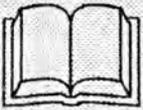


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

SEPTEMBER, 2000

"Don't be like the horse or the mule, which
have no understanding...." Psa. 32:9

"O that [my people] were wise...that they
would consider what their end will be."
Deut. 32:29

"I have considered my ways, and have turned
my steps to your statutes." Psa. 119:59

"Let us examine our ways, and test them, and
return to the Lord. " Lam. 3:40

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in
the faith; test yourselves." 2 Cor. 13:5

THE PERFECT PANACEA

Stanford Chambers

"**Panacea**: a remedy for all ills or difficulties, a cure-all."

--Webster's Dictionary

The sin-sick soul needs Christ. The sick world needs Christ. The heathen need Christ, the unlearned need Christ, the poor need Christ, the cultured need Christ, the scholarly need Christ, the rich need Christ. Christ received meets every need, meets it perfectly, and He alone does so. His redeemed should know this, and "Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so."

"Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them." Of others it is stated that they preached the Word. But He is the Word. They preached the things concerning the kingdom, but He is the King, and to preach the kingdom is to preach Christ. They preached the gospel, but He is the Gospel. Its wording is only to set Him forth to those of need. The remedy for sin is Christ. Rules there are, but the rules are not the remedy; they are directions for taking the remedy, and the remedy is Christ.

The backsliding Galatians needed Christ. "My little children, for whom I am in travail again until Christ be formed in you, even you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was set forth crucified." "Christ in you the hope of glory," is just as applicable to the Galatians as it is to the Colossians, just as applicable to us. To the carnal Corinthians, "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ"--the Christ who was crucified. The Hebrew Christians about to apostatize are presented Christ in His deity and all His superiority and excellencies from the beginning to the end of the epistle. And to each of the seven churches of Asia He presents Himself the first thing in each epistle, following which in the rest of the Book He goes forth "conquering and to conquer" until the conquering is done and He stands forth revealed and recognized as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Preachers, shepherds, teachers, leaders need a deep conviction of the fact of *the one supreme need*, need to be ever conscious of the same, and be ever prayerfully striving to present *Christ*, that the need, in whatever form it may be discovered, may be adequately met. He, not the rules of faith and practice, is the need. What time is necessarily spent in making plain the rules, let it be baptized in prayer that *He* may be *appropriated* and then, the need be met.

[Stanford Chambers edited *W&W* in its New Orleans days, before 1916]

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December under the auspices of the Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., Louisville, Ky. Subscription: \$8.00 per year, bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$7.50 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. XCIV

SEPTEMBER, 2000

No. 9

In This Issue

Consider What The End Will Be -- Alex V. Wilson	258
Faith Triumphs Over Troubles -- Richard Ramsey	259
Discouragement To Encouragement -- Billy Ray Lewter	260
The Man Alexander Campbell -- E. L. Jorgenson	264
Why Do They Leave? -- Gordon R. Linscott	267
Questions Asked Of Us -- Carl Kitzmiller	269
What Are Our Young People Thinking -- Don McGee	272
Your Calendar--Family Ally or Enemy -- Fred W. Schott	275
Teach Children To Witness Too -- Joyce Broyles	278
Voices From The Fields.	280
Frontiers Of Grace For Churches Of Christ -- Gary Pearson	281
Remembering Sis. Lois McReynolds -- Buford Smith	286
News and Notes -- Bennie Hill	287

Consider What the End Will Be

Alex V. Wilson

Recently I've been impressed with the ministry and message of Haggai. His book is the shortest in the O. T. except for Obadiah. But his two chapters pack lots of punch.

One common problem God warns us about through this plain-spoken preacher is carelessness. We are so apt to be short-sighted and just drift along. The Jews long ago had that same tendency, so the Lord impressed upon them the urgency of self-evaluation.

Two times in chapter one He says, "*Give careful thought to your ways.*" Three more times in chapter two He makes similar statements. Five times in thirty-eight verses; must be important. But the theme is found in numerous other scriptures too. People go along their way so thoughtlessly, senselessly, stupidly. No wonder the Lord warns us over and over. Listen: "O that [my people] were wise...that they would consider what their end will be." "I have **considered** my ways, and have turned my steps to your statutes." "Let us **examine** our ways, and test them, and return to the Lord." "**Examine** yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves." (Psa.32:9; Deut.32:29, Psa.119:59, Lam. 3 :40, 2 Cor.13:5.)

* * *

Since the Lord sees fit to repeat important lessons, it must be OK for *Word and Work* to do the same. So for this issue I picked out articles from previous years which seem worth repeating. Some are practical, some doctrinal, others historical. But all are valuable; some so much so that they are re-runs of re-runs. May they prove to be fresh, not stale, food for your soul.

FAITH TRIUMPHS OVER TROUBLES

Richard Ramsey

Eighty long years and more the children of Israel prayed for relief from Egyptian bondage. Eighty long years they prayed while nothing happened.

Abraham waited many long years for the fulfilment of God's promise that he would have a son. Long after natural forces had subsided so that it would be impossible for him or Sarah to have a child, Abraham kept praying and waiting.

Joseph was tried by adversity of various sorts; sold by his brethren into slavery, accused falsely by an evil woman, imprisoned, forgotten by friends.

Job had to endure a long period of physical suffering, plus the scorn of his friends. Even his wife urged him to curse God and die.

David was a fugitive for years hiding out from King Saul, who was determined to kill him. After the death of Saul there were long years of civil war before David was fully established as king.

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world, the Bible assures us. But where is that victory? The men of God through the ages have suffered and died at the hands of their enemies. "Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword." (Heb. 11:36-37)

The height of this disgrace and shame came when the Son of God himself was seized by sinful men, scourged, spit upon, laughed at and then crucified. Even his dead body was savagely pierced by the soldier's spear.

Did not the disciples pray for Jesus? Surely they must have, although the Bible does not tell us about it. Were they not standing nearby, praying God to deliver Jesus from the cross, expecting every moment to see angels descend to set him free? Yet, He went on to die.

You and I want immediate answers to our prayers. We want visible success right now. We pray believing, and we expect results.

Could we have persevered year after year under the trials these men endured? Could we have held on to our dreams in prison, as Joseph did? Could we have still believed in God's promise to take us to the promised land as the Israelites did, when year after year we felt the sting of the taskmaster's lash and saw our children put to death? Could we have held fast to our hope, as Job did when day after day he suffered terribly? Could we have held on to our faith that Jesus was God's Son if we were standing by watching Him die?

Maybe today you are struggling along under a massive load of troubles: sickness, poverty, failure, disgrace. You pray and nothing seems to happen. Just remember that you stand where mighty warriors of old have stood. Jeremiah endured the bitterness of seeing his city, Jerusalem, burned with fire, his friends slain by the enemy. The faith that triumphs is the faith that holds fast to God come what may.

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12:11)

A faith that lasts only as long as immediate, visible results are evident is a weak faith. The strong faith is that which holds fast to God when all the visible evidence seems to deny God or His goodness. A faith that endures chastening is stronger than ever.

DISCOURAGEMENT TO ENCOURAGEMENT

Billy Ray Lewter

Life is like a football game. We don't have an endless number of chances to score. Each time we lose the ball, we lose a golden opportunity. Every move, every choice, every decision is a risk. Sometimes we fail miserably. Defeat stares us in the face.

Concern over our children's spiritual responses, physical and financial problems, paralyzing fear, poignant loneliness, shattered dreams, the loss of a loved one overwhelms us. We lie awake silently weeping over embarrassing failure. Each tear erodes hope a little more. You know the feeling. So do I. And in spite of hints to the contrary, being a Christian doesn't exempt us.

Yet, in a football game incredible, unexpected changes can happen late in the fourth quarter. Out of nose-bashing pain, failure, and disappointment can come sudden triumph.

A few practical, profound principles, when practiced, could not only sustain us when we hurt, but actually enable us to influence and change the world around us. This is what counseling is all about. Helping hurting people boils down to turning discouragement to encouragement.

So, how can we "turn it around?" Here are six steps: 1. *Eliminate "failure fallacy."* That's the belief that past failure leads to future failure. The past can be a present reality to such an extent that the effects of the past can't be removed. The deeper we dig into a problem, the more we find it to be tenacious, complicated, and interwoven with other problems like links in a chain.

