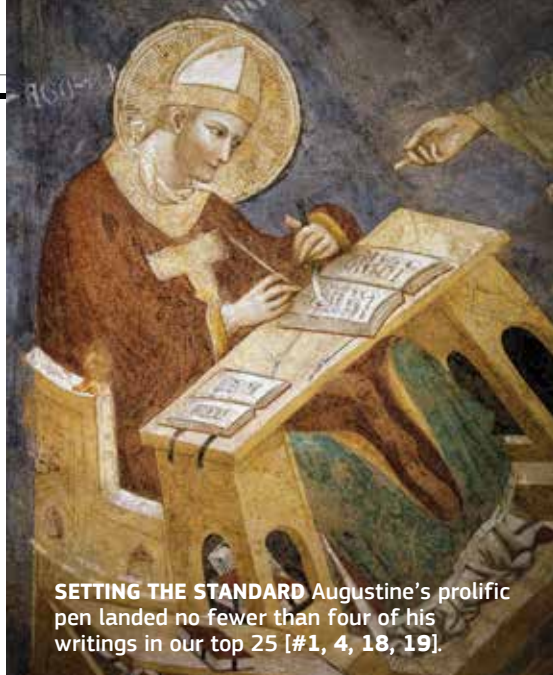


CHRISTIAN HISTORY



Issue 116

25 Writings
that changed
the church
and the world



SETTING THE STANDARD Augustine's prolific pen landed no fewer than four of his writings in our top 25 [#1, 4, 18, 19].



DEDICATED DISCIPLE John Wesley [*Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, #22] wrote thousands of sermons, letters, tracts, and journal entries—even riding in carriages, on horseback, and in bed.

Did you know?

WE ASKED OVER 70 PAST *CH* AUTHORS TO HELP IDENTIFY THE MOST INFLUENTIAL WRITINGS FROM CHRISTIAN HISTORY, AFTER THE BIBLE. HERE ARE SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE 25 WRITINGS THEY NAMED AS “GREATEST.”

OUR 25 WRITINGS “BY THE NUMBERS”

The earliest of these famous writings was composed around 175–185 (Irenaeus's *Against Heresies*); the latest in the twentieth century (C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*, or, if you count by when he finished the book, Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*). The longest is probably a tie between *Church Dogmatics* and *Summa Theologiae*, and the shortest is the Nicene Creed. Three of the works (the Nicene Creed, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the *Westminster Confession*) were officially composed by church councils or committees, though the *Book of Common Prayer* is acknowledged to be largely the work of Thomas Cranmer.

In addition to theological treatises, the list includes an autobiography (the *Confessions*), two fictional narratives (*Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Divine Comedy*), and a church liturgy (the *Book of Common Prayer*). The most frequent author is Augustine (4 works in the top 25), followed by Luther (3), and then everyone else is in a tie for third.

Only one book was written by a pope (Gregory's *Pastoral Rule*), but all the other authors were pastors or monks except Dante and C. S. Lewis. Translated into today's terms, their countries of origin include Egypt, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, England, Turkey, and the United States. ☐

FUN FACTS ABOUT OUR TOP 25: A QUIZ

All the answers are in this magazine. Happy hunting! (If you don't want to hunt, they are also upside down at the bottom of this page.)

Which of these writings ...

1. Originated as a series of radio broadcasts during World War II?
2. Was given its name not by its author but by Italian poet Boccaccio?
3. Was written by a Lutheran pastor later implicated in a plot to kill Hitler?
4. Influenced John Newton to convert to Christianity?
5. Was left unfinished at the author's death because he had a vision that all of his writings were like straw?
6. Is still used today by monasteries all over the world?
7. Settled an early church dispute about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son?
8. Ends with three chapters explaining the Genesis account of creation (often not printed in modern editions)?
9. Is told entirely as if it were a dream by the narrator?
10. Is organized around the structure of the Apostles' Creed?

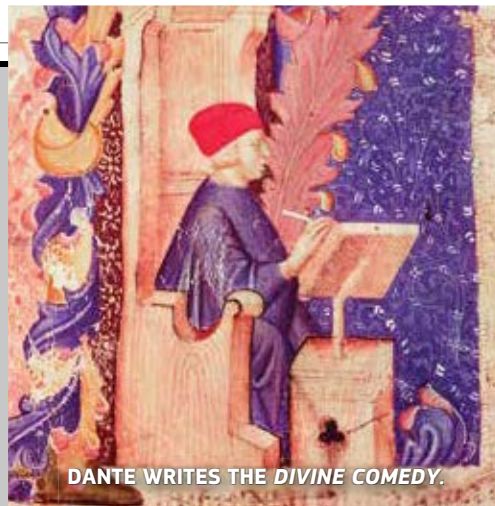
(*Mere Christianity*, *Divine Comedy*, *Cost of Discipleship*, *Imitation of Christ*, *Summa Theologiae*, *Benedict's Rule*, *Nicene Creed*, *Confessions*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Institutes*)

QUIZ ANSWERS

THOUGHTFUL REFORMER John Calvin [*Institutes*, #3] tinkered with his masterpiece through many editions to produce a systematic statement of Christian doctrine.



POPE, PREACHER, PASTOR Pope Gregory I hoped his *Rule* [#24] would encourage priests to be good shepherds of their flocks.



DANTE WRITES THE DIVINE COMEDY.

25 classic works

- #1. Augustine, *Confessions* (c. 398)
- #2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (1265–1274)
- #3. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)
- #4. Augustine, *City of God* (413–426)
- #5. Martin Luther, *95 Theses* (1517)
- #6. John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)
- #7. The Nicene Creed (325, revised 381)
- #8. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1952)
- #9. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (c. 319)
- #10. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418–1427)
- #11. Benedict, *Rule* (c. 540s)
- #12. *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549)
- #13. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937)
- #14. Martin Luther, *Freedom of a Christian* (1520)
- #15. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (1932–1967)
- #16. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy* (c. 1308–1320)
- #17. Anselm, *Why God Became Man* (c. 1095–1098)
- #18. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (397–426)
- #19. Augustine, *On the Trinity* (c. 400–428)
- #20. *Westminster Confession* (1646)
- #21. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (c. 175–185)
- #22. John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1777)
- #23. Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections* (1746)
- #24. Pope Gregory I, *Pastoral Rule* (c. 591)
- #25. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans* (c. 1515–1516)

Editor's note

CHRISTIANS OF ALL STRIPES universally point to the Bible as the most important Christian book, but it is far from the only Christian book. With 2,000 years of church history, hundreds of thousands of great Christian books, and an untold number of opinions on the most important, how could we ever pick 25 to feature? Well, you asked, so we tried. The topic of this issue has long been requested by our readers, and we've finally managed to pull it off—in 31 articles by 16 authors, quite possibly a record on both counts.

This is not *Christian History's* first "greatest hits" issue. We've previously covered the 100 most important events in church history and the 10 greatest Christians of the twentieth century (issues 28 and 65). To identify the 25 most important Christian writings of all time, we turned to a group of people well versed in church history and familiar with *Christian History's* readers—past writers for the magazine.

Over 70 of our past authors graciously offered up their five personal favorites, from which we tallied votes and compiled our list. We've also featured a few other writings that fell in the top 100. As a bonus, you'll also find an article on the top 25 Christian hymns of all time. And, if you're the type of person who doesn't like greatest hits, we've made sure your voice was heard too (see p. 45).


SURPRISING INFLUENCES

Some titles seemed obvious while others surprised us—as did the effects they had on the lives of others. Many of us know how Augustine's conversion occurred when he heard a voice chanting "take and read," a tale recounted in *Confessions* [#1]. But you may not know that *Mere Christianity* [#8] helped

change Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, from scheming politico to repentant sinner; that *The Imitation of Christ* [#10] turned around the life of John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace"; or that Dante's *Divine Comedy* [#16] saved a modern writer from deep depression.

While we don't have space to include all the rich content of the top 25, we hope to give you an idea of the stories behind them. How did they develop the tradition of orthodox faith? How did they affect later Christians who have found them sources of hope, comfort, challenge, and thought-provoking questions? And, last but not least, how are they still relevant today? Our brothers and sisters in Christ have much to teach us about welcoming both trials and joys, speaking to our world in transforming ways, and seeking refuge in Christ.

Maybe you've already read all the books on our list. But if you are like me and still have a ways to go, then take some time to read these stories and delve into the books behind them. You are guaranteed to be inspired and challenged.

As Lewis [#8] reminded us in discussing Athanasius [#9], "It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between." And one of our previous *CH* writers, Gene Veith, commented in his Christian guide to literature, *Reading between the Lines*, "Reading can never die out among Christians. This is because the whole Christian revelation centers around a Book." 



Jennifer Woodruff Tait
Managing editor, *Christian History*

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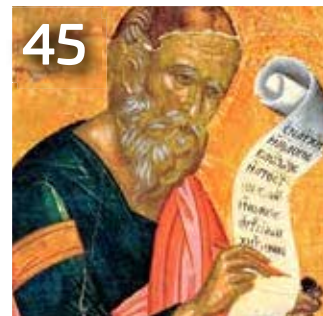
Don't miss our next issue on George Fox and the Quakers, telling of this fascinating movement's commitments to education, social egalitarianism, pacifism, and the abolition of slavery. Follow its story from its birth in the tumult of 17th c. England to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Society of Friends in the 20th c.

For a daily dose of Christian history, visit www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/today.

In CH 115, on p. 29, we said Tyndale was executed in England. He was actually executed in Antwerp. CH regrets the error.



CHRISTIAN HISTORY



The top 25 writings in Christian history

6 Fully man, fully God
Nicene Creed [#7]; Athanasius:
On the Incarnation [#9]
Jennifer Freeman

9 “Take and read”
Augustine: *Confessions* [#1];
City of God [#4]
Alex Huggard

14 Restoring order, life
Benedict: *Rule* [#11];
Gregory: *Pastoral Rule* [#24]
Steve Harper

15 Paying back the debt
Anselm: *Why God Became*
Man [#17]
Edwin Woodruff Tait

16 Illuminating truth
Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae* [#2]
Garry J. Crites

20 Following Jesus
à Kempis: *Imitation of Christ* [#10]
Paul W. Chilcote

22 Enduring influence
Dante: *Divine Comedy* [#16]
Rebecca Price Janney

**26 The straw that broke
the camel’s back**
Luther: *95 Theses* [#5]
Eric W. Gritsch and the editors

28 Robust instruction
Calvin: *Institutes* [#3]
Jennifer Powell McNutt

**33 Solid, scriptural,
rational**
Book of Common Prayer [#12]
Jennifer Woodruff Tait

34 “Be of good cheer”
Bunyan: *Pilgrim’s Progress* [#6]
Edwin Woodruff Tait

**36 Not concerning the
heart but the life**
Wesley: *Plain Account* [#22];
Edwards: *Treatise* [#23]
William Kostlevy

**39 The intelligent
layperson**
Lewis: *Mere Christianity* [#8]
David Neff

**41 In defiance of
the gods**
Bonhoeffer: *Cost of Discipleship*
[#13]; Barth: *Church Dogmatics*
[#15]
Roy Stults

**44 2,000 years, 25
hymns**
James D. Smith III

Also:

- Did you know? (inside front cover)
- Editor’s note, 2
- Apostles’ Creed, Irenaeus’s
Against Heresies, 8
- Others we love, 13, 21, 32, 38, 43
- Timeline, 24
- *Westminster Confession*, 28
- Dangers of lists, 45
- Recommended resources, 46

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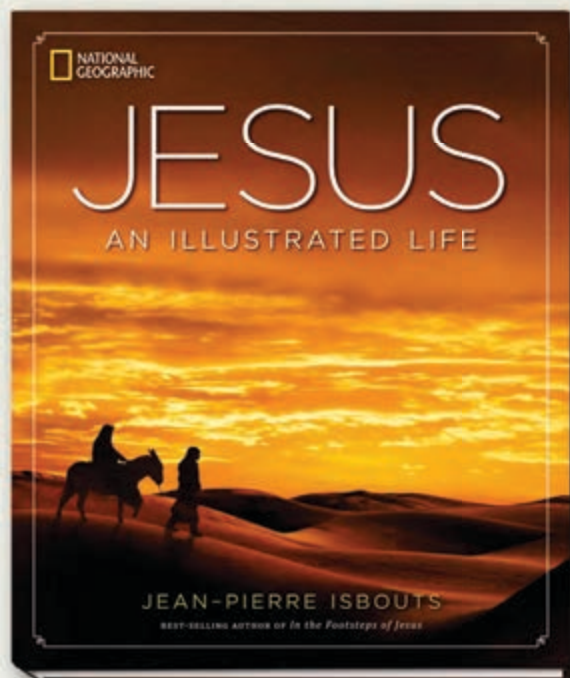
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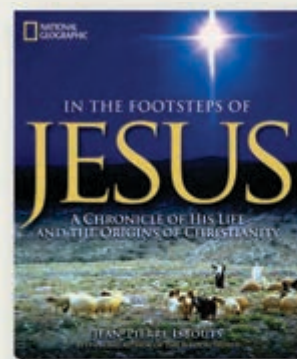
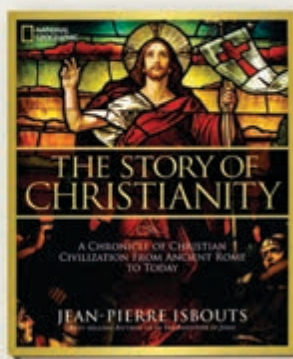
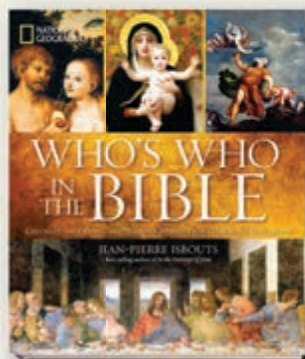
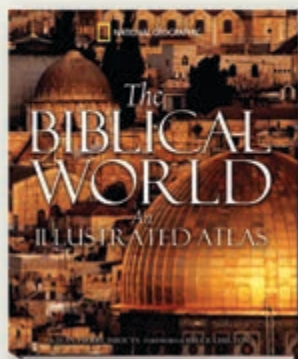
Explore a Life Destined to Change the World



Discover the rich tapestry of story and symbolism in the Gospels in this remarkable book chronicling the life of Jesus. Using the latest scientific and archaeological finds, acclaimed author and historian Jean-Pierre Isbouts presents a fresh perspective on the life Jesus lived.

Smart and compelling, *Jesus: An Illustrated Life* is an inspiring source for readers, regardless of faith tradition or background. Filled with exquisite photographs, rare period artifacts, detailed maps, and dozens of biblical quotes, this book is a stunning visual celebration of the life of Jesus.

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THE NICENE CREED [#7] AND ATHANASIUS'S *ON THE INCARNATION* [#9] EXPLAINED THE TRINITY TO US

Jennifer Freeman

IT'S A STATEMENT that many know by heart, reciting it regularly, in some cases weekly, in church services. The Nicene Creed maintains a pervasive presence in contemporary Christian teaching and has shaped Christian theology for almost 1,700 years. And we owe the survival of its orthodox views, at least in part, to a controversial Egyptian deacon-turned-bishop.

CONSTANTINE CLAIMS THE CROSS

Many aspects of Christian life in the late third and early fourth centuries are unrecognizable to us today. Paganism and the cult of the emperor dominated the religious landscape in the Roman Empire. Christians faced intermittent but deadly persecution at the hands of the state. Systematic Christian theology and the biblical canon were only just coming together.

In 312 something occurred that changed the course of history: pagan Roman emperor Constantine

SEEKING ANSWERS This ancient wall painting of Nicaea at a Romanian church pictures Constantine surrounded by bishops and protected by spears.

converted to Christianity. According to his biographer, Constantine applied the Christian *chi-rho* symbol (the Greek letters for the beginning of Christ's name) to his standard after receiving divine instruction in a vision and a dream. He then triumphed over his rival Maxentius in a famous battle at the Milvian Bridge in Rome.

The next year, Constantine legalized Christianity in the Edict of Milan, officially endorsing the fledgling religion. While its new status brought the church access to wealth and material resources, it did not result in the immediate resolution of heresy and division—rather, Christian controversies seemed to become even more public and political.

PROCLAIMING CHRIST BOTH HUMAN AND DIVINE Right: Athanasius is pictured with a quote from his works about the unity of God.

NOT ON MY WATCH Far right: Constantine, who supported the orthodox position, is shown in this 9th-c. drawing burning Arian books.

The church attempted to prune various heresies away through local councils. One of the earliest and most devastating of these was the teaching of Arius, a priest in Alexandria (on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt), around the year 318. In an attempt to protect the absolute unity of the Christian God, Arius argued that the Father had to precede the Son in existence, because he believed that to describe the Father and Son as co-eternal would be polytheism. This led to his famous problematic statement that “there once was a time when [Christ] was not.”

The controversy quickly consumed Christian discourse; Gregory of Nyssa wrote that 50 years later you couldn’t buy a loaf of bread without the baker telling you the Son was created out of nothing and there was a time when he was not. The church needed someone to set the record straight.

ATHANASIUS DEFENDS THE INCARNATION

When the controversy broke out in 318, Athanasius (c. 299–373) was a deacon to the bishop of Alexandria and the author of a little book, *On the Incarnation* (written sometime before 319), which ended up striking a blow to the Arian view. Athanasius wrote it for a Christian friend, Macarius, before the controversy sprang up. The book argues that to save us from sin and death the Redeemer must be truly human and divine: “Christ was made man that we might become God.” It is the Eastern equivalent to *Why God Became Man* by Anselm over 700 years later [#17]. C. S. Lewis [#8] praised Athanasius for standing for orthodoxy “when it looked as if all the civilised world was slipping back from Christianity into the religion of Arius.”

The two greatest influences in Athanasius’s own life were the Diocletian persecution, which he had witnessed first-hand in Alexandria during his pre-teen years, and the Egyptian desert monks, such as Antony (see “Master of monasticism,” p. 11), whose life Athanasius later recorded.

These influences instilled in him a devotion and unwavering commitment to his faith. His contemporary Gregory of Nazianzus eulogized him as “gentle, free from anger, sympathetic, sweet in words, sweeter in disposition; angelic in appearance, more angelic in mind” and “both peaceable and a peacemaker.”



A year after the founding of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) in 324, the controversy caused by Arius escalated to such a level that Constantine returned early from a military campaign to personally deal with the situation. Out of desperation he called for an ecumenical council at Nicaea (325), where the church’s bishops gathered to represent the church as a whole. Athanasius was present only as a deacon and did not have a vote.

The creed issued by Nicaea was probably based on the baptismal confession used by churches in Jerusalem. It used the Greek term *homoousios* (“of one substance,” which does not appear in the New Testament) to describe the shared substance of Father and Son:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God; light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father. . . .

The Holy Spirit was mentioned briefly, almost as an afterthought.

