by the distilled worship of the Church Universal. The fidelity of the great hymns to Scripture gradually impressed itself upon me, and I came to look upon this as the measure of assessing new hymns. To this day I have never found a better one.

I early learned that singing hymns and meditating on their words made mundane routines—such as dishwashing!—pleasant and meaningful. Hymns provided companionship on my long walks to school and elsewhere. Since illness had always been a part of my life—I've had arthritis from my third year and severe migraine from infancy—I learned while still a child that in my long hours of solitude and weakness, repeating hymns and Scriptures to myself could help me withstand the ravages of pain. I have used hymns ever since to help me counteract life's stresses, for there is hardly a life situation but has its analog in the writings of one or another of the pilgrim saints of God. A thorough knowledge of the Word of God and of hymnody has meant that "comfortable words" to suit almost any need rise readily to my consciousness to bless me with their peace. I shall never cease to thank God for the ministry of his Spirit to me through the words not only of his inspired Scriptures but also of his singing Church.

Another blessing has enriched my life immeasurably through my study of hymns—a sense of the community of saints. My hymnbook

gave the names and dates of the hymn writers. I soon began to have my favorites and to trace their hymns through the book. This led naturally to search for their other writings. Thus I came to know and love such people as John Bunyan, John and Charles Wesley, Martin Luther, William Cowper, John Newton, James Montgomery, Paul Gerhardt, Philipp Nicolai, Gerhard Tersteegen, Isaac Watts, Frances Ridley Havergal, and Fanny Jane Crosby. I can still remember how thunderstruck I was to discover that the writer of the little ditties I had learned in primary classes at school—"How Doth the Little Busy Bee" and "Let Dogs Delight to Bark and Bite"—and the writer of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" were one and the same person: Isaac Watts!

As my knowledge of hymns and their writers grew into an awareness of their place in time, discovering that the writers I loved were scattered throughout the centuries from the dawn of Christianity right up to the present had a profound effect on me. I began to see the Church in heaven and the Church on earth as one continuous, living stream of the grace of God in which I too had a place. The heaven of which the hymnists sang so compellingly seemed real to me, shedding its light through the words of the writers I loved into my present life and place on earth.

From here it was but a step to discovering and devouring books on hymnology, finding them wherever I could. When I was about seventeen, my search for the origin of the "Passion Chorale" in my hymn book led to my discovery of the great Christian musical classics—the devotional treasures of Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn and other Christian composers, most of which I now know by heart. This led naturally to the discovery and study of the world's great orchestral, instrumental and vocal music of every kind—an ever-expanding delight to this day. Words are powerless to express the wealth that music has poured into my life—it is my constant companion. Except for Christian truth, Christian friendship, and God's revelation of himself in nature, nothing has nourished and sustained my spirit as his gift of music.

WHAT IS A HYMN?

A hymn is an expression of worship—our glad and grateful acknowledgement of the "worth-ship" of Almighty God, our confession of our own creatureliness before our Creator, our bowing before his transcendence. Hymns are a celebration of who and what God is and of what he has done—songs of praise, thanksgiving and joy in God. Christians sing hymns because God is worthy to be praised.

1. Good hymns are God-centered, not man-centered—looking upwards.

2. Good hymns are doctrinal in content and theologically sound, rooted solidly in the Word of God.

3. Good hymns have words of beauty, dignity, reverence, and simplicity.

4. Good hymns display precision and fitness of poetic technique and expression.

5. Good hymns turn the heart heavenward. They rejoice in the unity of believers and the communion of saints.

Writing a hymn is more than using certain techniques correctly. It is a matter of looking on the face of God, of worshiping in his presence, of embracing his will, of accepting his cross and living daily under its obedience; then, having learned the disciplines of good writing, of singing his grace. True hymnwriters have not sought primarily to write hymns, but to know God: knowing him, they could not help but sing.

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HYMNS BY MARGARET CLARKSON

WE SEE NOT YET OUR LORD'S TRIUMPHAL GLORY

*We see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus . . .
crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:8, 9).*

We see not yet our Lord's triumphal glory,
all foes subdued beneath his conquering feet;
not yet the end of time's tempestuous story,
when he shall reign, his finished work complete.
But we see Jesus, all his travail ended,
at God's right hand enthroned in sovereign power;
we look to him, in radiance untranscended,
and wait the promised coming of his crowning hour.

