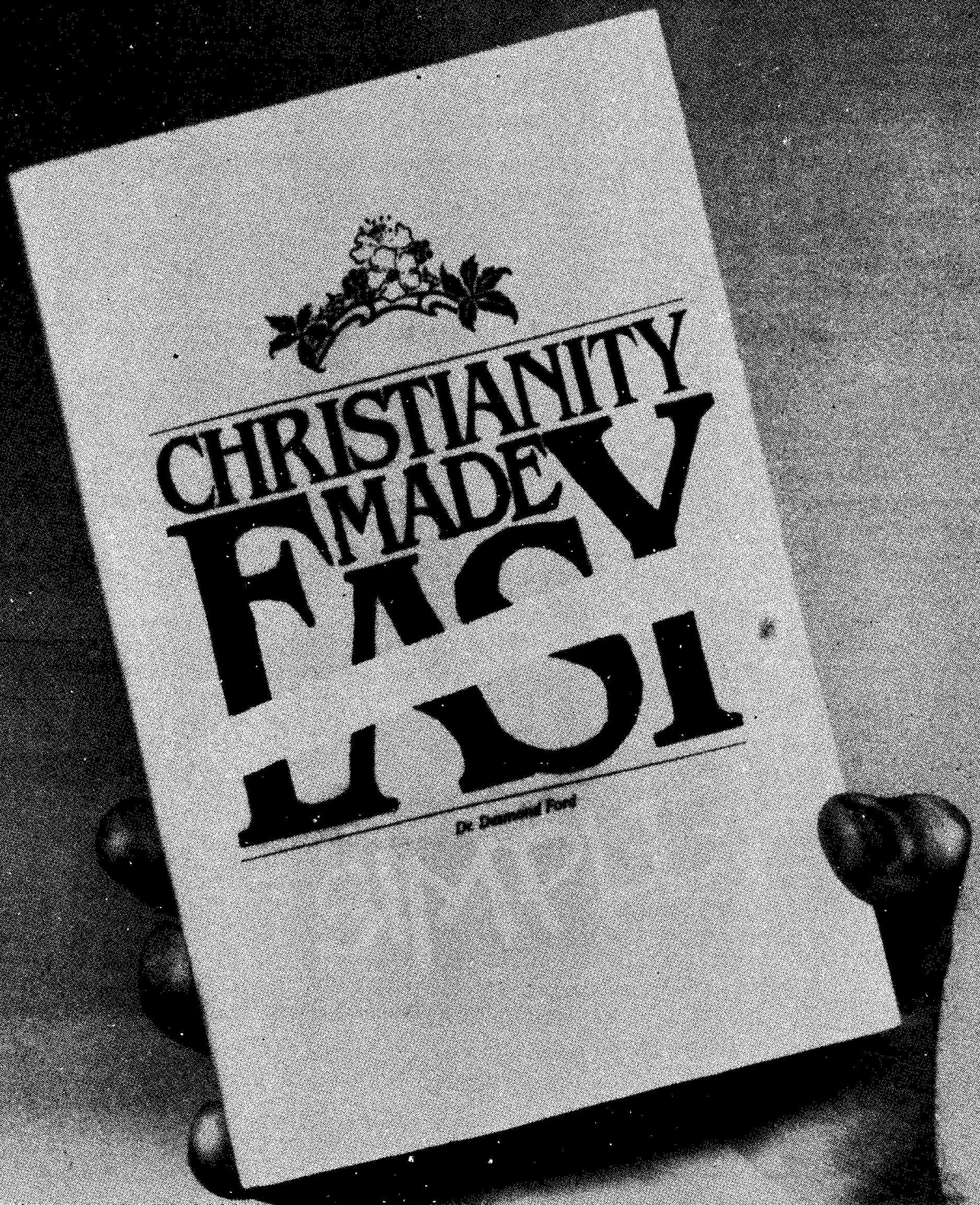


Good News Unlimited

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Solo Christo—Sola Scriptura—Sola Fide—Sola Gratia



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Editorial

Jesus started his ministry, as Matthew records it, with a series of blessings upon the most unlikely types of people. Those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who are meek, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, who are merciful, who are pure in heart, who make peace, who are persecuted and insulted . . . this unexpected catalog of people are the ones on whom Jesus places his blessings (Matt. 5:3-11).

In fact Jesus seems to present these persons as exhibits of typical citizens of his kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus set forth the principles of the kingdom he came to inaugurate. But before he shared these principles, he first took time to describe the kind of people who would constitute that kingdom.

And what a surprising list it is. In an age where people were made national heroes by becoming guerillas for the Jewish cause, where civil servants took advantage of their subjects, where women were treated alternatively as property or playthings, where capital punishment was carried out readily, where out spoken false messiahs quickly gained an audience—in such an age of violence and greed, extolling the virtues of the beatitudes was truly remarkable.

And it is no less remarkable today. The cult of the self-serving is alive and well, not to mention the cult of the tough. The media continues to reinforce false values, assuring us that only the ruthlessly aggressive are successful, only the stunningly attractive are popular, and only the obscenely wealthy are influential.