The Nicene Creed condemned Arius without naming him explicitly:

And those who say “there once was when he was not,” and “before he was begotten he was not,” and that he came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis or substance, affirming that the Son of God is subject to change or alteration—these the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.

Three years after Nicaea, Athanasius was made patriarch (bishop) of Alexandria—despite his protests that he neither wanted nor needed the job. Over the next 50 years, Arianism continued to plague the church. In the mid-fourth century, Athanasius wrote to a colleague that divine justice seemed to have prevailed in the death

The Apostles' Creed [#26]

According to tradition, the Apostles' Creed was composed by the 12 apostles and correspondingly divided into 12 articles. But there is no actual evidence of an apostolic origin. Rather, scholars believe that it was based on a creed called the Old Roman Creed, which dated from the second or third century.

The first mention of the Apostles' Creed dates to about 390 in a letter from Ambrose of Milan to Pope Siricius, but its complete current form does not appear until the eighth century. It is based on New Testament passages, especially Christ's command in Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

By the early Middle Ages, the Apostles' Creed was used in baptismal rites and the daily prayer offices of the Western church. In the later Middle Ages, it appears as ornamentation in hundreds of works of art, including manuscripts, frescoes, and stained-glass windows. Today it continues to be used in many Christian denominations. Its silence on the nature of the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity has also made it a useful profession of faith in ecumenical contexts between East and West. —Jennifer Freeman



of Arius, who, after making a false recantation of his heretical teaching, had fallen ill. Apparently his guts burst open while he was on the toilet!

But the popularity of the Arian views was relentless, and members of the church hierarchy still held them. Eventually both the creed's use of *homoousios* and Athanasius himself fell under attack. He was exiled five times from 338 to 365, only finally being reinstated as patriarch in 366, seven years before his death. In response to this tumult, the First Council of Constantinople was convened by the emperor in 381 to restore political and ecclesiastical unity.

Constantinople dropped the anathemas against Arius and filled in the blanks about the role of the Holy Spirit: "... the holy, the lordly and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father, co-worshiped and co-glorified with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets." This form of the creed is what many Western Christian churches profess today.

In the sixth century, some Christians in Spain began to use "and the Son" after "proceeding forth from the Father"; Rome's decision in the eleventh century to insist on this wording contributed to the split between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. One wonders what Athanasius would have said about that, had he been around. Centuries later Lewis praised the steadfast bishop in these words: "It is his glory that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away." ■

Jennifer Freeman is art researcher for Christian History.

ONE DOZEN AUTHORS? Legends told of the 12 apostles composing the creed under the dictation of the Holy Spirit, but it isn't actually mentioned until the 4th c.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* [#21]

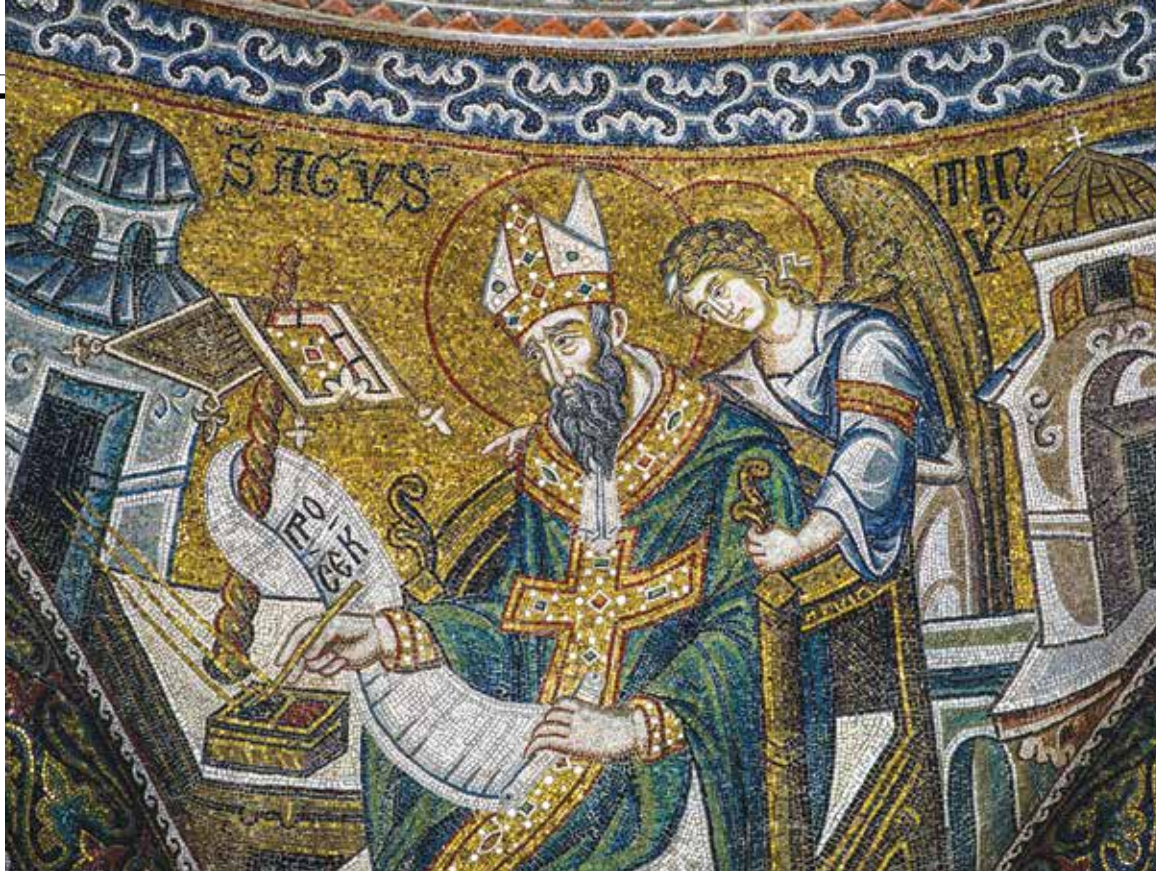
Against Heresies is one of only two surviving works written by Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130–200). It attacks Gnosticism, a complex and diverse religious movement that believed secret knowledge is necessary for salvation and only the spiritual realm is good.

Against Heresies is significant for its role as the first major treatise of Christian theology, its detailed account of Gnosticism, and its reference to most of the writings that would later be collected in the New Testament. Irenaeus maintained that human salvation has two components: first, humans must make an intentional commitment to goodness;

they then become immortal through the divine power of resurrection. He also described Christ's atonement as "recapitulation," in which he became incarnate to renew the image and likeness of God in humanity. Thus Christ is understood as the second Adam, Mary as the second Eve, Christ's Passion as a new creation, and so on. *Against Heresies* contains one of Christianity's earliest creedal statements:

Many nations of those barbarians who believe in Christ do assent ... carefully preserving the ancient tradition, believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all

things therein, by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God; who, because of his surpassing love towards his creation, condescended to be born of the virgin, he himself uniting man through himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received up in splendor, shall come in glory, the Savior of those who are saved and the Judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth, and despise his Father and his coming. —Jennifer Freeman



“Take and read”

AUGUSTINE'S *CONFESSIONS* [#1] AND *CITY OF GOD* [#4] PACKED A PUNCH

Alex Huggard

IN 430 the Germanic tribe known as the Vandals fled the grip of another tribe, the marauding Huns. Their flight took them to the doorstep of Hippo in modern-day Algeria. There the Vandals laid siege to one of the weakening Roman Empire's outlying cities. The Christian bishop of that city, dismayed by the conflict, looked back over his 75 years and pondered God's sovereignty.

That bishop, the greatest theologian in the Latin West, did not survive to see Hippo fall to the invaders from the north. But Augustine (354–430) had already witnessed a massive sea change.

That sea change was theological: the contentious fallout after the Council of Nicaea had been resolved (see “Fully man and fully God,” pp. 6–8). It was social and cultural: the brief recovery of paganism under Emperor Julian “the Apostate” ended with the establishment of Christianity as the empire's religion under Theodosius in 380. And it was political and economic: the fall of Rome in 410 undid the stability of the late fourth century.

Augustine enjoyed a unique vantage point as Christianity shifted from persecuted to established, and he viewed it with a keen mind, a deep commitment

LEADER OF THE PACK Augustine scholar Daniel Williams once said, “All of Western theology after Augustine merely serves as a footnote to Augustine.”

to service, and an abiding faith in a gracious and loving God. It is no surprise that his autobiographical *Confessions* takes the top spot in our survey. His *City of God* ranks fourth, and two other works also make the list, *On Christian Teaching* [#18] and *On the Trinity* [#19]. Christian theologians from Thomas Aquinas [#2] to Martin Luther [#5] to John Calvin [#3] depended upon the theological fields he plowed and built upon the philosophical foundations he laid.

FROM BACKWATERS TO GREAT CITIES

Born in 354 in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, Augustine rose to prominence first as a secular rhetorician and teacher and then as the preeminent Christian scholar-bishop of his time. Augustine's genius was recognized early in his life. His gifts took him from the backwater town of Thagaste in North Africa to the great ancient cities of Carthage, Rome, and Milan. At each stop he indulged not only his worldly pride but also his carnal desires.



In Milan Augustine could no longer run from the grace of God and turned his will over to his Creator, a story he would later tell in the *Confessions*.

Once converted Augustine desired a reclusive life to spend his days in contemplation and prayer; but after only five years, he was pressed into pastoral service by Valerius, bishop of Hippo, who rather forcibly ordained Augustine to the priesthood. Before long Augustine succeeded Valerius as bishop of that bustling port city on the coast of North Africa. In the midst of his pastoral and ecclesial duties, Augustine began to write, and write, and write some more. His enormous body of work changed the face of Western theology.

A RESTLESS HEART FINDS CONTENTMENT

Augustine began his *Confessions* in 397, only 11 years after his conversion, and completed it in 401 as the newly installed bishop of Hippo. Although his parishioners, friends, and supporters recognized Augustine's genius and passion for Christ, he had a checkered past as a philanderer, a Manichaean (a religion that saw creation locked in an equal battle between light and darkness), and an anti-Christian orator.

His era's flat and emotionless "chronicling" style of biography writing wouldn't do at all for this passionate man. Opening his heart to God, skeptical Christian leaders, and laypeople, Augustine poured out his honest tale with unprecedented vulnerability and psychological insight—in the process creating a whole new kind of autobiography. To each of his three audiences, he "confessed" in a different way.

To his God and Savior, Augustine spoke as an intimate, weaving together memory and prayer: "Who will



"PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST" Above left: Augustine's life was transformed when he picked up the Epistle to the Romans in a Milan garden in 386, leading to his baptism by Ambrose (above) and a new career as a defender of the faith he had formerly attacked.

give me help, so that I may rest in you? Who will help me, so that you will come into my heart and intoxicate it, to the end that I may forget my evils and embrace you, my one good?" In perhaps the most famous quote from the *Confessions*, Augustine answered his own question: "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

Augustine's second audience was Christian leaders still leery of accepting a man known for employing his learning against the Christian faith. To refute these skeptics, Augustine narrated his past without sugar-coating. By confessing and rejecting his past life, Augustine offered skeptics an apologetic for his transformation; in his vulnerable authenticity, Augustine secured his leadership and answered his critics.

His third and final audience was literate Christians who read an unflinching, theologically rich tale of one sinner's "restless heart" ultimately finding its peace in the grace of God.

Augustine appealed to all three audiences in two stories that revolved around life in a garden and harkened back to the Garden of Eden. First, at the age of 16, Augustine was called home to Thagaste from rhetorical studies in Madura. Scholars debate why Augustine's schooling was put on hiatus, but there is no debate that he pursued a life of hedonism in his lost year: "See with what companions I ran about the streets of Babylon,



FATHERS OF THE CHURCH Above: This image is part of a larger painting showing Augustine paired with 6th-c. Pope Gregory I (whose *Rule* is discussed on p. 14).

JESUS IN JUDGMENT Left: Augustine's *City of God* challenges the selfish human desire to rebuild the Tower of Babel and points toward the true eternal city of the heavenly Jerusalem.

and how I wallowed in its mire as though in cinnamon and precious ointments!" Yet the moment he cited as his most grievous sin seems an innocuous juvenile act. Augustine and his friends stole mediocre fruit from a neighbor's pear tree and threw it all on the ground for the pigs:

Behold my heart upon which you had mercy in the depths of the pit. Behold, now let my heart tell you what it looked for there, that I should be evil without purpose and that there should be no cause for my evil but evil itself. Foul was the evil, and I loved it.

For Augustine, sin took root in the desire to satisfy the self with no regard for goodness or purpose; taking the forbidden fruit, not out of hunger or for beauty, but only to quench the passion to do evil. Augustine's desire for evil was only tempered at this point in his life by his desire for wisdom. As he chased after both wisdom and women, God had a plan to meet him in yet another garden.

LOSING EVERYTHING

By the time Augustine reached a garden in Milan in 386 at age 32, he was a man adrift. His devout Christian mother had made him cast away his socially inferior

concubine in favor of an arranged marriage to a more suitable girl. And girl she was, for Augustine was told he would have to wait two years until she was of marriageable age! By all accounts, Augustine's concubine, the mother of his son, Adeodatus, was the love of his life. Losing her threw him into a cycle of licentiousness and self-recrimination for his lack of control.

Augustine had also lost his faith in Manichaeism on account of its logical errors. Finally he had physically lost the very thing that had brought him fame and (meager) fortune as a teacher and rhetorician: his voice. Drowning in loss Augustine seized upon the lifeline of grace he had heard about from his mother and from the bishop of Milan, Ambrose.

He cried out, and God responded with a vision of a beautiful woman—Lady Continence—for whom he had no carnal desires. She showed him a great cloud of witnesses who had accomplished what he truly desired. Yet Augustine still felt the tug of his old lusts. She counseled him:

Why do you stand on yourself, and thus not stand at all? Cast yourself on him. Have no fear. He will not draw back and let you fall . . . he will receive you and heal you.



HIS RESTLESS HEART'S FINAL RESTING PLACE Augustine's tomb in Pavia, Italy, remains a place of pilgrimage.

Today, modern readers can see the influence of Augustine's writing on Western autobiographies and memoirs, sacred and secular: a thematic narrative that describes not only the "how" and "what" of sequential events but the internal motivations and the "why" behind life-altering decisions and moments.

The *Confessions* impacted the Western church in its understanding of original sin and grace, as well as the meaning of God's creative acts (the last three sections of the book leave the story of Augustine's life behind for a theological exploration of Genesis). During the Reformation Martin Luther wanted to show how his understanding of the sufficiency of Christ alone was more Augustinian than that of his theological opponents. The Catholic Reformation responded by claiming its own Augustinian imprimatur. Among modern works that strongly bear Augustine's fingerprints is *The Four Loves* by C. S. Lewis. Christians who have not yet encountered the *Confessions'* depth and power should likewise "take and read!"

OPPOSITION AND RESTORATION

But the *Confessions* was not Augustine's only masterpiece. The proverbial barbarians were indeed at the gate of Hippo when Augustine died at 75; however, by that time, Rome had been in decline for decades. Some blamed the empire's adoption of Christianity in place of the ancient gods. Augustine marshaled his skill and knowledge to answer these critics in *City of God* and beat them at their own game: "In [this work] I am . . . defending the glorious City of God against those

who prefer their own gods to its Founder." Augustine began his great task in 413 and completed it in 426. The work has four parts: an apologetic against pagan philosophy, an account of the origins of the "City of God" and the "City of Man," the histories of the two cities, and each city's final destiny.

The *Confessions* uses personal narrative to draw the reader in. *City of God* approaches things differently, arguing philosophically that the eternal glory of God stands above the fading glory of human creations. Scholar Peter Brown said about the book, "Augustine drains the glory from the Roman past in order to project it far beyond the reach of men, into the 'most glorious City of God.'" Augustine depended upon a long tradition of exegesis centered on the conflict between the earthly city and the heavenly city, most notably in the book of Revelation:

On the one side are those who live according to humankind; on the other, those who live according to God. . . . We may speak of two cities or two human societies, the destiny of the one being an eternal kingdom under God while the doom of the other is eternal punishment along with the devil.

Augustine was not trying to demonize Rome as "Babylon" and justify its fall, nor was he trying to claim God's approval for the empire. Rather he separated the temporal and flawed cities and empires created by humanity from the eternal kingdom established by God.

The positive reception of *City of God* was immediate. A contemporary of Augustine, Bishop Macedonius, wrote before the book was even finished, "I am in doubt what to admire most . . . the teachings of philosophy, the extensive knowledge of history, or the charm of . . . style, which is such as to bewitch even the unlearned."

Readers throughout the centuries, like Macedonius, have been bewitched by its theological scope and profundity, and well-worn and annotated copies live on the shelves of pastors, politicians, medievalists, military historians, sociologists, and theologians. Along with the *Confessions*, it points Christians toward the praise of God, calls us to draw near to the heart of God, and invites us to yearn for another kingdom:

Now it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, while Abel, as though he were merely a pilgrim on earth, built none. For the true city of the saints is in heaven, though here on earth it produces citizens in whom it wanders as on a pilgrimage through time, looking for the Kingdom of eternity. ☒

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THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION

Even Holy Spirit-led religious movements need books of discipline. That's one of the biggest lessons from reading this early church order, which covers everything from how to ordain a deacon to what jobs are appropriate for a baptized Christian (excerpted in *CH* 110) to how to conduct your evening devotions. Rediscovered in the nineteenth century, the *Apostolic Tradition* (c. 200?) was for many years attributed to Bishop Hippolytus of Rome (c. 170–235), a controversial preacher who set himself up as what some call history's first antipope. When both he and Pope Pontian (ruled 230–235) became victims of Roman persecution and were exiled to Sardinia, they reconciled. Hippolytus was buried as a martyr in Rome with full honors in 236.

Hippolytus wrote *something* called the *Apostolic Tradition*, but whether it's *this* is under debate. Some argue that it collects material from as late as 400. Its antiquity nevertheless caused church leaders to use it as a model for liturgies adopted by Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches in the 1960s and 1970s. My own church still echoes in its prayers many phrases that may first have arisen in third-century Rome from the pen of Hippolytus. —Jennifer Woodruff Tait, managing editor, *CH*

LIFE OF ANTONY

When Athanasius (pp. 6–8) began his *Life of Antony* around 362, its subject (250–c. 356) was already famous for demonic battles, distance vision, and faith healing. Monks around the Mediterranean wrote to Athanasius asking “whether the things told of him are true.” Many still ask that question; Athanasius provided no evidence beyond common report.

Antony was 19 when his parents died, leaving him with 300 acres and a sister to care for. Six months later he heard Christ's words in a church service: “If you would be perfect, go and sell all that you have and give to the poor.” Immediately he sold everything, committed his sister to trustworthy virgins, and left in search of spiritual discipline. He resisted temptations by praying and meditating. Eventually disciples gathered around him. To escape them Antony moved into the Egyptian desert. However he still counseled visitors, instructed groups of monks, and traveled to Alexandria to encourage persecuted Christians. On a visit to Alexandria to denounce the Arian heresy, he met and befriended his eventual biographer, Athanasius.



