

# GOOD NEWS

UNLIMITED

Solus Christus — Solo Scriptura — Sola Fide — Sola Gratia

Registered by Australia Post-Publication No. WBG0048

**The Key to Every Door  
Worth Opening - Part 1**  
—Desmond Ford

**Compromise - Coming  
Ready or Not!**  
—Desmond Ford

**The Rabbi Gives  
an Examination**  
—Roy Gee

March 1987

**P**ietro was furious. He threw down his pack (and it did not help that the heavy bundle painfully hit the arch of his right foot), and raged at his wife Pica. "Why did you call the boy Giovanni? I go away for a few months, the baby is born, and you go ahead and name him what you think is best. But I can tell you I've been thinking about this while I was out there trying to make a living for us all."

"I wanted him called Francesco, 'Frenchman.' This trip to Champagne has shown me again French fabrics are superior to our Italian. The French do everything better than we do, and our trade with them is very profitable for us. Giovanni! Everyone is named Giovanni."

"I named him after me," said Pica, who's given name was Giovanna. "And John the Baptist."

"When I was still in bed, a man came to the door, asking for food. You know pilgrims can't be turned away at the time of a birth, so we gave him a chicken wing. But he was not satisfied. He insisted on seeing the baby. He came in and took the boy in his arms, and said, 'Today, two boys have been born here in Assisi. One will be among the worst of men, but the other will be among the best.'"

"So when I took baby to San Rufino Cathedral to be baptized, I determined he would be the best among men, just as Jesus said John the Baptist was. And John had baptized Jesus, and prepared the way for the Messiah, and the preaching of the gospel."

Pica's explanation did not satisfy Pietro. The boy had been baptized John, but he would not be called John. The boy could not be baptized all over again, but he was to be called only Francis.

A boy with two names. Unusual. But not so very unusual among Christians. Traditionally, people with pagan names have adopted a Christian name upon baptism. And each of us has two names anyway: Our given name (or nickname), and the Name of Jesus.

When we believe in Jesus, his merits are imputed to us. His perfect Life is counted by God in place of our own inadequate life; his desolate Death is substitute for the death sinners deserve to die; his Resurrection brings us to life, too; and his deserved Exaltation to heaven represents what we have inherited in Christ. Jesus stands in our place before God.

It is as though we have taken his very Name. When the name of Des or Roy or Stan or Marian or Janie or Terri or Jeff comes before God, God hears the Name, JESUS. That saintly Name is the only Name by which we **must** be saved (Acts 4:12).

\*\*\*\*\*

Be sure to read:

### **The Key to Every Door Worth Opening**

In this article about saving faith, Dr. Desmond Ford richly illustrates from his recent European tour.

### **The Rabbi Gives an Examination**

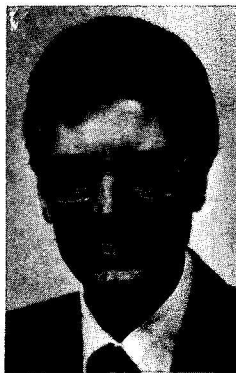
A Sholem Aleichem story reminded the editor that the Bible cannot be truly understood unless interpreted by the gospel.

### **Compromise—Coming, Ready or Not**

Dr. Ford says compromise for the Christian is unavoidable. But can we safely compromise principles as well as rules?

### **The Battle**

Gillian Ford describes the terrible battle between the Molks and the Shrewds. She also reveals to us the signs of judgment.



by Roy Gee

**Editor:**

**Roy Gee**

**Associate Editor:**

**Brad McIntyre**

**Good News Unlimited** is published each month by Good News Unlimited Inc., 11710 Education St Auburn CA 95603-2499 USA. The South Pacific edition is distributed by **Good News Christian Ministries Limited** (Incorporated in New South Wales and Queensland). Subscriptions are free upon request.