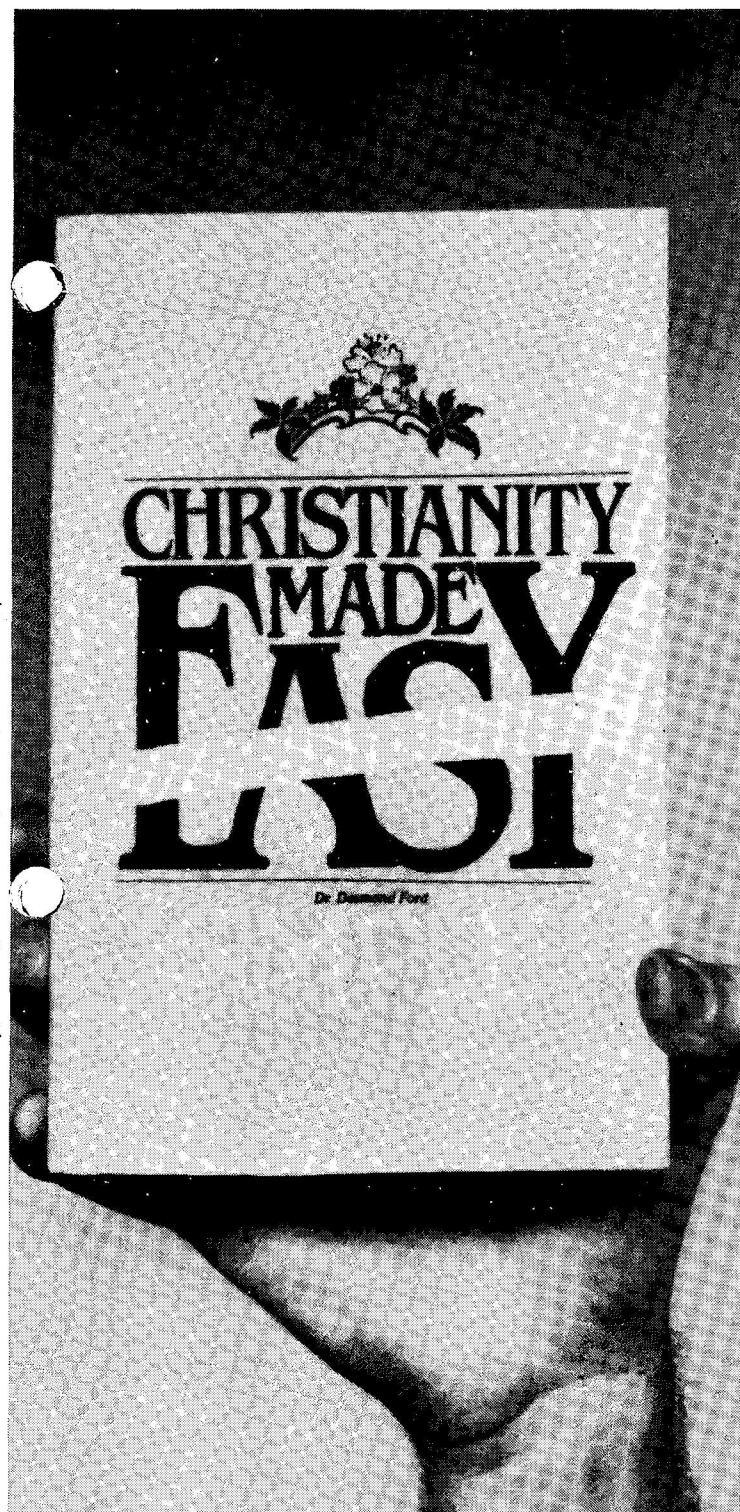
But Jesus teaches us that his kingdom is different. There's a place for the little people. For the strugglers like you and me. For the outcasts of society. For those mild in temperament and ordinary in their ways.

It's not that God condescendingly allows us to be a part of his kingdom, to fill a little remaining space behind the stalls where there is standing room only. No, his kingdom is made of us ordinary folks—humble sinners who stumble along life's road, always searching, longing, knowing we see but partially. We are the ones who constitute God's kingdom.

Heaven is made for those who despise worldly power and praise. It is for those who follow the Son of Man in self-giving and find that worldly praise is rather petty stuff compared with honor from the great God of the universe.

Calvin W. Edwards.

"... our salvation depends more upon God than upon us, for the Bible is emphatic that all persons whatever their temperament or natural advantages, are powerless of themselves to live a righteous life."



by Desmond Ford

It has been well said that the religion of many people is like a headache—they have no desire to lose their head, but it hurts them to keep it. This leads to the question: Is Christianity hard or easy? Or put another way: Is Christianity possible only to those who have a strong will, or can even moral weaklings “hold out” and “hold on”? A third way of asking the question is to inquire, “Does salvation depend mostly upon God’s doing or mine?”

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to *every one* that believeth.” “For there is no difference: . . . for the same Lord over *all* is rich unto *all* that call upon him” (Rom. 1:16; 10:12).

The word gospel means “good news,” but Christianity would not be good news if those with handicaps through heredity and environment were thereby outside the pale of salvation. The Scriptures, however, promise that through the gospel “he that is feeble . . . shall be as David,” and of all who will ultimately be saved it will be written that they “out of weakness were made strong.”

Our Salvation Depends on God

In other words, our salvation depends more upon God than upon us, for the Bible is emphatic that all persons, whatever their temperament or natural advantages, are powerless of themselves to live a righteous life. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7).

To encourage all who become aware of their weakness it is written that “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, . . . the weak things of the world, . . . and base things of the world, and things which are despised” (I Cor. 1:27,28). He promises to thresh mountains of difficulty with human “worms.” Heaven is for “every one that believeth”—Great-heart or Little-faith.

These promises all sound very well, but what is the process whereby such promises are implemented and fulfilled? It is easy to see from Scripture that a man receives forgiveness and a new heart the moment he beholds the love of God for him. At this moment he surrenders his all to Christ, simultaneously taking Christ as his by faith. This is well begun, but the job is still only half done. As Spurgeon said:

“We want to be purified as well as pardoned. Justification without sanctification would not be salvation at all. It would call the leper clean and leave him to die of his disease; it would forgive the rebellious, and allow the rebel to remain an enemy to his king. It would remove the consequences but overlook the cause, and this would leave an endless and hopeless task for us. It would stop the stream for a time but leave an open fountain of defilement, which would sooner or later break forth with increased power. Remember that the Lord Jesus came to take away sin in three ways. He came to remove the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and at last the presence of sin.”

Here, then, is the problem of the Christian life—how to *become* holy in order that one may live a holy life.

All Power Comes from Heaven

Notice that Romans 1:16, in defining the gospel, says that "it is the power of God." Says the psalmist also, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Ps. 62:11). As in the natural world all power comes from the sun, so in the spiritual world all power comes from Heaven.

"When we walk abroad on a beautiful day, and survey a landscape lit up by the beams of summer sun, our eye catches a variety of colors lying on the surface of this landscape, perhaps the yellow of golden grain, the green of the pasture land, the silver gleam of a stream, the faint blue of distant hills, . . . but none of these colors reside in the landscape, they are not the properties of the material objects on which they rest. All colors are wrapped up in the sunlight, and apart from the sunlight no object has any color . . . As soon as light is withdrawn from the landscape, the colors fade from the robe of nature. . . . Now Christ is the sun of righteousness, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. . . . When Christ is shining upon the heart, then his virtues are manifested there."

—E. M. Goulburn

The Secret of the Christian Life

This is the secret of the Christian life, revealing to us how Christianity can indeed be made simple. *The power to live the Christian life is not a power generated from within us or by us: it is a power from without, even the power of Christ, freely given to everyone that by faith maintains a living union with him.* Jesus, as the Son of Man, confessed his own lack of personal power: "I can of mine own self do nothing." "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (Jn. 5:30; 14:10).

As the Father lived in Christ and enabled him to be victorious in every phase of his experience, so Christ promises to dwell in every believer, empowering him or her to live a righteous life. Christ declares, "Without me ye can do nothing," but then encourages us by saying that we "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" us.

Let us note well that Christ does not want to be our *helper*, but our *life*. Not heaven someday, but Christ right now is the Christian message. It has been well said that the principle of Christianity is the principle of an exchanged life. Our great need is not a striving for more faith but a continued looking toward Christ, the faithful One who is now our life.

