

# Intoxication Quarterly

## *Wisdom Not of this World*

### Intoxicating Glory

Virgil Hurt

God is good to us. That is a maxim that all should live by. Christians ought to be able to say so with great enthusiasm, with deep joy, and with much laughter, for we understand that it is not of our own merit that we have attained the favor of God. In fact, we have made great protestations against any such thinking. God is holy and just and we are fallen and guilty. He is infinitely separate from us. We are dead in our sins and there is nothing that we can do to change this state of affairs. God must take the initiative or we are helplessly and hopelessly lost. But God does take the initiative. He sent His Son and He sends His Spirit to intervene in a harsh world and into the lives of men with hard hearts. He makes alive the dead and then renews them according to His abundant grace. *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* John 1:13

So, this is a given. God is good. His glory is all around us. It is revealed to us generally in His creation and it is revealed to us particularly in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This is reason for rejoicing. For if we know that God is good and that His favor shines upon us, we must know that He also governs all things for good. Not that all things, per se, are good. There are still sins and sinners in the world. But that God supersedes all that is to His own glory and to our good. It is with such eyes of understanding that we are to see the world.

This brings me not only to the place of eagerly looking for God's goodness in the every day events of life but also to the title of our little magazine, Intoxication Quarterly. The world God has made is full of life and beauty because our God is full of life and beauty. We should rejoice in this beauty because we rejoice in God. Of course, we always run the risk of loving the gift more than the Giver. Some have changed *the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.* Rom 1:25. But the problem here is *not* with loving what God has given but rather in *not being thankful* to Him, in not recognizing the fact that it is He that gives. When we are thankful, it lifts our eyes above the wonderful gift to the more wonderful Giver.

God has put beauty and wonder all around us. Some of the glorious things are the sun magically rising every morning,

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### St. Patrick

Lance Collins

Overlooking the storm beaten coasts of western Ireland, there looms a 4000 ft. peak known in Ancient times as The Eagle Mountain.

The eminent mount is known today as *Croagh Patrick* or St. Patrick's Mountain and is revered as a kind of Irish Mt. Sinai in honor of that great man. Today it stands defiantly against the crashing waves of the ocean, just as St. Patrick stood, 15 centuries ago, against the surging darkness of Irish Paganism. By this craggy monument, many faithful of the Emerald Isle still remember him.

On the other side of the Atlantic we remember him too, not with a mountain but with time. Every year on March 17<sup>th</sup> we don our green garb, pin on our shamrocks and raise our tankards to this Celtic Saint. But why? Why does this saint of the Catholic Church get so much press from us Protestants? I mean, do we even "believe" in saints? Perhaps we really don't but just love good parades and green beer. Or perhaps there is something about Patrick and his fellow celebrities that resonates within us.

St. Columba, St. Germain, St. George, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Theresa. These are but a few of the Catholic Saints whose feast days have not become part of our national calendar. So why Patrick? Is it the Snakes or Shamrock?

In 387 AD Magonus Sucatus Patricius was born near Dumbarton in modern-day Scotland. He was graced with Christian parents but at the age of 16 was captured by Irish marauders and sold to a Druid High-Priest, Milchu, who held him as a slave for six years. There in the misty solitude of the Emerald Isle he learned the Irish tongue and the power of prayer. He writes in his Confessio,

..and the spirit was roused, so that, in a single day, I have said as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night nearly the same, so that whilst in the woods and on the mountain, even before the dawn, I was roused to prayer and felt no hurt from it, whether there was snow or ice or rain...

*(continued on page 4)*

## Dragons

Rick Davis

Jim was a simple man who had never been to the big city before. So when he wandered into the huge bookstore, he was somewhat overwhelmed at the sheer size of it all. He timidly approached the man at the cash register.

"I'm looking for a book," he began.

"You've come to the right place," said the man at the counter. "We've got two floors of books."

"Actually I've come for a specific book."

"Well, if you tell me about it, I might be able to help you. What type of book is it?"

Jim, thought very carefully. "It's a very realistic book," he stated

"Oh," said the man, "follow me. I think we can fix you right up."

He led Jim to a series of long shelves labeled *FICTION: (Alphabetical by Author)*. The man pulled a book by Gustave Flaubert from the shelf.

"See if this looks like what you're after," he said, handing the volume to Jim.