We see not yet the cross on high uplifted,
not yet all nations bow to his command,
for sin and woe his heritage have sifted,
and earth sees not the sceptre in his hand.
But we see Jesus, clothed with light supernal,
who lives and reigns exalted on his throne;
we look to him, our Savior, King eternal;
the keys of death and hell are his and his alone.

We see not yet the holy consummation,
when he shall come, commanding every eye;
but we endure, amid life's sharp negation,
as seeing one invisible on high.
For we see Jesus, now for us appearing
in heaven's courts, nor there for us in vain;
we look to him, and know his time is nearing
when all the world shall see him come, and know his reign.

We see not yet—but ours is hope well founded;
the eye of faith sees now God's perfect plan—
the shining throne, and there by light surrounded,
the Son of God, the risen Son of Man.

Yes, we see Jesus, ours today, forever;
for us he lives, as once for us he died;
what force in earth or hell from Christ shall sever?
He'll bring us home rejoicing to his Father's side!

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(Tune: LONDONDERRY AIR—"O Danny Boy")

* * * * *

LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED

Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled (Matthew 24:6 KJV). Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me (John 14:1).

Let not your hearts be troubled,
you who believe in him;
let not your faith be shaken,
nor your hope burn dim.
Look to your risen Savior,
God's ever-living Word!
Soon from the throne of Heaven
comes our conquering Lord!
Man cannot thwart his purpose,
war cannot change his will;
far through the clouds of conflict
shines God's rainbow still.
Faithful is he who promised
earth shall not always groan:
after the dark of midnight
Dawn shall claim his own.

Sin shall not always triumph,
right shall at length prevail:
God holds the reins of empire—
his truth cannot fail.
Nation at war with nation
strives to subdue in vain:
Jesus alone is Victor—
he alone shall reign.

Daily his hour is nearing,
hour of redemption's morn;
ours is the holy promise
God himself has sworn.
Christ in his advent glory
waits on horizon's rim:
let not your hearts be troubled—
you believe in him!

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Tune: DILIGENCE ("Work, For the Night is Coming")

NOW KNOW WE NOT THE MEANING OF LIFE'S SORROW

(Then Shall We Know)

*Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face:
now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am
known (1 Corinthians 13:12).*

Now know we not the meaning of life's sorrow,
now know we not the pattern God has planned,
but comes the dawn of his all-glorious morrow—
then shall we know; then shall we understand.

Now know we but in part our life's long story,
now see we through a darkened glass and dim:
then shall we see our God in all his glory,
then shall we know as we are known of him.

Now know we but the sorrow and the sadness,
now know we but the loneliness and loss:
then shall we know the glory and the gladness—
the crown shall rise in triumph o'er the cross.

Then shall we know the love that passes measure,
then shall we read the mysteries of grace;
then shall we know eternal truth and treasure;
then shall we see our Savior, face to face!

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Tune: FINLANDIA ("Be Still, My Soul")

* * * * *

O FATHER, YOU ARE SOVEREIGN

*They lifted their voices together to God, and said, "Sovereign
Lord!" (Acts 4:24, RSV).*

O Father, you are sovereign in all the worlds you made;
your mighty Word was spoken and light and life obeyed.
Your voice commands the seasons and bounds the ocean shore,
sets stars within their courses and stills the tempest's roar.

O Father, you are sovereign in all affairs of man;
no powers of death or darkness can thwart your perfect plan.
All chance and change transcending, supreme in time and space,
you hold your trusting children secure in your embrace.

O Father, you are sovereign, the Lord of human pain,
transmuting earthly sorrows to gold of heavenly gain.
All evil overruling, as none but Conqueror could,
your love pursues its purpose—our souls' eternal good.

O Father, you are sovereign! We see you dimly now,
but soon before your triumph earth's every knee shall bow.
With this glad hope before us our faith springs up anew:
our Sovereign Lord and Savior, we trust and worship you!

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Tune: LANCASHIRE ("Lead On, O King Eternal")

Additional Notes About Margaret Clarkson

Miss Clarkson's hymns become even more meaningful when we realize that she often writes while experiencing intense pain. Her entire life (she was born in 1915) has been marked by periods—sometimes lasting for days—of excruciating headaches coupled with convulsive vomiting.