Dr. Henry Brandt, internationally known author and psychologist, pointed out that we may indeed fail again. He said, "Failure is predictable if you don't correct what you are doing wrong. The question is not whether you failed, but do you want to correct it?" The Psalmist said (119:59), "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet."

Success follows acknowledgment of failure and a desire to correct it. Joe Reaves, who holds doctorates in both theology and psychology, pointed out that correction is a process, not an event. It is a process started by a choice, that over time, has an ultimate benefit from God.

2. *God doesn't have, or need, perfect people.* The irony of God's kingdom is that the people with the greatest impact have not been

those conscious of success, but those aware of weakness and failure, and who discovered the power of God can produce deep changes.

My father was a heavy drinker, smoker and compulsive gambler. During the Depression my mother, brother and sister were fed by the Salvation Army.

When I was six weeks old, my father looked into my crib and said, "If things don't go well, I'll never see you again." He had planned to rob a store to pay gambling debts. He began to cry, then to pray. On Sunday he went to church with my mother and gave his life to God. His life completely changed.

In spite of only attending two years in a one-room school, and much trouble reading, he memorized thousands of Bible verses. Every night he went to hospitals, jails, prisons, bed-to-bed or cell-to-cell, sharing God's Word and the transforming power of Jesus Christ. He helped hundreds of others experience life changes, once even arranging a governor's release of a repentant prisoner from death row.

3. *You can see the hand of God in both success and failure.* The issue is not whether we think we are succeeding or think we are failing, but are we fully committed to do God's will. Our evaluations are not accurate anyway. We often over-estimate our failures and underestimate our success.

God has promised that all things work out for good in our commitment to Him (Romans 8:28). Compare this with a ship. Not all parts of a ship will float, such as the heavy engines or the propeller. But when these are added to a structure that does float, they provide force and direction. When the experiences of life are taken as a whole, the insight gained and lessons learned from our failures provide a meaning, force and direction that would not be there otherwise.

Henry Brandt said, "Sometimes I think it doesn't matter to the Lord what happens. It's my response He's concerned about. I've become more or less disinterested in how things work out." He continued, "Over my 72 years I've become very relaxed about money, possessions, what people think; that includes pain and death. I just try to pay attention to what manner of person I am."

4. *God has used ordinary people, unrecognized by the world, to do extraordinary things.* Moses was an 80 year old shepherd broken in spirit, when God called him. David was a shepherd. Amos was a shepherd and dresser of sycamore trees, neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. Peter was a boastful, impulsive fisherman. Jeremiah was an emotional person with deep inner conflicts, who felt he was a failure

because he couldn't see results. Yet Jeremiah was God's spokesman in one of Israel's darkest hours.

As a teacher in Hong Kong, several times I heard Gladys Aylward tell her story. She had heard of an old missionary in China's interior and believed God wanted her to leave England to help. But she was rejected by the mission board for not meeting its standards.

She worked as a maid until she could buy a ticket to China on the Trans-Siberian railway. After a long, uncomfortable, cold and dangerous trip, she arrived without notice. Her mail had never gotten through.

As Gladys helped run an inn, she ached over the plight of children. Her care for them won so much respect and trust, she was used to stop a prison riot.

Eventually she had 200 children. As the war with Japan progressed, Gladys and her children were forced to flee. With little food, they marched by night and hid by day. They crossed 2,000 mountainous miles and the huge Yellow River. A book, *The Small Woman*, and a movie, *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, were made from her adventures.

5. *Express pain honestly.* Job said, "I cry to thee and thou dost not answer." David cried out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus quoted that question on the cross. Jeremiah said, "I have labored in vain." Habakkuk looked at injustice and asked, "Where is God?" Gideon asked, "If the Lord is with us, then why has all this befallen us?" John the Baptist sent from prison and asked, "Art thou he that should come, or do we wait for another?" Turning discouragement to encouragement comes from facing, not suppressing, painful feelings.

When Dr. Brandt's wife Eva was dying of inoperable cancer of the pancreas, he said, "I have a lot of questions to ask the Lord, but He doesn't answer. My prayers are just sounds. I don't see any good in it, but when I asked God about it, I got silence. I've never heard a word from God." He went on to say, however, "If through the years you have learned to walk with the Lord, at times like this you find strength." He also said, "The longer I live the less I understand the Lord but the more I've learned to trust Him." He believes that because he has chosen to live for the Lord, he is an example to others, and he can expect unusual things. Instead of "Why me?" it is "Why not me?"

6. *Encourage each other.* Most people are discouraged and lonely. If the truth were known their hearts are probably breaking. They have

a deep sense of insignificance and a yearning for security. They hunger and thirst for deeper relationships.

The church is a natural support system. It offers redemptive fellowship, supportive encouragement, loving exhortation, and caring concern. It can be a laboratory for emotional and spiritual maturity. Isaiah said, "Learn to sustain with words him that is weary". (50:4)

Henry Brandt learned that he is no better at comforting those facing death, even after the Lord took two wonderful wives from him by death. He said, "Biblical words shared by a non-experienced person are just as effective as from an experienced person. It is not one's experience that helps another. It is God's word that helps."

Dr. Brandt's procedures for counseling are these: (1) listen to a person's story until Biblical principles emerge that have been violated, (2) share that with them, (3) leave the results with God. It is no easier to remodel thinking, behavior, and feelings, than it is to make a comeback in a rugged football game. Life, like the game, is complex, uncertain, brief, and reveals glaring weaknesses.

Yet these six spiritual and psychological insights make an inner curriculum for renewed purpose. They keep you in touch with God's incredible forgiveness, and sustaining grace. They enable you to experience pain and hope simultaneously. Even when you think you're about to lose, as they have worked for others, they will work for you.

Despair turned God-ward

Consider these verses from the Scriptures:

Will the Lord reject forever?
Will He never show His favor again?
Has His unfailing love vanished forever?
Has His promise failed for all time?
Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has He in anger withheld His compassion?

(Psalm 77:7-9)

Six rapid-fire questions packed with explosive power. The psalmist's despair turns godly when it turns God-ward. Something awesome has to happen when we choose the direct line to the Lord. The irony of questioning God is that it honors him: it turns our hearts away from ungodly despair toward a passionate desire to comprehend him. Despair that rises in a direct and vertical line to God opens us up to change, real hope, and the possibility of seeing God as he really is, not as we want him to be. Once we give an inch, God will take a mile. He'll take a million miles. He'll soar on the wings of the wind from heaven to here to show you who he is, to embrace you with his love.

--Joni Eareckson Tada and Steven Estes, *When God Weeps*.

THE MAN ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

E. L. Jorgenson

I am no Campbellite or any other sort of "ite" I trust--though I have known for some time that partyism can easily exist in the midst of those who repudiate it, and who wear no human name. It is a member of God's one and only Church that I am, and neither time nor energy have I to build up anything less or else than that.

But if I were bound to be an "ite" of any kind, perhaps, I should choose to be a Campbellite--that is, if I could stand right alongside of Campbell, believing and practicing as he did, not as some of the sections in the "Restoration movement" now believe and practice--by which I mean to imply that there has been degeneration and decline in that movement, even as "no religious reformation maintains its purity through a hundred years."

Beginning with his *Christian Baptist* of 1823, and ceasing not until I had read his last words for the religious press in November, 1865, I have carefully examined that great man's writings--a task which, with my other duties, I have been three or four years in completing; a task however, which is no task, but a pleasure and privilege to any lover of high, enabling thought expressed in clear, clean diction.

Throughout this reading, and especially in contrast with some things that have transpired the while, I have been impressed with the excellency, the high standard and the true Christian spirit of this great man of God. Lack of space forbids the free use of quotations from him; but the reader may be assured that I am fully prepared to substantiate with such quotations, the following statements:

1. He was of a fraternal spirit. So far from believing that God had no children in denominationalism he recognized that at the outset of his work they were *all* there. "Christians only, but not the only Christians," if not expressed in these words, was a truth freely recognized by him and his coworkers. For instance, Adoniram Judson's wife, whom he addressed as "Sister," he regarded as a Christian lady of great excellence. [The Judsons were Baptist missionaries.]

D'Aubigne (the historian) he characterized as "one of the most eminent Christian men of Europe."

A Baptist preacher, Teasdale, of Washington, he characterized as "a brother of good degree and great boldness in the faith."