**Good News Christian Ministries Limited** is an interdenominational organization comprising a variety of Gospel ministries. This magazine is dedicated to proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ and His kingdom of grace. It also seeks to keep subscribers up to date on all aspects of other **Good News Christian Ministries**: pastoral ministry, preaching appointments, radio broadcasts, public seminars, congresses, audio and video cassettes, as well as printed publications. **Good News for Kids** is a monthly section of this magazine. **Good News Christian Ministries Limited** is a non-profit religious corporation supported solely by donations from those who believe in its ministries. Gifts are tax deductible in Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

**Canadian office:** P.O. Box 3068, St. Catharines, Ontario, M2R 3G5, Canada.

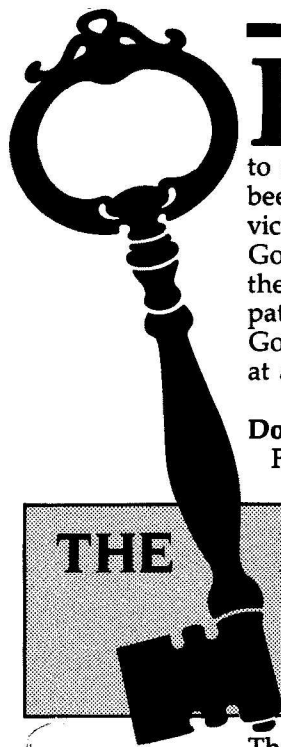
**Australian office:** P.O. Box 1603, Hornsby-Northgate, NSW 2077, Australia.

**South African office:** P.O. Box 11096, Universitas 9321, Republic of South Africa.

**New Zealand office:** P.O. Box 20154, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Copyright ©  
1987 **Good News Unlimited, Inc.**

GNU is audited annually by a certified public accounting firm in Sacramento, California. All regular donors may contact the GNU office and request the audited financial statement.



**F**OR MILLENNIA Christians have insisted that faith is the key, not only to knowledge, but to all good things. Why have they been so insistent? Because of the conviction that all good things come from God, and only intimate contact with the Divine can put us in the right path. The person who has no faith in God is open to error that can destroy at any step along the way of life.

#### **Double-sided Faith**

Faith in God is a double-sided coin.

so God stirs up our comfortable nests in order that we might learn to fly by faith in him. When life is monotonously the same and there are few surprises, there often seems little need of divine help. But when we are placed in a new situation entirely, where so many things seem completely unpredictable, the situation is drastically changed and a wise soul reaches out beyond itself for help. You will be able to think of many illustrations of this, including poverty, sickness, unemployment, or traveling in a strange land.

## **THE KEY TO EVERY DOOR WORTH OPENING**

*Editor's note: In our February 1987 issue, page 7, we published a letter from Dr. Ford regarding his European trip. Readers will immediately recognize allusions in this following article to Dr. Ford's itinerary. We believe the Lord greatly blessed the trip, and that it was a significant event for future GNU usefulness. Recent letters tell us of plans already under way for GNU speakers to be featured at a European Gospel Congress within the next two years.*

**by Desmond Ford**

The other side of the coin is self-distrust. Moderns do not think that this is much of a virtue. They prefer self-confidence. If they mean confidence in what a creature can do when in right relationship with the Creator, certainly they would be correct. But if they mean that the creature can find his own way successfully through the labyrinth of life, they are certainly mistaken. "The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer 10:23).

We have often heard it said that people wrapped up in themselves make very small parcels. A person who is self-confident rather than God-confident is a very small parcel indeed. What is one self among 5,000 million selves in this back eddy of one tiny planetary system which is but a speck in a galaxy that is dwarfed by innumerable neighbors?

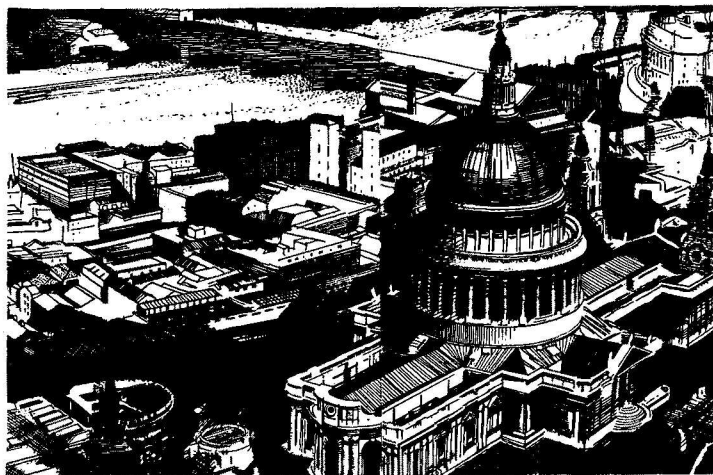
#### **Change Teaches Faith**

Our Heavenly Father in his great love uses all sorts of methods to teach us trust in him, and distrust in ourselves. Keep in mind they always go together, and are the fruit of the moving of the Divine Spirit. One way that God endeavors to teach us to distrust ourselves and to trust in him is the medium of change.