There is the legend of a man whose garden produced nothing but weeds. At last he met with a strange flower of singular strength. He sowed a handful of this seed in his overgrown garden and left it to work. The results exceeded all expectations: the flowers not only germinated and sprang up in profusion, but they exterminated every weed. As he looked over his garden nothing could be seen but the flowers of that rare plant.

The story illustrates well the nature of victorious Christian living. Christ in us expels sin. The best way to get rid of the darkness is to let in the light. Thus the apostle John affirms, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 Jn. 3:9). In other words, whoever has received into his life the eternal Seed, Christ Jesus, thereby hates sin and can no longer make that his habit.

The Secret of a Holy Life

Our present theme was the subject of Christ's last sermon. On the eve of his death he told his sorrowing disciples the secret of a holy life, a life that could rise above inherent weakness and outward trial. Christ explained to his disciples how he would come again to them through the person of the third member of the Godhead and thus dwell within them forever. Notice his words on that occasion:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; . . . he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you . . . He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . 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" (Jn. 14:15-23).

The age in which we live is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. As surely as Christ was on earth between Bethlehem and Calvary, so now the Holy Spirit is present here as his successor with each of us. Because of his humanity Jesus could not be in every place

"Part of the good news of Christianity is that those who believe in Christ have a God who is near at hand for all emergencies—a Christ available for everything."

personally, but after his ascension the Holy Spirit was poured forth upon all his disciples, becoming to them as the personal presence of Christ in the soul. As the atmosphere surrounding the earth transmutes the rays of the sun into heat, color, and light, thus directly bringing the sun into contact with life here, so the Holy Spirit is the medium whereby life and truth are communicated to us from the Christ seated on the right hand of God. Apart from the Spirit it would be possible to know only *about* Christ; but through the work of the comforter he becomes a reality dwelling in the heart, empowering us to do all his will.

Part of the good news of Christianity is that those who believe in Christ have a God who is near at hand for all emergencies—a Christ available for everything. Note two parallel texts in the New Testament: (1) "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit

to them that ask him?" (Lk. 11:13). (2) "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Mt. 7:11).

It is apparent from these texts that to receive the Holy Spirit is the same as receiving all good things. The Holy Spirit in us is the pledge of receiving all things necessary for life and godliness. This is the great significance of Pentecost when the third member of the godhead had his Bethlehem, taking up his abode with humanity, even the humanity of all believers in Christ. God has not left us alone. We are not to fight in our own puny strength. Christ is with us through his Spirit, ever with us, for all things.

The Christian is not only in Christ, but Christ is in him through the Spirit. Remember that the Greek word for comforter literally means "one alongside to help." Centuries ago the sleepy little town of Newmarket in England became the temporary residence of King Charles I. Overnight the town was transformed; life and activity sprang up. The king had come. Thus it is in the Christian life. When the King comes in, everything is different. *"Christ received is holiness begun, Christ cherished is holiness advancing, Christ counted upon as never absent is holiness complete."*

In essence, then, the believer's problem is how to ever have Christ within by the Holy Spirit. Scripture gives us the answer in Colossians 2:6, where it declares, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Our Christian life *began* when we received Christ by surrender and faith. The Christian life until its close is a *maintenance* of this initial attitude of surrendering all to Christ and receiving all from Christ. An old hymn by J.H. Sammis sets forth the secret simply:

"Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

True Christian Experience

Faith and obedience are the wings that raise the believer heavenward. True Christian experience is dependent upon an understanding of the relationship between these two. Theology over the centuries has fought many a battle in this area, but the church of God through the ages has ever maintained not only the necessity of both elements but also the vital importance of their true sequence. Faith in Christ must be the fountain of all good works, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). But it also remains true that the Holy Spirit is given that believers might be obedient (Acts 5:32). Obedience is the evidence of faith—and the only evidence heaven ratifies.

This secret of holy living is illustrated well in the book of Exodus. Here we read that the Lord called Moses up into the mountain to commune with him. Moses saw not only the glory of the Lord but also a vision of the tabernacle God required him to construct.

The Book of Exodus closes with the description of the building of that tabernacle, and in the last two chapters the expression "as the Lord commanded," or a similar one, occurs nearly twenty times. For example, we read that "according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it; and Moses blessed them." "Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did

he." Then it is that we read, "So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (see Exodus 39 and 40). Every believer in Christ is intended by God to be a temple of the Holy Spirit, and as we grow in character, building in every detail *as the Lord has commanded, then his glory will fill us.*

We need to remember that all God's commands are promises, and that the power to fulfill the commandment lies in the command as surely as the oak is in the acorn. When Abraham had manifested his willingness to surrender even Isaac, then he was blessed most richly. And it is our Isaac that God wants. When we have renounced our idols, such as love of money or praise, the life of indolence free from responsibility, or amusements that wean the heart from God, then he will pour out such a blessing "that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

The person who knowingly indulges in some practice forbidden by the Word of God, or who neglects a positive duty, cannot hope for the infilling of the presence of Christ. Said our Master, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lk. 6:46). Either Christ is Lord of all or he is not Lord at all, for it is ever true that God either matters tremendously, or he doesn't matter at all.

Christianity is a Daily Affair

At this point it is well to note that Christianity is a daily affair like all important matters. We are to be born again daily, we are to crucify the old life daily, we are to trust daily, and we are to obey daily. But as faith is ever prior to obedience, our primary duty each day is to seek the infilling of the Spirit by drinking deeply of the words of our Lord. It is interesting to note that in two parallel passages of Scripture the same effects are attributed to being filled with the word as to being filled with the Spirit. In Ephesians 5:18,19 we read, "*Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" Then in Colossians 3:16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

As we *receive* Christ Jesus the Living Word by receiving his Written Word, so we *maintain* our relationship with him in the same way. The Holy Spirit does not inspire a vacuum but a Word-filled believer. Thus our primary concern every morning should be to seek God's strength afresh before venturing into the day of toil.

On one occasion when the disciples were crossing a lake without Jesus, they were overtaken by a storm. For hours they rowed fruitlessly. When they were ready to despair, they discerned Jesus himself walking on the sea toward the ship. The record says, "Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went" (Jn. 6:21).

Too many of us are battling with life's storms on our own; we toil in rowing and arrive nowhere. What we need is to receive Jesus on board. Then we will be immediately at our destination, even the destination of a life that is filled with joy and fruitfulness because it is filled with him who is the Thought of all thought and the Strength of all strength.

by Brad McIntyre

Memories collect like dust over the years and are stored in time's attic. Yet some memories are so dear that we place them on the mantelpiece of our heart, keeping them in sight like a precious family portrait. Special occasions often resurrect musty memories long since buried. Birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays can evoke both painful and joyous emotions. This is perhaps because our memories, whether good or bad, can never be separated from the significant meanings they carry. *Memories carry meanings*, and special occasions accentuate those meanings.