In these quotations, I do not mean to endorse denominationalism, for, like Campbell, I seek to call God's children out of it into a separate, independent, unsectarian stand. But his genuine fraternal spirit is refreshing alongside of the narrow sectarianism which strives to make "The Brotherhood" of "loyal" disciples, as we use the term in a limited sense, coextensive with the Church of God; and especially in contrast with the hide-bound partyism that would disfellowship all outside of certain sections of that movement.

2. This broad fraternity and fellowship on his part grew out of a true understanding of what it is that constitutes the bond of union among believers. He required no subscription to his views or interpretations in order to perfect fellowship; and the tendency to require such conformity, now so prevalent among "disciples" he would have scouted in sheer contempt. I quote:

"The only bond of union among them (New Testament churches) was faith in Him and submission to His will. No subscription to abstract propositions framed by synods." "The New Testament is our only creed, and the avowal of the One Foundation our only bond of union."

To a "German Baptist" or "Dunkard" he wrote: "Dear Brother--for such I recognize you, notwithstanding the varieties of opinion which you express on some topics, on which we might never agree. But if we should not, as not unity of opinion but unity of faith is the only true bond of Christian union, I will esteem and love you, as I do every man, of whatever name, who believes sincerely that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and hopes in his salvation."

He saw reasons which forbade "an effort on our part to make our own declaration of faith a term of communion to others." He also saw reasons for "distinguishing betwixt making a declaration of our faith for the satisfaction of others, and binding that declaration on others as a term of communion."

He was a staunch defender of the right of individual and independent examination of God's word. As he says: "Every disciple of Christ will suffer no man to judge for him while he is able to read the revelation of God in his own tongue--at least, such ought to be his determination." He was equally firm in the avowal that among those who "hold fast the Head" and those who confess the "one foundation," differences resulting thus from independent study should be no bar to Christian fellowship: "I have no idea of suppressing anything of consequence because the writer and I may differ in some points. And while I edit this work (the *Christian Baptist*) it shall be open to every decent passenger of whatever creed, who holds the Head."

3. He was far clearer on the place of baptism, the place of works and the truth about justification by faith, than many of his modern friends, as the following paragraphs from the *Millennial Harbinger* will show:

"With Martin Luther, I regard 'justification by faith, the test of a standing or a falling church'--perhaps it should have been of 'a standing or a fallen church.' Grace and faith are not incompatible in any Scriptural view of either. But grace and works are evidently incompatible. *Grace and baptism into Christ* are not incompatible, for *baptism is not a work of the subject*, but of the administrator. The subject is as *passive* in baptism as he is, or will be in his literal burial in the earth, so far as his own work is contemplated. There can be no merits in any work not performed by the subject himself. Hence, baptism is but the personal and formal confession of the faith of the subject. It is, therefore, never regarded nor denominated as a good work of the subject. *All good works have our fellow men as their objects and not ourselves. They are the radiations of philanthropy.* Hence, in its institution, Christian immersion is only a development of the grace of God. It is His solemn, silent assurance to the proper subject, of the pardon of his sins and acceptance with God, *through the sacrifice of Christ*, whose blood cleanses from all sin."

4. It is in season also to point out Campbell's great interest in prophecy, an interest which the following quotations indicate:

"Now is the time for the students of prophecy to keep their vigils, to trim their lamps and watch!" "The subject of the Millennium is one of growing importance and of stirring interest to the Christian community." "The compass and grandeur of that sublime subject (millennium) demand a concentration of mind, paramount to any other topic now in our horizon. We are glad to see a continually increasing interest in that theme." "The subject is annually growing in importance, and we feel constrained to contribute our labors to that subject." "The coming events of Apocalyptic vision are pressing upon our attention." "Whatever is taught in the Oracles of God respecting the present or future condition of the Christian profession, demands our most grave and serious consideration."

Large portions of his paper were devoted to the discussion of prophetic themes, both by himself and by contributors. The Millennium he dealt with at length, and his paper was named the "Harbinger" of that glad era.

[E. L. Jorgenson was associate editor of the W&W when he wrote this in 1917.]

Still valid, though penned in 1963

WHY DO THEY LEAVE?

Gordon R. Linscott

At year-end we sometimes look back with profit. Recently I've been looking far back into the past, in the bound volumes of the W & W from the twenties and thirties. I see the names of brethren still active for the Lord, but no longer "with us." From what I hear, these are yet highly esteemed for their faith. Why did they choose to disassociate themselves from us? What happened somewhere in these intervening years? In certain similar cases, I have heard 1 John 2:19 glibly quoted: "They went out from us, but they were not of us," etc. Of some this may be true, but what of those who seemed to be among our most zealous and fruitful workers? Why did they prefer the fellowship of others? It seems unlikely that the fault was wholly with them.

Without trying to analyze individual cases nor attempting "to bring them back into our fold," let's use this as a background for a look to the future. We expect that other young men shall develop into spiritually-minded workers for the Lord. Will the time come when some of the best of them will feel they should go out from us? What do we have (or not have) that sends them elsewhere? Does the atmosphere of the congregation stimulate real spiritual growth? Is our vaunted freedom in Christ a reality? Do we encourage our young people to be taught by the Spirit, or do we hand them a ready-made doctrinal strait jacket? Have they seen the working of God through our prayers? Whatever our answers, the problem is still with us.

The responsibility for its solution cannot easily be laid at the feet of a few selected individuals.

AUTOPSY OF THE PRAYER MEETING

What is the greatest challenge facing the Church today? It may well be this: Is your God real? Where is the evidence that He is working in the congregation where you worship?

The present condition of the prayer meeting in most churches is a fair indication that many who believe in "church" have little confidence in a prayer-answering God. A few still continue to pray on, but even among these few we do not hear many shining testimonies of answered prayer. In the prayer meetings themselves there is little air of expectancy. As A. W. Tozer wrote some months ago, "When Christians meet, they do not expect anything unusual to happen; consequently only the usual happens, and that usual is as predictable as the setting of the sun...Christian expectation in the average church follows

the program, not the promises. Prevailing spiritual conditions, however low, are accepted as inevitable." Topics for prayer may rise but little above the mundane needs of the congregation, and the prayers are frequently more wishful than authoritative. Surely all this is painfully familiar to most of us. But it need not be so; prayer can be new and powerful--now, this month, this week.

A CITY WITHOUT CRIME

A few months ago, the city of Denver was deeply involved in a crime wave. Even the police force was implicated, and the whole nation was shocked by the scandal. According to one citizen, "Even the people in their own apartments weren't safe anymore." According to a report in United Evangelical Action, a Christian business man named Houston Gibson took the initiative that culminated in a city-wide week of prayer. The mayor gave his full support, as did the chief of police. Most of the churches joined in prayer for the city and its law enforcement agencies. A part of Chief Slavin's comments are worthy of quotation:

"I am certain that the Lord knows how much we in the police department need His help as we attempt to make Denver a safer and better city. You could not experience what the police do every day and not realize the need of prayer to maintain any hope. ...If our society has not become completely conditioned by cynicism, who is to say that through an earnest, sincere repenting appeal to our Father we may not witness a miraculous improvement in the moral standards and values of our fellow citizens and in each one of us who go to the Lord in prayer?"

The results were indeed little less than miraculous. For the five-day period (Monday through Friday) immediately following the week of prayer, Denver-the city of crime-reported only the theft of a bicycle.

Yes, God is real. He will yet hear from heaven and He does still manifest His power upon the earth. Try Him and see.

[Gordon Linscott edited W&W from 1962-75.]

QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

Only God can create life, yet the image of the beast is said to have breath. What is the nature of the image of the beast? Is it (the image) a robot controlled by a super computer? Something else?

This is one of nine prophetic questions asked by a brother I met. Most are opinion questions. They show that the one asking them has an excellent working knowledge of the end-time events as they are recorded in scripture. He understood that his questions could not be answered with a specific, "Thus saith the Lord," and appended a note saying that they were food for thought. I am not especially attempting to answer the questions here since much of what I would write would be speculation. Rather, I want to use the questions as an occasion for commenting on the whole of prophetic study.

Prophecy speaks of any message from God delivered by His prophets. Not all prophecy has to do with future events. (1) The prophets often spoke of conditions that existed in the very day when they spoke, and they delivered messages expressing God's will concerning those conditions. (2) Some of what they spoke had to do with the very near future, and their credentials as a prophet of God were established by the certain fulfilment of what they spoke. (3) Some of the messages of the prophets had to do with events several hundred years beyond their time, but those events have now taken place and their words have been fulfilled. Examples of this latter are the prophecies of the first coming of the Lord Jesus. Finally, some of prophecy has to do with things yet future to our own day, especially the events of the second coming of Christ. In this article we are using "prophecy" to speak primarily of those future things relating to the second coming. This is often the portion of prophecy people have in mind when they speak of prophetic things.