When she was three, she was bedfast for almost a year with juvenile arthritis. It subsided during adolescence, so for some time she suffered “only” from the headaches and a congenital back problem. The latter produced increasing pain and spasm coupled with difficulty in walking, till surgery during her 50's brought some relief. Then, three years later, arthritis struck again. It attacked almost all her joints, including her spine, and forced her into early retirement from school-teaching.

As if physical pain were not enough, terrific emotional blows were dealt her also. She was born into an unloving, unhappy home which finally broke up when she was twelve. Her most vivid memories of childhood are of “tension, fear, insecurity, upset, and isolation, along with the inevitable guilt feelings which sensitive children assume when caught up in undercurrents beyond their understanding.”

Her hymns of faith and praise to God were written amid such circumstances! In addition to her school-teaching and hymn-writing, she has authored at least 17 books. Only in the fourteenth, *Destined for Glory*, did she reluctantly reveal in print the pains and agonies mentioned above. Till then, even close friends of hers knew little if anything about them. But her heavenly Father knew, and gave her songs in the night.

God and Jonah — God and Me

How God Feels About Us

Florence Olmstead Collins

Conclusion

Each page of the Bible reveals God. Not only what he does, but his character— his power, his knowledge and his feelings. Forming the habit of studying the Bible with the purpose of knowing HIM enhances our lives (John 17:3). This month we continue the study of what the few pages of the book of Jonah tell of how the Lord feels about us.

God doesn't want anyone to be wicked, and gives us every opportunity not to be wicked. Wickedness is a terrible condition. The word translated “wickedness” comes from a root word which means “spoiled” or “good for nothing.” Sin may be committed in different

ways but, if continued, all ways lead to utter uselessness. Ninevites had reached this condition and were even violent, yet God wanted to save them (3:8).

God hears the prayers of pagans (1:14). The sailors became worshippers of the true God *after* he answered their prayer (1:14-16). If God doesn't hear the prayers of disbelievers, how can they become believers? If he doesn't hear the prayers of weak Christians, how can he forgive and strengthen them?

God prepares for our needs in advance when we are working for him (1:17). This verse states that God *had* prepared the fish to save Jonah. This implies that the fish was ready before it was needed—maybe before Jonah was thrown into the sea.

God often gives another chance to those who have disobeyed him (3:1, 2). The Lord had made every effort to bring about a change in Jonah's attitude. He had caused a storm at sea, and Jonah responded by offering himself as sacrifice for the ship and sailors. When they threw Jonah into the sea, the Lord prepared a great fish to save him. Jonah recognized God's hand in these events and declared that salvation comes from the Lord. Some change had taken place in Jonah's heart, and God continued to use him to take the message to Nineveh.

God is interested in the result achieved through his workers (3:10). He keeps an eye on those who deliver his message and on the people who hear it. God had compassion on those who believed him and repented. When he saw by their actions that they had changed their minds, he changed his. The word "repented" here includes the thought that God became comforted or eased because of their repentance. This tells us that he had been dis comforted and ill at ease because of their wickedness. God suffers when we disobey him.

God knows how to deal with pouting or petulant people whom he is teaching (4:4, 9). He does the kind thing, which is usually gentle or sometimes may seem severe. He does not defame or taunt those who ask for wisdom (James 1:5). He knows that our feelings are important, so he doesn't hurt a sensitive learner. When a child is earnestly learning something new—to walk, to write, to get along with others—a good parent doesn't scold him for mistakes. The good parent understands and encourages. God is the wisest and most loving parent. He only asked questions of Jonah hoping to cause his immature prophet to think about his attitude toward the people of Nineveh.

God is compassionate (4:10, 11). Jonah learned from experience that he felt concern for the short-lived vine which he had had no part in growing. Therefore, he should have understood that God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, had pity on higher forms of life, human life and animals. The people of Nineveh had repented, from the least to the greatest. The animals had been made to fast and to wear sackcloth (3:5-8). Now God, because he deals fairly and with love, was mindful to the cattle and the children. He even took a separate census of the children. This mention of the youngest citizens shows us that God was interested in the future of Nineveh.