Jim opened it and flipped through, reading a couple of short passages. He grimaced. "No, this isn't it at all. I'm looking for a *realistic* book." Stephen Crane, Henry James, Frank Norris, and Émile Zola each gave Jim the same visceral reaction. He turned disgusted to the clerk. "No, no, no! The book I'm looking for is realistic."

"You mean it's a true story?"

"Yes!" said Jim. "It's a true story."

"Oh, well why didn't you say so?"

The man led Jim a few rows further on into the store, where they stopped in front of a shelf labeled *NONFICTION/ BIOGRAPHY*. "Here," said the man, pleased, "is where you'll find the book you're looking for."

But alas, try as he might, Jim still did not find the book he was looking for. He was growing impatient with the clerk. "None of these books are realistic!"

"Of course they are! These books are all nonfiction, and the fiction books I showed you earlier represent the best that the school of realism has to offer. Here are the books that will show you the world exactly as it is, stripped bare of all pretense and fancy."

"Then where are the dragons?" inquired Jim sharply.

"I beg your pardon?"

"These books are realistic like a black and white photo," he continued. "I guess they show things that really are, but there's something missing. They don't look exactly like they do in real life. The color is gone. There is so much more that's just not there."

The man eyed Jim oddly, and then said in an exaggerated voice, "Well why don't you tell me about this book you're looking for, so that I (an English major mind you!) can learn what constitutes realism."

"Well," said Jim, "It begins with a man and a woman who are placed in a beautiful land by their king, and are told that they can live there happily ever after. But then a dragon comes and dupes them into eating cursed food, their kingdom is taken from them, and a curse is put on the land and everyone in it."

The cashier rolled his eyes, but Jim continued unabashed.

"Anyway, then the king promises that a prince will be born someday who will kill the dragon and lift the curse. In the next part, the people are held captive away from their land by a wicked king. Then the true king brings a savior, and he and his brother have a magical battle to determine if the true king's magic is stronger than the wicked king's magic. Then the true king plagues the evil king, and brings his people out of the land, and the sea swallows up the evil king. And the people are led through the desert, and they get attacked by fire-breathing dragons. There are so many stories in the book. There's a boy who kills a giant, marries a princess, and wins a kingdom. There are old wise men that do amazing things like call on bears, and ride flaming chariots, and raise the dead. There are epic battles with hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Fortresses magically fall to the ground when trumpets are blown. The sun stands still in the sky. Evil cities are destroyed by fire from heaven. Oh, it's a wonderful story. It's got dragons, and unicorns, and cockatrices, and giants, and devils, and all sorts of strange creatures with multiple heads and animal bodies and human faces. And then when the prince comes, it turns out that he's really the king. He heals people, raises the dead, turns water into wine, makes food appear from nowhere. But only a few of his people recognize him. Then, it's revealed that the only way for the curse to be broken is for the prince to take it on himself. And so, the prince is cursed and dies. But the book has a surprise ending, because the prince is raised from the dead, and kills the dragon. And at the end, he sends his people out to take back the kingdom!"

The cashier at this time was biting his tongue to hold back his laughter. "Follow me buddy, I think we've got your book."

Jim nodded and followed the clerk past the *BEST-SELLERS*, left through the *CLASSICS* and past the yuppie coffee bar, then up the stairs, and past the *ROMANCE*. Finally, they came to a stop in the back corner of the store under a sign that read *FANTASY*. The cashier stomped away, making twirling motions near his head with his finger.

Jim eyed the shelf for a moment, his head cocked to one side. There he saw Lloyd Alexander's *Black Cauldron* series and *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis. He looked on a lower shelf and saw J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books sitting next to *The Lord of the Rings*. There were Piers Anthony, and Peter S. Beagle, George MacDonald and T. H. White. He looked through these books for some time. He didn't find the exact book he was looking for on that shelf. He did, however, find an armload of *realistic* books that describe the world *exactly* as it really is, and left the store with them happily in tow.

