

# Good News

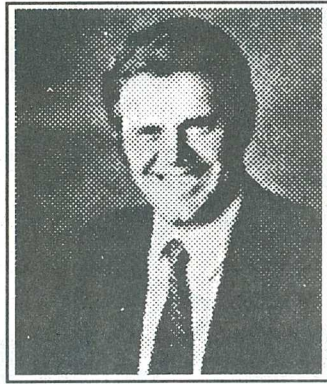
1995 Issue No. 3

AUSTRALIA



**ALL  
THINGS  
TO ALL**





## Welcome to New Executive Editor

We introduce to our readers, Pastor Ron Allen as Executive Editor of Good News Australia. Ron has been the Pastoral Director of Good News Unlimited for over ten years. During that time Ron has developed an effective ministry through his pastoral letters, as well, he is a regular contributor to Good News Unlimited magazine, USA and has been a regular contributor to Good News Australia. Ron's ministry is graced by a deep understanding of his fellow Australians and the Christian Good News.

## Editorial

**I**n a chapter on Christian duty, the Apostle Paul tells his readers, 'He that sheweth mercy, let him do it with cheerfulness.'

*Romans 12:8.*

That which makes an act peculiarly Christian, is not its form only, but its spirit. Many benevolent acts are done which are without Christian quality. There is something unique about the Christian way of doing good.

In the text, 'cheerful' comes from a word which forms the basis of our English word 'hilarious.' Paul is asking for more than service with a smile. He speaks of mercy, generated in a spirit of boisterous merriment - as if it was the greatest fun in the world. When a man forgives let him do it as if he enjoys it. Let him do it royally, splendidly, without reserve!

King David pretended to forgive Joab for his crimes, but in his last charge to Solomon he recalled Joab's acts, which still rankled in his mind. He had the same attitude to Shimei, who had cursed him as he fled from Absalom. He ostensibly forgave him, but never forgot.

The call to show cheerful mercy, is the call to be like God. There is nothing grudging in his kindness. He bestows it utterly; lavishly. Scripture says God delights in mercy. When the Prodigal came home, it was the Father's opportunity to spread himself in an extravagant show of forgiveness. How 'over the top' he was. How marked the contrast between the Father's glee and the surly, niggardly elder brother.

In this issue, we contemplate aspects of the Christian way of relating to the rest of the world. Surely, it is this immoderate, generous and gladly-given mercy, that must stand as the basis of all relationships.

Ron Allen.

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emphasising the atonement of Christ. Local supporters meet at the GNU fellowship at Burleigh Heads, Qld.

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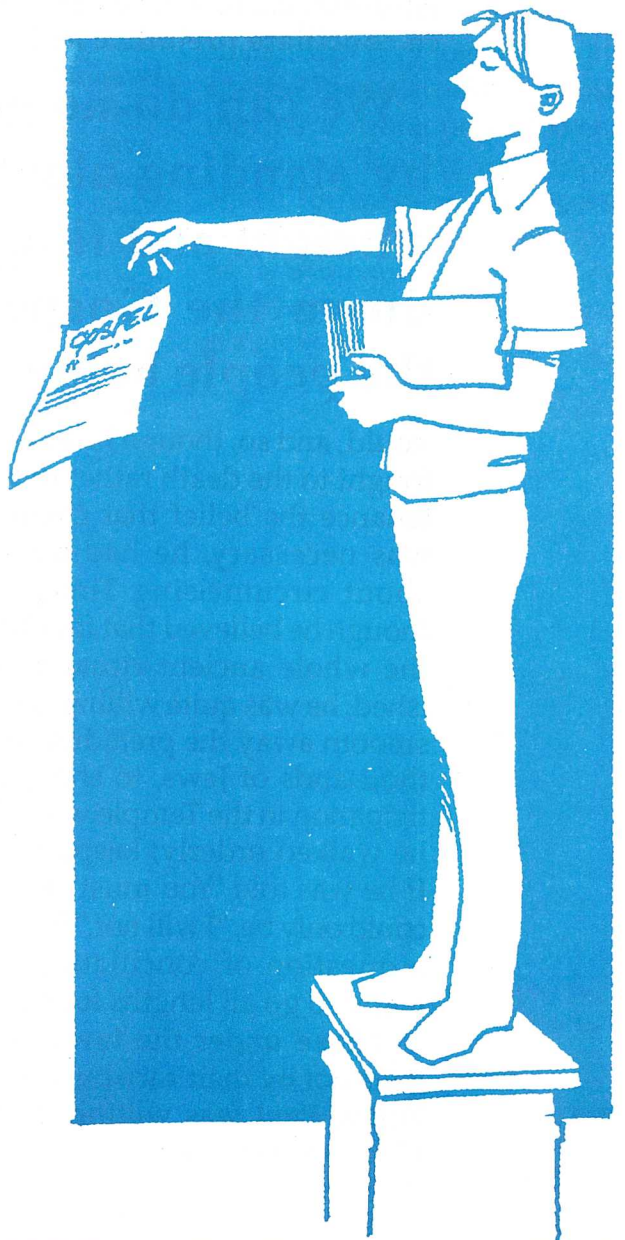
# All things to all ...