We read in Deuteronomy 32:11 that as the eagle stirs up her nest and ejects her young, all the while capably and protectively hovering over them,

#### **Travels with Des**

I am one of those persons who frequently do not observe their surroundings very closely. Often I am thinking about something I have read, or which I intend to write. Consequently, I am capable of being lost even in a telephone box. Recently, when traveling in Germany, England, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, I was reminded afresh of some of the truths



God intends to teach us.

Because I believe that being constantly still is the nearest thing to being dead, I cannot abide being closed up in a hotel room or even the guest room of my host and hostess. Consequently, I leave the shelter and the



safety and venture forth. This procedure for someone as absentminded as myself can be almost fatal. For example, the other Sunday in London, when I had determined to lay books aside and get some walking in (and it didn't matter very much where), I started off at Petticoat Lane Market and finished at All Souls' Church. (All Souls' is John Stott's famous center, which has influenced the whole Christian world.)

### Lost in London

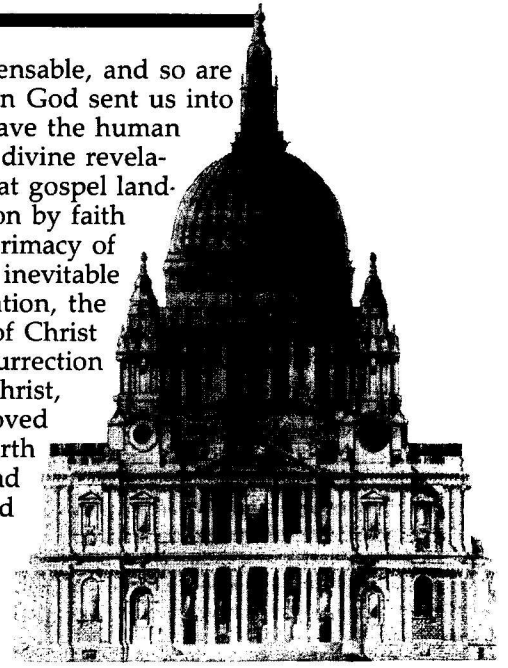
In the interim I had walked for over seven hours. You should not be impressed by this, because for about three hours I walked in a circle! I remember having just looked again at the home of John Wesley, and the cemetery opposite which houses the remains of such famous people as John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, John Gill, etc. I knew that very close was a London Methodist Mission building of great size. I thought I should now return to that and see if there was any interesting program on for the day. There was not, so I decided to head for a London reference library, just to see if I might be tempted to open a book again for that day. After half an hour's walking, it seemed strange to me that I was not seeing any familiar streets such as the Strand, Charing Cross Road, Regent Street, Oxford Street, etc. Even an ignorant wanderer like myself in London is constantly stumbling over well-known thoroughfares. But now there were none. I could have been in a distant suburb of Sydney, or New York, or Los Angeles. I wasn't worried. After all I was out for a walk and it didn't much matter where I was. I knew that in due course I would strike an Underground station and from there I could get to any place I wished in the great metropolis. I usually didn't wish, as it seemed to surrender all the advantages of walking, and pay for the surrender as well.

Still, I was puzzled—no familiar landmarks at all hour after hour. Then suddenly I saw one. I was back at the mission building that I had left several hours ago. I had been walking in a gigantic circle!

### Maps

For ignorant people like myself,

maps are indispensable, and so are landmarks. When God sent us into this world, he gave the human race the map of divine revelation and the great gospel landmarks of salvation by faith alone, and the primacy of justification, the inevitable fruit of sanctification, the ultimate return of Christ in glory, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, the reunion of loved ones, and the earth made new. Grand landmarks indeed for the soul which must otherwise wander fruitlessly in circles.



