

'Tis by the Faith of Joys to Come*Isaac Watts (1674–1748)*

'Tis by the faith of joys to come
 We walk thro' deserts dark as night;
 Till we arrive at heav'n, our home,
 Truth is our guide, and faith our light.

The want of sight she well supplies;
 She makes the pearly gates appear;
 Far into distant worlds she pries,
 And brings eternal glories near.

Tho' lions roar, and tempests blow,
 And rocks and dangers fill the way,
 With joy we tread the desert thro',
 While faith inspires a heav'nly ray.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***A Friend and Mentor, Part Two: The Influence of a Godly Man***Kevin T. Bauder*

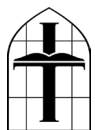
I met Charles Hauser when I enrolled at Denver Baptist Theological Seminary in the fall of 1979. That semester I took two of his courses: one in theology and one on the Christian life. I can remember two statements that he made during that first semester. One was, "There is no such thing as a dispensational hermeneutic. There is only a literal hermeneutic, and if you interpret the Bible literally, you will be a dispensationalist." The other was, "Charles Finney was a figure from whose influence fundamentalism has yet to recover."

Unlike some theologians, Hauser wanted his theology to be driven mainly by the exegesis of the Bible. He also considered a right relationship with God to be critical theological preparation. He was willing to acknowledge some role for historical considerations, but he allowed virtually no place for philosophy, which he saw as a waste of time. His depreciation of philosophy had the potential to place us at loggerheads. What redeemed our relationship was his character.

Charles Hauser had suffered personal tragedy with the recent death of his wife. He and the rest of the faculty were experiencing financial hardship as their salaries were months in arrears. He had endured betrayal from the administration of his previous school, and this betrayal continued in the form of published personal attacks. These attacks were broadcast far and wide, but were sent particularly to our seminary's library, where any student could read them.

We students had a close-up view of Hauser's reactions. He never displayed a hint of impatience or anxiety. As nearly as we could tell, he was convinced that the Lord was completely in control of all his circumstances, and he was willing to leave their disposition to God. Day after day he stood before us with grace and equanimity. It was impossible to dismiss a man with that kind of character.

Charles Hauser loved the Bible. He relished teaching courses on biblical books. His expository courses on Matthew and Hebrews became legendary, and he continued to teach these courses even after his retirement. He



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thought that studying the Bible, developing a systematic theology, and living the Christian life all belonged together. He emphasized repeatedly that theology connects directly to life. He would warn that, “Many people will be justified in placing their shattered lives at the feet of some preacher who taught them a bad theology.”

For all that, Charles Hauser was no ivory-tower intellectual. He loved sports, for example, especially football. He loved people, especially his students. And within a few years, he loved Ann.

About football: the seminary I attended was attached to a Bible college that sponsored an annual college versus seminary flag football game. Hauser held credentials as a football official, and he always refereed this game. Later in Minneapolis, he would buy season tickets to watch the University of Minnesota’s Golden Gophers on the gridiron. He regularly shared these tickets with his students.

For Charles Hauser did care about his students. He never forgot that he was preparing them to be pastors, not professors (though many became professors). When student-related issues were discussed in faculty meetings, Hauser almost always took a student’s position. He never forgot how difficult it had been for him to function in seminary with a speech impediment. He never forgot the humiliation of being told that the Lord could not use him in ministry. He was particularly compassionate toward students who had to struggle to learn. If a student had to appeal to the dean for help, he found that Hauser was on his side.

During his decades at Central Seminary, Hauser also served on the pastoral staff of Fourth Baptist Church. When Ernest Pickering resigned the pastorate at Fourth Baptist, Hauser became the interim pulpit supply. He taught a large adult Sunday school class, and he and Ann were involved with the Golden Agers group in the church.

Ann’s first husband had died under the same kind of tragic circumstances as Charles Hauser’s first wife. She had refused to think about marriage again until her sons were grown. When Charles and Ann eventually married, they seemed a bit of an odd couple. She was several years older than he and relatively tall, while he was quite short. Despite appearances, they were ideally suited for each other and became one of the most devoted couples I’ve ever seen. After his retirement, Hauser moved her to Louisville to be near one of her sons. Of course, this moved him out of his entire circle of acquaintances.

Ann died almost exactly ten years before Charles did. That last decade was the most difficult of his life. He felt lonely. He contracted Parkinson’s Disease and lost the ability to live independently. He felt as if the Lord has set him on a shelf. He was eager for heaven, whether through death or through the Rapture.

Only around fifteen people gathered last Monday for his funeral in Louisville. There were reasons. He had moved far from the circle of his acquaintances. He had outlived his generation. COVID had altered people’s traveling habits. Still, the small gathering was wholly out of proportion to Hauser’s influence in life.

He helped to prepare hundreds, perhaps thousands, of pastors in four institutions and on two continents. He helped to equip dozens of professors. He provided sound educational leadership at a time when many fundamentalist schools lacked that influence. He proved himself an able churchman, holding pastoral roles in multiple congregations. His was a life well spent.

Charles Hauser loved to read about those heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. In the process, he became like them: a man of faith, compassion, and perseverance. Measured either by theological acumen or by the stature of the fullness of Christ, Charles Hauser was a giant.



This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