Alexander Maclaren

**T**he great principle incumbent on all Christians, is to go as far as one can without untruthfulness, in the direction of finding points of resemblance and contact with those to whom we would commend the Gospel.

*'To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law, I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.'*

1 Corinthians 9:20,21



We can do no good by standing aloof on a height and flinging down the Gospel to the people below. They must feel that we enter into their circumstances, prejudices; ways of thinking, and the like, if our words are to have power.

Paul instances three cases in which he had acted on this principle. He was a Jew, but after his conversion he had to **become like a Jew**. That is, he had receded so far from his old self, that he, if he had had only himself to think about, would have given up all Jewish observances. But he felt it his duty to conciliate prejudice as far as he

## **We can do no good by standing aloof on a height and flinging down the Gospel to the people below.**

could, and so, though he would have fought to the death rather than countenance the belief that circumcision was necessary, he had no scruple about circumcising Timothy. And though he believed that for Christians the whole ancient ritual was abolished, he was quite willing, if it would smooth away the prejudices of many thousands of Jews, to show, by participation in the Temple worship, that he walked orderly; keeping the law. If he was told 'You must', his answer could only be, "I will not." But, if it was a question of conciliation, he was ready to go all lengths for that.

**Those under the law**, describes Jews not by their race but by their religion, Paul was willing to take his place among them, as we have just

observed, but he does not do that so as to be misunderstood. So he protests that in so doing, he is voluntarily abridging his freedom for a specific purpose. He is **not under the law**, for the very pith of the Christian's position is that he had nothing to do with that Mosaic Law in any of its parts, because Christ had made him free.

The second class to whom Paul is able to assimilate himself, is the opposite of the former – the Gentiles who **have not the law**. He did not preach on Mars Hill as he did in the Synagogues. The many-sided Gospel had aspects fitted for the Gentiles who had never heard of Moses, and the many-sided apostle had links of likeness to the Greek and the Barbarian. But here, too, his assimilation of himself to those whom he seeks to win is voluntary, wherefore, he protests that he is not without the law, though he recognises no longer the obligations of Moses' law, for he is under Christ's law.

The **weak**, (v22) are those too scrupulous conscientious Christians, addressed in chapter 8, whose narrow views he had exhorted stronger brethren to respect. The grand principle laid down here should guide us all, both in regard to fellow Christians and others. Make yourself as like them as you honestly can; restrict yourself of allowable acts, in deference to even narrow prejudices; but let the motive of your assimilating yourself to others, be clearly for their highest good. Be **all things to men** to gain them not for yourself, but for the master.

*Taken from EXPOSITIONS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE  
by Alexander Maclaren. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing  
Co. Grand Rapids Michigan.*



# THE CROSS *or Asceticism.*

**Bishop Fulton Sheen was a wise preacher. He knew human nature very well indeed. As with most great Christian counsellors, he often spoke of the necessity of not permitting feelings or passions to govern life. Rather, a will surrendered to Christ is to rule. Consider Sheen's words that are so pertinent to all, who, having seen the glory of Christ, resolve to bring all things within themselves into subjection to him:**

**Desmond Ford**

Everyone has a war going on inside himself, whether he be saint or sinner; everyone is fighting for an order of values, destroying some things for the sake of other things. Both the normal and the abnormal are engaged in a civil war. But the difference is this - the normal person is at war with his lower instincts in order to give expression to the higher self of reason, free will and response to grace. The abnormal person is at war with his higher self-reason, free will and the response to grace, in order to give unlicensed expression to sex, to ego, to avarice, perhaps under the name of security.'

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**Any form of asceticism  
which disrupts charity is  
wrong**

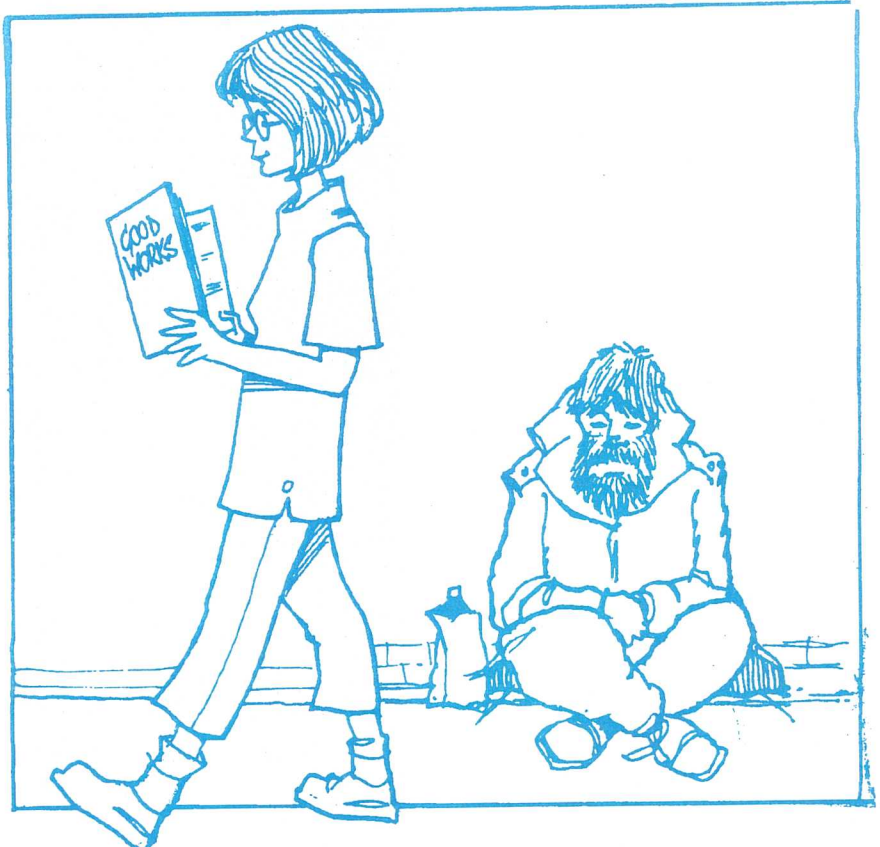
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It is meaningless to talk of repression being wrong and self expression being right, because there is never a repression without an expression, nor an expression without a repression.