*St. Paul's Cathedral*

### Travel's Unexpected Dangers

There are all sorts of traps for young travelers. For example, there were folk from another country at the guest house where I was staying in London, and I carefully explained to them that neither Oxford Circus nor Piccadilly Circus had any elephants. The circus in each case was just an urban circle, without tents or animals, except *Homo sapiens*.

So many things can go wrong for the hapless traveler. While walking in a thoroughly unfamiliar area of London, I decided I might have to consult my map. But alas I had dropped it. Suddenly a young, cheerful woman rushed up to me and said, "Excuse me, but you dropped this," and handed me my map. Things rarely work out that well.

A minister at the London guest home told us all of his experience in Spain. While driving friends in a hired car, on roads thickly lined with people, a little child suddenly ran out in front of him. It was too late to stop. He hit her. He told us that at that moment it seemed to him a great door, the door of his life hitherto, swung shut, and another door opened to a life where he would be branded as a killer. He was sure the child was dead. Stopping the car he raced to the prone body and carried her to the hospital. In a matter of minutes the little tot, bruised, was walking out of

*One way that God endeavors to teach us to distrust ourselves and to trust in him is the medium of change.*



***The most significant things that happen to us are not the ones planned or premeditated. They are the ones that come out of the blue like an angel, or a demon; like the glory of a rainbow, or a shaft of lightning.***

the hospital on her own account. But things could have been so different.

Or imagine you had just decided to take your family on a little camping holiday, perhaps to a place like Ayers Rock, Australia. And just imagine that during the night the youngest member of your family, a baby of only a few months, was stolen—by a wild animal such as a dingo. And now imagine that you were charged with the murder of your own child. Innocent lives can be blasted by what seems a mere freak of chance.

#### **Life's Unexpected Dangers**

So what? These are not just stories of travelers and campers. They depict everybody's life. The most significant things that happen to us are not the ones planned or premeditated. They are the ones that come out of the blue like an angel, or a demon; like the glory of a rainbow, or a shaft of lightning. Who is sufficient for these things? No one. Nobody has the strength, nor the wisdom, to successfully cope with all the emergencies of life. We need God and we need him every moment—and the wise man, the wise woman, the wise boy and the wise girl, is the one who acknowledges that fact continually. This is faith.

#### **Saving Faith**

Saving faith, of course, comprehends more than that—it

lays hold of the merits of the Divine-human sacrifice for the sins of the world, and applies the merits of that sacrifice to one's own soul. It is the sense of dependence which characterized the lepers Christ healed, the beggars he enriched, the despairing he encouraged, and the dying to whom he gave life, which is the beginning and the root of saving faith.

Scripture promises that God will show us the path of life. Unless he does, we will inevitably wander in hopeless circles among the tombs of the dead, soon to lie down beside them in their darkness. We need the light of the world (Jn 8:12; 1:9) to shine upon us every moment. The way of man that walketh is not in himself, and he does not perceive the pitfalls all about him.

When we know we are weak, we are strong. God has promised "my grace is sufficient for you, my strength is made perfect in weakness." He fills the hungry with good things but turns the rich away. He pulls princes down from their thrones and exalts beggars from their dung hills. "In thy light shall we see light." Chapters 3 and 8 of Proverbs speak very highly of wisdom, describing it as the Tree of Life, and promising that all who lay hold of wisdom shall be happy. The wisdom so honored is religious faith. □

*to be continued*



## **GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP**

*You are welcome to join with Christians at any of these Fellowships*

#### **BAYSWATER CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

Meets each Saturday morning 9.45am at Bayswater Uniting Church, Murray Street, Bayswater, W.A.

#### **BONNELLS BAY GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP**

Meets first Friday of each month 7.30pm in Bonnells Bay Hall, Station Street, Bonnells Bay, N.S.W.

#### **NORMANHURST GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP**

Meets each Saturday 3pm at Normanhurst Uniting Church, Cnr. Pennant Hills Road and Hinemoa Avenue, Normanhurst N.S.W.