For example, when my daughter celebrates her birthday it is a family affair. Everyone gathers to share the joy of another completed year of life. It is also a time for reflection on the day she was born. Memories recreate the hospital scene. We are once again in the delivery room reliving that exciting moment and its meaning for us. These common memories unite us as a family. But more than this, they establish our identity in a fast-paced world. We know who we are because we have maintained contact with our "roots," we have listened to our past, we have reheard it through our memories.

Like a family, the Christian Church retains its identity through shared meanings centered in common memories. This is also how continuity is preserved between the "now" of Christian experience and the "then" of Christian beginnings. Christians have a unique history to relive, a past to rehear, just like any family. The formative events of the Church are sacred memories full of significant meanings which must be passed along to succeeding generations if Christianity is to survive.

In this age of rootlessness and aimlessness the Christian Church is held on course by its shared meanings which cluster around its common memories.

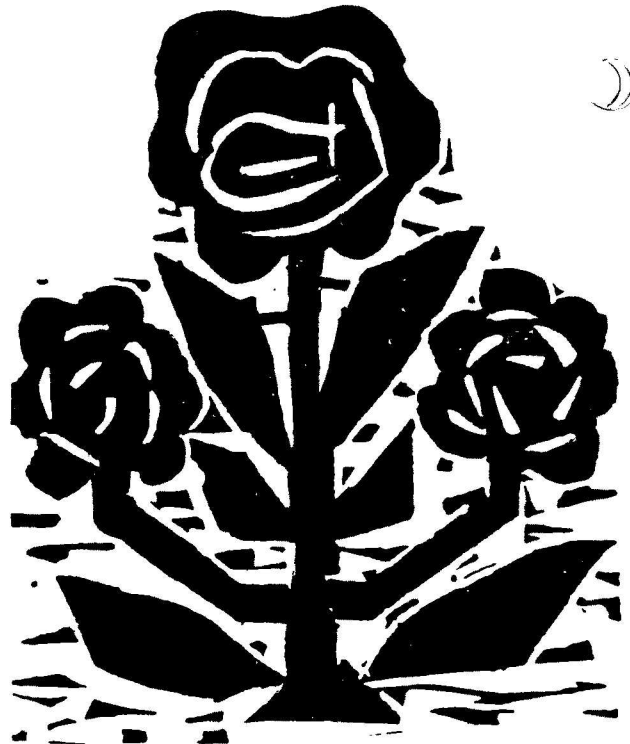
Over the years, the Church has created symbols, rites, and special seasons to transport the shared meanings and common memories of Christianity across the centuries. Some examples of these are the cross, baptism, the Lord's Supper, Advent, Epiphany, and Easter. These are all carriers of the Christian tradition which give the Church a solid identity in a pluralistic age and help the Church maintain unity with its past. In these sacred symbols, rites, and seasons, Christian memories are rehearsed and Christian meanings are internalized. But by far the most important carrier of Christian meanings is the one most taken for granted—the Bible.

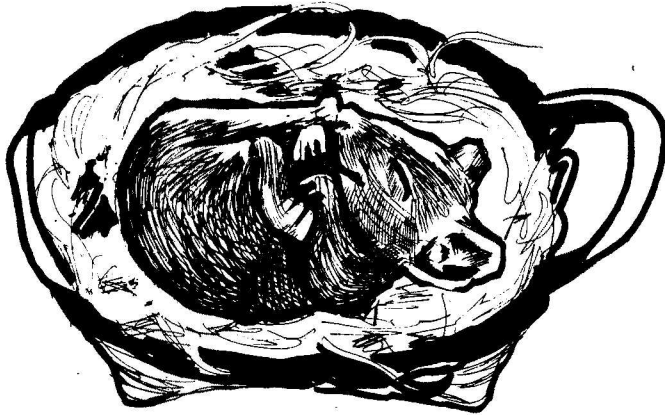
The Bible

The Bible is a book of selected memories, selected because of the significant meanings they carry for Christians. Gradually, the Church chose to preserve certain memories (and their implications) in written form. In turn, the Church is preserved by these same memories. This means the identity of the Church is preserved by the memories it has preserved in the Bible! The Church is what it remembers.

The Bible is a memory book of God's saving deeds. Yet these are not isolated deeds, unrelated to each other. The saving deeds remembered in Scripture are preludes to God's climactic saving event—Jesus Christ. Salvation-history slopes gracefully upward until the peak of Mt. Calvary. God's plan of redemption slowly unfolds, like the

We Are What We Remember





PRETENDING!

Romans 4
Gillian Ford

You can see here a picture of my pet mouse. He's not a real one. He's a pretend mouse made of plaster. When I saw him in a shop not long ago I got that "have to have him" feeling for which ladies are well-known. Then I started the equally well-known "how to get him" game. "I shouldn't buy it," I thought to myself, "but I want it. I know," I pretended, "I'll buy it for my husband to give to me. He never knows what to get for my birthday and it's coming up within the next twelve months." Now that sort of pretending is called rationalizing and it can be very dangerous.

But look at my dear little mouse. Don't you wonder where he came from, and why he's in that basket? Let's pretend. "There was once a cruel king rat who owned a cornfield full of field mice. Now, field mice may not be any good at subtracting and dividing, but they are wonderful at adding and multiplying. One time you look, there are two of them, and the next time there'll be 2,222 of them.

Well, this field I told you about was very full of field mice and the king rat thought,

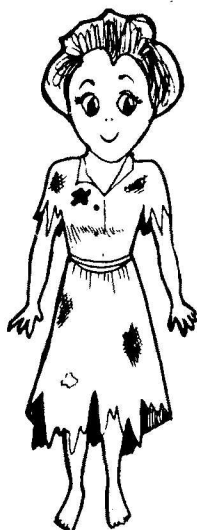
"Mmm! many mice may make millions more mice. Maybe they may murder mean me." He decided to get rid of the babies, but couldn't say it with m's. Now there was a mother and father mouse who were called Mr. & Mrs. SESOM (note that name carefully). They had a baby boy mouse — the one in the picture.

How could they save that baby? Well, they'd read a certain story in the Bible, and they got hold of a little basket, lined it with straw, put the baby in it and floated it in a very large puddle surrounded by a thick clump of weeds. Of course you know that the king rat's daughter found it there. She called that little animal "Baby Mouses."

If you haven't worked out the Bible story yet, I'll give you another clue. Take the last name of Mr. and Mrs. SESOM and turn it backwards.

Of course, I was only pretending, but did you know, some people call the gospel a pretend righteousness. They say God is pretending if he calls a man perfect who is not. Let's find out what that means. Now pretend again that you're on a bus listening

in on the conversation in the seat in front. Of course, that's very bad manners. You're not supposed to listen in on others' conversations, but we're only pretending. So in front of you, Mr. Godly Goodly and Mrs. Rags Righteousness are going at it hammer and tongs.