Once the instincts and passions are subject to the will, they can be controlled and guided. Morality does not repress passions and appetites when it restrains unlawful expression. For

instance, it does not deny the emotion of hunger, it only asks that, when a man sits at a table, he shall not eat like a pig. Our Lord did not repress the intense emotional zeal of Paul, he merely redirected it from hate to love. Our Lord did not repress the biological vitalities of a Magdalene, he merely turned her passion from love of vice to love of virtue. Such a conversion of energies explains why the greatest

sinners - like Augustine - sometimes make the greatest saints; it is not because they have been sinners that they love God with special intensity, but because they have strong urges, violent passions; flowing emotions, which, turned to holy purposes, can do as much good as they formerly did harm. Self-discipline is only a means, the end of which is a great love of God.





This was the mistake of the monk who decided to live only on crusts and upset the whole monastery by making all the monks hunt for crusts, to satisfy his desire for mortification.

**'Asceticism which makes us less agreeable to our neighbours, does not please God.' (1)**

To see the will of God as our ally and friend; to recognise human selfishness and pride as the great enemy, to acknowledge the cross of Christ as our supreme motivation, is to find health of soul.

An anonymous poet summarizes the science of Christian living:

*'For all through life I see a cross  
Where sons of God yield up their breath  
There is no gain except by loss  
There is no life except by death  
There is no vision but by faith  
No glory but in bearing shame  
No justice but in taking blame  
And that eternal passion saith  
Be emptied of glory and right and name.'*

ANON

(1) Fulton J. Sheen. *Science Psychiatry and Religion*. Dell 1962 pp14-15



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**T**he cross was for Jesus a conscious decision to do God's will, even though it brought him into collision with the world's wisdom and its fury. He came to GIVE HIS LIFE a ransom for many. The cross was the integrating discipline of His life. And he asked the rest of us to make it ours.

# *Living by the* **CROSS**

**Ron Allen**

**Many were attracted to Jesus until he spelt out clearly to them, what following him would mean. He used an ugly and disturbing metaphor:**

*'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' Mark 8:34*





**The way Jesus experienced the cross; his response to it as the will of God is the Christian Law; our rule of faith and practice.**

Life is transformed when arranged according to the cross. Values are up-ended; priorities reversed. Grievances which loomed large before, shrivel when placed before the indignities borne by Christ. Success ceases to mean prestige, money and power and is measured instead by personal values such as humility, patience and love. People are viewed differently. Those who serve are risen higher than those who compete with one another. Persons are re-valued by the cross. There are none that are worthless. Each is worth to God, at least as much as the life of His Son.

On His way to Calvary Christ drew into his circle the derelict and despicable. He was crucified in place of Barabbas - a murderer.

The cross establishes a criterion by which to gauge the sinister cause of the world's pain. In the experience of Christ the veneer of human respectability is stripped away and precious, harmless little trespasses are seen as proceeding from vicious, unloving hearts. Our problems are not superficial. They are systemic. There is not just indifference to goodness; but hatred of it.

A new morality comes in the cross. Other proprieties are revealed as inadequate.

**To take up the cross is to learn that the guidelines of other ethical systems are too small; too cramped.**



The first Christians found this out. Before Christ they had regulated themselves by sanctions which defined for



them holy things; holy times; holy places and all things clean and unclean. But when they took up the cross they were led across the boundaries onto unholy ground; unto unholy places. They touched unholy things; ate unclean food and mixed with unclean people. They saw that there was more to be done than to keep themselves unspotted from the world.