#### **BRISBANE GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP**

Meets the 2nd Saturday of each month 3pm at Rochedale State High School, Priestdale Road, Rochedale, QLD.

#### **PALM BEACH GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP**

Meets every Saturday (except 2nd Saturday of the month) at 3pm at Palm Beach Share-n-Care Centre, 10th Avenue, Palm Beach, QLD.

#### **HOBART GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP**

Meets on last Saturday of month. Phone (002) 31 0945 for details.

**T**HE DIE WAS cast. He would be a Christian. All unlawful commerce with the world was over. He would not compromise. Now he knew what was right, and that only would he do.

But it was not to be that simple in execution.

Chris was resolved to have that quiet fifteen minutes at the very beginning of the day (he hoped that later it would be thirty). Time for the Word, time for prayer. Nothing would budge him from the new habit. But what's that shriek from the bathroom? The toddler of the family has slipped on the wet bathroom floor and hit his head on the side of the shower recess. Quiet time is quiet no longer. Instead of passivity there must be activity, instead of the abstract, the practical. Rather than wrestling with metaphysical subtleties, Chris must wrestle with a yelling, squirming baby!

Time to eat. About this, too, Chris has had new resolutions. No more coffee and doughnuts, no more bacon and eggs. What he needs is a substantial breakfast of whole grains and fruits, perhaps a few nuts, too. But what is it Tania is saying? "I'm sorry, dear. I'm not used to cooking cereal. It burned. If you don't mind, use the packaged stuff again."

Of course he does. He must, or go hungry.

On to the hassle of the freeway. He

would never  
flagrantly break  
the speed limit  
like everybody  
else. He  
would go  
no faster  
than  
the few  
miles  
over  
usually  
granted  
as

reasonable even by enforcers of the law. He would stay in the right lane.

What a fool one feels as all the other vehicles whiz by, horns blaring. He can feel the daggers from the eyes of the driver stuck behind him.

Wasn't it agreed that it was wiser to go with the flow? Why be righteous overmuch? Certainly it would be safer. With a sigh, he accelerates moderately.

There's old Blinks entering the office door. Chris had made some resolutions about Blinks, too. Chris would not be part of the general hazing of a fellowman thought to be somewhat sadly retarded. Why should a Christian engage in something thoughtless and cruel? Yet, as he followed hard on Blink's heels he found words of gentle mockery on his tongue just from years of habit. Chris' casual greeting sounded hollow to his own ears.

Now to the grind. But with a difference: meticulous honesty must guide him in all his office practices. No more wasting the boss' time with long political arguments with Fred. No more taking home office pens for personal use, etc. Here comes Fred. Who could fail to see that already on Chris' lips was a political teaser? What is Chris to do? A Christian doesn't cut people—neither act righteous overmuch. He will never win Fred if he is stiff, starched, and negative.

"Hi, Fred! No, I really don't know the solution, and right now I can't get involved in such a heavy issue. What's your answer?" Fred's answer, Chris knew, would take 10 minutes.

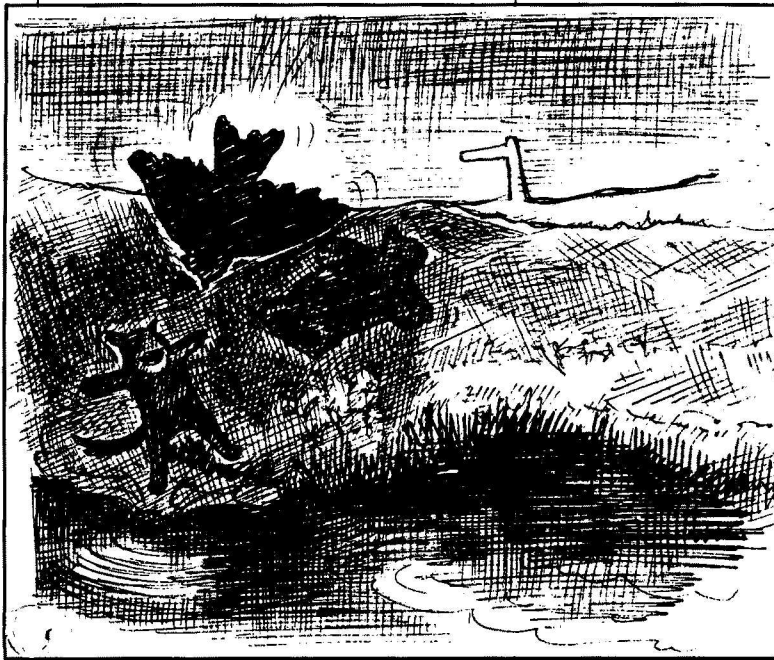
Down the hall he glimpsed Vern the office boy. Vern was not the brightest, belonging to the same ilk as Blinks. Everybody used him, and abused him. "But not Christians," thought Chris. Vern must be treated as a normal human being. Indeed, as the subject of Christ's great love, as one infinitely valuable. But Chris didn't have time