Mrs. Rags Righteousness



Mr. Godly Goodness

G.G. "What I say is that Jesus forgives your past sins and then makes you good so you don't sin anymore."

R.R. "No, no! That's not right. You always have to be forgiven even if you've been a Christian for a hundred years. Jesus has forgiven all our sins, past, present, and future. But we are never good in ourselves."

G.G. "That can't be right. Where is it in the Bible?"

R.R. "Well, take Romans 4. It speaks of both Abraham and David and we know they weren't perfect in their behavior even after they came to Jesus. But Romans 4 says that God **reckoned** or **imputed** righteousness to them. Don't you see what it means? He **counted** them as righteous even though they weren't."

G.G. "My godly goodness! But that's a pretend righteousness. God says someone is good or righteous who isn't. That makes God a liar."

R.R. "Now be careful, G.G. — you're stepping on dangerous ground when you say things like that. There were people who lived in Galatia that thought like you, and Paul the apostle wrote to them, and was he angry! He called them stupid (Galatians 1:6 NEB). This is what he said: 'Let God's curses fall on anyone, including myself, who preaches any other way to be saved than the one we told you about; yes, if an angel comes from heaven and preaches any other message, let him be forever cursed.' There's only one gospel, G.G., and yours isn't it. Yours is a works righteousness."

G.G. "I still think yours is a pretend righteousness."

R.R. "It isn't a pretend righteousness. The righteousness by which I go to heaven is not **mine**. God counts me righteous by looking at Jesus instead of me. It's just as real as when God counted Jesus as a sinner. He wasn't — but he died as though he were."

G.G. (miffed) "Hummmph, Mrs. R.R. — I'll stick to my own godly goodness and you can keep your rags of righteousness." (He couldn't see, boys and girls, how dirty his own clothes were.)

R.R. "But, G.G., listen to me. . . ."

But he wouldn't, and here we get off the bus.

Now if you count the times that the words "reckon" or "impute" (or even "count" or "accounted") are used in Romans 4, you'll see they appear eleven times. In the Greek the word is always the same word, but the English sometimes translates it differently. Those eleven times tell us that God doesn't count our sins against us if we trust in Jesus. Isn't that wonderful?

But while God loves naughty children and grown-ups, he hopes that when they see how he loves them, they'll want to be good. To love Jesus is to love goodness.

See my mouse. You can see he wants to be good. Of course, he's asleep and that helps a lot. But he said to me (now I'm pretending again), "When I grow up, my name's going to be Mighty Mouse, because the Bible says, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me' (Philippians 4:13)."



THE ROTTEN EGG

by
Julie Millett

We all know the story of Chicken Licken and how she thought that the sky had fallen down after an acorn had fallen on her head. Well, this is a story telling us about a rotten egg falling on a girl's head.

Julie lived with her parents on a large sheep station in Australia. Each morning, Julie and her two brothers would walk down the long drive to await the school bus to take them on the half-hour journey to school. After a while, the trio would wait until they saw the bus turning near the church, and then make a dash for it, running down the drive to the bus stop.

After school there were many interesting activities for the children like swimming in the channel, feeding the lambs or collecting eggs. The children found that a favorite place for the hens to lay their eggs was the haystack. It must have been a very warm and comfortable spot for the hens to sit. What fun the children had collecting the eggs.



They found that the haystack was a great place to slide down. No one ever broke a limb as the hay was very soft.

4

One afternoon, Julie and her brother Ross decided to have a bit of fun with the eggs.

"Listen, Ross," said Julie, "I bet you can't throw an egg up and over the rafters and catch it when it comes down!" Ross proved to Julie that he could. Then it was Julie's turn! She found that she could do it too. It was quite simple. The last egg that Julie chose was the biggest one. However, this time she didn't aim so well, and yes, you've guessed it — the egg hit the rafters. It landed right on top of Julie's head. What a mess Julie looked with the yolk and white of the egg in her hair and dripping down over her face and onto her clothes.

But that wasn't the worst of it.

"Ugh!" said her brother, "you stink! That egg is rotten!"

Julie could hardly stand the smell. She felt her tummy turning over. She felt like vomiting again and again. What could she do to get rid of the smell? She decided to run to another part of the haystack but she found that the smell followed her wherever she went. She couldn't get rid of it. Poor old smelly Julie.

Then she thought of her mother — her kind, dear mother. She would have the solution. She wouldn't scold her. Julie ran over to the house where her mother was busy baking. When she saw her daughter running down the path, she stopped the mixer and opened the door to greet her.

"Oh, Mom," said Julie, "I'm covered with rotten egg and the smell is making me sick."

I'm not surprised, Julie," said her mother. "I could smell you coming through my open kitchen window. Oh dear, you do smell! The only way to get rid of the smell is to go and wash your hair using plenty of shampoo." So she did. [Editor: I saw Julie recently and I can tell you that the smell has completely gone.]

All people's hearts are so naughty that it's as though they had rotten egg on their heads and in their hearts. As Julie's mother pointed out to her while she washed her hair, Jesus has special shampoo for sinful heads and hearts. He washes them squeaky clean. But the best news is that when they get dirty again he keeps on cleaning because they trust him to take away their sins. Do you like that good news — special soap for dirty hearts? I do!



PERFECT LIFE AWARD

Guess who has a
purrrr-fect score?!

Write your own name here

CONGRATULATIONS TO: _____

REASON: _____ You trusted in my blood

OFFICIAL SIGNATURE: _____ Jesus

DATE: _____ 31 A.D.

PLACE: _____ Cross of Calvary, Jerusalem

petals of a rose, until it reaches full bloom on Golgotha. There the New Age begins with a triumphant end: "It is finished!" Because Christ is the climax of salvation-history, the selected memories of the Bible can be best understood in light of the "Christ-event." For the Christian, Jesus is the starting point of all theological thinking. Here again, the Bible is our primary source of access to the Church's most treasured memories of Jesus.

We come to understand the significance of Jesus Christ through the testimony of the first apostles. Their experience of Christ is recorded for us in the New Testament and is influenced heavily by the Old Testament. Furthermore, their testimony is authoritative and normative for Christians because they were the first ones on the scene. As John says,

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life . . . We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us (1 Jn. 1:1-3).

The first apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ. They saw him, felt him, lived with him in the flesh. Their experience of Christ was direct, unmediated. But ours is not. We are dependent on the written testimony of the first apostles for our understanding of Jesus Christ. Our primary access to the meaning and significance of Christ is through the Biblical record. Christ is indeed just as much a divine revelation for us as he was for the first apostles. Yet the *means* by which the revelation is experienced is different. Emil Brunner comments on this point:

Jesus Christ is not directly "here" for us, as he was for the disciples. We possess him only in their narrative *which tells us about him. Their narrative and their doctrine are the means which God uses, in order to unite us with him.* (*The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 33)

This is why the Bible continues to be the most important historical object the Church possesses. It carries the memory and meaning of Jesus Christ across the centuries so that the Church retains its identity and maintains its unity with the past. In this age of rootlessness and aimlessness the Christian Church is held on course by its shared meanings which cluster around its common memories. From its early leaders the Church has received a set of convictions, a pattern of beliefs, preserved in Scripture. In the Bible, each generation of Christians has access to certain sacred memories which powerfully shape the community of faith, giving it identity and continuity.