TORMENTED Left: Antony's struggles with demons fired the imaginations of Hieronymus Bosch, Matthias Grünewald, Salvadore Dali, and (in this image) Michelangelo.

REDEEMED Below: For Cyril of Alexandria, if Jesus is not fully God, and thus God has not been united to flesh, then humans are left in their sins.

Antony influenced generations of monks. About 30 years after his death, a sensuous teacher of rhetoric named Augustine read *Life of Antony*. Impressed by the hermit's self control (which he lacked), he credited his conversion in part to it. —Dan Graves, layout editor, *CH*

ON THE UNITY OF CHRIST

In the wake of Protestant liberalism, which split up the so-called Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, a return to early Christian thought about Jesus' nature is in order. To understand the importance of affirming Jesus Christ as the “Godman,” there is perhaps no better work to read than Cyril of Alexandria's *On the Unity of Christ* (440). Cyril's work exposes the heresy that Jesus was a human being subsequently united to divinity.

Cyril held that the divine person of the Logos, eternally with God the Father, actually *becomes* a man by being born of Mary. God was not simply united to this man, or somehow in deeper connection with this man: God became this man. And this incredible mystery is precisely what achieves our salvation. “He made it [humanity] his very own,” Cyril wrote, “and thus he restored flesh to what it was in the beginning.” *On the Unity of Christ* is rooted in Scripture and applies Scripture's witness to the difficult questions that arise from such an understanding. Its language is clear and its logic easy to follow, making its message, in an age fraught with confusion over who Christ is, profoundly contemporary. —Jackson Lashier, assistant professor of religion, Southwestern College



LEARNING FOR THE LORD Right: Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, is shown preaching to his monks in this choral manuscript created in his monastery centuries later.

SHAPING GODLY MINISTRY Far right: Gregory, pictured here in his study, brought a love of the monastic life to his reign as pope.



Restoring order, restoring life

BENEDICT AND GREGORY EACH GAVE US A RULE [#11 AND #24]

Steve Harper

WHEN THINGS ARE IN DISARRAY, God brings order out of chaos. Within about 60 years of each other, God used Benedict of Nursia and Pope Gregory to do just that. Benedict's *Rule* for monastic community life and Gregory's *Book of Pastoral Rule* both intended to bring new life where the church was in decline.

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

As a teenager young Benedict (480–547), fed up with the immorality of Rome, began living as a solitary monk. Years later, with a growing following, Benedict grew convinced that a new way of learning and living would stem deterioration in both church and society. He constructed a rule of life around 530 to guide a monastic community he called a “school for the Lord’s service.” The communities that took his *Rule* as the way to order their lives together all preserved knowledge in the culture and advanced spirituality in the church. The effect of Benedict’s *Rule* ripples from his time into our own, where both traditional monastic communities and the movement called the “new monasticism” still order their lives together by its wisdom.

Gregory (540–604) became pope in 590. He believed that the humility and selfless service of monks stood in stark contrast to that of the church’s bishops, and his

Book of Pastoral Rule, completed within months of him becoming pope, sought to inspire bishops to exemplify holy character, live lives of service, and offer spiritual guidance to priests and congregations. Gregory’s counsel continues to shape godly ministry—for bishops, pastors, and laity as well.

Both these ancient documents offer the potential to restore the personal and social order so often lacking in today’s world. Like Benedict and Gregory, we sometimes feel we are in a period where widespread disarray compounds confusion.

In Benedict we find a life-giving interplay between worship and work, and in Gregory we discover authenticity when we live among others as peers, with integrity and with the willingness to guide and be guided. Drawing from his own reading of Benedict and Gregory, John Wesley (see “Not concerning the heart but the life,” pp. 36–37) would call this “watching over one another in love.” Benedict and Gregory give us the potential to bring the same order and new life to our time as they brought to their own. **GH**

Steve Harper is a retired professor of spiritual formation and elder in the United Methodist Church.

Paying back the debt

ANSELM'S *WHY GOD BECAME MAN* [#17] EXPLAINED THE ATONEMENT

Edwin Woodruff Tait

ONE OF THE MOST BASIC Christian claims is that God became a human being in the Incarnation. But why? Couldn't an omnipotent God forgive and redeem humans simply by an act of will?

In the early church, many argued that God offered Jesus as a ransom to the devil for humanity; the devil eagerly accepted this sinless human being, only to be overcome by God hidden under the weakness of human flesh. Others, such as Athanasius (see "Fully human and fully God," pp. 6–8), spoke of Jesus' sacrifice as a victory over death, as well as showing forth God's justice, because death was the just penalty for sin. By suffering this penalty on behalf of human beings, Jesus destroyed its power over us.

Not until the eleventh century would a theologian offer a different explanation. Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033–1109) was born into a noble family in northwestern Italy and joined the monastery of Bec in Normandy at the age of 27. He soon succeeded his mentor, Lanfranc, as abbot; after their ruler, Duke William of Normandy, became king of England in 1066, he succeeded Lanfranc as archbishop of Canterbury, the highest position in the English church. Anselm continued Lanfranc's policy of speaking out against royal tyranny and corruption, resulting in his exile from England twice. He persisted in upholding his principles and was restored to his office—both times. On his deathbed he expressed as his only regret that he had failed to write a book on the origin of the soul.

REJECTING RANSOM, DESERVING DEBT

Anselm rejected the "ransom theory" in *Why God Became Man* (1098) on the grounds that the devil cannot have legal rights over human beings. He did believe Christ's death and Resurrection defeated the devil, but thought the atonement was based legally in the idea that sin offended God's honor, thus creating a situation of injustice that God's nature required him to remedy.

Human beings owed God all their obedience simply as creatures, but they also needed to "pay back" the debt of honor incurred by Adam and Eve. God incarnate was the solution. As a sinless man, Jesus obeyed God the Father fully. But this obedience led to his death. Since Jesus did not deserve to die, his death was a gift over and above the obedience that he owed as a human being. And because he was also God, his offering was of infinite value, sufficient to make up for the infinite debt owed by the human race.



LIVING OUT LOVE Anselm is pictured here becoming a monk and curing a sick patient.

Anselm did *not* believe that satisfaction equals punishment: Jesus paid our debt by his perfect obedience, so no one needs to be punished except those who reject the gift of forgiveness. Protestant Reformers, particularly Calvin, combined Anselm's understanding with Athanasius's older theme that Jesus was actually punished in our place, resulting in the theory of penal substitution, where Jesus' satisfaction was no longer simply perfect obedience but a passive endurance of the just wrath of God on our behalf.

Anselm's theory seemed cold and rationalistic to many, and in the past century, the early church's more mythical, dramatic atonement theology regained favor. I find early Christian atonement theologies highly compelling. But Anselm may have more in common with the early church than people recognize. Ultimately he presents Jesus' Incarnation, death, and Resurrection as the merciful acts of a loving God unwilling to punish human beings even though he is legally entitled to do so. ☞

Edwin Woodruff Tait is consulting editor at Christian History.



Intellect that illuminates Christian truth

THOMAS AQUINAS'S *SUMMA THEOLOGIAE* [#2]

Garry J. Crites

IN 1879, exactly 20 years after Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, Pope Leo XIII delivered an encyclical arguing that Catholics should dialogue with the scientific world without sacrificing tradition:

We exhort you . . . to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas [Aquinas], and to spread it far and wide for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences. Let . . . teachers endeavor to implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students, and set forth clearly his solidity and excellence over others . . . and use it for the refutation of prevailing errors.

What was it about this controversial thirteenth-century preacher that led a pope six centuries later to declare his wisdom still indispensable? Why does Thomas's *Summa Theologiae* (loosely translated as *A Compilation of Theology*) endure as the arguable gold standard of theological works?

ON THE PATH TO GREATNESS?

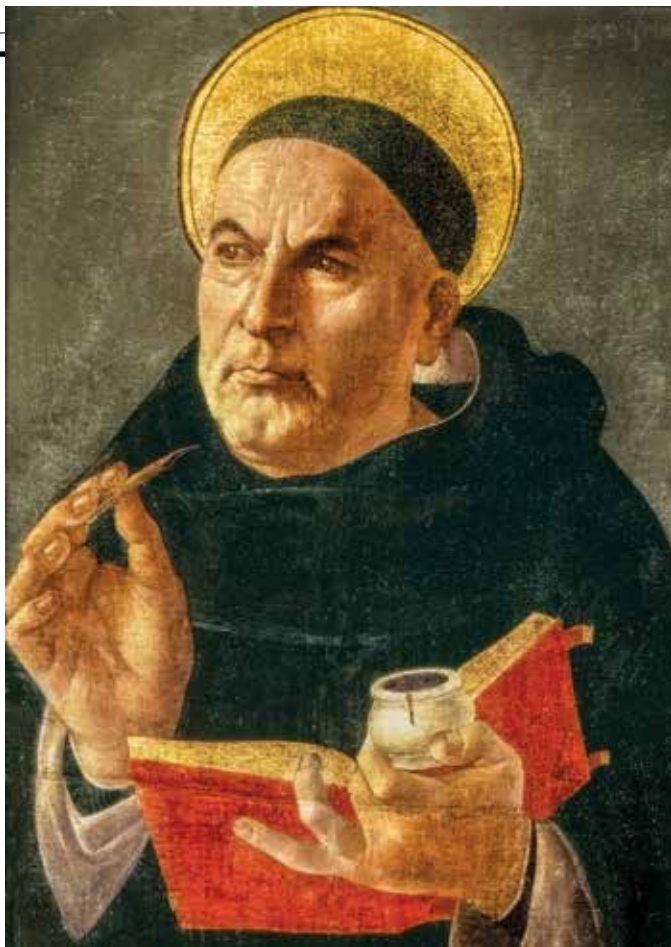
Thomas was the youngest of eight children born to Landulf of Aquino, a minor lord in the Kingdom of Sicily, and his aristocratic wife, Theodora. The date of his birth is uncertain—probably around 1225—but the place is well known, the family castle in Roccasecca, near the famed monastery of Monte Cassino. The mon-

THE ANGELIC DOCTOR Dante (see pp. 22–23) wrote in the *Divine Comedy* of meeting Aquinas in heaven with St. Dominic and St. Francis.

astery was not only the center of Benedictine monasticism, but also the epicenter of conflicts between Emperor Frederick II and the pope.

At the tender age of five, Thomas was sent to Monte Cassino to be raised by his paternal uncle, the abbot of the monastery. According to church regulations, the boy was still too young to become an oblate (a young person educated at and sharing in the life of the monastery, possibly with the intention of becoming a monk), but that was undoubtedly the path on which his family was placing him. Unfortunately for their plans, imperial soldiers stormed and occupied Monte Cassino in 1239 when Thomas was about 14. Landulf and Abbot Sinibald decided that the monastery was no longer safe for young Thomas, so, fatefully, they sent him south to study at the new university in Naples.

Naples was not only independent from the church, but it had antipapal leanings making it a surprising choice for a lad being primed for Benedictine leadership. Scholasticism—an approach to study that emphasized rigorous logic, carefully reasoned debate, and judicious use of earlier (often pagan) philosophy—dominated all thirteenth-century universities. But at Naples Thomas



was first exposed to teachings regarded as controversial to clergy of other universities (such as Paris, where he would eventually end up).

The prime example was philosophy derived from the work of the great Greek philosopher Aristotle, studied in the form of translations and commentaries written by Muslim intellectuals. Aristotelians taught that everything is subject to reason and all knowledge is obtained by sense impressions. These studies would have a significant impact on Thomas's later writings.

A TRAVELING PREACHER

Just as fatefully, in Naples lived a small contingent of monks from a new group called the Order of Preachers, or as they would become known, the Dominicans. The Dominicans were mendicant (begging) preachers, who relied solely on charity for their sustenance. The order was founded to combat heresy, and Dominicans were known for their intellect, breadth of knowledge, and ability to present arguments. All of these qualities made the group attractive to the young scholar from Aquino. In short order the 19-year-old Thomas made the monumental decision not to return to prestigious Monte Cassino to take Benedictine vows, but rather to take the black cloak of a Dominican preacher.

His family was furious. Theodora was not about to allow her dream to die; her youngest child was destined to be the abbot of St. Benedict's monastery, not a

READY AND WAITING *Left:* Once he had escaped his family's desire to make him a Benedictine, Thomas set about changing the face of Christian theology.

FOLLOW THE LEADER *Below:* This map of celestial bodies comes from a commentary on Aristotle by one of Thomas's disciples.



beggar in an order despised by clergy and traditional monks alike. To protect their new protégé from his family's wrath, the Dominicans sent Thomas to study at the University of Paris, far away from parental influence.

Theodora, though, caught wind of the impending transfer. She instructed her older son to capture Thomas and return him to the family. Before Thomas even made it as far as Rome, his brother nabbed him and spirited him off to a family castle at Monte San Giovanni, where he was told he would remain under house arrest until he renounced his foolish dream of being a Dominican.

In the year Thomas's family held him captive, it is hard to know where fact stops and legend begins. He was not cut off from his family; indeed, he spent much time tutoring his sisters. He was also permitted to correspond with Dominican colleagues, which is somewhat perplexing since these contacts further solidified his commitment to join the ranks of the Black Friars.

But this limited freedom did not mean that Thomas's family had given up the fight. They were so adamant that Thomas should never join the Dominicans that, according to one legend, his brothers sent a prostitute to tempt him. The pious young man drove the woman off to maintain his chastity and was thereafter protected by holy angels.

After a year of no progress, Theodora finally gave up. She made arrangements for her son to “escape”



THIS WILL BE ON THE TEST, FOLKS Medieval students listen to a professor at the University of Paris.

a scholar who studied even the most revered Catholic texts with a critical, analytical eye.

Thomas also wrote commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations that focused on the literal meaning of the passages. While this may not sound unusual today, medieval commentaries often fixated on interpretations that were allegorical (seeing Old Testament events as prefiguring Christ) and anagogical (seeking the eternal significance of Old Testament passages).

All this was enough to establish Thomas as a first-rate thinker. But the crowning achievements of Thomas's scholarly career, written near the end of his life, would be his apologetic works, the *Summa contra Gentiles* and his related theological manual, the *Summa Theologiae*.

NOT FITTING INTO THE CURRICULUM

Despite his unmistakable theological prowess, the theologians at the University of Paris never accepted Thomas. It was bad enough that he was a member of an order of "begging" preachers that they despised; these clerics were equally offended by the introduction of new ideas and methods into their established curriculum. Consequently Thomas left Paris for the Dominican centers of Santa Sabina and Naples to write his *magnum opus*, the *Summa Theologiae*.

The *Summa* is not a systematic theology in the modern sense, laying out doctrines of revelation, Christology, ecclesiology, and other "ologies," each building on the other. Its massive three volumes do discuss the nature of God and creation, the virtues, and the work of Christ. But within each section, Thomas introduced basic doctrinal questions ("Is the Eucharist a sacrament?"), reviewed opinions different from his, and then presented the logic behind his answers to the questions with careful precision.

It is difficult to overstate the long-term impact these volumes had on the theology and practice of the church through their systematic presentation of doctrine and repeated insistence on seeking reasonable compromise positions on disputed questions.

Catholic sacramental theology holds that the seven sacraments (not two, as in most Protestant traditions) actually bring about change in the believer. Its mature formulation relies heavily on the *Summa*. In the Eucharist the bread and wine are changed, so that the whole substance of Christ is present in the elements; Aquinas described this presence as so objective that even those without faith receive. The *Summa's* teachings on natural law are also enshrined in the *Catechism* of the Catholic Church: the law of God is inscribed in the human heart, universally

through an open window in the castle. He went straight back to his Dominican mentors in Naples and thereafter to Paris, where he began the scholarly life that would help to define Catholicism for centuries.

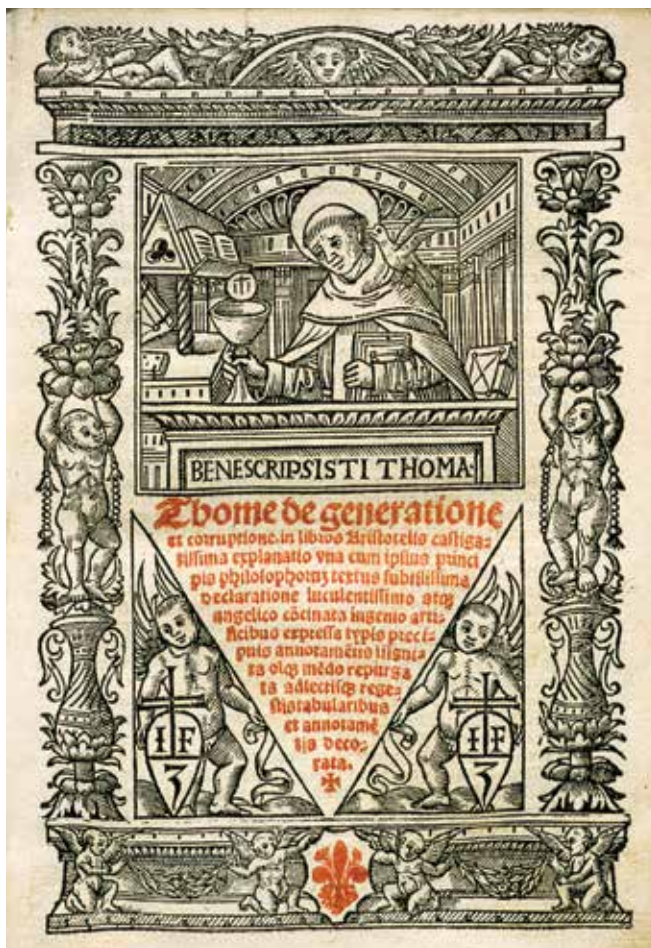
THOMAS THE THEOLOGIAN

Like all theologians of this period, Thomas studied Scripture and the early church fathers, especially Augustine. His theological works show clear mastery of Neoplatonic thought (a famous system of pagan philosophy). But had he focused on these, Thomas would have been just one more medieval scholar repeating long-held doctrines and aphorisms.

What set Thomas's thinking apart was his reliance on Aristotle, or as Thomas always called him, "The Philosopher." It did not seem to bother Thomas that he was drawing on a "pagan" author, because he believed that philosophy is not intrinsically incompatible with Christian teaching.

The human intellect is a mark of the image of God, he thought: thus, intelligent, virtuous non-Christians such as Aristotle have the ability to discern some truth through natural reason. Intellect illumines Christian truth, and Christian faith completes the salvation that natural intellect alone cannot achieve.