There is a sizeable segment of Christian people who "have no use for prophecy." These regard it as being so difficult to understand that "nobody knows what it means" and believe it only brings trouble. They believe, as some have expressed it, in living right in the present and doing the work of a Christian now and leaving all those future things to God. They can make their position sound reasonable to those who are not aware of the Bible emphasis on prophecy. They tend to dismiss all efforts at understanding the prophetic scriptures as "speculation" and regard prophecy as being a non-essential, an unnecessary portion of God's word.

Any fair-minded person must admit that there have been abuses, wild claims, and serious misuse of prophecy (as has been the case with most Biblical themes). This misuse must not drive us from the proper use, however. Prophecy is a part of the whole of scripture which is inspired of God and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter likens it to a lamp shining in a dark place (2 Pet. 1:19). It is intended as light for our pathway even here and now. A specific blessing is given in the book of Revelation to those who read, hear and keep it (Rev. 1:3). Jesus instructed His hearers, "Let him that readeth understand," as he spoke of a certain prophetic matter (Matt. 24:15), and He called His disciples friends because of His desire to reveal to them things to come (John 15:15). More could be cited to show that our Lord meant for Christians to study and understand prophecy as certainly as anything else in the Bible. It is not a commendable attitude which dismisses this portion of God's word as being unworthy of our attention, and it is a serious offense when Christians treat with suspicion or rebuke those who seek to understand what God has spoken.

There are some prophetic matters which receive so much attention in the scriptures that there is really very little basis for any lack of agreement concerning them, at least in general outline. Those who believe them certainly cannot be fairly accused of speculation. One would almost have to have help in believing anything else.

Then there are those areas of prophecy that begin to open up to the student of the Bible as he becomes aware of the entire scriptures, fitting the various passages into their proper place, trying to believe in "all that the prophets have spoken" (cf. Luke 24:25). These things may require some measure of Christian growth and some chewing on the "meat" of the word, but they are also part of the revelation of scripture. What may seem fantastic or speculative to the babe in Christ is recognized as blessed truth. In this area it will be necessary for the more mature Christian to exercise patience and forbearance with the less mature, and the less mature should at least recognize their limitations and withhold judgment concerning the other. Personal limitations, laziness in study, or a learned bias should not somehow become an excuse for depriving others of blessing.

As we begin to flesh out the outline of prophetic events we sometimes find ourselves in an area where God has not given a specific answer, where the scripture could be fulfilled in several different ways, or the answers are somewhat vague for some reason. This gray area needs to be treated with care since it may be our dullness that keeps us from understanding. I am persuaded that God may have told us a lot of things we have not had the spiritual discernment to see. One of the great surprises of eternity may be in discovering how much this was the case. Even so, there are things God has not revealed, either by

choice, in consideration of our present limitations, or for some other reason. There are matters that even the most spiritually developed persons recognize as being vague. I do not believe it is wrong for us to speculate on some of these things so long as we realize and clearly keep in mind that we are speculating. Such a process may cause us to search the scriptures for answers and may lead us to discoveries of what has been revealed.

Of course there is a danger that some will mistake their opinions for fact. One does not have to deal with prophecy to become guilty of wresting the scriptures. If the attitude is wrong, that can happen with any theme or portion of scripture we may choose (cf. 2 Pet.3:16). It is not an unknown thing for speculators to bind their views on others. There is no intention of defending a wrong use of speculation. We do need to apply scripture to our age and needs, however, and the question, "Could the Lord have been speaking of this or that in our day?" is often helpful. We do not always have to have an answer that is clearly black or white before we can reap a benefit.

In this light, let us look at the question given at the first of this article. It is my opinion that the image will receive life from the agent of Satan. I am aware that only God has life and immortality, but God sometimes grants His power to other beings when it suits His purpose. Satan is a supernatural being and it is not inconceivable that God has allowed him supernatural power to give life in a limited way. However, in view of Satan's deceptive ways and the developments we have seen in our day, the proposal that the image is a robot controlled by a super computer is not some kind of nutty idea. While God is never limited to the inventions and developments of man for carrying out His purposes. He has often used them (The ark, for example, was a material object built by man, not a supernatural gift from heaven). We live in a day that allows for some fairly simple fulfilment to things that once seemed utterly impossible except for the power of God.

So, what is the benefit of this speculation if I cannot know that God will use computers, nuclear destruction, etc., in the fulfilment of the judgments of Revelation? My concern for the possibilities could make me more watchful; could make it easier to believe in the literal fulfilment of the prophecies; and could make me more in awe of the power of God, seeing He has allowed such developments to man. Unless we make application of the truths of God to the events and needs of life we may miss a great deal that God means to tell us.

WHAT ARE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THINKING?

Don McGee

I was a teacher at church camp last summer and I could tell from the Sunday night crowd this was going to be a very good Senior week at CYE. It was what one might call the tenor and intensity of the group that arrested my attention, and I have continued to mull over what they said that week though it has now been several months. Perhaps other church leaders are interested in what these young people are thinking. I certainly hope so.

My class consisted of twenty-one high school and college students. Five were young men, sixteen were young women, and they represented a good cross-section of the churches in Louisiana. We took advantage of the opportunity to discuss a number of current church issues and I will share several of these with you in the hope we all will better understand those matters our young people consider important.

One of the first things talked about was the need for **classes on how to study the Bible**. They understand Bible study is to be approached differently than reading a newspaper or studying a biology textbook, but they are not sure of some of the mechanics. Judging from the proliferation of generic topical sermons there may be a pressing need for church leaders to seriously consider this subject.

Closely associated with the above is this next item. They also felt strongly about the need for **teacher training classes**. They see fine Christians being asked to teach Bible classes but who have little or no training in the art of Bible study. They are adept at reading and quoting scripture but are unfamiliar with expounding it. Take away a canned lesson plan so that a teacher must simply teach from the Word and they're at a loss! No theme, no substance, no thrust and no application. Do you suppose there may be something to what these young people are saying about our teaching programs? I believe there is. On a couple of occasions men have actually told me they "can not teach from the Bible," that they must have a "study guide." At least one reason for this is they have never been taught how to mine for the gold. It seems the word *exegesis* is not familiar to some teachers. That might be okay because our churches are not seminaries, but the alarming thing is that the practice of what the word means is also unfamiliar.

Also high on their list was the need for **premarital counseling**. They felt there was a great need for such classes but hardly any of their preachers had such a practice. As a result many young people are going into marriage without much of a Biblical view of sex. None were able to say their parents or church leaders ever talked to them about human sexuality, except to say "don't do it" before marriage. They have no concept of the family being the foundation for church leadership training. They somehow have the idea elders hire and fire the preacher and speak *ex cathedra*, and that deacons are "elders in training". Most admit to having hardly any idea of stewardship, budgets, credit, etc. The list could go on.

Among other things they would like to see are **activities involving others their own age**. For examples they listed tubing, canoeing, bowling, skating, ski trips and even an afternoon in the local park playing volleyball. One of them said any excuse to get together is good enough. *One of the ideas they had was for churches with buses to bring their young people to other church camps so they could meet other people.* The thought that crossed my mind when I heard that was, "Yeah, we used to have SCC to help fill that need."

After a couple of days with them I felt comfortable in asking what I've been wanting to ask a responsible group of young people for a long time. "Would you consider becoming a minister, and if not, why not?" The answers were not very varied. The reasons included their not being up to the challenge and not wanting to be viewed as being different. However, their two main reasons had to do with the money situation and the undue stress put upon the preacher and his family. These young people believe Christians should practice sacrificial living but they do not believe the preacher should be the only one in the congregation doing the sacrificing. I ask you, does that strike a nerve or what!? Three of the five young men said they would "seriously consider" the ministry but the above matters would be major considerations. One said both his peers and family (Christians, by the way) feel the preaching profession is a "waste of talent." There is more money and prestige doing other things, they said. That, too, is an exposed nerve!

I asked the young women how they felt about marrying a preacher and the answer was basically the same. Fifteen of the sixteen young women said they would "seriously consider" it and several indicated they would actually like to marry a preacher.