## O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

### *Is a Great Movie*

David Cooper

I knew I was in for a joyful movie ride during the opening credits as three convicts escape across a southern tobacco field to the music of the “Big Rock Candy Mountain”. The opening sequence sets the right tone of adventure, comedy, and great music that carries through the whole movie. We soon meet the three main characters: Ulysses Everett McGill (George Clooney) a slick talking know-it-all, Pete (John Turturro) a grumpy depression sufferer, and Delmar (Tim Blake Nelson) a softhearted adventurer. Their interrelations form the core of the movie as they encounter a host of fascinating, well-written, and hilarious side characters. John Goodman is powerful as an evil Bible salesman, and Holly Hunter performs well as the demanding and strong willed wife of Everett.

The Coen brother’s are gifted in crafting intricate movies. *O Brother* is meticulously detailed (costumes, props, and repeated lines), and woven like a beautiful quilt—characters cross each other, disappear, and reappear at key moments. Quiet lines take on meaning as the plot unfolds.

Beyond the cleverness and quiriness, *O Brother* has a wonderful theme of salvation through baptism. Early on, Delmar and Pete experience the sweet waters of baptism and are saved from their sins. Everett scoffs at them and a blind man’s prophecy that he will find a treasure he does not seek and ultimately his salvation. He is skeptical about spiritual things (basically a naturalistic atheist) and his smug attitude only changes in the throes of death. Like Noah, he is saved in a flood (his baptism). When he tries to dismiss the hand of God in his life he sees the fulfillment of the blind man’s prophecy and turns his eye unto heaven. The movie closes with him reconciled to his wife and humbled by the friendship he has formed with Pete and Delmar, his brush with death and the salvation he found in the water.

Some may see the movie as a mockery of southern religion but I believe there are a couple of reasons to see the movie more as a statement about the mystery of life and religious belief. Where it mocks it is often accurate (there are many southerners with a semblance of Christian belief that is not worked out in true godliness). McGill’s atheism is shown to be a hollow and unfulfilling way of living while the simple faith of Delmar is joyful. The KKK and Bible salesman are bad guys in part because of their perversion of the Christian faith. The foul-mouthed governor (while nominally Christian) is not held up as a paragon of true faith. The beautiful gospel tracks and the sincerity with which they are sung (some of the scenes come across as almost musical set pieces) demonstrate the lovely core of southern Christianity. I do not believe the Coen brothers intended their movie to promote Christianity but by weaving a clever, intelligent story laden with mythological southern and Homeric characters who find salvation in the waters of baptism, they have certainly made a great movie.

### *Is NOT a Great Movie*

Chase McMaster

I will begin with a confession. I like the movie. It is funny. It is well done. It has delightful music. Its characters, even the villains, are fun. But just because I happen to like it, does not make it great. Despite all the amusement, it is basically irreverent anti-southern propaganda.

*O Brother Where Art Thou?* fails to achieve greatness because it makes an illegitimate statement about reality and falls well short of excellence in its depiction of reality. Although scenarios in which Christianity is either mocked or falsified are abundant, I think it will suffice to point to two examples in an attempt to prove why the film is not great. The first is the baptism scene and the second is the hypocrisy of the characters.

The three main characters are escaped convicts who embark upon a journey looking for treasure. At one point, they come across a “congregation” being baptized one at a time in the river. Delmar is immediately awe struck by the phenomenon and rushes head long into the river to be baptized, emerging with a sense of euphoria. Pete, after hearing that “the preacher washed away Delmar’s sins and transgressions,” immediately follows the example.

Some would point to this scene as proof of the genuineness of their Christian conversion, but I believe it proves the opposite. The film portrays Christianity as a phenomenon of naiveté. Delmar’s “faith” is depicted as gullible emotionalism attempting to satisfy guilt which is evident when he declares, “Neither God nor man’s got nothing on me now.” This is the brand of Christianity that passes for genuine in the film, but it is an illegitimate Christianity. *O Brother* depicts southern Christianity as a culture of naiveté, vanity and escapism.

In addition, *O Brother* presents Christianity through the personifications of hypocrisy. Almost every character is in one way or another a Christian hypocrite. Governor Pappy O’Daniel constantly profanes the Lord’s name in vanity. Big Dan is a Bible salesman who assaults Delmar and McGill so he can try to steal their money. Homer Stokes is a gubernatorial candidate who promises reform while at the same time serving as the leader of the KKK. A sadistic police marshal appeals to the name of God in his attempted lynching of the convicts.