Thomas was a prolific writer. As a young scholar, he was charged with teaching his students Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, the basic textbook of the day for budding theologians. In preparation for his lectures, Thomas wrote a commentary on the *Sentences*, showing the makings of



“GOLDEN WISDOM” Above: The ideas of the controversial monk from the despised religious order eventually became the foundation of Catholic theology.

ALL TRUTH IS GOD’S TRUTH Left: Among Thomas’s prolific writings is this commentary on a scientific text by his beloved Aristotle.

perceivable through human reason and sufficient to establish ethical standards that make all humans accountable to God.


Perhaps the *Summa* is best known for its five proofs of the existence of God. Using logic drawn from Aristotle, Thomas argued that motion in the universe requires an initial mover; that effects require a first cause; that there must be something in the universe whose existence is not contingent on something else; that varying degrees of goodness in the universe only have meaning when measured against something of absolute goodness; and that nonintelligent things can only reach their end when guided by an infinitely intelligent being. While these arguments have been frequently criticized, they nevertheless serve as staples in theology classes (and on apologetics websites) and are echoed by other writers in this issue.

THE END AND BEYOND

On the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6, 1273, Thomas was celebrating Mass in Naples when he had a profoundly life-altering experience. His contemporaries insist Thomas levitated before the altar and received a vision; later scholars have wondered if he experienced a mental or physical collapse. Whatever it was, after com-

ing down from the altar, Thomas declared that his life’s work was nothing but straw. He never wrote again; the *Summa Theologiae* remains unfinished to this day. In about three months, the great scholar was dead at the age of 49.

In the years immediately following his death, Thomas continued to generate controversy in clerical circles. In 1277 the bishop of Paris delivered a lengthy condemnation of theologically suspect doctrines, some clearly Thomistic teachings based on Aristotelian thought.

But as the centuries rolled on, Thomas’s immense contributions to the church were recognized and celebrated. He was canonized in 1323 by Pope John XXII, and in 1567 the Holy See declared him a doctor of the church, to be venerated at the same level as Augustine and Ambrose. We can only suppose that, had Landulf and Theodora been permitted to look down the centuries to witness Pope Leo XIII declare their son the bedrock of Catholic theology, they finally would have had the faith and reason to realize that Thomas knew what he was doing all along. 

Garry J. Crites is director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Duke University.



A LITTLE BOOK WITH A BIG REACH Thomas à Kempis meant his book as a devotional for his own monks, but thousands of Christians have read it with profit.

Following Jesus above all

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST [#10]

Paul W. Chilcote

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST has been for centuries the most widely read Christian devotional book next to the Bible. Its central themes of humility and purity, as well as its focus on Holy Communion, have inspired and challenged spiritual seekers across the globe for half a millennium.

This classic work emerged out of a spiritual renewal movement of the late medieval world known as the *devotio moderna*, a Latin term meaning “modern devotion.” From this community of devout followers of Jesus came a simple monk with the gift of communication named Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380–1471), who authored this small, profound book.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the foundations of the church-centered European world began to quake and shake. Christian devotion changed

to meet these new challenges. In the Netherlands in particular, a new lay movement of traditional monastic spirituality challenged the dominant vision of religion. Its followers advocated a new way of devotion for the common person based on an interior, spiritual transformation. They emphasized humility and love in the pursuit of holiness. More than anything else, they sought to combine a religion of the heart with acts of loving service to others.

The authenticity of this community and its faithful witness to practical, spiritual wisdom deeply impressed Thomas à Kempis. He joined and eventually was given the responsibility of instructing novices at the Agnietenberg Priory (Mount St. Agnes in the Netherlands), the Augustinian monastery where he spent most of his life. It is most likely there that he completed the *Imitation* between 1418 and 1427 as an instructional guide for his community. À Kempis could hardly have imagined how influential this devotional work would prove to be over so many years.

DEEPENING LIVES EVER SINCE

Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, devoted a year to the study of the *Imitation* in hopes of following in Jesus’ footsteps more closely. John Newton, author of the familiar hymn “Amazing Grace,” linked his conversion to the reading of this book. A horrendous storm overtook his ship on the open seas when the book was in his hands. Struck by à Kempis’s emphasis on the fragile nature of life, Newton gave his life to God.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (see “In defiance of the gods,” pp. 41–42) was reading the *Imitation* the night before the Nazis led him to his execution. Dag Hammarskjöld, secretary general of the United Nations, left his copy of the book with a friend as he embarked on a plane that would crash in the dark of night. His oath of office was tucked in its pages with an affirmation of the duty to serve others. Ironically, Thomas Merton (p. 43), one of the Catholic spiritual giants of the twentieth century, began reading the book at the suggestion of a Hindu monk.

Follow the precedent of these great saints; take it up into your hands; read it; and permit the Spirit of Christ to do its transforming work. ☒

Paul W. Chilcote is academic dean and professor of historical theology and Wesleyan studies at Ashland Theological Seminary and editor of *The Imitation of Christ: Selections Annotated and Explained*, a new edition of à Kempis’s work, from which this article is adapted.

CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY

For about 1,100 years, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* (c. 523) was a best-seller. Medieval students studied hand-copied manuscripts, several hundred of which still exist. It was translated into the vernaculars of all western European nations, including Old English by Alfred the Great (who also translated Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, p. 14).

Boethius (c. 480–524) was a high-ranking Roman, a Trinitarian Christian, and an adviser to the sixth-century Germanic king, Theodoric, who denied the Trinity. Corrupt, jealous courtiers persuaded the king to thrust Boethius into a filthy prison where he faced torture. Medieval readers could sympathize.

Boethius imagined Lady Philosophy entering his cell, posing difficult questions and drawing thoughtful answers from him: why do bad things happen to good people? Is free will possible? What is the nature of evil? Boethius's answer to the last question is that evil is perverted good, but God is continually bringing good out of it.

The *Consolation's* popularity came from its compelling blend of dialogue and poetry, philosophy and feeling. Prisoners in centuries to come imitated it, but none measured up to the original. Through it, one could say God worked good out of Boethius's sufferings. —Dan Graves



TRUE LOVE Medieval writers Boethius (above left, with Lady Philosophy), Bernard (above), and Julian (left), spoke of the reality of suffering and the presence of God's love.

but with the attainable Christ).
—Edwin Woodruff Tait, consulting editor, CH

REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE

Medieval anchorites lived in austere cells attached to parish churches and took vows to spend their lives in solitude and prayer. The woman who lived next to St. Julian's Church in Norwich abolished her original identity so completely that we

know her only as Lady Julian of Norwich (1342–1416). A famous spiritual adviser in her own day—people traveled miles to see her—she left to posterity the *Revelations of Divine Love* (1395), a series of visions following a severe illness.

One of her most memorable visions sums up her spirituality (literally) in a nutshell: the whole universe as “a little thing like a nut” held in the protecting and nurturing hand of God. She referred to Jesus as “mother,” not as a rejection of masculine language, but as a dramatic way to highlight his devoted love; she clearly struggled to reconcile hell with her belief that “all will be well, and all manner of things will be well.”

When modern “progressives” tell me that God is love, all they are saying is what their culture has taught. But when a medieval ascetic, shut up in a tiny cell, has lurid visions of the discolored body of Christ on the cross, and on the basis of those visions tells me that the self-giving, all-forgiving love of Jesus is the ultimate truth about the universe—then I dare to believe that it just might be true and all may indeed “be well.”—Edwin Woodruff Tait

SERMONS ON THE SONG OF SONGS

The twelfth century was the century of love. Aristocratic culture embraced courtly love, wherein a knight devoted himself to an often unattainable lady. Religiously, western Europe was rocked by the rise of the Cistercians, committed to refocusing monasticism on community life characterized by love. Cistercian leader Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), a French nobleman, made Clairvaux one of the most famous monasteries in Europe, advised popes and kings, promoted the Second Crusade, and opposed controversial theologies of the day. But today we remember most his writings describing the Christian journey to deeper love of God.

Bernard delivered sermons on the Song of Songs to his monks beginning in 1136—bold and passionate ones, especially for an audience of celibate men. One describes the spiritual life as a progression from the “kiss of the feet” (acknowledging our sinfulness), to the “kiss of the hand” (Christ's grace enabling us to live the moral life), to the “kiss of the mouth” (spiritual intimacy, not with an unattainable lady,



Dante's enduring influence

THE DIVINE COMEDY [#16] TOOK READERS ON AN UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

Rebecca Price Janney

T. S. ELIOT ONCE SAID, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the modern world between them. There is no third." But there was nothing about Dante Alighieri's (1265–1321) early life or background to suggest greatness, certainly not that he would write one of the world's most important literary works.

LIFELONG LOVE

He was born in Florence, Italy, during a time of intense political conflict, and although the Alighieri family was respectable, they didn't stand out in terms of position or wealth. Dante's mother died when he was only seven. At the tender age of nine, he met the love of his life, Beatrice di Folco Portinari (1266–1290), and although that deep affection would guide and inspire him for the remainder of his life, it was unrequited. When Dante was just 12, his father promised him in marriage to someone else.

The young man studied great poets and philosophers, though not at a prestigious university; his education most likely occurred at a "chapter school," one affiliated with a church or monastery. Afterward he became a pharmacist and a poet, making a quiet living for himself and his family (he married his intended fiancé, Gemma, and they had at least four children).

PARTING WAYS Pagan poet Virgil, Dante's guide through hell and purgatory, is not allowed to guide him through heaven; instead, Beatrice takes over.

In Italy conflict escalated between the pope and the Catholic Church on one side and the emperor and the Holy Roman Empire on the other. In this battle Dante aligned himself with the victorious papacy. Initially it appeared he had chosen well for his future. But when his winning compatriots split into two factions, he suddenly found himself on the wrong side of power. His assets were seized, he was forbidden to hold any public office, and he was ordered to pay a fine.

When he refused Dante was sentenced to death at the stake and fled for his life, leaving behind his wife and children. Never again would he see his dearly loved Florence. During the next several years, he roamed about the country as an exile and a house guest, writing. He had already published one work of poetry describing his love for his long-lost first love, Beatrice.

Around 1317 Dante settled in Ravenna (his family eventually joined him). About 10 years earlier, he had begun in a casual fashion an epic, allegorical poem he called *Commedia* (*Comedy*) about the soul's journey through the afterlife. Now he continued it in earnest, completing it in 1320, the year before



he died. His masterpiece, divided into three parts, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, draws strongly upon the medieval view of hell, purgatory, and heaven. The Italian poet Boccaccio (1313–1375) referred to Dante's poem as "Divine," not only because of its religious themes, but because of its sheer brilliance. The name stuck. Today few remember that it wasn't always known as the *Divine Comedy*.

Not only was the writing itself celebrated, but so was its author, in ways no one could have foretold. Even now in the digital age, Dante's influence endures. In Italy he is still hailed as the nation's "Supreme Poet," as well as the "Father of the Italian Language." In a 2013 article for the *New Yorker*, author and critic Joan Acocello wrote,

You'd think that a fourteenth-century allegorical poem on sin and redemption, written in a medieval Italian vernacular and in accord with the scholastic theology of that period, would have been turned over, long ago, to the scholars in the back carrels. But no. By my count there have been something like a hundred English-language translations, and not just by scholars but by blue-chip poets. . . . Liszt and Tchaikovsky have composed music about the poem; Chaucer, Balzac, and Borges have written about it. . . . The *Divine Comedy* is more than a text that professors feel has to be

I'M ON THE SILVER SCREEN? Dante has appeared in *Liar Liar*, *Hannibal*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Ghostbusters II*, *How I Met Your Mother*, *Mad Men*, and *The Sopranos*.

brushed up periodically for students. It's one of the reasons there are professors and students.

WHY SO DIVINE?

Why the exalted status? It is, in part, due to the vivid manner in which Dante described the torments of hell, the uncertainty of purgatory, and the glories of heaven. These are themes every human must come to terms with. The images he left us not only made an indelible mark upon his readers, but on Western civilization itself. Who can look at Pierre Auguste Rodin's statue *The Thinker* contemplating the gates of hell (a scene from *Inferno*) and not be moved as the pit of hell devours its newest residents? Famed poet T. S. Eliot also drew upon Dante's influence in several of his works including "The Waste Land," which echoes scenes of death and hell from the *Inferno*.

Dante's epic poem has even reached into pop culture over the years, especially in America. Perhaps it is so accessible in part because Dante wrote for ordinary Italians in the first place. Aside from films of the poem itself and those countless English-language translations, references and allusions to it have appeared in dozens of movies and television programs: when the popular Yu-Gi-Oh trading card game finds inspiration from the master poet.

Writer Rod Dreher, author of *How Dante Can Save Your Life: The Life-Changing Wisdom of History's Greatest Poem*, wrote recently in the *Wall Street Journal* about Dante rescuing him from depression:

On the evening of Good Friday, a man on the run from a death sentence wakes up in a dark forest, lost, terrified and besieged by wild animals. He spends an infernal Easter week hiking through a dismal cave, climbing up a grueling mountain, and taking what you might call the long way home. It all works out for him, though. The traveler returns from his ordeal a better man, determined to help others learn from his experience. He writes a book about his to-hell-and-back trek, and it's an instant best-seller, making him beloved and famous. For 700 years, that gripping adventure story. . . has been dazzling readers and even changing the lives of some of them. How do I know? Because . . . [it] pretty much saved my own life over the past year.

If testimonies throughout the last 700 years of Western civilization are any evidence, Dreher is not alone. ☐

Rebecca Price Janney is the author of *Who Goes There? A Cultural History of Heaven and Hell*.

From 2,000 years ago to the day before yesterday

The top 25 (in red)and some others we love from our top 100

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (c. 175–185) [#21]

—Apostolic Tradition (c. 200)

—Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (c. 319) [#9]

—The Nicene Creed (325, revised 381) [#7]

—Athanasius, *Life of Antony* (c. 356–362)

—The Apostles' Creed (390 or earlier)

—Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (397, 4th book added in 426) [#18]

—Augustine, *Confessions* (c. 398) [#1]

—Augustine, *On the Trinity* (c. 400–428) [#19]

—Augustine, *City of God* (413–426) [#4]

—Cyril, *On the Unity of Christ* (440)

—Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* (c. 523)

—Benedict, *Rule* (c. 540s) [#11]

—Pope Gregory I ("Gregory the Great"), *Pastoral Rule* (c. 591) [#24]



Dante meets Virgil in the Divine Comedy (14th c.)

—Anselm, *Why God Became Man* (c. 1095–1098) [#17]

—Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* (begun 1136)

—Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (1265–1274) [#2]

—Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy* (c. 1308–1320) [#16]

—Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (1395)

—Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418–1427) [#10]

350 400

—Josephus, *Antiquities* (c. 94)

—Plotinus, *Enneads* (c. 270)

600

—Corpus Juris Civilis [a famous compilation of Roman law] (528–565)

—Qur'an (609–632)

—Beowulf (c. 8th century)

—The Song of Roland (c. 11th century)

—Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose* (1230–1275)

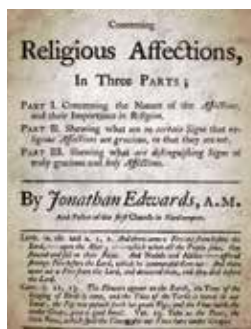
1100



The Qur'an (7th c.)

Here's where the writings described in this issue fall into the sweep of the last 2,000 years of history.
(That history includes some famous non-Christian writings, which you'll find at the bottom of the page.)

- Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans* (c. 1515–1516) [#25]
- Martin Luther, *95 Theses* (1517) [#5]
- Martin Luther, *Freedom of a Christian* (1520) [#14]
- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) [#3]
- Book of Common Prayer* (1549) [#12]
- John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*) (1563)
- Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* (1577)
- John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul* (c. 1578)



**Jonathan Edwards's
Treatise (1746)**

- Westminster Confession (1646) [#20]
- John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) [#6]
- Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Religious Affections* (1746) [#23]
- John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1777) [#22]

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul* (1898)



**Dietrich Bonhoeffer
(1937)**

- Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (1932–1967) [#15]
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937) [#13]
- Thomas Merton, *Seven Storey Mountain* (1948)
- C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1952) [#8]
- Catherine Marshall, *Beyond Ourselves* (1961)
- Martin Luther King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (1963)

1500

1600

Voltaire, *Candide* (1758)

Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1603)

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1532)



William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

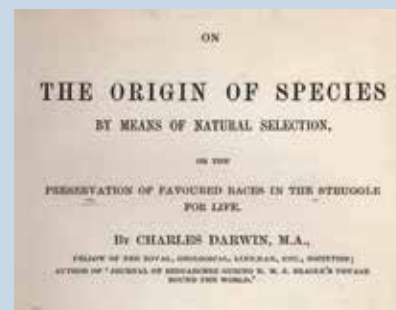
1900

2000

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1925)

Karl Marx and
Fredrich Engels,
Communist Manifesto (1848)

Charles Darwin, *On the
Origin of Species* (1859)



Darwin's Origin of Species (1859)

The straw that broke the camel's back

THE 95 THESES [#5] SPLIT A CHURCH AND REVOLUTIONIZED A CONTINENT

Eric W. Gritsch and the editors



ON OCTOBER 31, 1517, the day before the Feast of All Saints, 33-year-old Martin Luther posted theses against the practice of indulgences on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. (At least, so wrote Philip Melancthon after Luther's death.) The door functioned as a bulletin board for announcements related to academic and church affairs. Whether or not Luther put the theses on the door, he certainly mailed them off that day to his superiors with an annoyed note.

The theses were written in Latin and printed on a folio sheet by John Gruenberg, using the new technology of the printing press. Luther was calling for a "disputation on the power and efficacy of indulgences out of love and zeal for truth and the desire to bring it to light." He did so as a faithful monk and priest who had been appointed professor of biblical theology at the University of Wittenberg—a small, virtually unknown institution in a small town. The man, the school, and the town would soon be "on the map."

Copies of the theses were sent to friends and church officials, but the discussion Luther requested never took place. Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop of Mainz, gave the theses to some theologians who encouraged Albert to send a copy to Rome and demand action against Luther. Within two months,

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP Luther was frequently pictured with Jan Hus despite the fact that Hus died in 1415, well before Luther's birth; here they shepherd God's sheep.

indulgence-seller Johann Tetzel fired back with his own theses, including: "Christians should be taught that the pope, by authority of his jurisdiction, is superior to the entire Catholic Church and its councils, and that they should humbly obey his statutes."

By the early months of 1518, the theses had been reprinted (in German) in many cities, and Luther's name had become associated with demands for radical change in the church. He was front-page news.

THE ISSUE OF INDULGENCES

Luther was calling for a debate on the most distressing issue of his time: the relationship between money and religion. The granting of forgiveness in the sacrament of penance was based on the "power of the keys" given to the apostles according to Matthew 16:18 and was used to discipline sinners. Penitent sinners were asked to show regret for their sins (contrition), confess them to a priest (confession), and do penitential work to pay the temporal penalty for them (satisfaction). Under certain circumstances, someone who was truly contrite and had confessed his or her sins could receive partial (or, rarely, complete) remission of temporal punishment by purchasing a letter of indulgence (from the Latin *indulgentia*—"permit").