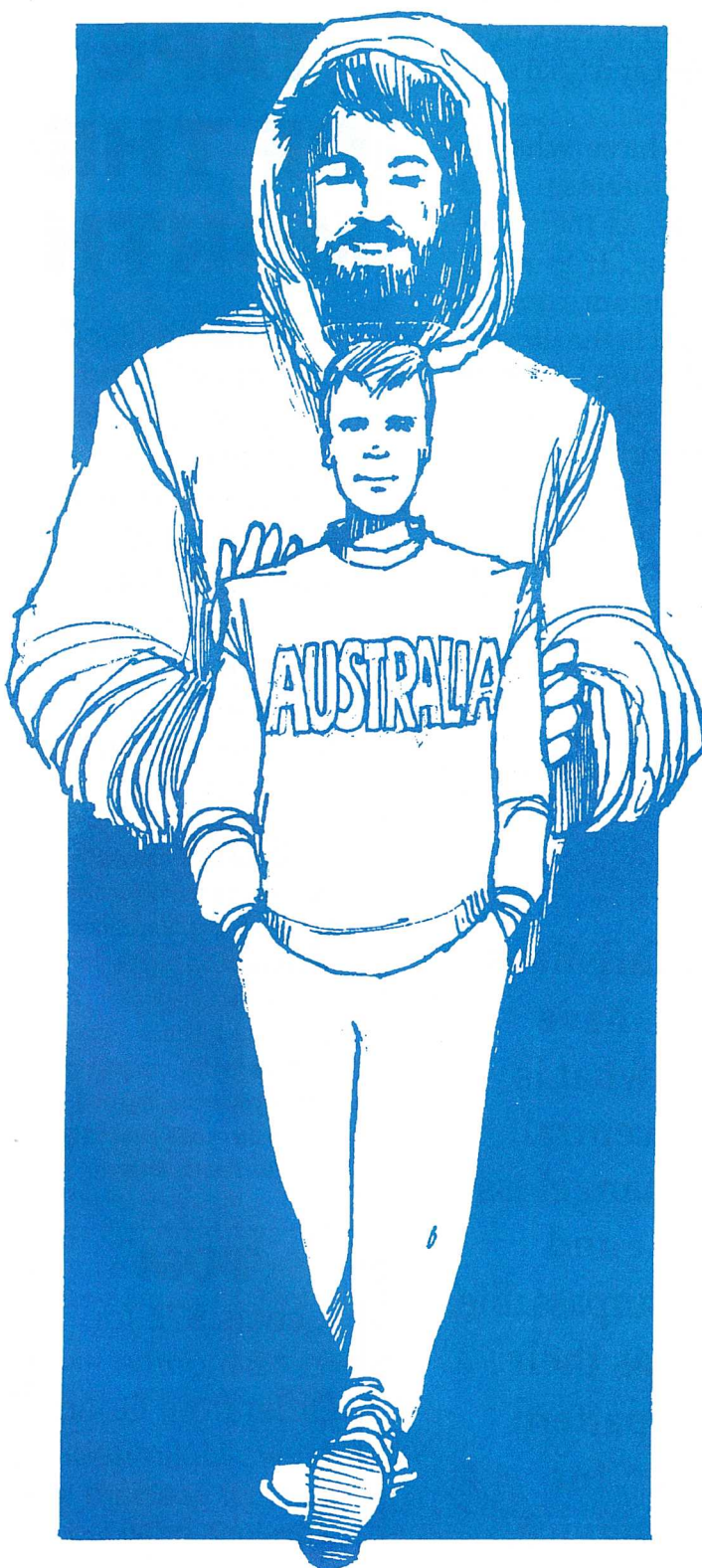
It is the same for those today, who respond to Jesus' invitation.

**The cross challenges the proscriptions of religious tradition and political correctness.**

It is a summons to engage with people where they are. It bids them take Christ's spirit of costly love into the thick of human need. To the place of poverty, violence, greed and injustice. Christ has nothing else to give to the world; nothing more than His cross. And His followers can offer nothing better.



# Salt of the Earth



**Sean Erikson**

Being the Salt of the Earth is the received job description of the church. How best to fulfil that destiny, must be the topic of constant revision and contemplation. Forms and methods alter with changes in social currents. Yet, some things remain the same.

E. Stanley Jones was an inspirational Christian teacher earlier this century. He spoke to the point when he wrote:

"Love one another as I have loved you" is the highwater mark of human conduct in the ethical history of mankind. What philosophers, moralists and religious thinkers have reached after through the ages, Jesus distilled in a sentence. They could not utter that sentence, because the sentence isn't a verbal sentence – it is a vital sentence. The content of the most beautiful life that has ever lived has gone into it. No one else could utter it, for it couldn't be uttered – it had to be lived. That sentence is vascular. Cut it and it will bleed – will bleed with the lifeblood of the son of God. Thirty three years of unstained living and loving have gone into it. And more – the cross has gone into it! And more still – the Resurrection has gone into it! It is a suffering love, but it is also a triumphant love. That love won out in the end. And it **will** win out in the end. It is the purest and most potent power in the universe – the love of Christ.

The same thing is distilled into a sentence by Paul, "Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Jesus Christ." (Phil 2:5 Moffatt.) Treat one an-