Perhaps when our churches realize preachers are "ranchers" and not "shepherds" and that it will take more than \$2100 a month and a parsonage to get a man who knows what he is doing, we will begin to see some good talent being put into practice.

Does this mean these young people are materialistic? Not at all! But it does mean that, as potential preachers and their wives, they would like a style of living similar to that which their congregations practice. They would like to take a vacation, own a boat or camper, have a modest and comfortable home, take their families out to dinner, continue their education, provide opportunities for their children, have a savings account . . . I think you get the idea.

Next time some committee or board of elders gets together to consider a lectureship series or the future of their congregation they may want to listen to what their young people have to say. None of the young people I know would make unreasonable requests, present ultimatums, or spew forth caustic demands. (What could be more reasonable than the above mentioned classes?) Sadly though, they are not even asking for an audience with the "powers that be." Some seem to have simply resigned themselves to the status quo. After being de-facto ignored for some length of time they simply leave, and as leaders we are left standing in the dust wondering what happened and why. To deny consideration of our young men and women is to destroy golden opportunities, ignore some brilliant ideas and waste the drive and vigor of youth. May this charge never be leveled against us for we shall give account of our stewardship in this most vital area.

If you feel this evaluation is off by a country mile then give it a test. Take your class of young adults, both singles and those married, and study 1 Timothy with them. Take the role of facilitator from time to time and listen carefully to what they think. Especially when you get to chapter three! If you are like me--that is, if you are quite conservative--you will be impressed. Perhaps one Sunday afternoon you will fall on your knees and praise God for your young adults and their depth, conviction and soundness. Perhaps for the first time you will realize that, if our Lord's return is further delayed, His church will pass into the capable hands of a generation that will fit well into Hebrews chapter eleven! If we will let them!

[Though this was written in 1994, its content and especially its example to leaders of asking and listening are both very relevant today. How can we scratch folks where they itch if we don't know where they itch?--avw]

YOUR CALENDAR-- FAMILY ALLY OR ENEMY?

Fred W. Schott

Remember when families ate at the same time every evening, year after year? Supper time at our house was 5:00 p.m. sharp. You could set your clock by our routine. Dad punched out of the factory in the south end of Louisville at 4:30. It took him exactly twenty-five minutes to make it home to the west end. He arrived at 4:55, washed his hands, gave mom a big kiss, and I said grace every night at 5:00. One of our family's strictest rules was, "You have your feet under this table at 5:00!"

Today, my family is lucky to all hold hands and say grace together two or three times a week. It seems no matter how hard we try, the five of us are just going in so many directions that one or more family members is not there.

Ah, the good ole days! But before we get too melancholy--the families of the past were not better families because they ate together with more regularity than our families today. Our families are not inferior because we have trouble eating at the same time each night. Many of the things that interrupt our meal times are healthy: piano lessons, special choir practices, cheerleading, men's Monday after-work basketball league (very important to my mental well-being!), a late afternoon class or seminar. We are not inferior. We are just different, responding to a different world than the one in which we grew up. Further, struggling with overcommitment as we do, our lives are full of wonderful opportunities and experiences.

But my family and most others need to learn ways to take greater responsibility for planning family time. We do have to work harder at that than previous generations. It is most important that we do not just let things happen. Rather, we need to give time, thought, and energy to planning our time. Overcommitment is an overlooked danger to modern family life. I reemphasize: We must take charge of the process. We need to go beyond simply responding to each new crisis or demand on our time.

"OK, OK." I can hear some of you say. "I agree! But how?" It is a simple matter of *Getting Organized*. Develop a system of time management is my first recommendation. This is important. When things get hectic and we sense ourselves becoming overcommitted, if we have a system, we know how to make adjustments, we have confidence, and we will not be overwhelmed. I have a system of time management that I use. It helps me be fair to myself as well as my family.

I discovered the importance of a system and developed one that works for me and many I have shared it with. What I will share here is the basics of a family system of time management. You need to personalize it, add to it, and make your own. It is built around this principle: *Proactive Calendaring*.

A good calendar is the heart of any system. I use a three-ring binder in which two 8 1/2 X 11-inch pages open to form a week's calendar. At home, the heart of our family system is a large wall calendar showing a month at a time with large daily squares that allow a lot of writing. A simple principle: Writing things down, in the calendar, with enough detail is vital.

We write more than scheduled events in the calendar. Things that have shown up on our calendar from time to time are whose night it is to cook, to wash dishes, or to feed the dog. Sometimes when I have gotten out of the habit of routinely doing something that is important to me, like physical exercise, quiet times for prayer and study of scripture, or guitar playing, I will begin to chart that activity in my calendar. Just keeping a record gets me back into the habit. This is simply a method of self-discipline.

Work to become more *proactive* and less *reactive* in scheduling things on the calendar. Most of the time we react to time commitments. We get notices from school, letters and announcements in the mail, receive phone calls, sign up for classes, leagues, and church activities, and react by scheduling all these activities on the calendar. Soon it is so cluttered we have no time left for the family or ourselves. Often by reacting to life's events, we have trouble saying "no" to things we really would rather not do. Or it seemed OK when we said "yes" but all those "so-so" activities build up, making us tired, cranky and feeling out of control.

By proactive, I mean to determine as a family not only what is important but what we want to do and schedule it in advance. Write it into the calendar, then protect it. Some examples: When calendars begin to look cluttered, someone needs to say to the entire family, "Hey, gang, we haven't been together just as a family, by our selves, in a long time. We need to do something together." So far all we have is a wish. A family becomes proactive when they then go as a group to look at the big calendar, select an open evening or afternoon, and write in big letters "US!" Then everyone agrees to protect it. What the family ultimately does can even be decided later! The activity is not as important as the time.

Proactive Calendaring can also conquer the monster television. We really do see it as a monster, not only because of some of the garbage it spews but because it tempts us into spending too much time with it. Once this was becoming a real problem at our house. First we

determined how much time was reasonable for us to spend watching television in a week. We then took the Sunday TV guide from the paper and with the children went over the schedule. With a red marker we put a box around certain shows we thought were worth-while. During the week, the television only came on during those hours. We did this for several weeks until we got out of the habit of just flipping on the television, having it on, and watching whatever it had to offer.

I am grateful that as a young father I read a book by Pastor Charlie Shedd called *A Dad Is for Spending Time With*. In the book he suggested that fathers make regular "dates" with each child. I began the practice when our oldest, Laura, was seven. Each month, afterwards, I took one of my daughters on a date. All three of them seemed to enjoy the practice. We have some precious memories. When they were little, they used to remind me when it was their month for a date. Later I usually had to remind them, but they still seemed more than willing. I often asked after we agreed on a night and the activity, "You're not too big to keep going out on dates with Dad?" They always responded with the nicest comments. We had good times and great discussions. It really helped me get to know them as unique people.

Proactive calendaring is what really made those monthly dates with dad a reality. Over the years I always wrote our dates into my personal calendar, the same one I use for my business appointments. When I was in private training and consulting, my office in our basement always had my calendar. One day my youngest, Emily, about seven or eight, came bounding into the family room, climbed up into my lap, and with one arm resting on my shoulder and a sweet tone to her voice said, "It's my month for a date, Daddy." We talked about it and agreed on a night. She jumped off my lap and ran out of the room. She reappeared in a few minutes with my calendar under her arm. She strutted over, handed it to me, and commanded, "Write it down, dad!" Even at that age she knew if it was down in my calendar, not only would I remember our date, but I would protect it.

Protecting family time is my last suggestion. Proactive calendaring is only effective if we protect it. I have found this principle helpful. When I calendar family time or time with just one family member (Donna and I need our dates too!), or even time for me (GONE FISH'N gets put in the calendar occasionally), I try to treat my family members with all of the dignity and respect I would give to a client, my boss, or my church.

To illustrate, say my family has looked ahead and written "US!" on the calendar and a client calls and says, "Fred, I belong to a professional organization. We are having a big meeting. We want you to be the keynote speaker. I think your thoughts on families are so important in today's world. Will you speak to us on corporate responsibility

to the family?" My response should be one of the following: "Gee, Mr. Client, I am flattered, but I have a previous engagement that has been scheduled. It is very important. I feel badly but I'm going to have to decline." Or I can say, "Gee, Mr. Client, I am flattered. I would love to speak to your organization. I do have a commitment to another group. Let me see if I can move them to another night. Can I call you tomorrow?"