Indulgences were issued by executive papal order and by written permission in various bishoprics. By the late eleventh century, it had become customary to issue indulgences to volunteers taking part in crusades to the Holy Land against the Muslims; all sins would be forgiven anyone participating in such an enterprise, deemed dangerous but holy. After 1300 a complete "plenary indulgence" was granted to all pilgrims visiting holy shrines in Rome during "jubilee years" (at first every 100 years, and, eventually, every 25 years).

Abuses soon abounded: permits were issued offering release from all temporal punishment—even from punishment in purgatory—for a specific payment determined by the church. Some popes pursued their "edifice complex" by collecting large sums through the sale of indulgences. Pope Julius II, for example, granted



a “jubilee indulgence” in 1510, the proceeds of which were used to build the new basilica of St. Peter in Rome.

In 1515 Pope Leo X commissioned Albert of Brandenburg to sell indulgences in his lands to complete the building of St. Peter’s. Albert owed a large sum to Rome for having granted him a special dispensation to rule three territories. He borrowed the money from the Fugger family’s bank in Augsburg, which engaged an experienced indulgences salesman, Tetzel, to run the indulgences traffic. One-half of the proceeds went to Albert and the Fuggers, the other half to Rome.

The issue of indulgences had now become linked to the prevalent anxiety regarding death and the final judgment. This anxiety was further fueled by a runaway credit system based on printed money and newly developed banking systems. And when the unknown monk from the unknown town began to read, he could not stand by and watch the church selling grace for profit.

THE MESSAGE OF MARTIN LUTHER

In the *95 Theses*, Luther strongly objected to the abuse of indulgences—most recently under the salesmanship of Tetzel: “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent,’ He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. . . . This shameless preaching of pardons makes it hard even for learned men to defend the pope’s honor against calumny or to answer the indubitably shrewd questions of the laity” (Theses 1, 81).

By 1520 Luther was announcing that baptism is the only “indulgence” necessary for salvation. All of life is a “return to baptism”: one clings to the divine promise of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, who by his life, death, and Resurrection liberated humankind



IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD *Left:* Luther read and wrote widely. *Above:* One 16th-c. bookbinder decorated the cover of Martin Luther’s collected works with . . . Martin Luther.

from all punishment for sin. One lives by trusting in Christ alone and becoming a Christ to the neighbor in need: “Christians should be taught that whoever sees a person in need and, instead of helping him, uses his money for an indulgence, obtains not an indulgence of the pope but the displeasure of God” (Thesis 45).

Luther criticized the papacy, which claimed to have power over every soul: “Why does not the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus [a wealthy Roman nicknamed “Fats,” who died in 53 BC] build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?” (Thesis 87).

Though condemned by church and state, Luther survived the attempts to burn him as a heretic and lived out into old age the message he had preached in 1517: “We should admonish Christians to follow Christ, their Head, through punishment, death, and hell. And so let them set their trust on entering heaven through many tribulations rather than some false security and peace” (Theses 94–95). ¶

Eric W. Gritsch (1931–2012) was professor of church history at Gettysburg Seminary and director of its Institute for Luther Studies. This article is adapted from issues 28 and 34 of Christian History. Read more about Luther in CH 34, 39, and 115.



Robust instruction

JOHN CALVIN'S *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION* [#3]

Jennifer Powell McNutt

IN THE FALL OF 1530, Protestantism began to make headway in the French-speaking areas of Europe when a fiercely passionate, uncompromising, red-haired Frenchman by the name of Guillaume Farel led the Swiss city of Neuchâtel to embrace the “evangelical” cause (as people in the sixteenth century termed the spread of Reformation ideas).

As once-honored medieval Catholic devotions were trampled underfoot, Farel began to turn his sights to the independent republic of Geneva (in modern-day Switzerland). By the middle of the decade, he succeeded in transforming Geneva and breaking it from its former political and religious ties. A new motto for the city emerged to capture the mind-set of an era: *Post tenebras lux*: “Out of the darkness, light.”

A GLOWING CANDLE

Farel’s polemical approach to reformation proved sufficient for spurring French minds and hearts toward radical change. But he recognized that Geneva required a leader better suited to theological and ecclesiological rebuilding of the church. Enter Farel’s friend John Calvin (1509–1564).

MONUMENTAL The 20th-c. Reformers’ Wall in Geneva pictures (l-r) Farel, Calvin, Theodore Beza, and John Knox under the motto “Out of the darkness, light.”

Calvin’s skill at weaving Scripture and theology together in one narrative with breadth, order, and relevance to the era was exactly what was needed. Without a doubt, Calvin’s masterpiece of theology—the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*—influenced the Reformed tradition for centuries and contributed to Geneva’s growing reputation among friends and foes as the “Mother Church” of French Protestants (Huguenots) and the “Rome of Protestantism.”

For early Protestants the image of light, set forth in Geneva’s motto, represented the Gospel that had been long hidden, obscured, and extinguished by the medieval church and even the devil himself. The famous seventeenth-century Dutch print *The Light Is Restored to the Candlestick* features a table surrounded by reformers with a candle as the centerpiece. (A similar painting from Germany appears on p. 39 of *CH* 115.) Martin Luther and John Calvin, the foremost leaders of the Protestant Reformation, sit at the center of the table on

EXALTING THE WORD ... *Right:* Reformed Protestants in Geneva and elsewhere (this image is from Antwerp) frequently removed art, now deemed idolatrous in the church, from formerly Catholic places of worship.

... **AND THE WORDS** *Below:* Calvin certainly wrote lots of words, and one of his admirers decided to make this portrait of him out of excerpts from his own writings!

either side of the candle. In the foreground a pope, a cardinal, a monk, and a demon try to blow out the light of the candle—but to no avail.

Calvin's contemporaries felt as though their message had dramatically invaded early-modern Europe. An unprecedented outpouring of Scripture in the common languages appeared in order to educate a biblically illiterate culture. Such widespread access to Scripture was by all accounts exceptional in European history. A seismic shift had occurred—from copying biblical manuscripts by hand during the medieval era to the use of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century.

The staggering increase of Bibles shaped the culture of Christendom, both elite and popular, as never before. Preaching filled the streets. Religious conversations dominated the din at alehouses. People purchased, read aloud, and passed on inexpensive theological pamphlets. Images and songs diffused the Protestant message with persistence. Scripture was increasingly promoted as the focus of personal devotion and family devotional life. The first generation of reformers felt a vibrant optimism. Luther famously declared that “nowadays a girl or boy of 15 knows more about Christian doctrine than did all the theologians of the great universities in the old days.”

Yet, as the Protestant Reformation unfolded, it became clear that more robust instruction for the laity and those training for ministry was still needed. Luther's friend Melancthon found, in a 1528 visitation of parishes in Germany, a widespread lack of knowledge of basic elements of the Christian faith like the Lord's Prayer. This discovery spurred on the publication of Luther's *Large* and *Small Catechisms*. It was evident that Christians needed guidance to understand better the story of human salvation. Calvin provided even more of that guidance, though it seemed unlikely at the beginning.

NOT SEEKING THE LIMELIGHT

Calvin, a Frenchman, had set his sights on a secluded, scholarly life. Trained in law, shaped by a cutting-edge humanist education, and self-taught in theology, Calvin is considered one of the most brilliant minds in Christian history. By 1533 he had embraced the reformers' cause and found himself running from Parisian authorities bent on linking him to Lutheran ideas.



In 1534 King Francis I's enactment of a royal policy of persecution against French Protestants dramatically transformed Calvin's life. From that point on, he lived in exile among Swiss and Genevans. In the position of both refugee and pilgrim, Calvin dedicated his life to advancing the church in Geneva as pastor and author and assisting French-speaking communities that faced tremendous obstacles and persecution.

But Calvin's contribution to the church extended well beyond the confines of continental Europe. The *Institutes* was not just a synthesis of theological understanding grounded in Scripture, nor merely a blueprint for Reformed church order. At its core Calvin saw it as a confession of faith for the church universal.



BASE OF OPERATIONS Left: Calvin preached frequently at St. Pierre Cathedral in Geneva and adopted it as his home church.

OK, YOU CAN HIRE HIM Below: Calvin sent this letter to his friend Farel in 1551 to recommend its bearer as a schoolteacher.

Over the course of the 1530s and 1540s, besides developing and expanding his *Institutes*, Calvin also wrote prefaces for his cousin's French translation of the Bible, as well as a confession of faith (1536) and *Catechism or Instruction of the Christian Religion of the Church of Geneva* (1537). All exhibit significant continuity with the first edition of the *Institutes*. Though Calvin did not join the ministry leadership of Geneva until 1536 (when Farel urged him to do so), he was already developing resources aimed at providing theological guidance for the church.

A PASTOR EMERGES

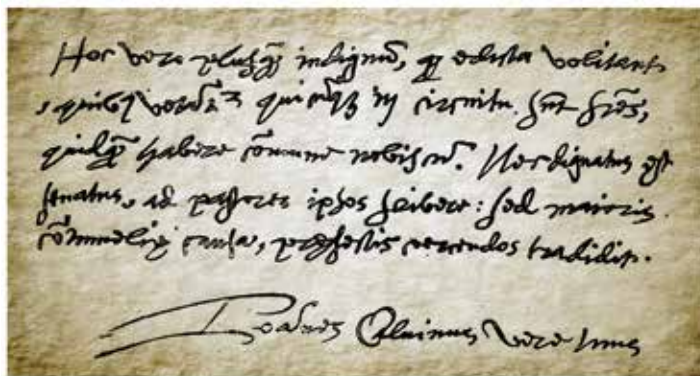
Meanwhile the Reformation in Geneva was far from stable. In 1538 the tables turned on Farel and Calvin, exiled from

the city after a tug-of-war dispute with the state over church authority and discipline. Calvin, once again homeless, took refuge in Strasbourg under the auspices of another mentor, reformer Martin Bucer. He thrived there as pastor of a French congregation, lecturer at the Strasbourg Academy, and newly married husband to widow Idelette de Bure. Emotional healing from his recent hardship and renewed conviction in his calling helped to spur Calvin's work forward.

During his time in Strasbourg, Calvin expanded his Latin *Institutes* by 11 chapters in 1539, revising the title to make it clearer that the work was a systematic treatment of doctrine. He turned his attention to equipping clergy in their study of Scripture; this edition contains an expanded focus on Romans coinciding with Calvin's commentary on Paul's epistle published that same year.

Calvin the scholar increasingly moved in the direction of pastor and teacher with the emergence of his first French edition of the *Institutes* in 1541. By writing in French, he was reaching out not only to clergy but also to laity, who would not have been able to read Latin, at an entirely new depth. In that same year, he accepted an invitation to return to Geneva.

Calvin was finally satisfied with his Latin edition of the *Institutes* in 1559. Overall the work was intended as a companion to Scripture and to Calvin's commentaries. By the end he had substantially expanded the book in range and altered its organization. For example his explanation of justification by faith broadened, based



In March 1536 Calvin's first edition emerged, a short summary of Reformed doctrine published in Latin. It contained striking similarities in content and structure to Luther's own *Small Catechism* (1529). Dedicating the work to King Francis I, Calvin strove to endear the king to the Protestant cause by denying rumors of political subversion and theological innovation. Instead Calvin identified the core of the Protestant effort to be restoring the "True Church," the body of believers marked by the right preaching of the Word and the right administration of the two Protestant sacraments, baptism and the Eucharist.

Though Francis I's reign ended with his death in 1547, Calvin's dedication continued to be printed with every edition of the *Institutes* (he kept expanding and revising the work until 1559) as an ongoing reminder of the work's motivation and context.

BORN IN STRUGGLE The *Westminster Confession's* enduring statements originated out of civil war between King Charles I and the English Parliament. Even today it remains a good place to start in understanding the mainstream of traditional Protestant theology.

not only on his belief that it was the “main hinge on which all religion turns,” but also due to his involvement in ecumenical discussions—like the Colloquy of Regensburg (1541), an unsuccessful meeting attempting to reconcile Protestants and Catholics over the doctrine of justification.

By the last edition, the *Institutes* was divided into four books addressing matters relating to God the Creator, Jesus Christ the Savior, the Holy Spirit, and the nature and functions of the church. Calvin’s followers embraced his emphases on piety, divine providence, the impact of sin, his notion of “double grace,” the work of the Holy Spirit, his doctrine of double predestination, and union with Christ.

These eight emphases shaped much subsequent Christian doctrine and, more important to Calvin, Christian piety, which he called “reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces.” At its core the *Institutes* urges others toward a life dedicated to honoring God in both word and deed.

The legacy of Calvin and his *Institutes* is immense, impacting the church broadly and the Reformed tradition in particular, from fiery Scottish reformer John Knox in the sixteenth century to Swiss theologian Karl Barth in the twentieth (see “In defiance of the Gods,” pp. 41–42). The questions that Christians grappled with in Calvin’s day continue to surface in our time. While his *Institutes* is very much of its time, it is also surprisingly relevant for any thinking Christian today. In many ways the *Institutes* represents Calvin’s coat-of-arms (which shows a hand holding a heart) in action; here is doctrine and piety in the form of a burning heart held out to the world. **■**

Jennifer Powell McNutt is associate professor of theology and history of Christianity at Wheaton College and the author of *Calvin Meets Voltaire*.

Westminster Confession of Faith [#20]

Generations of children have grown up with the memorable beginning of the *Westminster Catechism*: “What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and enjoy him forever.”

But this statement arose from strife. In 1643 Parliament authorized the calling of an “Assembly of Divines” to bring English Protestantism more in line with the rest of Europe, including Presbyterian Scotland. By the time the theologians actually met, civil war had broken out. Some Anglican bishops did not attend due to loyalty to the king. Meanwhile the Scottish church sent delegates, making the assembly predominantly Presbyterian. It abolished bishops and the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), and in 1646 (the same year the king was defeated) drew up the *Westminster Confession*.

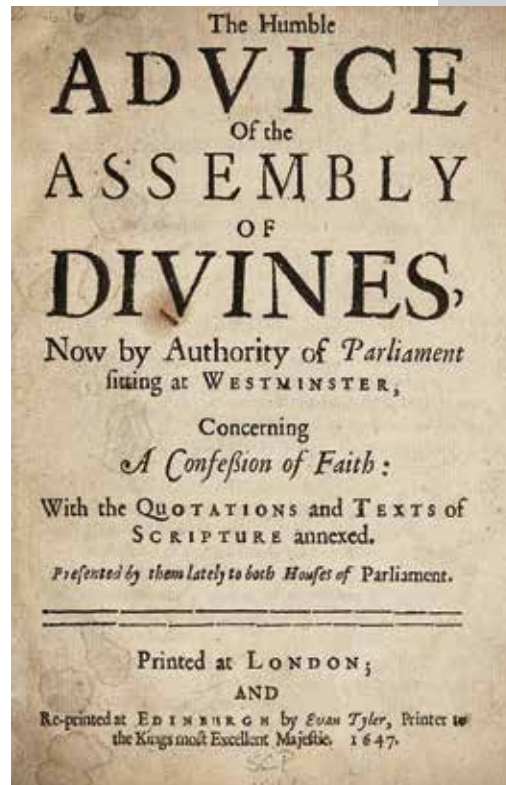
In 1660 the monarchy returned to power, bringing bishops and the BCP back with it. Clergy who refused to conform were kicked out of Anglicanism, forming “dissenting” denominations. In 1689 the king gave up trying to force bishops on the Scots. The *Confession* became the foundation of Scottish religion, its catechisms taught to every schoolchild.

The *Confession* sees Scripture as foundational: “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or... may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.” Yet it also admits that some practical matters of liturgy and church government may be resolved by

“the light of nature and Christian prudence.”

The *Confession* also argues that God ordains whatever happens without either being the “author of evil” or taking away free will, and has “predestinated” some people to everlasting life and “foreordained” others to everlasting death. Good works are the inevitable fruit of justification but not in any sense the basis for our acceptance by God. It also affirms Calvin’s view that believers truly and spiritually feed on the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist and proclaims that the church is both “invisible” (all the elect, ultimately known only to God) and “visible” (where the Word is preached and the sacraments properly administered).

The *Confession* failed to unify British Protestantism, but it had a deep impact on faith and culture. And even to those like myself who don’t subscribe to confessional Calvinism, its majestic sentences ring in the mind like a bell. —Edwin Woodruff Tait



CRUEL CHRONICLE Right: Scholars recognize the value of Foxe's sources; but it's the narrative he created from those originals that made him a household name.

INNER JOURNEY Far right: In one of Teresa's visions, an angel thrust a spear into her side which caused her to love God more deeply.

ANGUISHED CRY Below: John of the Cross, shown here at his desk, ended up imprisoned, with no clothing and little food, in a cell so small he had to stand up to read his prayer book.



BOOK OF MARTYRS

I was 14 when I discovered John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563) in my grandparents' basement. Sitting on a pile of old newspapers with a sump pump whirring, I devoured the pages. Both repulsed and fascinated, I could not lay it aside.

Before reading Foxe (1516–1587), I had some idea of cruelty. But to deliberately, systematically torment others because they were followers of Christ was beyond my comprehension.

Foxe's original aim was to show that England was God's chosen nation and that its sixteenth-century martyrs, executed by Henry VIII and Queen Mary, were part of a tradition that stretched back to the apostles. His 1,800-page book, originally titled *Actes and Monuments*, spread a vision of Protestant heroism that helped alienate British Protestants from Roman Catholicism. Although the book's politics soon grew dated, its stories of heroic Christians are timeless; millions of Jesus followers around the world face such realities today. Demand never waned. Dozens of editions are still sold on Amazon. —*Dan Graves*

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

"In a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning," said F. Scott Fitzgerald, but he wasn't the first to use the phrase. It derived from Reformation-era Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross (1542–1591).

In his early twenties, John became a member of the Carmelite order of friars. Three years later he joined forces with Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582), a Carmelite nun who wished the order to return to its stricter and more primitive roots: silence, abstinence from meat, evangelization, and simple clothing—including no shoes. Their reform efforts led to confrontation with other Carmelites, and John was



imprisoned in 1578. Around this time he composed *The Dark Night of the Soul*, which spoke of dying to all things to reach union with God: "These dense darknesses have deprived [the soul] of all satisfaction—love alone . . . makes her soar to God in an unknown way along the road of solitude." Later Christians found the term described seeming absences of God in their own lives; I am one of them. It's such a part of Western culture that fantasy writer Douglas Adams even parodied it in *The*

Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul.—*Jennifer Woodruff Tait*

INTERIOR CASTLE

My appreciation for Teresa of Ávila was originally rooted in Robert Boyd Munger's *My Heart Christ's Home* (1951) and its interior journey through five rooms and a closet in the soul. Reading it as a college student, it struck me: Jesus said we're all building the house of our lives on something (Matt. 7:24–29) and filling it with something (Matt. 12:25–30).