# Compromise

COMING,  
READY  
or  
NOT!

by Desmond Ford





## The Sack Race

### Chapter Seven

*Continued*

Because of his belief that God is the creator of all living things, Marley is first scorned and then persecuted by his cousin Sam. Sam becomes more and more angry as Marley wins all his races. Now we come to the sack race. Sam gives a signal and Freddy Ferret and Willy Wolverine move into position to lure Marley off the track to push him in the stream, made very dangerous by a storm in the mountains the previous night.

**T**HE RACE started off with great excitement. Marley was a little tired, but had the boundless energy of the young and was ready for more. He got inside his little red and blue striped sack, for the first part of the race was a sack race. "Ready, steady, GO!!!" and they were off. Marley bounced away, paws up, paws down, paws up, paws down. Bounce, bounce, he went, faster and faster. Up down, up down, into the distance way ahead of the others.



by Gillian Ford

Round the corner he went, bounce, bounce. He followed the signs, and thought at one stage that he saw Freddy Ferret, but he couldn't be sure. He went the wrong way as planned, and behind him Freddy smirked and changed the sign back again. Bounce, bounce, went Marley. Up and down, up and down, towards the deadly waters. It was misty and damp. He couldn't see far. He thought he heard a growl, but surely, he thought, it was a mistake. He was heading full tilt for the stream, when suddenly as one shadow moved out in front of him, another shadow moved above.

A great wing hit him full force and over he went. It also hit the shadow in front of him. There was a faint cry, a splash and a silence. He heard the schwoof, schwoof, schwoof of great wings flying up to the sky. Marley was overcome by a great terror, unable to breathe. Wriggling out of the sack, he ran away from the stream, running until his lungs nearly burst. He crossed the racetrack almost running into a rat in a sack, who got such a fright that he fell right over. But Marley ran on with blood like ice in his veins. That race he didn't win. He ran until he found his dad and collapsed into his arms, shivering with fright, unable to speak. His mother came over and put a blanket around him

land spoke to him comfortingly until he was haltingly able to speak.

"Mom and Dad," he whispered. "I was attacked by a great bird and knocked over. It was awful. I thought I was going to die in the mist. I could hear the stream roaring. Oh, it was terrible." Marley just shook and shook.

"But son," said his father, "you weren't supposed to be by the stream, and we had promises from the owls that they would not touch us. This is very strange."

No one wanted to spoil the picnic so they didn't mention what had happened. They just kept Marley quiet the rest of the time—he didn't want to eat when the food was put out, and just stayed with his father. Sam could see that Marley was upset and that made him happy. He saw the blanket wrapped around him and he knew he hadn't won the race. He presumed all had gone as planned, that Marley had got his soaking. He could see Freddy close by, but where was Willy Wolverine? Willy hadn't come back.

*Marley was still in shock, and all he could do was babble about a big wing that brushed him and knocked him over.*

Marley's family went home earlier than usual and put him to bed. He seemed to be suffering from shock and Mrs. Mole was quite worried about him. They let him stay in bed all day and into the evening, but that night the headmaster and the local sheriff came round. They brought the shocking news that Willy Wolverine was missing, possibly drowned in the stream. What was worse, two witnesses had come forward saying that Marley had been seen by the stream pushing Willy in.