With the second response I then go to the family, explain the situation, and see if we can pick another night. I do not feel the obligation to even reveal that the previous engagement is with my family--for two reasons. Many people do not share my values and would pressure me to violate my principle. Second, my calendar, my time, and my family is my business and my responsibility. Proactive calendaring helps families to say "no" in an honest and sincere way.

TEACH CHILDREN TO WITNESS TOO

Joyce Broyles

For over thirty years now, I have been sharing the gospel with children, encouraging them to hide God's Word in their hearts. As soon as I returned from Southeastern Christian College, a mere eight-years old, I was saddled with a Bible Class of eighth grade boys. Remarkably, thirty-four years later, I am still teaching eighth grade boys. However, in the interim, I taught classes from babies through high school, the Girls' Club, Child Evangelism clubs, and even a few ladies' Bible classes.

Sometimes the classes have been difficult, but I keep volunteering. I need the challenge to keep studying. I have found that I learn so much more than I can ever teach. Some classes, though, have been harder to manage than others. Several times my children have asked, "Why do you keep doing it? You don't even get paid for it!" At those times, I have thought to myself that I have "bread to eat that you know not of."

There were some expenses for consumable items, supplies, special projects and refreshments: however, the cost of my time was the most valuable. Yet through the years I have been privileged to witness some of these students give their lives to Jesus. At those times, any little sacrifice that I might have made was nothing compared to the joy I experienced at their baptisms. I am not an evangelistic minister, so I have not led hundreds to Jesus, but I can vividly recall the first one, David, and then John, the King family, Jeff, Melissa, Lisa, Laura, and Kelly, as well as our own children.

Basically, I am a shy person, especially in a crowd or when I feel intimidated by others. In a classroom, however, when I am well-pre-

pared and sitting beside my students, I feel wonderful about telling them about Jesus.

Adapting the teaching to the ages of the students, naturally, I try to tell each class how to come to Christ. Fourth graders are my favorite age group, and it is with this group that I especially stress commitment to the Lord for salvation.

Often we ROLE-PLAY, having one student ask another about Jesus. I have a small script that I have them adapt and use. We practice it regularly:

Saved person to Unsavd friend: I had a good time last Sunday in Bible class. Do you go to Bible class anywhere?

Unsaved person: No. What do you do at Bible class?

Saved: We learn about trusting Jesus so we can go to heaven some day.

Unsaved: Who's Jesus? Why do you trust Him?

Saved: Well, first of all, everyone has been bad or done bad things. The Bible says everyone has sinned.

Unsaved: So what does that mean?

Saved: Everyone was sinning or doing bad things. God is in heaven, and when He saw how everyone was acting, He sent His son Jesus to pay the price for our sins. Jesus came down from heaven and died for us, taking the punishment our sins deserved.

Unsaved: Then what happened?

Saved: God made Him alive again. Jesus went back to heaven and He's waiting for us, getting our mansions ready. There won't be any pain there.

Unsaved: Sounds like a good place. How can I get there?

Saved: You have to trust Jesus to forgive and change you. If you really trust Him you will confess, obey and follow Him.

Unsaved: Confess what?

Saved: The six most important words you will ever say: "Jesus is the Son of God." You must confess this in front of other people to show that you believe Him and are not ashamed of Him.

Unsaved: Then what?

Saved: After you confess, then you must obey. The Bible says you should repent or turn from doing wrong, and be baptized.

Unsaved: Okay, then what?

Saved: After you have trusted and obeyed Jesus, then you must follow. When you follow someone, you don't just take one step. You must follow

them each day. That's what you do with Jesus. Each day, you ask Him to show you which way to go.

Unsaved: So the good news is that I can go to heaven too?

Saved: Yes, if you trust and follow Jesus. He died for us so we can be forgiven and go to heaven.

Usually, the students enjoy role-playing, and after each student has been paired off and gone through the script, the students almost know it from memory. At that point, I explain that in order to do this properly, they should know those verses that they referred to. And thus, the MEMORY WORK begins.

Each week that we meet, a new verse is added to the ones they have learned. All of the ones learned are reviewed first, each student having a chance to recite each in turn. Gradually, other facts are added to the scripture list, and the students learn things about the Bible as well as the scriptures themselves.

VOICES From The FIELDS

Moto Nomura

Bethany House, Japan

Aug. 2000

At last through the district Health and Welfare Department, we were able to take my mother to the nearby mental hospital--for an interview. The beds are all occupied and we could not leave her in the hospital. We shall visit the clinic tomorrow morning again for another interview and a shot, then if we find a bed available, we will ask them to take care of her. If not, then we have to take her back to our Bethany Home till Monday morning. By next week we hope she can find her bed in the hospital.

The doctor told us that she is having a sort of reaction to some pressure or stress that she was facing recently. There is no senility problem, he said. But from now on we have to get ourselves adjusted to the new situation, time wise, money wise, etc., to help her recover in the hospital while we keep our ministry going on. A tight-rope mono-cycle ride for the Lord is ahead of us. In His grace, we know somehow we can make it. It is good that our son Makoto also works in the same medical field for mental patients, and we have come to appreciate his way of serving his Lord this way.

Next month we will have his wedding with Chuck, our daughter Megumi, her husband Church, and their son Tom joining it. We hope my mother can observe the wedding in our Bethany Home.

FRONTIERS OF GRACE FOR CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Gary Pearson

When I think of God's grace and our understanding of it, I think of confusion.

Grace is so basic to the Christian faith; without grace there is no Christianity. Yet for most of us grace is a slippery subject. Just when we think we've figured it out, we find out we don't quite have it. Fortunately for us, we don't have to fully understand grace in order to have it. Yet we continue to strive for deeper understandings of this grace that has made our salvation possible.

This article will consider three frontiers for Churches of Christ in our understanding of grace: one that has confronted us, one that is confronting us and one that will confront us.

Understanding Salvation by Grace

The first frontier of grace that has confronted us, and to some extent still confronts us, is the frontier of understanding our own personal salvation by grace through faith. For one who is familiar with the New Testament, it may seem strange to call this a frontier. What's so hard about it? The Bible is clear, isn't it? Ephesians 2:8-10 is about as plain as it can be:

For by grace you have been saved through faith--and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God--not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This passage defines what biblical grace is. It is God's gift of salvation that comes to us through faith. Paul is emphatic that we are not saved on account of our works. Now good works do come into the picture but only as a result of our salvation by grace through faith. Good works are the fruit of our salvation; but they count for nothing when it comes to causing our sins to be forgiven. If I went to the mall and tried to buy something with Confederate money they'd laugh in my face. It wouldn't work. Why? It's the wrong currency. Good works are to be an important part of our Christian lives, but they are the wrong currency when it comes to being justified before God. Christ purchased our salvation, 100 percent of it, at the cross and gives it to us when we by faith accept it.

Traditionally we've been wary of this Ephesians passage and others like it because it doesn't mention baptism and it might sound like "faith only" if we emphasized it too much. That is a needless concern, because baptism is as much faith as is believing. Baptism is not a work in any shape, form or fashion. No work whatsoever is accomplished by man in baptism. It is a passive act. Someone else immerses us into water. Our own exertion never comes into the picture.

Baptism is a physical expression of faith. In biblical accounts of conversion, we find a three-fold expression of faith. To accept Christ we trust in him for salvation *intellectually* by believing and confessing that he is the Son of God. We trust in Christ for salvation *emotionally* in repentance. We trust in Christ for salvation *physically* in baptism. With our entire beings we express our reliance on Jesus for salvation. At that point we accept God's gift of salvation. That's all. Everything we do in conversion is equivalent to holding out our hands to receive a gift.

So we need not fear those words "by faith" in Ephesians 2:8. In fact, if we have a biblical understanding of faith, we need not fear the words "faith only." Biblically speaking, salvation is by grace through faith only. Baptism and repentance are just as much manifestations of biblical faith as is belief in Christ as God's son. Once we work through that concern about what faith is, the message of Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10 seems simple and straightforward. We are saved solely by God's grace through faith and the fruit or the result of our salvation is our good works.