The Bible and Preaching

We have seen that the Bible is a carrier of significant meanings for Christians. It is a sacred repository containing selected memories of God's saving activity, the climax of which is Jesus Christ. But the Christian gospel is more than a sentimental memory. True, it is a past

event. Yet this past event breaks out of yesterday and comes to life *today* through preaching. Peter writes, "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God . . . And this is the word that was preached to you". (Pet. 2:23-25). Preaching is the primary "special occasion" of the Church, during which time the memories of God's saving deeds are reborn through the power of the Spirit and accost each listener. Wherever the message of Christ is proclaimed the salvation-occurrence is again present, calling for decision. The "day of salvation" becomes a present reality when the "Now-time" of God's favor confronts the hearer during the preaching moment (2 Cor. 6:2).

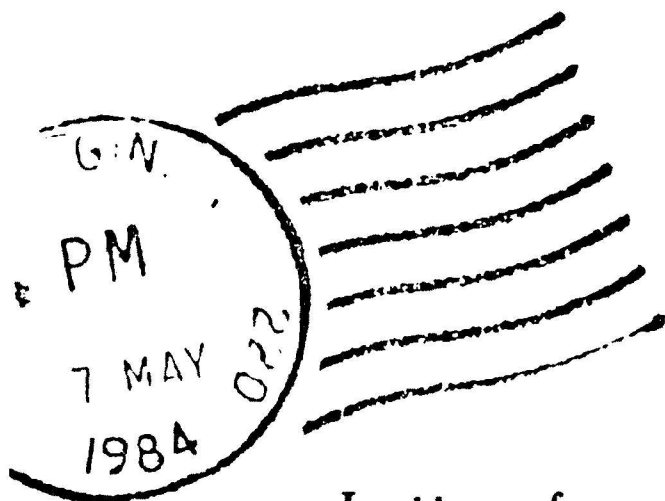
It is helpful to remember that the spoken Word preceded the written Word. Most of the New Testament, for instance, was oral proclamation before it was "encased" in written form. Even a cursory reading of the Acts of the Apostles reveals how important oral proclamation was in spreading the gospel. In fact, the word "apostle" means one who is sent with a message to proclaim. The genuine apostle speaks the message from God with an authority derived from God. Again Peter says, "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God" (2 Pet. 4:11). Through preaching, then, God keeps the "good news" of salvation alive and active in the Church. Memories cannot get dusty when they are proclaimed regularly and with convicting power!

Paul told Timothy, "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Earlier, Paul stressed the importance of orally transmitting the truths of Christianity to others when he said, "The things which you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2:2). And what is the content of these "things" which are to be passed along? "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. *This is my gospel*" (2:8). Christ crucified and resurrected is *the* gospel event which is continually remembered and active through Spirit-filled preaching.

Lest We Forget

To a certain degree, each of us is a historian. Consciously or unconsciously, we spend a good deal of time trying to figure out our past. We feel perhaps the riddle of yesterday can move us toward self-understanding today. There is, of course, the danger of getting stuck in yesterday to the point we lose touch with today. But despite this danger, looking back and remembering our past can be a good thing lest we forget those meaningful moments that have all added up to make us what we are. As Christians, we are part of a sacred heritage, a holy history. The common memories contained in the Bible are not lifeless antiques. They are lively events that will influence our life course when we let them. The strength and significance of our Christian life will be determined by how much we allow our sacred memories to shape us. For after all, we do not relive our memories as much as they live us.

Brad McIntyre writes from Chicago where he is a Master of Divinity student at McCormack Theological Seminary. He will be a guest speaker at the Gospel News Unlimited Summer Congresses.



Letters from Smuts van Rooyen



So many of you have written to us with questions about Smuts van Rooyen, who left GNU in November of 1983 in order to complete his doctoral dissertation in South Africa. His words—both written and spoken—were dearly loved by our readership. In order to accommodate those questions about Smuts, his family, and present interests, we have compiled several of the letters he has written to us in the GNU office. We

8 *miss him very much.*

Dear Everybody at GNU:

May the fleas from a thousand camels infest my armpits for not writing to you sooner. I've been very busy, and loving it. Wish I could make some money though. Things should pick up after the holiday season.

Am thrilled to be back here. I seem to be sorting myself out and uncomplicating my psyche. But miss you guys.

The local church has been marvelous. They know the church has not been on the level in this whole affair. Have had many ministers come to my home to talk. I feel some hope for change with them.

The kids are great. Thank the Lord! And the sea is marvelous.

Have managed to change my dissertation topic. Will be doing a hermeneutical study of eschatological interpretations within Adventism.

Keep in touch. Hang in there.

Smuts

Hi ole buddy Noel & Jill,

Thanks for your letters. Am glad things are going well for GNU. Only those of us out here in the wilderness know how rare a drink you guys serve the traveler.

My work is going well. I find it interesting but not important. Hope to start a home Bible study group soon. Earned a lot of money last month but none this month since the government has pushed the interest rate up to 21.5%!

Kids seem to enjoy the school here, although they are amused by some quaint traditional ways.

Miss all of our friends. Regards to everyone at GNU and the fellowship.

Yours sincerely,
Smuts

P.S. Yes, do visit us anytime you can!

Dear GNU:

The other night we saw a movie on television filmed in San Francisco. I must confess that a few sharp pangs of nostalgia struck me in my emotional solar plexus and left me quite breathless. We do miss the States but try not to think about it too much.

Seem to be making a reasonable but by no means extravagant living with my job. Find the world of objects sterile when compared to the world of ideas. Driven by intellectual hungers, I'm enjoying reading again. You guys should consider reviewing Bernard Ramm's *A Christian Appeal to Reason*.

How did the trip to Aussieland go? What's up U.S. side? Wonder what God has in mind for us. Trust that he hasn't forgotten our willingness and yearnings. Never regret the stands that we all took. Still standing tall.

Your friend,
Smuts

P.S. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. Isn't that fantastic!

Book Review

by Calvin Edwards

Michael Green, *The Day Death Died*, InterVarsity Press, 1982, 121 pp., \$3.25.

The subtitle only tells half the story. It reads, "Did Jesus Christ really rise from the dead?" The value of this marvelous little book is enhanced precisely because the reader gets so much more than all the old arguments for the historicity of Jesus' bodily resurrection.

