

# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11.

*"Devoted to the Search for Divine Truth"*

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## SINCERE WORDS

"The preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

*Dick Blackford*

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## "The Appearance of Evil" 1 Thessalonians 5: 22

"Abstain from every form of evil. " "Hold yourself aloof from every form of evil. " "Shun every form of evil. " "Continue to abstain from every sort of evil. " "Steer clear of evil in any form. "

These five translations of 1 Thessalonians 5: 22 are from *the American Standard Version, The Epistles of Paul by W. J. Coneybear, The Twentieth Century New Testament, Williams Translation, and J. B. Phillips Translation*. This passage is made clearer by observing and comparing other renderings. They all bear the same message. This, of course, it not to say that the King James Version is inaccurate in rendering the passage, "Abstain from all appearance of evil. " However, some erroneous conclusions have been drawn from the word "appearance" not intended by the Holy Spirit. Some interpret appearance to mean "the outward aspect of anything. " But a thing is not evil just because someone thought it looked that way. The passage means whenever evil (the real thing) appears, abstain from it.

Add to these five translations of 1 Thess. 5: 22 Thayer's definition of *eidos* ("appearance"): "from every kind of evil and wrong" (p. 172), and *Nestle's Interlinear*: "from every form of evil, abstain. " This shows the verse is not talking about what may "look like" evil or what someone may associated with evil.

That becomes subjective, for what some may associate with evil may not "look like" evil to others. It is in the eye of the beholder. For example, some suspicious minds accused Jesus of being a glutton and a winebibber because he ate with publicans and sinners (Mt. 9). "Guilt by association. " He also spent some time with a woman who had had five husbands (Jn. 4). It astonished his disciples and to some it may have had the outlook of evil. Was Jesus wrong or were the suspicious minds in error? If we are not careful we may put ourselves in the position of reading other people's minds and of falsely accusing them.

To some Pentecostal groups it appears ("looks like") evil when you wear jewelry, makeup, etc. In years past about the only place where billiards was played was in beer joints. Unable to see that it was the drinking that was wrong, not the billiards, some erroneously concluded that it was wrong to play pool even when drinking was not present because it had the "appearance" of evil and was therefore questionable. The same happened with dice, cards, and moving pictures on a screen. Though no drinking or gambling was involved, those who used dice and cards or watched a picture move across a screen, were pronounced "guilty by association. " If I came to your home and saw you playing a board game with dice or a game of Rook (cards), I would have no right to accuse you of violating 1 Thes. 5: 22.

Certainly, a Christian should not try to see how close to evil he can get, or seek to make it look like he is doing wrong. Nothing in this article should be misconstrued as a defense of any sin named herein. But this passage is not saying every time one is found in circumstances another might question that he has actually sinned.

In some states the grocery stores sell beer and lewd magazines. If a Christian is seen in one of these stores, has he sinned by "the appearance of evil?" No, but he may have violated someone's misconception of 1 Thes. 5: 22.

While aboard a plane, the man sitting next to me ordered a cocktail and so did the people behind me. Rather than come under the scrutiny of a suspicious person who thought I violated 1 Thes. 5: 22, I reluc-

tantly decided not to jump out.

Another example: a Christian may be present where cursing, lasciviousness, cheating and gambling are taking place, without sinning. There are two places I have in mind where these often occur — at school and at work! Because one is present where these occur, is he guilty of "the appearance of evil?" If 1 Thes. 5: 22 is teaching that we sin every time we are found in association with that which could be sinful, then the only possible solution would be as Paul states, "for then must ye needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5: 10).

It is possible that one may sin through impure thoughts when he sees others involved in sin. He may also sin when he sees murder, stealing, materialism, or lasciviousness on TV in his own home. Does one sin when he sees sin re-enacted on television? He may or he may not. He may have placed himself in a dangerous situation — dangerous to his spiritual well-being. It may cost him dearly. He needs to beware of self-deception. He needs to ask: "What is my motive for watching this program?" He may have sinned terribly. All I am saying is that I cannot read his mind (1 Cor. 2: 11). I must avoid the temptation to become a mote hunter or to always put the worst interpretation on another's action or circumstances. We must "do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith" (Gal. 6: 10). Being charitable and using the Golden Rule applies here too (1 Cor. 13; Lk. 6: 31).

I have often heard this verse misquoted to the effect that we should "Abstain from the very appearance of evil." The word "very" is added to make it sound like it is wrong because it "looks like" evil to someone. "Very" is not in the text nor in any of over 30 translations I have checked. It is an addition which contributes to misunderstanding the verse.

The misinterpretation of 1 Thes. 5: 22 has caused no small amount of problems for brethren and congregations. This misinterpretation encourages mote hunting. Accusations are often made on suspicion and one may become guilty of speaking evil against a brother (Js. 4; 11) when, in fact, he may have done no evil. Dissension and division are often the result.

Let us "judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7: 24). *Vine's Expository Dictionary* points out that this is the only time the word appearance is used to mean "the outward aspect." It is from *opsis*, not *eidosis*. Jesus plainly commanded us not to judge this way. He did not contradict Paul. He contradicted the misconception some have of 1 Thes. 5: 22. Christians should be cautious of dangerous situations. Likewise, we should be concerned about one another. But let us not misinterpret 1 Thes. 5: 22 or John 7: 24. The consequences are disastrous. Adapted from 1972.

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## " QUOTE

**"Only the dead have seen  
the end of conflict."**

— President George Bush  
(State of the Union Address)

## UNQUOTE "

## Editorial

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### Justified

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5: 1-2).

#### The Meaning of Justification

Justification means that the sinner is vindicated before God. He is acquitted of his sin. He is declared righteous. This does not mean that he has not sinned, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). The guilty sinner stands before God without excuse. He is unable of himself to provide acquittal. He cannot make himself righteous nor justify himself. That is the right of God. It is sin which has separated man from God (Isa. 59: 1-2). Man is the offender and God the offended party. In order to have "peace with God" the offender must be acquitted, justified, declared righteous.

#### The Source of Justification

But how can this be? Is the sinner powerful or wise enough to devise a means of justification? "Oh Lord I know that the way of man is not in himself (Jer. 10: 23). Only God can justify. The Jew could not be justified by the works of the Lord for Paul said "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The Just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3: 11). Neither Jew nor Gentile could be justified by works of human merit. It is "not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2: 9); and "not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3: 5). So, then justification does not originate in man. It must come from God. According to Paul, it is God who purposed to offer acquittal to those helpless and hopeless without his grace. He called and justified those called that they might be glorified with him. Indeed, "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8: 30-33). It is offered as a favor which the sinner did not deserve and could not provide. It is therefore of grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2: 8). Man's dilemma was God's opportunity.

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see. "

Having described the frightful condition of those who were "dead in trespasses and sins, " and having set forth the ultimate fate of those suited only to receive divine

wrath, Paul opens the window of hope to the hopeless when he said "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 4-7). Astounding! There we are guilty, having offended our own Creator. What have we to offer? What can we think of to do? What wise plan of our own will prompt God to forgive us and restore the fellowship now shattered because of our sin? There is nothing we can do to place God in our debt. We owe him everything but he owes us nothing. Ah, but our God is "rich in mercy, " his love is "great" and his "kindness" is extended out of grace. What a God! He is able and willing to justify us, count us righteous and treat us as if we had never sinned. It boggles the mind to try and take it all in.

#### The Means of Justification

Having seen that justification can only come from God it is necessary to determine whether or not this acquittal is offered unconditionally or conditionally. It springs from the grace of God flowing out of the well-spring of his rich mercy and great love. Will the grace of God save every sinner, or will it save some sinners? If every sinner is to be saved unconditionally, then we are at a loss to explain many plain passages in the word of God. Jesus said that at the judgment (and why would there need to be a judgment if justification is unconditional?) some would "go away into everlasting fire" (Mt. 25: 46). Paul said the Lord would come "in flaming fire" and "take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" and said they would be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thes. 1: 6-9). So then, not everyone will be justified.