Later I discovered Teresa's *Interior Castle* (1577). Four centuries before Munger, Teresa envisioned the human soul as a crystal globe resembling a castle. She wrote of seven successive mansion-courts of meeting our Lord in deeper prayer; the innermost room brought communion with Christ. Teresa's life as reformer led her to become the first woman named a "Doctor of the Church."

All along my movement from initially "inviting Jesus into my heart" to increasingly "turning over title and management" of the spaces and "rooms" in my castle have meant a disciple's journey across life seasons.—*James D. Smith III, professor and pastor*

Solid, scriptural, rational

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER [#12]

JOHN WESLEY [#22] wrote of the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), “I believe there is no Liturgy in the world . . . which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety than the *Common Prayer* of the Church of England.” Modern mystery writer P. D. James noted its influences on everyone from John Bunyan [#6] to “the majestic phrases of John Milton” to Defoe, Thackeray, the Brontës, Coleridge, Eliot, and Sayers. Phrases like “till death do us part” and “ashes to ashes, dust to dust” have entered common speech. Eighty million Anglicans still use the book in worship worldwide. Not a bad achievement for a liturgy originally written by a committee.

ONE BOOK FOR ONE KINGDOM

When Henry VIII broke with Rome, he made no changes in the Latin liturgies used in worship. But when his nine-year-old son Edward VI came to the throne in 1547, reform-minded church leaders seized the opportunity to standardize, coordinate, and translate an entire book of prayer into English.

One such reformer was Thomas Cranmer, who all agree had the largest hand in the book’s composition. He rose from a modest middle-class family to become a priest and a Cambridge don, and came to Henry VIII’s attention in the late 1520s while applying legal assistance to Henry’s attempted annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Having already gone against Catholic regulations by marrying the niece of leading reformer Osiander, Cranmer was soon appointed as archbishop of Canterbury through the maneuvers of Anne Boleyn, Henry’s mistress and future wife.


At the time the BCP was published, the most commonly used rite was the “Sarum rite” from Salisbury. But others floated around the kingdom; no fewer than four different books might be needed for any service. Furthermore, the reformers complained, the plain reading of Scripture was interfered with by “uncertain stories, Legends, Responses, Verses, vain repetitions, Commemorations” that cluttered up the order of worship and the yearly calendar. All of this would be changed, they hoped, by a clear and accessible English book.

We know very little about the writing of the book; church records perished in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The First Act of Uniformity in 1549 referred to a group of “learned men of this realm,” led by Cranmer, compiling “one convenient . . . fashion of common and open prayer and administration of the sacraments.” They seem to have met at least twice in 1548 to do their



KING’S MAN Cranmer supported Henry through all of his marriages and divorces, and he served Edward VI loyally.

work. The requirement that the book be used from June 1549 onward triggered riots by people sympathetic to the Catholic liturgy, claiming the new one was “like a Christmas game.” The only surviving sermon by Cranmer denounces this rebellion against his new book.

When Edward’s Roman Catholic half sister Mary I, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, came to the throne, Cranmer was executed for supporting a rebellion against her—as well as for his continued use of the BCP, which he called “more pure and according to God’s word, than any that hath been used in England these thousand years.” His dramatic execution formed one of the centerpieces of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* (see p. 32), but his book survived kings, queens, and numerous revisions to remain the living worship language of millions. 

Jennifer Woodruff Tait is managing editor of *Christian History*.



BURDENED BY GUILT Artist William Blake is one of many who have illustrated the stages of Christian's journey.

mended pots and pans, he served briefly in the English Civil War on the Parliamentary (anti-Anglican and antimonarchy) side.

An intense inner conflict, described in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), brought Bunyan to the assurance that his sins were indeed forgiven. He joined a nonconformist congregation that met in the local Anglican church—this was during the “Commonwealth,” when radical Puritans controlled the government and tolerated a wide variety of Protestant movements.

After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Bunyan's congregation was ejected from the parish church. Shortly afterward he was arrested under an Elizabethan law banning unauthorized religious gatherings. The law was not often enforced, but the newly restored regime was taking no chances.

Bunyan spent the next 12 years in prison. While there he probably began his most famous work, *Pilgrim's Progress*. After his release Bunyan devoted himself to full-time preaching and traveling throughout the region and even to London. In 1678 *Pilgrim's Progress* was published and quickly became a best seller. In 1682 he followed it up with the less successful *Holy War*. Six years later, caught in a storm on one of his travels, he died of the resulting fever.

Pilgrim's Progress, a gripping adventure story with theological dialogues, reflects both Bunyan's Calvinist convictions and

the landscape and culture of seventeenth-century rural England. For example, village crosses dotted the English landscape, and one in particular matches a description in Bunyan's book. Bunyan the Puritan presumably disapproved of outward images, but Bunyan the author drew this Catholic image into the heart of his stoutly Protestant book.

Part 1, most famous today, tells the story of Christian and his pilgrimage from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Part 2 tells of his wife, Christiana, who sets out to follow her husband and traverses the same landscape.

Christiana's journey is more communal than Christian's; she starts out with her sons and a female friend named Mercy and welcomes other companions as she travels. Unlike Christian she has a guide for much of the way, Mr. Greatheart, generally understood to be Bunyan's portrait of the ideal pastor. This

“Be of good cheer”

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS [#6] EXPLORES THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY

Edwin Woodruff Tait

JOHN BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress* presents the Christian life as a pilgrimage “from this world to that which is to come,” a view that dominated Christian thought for centuries.

In medieval theology a Christian was a *viator* (pilgrim), who was *in via* (on the way), yet still *in patria* (in the homeland). The metaphor was powerful since medieval Christians spent a lot of time traveling on foot and sometimes made literal pilgrimages to holy places. Through Bunyan this medieval idea became the defining form of such imagery in the evangelical mind for generations.

PUT IN AND CAST OUT

Bunyan himself, though, was, at first glance, about as far removed from medieval Catholicism as it's possible to be. Born in 1628 in Bedfordshire in the English Midlands, the son of a “tinker,” or traveling handyman who

two-part structure lets Bunyan contrast those features of the Christian life that he considered essential, such as conversion, with those that he recognized would vary from one person to another.

TRYING TO LOSE THE BURDEN

Christian's journey shows Bunyan's understanding (and that of most Puritans of his time) of the proper shape of the Christian life. He leaves the City of Destruction under the pressure of guilt and fear and is directed to the "wicket gate" (conversion) by Evangelist.

Stuck in the Slough of Despond, he nearly gives up but perseveres, only to meet Mr. Worldly Wiseman who persuades him that Mr. Legality can get rid of his burden. (In other words, he hopes to allay his guilt by a strict program of moral behavior rather than by genuine conversion.)

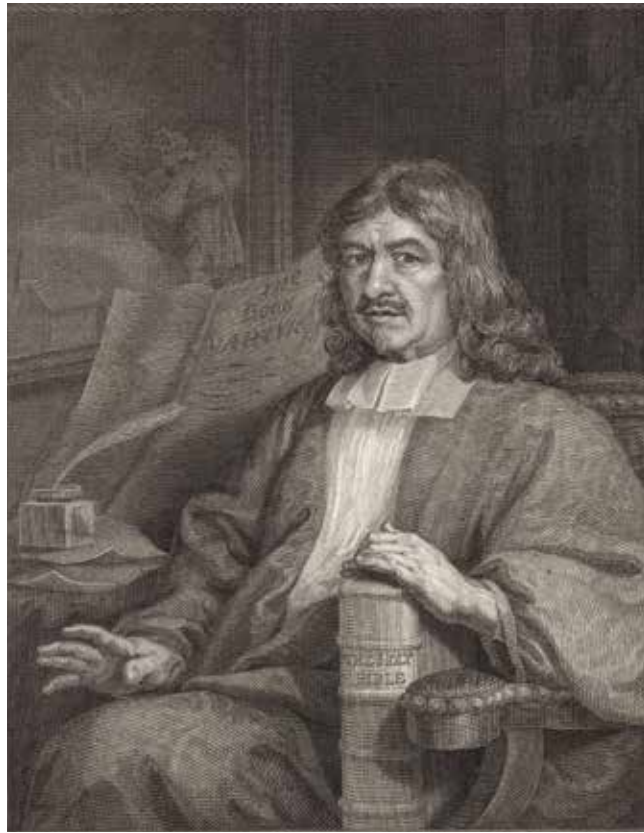
On his way to Mr. Legality's house, however, he has to pass under Mt. Sinai (the genuine demands of God's law), which frightens him back to the right road. He enters the wicket gate, is shown visions in the Interpreter's House to instruct him in the nature of the new life he has begun, and then comes to a cross, where the burden falls off his back. The multi-stage nature of Christian's conversion confuses some readers but reflects Bunyan's own experience and understanding of how people come to an assurance of saving faith.

After losing his burden, Christian climbs the Hill of Difficulty, rests at a beautiful palace, and then descends into the Valley of Humiliation. Here he meets Apollyon (the devil) who reproaches him for treason against the lawful king, one of a number of political references in the book, and attacks him with fiery darts. Armed with the armor of Ephesians 6, Christian is able to defeat Apollyon, only to encounter the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Escaping the valley he meets a fellow pilgrim named Faithful. Both are arrested and put on trial in the city of Vanity Fair; Faithful is burned at the stake. Vanity Fair, like so much else in the book, is both a generalized picture of "worldliness" and a satire of the materialism and pride of England during the Restoration period, when cultural elites embraced worldly honor, conspicuous consumption, and sexual exploitation. Against this Puritans held up an ideal of humility, simple dress, and nonresistance to insult and injury.

Christian gains a new companion, Hopeful, a citizen of Vanity Fair converted through the martyrdom of Faithful. The two proceed to conquer Doubt and Despair and finally reach the "land of Beulah," a place of spiritual maturity and peace just on the near side of the river dividing them from the Celestial City. They cross the river (death) and are welcomed into the city.

The stages of Christian's journey and the challenges he meets along the way are ingrained in evangelical



SEEKING SOLACE This engraving shows Bunyan with his Bible and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (see p. 32), both of which consoled him during 12 years in prison.

spirituality, even for people who have not read the book. It was, along with the Bible, one of the first books I read (at the age of about four or five), and its key moments continue to shape my own Christian experience. The moment in Part 1 when Christian and Hopeful cross the river of death stays with me perhaps more than any other:

And with that a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian, so that he could not see before him. Also here he in a great measure lost his senses, so that he could neither remember nor orderly talk of any of those sweet refreshments that he had met with in the way of his pilgrimage. . . . He had horror of mind, and heart—fears that he should die in that river, and never obtain entrance in at the gate.

His companion, Hopeful, holds up Christian's head and comforts him with the assurance: "Be of good cheer, my brother: I feel the bottom, and it is good."

In our own moments of doubt and despair today, we can look to those, like Bunyan, who hold up our heads in the river and tell us that their feet touch bottom. ■

Edwin Woodruff Tait is consulting editor of Christian History. Portions of this article appeared in CH issue 112.



Not concerning the heart but the life

JONATHAN EDWARDS'S *TREATISE* [#23] AND JOHN WESLEY'S *PLAIN ACCOUNT* [#22]

William Kostlevy

THEY WERE THE TWO GIANTS of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival. Fitting for men from a century known as the “Age of Reason,” both were university-trained, articulate defenders of faith they believed reasonable. But reason was not all. They saw love as the fountain and heart-warmed affections—we might use the word “emotions” today—as a stream (to use Edwards’s words) that waters an interior life that flowers into holy actions.

OPPOSITES ATTACK

Ironically, Calvinist Edwards (1703–1758) and Arminian Wesley (1703–1791) each considered the other’s theological posture an abomination. For famed preacher Edwards, proud heir of Puritans, Arminianism reduced Christianity to an outward moral code without a divinely induced personal experience of salvation grounding an authentic Christian life. As he wrote in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), “True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.”

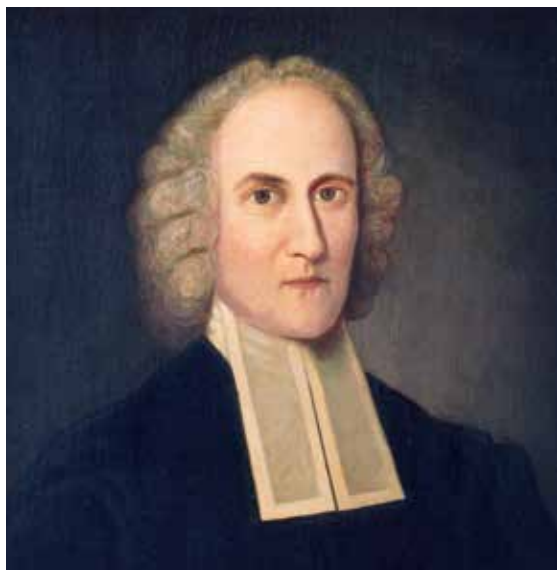
For Anglican Wesley, Calvinism—more pointedly, the doctrine of predestination—undermined human

PREACHING THE PLAIN GOSPEL This painting, once thought to be of John Wesley, shows an 18th-century evangelical preacher holding forth.

effort and good work and led to lawlessness. In biting satire aimed at August Toplady, author of beloved hymn “Rock of Ages,” Wesley wrote, “The elect will be saved do what they will; the reprobate will be damned, do what they can.” He abridged Edwards’s *Treatise* for his followers from 346 pages to a mere 69, assuring readers that “out of this dangerous heap, wherein much wholesome food is mixed with much deadly poison, I have selected many remarks and admonitions which may be of great use to the children of God.”

Still Edwards’s attacks on Arminianism and Wesley’s forays against Calvinism do not tell the whole story. Indeed, isolated from the context of their works and their lives these differences are downright misleading, for Edwards’s *Treatise* and Wesley’s most reprinted controversial work, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, have much in common. Both were primarily written to defend their movements, not

SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE Below: Edwards's works are much broader and deeper than his famed sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."



from external enemies, but from the excesses of their supporters.

SEEKING EXPERIENCE OR SEEKING HOLINESS

Edwards's work on religious affections, delivered first in 1742–1743 as a series of sermons at the Connecticut River Valley church that he had served with distinction since 1726, did not appear in book form until 1746. It was the fourth work on a subject near and dear to its author: revivals of religion.

Edwards's earlier works on revival had been primarily narratives. This work was theological, introspective, and critical. Edwards had learned through bitter experience that revival declined through emotional excesses of people seeking a religious experience instead of a holy life. Edwards believed that experience could often be misleading: "living on experiences, and not on Christ is more abominable in the sight of God, than gross immoralities of those who make no pretenses to religion."

Edwards also wanted to answer critics of revival itself such as Charles Chauncy. Chauncy, pastor of Boston's Old Brick Church, openly attacked revival's use of fear and appeal to "vulgar sentiments." Horrified by irregular preaching or exhorting by unauthorized "young men or lads" and even women, who were often not above attacking the clergy themselves, Chauncy feared that revivals exploited emotions and threatened the fragile social order. The *Treatise* is Edwards's thoughtful defense of the role of emotions in Christian experience and a detailed warning about the dangers of a misplaced emphasis.

On the surface *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1777) is a very different work. A compilation of Wesley's



HOLINESS OF HEART AND LIFE Above: Wesley unapologetically championed the possibility of a life of Christian perfection.

writings on Christian perfection over nearly 30 years, it begins with an essay explaining Wesley's controversial views on the subject and includes excerpts from Charles Wesley's hymns and the tract *The Character of a Methodist*, which Wesley called his first description of a "perfect Christian."

But the heart of *A Plain Account* consists of Wesley's response to the explosion of claims of "full salvation" or Christian perfection among his followers that occurred in the decade after 1757. Extravagant claims by untrained but zealous followers, including setting a date for the second coming of Christ, led to the expulsion of several London preachers and their followers from the Methodist societies.

In their search for the character of true religion, both authors found similar answers. In words that could have been written by Wesley, Edwards proclaimed that "Christian practice or a holy life is a great and distinguishing sign of true saving grace." Edwards, the Calvinist, and Wesley, the Arminian, both saw Christian practice as the product of a supernatural new birth and as Christianity's distinguishing mark. Both viewed Christian love not as an emotional experience but as an underlying spiritual reality. Wesley, in a fitting summary of his and Edwards's view of how one identifies a "real" Christian, wrote in 1747: "The question is not concerning the heart but the life." ■

William Kostlevy is director of the Brethren Historical Library and Archives.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

The story is apocryphal, but telling: upon Harriet Beecher Stowe's being ushered into the presence of Abraham Lincoln in 1862 while the Civil War was raging, the president supposedly greeted her with the words, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war."

Few novels have transformed American society as much. Stowe (1811–1896) wrote over 30 books—including children's books, biographies, and advice manuals—but this one made her name. It appeared in response to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act that required that all citizens try to recapture fugitive slaves, as well as to her sister-in-law's urging, "If I could use a pen as you can, Hatty, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." Stowe succeeded.

The daughter of famed American preacher Lyman Beecher and his wife, Roxanna, Stowe was one of 11 children, all socially active. Her brother, Henry Ward Beecher, was a well-known late-nineteenth-century preacher; her oldest sister, Catharine, founded schools for women; and her youngest sister, Isabella, founded the National Women's Suffrage Association.

Stowe originally released the book as a newspaper serial (chapter by chapter, a common way to release novels in the nineteenth

century) in early 1852. When it came out as a complete book later in the year, it sold 10,000 copies in its first week. In just 12 months, nearly 2,000,000 copies were sold in the United States and Great Britain combined.

Stowe followed the book up with an even more radically abolitionist story, *Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856), continuing to preach the message she had urged in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: "The enslaving of the African race is a clear violation of the great law which commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves." —Jennifer Woodruff Tait

THE STORY OF A SOUL

A young, impulsive, French Roman Catholic girl who asked at the age of 15 to be committed to a convent seems an odd spiritual model for a Protestant, married, middle-aged woman. Yet from the moment I read about Thérèse (1873–1897) in Kathleen Norris's *The Cloister Walk* in my early twenties, I've felt a great love for this excitable teenage saint.



TEENAGE DISCIPLE Above: Thérèse (pictured here on a homemade shrine) was the youngest of five sisters who all eventually became nuns.

WISE WRITER Left: Social activism powered by Christian conviction ran in Stowe's family.

Born in Lisieux, France, to parents who had considered becoming members of religious orders themselves, Thérèse was one of nine children (five survived infancy). Influenced by her devout family, frequent illness, and *The Imitation of Christ* [#10], Thérèse petitioned to enter the same Carmelite convent as several older sisters. Her parents approved, but church bureaucrats did not because of her age. She obtained an audience with the pope to ask his support, writing home to one of her sisters about the 77-year-old Leo XIII, "The Pope is so old that you would think he is dead." Eventually the church relented.