Not only did God create those children and cattle—they belonged to him (Psalms 50:10, 11). The God who deals justly with cattle continuously watches every small sparrow (Matt. 10:29, 30). He cares so much for us that he keeps a running inventory on the ever-changing number of hairs on each of our heads. If we accept this intimacy that God offers, our lives will have meaning and fullness and we will enjoy living in his presence.

From the time the Lord made the human race, his loving feeling for each individual has been the basis of his dealings with us. When our actions are prompted by our emotion we often make mistakes. Our holy God never makes mistakes because his feelings are completely compatible with the truth. We may act from selfish anger; he acts from justified anger. We may act out of self-pity; God has not self-pity. We may act out of lust; he acts out of his sacrificial love.

God loves each of us personally. That means that when I am like Jonah, when I am like someone else, and when I am my own individual sinful self he cares for me. He is with me, working to make me like his Son. Each of us can have a close relationship with God if we accept his friendship and sincerely dedicate ourselves to him again and again.

[The next four articles tell about God's remarkable relationship with Jonah.]

VOICES from the FIELDS

Robert Garrett

P.O. Box 30, Ruwa, Zimbabwe

April, 1991

A men's leadership camp meeting was held at Ruwa over the Easter holidays. Lessons from God's word on various leadership topics were given morning, afternoon and evening on both Friday and Saturday. The lessons were good and needful and if taken to heart should produce some good much-needed fruit. Your prayers to this end are needful. There were 73 men and one woman; plus six women cooks (with Joy making the seventh). The majority were from the Harare area. Ten came from the land of Venda.

Venda is a tribe down in the Republic of South Africa. It is very near the southern border of Zimbabwe. Two of our families from the Arcadia church here in Harare emigrated to South Africa and then to Venda a few years ago, started a new congregation there and came into touch with a number of churches of Christ in that area. They have been fellowshiping and working with them. The two families are the Landsberg brothers, Noel and Yvonne Landsberg and four children; Clive and Alice Landsberg with three children. In visiting the Landsbergs we were brought into touch with some of the Venda brethren. They enjoyed their visit with us and look forward to more exchanges of good visits and fellowship. Although the Venda language is distantly related to our Shona, it is too widely different for common understanding—so English becomes the medium of communication.

Bulawayo is the largest city in Southwest Zimbabwe (almost 300 miles from Ruwa). That is where the Church of Christ was first established in Rhodesia by the late Bro. John Sherriff. Work later done by the Garretts, Browns and Lawyers was in the Northwest area nearer to and in the capital city of (Salisbury) Harare. The Bulawayo work has been dominated by the Christian churches and mainline churches of Christ. The latter established several congregations among the whites who built several church buildings in the white residential areas. With the advent of majority rule, most of these missionaries left and so did the members of their congregations. Some of those buildings are now housing mostly black congregations. Bro. Michael Charles, formerly of Arcadia, moved to Bulawayo a few years ago and is fellowshiping and working with three of these congregations. They invited me to teach them on subjects prophetic concerning the kingdom of God and our precious hope in the Lord's coming. We had some good studies with them March 13 through 17. Michael is doing a good job of helping these struggling congregations who need a lot of teaching in many subjects, not only prophetic.

[In a personal note to the family Bro. Robert mentioned the need for travel funds. Lord willing, he and Joy would like to return to the U.S. this Dec. for a furlough. It is their desire to visit among the U.S. churches encouraging mission work and also to visit children and grandchildren (14 at last count).]

Earl, Sr., & Ragena Mullins

April, 1991

P.O. Box 212, Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, Philippines

We have made several trips since we last corresponded, and the Lord has kept us and blessed us abundantly.

Here is something that will boggle the mind of every born again Christian. The island of Mindanao has a cult, whose master [i.e., living human leader] claims to be God the Holy Spirit. It also has a cult whose master claims to be the Christ. Still another cult has a master who claims to be God the Father. Can you believe that? Without a doubt, Satan is alive and active on the island of Mindanao. Thankfully, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is alive and well, also.

We traveled over some of the worst roads we've ever encountered the week of February 18 to get to Davao, Gen. Santos, and Cotabato. We climbed and climbed up into the mountains on winding, crooked roads. For a while we rode in the back of the van to keep from being seen by Muslim rebels manning certain check points along the highway and stopping us for inspection. We also had a few minutes of uncertainty in a hotel when a group began talking loudly outside our room about thirty minutes past midnight. We could not understand the language being used except for a couple of words, "Saddam" and "Americano." Evidently it was an argument over a room.