Paul explained it for us in Romans 1: 16-17. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. " It is by means of the gospel that God offers his favor to the sinner. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel" (2 Thes. 2: 14). Remember, he justified those whom he called (Rom. 8: 30) but here it is clear that he calls by the gospel. This good news is the power he exerts to apprise the sinner that his grace is offered. It is by means of the gospel that God reveals his righteousness (justification, ASV) or acquittal (as Moses E. Lard has it). The gospel tells us how God offers his favor to us.

But upon what ground does God offer to forgive the transgressor? In every dispensation blood atonement has been required. The patriarchs and the Jews under the law of Moses were required to offer blood sacrifice for "without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9: 22). But the law was only a "shadow of good things to come" and it "was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10: 1-4). Those sacrifices only typified the ultimate sacrifice for sin

when the Son of God shed his blood. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9: 28). "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9: 14). When Jesus took the cup, the night of his betrayal, he said "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26: 28). "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2: 16). Here both Jews and Gentiles have "access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 3: 18). Paul sums it up for us when he said "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3: 24-26). The cross was the price which had to be paid in order to make the grace of God accessible to us.


**Man's Part**

The sinner must act out of faith to obey the will of God if he is to be justified. "Therefore being justified by faith..." (Rom. 5: 1). God justifies, that is his part. But it is by faith and that is the sinner's part. He must believe God. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto "every one that believeth." "By grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2: 8). God extends the favor and man responds in faith. The question which must be resolved is whether saving faith is a living or dead faith. "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2: 26). It was because Abraham believe God that he obeyed the instruction of the Lord. The worthies of old who were all said to be justified by faith in God, acted in demonstration of that faith (Heb. 11). "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5: 6). Christ is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5: 9).

God requires the sinner in faith to repent of his sins. "God commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17: 30). Jesus said "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16: 16). Neither faith, repentance nor baptism nullify salvation by the grace of God. All of these are demanded of everyone. God offers his grace and man responds in faith because Christ shed his blood as a perfect sacrifice for sin. Justice has been met. The alienated sinner now has peace with God. He is justified. To quote a good friend and eloquent preacher, "I scarce can take it in!"

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## 1 Cor. 7: 15 — Is the Believer Free To Remarry?

Much of the discussion on the alien's amenability to the law of Christ on marriage, divorce and remarriage has centered around 1 Cor. 7: 10-16.

Brother Bassett gives considerable attention to this text in his book. He makes three points about this context: (1) Paul gives different instructions to the Christian married to the unbeliever from the ones given to two Christians who are married. (2) The term "bondage" (v. 15) refers to the marriage bond. (3) The Christian (believer) whose unbelieving mate leaves is free to remarry.

We will examine these three points in this article.

### Differing Instructions For Those Married To Unbelievers?

Jerry Bassett claims that the instructions of 1 Cor. 7: 10-11 were addressed to two believers who are married and that the instructions of verses 12-16 are addressed to a believer married to an unbeliever. He tells us that what the Lord said to the believer married to an unbeliever differed from the instructions given to the believer married to a believer. He writes, "Clearly, then, Paul claimed that what he wrote to believers married to unbelievers was something other than what the Lord had spoken. It was therefore also something other than what he wrote to believers married to believers at 1 Corinthians 7: 10-11" (p. 81).

We are told that when Paul addresses the Christian married to the unbeliever he is speaking to "an entirely different group" (p. 81) Thus, the Christian in a mixed marriage and unbelievers are not included in the instructions of verses 10-11.

To illustrate his point, Jerry uses a coach's instructions to his football team. His team consists of veteran players and a few rookies. The coach says, "All you returning veterans go down to the other end of the field and warm up." Then he says, "The rest of you stay here with me." Bassett concludes, "Who could fail to see that the coach was speaking to two different groups of players, and that he had something different in mind for each group?" (pp. 81-82).

In 1 Cor. 7: 10-11 Paul addresses the *married*. He had addressed the *unmarried* in verses 8-9. Bassett assumes that these verses are limited to **Christians** who are

married. There is no reason to think that it only applies to Christians. There is no justification for making "married" mean *some* of the married.

It is true that in 1 Cor. 7: 10-11 Paul refers to the teaching that the Lord did during his personal ministry (probably Matt. 19: 9 and parallel texts).

In verses 12-16 Paul addresses some specific questions that the Lord did not directly address while he was on earth. For example, he did not directly deal with the question of a believer being married to an unbeliever. Should they sever that relationship? Is it a legitimate marriage? These and other questions Paul says "I, not the Lord" will address (v. 12). This does not mean the instructions of the Lord (vs. 10-11) do not apply to the Christian married to an unbeliever or to two unbelievers who are married. *This text does not say that those in mixed marriages and unbelievers are not under Christ's law on marriage!*

If "I, not the Lord" (v. 12) means that Jesus said nothing which applied to mixed marriages, then, "not I, but the Lord" (v. 10) must mean that Paul said nothing which applied to two married Christians.

No one denies that Paul addresses some specifics about mixed marriages that Jesus did not address in his ministry. What I do deny is that the statements in verses 12-16 imply that the instructions of verses 10-11 do not apply to those in mixed marriages and aliens.

Bassett tells us that the instructions to the Christian married to the unbeliever are *different* from the instructions given to two Christians. However, as I read verses 10-16, the instructions look the same to me. In verse 10-11 those addressed (which Bassett assumes are only Christians) are told "not to depart" and "not to divorce." Those addressed in verses 12-16 are told, "Let him not divorce her" (v. 12) and "let her not divorce him" (v. 13).

His football illustration does not fit with the text. We have just shown that verses 12-13 give the same instructions as verses 10-11. The coach gave one command to the veteran players and another to the rookies. To better fit his doctrine, he needs an illustration that has the coach giving one set of rules for his veteran players (that does not apply to the rookies) and another set for the rookies. I'm not much of a sportsman, yet I would pay to see a game played by a team like that.

More in harmony with the text would be this illustration. The team captain comes to the practice field and says, "To the players, not I, but the coach says to warm up. To the rookie players, I and not the coach say you warm up by doing set ups, push ups and running in place." Does that mean that the instructions to warm up only apply to veteran players? Not at all. All the captain did was address some specifics to the rookies that the coach did not address in his instructions. Yet all players would know that they needed to warm up.

### Does "bondage" (v. 15) Refer To The Marriage Bond?

Bassett argues that "not under bondage" (v. 15) refers to the marriage bond. He gives three reasons for saying that. 1. When the unbeliever departs (divorces the believer) they are not married. He thinks the marriage and the bond are the same. Thus, the believer could not

be bound (p. 86). 2. If the unbeliever stayed (instead of departing) the believer would be bound (p. 87). 3. The word translated "bondage" (*douloo*) applies to marriage just as *deo* (word for "bound" in Rom. 7: 2 and 1 Cor. 7: 39) in a figurative sense.

Let's examine these three reasons. (1) Bassett assumes they are not bound for he assumes that the bond and the marriage are the same. We have already shown (article no. 2) that Rom. 7: 2-3 shows that a woman is bound to her first husband while she is married to another man. Thus, the bond and marriage are distinct.

(2) Again, it is an assumption that the believer married to an unbeliever would be bound if the unbeliever decided to stay. The perfect tense suggests that he *has never been under bondage*. Nestle's Interlinear translates it "has not been enslaved."

(3) Bassett says that if *deo* can be used of marriage, so can *douloo*. For if either refers to marriage, it will be figurative. It may be true that *douloo* could be used that way. However, the fact is that the Bible didn't use it that way. *Deo* refers to a binding by law and *douloo* refers to being a slave or bondage. To say the least, that is how they are used in the texts where they are found.