Thérèse was happy in the convent until her final years, when she wrestled with both a dark night of the soul (see p. 32) and tuberculosis. She died at age 24, but left behind an autobiography called *The Story of a Soul*, written at the urging of her sister Pauline who by then was the convent's abbess.

Published after her death, it touched millions with what she called her "little way" of faith: "I will seek out a means of getting to Heaven by a little way—very short and very straight, a little way that is wholly new . . . thine Arms, then, O Jesus, are the lift which must raise me up even unto Heaven. To get there I need not grow; on the contrary, I must remain little, I must become still less." —Jennifer Woodruff Tait



The intelligent layperson

MERE CHRISTIANITY [#8] EXPLAINED FAITH TO A WARTIME AUDIENCE

David Neff

WHEN WORLD WAR II BROKE OUT in September 1939, hardly anyone had heard of C. S. Lewis. By the end of the war, he was one of England's best-known spokesmen for the Christian faith.

In May 1941 letters from "an elderly retired devil to a young devil who has just started work" began appearing in the *Guardian*. The *Screwtape Letters* reflected wartime themes with God as "the Enemy" and fictional devils as fierce as the German bombs falling on Britain. It established Lewis as a Christian who could write about spiritual truth with wit and imagination.

When Maurice Edwards, chief chaplain of the RAF (Royal Air Force), asked Lewis to speak to the troops about spiritual matters, he readily agreed. Unfortunately Lewis, who had taught philosophy and literature as a tutor at Oxford University since 1924, had no idea how to speak to nonscholarly audiences. In an April 1941 lecture to RAF chaplains, he discussed linguistic analysis in Pauline soteriology. The chaplains fidgeted. One openly did a crossword. Afterward Lewis wrote to a friend that his talk was "a complete failure," taking comfort in the fact that "God used an ass to convert the prophet."

ON CALL Lewis had fought in World War I and wanted to serve his country again, but was too old for active duty. He served by writing and speaking instead.

Lewis learned from his initial failures as a speaker. Reminded that the RAF chaplains were "probing life in the raw and trying to do something about it," he began choosing more down-to-earth topics. He would soon have a broader audience.

CHAMPION OF RELIGION

In wartime the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) reduced its multiple radio channels to one to give the nation a unified source of information, entertainment, and inspiration. Sunday hours previously dedicated to rebroadcasting church services were now taken over by entertainment. The religion department, led by James Welch, scrambled to create new programming that addressed serious questions of wartime.

Welch, intrigued by Lewis's first book of Christian apologetics, *The Problem of Pain* (1940), wondered if Lewis could become his on-air champion of religion, just as other BBC departments employed voices on wartime gardening, cooking, and health. In February 1941



SEAT OF LEARNING Lewis composed many of his writings in his faculty rooms at Magdalen College, Oxford.

Welch wrote Lewis to propose a series of talks on either modern literature or Christian belief.

Modern literature held no interest for Lewis, but he had another idea: talks on the objective nature of right and wrong. When the New Testament preaches repentance, Lewis wrote, it presupposes that its hearers have a sense of the moral law and their failure to live by it. Not so in today's Britain, he said.

Welch had promised Lewis "more than a million" "fairly intelligent" listeners, but the 7:45 p.m. time slot was not favorable: Lewis went on right after a news broadcast in Norwegian and just before a folklore festival in Welsh. Nevertheless, everything went off without a hitch.

Letters from listeners began to arrive. The day after the first series concluded, Welch's colleague Eric Fenn asked Lewis for another on specifically Christian beliefs. Soon publisher Geoffrey Bles also contacted him, asking to publish the first set of talks—and any yet unwritten—in book form. To both men Lewis said yes.

The second set of talks outlined central Christian beliefs using the language of war. We live in "enemy-occupied territory," Lewis said; "Christianity is the story of how a rightful King has landed" in disguise. In these broadcasts Lewis made his most famous apologetic point: you can't accept Jesus as a great moral teacher without accepting his claim to be God. A mere mortal who "said the sort of things Jesus said" would "either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he's a poached egg—or else he'd be the Devil of Hell."

Eventually Lewis agreed to a third series on Christian behavior; when a fourth was requested,

he produced talks about the Trinity, Resurrection, and Ascension among other doctrines.

Lewis and Fenn worked together well until Fenn told him that Lewis's time slot had been moved to 10:20 p.m. Lewis was furious. He would have to catch the midnight train from London back home to Oxford and not get to bed until 3 a.m. "Who the devil is going to listen at 10:20?" he wrote. "If you know the address of any reliable firm of assassins, nose-slitters, garrotters and poisoners I should be grateful to have it!" The fourth series aired in 1944 and once again received enthusiastic response. The BBC came back asking for more. No, said Lewis. Repeatedly. Broadcasting had lost its allure, and key Allied victories meant more young people were returning to Oxford as students. Lewis's radio career was over.

LIFE-CHANGING BOOK

What is the legacy of Lewis's broadcasts? First, *Mere Christianity* itself—"mere" not in the contemporary connotation of "lowest common denominator," but in older meanings: "genuine," "pure," "nothing less than." To avoid any hint of denominationalism, Lewis asked four prominent clergymen—Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic—to vet the talks. He got four thumbs up. Bles published the book in 1952. It went on to sell over 200,000,000 copies in 30 languages. It also changed lives.

Second, Lewis helped to create a genre of Christian publishing marked by informed simplicity, clarity, and imagination. Eric Fenn guided Lewis not only in writing to a specific length, but also in speaking in short, unadorned sentences for radio, addressing the experiences of common folk.

Third, Lewis's broadcast talks proved that an intelligent, informed layperson could expound historic Christian orthodoxy without kowtowing to ecclesiastical or academic gatekeepers.

Finally, Lewis demonstrated the power of the imagination combined with rational analysis. Either one without the other creates lopsided Christians. Together they prepared Lewis's contemporaries to cope during wartime. Today, more than 70 years after Lewis's last radio broadcast, his unique blend of imagination and analysis continues to speak. ■

David Neff is retired editor in chief of Christianity Today.



In defiance of the gods

BARTH (#15) AND BONHOEFFER (#13) RESISTED NAZI RELIGION

Roy Stults

KARL BARTH and Dietrich Bonhoeffer: well-known theologians, true, but perhaps just as famous for seeing through Nazism as a false religion and Hitler as a false god. Barth's *Church Dogmatics* (1932–1967) and Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937) both came from a desire to resist Hitler and the Nazi state.

FIGHTING EVIL WITH BOOKS

Barth (1886–1968) was about two decades older than Bonhoeffer. Having been educated in Switzerland and Germany, by the early 1910s, he was a young father of two and pastor of a small Reformed country church in Safenwil, Switzerland.

There he reacted strongly against many of his liberal teachers who supported the “Manifesto of the Ninety-three German Intellectuals to the Civilized World” (1914), signed by Barth’s former teacher Adolf von Harnack. The manifesto championed Germany’s aims in WWI and represented a theology that, Barth felt, identified God too closely with culture rather than the Word of God. Barth’s response: a book. His groundbreaking commentary on the book of Romans spelled out his theology in defiance of such cultural Christianity. This led to a teaching job in Germany in 1921 and his rise to prominence as a theologian.

CENTERED ON CHRIST *Left:* Barth wrote that humans “cannot make truth falsehood” and “can certainly flee from God ... but ... cannot escape him.”

COSTLY GRACE, NOT CHEAP GRACE *Right:* Dietrich Bonhoeffer criticized “grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.”

Barth served as a lecturer at the Universities of Göttingen (1921–1925), Münster (1925–1930), and Bonn (1930–1935). At Bonn he was pressured to swear allegiance to Hitler through the “Hitler salute” at the beginning of class sessions. He refused, lost his teaching position, and went back to Switzerland. His books were banned and burned, and he was forbidden to speak publicly. Barth argued that Christianity and Christian authority are found in the Word of God alone and not in the Nazi attempt to combine Christianity, God’s Word, and German culture.

Hitler became chancellor of Germany in January 1933 and gained full dictatorial powers as president in 1934. He sought to unify all areas of German life (including the Christian church) under Nazi control and ideology. Barth strongly resisted the church becoming an organ of the state and a tool to promote the Nazi cause. Part of the German agenda was found



NO OTHER GODS BUT GOD Both Barth and Bonhoeffer opposed the Nazi treatment of Jews and Hitler's desire to make Christianity subject to the state.

young theologian who obtained two doctorates from Berlin University before the age of 25. He read widely in Barth's writings and cited him as a major influence on his theology. Like Barth, Bonhoeffer held a strong doctrine of the lordship of Christ over the world, resisted Hitler's desire to take over the German church, and was particularly opposed to the Aryan paragraph.

In 1933 Bonhoeffer gave a famous radio speech on leadership, possibly (though no one is sure) aimed specifically at Hitler. The talk was cut off before Bonhoeffer could finish it. It was an insightful speech and could not have been more timely.

Average Germans were desperate for a leader to help restore the dignity of the nation—a person, many argued, who would not be accountable to anyone but the group that put him in power. They thought all individuals would become instruments in the hands of the *Führer* (the German word for “leader”) in unconditional obedience. The concept tapped into the German mythology of race, blood, and soil.

Bonhoeffer, on the contrary, personified moral leadership. His famed book *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937) spells out what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. In his struggle with Nazism, Bonhoeffer was banned from public speaking and from entering Berlin, his home; the theological school he ran was deemed illegal and shut down. Yet he continued to teach through a series of underground churches.

In 1939 he went to the United States, but soon returned to his homeland, saying: “I must live through this difficult period in our national history with the people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people.” In 1942 he was imprisoned for his work in the German resistance movement.

Like Barth, Bonhoeffer stood nose-to-nose with the most evil ideological system of his day and defied it, not out of arrogance or personal charisma but as a loyal servant of Christ. After his connection with a plot to kill Hitler was discovered, Bonhoeffer paid the cost of discipleship with his life. He was executed by the Nazis in Flossenbürg concentration camp on April 9, 1945, at just 39 years old—saying as he was taken to his execution, “This is the end—for me the beginning of life.”

Roy Stults is online workshop coordinator and educational services coordinator for the Voice of the Martyrs.

in what was called the “Aryan paragraph,” a law that promoted the so-called “Aryan,” or pure German race, as superior to all other races. All non-Aryans, especially Jews, were to be removed from leadership, including in the church. Ironically Barth had preached a sermon on Romans 15:5–13 called “The Church of Jesus Christ” on December 10, 1933, shortly before Hitler became president, emphasizing that Jesus himself was a Jew!

Meanwhile Martin Niemöller, a leading German pastor, had founded the Pastors’ Emergency League in 1933 to resist the Nazi-directed “German Christians.” In May 1934 a group of pastors met at the Synod of Barmen—including both Barth and Bonhoeffer, friends since 1931—and formed the “Confessing Church.” The Confessing Church produced the *Barmen Confession*, largely written by Barth, arguing that Christ is Lord of all of life and there is no other ultimate authority in faith and conduct.

Barth’s response to the failure of liberal theology and the challenges of Nazi ideology became the basis for his massive systematic theology, *Church Dogmatics*. Begun in 1932 but left unfinished at his death, it is one of the most important theological publications of the twentieth century.

Forced to leave Germany in 1935, Barth became a professor at the University of Basel, where he taught until 1962. The day before his 1968 death in Switzerland at age 82 he remarked to a friend, “Things are ruled, not just in Moscow or in Washington or in Peking, but things are ruled—even here on earth—entirely from above, from heaven above.”

“THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF LIFE”

Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), born in Breslau, Germany (now Wrocław, Poland), was a Lutheran pastor and noted



MODERN PREACHERS AND PROPHETS From Alabama to Kentucky to Washington, D.C., King, Merton, and Marshall applied Christian truths to 20th-c. problems, with memorable phrases like “Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy” (Merton), “A Christian has no business being satisfied with mediocrity” (Marshall), and “We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right” (King).

SEVEN STOREY MOUNTAIN

I honestly think I heard of Thomas Merton (1915–1968) via my mystic-friendly mother before I could walk. The son of two artists, Merton experienced a disrupted childhood; his mother, Ruth, died when he was six, and his father, Owen, 10 years later. Admission to England’s prestigious Cambridge University ended in disgrace: excessive drinking and womanizing led his guardian to enroll him in college in the United States instead.

There more wholesome influences prevailed: friends, thoughtful professors, spiritual reading, and renewed relationships with his grandparents and brother. The once-agnostic Merton became a Catholic in 1938. In 1941 he entered the Abbey of Gethsemani to become a Trappist monk and live a life of prayer, work, and contemplation. From that rural Kentucky hillside, he wrote 70 books on spirituality and social justice before dying on a trip to Asia—27 years to the day from his entry into Gethsemani. Some call one of his first books, *Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), the most compelling story of a conversion since Augustine.

I have stood on Gethsemani’s windswept hillside often and remembered Merton’s testimony that God speaks most profoundly when we have nothing left to say. —Jennifer Woodruff Tait

BEYOND OURSELVES

Daughter of a rural Appalachian Presbyterian minister, Catherine Marshall (1914–1983) gained celebrity through *A Man Called Peter*, a biography of her husband, a United States Senate chaplain—later made into a successful Hollywood film. An enthusiast of evangelical and medieval devotional works, Marshall frankly acknowledged that *Beyond Ourselves*, her 1961 devotional book, simply restated Hannah Whitall Smith’s *The Christian Secret of a Happy Life* (1875) in non-Victorian prose.

In *Beyond Ourselves* Marshall asked the hard questions that confront Christians. Why does God allow



evil? Is prayer efficacious? Is divine healing possible? Is there divine guidance? Marshall rejected humanism, materialism, and other middle-class cure-alls, pointing to an “unselfish God” who promises everyone willing to die to self a meaningful life of service filled with joy.

Frustrated by Christians who spiritualized God’s love into moralism and by a society of consumers “frantically scrambling to get ours while there is anything yet to take,” Marshall emphasized the new birth, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit in the language of a modern age. —William Kostlevy

“LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL”

On April 3, 1963, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) began a massive campaign of nonviolent protest against racial segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. On April 12 (Good Friday) he was among 50 people arrested for defying a city order against the protests.

While in jail King read a “Call to Unity,” published by eight white Birmingham clergy in the local newspaper, criticizing “outsiders” such as himself and other protesters for not working within the legal system. In response King wrote his “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” He drew on authorities all the way back to the biblical prophets and the apostle Paul to justify his willingness to “carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town.”

Using Augustine and Aquinas, King argued that human law derives authority from natural law and that an unjust law is not truly a law at all. His stirring call for nonviolent action to implement divine justice on earth proved an inspiration to those on all sides of contentious issues, from pro-life to gay rights movements. —Edwin Woodruff Tait



MEDIEVAL POWERPOINT Here's how monks knew what the lyrics to the songs were.

2,000 years, 25 hymns

James D. Smith III

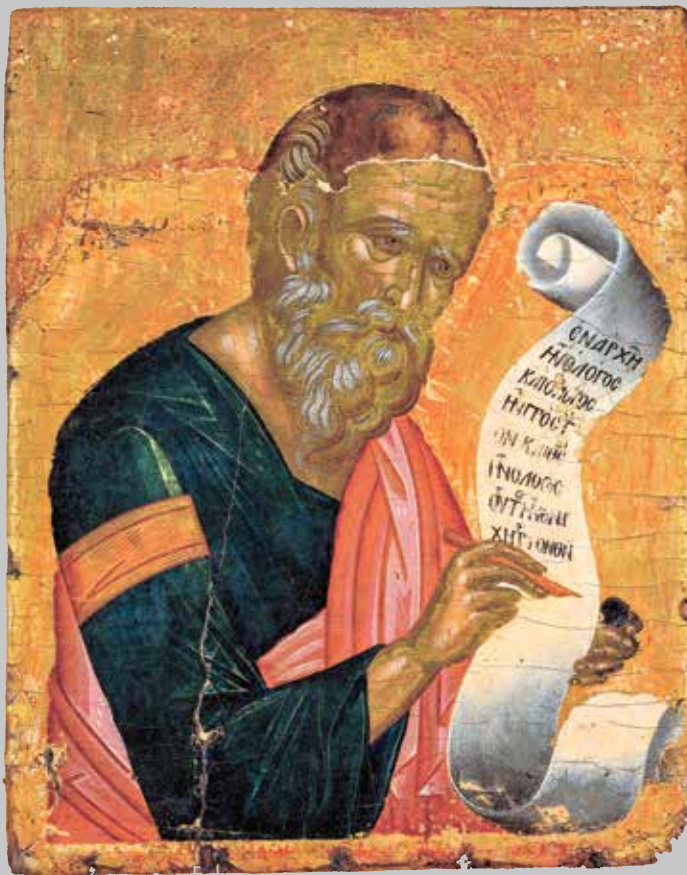
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES, Christians have associated “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” with teaching, personal disciplines (Col. 3:16), and confessing of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18–21). Here are 25 of Christianity’s greatest hymn texts in chronological order.

1. Clement of Alexandria, “Shepherd of Eager Youth” (c. 200) *Eastern church discipleship by the earliest post-NT composer we know by name*
2. Ambrose of Milan, “O Splendor of God’s Glory Bright” (c. 390) *The theology of ancient church councils expressed in song*
3. Aurelius Prudentius, “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (c. 410) *Spanish-born poet-hymnist who influenced later Western breviaries and chants*
4. Anonymous, “Be Thou My Vision” (before 600) *Power amid spiritual warfare*
5. Anonymous, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (700s) *Invokes divine presence in oppressive times*
6. Theodulf of Orleans, “All Glory Laud and Honor” (818) *Classic processional in Holy Week*
7. Francis of Assisi, “All Creatures of Our God and King” (1200s) *Iconic Christian naturalist’s hymn to elicit praise from all creation*
8. “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” (1200s) *Christ as our atonement and our friend, famously set to music by Bach*
9. Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (1528) *The “battle hymn” of Protestant reform that ignited Germany and the world*

10. Thomas Ken, “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” (1695) *From a prayer written to engage his students*
11. Isaac Watts, “Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come” (1719) *Beloved worldwide as a Christmas carol*
12. Charles Wesley, “O for a Thousand Tongues” (1739) *Pietist-inspired Anglican who wrote 7,000+ hymns for missional devotion*
13. Thomas Olivers, “The God of Abraham Praise” (1770) *Messianic praise drawn from a Jewish hymn*

14. John Newton, “Amazing Grace” (1779) *God-ordained freedom from enslavement*
15. Reginald Heber, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (1826) *Worship of the Holy Trinity—reflecting Rev. 4:8 and the Nicene Creed*
16. Folliott Pierpoint, “For the Beauty of the Earth” (1864) *Written as the Industrial Revolution transformed cultures*
17. Fanny Crosby, “To God Be the Glory” (1875) *The favorite (out of 2,000+) by the blind poet that stirred many to new life and mission*
18. Frank Bottome, “The Comforter Has Come” (1890) *Written just before the Holiness tradition stirred revivals*
19. Kate Wilkinson, “May the Mind of Christ My Savior” (1913) *Aspiration to imitate Christ following Charles Sheldon’s book In His Steps (1896)*
20. Daniel Iverson, “Spirit of the Living God” (1926) *Among the earliest twentieth-century “praise choruses”*
21. Thomas A. Dorsey, “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” (1932) *A blend of blues and spirituals by the “Father of Gospel Music”*
22. Stuart Hine, “How Great Thou Art” (1953) *The Swedish “O Store Gud,” a Billy Graham favorite, along with “Just as I Am”*
23. Peter Scholtes, “They’ll Know We Are Christians” (1968) *By an American Catholic priest, especially beloved during the Jesus Movement*
24. Bill and Gloria Gaither, “Because He Lives” (1971) *Southern country-gospel-inspired hope*
25. Stuart Townend and Keith Getty, “In Christ Alone” (2001) *A new hymn embraced by many Christians worldwide*

James D. Smith III is professor of church history at Bethel Seminary and associate pastor of La Jolla (CA) Christian Fellowship. “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” from Assam, India, is one of his personal favorites.