The Words of Life meetings with the brethren were very profitable. We've come into contact with many wonderful Christians in our recent travels. They form a good nucleus for the advancement of the Gospel. Of course, as in the apostolic days, there are many

problems and many babes. One of the great needs we have sensed in our two months here is for leadership training.

We covet your prayers. The change in pace and environment is sometimes a real challenge. So pray that the Lord will be given the freedom to use us in His own way from day to day.

Crystal Hardin

Honduras, C. A.

May, 1991

My students have a chapel program coming up. We're going to have the theme of choosing to serve the Lord while you're young. Most of the children are so responsive. They don't seem to rebel against the Christian teaching until the high school years. High school teachers say the Gulf War sparked interest in prophecy and spiritual matters. We hope there will be some soul searching.

Everybody in our family got a flu that went around, but it really took up residence in Ted. It turned to bronchitis and he couldn't shake it for over a month. We are really eager to come home for this summer! We will probably be in Louisville the end of June and most of July. Ted gets only one month, but the rest of us will be home for two. We look forward to a Crowder family reunion in Georgia during August, since Karen and James [Ashley] and their children will be on furlough from the Solomon Islands for a while, too.

The school will lose quite a few teachers this coming school year, since their 3-year terms are completed. Please pray for new teachers! Ted has been doing his best to find prospective ones.

Moto Nomura

Japan

April 29, 1991

Last fall my wife's father, 95 years old, died, leaving his 84-years-old wife behind in Tokyo. She is feeble and stricken with rheumatism. So Yoriko stays with her from Sunday afternoon to Thursday. Yoriko comes back to our home in the mountains with me on the train on Thursday afternoon or even Friday afternoon when I come back home from American Christian College. Our activities both in Tokyo and in the mountains thus have been greatly curtailed, but people keep coming to us for various kinds of needs.

American Christian College has started its third school year with about a dozen students. We have several freshmen this school year. I teach Restoration History, Introduction to Christianity, and the book of Acts this semester beginning April 22nd. We believe we are reaching good young people with the Gospel message each day in ACC.

IF BUILDINGS COULD TALK

Victor N. Broaddus

You can find me at 1783 Quiricada Street near downtown Manila, Philippines. I don't remember when I first came into existence,

but it was a long time ago. I've seen good times and bad. In fact, during World War II a battle was fought less than two blocks away. On the evening of February 3, 1945, U.S. armed forces fought their way into a Japanese concentration camp to rescue about 3700 American prisoners of war. Because I was so near the camp I was somehow spared the fate of most other buildings in what came to be known as "the rape of Manila," when most of the downtown area was leveled by fighting between U.S. and Japanese troops.

Some time after the war, my owners allowed my front portion to become a karate gymnasium. The back portion became small apartments. Some neighbors say I was also used as a place of gambling.

Time began to take its toll. Rather than trying to fix me up, my owners decided to put me up for sale. My front section remained vacant for some time, so my owners lowered the price to where it was most reasonable, especially considering the location in the big city of Manila (current population is about six million). One day, some American missionaries came by to look me over. Soon they returned with a building contractor who then made an estimate of what it would take to rejuvenate and remodel me to suit their purposes: \$45,000 for the building and property, plus \$15,000 for renovation! But, where was the money? Even for such a reasonable price, it seemed almost insurmountable. It would take a miracle. Many joined in prayer, and *the Lord provided!* A deal was finally made, and in 1967 I found myself with new owners.

Soon, my halls began to echo with the sounds of workmen. Carpenters ripped out old partitions and put in new walls. Trucks began arriving with concrete blocks, cement, sand, and lumber. Electricians put in all new wiring, and many buckets of paint began to make me look respectable again. I was good for another 20 years!

Finally, moving day came. The Chinese congregation, Filipino (English language) congregation, and Central Bible Institute all settled into their new home. (See last month's article, "Forty Years of Philippine Ministry.") Instead of the sounds of a gymnasium, there were the sounds of singing, preaching and Bible classes. Unlike many "church buildings" which are vacant during most of the week, my rooms and halls were (and are) kept busy every day and almost every night until nearly 10 p.m. The American missionaries used to call me "Grand Central Station."