Various lexicons tell us that *douloo* denotes enslavement (Thayer, p. 158; Bauer, p. 206; Kubo, p. 153; Liddell and Scott, p. 179). The point is that the believer is not enslaved to the unbeliever to save the marriage at the expense of his/her faith.

Is The Believer Free To Remarry?

Bassett's answer to this question is "Apparently, he is" (p. 93). However, there is nothing said about remarriage in the text. We have shown that the text does not say that the believer is no longer bound to his mate (Rom. 7: 2-3).

There is as much about the believer's right to remarry in 1 Cor. 7: 15 as there is about instrumental music in Eph. 5: 19.

It is interesting that brethren look at 1 Cor. 7 and conclude that Matt. 19: 9 is binding on *Christians* to whom the Lord *did not* speak, and not binding on *Jews* to whom the Lord *did* speak.

The next installment in this review will be "Must Those Who Have Committed Adultery Separate?"

## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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## What Power Did The Apostles Receive?

**QUESTION:** *In Matt. 10 Jesus called his disciples and gave them power over unclean spirits and the power to heal sickness and disease. In John 20: 22 Jesus commissioned the apostles. He gave them the Holy Spirit, and authorized them to forgive sin.*

*According to Acts 2, "they" were baptized by the Holy Spirit and "they" spoke with other tongues. Frankly, I am puzzled. What power did the apostles receive on the day of Pentecost?*

**ANSWER:** Jesus said to His apostles in Acts 1: 8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The promise of the power was fulfilled in Acts 2: 1-4 when the apostles were endowed with power from the Holy Spirit. (They received that which was poured out of or from the Holy Spirit, Acts 2: 17).

The power the apostles received on Pentecost is explained by J. W. McGarvey in his comments on Acts 1: 8 as: "The power promised, and their work as witnesses, are so connected together as to indicate that the power to be effective witnesses is meant. This, as we learn from the testimony which they afterward gave, was not merely to tell what they had seen and heard, which they could have done by their unaided powers; but it included ability to recall all that he had said to them in his years of ministry; and to testify as to his exaltation in heaven, his will concerning all spiritual affairs on earth, and his future dealings with both men and angels" (*New Commentary on Acts*, Vol. 1, p. 6). Actually, everything the apostles needed to enable them to function as apostles is included in the word "power." Jesus describes it as being "endued (clothed) with power" (Lk. 24: 49).

When Jesus called His disciples in Matt. 10, verse 1 states He gave them power (authority, ASV) over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and diseases. Luke 9: 1 says Jesus gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. The miraculous functions were temporary, con-

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current with their mission to the Jews only (Matt. 10: 5-6). These miracles served to confirm their message. Jesus also empowered the seventy to heal the sick and to cast out demons (Lk. 10: 1-20).

John 20: 22 is in anticipation of Pentecost. It reads, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The breathing transferred nothing from Jesus to the apostles but only symbolically foreshadowed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost.

Receiving the Spirit in John 20: 22 was to be in conjunction with the remitting and retaining of sins in verse 23. The Spirit would teach them all things (Jn. 14: 26), guide them into all truth (Jn. 16: 13) and convict the world of sin (Jn. 16: 8). The apostles would bind and loose (Matt. 16: 19) heaven's will through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The conditions of forgiveness are proclaimed after the Holy Spirit, i. e., His power, is received by the apostles in Acts 2. Here, and subsequent thereto, sins were remitted and retained by whether the gospel was obeyed or not. John 20: 22 seems to be, therefore, another promise of the reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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### "Miss Nollie"

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (1 Tim. 1: 5).

There is a song called, **Give Me The Roses While I Live**. While it is always good to have many nice things to say when a loved one has passed on, it is also good to express some appreciation while they are still alive. That is my purpose in this brief article of a tribute to my mother, Nollie Matilda (Stotesberry) Adams. At this writing she lives at the old home place near Hopewell, Virginia in Chesterfield County and she is 87 years old. She and my father's sister, Beulah D. Adams, live a good life helping each other to keep things going. They attend the Rivermont church of Christ which my family and others were instrumental in starting in the late fifties. Let me nutshell my mother's life and traits for you:

Eastern North Carolina roots... born in poverty... knew hardship, deprivation and cold, bleak sorrow... orphaned as a small girl... family held together by "Grand-mammy" (Mama's mother)... worked in the fields chopping and picking cotton... learned to survive and to be resourceful... deeply religious with very strong convictions... a capacity to endure almost impossible circumstances... moved to Virginia... married Joyner Wilson Adams in December, 1923 (a marriage that lasted 63 years)... Together they instilled in their daughter and two sons the principles of Truth that would serve them well for a lifetime... faith, courage, integrity, honesty, a feeling for the underdog... an uncompromising spirit... These they possessed to an unusually high degree... blessed with a keen wit and a sense of humor that won't stop... an unswerving loyalty for God and family... a determination in matters of faith and practice that will not countenance surrender to that which is wrong.

Her neighbors call her "Mrs. Adams." The older brethren call her "Nollie." With deep respect and affection all the younger people call her either "sister Adams" or "Miss Nollie." The little children come to her at church services to hug and kiss her. She and "Buby" (Aunt Beulah) still prepare meals for the visiting preachers and still have folks in at regular intervals. My father died in December, 1986 but they have continued on in faith.

Blessed with an enormous amount of good common sense, many still seek "Miss Nollie's counsel and advice. To her children she is "Mama. " To her grandchildren she is "Memaw. " To all of us she is a grand lady. Her children rise up and call her blessed.

Please don't fuss at me, Mama. I just had to say these things now rather than later. But I have not even touched the hem of the garment.

We all love you Mama!

**SIMPLICITY  
IN  
CHRIST**



*P. J. Casebolt*

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**Paperback Preaching**

Under ordinary circumstances it should not be necessary for us to define our term. Neither should it be necessary to go into detail as to what we are **not** discussing. But when you are dealing with a subject that is apt to be controversial, it is wise to follow the advise of Paul and "cut off occasion from them which desire occasion" (2 Cor. 11: 12).

For example, in controversies of the past, the issue was not orphans, needy children, cooperation, edification, preaching the gospel, or entertainment. The issue was (and still is): can the church establish and work through human institutions, sponsoring-church arrangements, or support and provide recreation and entertainment?

The Reader's Digest Illustrated Encyclopedic Dictionary defines **paperback** as "A book or edition having a flexible paper binding and selling relatively cheaply. " And while this dictionary is of the hardback variety, the definition would be no less authentic were it contained in a paperback issue.

A wide variety of subjects are discussed in paperback books and there is nothing inherently wrong with paperbacks. A few years back I published a book of poetry and opted for the paperback model because the hardback copy would have cost two or three times more than the paperback.

When I speak of paperback preaching, I refer to sectarian influence and characteristics which have their origin in human wisdom and philosophy, and disseminated by means of paperbacks.

Sometimes a position is so nebulous that it is difficult to define it or pin it down. And this very fact makes a doctrine or position suspect because it is directly contrary to the characteristics of truth and plain Bible teaching (2 Cor. 3: 12).

A few years back the Crossroads movement banded about the "total commitment" phrase, and the later Bostonian movement spoke of "discipling. " While there is nothing wrong with making a total commitment to the Lord or making disciples, the Crossroads and Boston application had its origin in sectarianism, and those sectarian authors and sources were clearly identified.

Today, we are hearing a lot about "motivation" and some of the methods and tactics being employed are close enough to sectarian paperback sources that you can hear "the bleating of the sheep... and the lowing of the oxen"

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(1 Sam. 15: 14).