The only serious exception to hypocrisy is in the character of McGill and that is because he is a skeptic to begin with. In fact, some might try to argue that McGill has a genuine conversion experience at the conclusion of the story when the waters of “baptism” rise and flood the valley. The problem, however, is that after praying for help, he admits that he only did it because “Any human being will cast their ballot in a moment of distress.” But let us assume for a moment that he really is converted. To what is he converted? The same hypocritical brand of Christianity which runs as a constant theme throughout the entire film?

*(continued on page 6)*

(St. Patrick, continued from page 1)

Warned by an angel in a dream, he fled from his master to Gaul where he became a disciple of St. Germain. It was Germain who was ordered by Pope Celestine I to go to Britain and combat the new heresy of Pelagius. Patrick accompanied him on this journey. During this time he had visions of those he had known in Ireland. In one dream the children of Focluth by the Western Sea appeared to him saying, "O holy youth, come back to Erin, and walk once more among us." In the summer of 433, he obeyed this calling, crossing the Irish Sea and landing at the mouth of the Vantry River. The Druids (an elite priestly class that held sway over both politics and religion) were immediately arrayed against him. One Druid, by the name of Dichu, met Patrick on the road and sought to slay him, but his arm was seized by the angels and became as rigid as stone. The Druid was overwrought by this display of divine power and Patrick's meekness. He immediately converted and offered all his worldly goods to the service of Patrick and his God. Thus, it was that Dichu's barn became the first sanctuary in which Patrick conducted the Holy Eucharist.

As God orchestrated it, the Easter Sunday of 433 AD coincided with a Pagan feast for the Celtic god Crom-Cruach. Patrick received word of this from one of his new converts and made his way to the festival, prepared for a confrontation reminiscent of Elijah at Mt. Carmel. He arrived at Mt. Slane on Easter Eve and pitched camp across the valley from the assembly of Druids, Princes and Ard-Righ Leoghaire (High-King Leary). It was customary that on the night before the pagan feast all fires should be extinguished until the signal blaze of the High-King was lit. Patrick purposefully defied this when he lit the Paschal Fire. The infuriated Druids pleaded with King Leary with prophetic words that echoed those of Darius' satraps and the wicked prophet Balaam:

"O King live for ever, this fire, which has been lighted in defiance of the royal edict will blaze forever in this land unless it be this very night extinguished."

They were right. Repeated attempts to murder Patrick and quench the fire were useless as Divine Power shielded him and his companions. It was on this and other occasions that Patrick and his men are reported to have appeared as deer to their would-be-assailants.

But the battle was not over. The next day, the Arch-Druid Lochru summoned up all his iniquitous strength to cause the entire mountain to be covered in darkness. But Patrick, like Elijah, called down Heavenly Light to pierce the darkness. Again, by hellish incantations, Lochru was lifted up high in the air, but when Patrick knelt in prayer the Druid was dashed to pieces upon a rock.

The High-King Leary was thus convinced of the daunting omnipotence of the God of Patrick. It was on this occasion that Patrick used the legendary shamrock to explain to Leary the mysterious Trinity. The King of Ireland granted leave to the Saint to preach the Gospel of King Jesus all over the Island. But

this was not the inauguration of an effortless conquest. Patrick met resistance every step of the way. He writes that no less than twelve times he and his comrades were chained and sentenced to death but like Paul and Silas, they were delivered. On one occasion he narrowly escaped death when a Druid hurled a spear at him. The spear by inches and killed Patrick's companion instead.

Patrick and his converts continued to work and pray for Ireland's deliverance from the grip of Paganism. God honored their prayers and glorified Himself. Over time, he crushed Druidism and there sprang up a fervent Christianity that became as verdant as the rolling hills of Erin. Irish Monasticism was an epicenter of vital spirituality that surged back across the seas to Britain and the continent in such men as Columba, Aiden and Columbanus. These Saints brought the gospel to the Orkney Islands, the rugged coasts of Scotland, the frozen recesses of Iceland, the dark forests of Germany, and the foothills of the Alps. It was the Irish Monk St. Brendan who, eight centuries before Columbus, carried the Gospel across the Atlantic to our own shores.