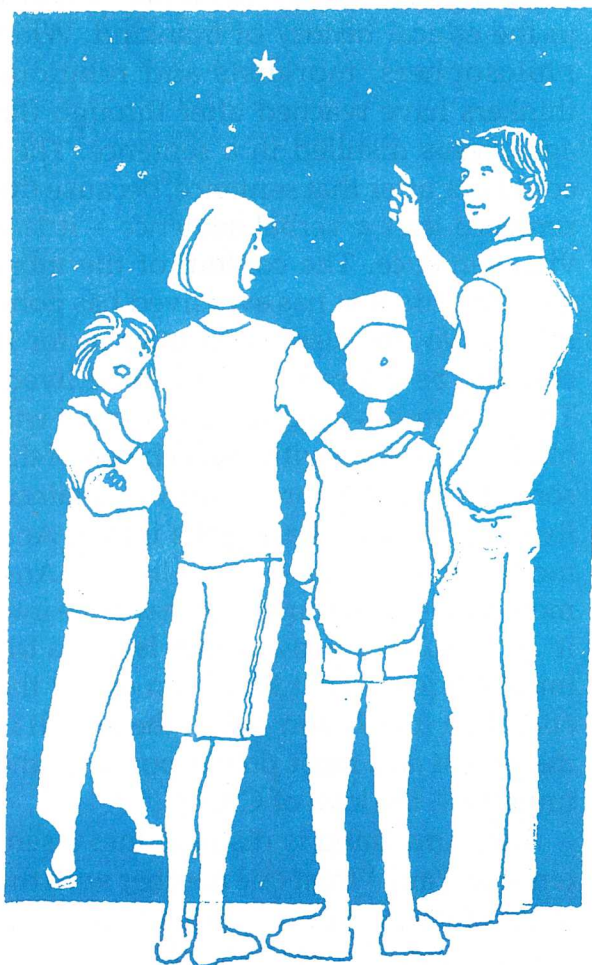
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other as Christ treats you. This is far beyond the Golden Rule. When He uttered the Golden Rule, it was the highest standard ever reached. But it wasn't a perfect standard. Jesus perfected it, by putting his life and love into it. And now, as amended, it is the perfect

standard; with the absolutely perfect content, illustrated by the absolutely perfect life. Among standards, this is it! Beyond it, the human race will never progress. For Christ is God's perfect and final self-disclosure.' (1)

Christians have what is central, changeless and unsurpassable, as their pattern for service. It is not a document, a custom, convention or creed. It is the life of a person – still living – with all the fluidity, imagination, surprise and nuance that is native to personality. To organise one's life around Christ, is to be made into a more flavour-some person; be made the Salt of the Earth.

(1) E. Stanley Jones. *Christian Maturity*. Hodder+ Stoughton 1958 p106.



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## **TAPE OF THE MONTH**

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# BEING THE CHURCH

## Small is OK

\* In the Greek Old Testament EKKLESIA (church), is the people of God as a whole, or an organised part thereof. It never means, an aggregate of isolated individuals. The New Testament adopts and enriches this meaning.

\* Paul uses EKKLESIA for the church in a city, having many members, or having few, whether meeting in a public place or in a private home. See Romans 16:5 1 Corinthians 16:19 Colossians 4:15. Some assemblies may have had hundreds of members, eg. Jerusalem, Ephesus, where the congregation met in a lecture hall belonging to Tyrannus. Acts 19:9.

\* After the period of establishment had passed, house churches in the New Testament world were more the norm, than the exception. When the Synagogues were closed to them, Christians would have congregated at their peril. (The Synagogue and its worship was officially recognised and tolerated). Homes became the most convenient and inconspicuous places for Christians to meet. Not 'till the beginning of the 3rd century is there evidence of buildings being erected specifically for Christian worship.

\* It was rare for Christians to be wealthy, so they most commonly met in smaller dwellings.

\* By these things we do not deduce that the church has to be small in order to be truly the church. Let all beware of thinking that the form of their particular church is the only one that can rightly claim the name. However, we observe that small is OK. And, that church size can sometimes be dictated by availability and size of venue.

## Small is Good

\* Though the size of a church is not its sole defining feature, size does make a difference. That this is so, can easily be observed in the way someone speaks to an audience. If 500 are present, the speech will be more formal and take on the character of an oration. If there are 15 listening, he will likely use a conversational style. When a speaker adopts the reverse mode in each situation, the inappropriateness of his style is easy to see.

\* One of the least effective ways of learning is to listen to lectures or sermons. Knowledge is better acquired when things can be discussed with a teacher, or another student. We learn by listening AND by talking back, asking questions and discussing. These things hap-

pen easily in a group of say 10-15 people. The bigger the group grows beyond that, the less likely it is for them to occur.

\* Those who meet in a small church ought not squander their advantage, by allowing one person to use up the whole time together, by preaching. A ten minute address is ample, followed by vigorous input from all sides.

\* Smaller churches afford their adherents better opportunities for fellowship. Large assemblies make it easy for folk to come together, without anyone actually getting involved with anyone else. In the smaller communion details about one another, become one another's property. There is frank and open sharing of concerns and joys. The business of 'bearing one another's burdens' follows more naturally.