Preachers have different personalities, abilities (natural or acquired), and methods of presentation. We are not opposed to preachers who endeavor to improve their knowledge of the Bible or the presentation of those truths. But we are opposed to the idea or practice of allowing human wisdom, philosophy, and sectarian gimmicks to be the motivating power instead of the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 1: 21-26; Col. 2: 4, 8, 18).

What was it that caused those on Pentecost to be "pricked in their heart" (Acts 2: 37)? What "motivated" Stephen's murderers when "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth: (Acts 7: 54)? What was it that "motivated" Felix to tremble (Acts 24: 25), Festus to accuse Paul of being "mad" (Acts 26: 24), and Festus to accuse Paul of being "mad" (Acts 26: 24), and Agrippa to be "almost persuaded" (v. 28)?

We can tell you without any doubt whatever that the motivating power was the gospel of Christ, and not the paperback philosophies of the Epicureans and the Stoics.

And if a preacher has an inferiority complex because of this personal appearance, personality, lack of ability or formal education and training, he needs to depend even **more** on the power of the gospel and less on the paperback philosophies of men.

## Taking Up The Mantle

*Steve Cundiff*

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When a congregation of God's people experience the loss of a great leader many emotions beset them. Confusion, sadness, and distress are all natural reactions to the death of one with whom you have shared both good and bad times.

In thinking about great leaders that I have known personally who have passed on to their reward and in view of great men in the Bible who worked everyday of their lives in service to Jehovah God I am reminded of the story of Elijah and Elisha.

There are four lessons to learn from II Kings 2: 1-15. First, Elijah accepted what was ahead of him. As chapter two opens Elijah was aware of his approaching death. Yet, he did not display any unwillingness to depart this life, nor did he fear the unseen world that was ahead of him. Elijah willingly accepted what was about to happen for he knew that God's divine purposes would be continued by someone else. Elijah knew that he was ready to go. And so, he was content to let God's will be done. Not a single word of objection is heard from the great prophet Elijah as he approaches his death.

The second lesson to be learned is, Elijah was absorbed with spiritual things. During the Elijah's life he was not afraid to confront error. When the religious people began teaching error one could count on Elijah standing up and being counted on the Lord's side (e. g. when Elijah confronted the worshippers of Baal on Mt. Carmel to prove that Jehovah was God; 1 Kings 18). Elijah confronted kings when they began losing God as their focal point (2 Chron. 21). Elijah performed many miracles and helped many people during his life of devotion to God. Yet, as death approached, Elijah did not stop doing good. His final journey to his homeland was full of service to others as well as meditation upon God. Elijah's future reward was ahead of him. The things of this world no longer concerned him. The unseen world, the coming change, the things of heaven, occupied his efforts and his thoughts. Elijah was on his final journey home and as the end drew closer his mind was still fixed on the things of God.

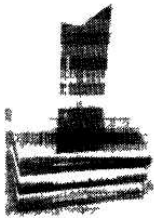
The third lesson to be learned is, Elijah had regard for and was devoted to his follower, Elisha. When a person is facing the prospect of death it is not uncommon for him to be occupied with himself and consequently to lose sight of others around him. However, this was not the case with Elijah. He did not want to be a burden to

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Elisha. So, Elijah tried to encourage him to go back home. Elisha refused. As the two men traveled down the road to Elijah's homeland Elisha must have learned many things by observing how Elijah stood fast in the face of death without fear. Elijah probably wondered how God's will would be accomplished after he was gone. So, the time Elijah spent with Elisha was very crucial.

The fourth lesson to be learned is that Elisha took up the mantle. Elisha was more than a servant to Elijah. They were friends. After Elijah had passed on Elisha became the full-fledged successor of his master. Elisha proceeded with the same type of work that Elijah had done. A work that was focused upon honoring God (helping the needy, performing miracles, giving advice to the needy, giving advice to the king, acting as a spokesman for God). Elisha knew what had to be done. The responsibility of a prophet was tremendous, but Elisha assumed that responsibility and met the challenges that were before him and took up the mantle.

What are we to do? When a congregation loses someone of quiet dignity, thoughtful wisdom, a man whose loyalty was to God, a dedicated servant of family and church, he will be missed.

The time is upon each member to step forward and take up the mantle that has fallen. Be the kind of person he was, strive to give all that you can, do the things that he did, be the quality leader he was, do as much for the Lord's work as he did.

When a great leader passes from this world we are reminded that we must "take up the mantle" that has fallen and continue God's work as Elisha did.



## Oblivion ... Is There Nothing More?

*Tony Mauck*

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An aging movie actress spoke philosophically of her declining years, "I look forward to oblivion. I'm what is known as gradually disintegrating. I don't fear the next world, or anything. I don't fear hell, and I don't look forward to haven... I find all life thrilling. I like to write, I like to paint, I like to play tennis, I like to swim. I don't like depressing stories about the inevitability of someone going down the drain. Getting old? I think it's unhealthy. Why should anyone want to see that. They're all going to get old, they're all going to fade away."

Upon hearing these comments, one is left to wonder if there is nothing more to look forward to than "oblivion." As each of us gets older or "gradually disintegrates," will there be nothing more than writing, paint-

ing, swimming, playing tennis or being totally consumed in whatever it is we enjoy doing? You would think that most who face the proximity of death would be more concerned about what lies beyond.

While a youth, feelings of seeming immortality grip us. Life is ahead of us. We have the world by the tail. We're invincible. But like it or not, the "evil days come" and often more rapidly than we had expected (cf. Ecclesiastes 12: 1-8). Wrinkles appear. Muscles and joints weaken. Bones creak. Vision falters. Gray hair conquers. Youthful vigor fades. "... then the dust will return to the earth as it was." "Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Surely every man walks about as a phantom" (Psalm 39: 4-5). "You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (James 4: 14).

And then... oblivion? Secularism provides no answers. The evolutionist can look forward to nothing more, nor the atheist. At least, "new age" thinking provides some hope for a future of some sort, howbeit an unappealing and false hope. Are there any answers to be uncovered for the conclusion of our existence upon earth? Only in the word of God do we find the answers to life's most important questions. Questions dealing with man's origin, purpose in life, his suffering and state after death are resolved here and here alone.

While the "next world" may seem to be unimportant to the person full of youth, it should be of great concern to all since all will ultimately encounter it. For the Christian, getting old is not a curse, because only they have a reason to be confident about what lies beyond. With each passing day, Christians can say with assurance, "for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Romans 13: 11). By God's grace, they have been promised "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1: 4). Christians know, regard-less of how enjoyable life has been, the best is yet to come. "In Thy (God's) presence is fullness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16: 11).

Without hope... what a sad, miserable way to grow old! When death comes knocking at your door (and it will, maybe even before you grow old), will you be prepared for what comes next? Listen to the words of the Son of God, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6: 19-21). Hope in this world, its luxuries and its pleasures, is sure to disappoint.

Looking forward to oblivion? Not me? Looking forward to reincarnation? Not me! Looking forward to a paradise on earth (as some religious groups erroneously teach)? Not me! Looking forward to heaven? Absolutely! Only in the presence of God and in His service can the thirst of man be quenched (Psalm 42: 1-2; 63: 1; Ecclesiastes 3: 11; Matthew 5: 6; John 10: 10). "... and His bond-servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 21: 3). That beats oblivion any day!

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## TV or Not TV?

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In bro. Connie Adams's excellent editorial, "The Open Sewer," (STS, Jan. 1991) he compared today's TV entertainment to an open sewer in our living rooms. It is an apt comparison and not at all exaggerated. He observed that TV is saturated with (1) profanity, (2) coarse speech, (3) gore, (4) hedonism, and (5) humanism. He mentioned that even Sesame Street and children's cartoons are filled with humanism and evolution.