Patrick worked tirelessly until his death on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 493. He had served the High-King of Heaven for over one hundred years. And just as his mountain monument still stands, so does the cogent faith he proclaimed. His legend has grown and transcended traditional boundaries. He is now celebrated by Christian and non-Christian, Catholic and Protestant, Irish and non-Irish. Perhaps there is a comforting appeal in all the green beer and shamrocks. Perhaps there is something innately pleasing with the primal image of the snakes being driven from Ireland. I have never been to Ireland, but I have it on good authority that there are no snakes there. According to the legend, that while atop the mountain that now bears his name, St. Patrick blessed all of Ireland and simultaneously banished the snakes. Whether this is true or not (and it is no less fantastic than levitating Druids) is uncertain. There are scientists (and scientist know everything) who say that snakes never lived in Ireland, even before Patrick. Whatever the case, it is clear that the story is either a real or contrived allegory for an undisputable fact: in vanquishing Druidism, Patrick drove from the Island that old Serpent the Devil.

Those ancient Druids were right. The fire of Patrick's God continues to blaze. The first American parade for St. Patrick was celebrated in Boston Massachusetts, 1737. New York City first celebrated the saint at the *Crown and Thistle Tavern* in 1756. Since that day, the New York celebration has become the largest Saint Patrick's Day parade in the world. It is a fitting celebration for such a great man. Today many churches sing the words he penned over 15 centuries ago. We call it today, the *Deer's Cry*, the *Lorica* or *St. Patrick's Breastplate*. They are the brave words of a stalwart saint who persevered for the triumphant King of Heaven.

## Beer and Other Good Things

David Cooper

### Beer of the Month:

#### North Coast Old Rasputin Russian Imperial Stout

It does not matter if you are a fan of dark beers in general, this is simply one of the most flavorful and rich beers you can find. Russian Imperial Stouts, as a class, are dark and thick and this one fits that bill. What sets it apart is the wonderful combination of smoky and chocolate flavors. It tastes delicious, coats the throat pleasantly and warms the chest. This is a beer to be savored slowly.

### Red Wine of the Month:

#### Ironstone Cabernet Sauvignon 2003

The initial nose on this well priced cab is very fruity. After eating some Italian food and taking a few sips the scent turned to freshly broken green branches. There is nice fruit on the tongue (blackberry or even a hint of sweet strawberry), a little chocolate hidden underneath, and most of all a very drinkable smoothness. The finish definitely lingers and invites more drinking

### Lynchburg Spot of the Month:

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Street by the City Cemetery

I love the canopy of spring blossoms that form over 5<sup>th</sup> Street as you come up the hill on your way toward downtown. It is a tunnel of God's kindness in the beauty He gives us at spring. You certainly do not want to look at the weird junky house that used to wish us Merry Christmas so turn your eyes upward. Slow down, cause a little traffic jam, and spread some cheer this spring.

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### *(Intoxicating Glory, continued from page 1)*

the stars peaking through the firmament each night, the flowers inexplicably returning from their hiatus each Spring. These are wonders of enormous proportions. But what of a mother nursing her newborn baby? A family eating around an old table? The saints taking communion together each Lord's Day? A child reciting his catechism? These are things so regular and so normal that we sometimes fail to see the immense glory in them. But that is not because they are not glorious but rather because we are not so thankful as we ought to be.

There is glory all around us. We must look for it and see it and then thank God for it. He will then give us greater vision to see more of His glory. And we must do this with joy, with deep, abiding, overflowing joy. This is being Intoxicated with all that God has revealed, with all that God has done and is doing. This wonder at glory, with thankfulness, is being Intoxicated with God, Himself.

## Baseball, Burdens, and the Holy Ghost

Chase McMaster

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal. 6:1-2)*

The Christian life is a road to failure. When the standard is God's holiness, the margin of error is about as narrow, in baseball terms, as a foul pole.

Baseball, as a sport, is similar in at least one way to the Christian life. It is a game of failure. Every team, without exception, is composed of a dugout full of failures. Even the winners are failures. Especially the losers are failures. But win or lose, failure is a constant.