If you've been a part of our fellowship for many years, you know that this has been a frontier for us. I am now thirty-six, and I was raised in the church on concepts of grace that denied the truth of Ephesians 2:8-10. I will always remember hearing our salvation compared to rowing a boat--with one oar being grace and the other works. As a young person and a new Christian, that was my understanding of salvation by grace. Many of you know what I'm talking about because your experience has been similar. You may have heard things like: "God by his grace provides 50, 60, 70, 80 maybe even 90 percent of our salvation, and we by our works provide the rest." Or even more common: "We do all we can and then God's grace makes up what is lacking."

We should weep over that legacy. How many of our brethren have gone through life and to their deathbeds with no assurance of salvation--hoping against hope that they had worked enough to be saved? How many through the years turned back from Christ in frustration because they never felt they were good enough to be saved?

One hundred theologians could not reconcile "rowboat salvation" with Ephesians 2:8-10 if their lives depended on it. Our legacy of works salvation has been a stumbling block to many. It's time to confess it, renounce it and repent of it. We can be thankful as we now near the end of this century that the majority of our brethren in Churches of Christ have passed through this frontier and now understand that salvation is by grace through faith. Some have not. Some are still in the midst of the passage. Some are dead set against ever passing it. But as a whole, the bulk of our Restoration Movement is now beyond it.

Understanding Grace-based Fellowship

As a brotherhood, we are now passing through another frontier--the understanding of grace. This frontier follows naturally from the first one. This present frontier is the frontier of a grace-based fellowship with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. A truth began to dawn on us in the 1960's and 70's and increasingly through the 1980's. That truth is that God's grace extends not only to our moral imperfections but also to our doctrinal shortcomings.

We've always recognized this truth to some extent. We've always considered some doctrinal questions to be in the realm of opinion. Few, if any, of us would teach that a Christian woman's salvation depends on her correct understanding of Paul's teaching on coverings in 1 Corinthians 11. Most of our women have concluded that God does not require them to wear a special head-covering. What if it turns out that we're wrong? We understand that God's grace would cover that doctrinal shortcoming. But we haven't known how far to take this.

First John 1:7 teaches that as long as we're walking in the light of Christ his blood goes on cleansing us from sin--all sin. That would include doctrinal sin, or missing the mark doctrinally. How far does this go? The answer is inherent in the truth we accepted in crossing the first frontier of understanding salvation by grace. Grace is God's gift of salvation to us when we by faith accept it. Just as we are not saved by our works, so we are not saved by what we know. Rather we are saved by whom we know: Jesus Christ. Second Timothy 1:12: "I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me." As long as I know the good news of Jesus, then I know enough to be saved. The only doctrinal error that will cause anyone to be lost is doctrinal error that leads one to lose faith--to quit trusting in Christ for salvation.

Doctrinal error of that magnitude does exist. John in 2 John 7 condemns those who denied the incarnation--the coming of God in the flesh in Jesus Christ. If that wasn't the Son of God who in the flesh died on the cross, then we can forget salvation. Some religious groups

today deny the divinity of Christ. That's a denial of the gospel or good news of Jesus and is a rejection of a biblical saving faith. So there is doctrinal error that will cause one to lose his salvation. With those people we cannot be in fellowship. But all doctrinal differences that fall short of destroying biblical faith are covered by grace. We are all, in one area of doctrine or another, brethren in error.

Do any of us really think that at the Judgment, God will say to us, "You got everything right! You get a 100!"? That's not going to happen for any of us. I'm not in fellowship with you because you've got everything right and you're not in fellowship with me because I've got everything right.

It is God's grace that makes possible our ongoing fellowship. What we hold in common is that each of us has been saved by grace through faith. This may sound revolutionary but it's really not. It's what we all practice in our local congregations. When someone comes forward and says that he wants to become a Christian, we don't ask him about his understanding of church government or what can and can't be done in worship or what's going to happen at the second coming or whether spiritual gifts are for today. We ask him only one question: Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? If he makes that confession, then we baptize him and accept him as a brother in Christ.

At what point does it change? Is it 5 years later, 10 years later, 15 years later? At what point does it take more knowledge than a knowledge of the good news of Jesus to be saved? It never takes more. When we know Jesus, he is able to keep what he has entrusted to us until the day he returns. As long as we hold on to our faith in Jesus, we continue to know Jesus and thus to be safe in him, even if we are mistaken in a thousand opinions.

We are in the midst of the passage through this frontier of a grace-based fellowship. We may continue to be in the passage of this frontier for years to come. But thankfully it appears we're going to the right direction. When questions of fellowship arise, let our answers be based on God's grace.

Learning to Live by Grace

Yet a third frontier of the understanding of grace awaits us. We're just beginning to approach its edges. It is the frontier of living by grace. Once we've crossed the first two frontiers, we must stoutly resist the temptation to stop and settle down. If we're not careful, we can stay in a rut of reaction against our previous mistakes.

During the twenty years that Bob Hendren preached at the Donelson Church of Christ in Nashville, he traveled and spoke elsewhere probably ten or twelve Sundays a year. He preached from Fresno, California, to Caribou, Maine, and a lot of places in between. He has been one of the most notable proclaimers of God's grace in our brotherhood. Yet, for all of Bob's emphasis on grace, I've heard him comment on an attitude he encountered among some of our brethren. He calls it the "Thank-God-I'm-not-a-legalist" attitude. He said those with this attitude just wanted to be congratulated on their discovery of grace. They weren't interested in being challenged by grace to reach new heights in their Christian lives.

After crossing the first two frontiers, it's possible for us to make a wrong turn into a modern-day gnosticism--an emphasis on the knowledge we have. This can show itself in a smug, elitist attitude--a feeling of superiority over those who haven't yet gained our insights. This attitude is as deadly to the church as legalism ever was. It makes for a sterile, impotent church that rarely sees anyone come to Christ. It makes for a cold church with little zeal or commitment. Reaction is no better a motivator than guilt. Guilt at times produces spectacular short-term results but is worthless for the long haul. Christians burn out when their motivation is guilt. Reaction is similar. You can only react with vigor for so long.

If the primary motivation in our Christian lives is reaction against the traditionalism and legalism of the past, we will not burn out, we will eventually "blah" out. The spiritual fire within us will go out. Christians and congregations stuck in this rut of reaction usually end up becoming bland. To forever define ourselves by what we are not never frees us to become what God wants us to be. We don't have to get stuck in the rut of reaction. We can consciously choose rather to face this new frontier of living by grace.

What does it mean to live by grace? Basically it means to welcome the transformation that God wants to accomplish within us through His grace. We almost always concentrate on the role of grace in our conversion, our initial salvation; but that's only the beginning of God's grace in our lives, not the end. Yes, grace makes possible the forgiveness of our sins, but it does so much more. I don't begin to claim that I have a grasp on all that living by grace involves, but I do see some directions of living by grace in Scripture.

To live by grace is to live an honest life before God. Freed from the need to be good enough to be saved, we no longer have any reason to whitewash our sinfulness. We can be authentic in our relationship with God and in our relationship with our brethren, confessing our struggles against sin. This connection is found in 1 John 1:5-10. Al-

Remembering Sis. Lois McReynolds

Buford Smith

I think of her as one of God's Silent Warriors. She never "made the front page" of the local paper. She was busy in the classroom, and prayer room. She never caused doctrinal controversies. She was busy living the Christian life before her students and neighbors. She never complained about pay or work load. She was busy meeting opportunities God had provided.

What I "saw" at the Sellersburg memorial honoring her, was a woman dedicated to service for her Lord Jesus; a woman who gave thirty plus years to teaching mathematics and Bible at Portland, then going back to Louisiana to care for her parents.

I "saw" a woman who taught subject matter while living the Christian life style before her students, all day, every day, and still found time to encourage marginal students needing more than the structured lessons.

I "saw" a woman who, after her daily responsibilities ended, went to the church auditorium and sat for a couple hours in Brother Boll's Bible class before going home.

I "saw" a Prayer Warrior who had a calendar of names and prayed for the named each day. I heard that at one time she had eight names for each day, and I thought of the Apostle Paul who began many letters by saying he prayed for them regularly.

I "saw" a Warrior who worked at other jobs in the summer months so she could afford to teach at Portland through the school year; so she could have a positive Christian influence on students like me.

I remember only one incident, choosing to block out the others, when my "performing" in class embarrassed her. That day her throat bothered her so she could speak only in a whisper. She whispered a question to me; I leaned forward and whispered the answer to her. As the class laughed, her face became a beautiful shade of pink.