The book ends with two chapters (about a third of the book) dealing with the implications of Jesus' resurrection. We are not allowed to treat the subject merely as an academic exercise where the evidence is amassed, the "proof" given, and the conclusion drawn. No, after this we are challenged to live with the results of what we have been led to believe.

Because it combines both apologetics and a clear evangelical note, the book is valuable to both Christians and their more skeptical friends. The author has consistently written with the non-Christian in view, and relates the whole issue of the resurrection to the big questions of life such as: What is life all about? Where is this world headed? And, is there life beyond the grave?

The first chapter briefly reviews the pivotal importance of the question: Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? Green rightly points out that this is the key to Christianity. Any critic will say that if the resurrection can be disproved, Christianity is a fallacy. But conversely, if the evidence points solidly in its favor, then the claims of Christianity are all the more compelling.

If the resurrection is true then we know that God exists; there is life after death; Jesus Christ really is the Way, the Truth and the Life; and this life with its suffering and death is not all that there is. Because so much hangs on the truth of the resurrection, the author carefully compiles the evidence in its favor (pp. 17,18).

He does not pretend to be able to prove the resurrection. Things of the Spirit are not subject to proof in the strictest sense of the word. But he is convinced that the evidence is indeed overwhelming.

One of the strengths of the book is that it not only deals with evidence, but also with the presuppositions that underlie the interpretation of the evidence. The author thus deals with apathetic prejudice, theological prejudice and scientific prejudice.

Green points out that scientists who are usually so tentative and qualified in their statements, tend to become surprisingly dogmatic when speaking against the possibility of the resurrection! He appeals to the scientific method itself as demanding a careful consideration of the resurrection. The "scientific method . . . does not begin by ruling out of order facts that are inconvenient. Instead it examines them. And most of the

advances in scientific enquiry have taken place when scientists have wrestled with the one awkward fact that did not fit into the prevailing theory. In principle there is no scientific reason why Jesus could not have risen from the grave" (p. 25).

In a fairly lengthy section the author discusses the claim of the resurrection. Citing both biblical and extra biblical writers, he sets forth the evidence that those who wish to be open-minded need to consider (pp. 26-44).

The third chapter is entitled "Examining the Evidence" and lists in an orderly way many of the traditional arguments for the resurrection. This topic has been dealt with so thoroughly by evangelicals over the last century that it is virtually impossible to have any startlingly new information. Green has none; but he does set forth an eminently readable and compelling case with admirable brevity.

Green's agenda is to prove the following points: Jesus did in fact die (he didn't just swoon); he was embalmed and buried; the tomb certainly was empty on Sunday morning (even his enemies agreed to that); numerous testimonies of persons claim to have seen Jesus after his death (testimonies from persons who could be trusted); and nothing else could account for the dramatic beginnings and growth of the Christian church (pp. 46-48).

The evangelical note I referred to earlier commences in chapter four. Here the author includes stories of persons whose lives have been changed by the living Christ. How can such be accounted for if Christ did not rise from the dead? He says:

"The heart of the matter for the Christian is this: Jesus did not merely rise, he is alive and ready to be met by men, women or children who are willing to share their lives with him.

"That is not a common image of Christianity. God forgive us, we have smothered the risen Christ in respectability, moralism, and goodness knows what else. But that is the heart of authentic Christianity" (p. 79).

The conclusion of the book is filled with gems that assure us of the blessings that flow to Christians because of the resurrection. Death is not the end. Jesus is the way to God. God himself has come to rescue us. *"The resurrection was God's 'Yes' to the achievement of Calvary. It was God's vindication of his precious Son."* (p. 88). In moments of solitude and loneliness we may rejoice for the risen Lord is at hand. Resurrection power is available for moral victories over sin. We belong to the church of the living Christ, a community marked by the resurrection. Our own resurrection is guaranteed in Christ's. Death's sting is removed, there is life eternal.

"The resurrection of the body of Jesus seems to be a sign that God is interested in reordering rather than scrapping this universe" (p. 102).

For those who wish a careful and yet manageable discussion of the resurrection, the book is a must. It will reassure your faith, challenge your narrow view of the meaning of the resurrection, and speak to your heart about a God who plunged even into death for his wayward children.

Questions and Answers

Q. Every now and then thoughts of the past plague my mind—lies and injustices that people dealt out to me. How can I forget? Philippians 3:13 does not seem to help.

A. We hear a lot about learning from history and remembering the past (see for example Brad McIntyre's excellent article in this issue), but we rarely hear about forgetting the past. It's kind of like when I go into a health club and say I want a program to put on weight—I get some rather strange looks. (But those who know my ectomorphic build understand!)

Yes, for all of us there are things in our past experience that we want to forget, indeed *need* to forget. I am sure that we would be quite mentally ill if all our bad memories constantly raced through our minds. No one could stand that kind of perpetual nightmare.

Usually time takes care of this mental garbage collection for us. The trash of old plaguing memories is generally carted off on time's truck. I believe that God has made us that way for our own psychic well-being. He lets us remember our mistakes, our hurts, our agonies for a while, but then they are dumped.

And it seems that this period of recollection serves a valuable purpose. During this time when the hurt is prolonged a while we can do much learning. Sometimes it is learning from our own mistakes, but other times it is learning from others' mistakes. In your case I suspect you may be able to learn from the poor treatment you received from some former associates. Have you gained all you can from the abuse you received? Are you certain you could never, under any circumstances, do the same?

Your answer to these questions is probably "yes." You've learned all you can, and you've had all you can take. If so, then it is time to forget—forget the experiences, but not the lessons they teach. So here are a few suggestions.

One, choose to leave these memories behind. Don't say, "I wish I could get this out of my mind, but . . ." Say, "From now on these thoughts are history, I am not going to allow these things to enter my head again." Be tough with your own mind. Choose to take a hard line with your own "rememberer."

Two, refuse to talk about the thoughts that trouble you. Make no exceptions (possibly after five years or so you could make some exceptions!). I suspect you've done enough talking to "get it out of your system"; now you need to act like you have in fact got it out.

Three, occupy yourself with something else. Be busy. Have a cause, something to live for, something to devote yourself to. Get involved in a big church project, do community work, take on some extra responsibilities at work, invite your grandchildren around more often, run for mayor—whatever it takes, but get yourself so occupied with something of genuine importance (not just time-filling trivia) that your mind is otherwise occupied. Incidentally, this can be a miracle cure for all kinds of ailments.

Four, remove yourself from things associated with those events you want to forget. It might mean changing your baby-sitter, cancelling a magazine subscription, joining a new tennis club. Get yourself out of and away from those things that keep bringing back those unwanted memories.

Five, do all in your power to forgive those who have damaged you. This will probably be difficult, and it will certainly take time. It will take the work of the Holy Spirit in your life to bring this about; you can't make it happen. But dwelling upon the inexpressible love of God which led him to die for us while we were yet ungodly will certainly help. His forgiving love will inspire you to do likewise. Once you have forgiven, you will probably find it easy to forget.