Of course, the two witnesses were Sam and Freddy. When asked why they hadn't reported it sooner, they said they had gone looking for Willy for hours and couldn't find him. Marley was still in shock, and all he could do was babble about a big wing that brushed him



and knocked him over. He had heard a splash but he didn't know Willy was there. He didn't know how he had gotten to the stream—he had just followed the directions.

Mr. Mole told the headmaster and the sheriff that the doctor had been there while Marley was asleep that day and had said he was suffering from shock and must sleep through the next night. He asked them to wait to question him further until he could have more sleep. When they left, he, Mrs. Mole, and Mary, had worship and prayed that God would help them and that truth would be honored.

The next day a message came to the house that Marley was suspended from school until the inquiry into Willy's death was held in 2-3 days. Marley felt very glum.

"But, Dad," he said, "why is everything going wrong when I try to do everything right? It seems so unfair and meaningless." At worship his father repeated Marley's question to the family.

"Remember Maon and the flood?" he said. "Maon's intentions were only good. He wanted to find the foundation stone of the temple to build a house for God. But look what happened. The stone was moved. There was a great flood, and things looked so grim. But then remember what happened later. That same terrible flood saved Maon's people from their enemies. It was a judgment on the Shrewds, but it saved the Molks."

"You see, Marley, there are both good and bad people on this earth. All are sinful, but some admit it and try to let God save them. The wicked often hate anyone who loves God and they often try to hurt them. That's a rule in life. Our Lord said, 'Those who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.'"

"But doesn't God stop the wicked

hurting the good?" questioned Mary.

"Not always straightaway. There are some countries where Christians are persecuted year after year. But God comforts them and eventually he acts. Often he uses the same event (and it might be quite frightening, even for the innocent ones) to save the people who love him and punish those who don't. The flooding waters were a good example. In the Bible, the flood in Noah's day saved the good and destroyed the evil."

"And," said Mary, "at the Red Sea, at the time of the Exodus, the waters

opened up for the Israelites but drowned wicked Pharaoh. It saved one group, but destroyed the other."

"That's right," said Mr. Mole.

"You'll remember also that there was a cloud just before the crossing of the Red Sea that was light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptians."

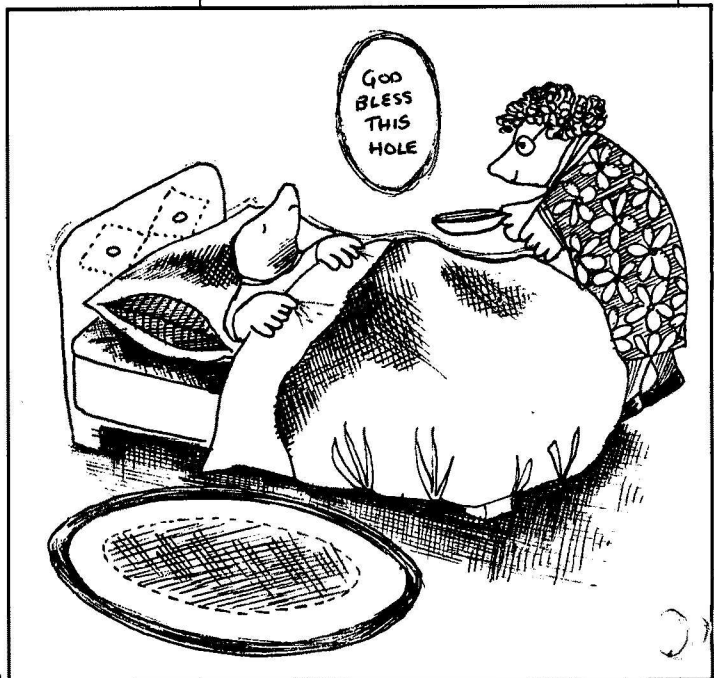
"Like light and darkness in the Creation Story," said Mary.

"Yes," said her dad. "You're getting the idea. The Bible takes elements of the Creation Story, like light and darkness and flooding waters, and uses them at the same time as symbols of either saving or punishing, or both."

Mrs. Mole said thoughtfully, "I think I can see it. The symbols of the Creation Story are used to illustrate saving, and the symbols of creation undone or destruction are used for judgment. And often the two happen together."