I knew Sister McReynolds as a trusted friend. I knew she cared about my relation to Jesus, and my understanding of mathematics. I remember that she did not "cut me any slack." I had to do the work to get the grade. I enrolled in Portland about six weeks late. The next Spring, before receiving credit for the year of math, I had to pass an exam over the first six weeks. She coached me, encouraged me and insisted that I get it done!

My "picture" of Sister Lois McReynolds is this: Her life's goal was to please God; to wait excitedly for His coming; and while waiting, to live the simple Christian life of service to others. I can almost hear her saying, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus."

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

Revivals: (October)

1-4 Bohon - Rick Murphy
1-5 Waterford -Randy Coultas
1-6 Fisherville -Nick Marsh
7-11 Tell City - Sonny Childs
8-11 Buechel -Julius Hovan
8-11 Parksville - Nathan Burks
9-13 LaGrange- Henry Ott, Bill Smallwood, Robert Gill, David Tapp, & Ray Naugle.
15th -Gallatin Homecoming- Don McGee preaching.

Jennings: Ladies Day rich blessing! Some 60+ ladies enjoyed a wonderful day of singing, praying and listening to speakers who reminded us that Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you..." and then "Go and teach the world..." All of us, women and men, have stories to tell about how Jesus works in our lives that we must tell to all we meet. Mission-mindedness is for all who care and dare to share. Jennings is in a **Operation Reclamation** campaign to reclaim children for the Lord!

We'd like to hear what other churches are doing in regards to youth work! Share your ideas with us so we can pass them along via News & Notes. Bennie Hill, P.O. Box 54842, Lexington, KY 40555

Greater Lexington Festival 2000 is coming to Rupp Arena October 13-15 with Franklin Graham. There has been a city-wide effort in making this become a reality. Services begin each evening at 7:00 p.m. The prayer among many churches in Lexington is that God will use this effort in not only providing people an opportunity of hearing the Gospel but seeing the prayer of the Lord for unity become a reality here and now! **Marvelous things happen when God's people pray!!!**

New Address :

David Johnson
14512 Old State Rd. 37
Tell City, IN 47586
(812) 836-4137

Woodland Bible Camp...annual Camp Meeting and Bean Dinner is being planned for Saturday, October 14th. Come early and see many improvements in the camp and enjoy a day of fellowship.

Ralph Ave. Revival: What a great meeting we had with the Ralph Ave. brethren last week. Attendance was encouraging from mostly members. Several others from area churches came out during the week to show their support. The PCS chorus, directed by Phyllis Mullins, sang a medley of songs Wednesday and just simply blessed everyone. God's message to the small

church is still the same: “**Remain faithful.**” I thank God that He continues to call His people together in these “end times” to bless them, to encourage them, to fill them with His Holy Spirit, and then to send them out where they can reach others with the Gospel. (Bennie Hill)

From Russia (Paul & Virginia Kitzmiller) We have just returned to St. Petersburg after spending part of the summer in the States with family and friends. We need to report the following to you which may require a change in your records. If you wish to correspond with us by email, our current (and only) address is: pkitzmiller@peterlink.ru Any other email addresses that you may have associated with our name should be deleted. Keep us in your prayers that the Lord will continue to use us for His glory.

Church Outing to Historic Cane Ridge Meeting House... can both inform and educate your membership about the Restoration Movement. Your church can visit the Cane Ridge Meeting House in Bourbon County, Kentucky and relive religion on America's Western Frontier. For information contact: Cane Ridge, P.O. Box 26, Paris, Ky. 40362-0026. (859) 987-5350. CANERDGMTG@AOL.COM Act soon because the museum is closed from Nov.1-Mar.31. The meeting house is opened with curators available but by appointment.

PCS Alumni... announces the “White Elephant Sale” for Saturday, Nov. 11th from 9:00 a.m. Auction begins at 2:30 p.m. Items needed for the booths and auction include: furniture, small appliances, glassware, jewelry, and general household goods. For questions or to have items picked up call Fonda Carey at 502-459-0675 or Rita Smallwood at 502-778-6114.

Collis Campbell, former missionary to Japan, sent a note of appreciation for several recent articles on UNSung heroes—lady missionaries. But he felt we overlooked one of the most important, Sarah Andrews. Maybe you say, “Who’s she?”

Richard Hughes’ book says she “served from 1916 to 1961 as a missionary in Japan, where her work proved the most enduring of any mission activity undertaken in that country by members of Churches of Christ.” She was interned there by the government during World War 2.

We would love to run an article about her, if either brother Campbell or brother Moto Nomura (who has written much in Japan re: various missionaries) would write from 1-4 pages about this remarkable servant of the Lord. —avw

DON'T SPREAD LIES! (Eph. 4:25 paraphrased) —Many well-meaning people are unknowingly spreading lies and sometimes committing libel and slander by forwarding sensational

but false e-mails. A current example concerns an "expose" of the popular Harry Potter books, in an e-mail which originated as an intentional spoof but which has been passed on as true. CHRISTIANS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY NOT TO TELL LIES, either knowingly or through gross carelessness. Minister & broadcaster Dr. Rich Buhler investigates e-mail rumors and confirms or refutes them accordingly. His site is www.truthorfiction.com

I encourage anyone who is tempted to forward sensational stories (a tip-off already to be careful!) to check that web site first. This is a moral and legal issue which ought to be taken most seriously. --Edward Fudge, GraceMail

Time Passes: Growing More Mature or More Feeble? According to a list I saw, **Word and Work** is the 4th oldest magazine still being published among Stone-Campbell churches. We began in 1908. Only **Gospel Advocate** (1855), **Christian Standard** (1866), and **Firm Foundation** (1884) are older and still circulating. Scores of other magazines were older than W&W but stopped for various reasons.

Please pray for us, that we will always know God's will for this magazine. We don't want to quit when He has purposes for us to fulfill, nor continue on just to continue on. Have you ever given anyone a subscription to W&W?
—avw

A Very Short Lesson in Bible Doctrine - I'm sure we all know better if we stop & think about it. But fairly often, in prayers during the Lord's Supper especially, statements like this are made: "Thank You, heavenly Father, for dying on the cross for our sins." Of course it was not God our Father but His Son, Jesus our Lord, who gave His life & died for us. It is surely appropriate to thank our Father in heaven for sending His Son. But let's thank Jesus our savior for dying for us.

"Who I Saw at the Ballgame"

—A man/wife who left a child home with a virus; >several people who were delighted when the game went into overtime (though if church gets out later than usual, how they fuss!); >a man who left his visitors at home when they didn't care to attend the game with him (though of course it's rude to go to church and leave them at home); >a woman with a nervous condition which keeps her from being in a crowd; >a man whose back injury will not permit him to sit on church pews; >a family who can't attend church since they feel embarrassed about not having enough \$ to put in the offering; >some folks who can't drive at night; >some folks who get upset if the preacher urges them to attend church regularly, though they have 'season tickets' to the ballgames & never miss.
[Adapted from a tract]

CENTRAL LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
November 13-16, 2000

Building Strong Families and Churches
Men of Outstanding Spiritual Character

MONDAY November 13th

7:00 p.m. Building strong families & churches through LOVE
Earl Mullins, Sr.

TUESDAY November 14th - Abraham

10:00 Original call and its implications A. J. Istre
11:10 Life after the call: Its failures and victories Alex Wilson
1:15 The test of faith: Its meaning and foreshadowing Kenneth Preston
7:00 p.m. ...through PRAYER AND THE WORD Earl Mullins, Sr

WEDNESDAY November 15th - Joseph

10:00 A young man in resentful circumstances Bud Ridgeway
11:10 A young man DOWN & UP because God was with him Buford Smith
1:15 A man who rules with a forgiving heart Dale Offutt
7:00 p.m. ...through SERVING ONE ANOTHER Earl Mullins, Jr.

THURSDAY November 16th - Daniel

10:00 A young man with a "Purpose of heart." Sam Marsh
11:10 A godly man ruling in a wicked society Don McGee
1:15 A praying man who received prophetic revelation Antoine Valdetero
7:00 p.m. ...through SPIRIT-FILLED MEN AND WOMEN Earl Mullins, Jr

Evening services will be held for the youth in the Fellowship Hall,
Prayer sessions will be held at 9:30 a.m. Tues.-Thurs.

P. O. Box 314 Glenmora, La. 71433 Phone: (318) 748-4243