In baseball, the one thing that separates the winners from the losers isn't so much that the winners succeed more than the losers do but that the winners pick one another up after they fail. For example, with a runner on first and no outs and his team ahead by one run in the ninth inning, the third baseman botches an easy ground ball and his error allows the batter to reach first base safely. Now there is a runner on first and second and the third baseman has just failed. But the game is not over. The pitcher picks him up by striking out the next batter. One out. But then the pitcher fails. He walks the next batter, loading the bases with one down, putting the winning run in scoring position. He gets pulled. A relief pitcher is brought into the game and immediately picks up his teammate by enticing the batter to hit an infield ground ball that appears to be a game ending double play until the second baseman makes a wild throw toward first. Another failure. Yet fortunately for him, the first baseman stretches like a gymnast, gracefully plucking the errant throw from the dirt, picking up his failed teammate as heroically as he does the ball, and securing success for his team as imminently as his opponent swallows the bitter taste of failure and loss.

In baseball, the winners fail just as often as do the losers, but the winners pick each other up, or, more biblically speaking, they bear one another's burdens. In baseball, more so than any other sport, the universal merges with the particulars. A successful team (the universal) is composed of a bunch of failures (the particulars) who simply refuse to let their teammates fail. If one should happen to fail, then another takes it upon himself to succeed, and together they become winners. That is what winning in baseball is all about-bearing one another's burdens.

In the Christian life, an essential function of the church as a universal concept is that particular Christians bear one another's burdens when we inevitably fail. We will be unkind to one another.

We will covet. We will bear false witness. We will take what is not ours. We will hold grudges, and we will judge harshly. We will succumb to temptation. We will fall into sin. But we pick each other up. We repent. We forgive.

When Paul writes, "...if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness", he is referring to a work of the Holy Ghost. A spiritual life is God's life. It is those whose lives imitate Christ who are commissioned to bear the burdens of those who have fallen into sin. But there is a qualification. They must do it considering themselves lest they also be tempted. Paul is saying that even the righteous Christian is a failure. Even the spiritual man possesses the sobering potential of falling into a slew of sin while trying to help another brother out of it. Maybe he will think himself above such temptations. Maybe he will be tempted to fall into it himself. Maybe he will be tempted to take pride in his own spirituality. That is why Paul warns, "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." (Gal. 6:3).

With the dawn of another baseball season upon us, we might do well to reflect upon the manner in which it resembles the Christian life, upon the reasons which make it such a classic sport. For in it, an entire collection of individual failures bears responsibility for ensuring the success of the whole. In baseball, teammates bear one another's burdens.

Christianly speaking, our Savior has done more than simply pick us up after we have failed. He actually plays the game for us. He actually took our failures and bore them in His own body to the point of death in order to make us winners. Christ makes winners out of failures. And we are at once both failures and winners; sinners and saints. Christ bears our burdens and because He does, we in turn pick each other up, consequently carrying out the work of the Holy Ghost and fulfilling the law of Christ.

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(O Brother-NOT, continued from page 3)

If it were simply that O Brother is a critique of how shallow evangelicalism has become in America, then I could probably accept that. However, it is not so much that O Brother attempts to ridicule a southern brand of Christianity and culture by ridiculing Christianity at large by identifying it with southern stereotypes such as ignorance and hypocrisy. O Brother might be fun, but it is not great. It falsifies the religion that it attempts to ridicule, and it fails to edify.

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## This Month in Christian History

**April 1, 2006**-(*The Intoxication Quarterly is born. People everywhere clamor for copies. The market responds poorly and the price of gold skyrockets.*)

**April 9, 1945:** The Gestapo hangs German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, after discovering his plot to kill Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer's last recorded words were, "This is the end—for me, the beginning of life" (*Such bold faith.*)

**April 11, 1506:** Pope Julius II lays the foundation for the new St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Indulgences sold to fund the construction drew criticism from Protestant reformers, most memorably Martin Luther. (*And a Reformation was born.*)

**April 13, 1534:** Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor of England, refuses to take the oath to the English succession. One year later, Henry VIII indicted him for treason and had him beheaded. (I guess *he was no patriot.*)

**April 15, 1729:** Johann Bach conducts the first and only performance of *St. Matthew Passion* during his lifetime at a Good Friday Vespers service in Leipzig, Germany. The choral work has been called "the supreme cultural achievement of all Western civilization," and even the radical skeptic Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) admitted upon hearing it, "One who has completely forgotten Christianity truly hears it here as gospel." (*Sadly, many Christians today cannot even recognize what god-haters recognized 300 years ago.*)

**April 21, 1109:** Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury and one of the most profound thinkers of the Middle Ages, dies around age 76. He attained fame for his argument that faith is the precondition of knowledge ("credo ut intelligam"), and for his ontological argument for God's existence. (*God is that which nothing greater can be conceived. We can conceive of God. Therefore, God exists.*)

