Closing Thoughts

Look back. Look forward. The yearning and the learning are the horse we ride.  
Andrew Peterson

If reality truly were as our culture advertises, then at any time we would be able to turn off the remote and call it a day. But a successful and purposeful life demands that we accept in full the lot we are given—regardless of whether or not we are dealt the hand we have always dreamed for, or we receive that thing which we have always prayed against, we must accept reality for what it is—reality.  

The academic school year of 2002-2003 proved to be a year full of trials and twists for Union University, but these trials produced a hope in the hearts of Union students, faculty, and staff that will last far beyond the memories of smashed windshields and torn shingles. These are the trials that James speaks of in his epistle to his fellow believers as he encourages God’s people to “Consider it pure joy, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.” Trials equip people with the ability to grow, but mere exposure to trials does not automatically breed growth and maturity in the lives of those who experience them. It is easy to throw in the towel when the harshest reality steps into the ring, but the battle of life will only be won by those who press on when the road of life becomes treacherous. Though many in the Jackson community will remember this academic year by the storms that tore the city apart, Union will remember 2002-2003 as the year that faithful servants held the city together with unity and love through persevering faith in God Almighty.  

The students and faculty of Union University in 2002-2003 will be forever remembered as an overcoming and resilient example of what God’s people can do when they stare confidently down the barrel of brute reality, knowing that He who holds the past and the future also holds the present, and that the real trials and pain that arise in this life will not last forever. Mary Baker Eddy realized this truth when she said, “Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal.” Looking back on this year, God’s hand never left Union University, but even more obvious is the spirit He left His people—the spirit of real and lasting faith.
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