But the solution to the problem which Bro. Adams did not dare to suggest is really the only solution. We must get the sewer out of our living rooms! In my judgment, TV is beyond control. It is impossible to keep those five things from being present if we have a TV set in our home. American-saturated TV in South Africa is bad enough; US television is even worse. The "best" of programs are apt to have sexually suggestive scenes, humanistic solutions of problems, and the clear toleration of fornication. It is impossible to be selective enough to keep those things out while the TV set is in your home!

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is to good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4: 8-9). Can you say that today your mind is on those things because of the three hours of television you watched last night? Bro. Adams talked about our children. I am talking about us parents. Our minds are affected by what we watch just as our children are. If we are going to be kept pure, if we are going to keep our minds on those things which are honorable, right, lovely and of good repute, we must not let our minds be led by the open sewer of television. Trying to get good things out of TV is like trying to find good food in a garbage can; it is possible, but you get awfully smelly doing it!

Our five sons were reared in a mostly TV-less environment and I don't think they missed anything worthwhile. Our two oldest sons have banished TV from their homes, and their children seem not to be suffering. Helen and I manage to get along quite well without TV. It really can be done. It might be harder than giving up smoking, but after you have broken the TV habit you will be glad you did.

Is giving up TV too difficult for you to contemplate? Jesus said, "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that

one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matt. 5: 30). God needs to see a bunch of Christians walking around with bloody

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## "The Queen Also Sitting By Him"

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The above states a simple fact, but did you ever wonder why Nehemiah threw in that bit of information when telling of the occasion when he went into the presence of Artaxerxes with a sad countenance because of the news he had received of the condition of things in his beloved Jerusalem? When the king noticed his sadness, Nehemiah was "sore afraid" and prayed to God (Neh. 1: 1-4); yet he noted (v. 6) that the queen was sitting by the king!

Who was this queen? It must have been Esther! What other queen would a Jewish prophet have noticed under the circumstances? No doubt he knew of the choosing of Esther as queen thirteen years before and of the tense circumstances under which she had approached the king on behalf of her Jewish countrymen (Est. 5) after Mordecai had urged her to act on behalf of the Jews, saying "... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Hence, because of Esther's intercession for her own countrymen, the Jews (including Nehemiah) had been saved from death in the plot of Haman against them. This fact, alone would have been sufficient reason for him to take note of her presence at his tense moment before the king.

Don't let the fact that the king of Esther's day is called "Ahasuerus" and the king in Nehemiah's day is called "Artaxerxes," confuse your mind. Before this other kings had been called by these names. Cyrus established the Medo-Persian Empire with the capture of Babylon in 538 BC. That year he fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah (44: 28), that he should order the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He sent Sheshbazzar (Jewish name was Zerubbabel) to lead the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Cyrus was succeeded as king by his son Cambyses II, who was called Ahasuerus (Ez. 4: 6). To him the enemies of the Jews brought accusations against the Jews in Jerusalem with no success. Cambyses was followed by the usurper, Gomates (also called Pseudo-Smerdis) because he replaced Cambyses' brother, Smerdis. During his 6 mo. reign, the Jews' enemies wrote a letter to him as Artaxerxes (Ez. 4: 7-16), and succeeded in getting him to stop the work of the Jews in building their Temple (v. 24). That work was not resumed until the reign of Darius (521-486 BC). Darius was succeeded by his son, Xerxes (486-465). Some think he was the husband of Esther,

and date the Book of Esther at 480 B. C. This could not be for several reasons.

#### The Proof:

"Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah... and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose (in building the Temple—JEN) all the days of **Cyrus**, king of Persia, even until the reign of **Darius**, king of Persia: (Ez. 4: 4, 5) **The only kings of Persia between Cyrus and Darius were Cambyses II (529-522) and the usurper, Gomates, or Pseudo-Smerdis (7 months in 522).** The first one is called Ahasuerus in verse 6, and the second is called Artaxerxes in verse 7 of Ez. 4. Cambyses ignored them, but Gomates acted for them and ordered construction of the Temple stopped (Ez. 4: 24) After Gomates was assassinated by Darius and six other princes who used various means of finding out who he was and after Darius became king, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah spoke out and Zerubbabel began work on the Temple. Tattenai, the Governor, and the people beyond the river (Euphrates) accosted them and wrote a letter to Darius reporting their activity (Ez. 5). Then Darius ordered that a search be made in the archives of the state, and at Achmetha (Ecbatana, ancient capital of Media) there was found the decree which had been issued by Cyrus in 538 BC. (2 Chr. 36: 22, 23; Ez. 1: 1-4). Then Darius issued orders that legalized the work on the Temple (Ez. 6: 1-12). The work had been stopped in 522 and Darius came to power in 521, so the delay in the building had lasted only about a year. The Temple was finished in the 6th year of Darius, 516 BC. (Ez. 6: 15). He reigned 521-486 BC.

The decrees which made possible the rebuilding of the Temple, city and walls are summarized in Ez. 6: 14, and include the decree made by Artaxerxes authorizing Ezra to go to Jerusalem (Ez. 7: 11-26) in the 7th year of his reign and the permission given to Nehemiah in the 20th year of his reign (Neh. 2: 1-8). Hence, it is clear that the Ahasuerus to whom the Samaritans wrote was **the Ahasuerus who reigned before the Temple was finished**; namely, Cambyses II, son of Cyrus, who reigned 529-522 Be (Ez. 4: 6). The Temple was finished in 516 BC.

Charles Pfeiffer in **Between The Testaments**, Baker Book House 1963, p. 42, ignored the fact that the people of the land wrote to Ahasuerus **before the Temple was finished** and concluded that the Ahasuerus of Esther was Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius I because he was called Ahasuerus. Also **Davis Dictionary of the Bible**, Baker Bk. House, 1980, p. 20 makes the same mistake. In fairness, however, both of them admit that the older interpreters thought the Ahasuerus in Ez. 4: 6 was Cambyses, the son of Byrus.

#### Just What Did The Old Interpreters Say?

According to most ancient authorities Esther's husband, Ahasuerus, was Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, who reigned 40 years (465-425 BC). Note the following:

The **Septuagint** Version of the Old Testament, made about 250 B. C. in Alexandria by translating the Hebrew O. T. into the Greek language, calls him Artaxerxes in Est. 1: 1.

The Apocryphal book, "**Additions To The Book of**

**Esther**" calls him Artaxerxes.

**Flavius** Josephus, Jewish historian, who lived in the first century A. D., says he was Artaxerxes (Ant. XI, 6: 1).

Prideaux's **O. T. and N. T. Connected**, written in 1717-1718, says he was Artaxerxes (Vol. 1, Bk. 4, p. 221).

Clarke's **Commentary**, finished in 1817 says he was Artaxerxes (Notes on Esther 1: 1). The Ahasuerus of the Romans, the Artaxerxes of the Greeks and the Ardsheer of the Persians are the same. "

#### Identifying Esther's Husband

Following is a chronological count-down from the **first year** of the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes to the **seventh year** of the same at which time Esther married Ahasuerus, as Artaxerxes is called in the Book of Esther:

Xerxes	Artaxerxes
(486-465 BC)	(465-425 BC)

Xerxes' wife was Amerstris

Penquin Classics:

**Herodotus, The Histories,**

Book VII, p. 479ff). Not Vashti.

Xerxes enthroned 486 BC

Artaxerxes enthroned

Began reign building an army 465

BC

to put down a rebellion in

Egypt. Sent army to Egypt in

**first year** of reign. See **ibid.** **3rd yr.** of reign, 462

VII, pp. 442, 443.