As soon as everyone was settled in, a dedication Sunday was announced. Among the many guests present was the wife of Taiwan's Ambassador to the Philippines. A special policeman was employed to direct traffic. I began to wonder if my old timbers would be able to hold up the load of people in the second floor auditorium. Not only am I thankful that they did hold up, but that they have held up on many other occasions for just as many people, if not more.

That was about 24 years ago. Over the years much has happened. I lost count of how many people have been baptized in my baptistry. Many hundreds or even thousands of students have attended the Bible Institute. During that period I have withstood two major earthquakes (and numerous small ones), and several floods each year. The city raised the front street level several feet, so that water now flows into the first floor whenever there is a big rain—and we have plenty of big rains! Some of the Filipino leaders of the church have written that it may be only a matter of time before the City Engineer's office issues a notice to condemn me. You can imagine my concern! What can we do now?

The church leaders got together with an architect to see what it would take to put up a new building adequate for the many ministries and which would last a long time. They came up with the following plan for a three-story building:

First floor would be for offices of Central Bible Institute, space for "Project Compassion" (see note below), and a kindergarten.

Second floor would be for the auditorium.

Third floor would house classrooms for the Bible Institute, library and Sunday School.

A *roof deck* would be able to accomodate various types of open air activities. There are no yards in this part of the city. Buildings are built right up to the sidewalk.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Over a million people in Metro Manila are "squatters" who are extremely poor. They usually live in shacks made of scrap wood, flattened tin cans, or whatever they can salvage from trash. Unemployment is extremely high. Many children are undernourished and sickly. Every day not a few die. The church has feeding programs for malnourished children in certain squatter villages. However, many of the poor living near the church had not been reached until recently. "Compassion Philippines" (an international charity organization) has offered to provide funds for a feeding program for those near the church if we provide the personnel and space to administer the program. The church will also hold Bible teaching classes for both the children and their parent(s). The two Bible Institute classrooms now borrowed for that purpose are far from adequate.

If buildings could really talk, each would have his own story to tell. Well, my story is basically this: after several decades serving my human masters, I'm happy that for the past quarter century I have been able to serve my heavenly master in providing a place for preaching, teaching the Word of God, and for helping those in need—both body and soul. Will this ministry be able to continue and even grow? *Pray* about it. *Pray* for my future.

A Letter from the Future

January 22, 2023
(50th anniversary of Roe v. Wade)

Dear Mom:

Can you believe it's 2023 already? I'm still writing 22 on nearly everything. Seems like yesterday I was sitting in first grade celebrating the century change!

I know we haven't really chatted since Christmas. Sorry. Anyway, I have some difficult news and I really didn't want to call and talk face-to-face.

Ted's had a promotion, and I should be up for a hefty raise this year if I keep putting in those crazy hours. You know how I work at it. Yes, we're still struggling with the bills.

Timmy's been "OK" at kindergarten, although he complains about going. But then he wasn't happy about day care either, so what can I do?

He's been a real problem, Mom. He's a good kid, but quite honestly he's an unfair burden at this time in our lives. Ted and I have talked this through and through and finally made a choice. Plenty of other families have made it and are much better off.

Our pastor is supportive and says hard decisions sometimes are necessary. The family is a "system," and the demands of one member shouldn't be allowed to ruin the whole. He told us to be prayerful, consider ALL the factors and do what is right to make the family work. He says that even though he probably wouldn't do it himself, the decision really is ours. He was kind enough to refer us to a children's clinic near here, so at least that part's easy.

I'm not an uncaring mother. I do feel sorry for the little guy. I think he overheard Ted and me talking about "it" the other night. I turned around and saw him standing at the bottom step in his pj's and the little bear you gave him under his arm and his eyes sort of welling up.

Mom, the way he looked at me just about broke my heart. But I honestly believe this is better for Timmy, too. It's not fair to force him to live in a family that can't give him the time and attention he deserves. And PLEASE don't give me the kind of grief Grandma gave you over your abortions. It is the same thing, you know.

We've told him he's just going in for a vaccination. Anyway, they say the termination procedure is painless.