### EDITORS NOTE:

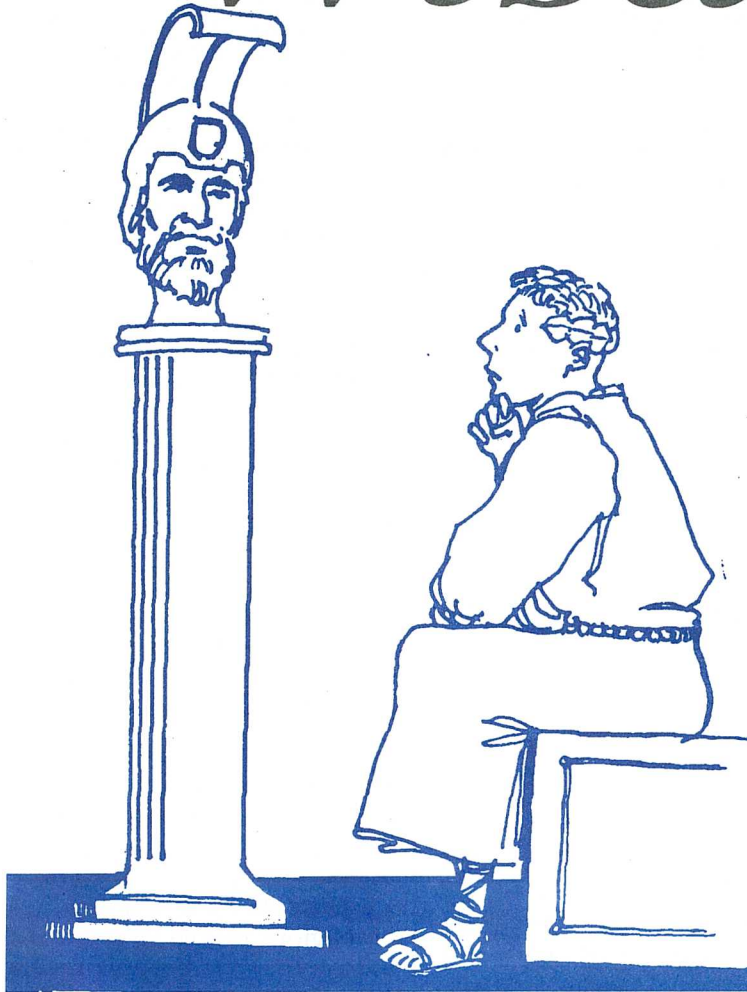
BEING THE CHURCH will feature regularly on these pages; from this issue. Its inclusion represents an attempt to provide relevant information to those striving for community in the context of a small church. This, not in contempt of larger congregations. Rather, to acknowledge that greater effort is usually needed for the small gathering.

It is hoped that this column will offer ideas and inspiration. Perhaps you have had experience of a home church or small fellowship? You may wish to write about it for the benefit of others. Your input is sought and welcomed.

Ed.



# A BEGINNING OF *Wisdom*



## *How to Study the Bible. (1)*

### **Why the Bible?**

**W**ithout the revelation contained in the christian scriptures, we can not be sure who we are, where we come from, why we are here; or where we are going. Mere human reason is totally insufficient to attain to any certain knowledge of absolute truth in matters moral and spiritual.

Among the ancient heathen nations the grossest polytheism and idolatry prevailed. Their ideas of deity were dark, confused and imperfect. Athens was full of statues

dedicated to different gods and imperial Rome, from political principles, adopted all the deities which were adored by the nations who yielded to her victorious armies.

Some of these gods were vindictive and ferocious. Others were jealous, wrathful, or deceivers. All of them were unchaste, adulterers, or incestuous. Many of these gods were monsters of the grossest vice; and their rites were absurd, licentious and cruel, consisting of shameless dissipation and debauchery.

Prostitution, in all its deformity, was linked to many pagan temples and was often a principle source of national income. It was often forced upon the female population of some countries. Boys were whipped on the altar of Diana, sometimes until they died.

The heathen knew nothing about the creation of the world, the origin of evil, the cause of depravity and misery that prevails among men. They were equally ignorant of a plan of salvation. No one among the heathen could be certain as to what was a supreme good for mankind to seek. Some sought pleasure, or at least, indolence and freedom



from pain, as a final good. Others felt that an accumulation of material goods, was the main ambition to be fulfilled.

The heathen had no certain view about the life to come and the resurrection of the dead. The greatest of pagan philosophers, with the exception of two or three, never suggested the duty of loving our enemies or of forgiving injury. Courage and the love of popular applause, were considered the best and greatest incentives to virtue. Suicide was considered to be the mark of heroism, while the wickedness of the inner heart - the adultery of the eye and the desire to kill, were little regarded. Theft was permitted in Egypt and in Sparta. And, Plato taught the lawfulness of exposing children in particular cases. The exposure of infants and the destroying of children who were imperfect was allowed at Sparta. Slavery was a universal phenomenon in the ancient world.

That which makes life worth living is enshrined in the values taught by Holy Scripture. Love, compassion, sympathy, goodness; purity, truth, hope etc. Only in the Bible, is a solid basis for these found.

Those who brought the greatest misery on the Twentieth Century world, were men who had spent years in the seminary. Stalin trained to be a priest. Hitler and Mussolini were taught by churchmen. But, they were men who did not understand the Gospel of Holy writ. To them, religion consisted of a series of doctrinal statements to be believed in and an institution to be joined - the visible church. This hollow shell and sham faith, resulted

in the deaths of scores of millions of people exposed to the rulership of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin.

Religion without the Gospel; religion that is not Bible centred and Christ centred and Grace centred, does more harm than good. John Warwick Montgomery has written a book called 'Damned Through the Church'. He says that throughout history, the church has been a force for evil as well as good. It is usually measured by what Kierkegaard calls barren, or dead orthodoxy. It has condemned progress and truth by majoring in tradition. It has even shed the blood of its own prophetic voices in the name of Christ. It has encouraged its members to believe in salvation through an institution, instead of Christ. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said that much of the Western world contained Christianity without Christ. Only a close study of Scripture can prevent such a tragedy.