**April 22, 1864:** The motto "In God We Trust," first appears on American coinage. (*And, we do. And this is Rebecca Hurt's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. A truly notable day.*)

**April 24, 387:** On this day, Augustine of Hippo writes in his autobiographical *Confessions*, "We were baptized and all anxiety for our past life vanished away." His baptism by Ambrose, on Easter Sunday, marked his entrance into the church. (*But that would make him sort of a sacerdotalist, wouldn't it? Can't have that!*)

**April 30, 418:** Roman Emperor Honorius (395-423) issues a decree against Pelagianism, a heresy teaching that man can take the initial and fundamental steps towards salvation by his own efforts, apart from divine grace. (*Derek, you better rewrite that poem. You appear to be a Pelagian!*)

Christian History courtesy of ChristianityToday.com/Christian History. Remarks in parentheses are ours.

## My Birth Story

Derek Davis

Gather 'round to hear my birth story, I'll tell it just like I remember it.  
 I share it to empower people - to be determined and to never quit.  
 Never an easy decision to make, since once you start a life you can't go back.  
 But at the wooing of my conception, I made a commitment to do just that.  
 So I arranged coming into the world, I knew in my heart it was the right time.  
 It took me about nine months to prepare, to be born on a hot summer night.  
 Now before I tell you what happened, I take full responsibility for this.  
 It's not the doctors fault I couldn't breathe, since this was my operation - not his.  
 It seems I had trouble working my lungs, which is strange since I made them with care.  
 But I fought and I kicked and I struggled, determined my life would not end there.  
 I don't recall how I succeeded, and I hardly remember a sound,  
 But I'm sure the doctors were impressed, to meet a lad like me who stood his ground.  
 And so my plan to be born was fulfilled. I'm no robot - I made my own choice.  
 My own logic and reason bid me come, it was not because of a still small voice.  
 Now don't get me wrong I believe in God, but here is where some make a mistake.  
 If God made me without my consent, then what other liberties could He take?  
 No, my God can't control the will of man, and my love for Him is greater this way.  
 I hope many will take up Christ's offer, so that He will have not died in vain.  
 So when you hear the preacher read John 3, about the need to be born again,  
 Remember you'll need to direct the Wind, for it can do nothing without us men.  
 In fact I'm now planning my second birth, and then I'll have another story.  
 I know God will be pleased I chose Him, and I will be pleased with the glory.

2006

# Ascension Day Ball

Friday, May 26th

Doors open at 6:30

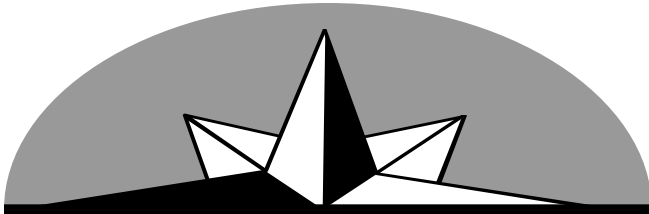
at Bahnsen Hall

434 Rivermont Ave

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## PROVIDENCE CHURCH

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**Intoxication Quarterly** is a free publication of Providence Church.

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While contributors are generally likeminded, we do not agree on every point. And we like it that way.

Donations are happily accepted.

*And do not be drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph 5:18)*

"When the apostles came forward on Pentecost Day, for the first time filled with the Holy Spirit...others mocked and said "They are full of sweet wine." ...This was the explanation. But it is inadequate, because, strangely enough, they were not this way only in the morning, no - if they were drunk - they were still drunk in the evening; and it was not only that morning, no - if they were drunk - they were also drunk the next morning and the evening of the next morning, and a month later, and twenty years afterward, and even in the hour of death they were filled with the sweet wine that they, according to the mockers explanation...must have drunk that morning."

-Soren Kierkegaard in Judge for Yourself!

At Intoxication Quarterly, we feel it is necessary to be continually drunk in the Spirit of God, Intoxicated with God's goodness, mercy and truth. So let us live.

# The Christian Home *Bringing Up Godly Children*

DOUGLAS & NANCY WILSON

Saturday, July 22, 2006

Lynchburg, Virginia

9:30am-4:30pm

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