

Th' Abyss of Many a Former Sin*Joseph of the Stadium (762–832); tr. John Mason Neale (1818–1866)*

Th' abyss of many a former sin
 Encloses me and bears me in:
 Like billows my transgressions roll:
 Be Thou the Pilot of my soul;
 And to salvation's harbor bring,
 Thou Savior and Thou glorious King!

My Father's heritage abused,
 Wasted by lust, by sin misused;
 To shame and want and mis'ry brought,
 The slave to many a godless thought,
 I cry to Thee, who lovest men,
 O pity and receive again!

In hunger now and dispossessed
 Of that my portion bright and blessed,
 The exile and the alien see,
 Who yet would fain return to Thee.
 Accept me Lord, I seek Thy grace,
 And let me see a Father's face.

With that saved thief my prayer I make,
 Remember for Thy mercy's sake!
 With that poor publican I cry,
 Be Merciful, O God most high!
 With that lost Prodigal I fain
 Back to my home would turn again!

Mourn, mourn, my soul, with earnest care,
 And raise to Christ the contrite prayer:—
 O Thou, who freely wast made poor,
 My sorrows and my sins to cure,
 Me, poor of all good works, embrace,
 Enriching with Thy boundless grace!

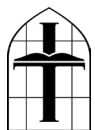
ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Full Circle***Kevin T. Bauder*

In 1968, when I was thirteen years old, my father moved our family from eastern Michigan to Ankeny, Iowa. He was a manager with United Airlines, but he took a demotion so that he could prepare to become a pastor by studying at Faith Baptist Bible College. We moved into a house literally across the street from the campus. At that time, the college consisted of three buildings in a corn field, erected (as I recall) by the same Christian developer who built our entire neighborhood. We lived across the street from one professor, down the street from another, and around the corner from the president, the retired former president, and a couple more professors. A block in the other direction was a board member who was both a general in the Air Guard and an Iowa senator. I delivered their newspapers. Our new home was just up the street from the offices of the Iowa Association of Regular Baptist Churches, and I attended church with its associational representative.

At the time, none of it meant anything to me. Dad graduated after five years, in May of 1973, the same Spring that he was ordained and that I graduated from high school. That fall—fifty years ago now—I enrolled at FBBC. My reasons were less than virtuous. I had no savings to go away to university. My high school grades were too low for me to qualify for a scholarship (I graduated in the lower half of my class). Most options in higher education were closed to me. Nevertheless, my mother ran the bookstore on the campus at Faith. That meant that I could attend the college tuition-free.

When I matriculated at age seventeen, my heart was far from the Lord. I was not seeking to do His will. I was indifferent to the things of God and, really, to most of life. My indifference was reflected in both poor academic performance (I flunked Greek the first time I took it) and in a sardonic, contemptuous attitude. On top of that I was certainly less mature than the average seventeen-year-old. Taken together, these factors resulted in a year and a half of abysmal behavior.

The whole time, however, God was there, and He was not silent. He was working in my heart, showing me the end of the path that I was on. He was convincing me of my own self-centeredness. He was working from outside, administering chastening. He was determined that I should persevere even



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when I did not care. He broke both my heart and my will, and He showed me the emptiness of the things that I thought I loved. He convinced me that the more I chose to remain the captain of my own soul, the more certainly a shipwreck loomed. I began to fear that calamity, and He brought me to the point at which I consciously and deliberately submitted myself to Him, fully prepared to do whatever He wanted me to do.

None of these struggles took place in public, but this new submission to Jesus Christ made all the difference in my world. Along with the stormy hand of His discipline, I began to experience the warm blessings of His kindness. The relationships that grew up during these days have remained the most important of my life. Not the least of them is the relationship that God granted me with the woman who eventually consented to marry me. It was during these days that I first felt a sense of vocation for ministry. They were the days when I discovered the joy of studying God's Word. They were gracious days, and they remain gracious days. It is truly God who works in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure, and His good pleasure is always good.

This week I find myself back on the campus of Faith Baptist Bible College. The student population is smaller. The buildings have multiplied on campus. The mission, however, is the same: "With the Word to the World." I am here to deliver the Arthur Walton Lectures, named in honor of the professor who gave me my well-merited "F" in Greek. The atmosphere is a bit more relaxed than it used to be. The dress is a bit more casual. The people seem more outgoing, probably a result of the influence of the current president, but possibly because against all odds I have become a grey eminence.

It's good to be here this week, to visit with professors and administrators, but especially to chat with students. It's a joy to discover on this campus a combination of grace and grit, of biblical conviction and Christian compassion. I'm grateful for another generation of leadership, both in the offices and in the classroom, who are willingly investing themselves in their students, just as that generation fifty years ago invested themselves in me.

Most of the old, familiar faces can only be seen in photographs here and there around the campus. The people themselves are either with the Lord or in some advanced stage of retirement. But the investment they made, and the work they did, still pays spiritual dividends to the hundreds of students who are being disciplined and trained for Christian service in this place.

I've been back to this campus before, but this week is different. I feel as if I've come full circle. I can only express gratitude for what I received here, although the people to whom I am most indebted are almost all gone now. I'm also grateful for the people I've seen who were students when I was, and who are still serving Christ. Furthermore, I am greatly encouraged by younger men and women who have taken up the work, and who are train-

ing new generations of Christians at both the baccalaureate and graduate levels.

I have never been employed by Faith Baptist Bible College and Seminary, but much of my life is wrapped up in this place. One way or another it has affected me for over half a century. Its influence has been overwhelmingly positive. I thank God for the work that it has done and that it is still doing.



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.