We live in a world that is experiencing, at the same time, a youth revolution, sexual revolution; racial revolution, colonial revolution and technological revolution. Our world is exhibiting all the symptoms of a man having a nervous breakdown. Man, who asks the riddle, has become a riddle to himself. Not only does man not know who he is, but he knows he doesn't know. For the first time man has become a problem to himself. We have a world with much knowledge but little wisdom. We have inventions to lift burdens from hands and backs, but not from hearts. Only the Bible can solve these problems.

*-Desmond Ford*

## How we got our Bible.

**I**mmanuel Kant said it was impossible for anyone to know anything about the real world. He said, all our thinking is determined by categories of the brain and has no real connection with reality beyond this world.

While it is true that a bird can not fly out of earth's atmosphere, it is just as true that the one who made the bird and the atmosphere, can put His loving hand down and stroke the bird. Just so, the Creator has condescended to talk to his

earth-bound children and explain to them the mysteries of existence.

The glories and beauty of nature testify not only that God exists but that he loves us. Would not a loving Creator desire to have something to say to his children? We would certainly expect God to tell us his will for us. Such a revelation would have to bear heavenly credentials and still leave room for doubt. A revelation without strong evidence in its favour would influence few, whereas, one that was as strongly attested as if God himself stood before his creatures, might cancel human freedom and compel, rather than solicit.

We might further anticipate that such a revelation would be best in written form, with a group of people entrusted with its care. Only written records would suffice, because that which is handed on by word of mouth, invariably changes in the process. If such a revelation were accompanied by a concrete embodiment of its truths - for example, a man whose life and person were entirely in harmony with God's will, then it would not only make abstract truth readily understood, but would provide the impetus of holy example.

There is only one revelation, as described above, in existence today. The Bible not only claims to come from God but it bears its own credentials, sufficient to authenticate it to any honest reader. It was entrusted, over the centuries, to a race of religious people who preserved its records. Among this race appeared one, whose entire life and person were in complete accord with the requirements of God's written message to men. This one was Jesus Christ. As the Bible has no parallel among other so-called sacred books, so Christ stands, without peer among the religious leaders of mankind. No other founder of a worldwide religion claimed to be God incarnate. No other one claimed to be without sin. It is true of Jesus Christ alone, that after he died, 'He rose again and appeared to many'.

God was not content with telling his children to be kind, good and true. Instead, he sent his Son who was Truth, Goodness and Love incarnate. It was 'the Spirit of Christ who inspired the prophetic writers of Scripture.

*- Desmond Ford*



# The Unity and Symmetry of the Bible.

Everyone is familiar with the two great volumes of the one Bible, known as the Old and New Testaments, and the relation between them is almost universally recognised. There is the same evidence that both are from the same mind, as that the bud of spring and the flower of summer, are from the same hand. The Old Testament is the bud and the New Testament is the flower. This has long been a commonplace with students of the Bible. Augustine put it thus: 'The New Testament lies hid in the Old; the Old Testament lies open in the New.' – which is exactly the idea of our illustration, for the flower lies hid in the bud; the bud lies open in the flower.

The general truth of the relation will scarcely be questioned, especially as it is quite in line with the key thought of the age-evolution. But, one is tempted to work it out a little. Let us then take for illustration the development of Divine Grace throughout the Bible. As this is no mere topic chosen from among many, but the main subject of the sacred Scriptures, it will afford something more than illustration – may in fact stand for an exposition of the progressive nature of revelation.

There are those who discover the seed of the Gospel of Divine Grace covered up in the curse pronounced upon the serpent, like a sweet nut in a hard shell ... we find it in the days of Abraham, no longer encased in the hard integument of a curse upon evil, but, like a tiny plumule in the living green of that Word of Grace: 'In thy seed shall all nations of earth be blessed.' By the time of Moses, we may think of the bud as fully formed, rounded off and set upon its stem. As we follow the course of history, it becomes developed and enlarged, and though, to the observer from without, there is only the dull green exterior for a time, in the earlier Psalms and

prophecies we get glimpses of the beautiful colours beginning to glow in the heart of it. In the days of the later Psalmists and prophets, we see the colours emerging from the green with a growing presage of beauties presently to be unfolded, when the fullness of the summer has come. And then, just as after the many weeks of spring, during which the bud, though growing steadily, has still persevered in its original shape and mostly its original colour, there comes a time when suddenly and unexpectedly, there is a change. And



the closed bud is spread into the open flower. So, after the many centuries of the slow development of the bud of promise in Hebrew times, there is a sudden efflorescence, and in a single generation, the flower of the New Covenant is opened to our sight, rich in colours and redolent of fragrance, apparently new, but which is found to be only a fuller development and a more open display of what has all along been hidden in the green.

A remarkable illustration of evolution, we admit, but not in the line of natural development. It was directly against the current of Jewish thought. It was, in spite of the Jewish mind, that the inner glory of the old Judaism flowered out and cast away the shell that had sheltered in the long spring-time of the Divine year. The evolution of the New Testament out of the Old was clearly not a mere development of human intellect; but, like that of the rose, can only be explained by the power of God. Though human hands planted the seed and tended the growth, the blessed Son in the heavens had more to do with it than they. And we might as well look for summer without the sun, as for a Bible without God.