Finally, point six, pray about the matter. I mention this last not because it is least important, but because it overlaps with all the other. You need to pray for God's guidance as you implement each of the above. Maybe you won't leave the tennis club where the other women ridiculed your faith, but rather stay and continue to witness the gospel to them. But don't let your prayers dwell excessively on the problem. Share it with the Lord earnestly and briefly, then move on to praising him for his blessings in your life.

I wish I could prescribe a magic potion to take away your pain. But I can't. Perhaps the above thoughts can help a little to speed an important recovery. Be assured, God is on your side to make you happy, healthy, and holy.

—Calvin Edwards



**BEGIN
THIS
MONTH
HEARING
POWERFUL AND
PRACTICAL
BIBLICAL
MESSAGES.**

Hundreds of persons have found their minds challenged and their lives enriched listening to and *applying* truth they hear on each of GNU's Tape of the Month.

Odds and Ends

New Radio Program Format Finalized

In our May issue, we provided an update on our new daily radio program. We are happy now to report that we have a contract with Ed Simpson of KXOA in Sacramento, who in addition to being a professional announcer and creative consultant, is a sincere Christian who looks upon our project as a personal ministry he can do for the Lord.

The format of the program has also been finalized. Fundamentally needs-oriented, it will deal with the concrete answers Christianity has to the real events and problems of life. the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone will be upheld consistently. Broadcasting will begin on a test-run basis in a number of markets as soon as possible.

Those subscribers still interested in helping to underwrite this project and/or would like the program to be broadcast in their area should contact Calvin Edwards.

If you enjoy sound teaching that relates directly to where you live, you'll want to subscribe today to GNU's unique tape series. For a donation of \$48, you'll receive 12 tapes, one each month, containing 24 powerful expositions of biblical themes.

Send your donation today and receive a
Tape of the Month

Side A—The Answer to Handicaps

Desmond Ford

Side B— A Psalm for all Seasons

Noel Mason

**GNU'S
TAPE OF
THE MONTH.**

For those who take
their faith seriously.

AT WINGHAM N.S.W.

"Upon this rock" was the title of the seminar held at Wingham N.S.W. on June 9. Approximately 30 people gathered in the Uniting Church to celebrate as Ron Allen spoke on the necessity and privilege of participation in Christ. Later, after an ample lunch, Ron presented a study on the role of faith in the building of the Church. This was followed by a vigorous and profitable discussion period. All went away enriched and profited in Christ and in one another.

MURWILLUMBAH MEETINGS

The weekend of May 25 and 26 was a feasting time for many in the Tweed Valley region of N.S.W. In excess of 50 people attended a fellowship meal, on Friday evening, which was followed by a Bible study. The speaker was Pastor Ron Allen, who chose as his scripture Matthew 16 – Peter's famous confession. The day following Ron spoke again about care for the "weaker Brother". It was a practical discussion of faith's implications for Christians who differ from one another. Everyone felt blessed.

BUNYA MOUNTAINS

June 16 was the day set for a Gospel seminar in the Bunya Mountains Queensland. At commencement time the mountains were shrouded with fog and a chill damp threatened to cancel the proceedings. However a happy congregation of about 30 warmhearted people braved the elements and were rewarded for their perseverance.

Pastor Ron Allen was the speaker for the day and his theme was, "Through Misery to Mercy". Hearers were challenged to observe mercy in all their circumstances by comparing their troubles to those endured by Christ on their behalf. At day's end all present resolved to come again.

Gospel on Radio

The Christian message of hope, presented by Doctor Desmond Ford, may now be heard on the following radio stations:

2N SB FM Sydney – Sundays 8:45 a.m.

2BS Bathurst – Sundays 9:00 p.m.

2CHY FM Coffs Harbour – Sundays 9:30 a.m.

5PBA FM Adelaide – Sundays 9:00 a.m.

Donations

GNU gratefully acknowledges receipt of an anonymous donation of \$50.00.

STOP PRESS

Dr. FORD on A.B.C. RADIO

On Dr. Ford's last visit to Perth he was interviewed by A.B.C. Radio. This interview will be broadcast on Saturday, 21st July on the *Insight* programme. Check with your local A.B.C. Radio office for the time slot.

Letters

Timely Messages

Sirs:

Please find enclosed our donation to assist GNU in passing on the Good News. We appreciate the Tape of the Month and the timely messages sent to us in the publications each month. May God bless you as you carry out management of GNU in Australia.

Albert and Diana Pratt
Sydney N.S.W.

Friends

Sirs:

So many times I wish I could just pick up the phone and visit with you. I truly think of you as my friends. I pray for God's continued blessings and guidance for you all at GNU doing his special work. Enclosed is a small check. Wish I could send much more.

I love you all.

Jean Cummings
Bemidji, Minnesota

Supporting Work Financially and Prayerfully

Sirs:

Good news! We can begin to contribute regularly again! Thank you for continuing to send the Tape of the Month and the monthly magazine. Both are a great blessing.

As we have rejoiced in the gospel you have made so clear, we rejoice that we can again support your work financially as well as prayerfully.

God bless you all!

Gordon and Raylene Phillips
Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

Blessing Our Endeavors

Sirs:

Enclosed please find a \$25.00 check to use towards Dr. Ford's radio ministry. As we are on a limited income, we cannot pledge a certain amount every month but will try to send something from time to time. May God bless

Good News Unlimited

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you in your endeavors as you continue to bring us the good news of the gospel.

John and Doras Grimmig
Long Beach, California

Wrestling With Beliefs

Sirs:

Thank you so much for sending us your magazine so that we could examine your new "Confession of Faith."

It's so Scriptural that there's really nothing that can be refuted! I think it's quite good. In fact, I'm sending a copy of it to a friend who has been wrestling lately with thoughts of "What exactly DO I believe?" We have found lately that it's difficult to say that we believe EVERYTHING that our church teaches . . . but your statement of beliefs seems to be very compatible with my understanding of Scripture at this point, and I'm anxious to hear my friend's response when she reads it.

May God continue to guide you all as you share his good news with others.

Kay Drumwright
Sandpoint, Idaho

Enlightening Messages

Sirs:

Please send me your free cassette tape "Samson the Savior." I listen to you on WWDJ radio, New Jersey. I thank God and thank you for the wonderful work that you are doing in his name. Because of your messages I have been enlightened in his word. I pray to God that you will continue in his grace.

Mildred Pickett
Bronx, New York

Encouraging

Sirs:

Thank you for your letter which was included with the last Tape of the Month. It is encouraging to see Good News Unlimited growing in Australia. I pray that God will bless your ministry as part of His overall plan to spread the Gospel to all people.

Mark Brinsmead
Lavington N.S.W.

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