Spent 4 years after Egypt

feast at Susa in the

(486-481) amassing troops for

Shushan palace —

Est. invasion of Greece, **ibid.** p. 452 1: 3, 4

Toward close of **5th year**

(481 BC) began march toward

Sardis. **ibid.** 452 Wintered in

Sardis (481-480) **ibid.** 458 In

Spring of **6th year** invaded

Greece, 480 BC and his Navy

defeated at the Battle of

Salamis. **ibid.** pp. 547-556, or

any Encyclopedia.

In his **7th year** his army

In Artaxerxes' **7th**

defeated at Plataea (479 BC).

**year** (458 BC) the 5th

**ibid.** pp. 597-603, or any

month Ezra was sent to

Encyclopedia.

Jerusalem—Ez. 7: 8

XERXES WAS IN GREECE

The same yr., 10th

mo. THE 7TH YEAR OF HIS

**he married Esther—**

REIGN!

Est. 2: 16.

#### A Study In Character

A contrast of the men—Xerxes and Artaxerxes should shed some light on the subject.

Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, was a man of war and a scheming tyrant who was unmerciful to his enemies. Ascending the Persian throne at age 25, he put down a rebellion in Egypt. Next he attempted to conquer Greece, a venture in which his father had failed. Xerxes reportedly attached Greece with a two-million man army and over a thousand ships. Pontoon bridges were built across the Hellespont and Xerxes is said to have taken his golden bedstead along! After the Greeks destroyed his fleet and army, he fled back to Sardis where he tried unsuccessfully to take his brother, Masistes' wife. Amestris, Xerxes' wife learned of her husband's waywardness and took her spite

out on Masistes' wife by having her nose, ears, lips, tongue and breasts cut off and fed to the dogs! After the death of this poor mutilated woman and the murder of Masistes, who had refused to give up his wife, Xerxes returned to Susa and was murdered in his bedroom by his uncle by name of Artabanas. Thus the evil deeds of this profligate king brought him down to the grave. Herodotus, a Greek historian of that day tells all this and much more about this blood-thirsty, immoral king. (See Penguin Classics, **Herodotus The Histories**, Bk. 9, pp. 619-621).

Over against this, Artaxerxes "Longimanus" (meaning "long handed" was a benevolent king. "Longimanus" evidently had nothing to do with the size of his hands, but with the size of his kingdom and extent of his power. He ruled over 120 provinces from India to Ethiopia. Though he was misled by Haman in a plot to destroy the Jews, he had a Jew, Mordecai, in high position in the palace. He called off the destruction of the Jews after Esther made her plea for them and Haman was ingloriously hanged. Also, the king gave Ezra permission to lead a group of Jews to Jerusalem in 458 BC and allowed his cup-bearer, Nehemiah, to go in 444 to rebuild the walls. After 12 years (according to his agreement with the king), Nehemiah returned to Susa and "after certain days ... obtained leave from the king" and went to Jerusalem again and served as Governor. Seven years later, Artaxerxes died. Thus passed a 40-year reign in which a great king seems to have been influenced for good toward the people of God by a daughter of Israel, who after 13 years of marriage to a king was still "sitting by him."

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## James Edward Nowlin Has Finished The Course

*Gary M. Ogden*

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On January 22, 1992 funeral services were conducted in Perry, Florida for J. Ed Nowlin, who passed from this life January 19, 1992 after a noble battle against cancer. Kent Heaton, Danny Roberts, and Charles Murray assisted this writer in paying tribute to a grand soldier of the cross. The following is the address I made on that occasion.

Today we are reminded, soberly reminded, how fragile life is. Bro. Nowlin seemed ageless, invincible, but death has once again invaded our quiet existence and taken captive a strong vibrant soldier of Christ. His leaving will leave a void that will be hard to fill.

James Edward Nowlin, known by most as "Ed," was

born on October 28, 1909 in Chattanooga, TN. He was reborn in 1929, at the age of twenty, when he responded to the gospel of Christ during a meeting held by Clarence Cook at East Chattanooga. As a new Christian, he could be seen carrying his Bible to work at the grocery store and would read it during break time. He sought to share the truth with others with whom he came in contact.

Some of his first preaching was done in Sale Creek, TN and in 1931 he rode his motorcycle to that village to fill the pulpit. It was there that he met Miss Ola Crawley, the youngest of nine children. One of her brothers is the venerable Bruce Crawley, now of Athens, AL. Ed was immediately and totally smitten by her loveliness and charm and it appears that he never did quite regain his equilibrium. All the way home, he talked to that motorcycle about his intention of one day marrying Miss Ola.

Ed finished high school early and then attended David Lipscomb College when it was a two-year school. In 1934, he began preaching in Athens, TN, and on August 4, 1935, he fulfilled the promise he had made to the motorcycle and married the lovely Ola Crawley. "Till death do as part" was not said in haste or in jest, and they kept that solemn oath to each other for 56 1/2 years. We salute their commitment to each other and to the Lord before whom they had made that pledge. May the day come again that their example will be followed and marriage for life will be the rule and not the exception.

In 1937, the Nowlins moved to Sparta, TN and worked in the vineyard for four years. From there they moved to a "mission field" in Johnson City, TN. For awhile, the new work met in a school house. He labored in that city for eight years.

At the age of 40, he moved to Maryville, TN and worked with that church until 1951.

In 1951, the Nowlins moved to Atlanta, GA and began working with the West End church. He was there for eight years, and it was during this time that the institutional issues were being hotly contested. Bro. Nowlin lost a pulpit because he founded his preaching upon the ancient principles of New Testament authority. But when one door slammed, another door opened across town and he found open arms in the brethren at Glenwood Hills in Decatur, GA. He labored faithfully and effectively there for thirteen years until 1971. During that time he received a degree in History from Georgia State and taught school part-time.

Ed and Ola moved to Perry, FL in 1971 and he preached there for a number of years before retiring from the pulpit. He was appointed an elder of the church and served in that capacity for 17 years until his death.

Bro. Nowlin did a considerable amount of writing. *Searching the Scriptures* recently published an article on the Virgin Birth of Christ. He published several Bible work books, including O. T. Studies, Marriage and the Home, and 400 Silent Years (The Period Between the Testaments). He also published a 26 lesson Correspondence Course.

Throughout a half-century of preaching, Ed Nowlin conducted many funerals, including those for my wife's maternal and paternal grandparents. He has been a source of comfort to many and we feel a debt of gratitude as we make this feeble attempt to comfort his family in

their loss.

Precious memories, how they linger! I recall a firm hand shake that was indicative of his physical strength and of his delight to see you. For a man in his eighties, he had uncommon strength which he exerted, not for violence, but for the gentle care of his beloved Ola.

I remember a wide grin and a boyish laugh. He was a brilliant man, but he had the heart of a child. It was an endearing virtue.

Living simply was a virtue and not a burden.

Ed Nowlin was one of the most studious, serious students of the Bible that I have known. He was meticulous in his handling of the Word and he encouraged that in others. I remember an occasion, in my early years of preaching when he gently corrected a statement I had made in a sermon. I had said that old Adam didn't have a thing to do in the garden, but he found time to introduce sin into the world. After the service, bro. Nowlin quietly took me aside and pointed out that God has given Adam the responsibility "to dress and keep" the garden of Eden (Genesis 2: 15). I thanked him for the correction, said so in the following service and have not made that particular mistake again! Other preachers can tell similar stories. If he got his pen and pad out and started writing during your sermon, you could expect a gentle reminder of what the good Book says.

Ed Nowlin's preaching style was not flamboyant—just simple, straight-forward preaching. He loved the Truth, the Lord, the Lord's people, and the lost. He was faithful in service, a faithful steward of God. As was said of Barnabas, "he was a good man." Good men have their faults, but the God they serve is longsuffering and forgiving. Bro. Nowlin was not perfect, but he was blameless. He is a worthy example.