MAKING A LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE

The apostle John composes Revelation in this 15th-c. icon. People have been debating the best Christian writings practically since he laid down his pen, and they have not always agreed on the results.

Christian books and put himself at the end in an extra-long section. Authorial vanity still had its place.

The problem seems to be defining what constitutes “best.” In Jerome’s time it had still not been finally agreed which books were “scriptural” and ought to be included in the Bible. His “Christian authors” formed a second rank, ahead of the secular classical authors, which he found so hard to put down that he was worried that he was more a “Ciceronian” than a “Christian.”

HOW DO YOU MAKE THE LIST?

Must books and authors be orthodox or could they be included if they were dubious but stimulating? Should the criterion be that their popularity endured?

Jerome could not check which were favorites on Amazon. He could not look ahead down the centuries and see which would still be “in print” in the twenty-first century. Gennadius put in some names about which we should not know at all if he had not listed them, so his guesswork about durability was not very accurate.

The works of Jerome’s archrival Augustine (“Take and read,” pp. 9–12) bulged in monastic and cathedral medieval libraries, often nearly as frequently as the Bible and the liturgy. But how many of his works are now on every shelf? Would Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* (p. 21) be everyone’s first resort for consolation now if they found themselves on death row?

So in what does “bestness” lie? Booker Prize selection [*a famed book award—Editors*] or personal preference? Books for the bedside table, the beach, the condemned cell? Nonfiction, novels, poems, sermons, ebooks and blogs, tracts for their times?

The pre-Christian Cicero, useful on duty, friendship, and old age? Books written by recluses and the distinctly odd? A chance sentence in a bad book may still change a life. —G. R. Evans, author of *The History of Christian Europe and many other books*

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The dangers of compiling lists

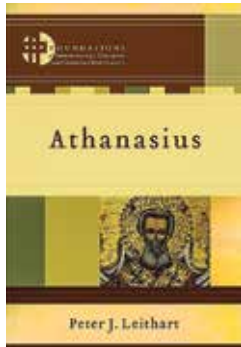
“Not a good idea, this list,” I said testily when I was asked to contribute. [*This article originally appeared in response to the Church Times’s desire to list the best 100 Christian books of all time; the results can be seen at www.ct100books.co.uk. Have fun comparing their list and ours!—Editors*] It reminded me of those Hundred Great Books university courses in the United States, that never seemed much of a basis for syllabus construction. Unless you are a publisher with an eye on sales figures, why put books in league-tables? [*i.e., lists of rankings—Editors*]

Listing the “Best Christian Books” isn’t a modern idea. Crotchety old Jerome drew up 135 approved Christian authors in the 390s and called them “Illustrious illustrious men.” He modestly added himself. Gennadius of Massilia brought the list up to date before he died in 496.

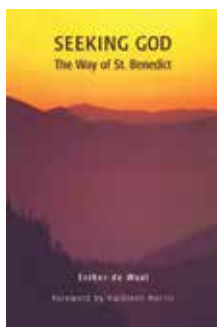
The temptation to update the catalogue continued. Sigebert of Gembloux, 600 years later, extended this list of approved and outstanding authors of

Recommended resources

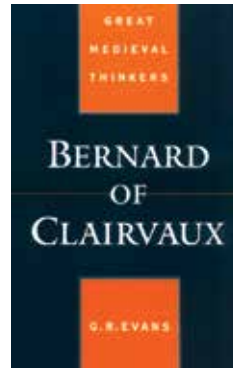
HOW TO SUGGEST RESOURCES ABOUT SO MANY BOOKS? WE DECIDED TO RECOMMEND JUST ONE TITLE FOR EACH FEATURED AUTHOR, ALTHOUGH THIS MEANT IGNORING MANY OTHER EXCELLENT WORKS. WE URGE YOU TO EXAMINE PAST *CH* ISSUES, OUR WEBSITE, AND OTHER LISTED WEBSITES FOR MORE.



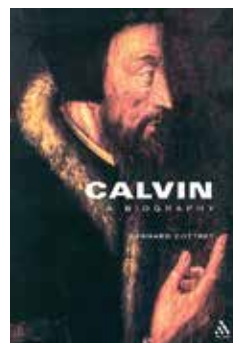
- **Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*** (c. 175–185) [#21] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (1993), also helpful for writers up through Cyril; *CH* 80
- **Apostolic Tradition** (c. 200?) *On the Apostolic Tradition*, ed. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (2015); *Apostolic Tradition* website (Hotlinks to all websites appear in the online version of this issue.)
- **Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*** (c. 319) [#9]; *Life of Antony* (c. 356–362); Peter Leithart, *Athanasius* (2011); *CH* 64, 80; C. S. Lewis introduction to *On the Incarnation* reprinted online
- **The Nicene Creed** (325, revised 381) [#7] Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (3rd ed., 2012), which is also excellent on Benedict, Luther, and Wesley; *CH* 51, 85
- **The Apostles' Creed** (390 or earlier) [#26] Alister McGrath, *I Believe: Exploring the Apostles' Creed* (1998)
- **Augustine, *Confessions*** (c. 398) [#1]; *City of God* (413–426) [#4]; *On Christian Teaching* (397, 426) [#18]; *On the Trinity* (c. 400–428) [#19] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (1969); *CH* 12, 67; Augustine of Hippo website
- **Cyril, *On the Unity of Christ*** (440) *On the Unity of Christ*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (2015)



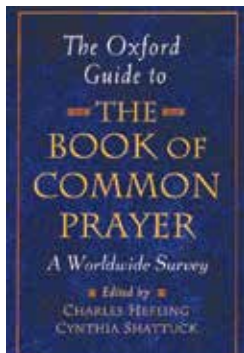
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- **Benedict, *Rule*** (c. 540s) [#11] Esther de Waal, with introduction by Kathleen Norris, *Seeking God* (2001); *CH* 93; Order of St. Benedict website
- **Pope Gregory I (Gregory the Great), *Pastoral Rule*** (c. 591) [#24] R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (1997)



- **Anselm, *Why God Became Man*** (c. 1095–1098) [#17] R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (1992)
- **Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*** (begun 1136) G. R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (2000); *CH* 24
- **Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*** (1265–1274) [#2] Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, *Knowing the Love of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (2002); *CH* 73; Thomistica website
- **Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy*** (c. 1308–1320) [#16] Rod Dreher, *How Dante Can Save Your Life: The Life-Changing Wisdom of History's Greatest Poem* (2015); *CH* 70
- **Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*** (1395) Grace Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian* (2nd ed., 2000)
- **Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*** (c. 1418–1427) [#10] Paul Chilcote, *The Imitation of Christ: Selections Annotated and Explained* (2012)
- **Martin Luther, *95 Theses*** (1517) [#5]; *Freedom of a Christian* (1520) [#14]; *Lectures on Romans* (c. 1515–16) [#25] Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (1950); *CH* 34, 39, 115



- **John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*** (1559) [#3] Bernard Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography* (2000); *CH* 12; The Meeter Center for Calvin Studies website



- **Book of Common Prayer** (1549) [#12] *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer* (2006); CH 48; *The Book of Common Prayer* website
- **John Foxe, Actes and Monuments** (Foxe's Book of Martyrs) (1563) J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and His Book* (1940); *The Acts and Monuments Online* website


- **Teresa of Ávila, The Interior Castle** (1577) Cathleen Medwick, *Teresa of Ávila: The Progress of a Soul* (1999)
- **John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul** (c. 1578) Richard Hardy, *John of the Cross: Man and Mystic* (2004)
- **Westminster Confession** (1646) [#20] Chad Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith: A Readers' Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* (2014)
- **John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress** (1678) [#6] *Cambridge Companion to Bunyan*, ed. Anne Dunan-Page (2010); CH 11; John Bunyan Society website
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- **John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection** (1777) [#22] Richard Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (2013, 2nd ed.); CH 2, 69; Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition website
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- **Thérèse of Lisieux, The Story of a Soul** (1898) Guy Gaucher, *The Story of a Life: St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (1993); Society of the Little Flower website
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- **Catherine Marshall, Beyond Ourselves** (1961) *The Best of Catherine Marshall*, ed. Leonard LeSourd (1993)
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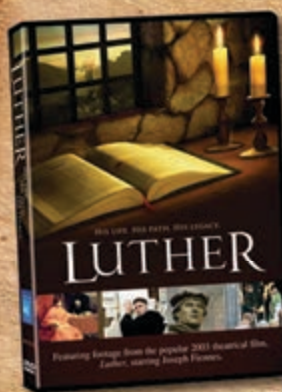
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- Augustine (*A Voice for All Generations; Restless Heart*)
- Luther (*Martin Luther, Here I Stand; Luther: His Life, His Path, His Legacy; This Changed Everything* [releasing in late 2016])
- Calvin (*Zwingli and Calvin; Johannes Calvin*)
- Bunyan (*Journey of a Pilgrim; Dangerous Journey; Pilgrim's Progress* [live-action and animated versions])
- Edwards (*Great Awakening*)
- Wesley (*A Heart Transformed Can Change the World; Encounters with John Wesley*)
- Stowe (*Josiah Henson: The Real Uncle Tom*)
- Thérèse of Lisieux (*Thérèse*)
- Bonhoeffer (*Memories and Perspectives; Hanged on a Twisted Cross; Agent of Grace*)
- Lewis (*C. S. Lewis Through the Shadowlands; Affectionately Yours—Screwtape; The Shortest Way Home; Through a Lens Darkly; Life of C. S. Lewis*)
- Marshall (*Christy; A Man Called Peter*)



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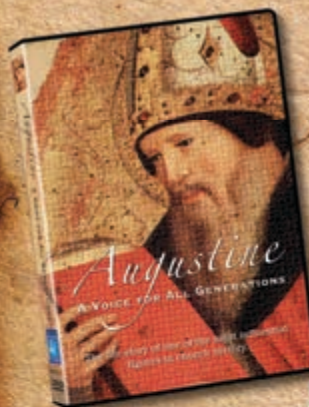
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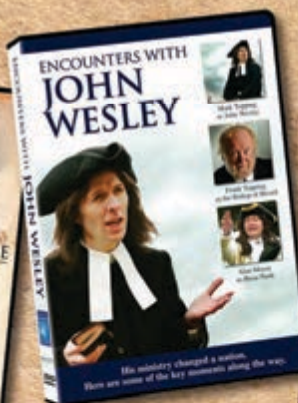
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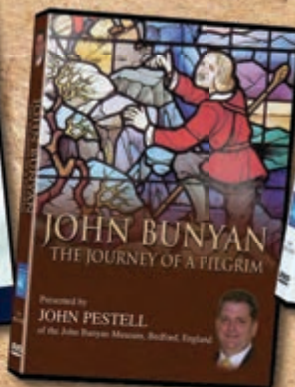
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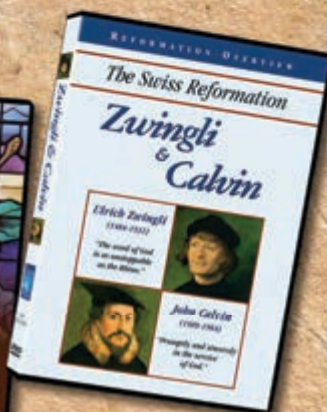
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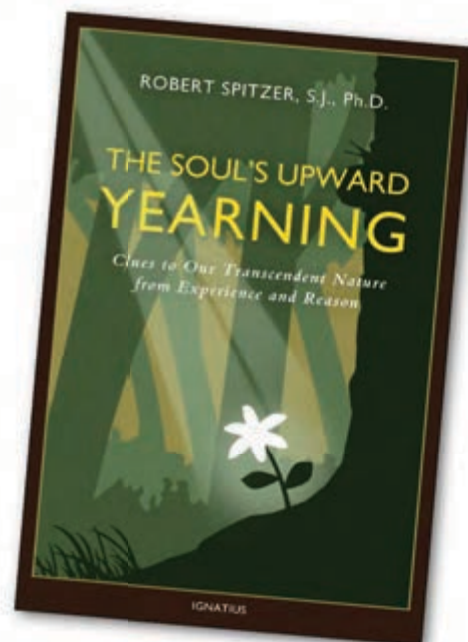
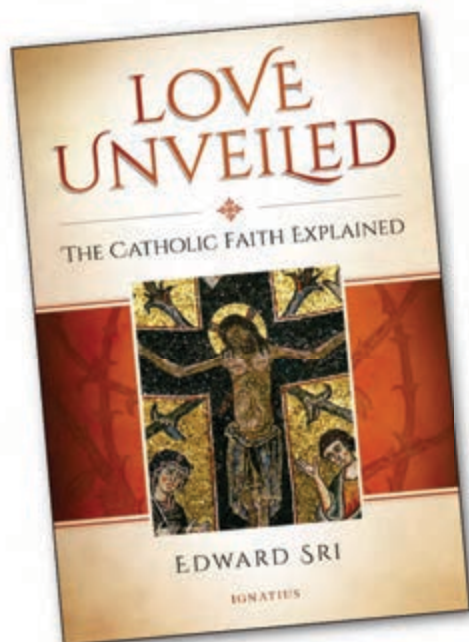
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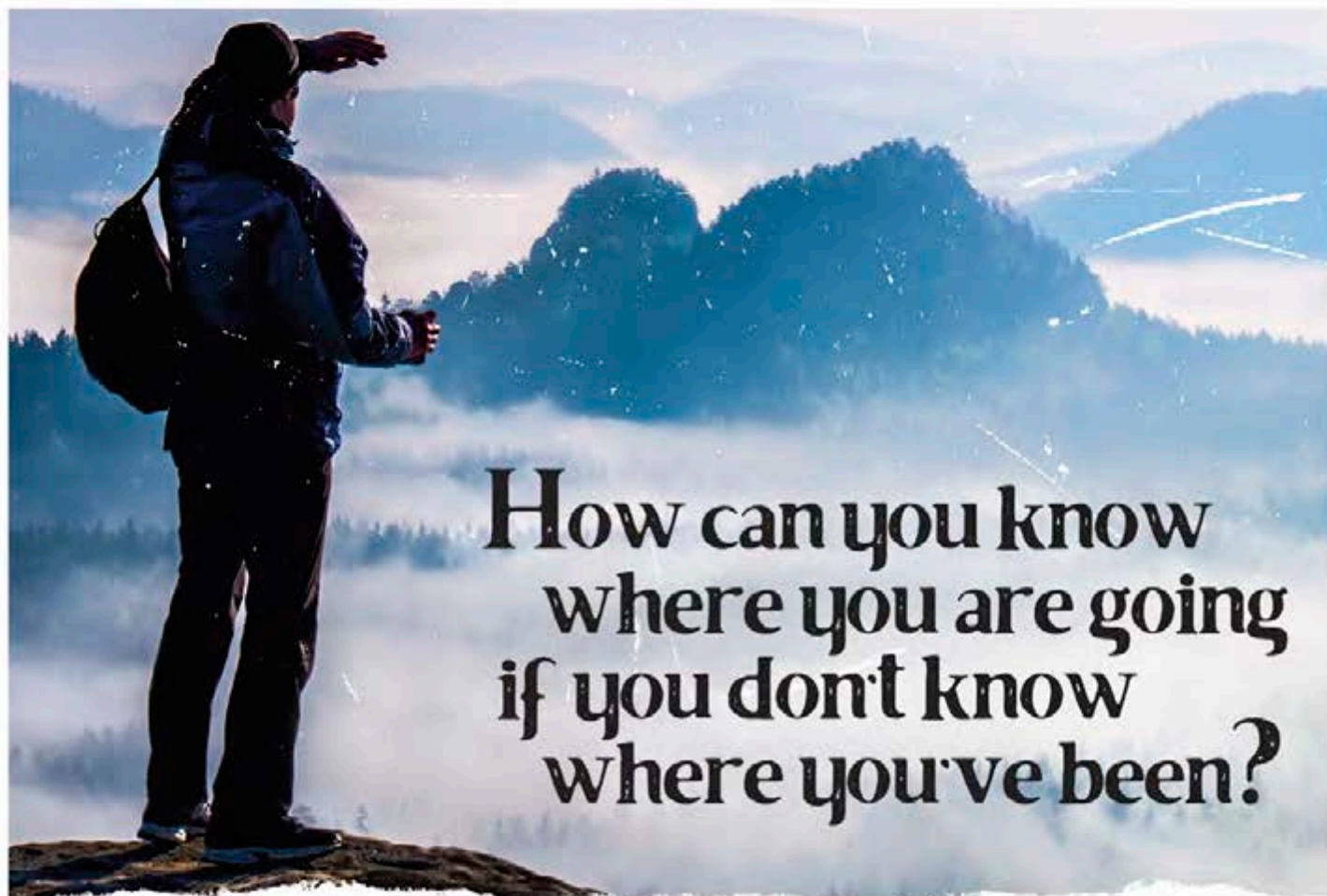
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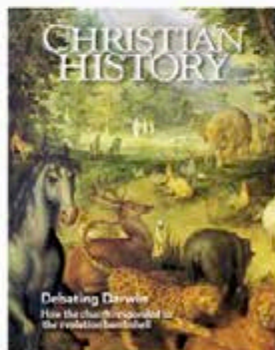
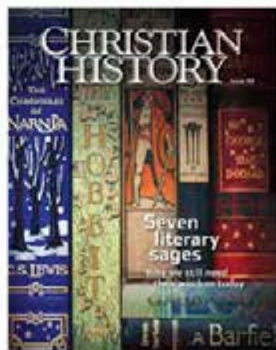
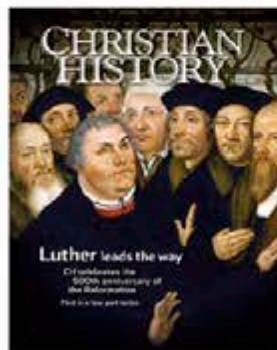
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