I guess it's just as well you haven't seen that much of him. Love to Dad.

NEWS AND NOTES

COMING ISSUES

We are glad that a good number of readers wrote us about "What My Parents Did RIGHT." We have enough contributions for 2 months! These will appear in Aug. & Sept., since the June & July issues will both have prophetic themes, D.V.

Churches—Take Advantage of This

The School of Biblical Studies will consider providing a teacher for any congregation within reasonable driving range of Louisville. In the past, SBS has provided teachers for extension classes at Winchester, Ky., Hamburg and Lilly Dale, Ind., and several churches in Louisville. Subjects have included personal evangelism, leadership training, teacher training, how to counsel, Gen.—Deut., etc. Students may enroll for credit or merely as auditors. If only a few people in one church want a class, consider combining with folks at some nearby church—as Lilly Dale and Tell City did.

For more information, write SBS, 2500 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212. Or call Dennis Kaufman at 502:458-2943.

Sister Doris Terhune Now with the Lord

On April 7, Sis. Doris Terhune's funeral was held in Dugger, Ind. Eugene Pound, who conducted the funeral assisted by Vernon Lawyer, made these observations in his tribute:

Sis. Doris and Bro. Baty Terhune were married for over 65 years. He has been an elder at the Dugger Church for many years. "She honored and respected him; he was the head of his house. But back of him in the home and the church was Doris. In a quiet, gentle way she was a strong and guiding factor...."

"She was a kind and loving mother and grandmother. Most important, Doris was a sincere, devoted Christian. She loved the Lord and put Him first. There is nothing more beautiful than a devoted Christian woman."

Summerville Church of Christ, Ind.

Our adult class is studying the minor prophets. We are grateful to God for

a group of brethren who are active in various ways: caring for the church building and grounds, leading singing, seeing that we have flowers for the church all the time. It means so much to have brethren able to read, lead in prayer and take care of the Lord's table regularly. Some of the brethren ably carry on the work of the Lord when the minister is away. Let God be praised for the love and unity among the Christians at Summerville. Hollace Sherwood plans to be at Summerville on May 19th and tell about the corn project being carried on by the Bryantsville Church of Christ. We look forward to having Carl Kitzmiller with us in a meeting from June 2 through June 5. Carl and Phyllis are loved among the people here and we are praying for a great time of fellowship in the Lord. —Eugene Pound

Johnson City, Tenn.

April 7, the brethren at Mt. View Church are having an Anniversary Day and encouraging attendance. Let's remember them in their efforts to serve the Lord. We hope they have a record attendance. [Paul Clark is the preacher there.] —Locust Street Laborer

Gallatin Church of Christ, Tenn.

A Prophecy Seminar will be conducted by Brother Hovan in Bowling Green, Ky., April 26, 27, 28. Meetings will be at the Bowling Green Christian Church.

Ralph Avenue Church, Louisville, Ky.

Young People Take Note: We are very thankful for each of you who are coming out on Wednesday night. We are planning something special and different each week. This coming Wed. we will have a chorus practice. We will sing from 7-7:30 and then have a Bible study. On April 17th we will have craft night for you! April 24th we will play Bible games and May 1 we will have a VCR film. Linda Spencer, Fay McEwan and Beecher Smith are our teachers on Wednesday night and we appreciate the work they are doing. —Bill Smallwood

GOOD BOOKS MAKE GOOD GIFTS

Here are some books we highly recommend you give to your Christian friends. Your preacher, elders, and Sunday School teachers would appreciate them—and learn a lot.

A NEW SPIRIT, by Carl Ketcherside; 41 pages, paperback, \$3.50

Excerpts from this stimulating author's writing over the years, compiled by Lloyd Boyll. The book explores 16 subjects such as interpretation, sectarianism, creeds, differences, Christians among the sects, conformity, brotherhood, etc.

DISCOVERING OUR ROOTS: THE ANCESTRY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST, by Leonard Allen & Richard Hughes; 160 pages, paperback, \$12.25.

This fascinating book explores the origins of the Stone-Campbell movement. It asks, "Where did we come from? How did we get this way? Why do we read the Bible as we do? What has been the heart of our movement?" And it asks further, "What can we learn from those who have viewed restoration of N-T Christianity in ways quite different from our own?"

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