When the aged, imprisoned apostle wrote the second letter to Timothy, he was aware that the "time of my departure is come" (4: 6). He faced the prospect of death with courage and hope. Near the end, it was evident that bro. Nowlin knew that all hope of recovery was gone and spoke freely of his impending departure. His courageous outlook toward death buoyed the spirits of those who were being left behind. He was able to accept the reality of death for the same reason that Paul could, he had fought the good fight, finished the course, kept the faith (2 Timothy 4: 7, 8). Sixty-two years of faithful service to Christ helped Ed Nowlin look death squarely in the face with hope.

We will miss this grand gentleman and soldier greatly, but we rejoice that he can rest from his labors and the anguish of a diseased body. Today we view his future and ours with hope as we look forward to our gathering home, beyond the sunset, with him and all the saints.

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**Do you pray to God everyday?**  
**(Daniel 6: 10, 13)**

## Sick & Tired?

*Norman E. Sewell*

115 Rose Street  
Harrison, Arkansas 72601



How often have we felt tired and frustrated, as though things just never work out right for us? What's that old song from Hew Haw, "If it weren't for back luck, I'd have no luck at all?" Perhaps all of us feel this way sometimes, and certainly Christians are no exception. Then comes the confusion over the 28th verse of Romans chapter 8 which reads, "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Does this verse promise us that things will always go well for us in this life, and that there will be no pain or heartache or trouble? It really doesn't say that, but many have misunderstood it to mean just that. When you study that verse in its context it becomes clear that Paul was dealing with the blessings to be found in Christ, and how God cares for His people, and that He was not promising heaven here on earth.

The 8th chapter of Romans begins by saying, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here is the relationship, "in Christ." And in the next three verses Paul shows that what the law could not do God did in Christ, making us free from the law of sin and death. In the next several verses Paul explains that we must meet the condition of walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, and that this is done by setting our mind on the things of the Spirit (the revealed word of God — 1 Cor. 2: 10-11; Eph. 3: 3-5) and not on the things of the earth. In the 14th verse Paul affirms that those who are thus led by the Spirit are the sons of God; that the Spirit bears witness with our spirits to this fact, and that as children we must expect to suffer with Christ in order to inherit. But that suffering is nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed (v. 18). In the next few verses Paul shows that all of the creation suffers in this life, but that when we who are the children of God don't even know what we should pray for the Spirit helps "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (v. 26). It is then because of this relationship that we have with the Christ, and God's blessing of us through His Spirit that He can say to us, "and we know that all things works together for good to them that love God" (v. 28). And finally Paul ends the chapter by showing "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (v. 31).

The fact that all things WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD does not mean that all things ARE good. Earlier

in the Roman letter Paul wrote: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Romans 5: 3-5). Even James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when he fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1: 3-4). There is something to be learned, and something to be gained even by trouble and hard times and yes, even by temptation. This doesn't make these things any more enjoyable, but they work together for good to produce in us steadfastness and a stronger faith. James wrote: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tired, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1: 12). The ones "that love him" here in verse 12 are the same ones described in Romans 8: 28 for whom "all things work together for good."

How do I know if I love God? Jesus said it well in John 14: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John 14: 23-24). If you love God it will be shown in your obedience to whatever God has asked of you in His word. So it is to those who obey God that this promise is made, that all things work together for good.

As long as we live in this world we will have pain. There will still sometimes be periods of frustration and disgust with ourselves as we struggle with properly applying God's word in our own lives. But once we begin to get this all in perspective, remembering that whatever we may suffer here is nothing compared to eternal life, then we begin to more quickly resolve the frustration and get on with living. Paul told the Corinthians, "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4: 17-18). Its only when we let our sights drop down so that we are focused on the problems of this life and failing to look at the goal, the big picture, that we allow frustration and distress to over run our lives. Keep **your** eyes on the goal, and remember that whatever may come in this life that for those who love God and obey Him "all things work together for good."

## Do A Friend A Favor

Do you have a friend or relative who could benefit from reading *Searching the Scriptures*? Why not buy a subscription for someone?

## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them ..." — Acts 14: 27

*Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109*

**B. G. ECHOLS, 7 Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge, New Jersey 07028**—Six were baptized at the church in East Orange, N. J. during the last half of 1991. Three others were identified with us. Several home studies continue which we pray will lead to additional converts. We completed three new classrooms for our study programs.

### CLASS ON TEACHING

**JAMES L. SLOAN, P. O. Box 73024, Houston, TX 77090**—The Kleinwood church in Houston, Texas has planned special classes on training teachers and improving Bible classes for the week of July 27-31. Some of the confirmed speakers are: Mark and Alicia Kercheville, Betty Haynes, Martin Broadwell, Crystal Hunter, Glenda Schales. There will be both morning and evening sessions. There will be separate classes for men and women, with women teaching only women. We are hoping to improve our teaching program, and invite as many visitors as we have room for. You can reserve a spot by writing us at: 11811 Misty Valley Dr., Houston, TX 77066. If you would like to stay in the home of one of our families please contact Robert & Martha Banning, 3902 Marywood, Spring, TX 77388 (phone 713-353-2309).

**W. C. (BILLY) ASHWORTH, 2148 Nashville Hwy., Columbia,**

**TN 38401 -941ft**—1991 was the first year I have not done located work since 1953. It required quite an adjustment but that has been made. But I have been active in preaching and teaching the gospel. We are members of the Collegevue church here where I teach an adult Bible class every Wednesday night and have preached on occasion when Jim Deason, the regular preacher, has been away. About 40% of the members are under the age of twenty. It is a joy to be a part of the spiritual and numerical growth here. I have preached many Sundays by appointment. My health is excellent. I am available to preach in meetings as well as on Lord's days when I can be of assistance.

I have the following subjects which would be suitable for week-long or week-end meetings: Why I Believe That God Is; The Man Called Jesus (Christ in prophecy, virgin birth, early life, baptism, temptations, earthly ministry, trials, crucifixion, resurrection, authority, the judge of all, and his plan of salvation. Other subjects include: The Holy Spirit, Proper Rules for Bible Study, Secular Humanism, Homosexuality/Lesbianism, The Family as God Ordained It, and Prayer (one of my favorites). You can reach me at the above address or call 615-388-8355.

**PATRICK L. KELLY, P. O. Box 822, Portland, Maine 04104**—In 1991 six were baptized here. Two of these fell away. We have seen

growth in other members Support continues to be a struggle The brethren here are doing all they can The cost of living is high here but the economy is poor

**JIM ZACHARY, P. O. Box 1466, Mountain View, AR 72560**—In 1991 I preached gospel meetings at North Desoto church in Shreveport, LA where John Lasater preaches, Ben, AR where Clell Cook and Kenny Brackett preach, Briscoe, AR where Jackie Price Preaches, Batesville, AR where John Ledgerwood labors and Rogersville, TN where Marshall Stubblefield preaches There are good brethren in all these places and these men are strong and faithful The work at Eastside continues to go well Our Sunday morning radio broadcast can be heard throughout Arkansas and southern Missouri It is at 8 45 Sunday mornings on KWOZ 103 3 FM Visit us when in the Ozarks

**MIKE MILES, 1200 Handel Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23464**—In the past 17 months we have baptized 30 here and have grown from 75 to more than 100 The number is down some now We have moved to a new location and some who opposed this decided not to come with us We have moved from the old location at 1415 Oceana Blvd to a rental property in Chesapeake, VA at 802-B Live Oak Dr We are averaging 85 and, have excellent prospects for growth We are now known as the Tidewater Church of Christ We are just two miles off I-64 off the Battlefield Blvd exit We can now draw from Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Norfolk and Suffolk More than 1 5 million live in this geographical area and we are right in the middle of it If you know of military people being transferred here or others please ask them to contact us You may call me at 804-427-9677, or Dave Haga 804-463-3379, or Robert Johnston 804-427-5669

#### FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**OPEN DOOR IN LITHUANIA**—During the last week of November, 1991, Steve Wallace and Derek Chambers visited two of the Baltic states, Lithuania and Latvia, to teach the gospel They found an extremely good response in Vilnius, Lithuania As a result, Steve Wallace will be returning to Vilnius with Harry Osborne in late April this year intending to work through early June, the Lord willing Their purpose will be to establish a local church there Since brother Wallace lives in Ramstein, Germany, he will be able to follow up in the work done They need to locate tracts in the two predominant languages spoken in Vilnius, Lithuanian and Russian, which will be reproduced and handed out for study If you know of such material, please contact Harry Osborne, 1606 Crown Dr, Alvin, TX 77511, phone 713-331-9305 or 331-4953 If you know of a local church or individual that would agree to help reproduce such material, please let them know Please keep this effort in your prayers that the word of God will have free course and that souls might be saved (Report sent by Harry Osborne)

**SOUTH AFRICA**—Paul Williams reports 26 baptized during 1991 by members at Eshowe His last two reports mention three more in Eshowe in January, 1992 Gene Tope was in an 11 day meeting there in December in which three obeyed the gospel Brother Williams also reports a good brother being gunned down in Soweto while on duty in his police work He also reported that some other brethren are in danger from the unrest in Esikhawim where a number of people have been killed and where houses were burned Pray for our brethren there and for all the people

**GLENCOE, ONTARIO, CANADA**—According to a bulletin from Brian V Sullivan at Wellandport, ONT, three were baptized during a gospel meeting at Glencoe in which David Spiece preached

**PHILIPPINES**—**JULIE D. A. NOTARTE** reports several efforts with fellow-preachers Rosendo Lamodin, Godofredo Catamora, Romeo Areglo and Rosendo Lamodin in which a total of seven were baptized

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**MERIDIAN, MISSISSIPPI**—The church meeting at 2914 Seventh Street needs a preacher We have had two men during the last twenty-six years They were Horace Huggins and Milton Harris We have 65-70 in attendance, own the building where we have met for forty years and own a house for the preacher next door to the building We need

a man by June, 1992 or sooner if possible Brethren who know us well include Bill Cavendar, Granville Tyler, Barney Keith, David Thom-ley, James R. Cope, Ed Bragwell, Marshall Patton, Lynn Huggins, Sewell Hall and many others Contact Michael Gay (601-485-5229), Lewis Robbins (601-483-3003), or Ronnie Beech (601-693 4860)

#### DEATH AMONG US

##### FORD CARPENTER (1917-1991)

With sadness we report the death of another faithful proclaimer of the gospel Ford Carpenter passed to his eternal reward on November 14, 1991 He had been suffering from cancer until finally his heart also gave out early on the morning of his death To know Ford was to respect him and he shall be sorely missed, especially in Southern California

He was born in Ardmore, Oklahoma on May 21, 1917 and married Lessie Mae in December, 1937 In July, they moved to Ontario, CA For several years Ford was song leader for the Ontario congregation He taught singing for congregations through the years After moving to South Gate, CA he attended training classes conducted by L. L. Stout When they moved back to Ontario, Ford preached his first sermon

He then moved to Amarillo, TX to work with Hoyt Houchen for over two years Moving back to southern CA he began work with the Spring and Delta church in Long Beach where he labored on two occasions He also preached at Napa, Fontana, Culver City Canoga Park, Montclair and for the past six years in Apple Valley All in Southern CA except for Napa in northern CA

The funeral was conducted by this writer with the help of David Posey, on Nov. 18, 1991 at the Ontario, CA church building Over 300 were in attendance We became close friends over the years and spent many hours discussing the many problems facing the Lord's people and in him I found one that was greatly concerned about much liberalism that seemed to us to be gaming a foothold, even among conservative brethren

Ford leaves behind his wife, Lessie Mae, a daughter, Carol Elmore and a son, Ken There are several grandchildren and great grandchildren They will all miss him as we all shall He never hesitated to speak out, either in defense of truth or in condemnation of error We can ill afford to lose such men The cross of Christ has one less soldier to bear the message of salvation to lost men But there will be many who, as a result of his preaching and teaching, will carry on the Lord's work

—Bill Mosely, Folsom, CA

##### ERVIN RICH

Ervin Rich, deacon at Sun Valley church in Birmingham, AL died December 27, 1991 at age 67 The funeral was conducted by Lloyd Barker and Richard Weaver Lynn Headrick conducted the graveside service, assisted by Kyle Pope A native of Tompkinsville, KY, he served in World War II receiving the Purple Heart, after discharge he moved to Birmingham and worked for the L and N Railroad as an engineer until retirement five years ago. On the side he also worked with Sun Valley Home Builders, Inc. He built the buildings at Pinson (which he helped start), Gardendale and North Gardendale where he preached the first sermon in the new building He also remodeled the Trussville building and built the preacher's homes for Huffman, Pinson and Sun Valley

He was known and loved among brethren in this area He helped others to begin the Sun Valley work They met at first in a temporary place behind his house and had 90 present at the first service They moved into a new building in 1971 where they now have 180-200 on Sunday mornings Over the years he and his wife personally helped support a number of preachers in addition to their liberal contributions to churches They were given to hospitality and entertained many in their home He preached at Wheeler's Grove in Cullman County for awhile and filled in at numerous places He made two preaching trips to Jamaica with Lloyd Barker and David Tant, going at his own expense He was truly addicted to the ministry of the saints We will always remember "our beloved brother" Ervin Rich By his gifts "he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb 11: 4) —Richard Weaver, Fultondale, AL

(EDITOR'S NOTE I knew both these brethren and esteemed them highly in the Lord Both of them were personal encouragements to me when I preached in the areas where they lived Also, note the article



elsewhere in this issue by Gary Ogden about the death of J. Ed Nowlin of Perry, Florida. He was also a friend. I had intended writing a piece about him until I received this one from brother Ogden who said it better than I could have. My brethren, the ranks are thinning. We must do all we can to encourage younger men to enter the work and to follow the worthy example of such men as these whose deaths we are saddened to report. Our sympathies are extended to the families of these three noble servants of God. You know, the prospect of heaven grows brighter every day. )



**LAY-OUT WORK**

Donnie V. Rader will be handling the lay-out work for STS. He has been doing this part of our work ever since June when he began what was meant to be a three months stint to give the editor some relief. That turned into a much longer time. My Doctor has released me now to go on about my work as before with the warning that I must use some "common sense" about my back (When I told my wife that, she said, "We may be in trouble there"), but it will still be a great relief to me not to have to do this lay-out work. Donnie does it well, far better than I could hope to do it. Once again I thank him for his kindness and willingness to help in the operation of the paper. I will continue my work as editor, all but the paste-ups.

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**TO NORWAY AGAIN**

By the time you receive this issue of STS, the editor and wife should have returned from a gospel meeting with the small congregation in Bergen, Norway where Tom Bunting, Terrell Bunting and their families are laboring for the Lord. They asked us to come and the good church at Manslick Road in Louisville has made it possible for us to squeeze that into the schedule for the year. This required cutting one month off the winter classes I teach annually here. They supported us in the effort. We will carry a brief notice about the work there and the meeting later.

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**COLOR, COLOR, COLOR**

For a long time, friends of the paper advised that we ought to add some color to the cover of the paper to make it more attractive to the eye. We have done that. Trouble is, so a number of art design people have told us, we added TOO MUCH color. Some readers have complained that the dark blue print over the lighter blue background was hard for them to read. So we have decided to back off on color and use it for the masthead and trim on front and back page and keep the copy black on white as we had it for many years. I THINK we now have it the way we want it. Thanks for your patience and comments.

**IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH**

<b>BAPTISMS</b>	155
<b>RESTORATIONS</b>	62
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	