## Four Volumes

So much for the relation of the two Covenants or Testaments, as we generally call them. Let us now observe how each of them falls into a twofold division, making Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the Old Testament, and Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the New. The successive volumes are not only in organic unity each with the other, but there is perfect symmetry in the set. By which we mean, that volume 1 of the Old Testament, is related to volume 2 in precisely the same way as the first volume of the New Testament is related to its second volume. Let us endeavour to make this out.

When the Old Testament was considered as twofold, it was spoken of as the **Law** and the **Prophets**. Matthew 5:17. Or **Moses** and the **Prophets**. Luke 16: 29, 31 – a very unequal division as to bulk, but, from the way in which the Law was regarded by the Jews, what was wanting in bulk in the first volume, was made up in importance. It was like the division of head and body. This relationship of the two parts, has not been affected by the very close connection between Joshua and the Pentateuch, so close, that it has become the custom now, in the literature of the higher criticism, to



speak, not of the Pentateuch but rather of the Hexateuch. The Law runs into the prophets through Joshua, just as the head runs into the body through the neck, but whether the head belongs to the neck or the body might be a fair enough question for discussion; it certainly would be as inconvenient to demonstrate the dividing line between a man's head and his body, as it would be to show the precise line of demarcation between the Law and the Prophets.

Now, leaving as questions quite beyond our scope, the origin of the documents of which the Hexateuch was composed, and the dates of their production, let us look simply at the two periods covered respectively by the Law and the Prophets. We cannot do this attentively without observing a distinction between them, as to the manner in which God is said to have made himself known to men.

In the first volume of the Old Testament, we read continually of God appearing. The idea conveyed being, that it was in some outward form visible to the senses. So, we read of him appearing to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in patriarchal times; so, too, in the days of the Exodus and the wanderings, he appeared visibly in the fire – in the burning bush, on the mount, and thereafter, day by day in a pillar of cloud and night by night, in a pillar of fire. So again, when the people of God were just about to enter the land of promise, which was to be the scene of their national history, there is the appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host, as he stood before Jericho, the key fortress of the land. This appearing of God, then, is characteristic of the first volume.

In the second volume there is a marked change. Manifestation in the old way ceases, and in the place of it, what? The word of God through the Prophets; through the deeds of such men as Gideon, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha; through the words of Isaiah and many others who 'spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The one method of revelation follows the other, according to the order indicated by the Apostle; 'First, that which is natural; afterward, that which is spiritual.' First, that which is addressed

immediately to the senses; afterward, that which is addressed immediately to the Spirit.

Turning now to the New Testament, we see that it falls into precisely the same twofold division. Christ and the Apostles, the Gospels and the Epistles are the two volumes correspondingly unequal in bulk, but, the inequality again compensated for by the commanding interest and importance of the former.

Here again, it is no question of the origin of the two. In fact, we know that the Gospels as books were later than most of the Epistles. But, having regard to the history covered, the order of books as we have them is clearly the right one. There is further, the same dubious position of the connecting book, for the Acts of the Apostles is most closely connected with the Gospels, especially the third. So, again we have the head (Christ) and the body (Epistles) joined together by the neck (Acts of the Apostles) or perhaps, it would be more accurate to mark off, as the transitional portion, the history of the fifty days between the Resurrection and Pentecost, the record of which, closes the Gospel of Jesus and opens the Gospel of the Holy Ghost. The same relation between the two volumes which we discovered in the Old Testament, is disclosed in the New. In the first,

God appears; manifests himself in the person of his Son. In the second, he makes himself known through his Apostles, their deeds coming first (as in the case of the Prophets) and then their words (letters) given in his name, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We do not say indeed that the two periods are sharply separated. Clear cut divisions are not found in living unities. The first begins with the advent of the Son; the second with the advent of the Spirit. But, the Spirit is not absent from the Gospels. Nor is the Lord Jesus absent from the second volume. On the one hand, it was in the power of the Spirit that the Lord Jesus accomplished his earthly ministry; on to the very end, when through the Eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot, unto God. On the other hand, visible manifestations did not altogether cease in the second period. Christ appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus; and to John in Patmos, just as the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and Manoah after the age of manifestation was over. But alike, in the Old Testament and in the New, the characteristic of the earlier era, was manifestation to men. Of the later era, revelation through men. So much for the parallel and symmetrical arrangement of the two great divisions of each Testament.

## The Eight Volumes

**W**e have now to consider a fourfold division, quite as marked, and quite as remarkable; where again, symmetry is maintained throughout. Each of the two Testaments is a four volumed book, in which, not only do the volumes follow each other in logical succession, but the progress of thought is, as before, precisely parallel in the two testaments.

In the Old Testament the four volumes are (1) The HEXATEUCH the characteristic of which is manifestation. (2) The HISTORICAL books which set forth the application of the Law, or early revelation to the nation of Israel. (3) The POETICAL

books, making together a volume of experience, showing the results in the life of the people. (4) The PROPHETICAL books, a volume of outlook.

In the New Testament there is precisely the same sequence. (1) A volume of manifestation embracing the FOUR GOSPELS. (2) volume of application; the historical book known as ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. (3) A volume of experience, showing the results of the Gospel in the life of the people, the EPISTLES. And (4) a volume of outlook, the APOCALYPSE.

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