"Oh, Daddy," said Marley,

"Please don't tease me. I feel so awful."



"I'm deadly serious, Marley. It may be a fluke, but in the Bible, birds of prey are used as symbols of judgment. You said you saw a shadow on the ground, and one above. The one was Willy, I suspect. And the other was probably some bird. The bird frightened you to death, but I believe it somehow meant you good. Willy was there for no good purpose. Somehow you went the wrong way. Willy wanted you out of the race for some reason, most likely concocted by Sam. The bird saw what was happening and was afraid that you would be pushed in the stream. I believe he saved your life. Marley, don't be afraid. We'll get to the bottom of this."

"That makes me feel so much better, Dad. I have been so afraid. I thought that bird wanted to eat me. But how awful that Willy may have drowned."

## THE BATTLE

### Chapter 8

### The Fourth Reading

**Y**OU WOULD think the Molks would have stayed in the city and defended its walls, but in doing so they would have easily been besieged. They ate such great quantities of worms that they would have soon run out of food. Their

foodstores were near the river, not too far from the border, and so their greatest need for defense was in that area. Some soldiers were left in the city in case the Shrewds attacked it, but the majority were to be marched to the food stores

on the main highway to meet the enemy there.

Maon spent a lot of time in prayer and meditation in preparation for the



stress of the hours ahead. But the time soon came when they had to leave. Mishma interrupted his reverie and came in regretfully.

"Sire, we must go to the border at once, without delay. You must dress immediately. I have laid your clothes out with your royal weaponry." He helped Maon to dress hurriedly, discussing plans all the time with him that he and the other generals had made up. Maon was very satisfied.

"You have done exceedingly well, Mishma."

Mishma was ashamed of the praise when his running away and deserting the king was still fresh in his memory. However, the king never rebuked him and did not intend to, for Mishma had an excellent reputation and was extremely efficient and loyal. This was the only apparent and serious mistake he had ever made, and Maon knew that no one who had been present at the flood would blame him.

Maon looked spectacular in a blue and red uniform, with silver mail armor over his chest and back and a helmet to match. Mishma handed him his shield, painted with a white background, a strong blue cross superimposed over it, three red rampant moles in one corner and a red heart in the opposite one. Behind him would ride Mishma carrying a cloth banner with the same motif on it and the words, "God will honor,"



written in ancient Molk underneath.

Outside were saddled their white war-hampsters (the Shrewds rode on rats), but most of the troops were infantry and had already begun the walk to the border. The Molks did not have a lot of cavalry—just a few hampsters for the generals and the king. The troops were fit and in condition, having done a great deal of exercise and training, but the Molks had never made a big thing of war. They were technically outmoded, while the Shrewds were extremely well-trained in techniques of killing and torture, and had a lot of wicked-looking weapons. The Molks depended a great deal on divine help, while the Shrewds depended on themselves. Maon knew that God would help them, but it was as difficult to wait for that help then as it is now. He didn't show he was scared.

It did not take long for the cavalry to catch up with the infantry. They overtook them and went on in front. Imagine that picture, for starting out is the only pretty part of war. See the straight disciplined lines, the clean sparkling colors of the uniforms, the bright shine of the armor and the pure glint of unstained swords in the sunlight. Hear the cheerful, encouraging music of the army band, and see the hopeful gleam it sheds across their faces. The possibility of victory was thrilling, but the shadow of death always hovers close in war, takes the shine off victory, and scars minds and bodies forever.

That was future, yet coming closer with each purposeful step of the hampsters. The troops passed many refugees, Molks from stations near the border, who were fleeing inland for safety. Soon they arrived at the river and began to set up camp. The floods had abated and the banks were dry, thanks to the great wind. Over on the other side of the river, but back some miles, were the advancing armies of the Shrewds. As the sun set behind them in the west, its glowing embers caught the glint of their weapons, and their brass-colored armor irradiated

the horizon with tiny brushes of shiny bright gold on the low skyline. It was a fearful sight, for there seemed to be 10,000 enemies over there, as the sinking sun multiplied the look of them. The annals later recorded that there were only 4,000 of them, but they still outnumbered the Molks.

That night there was silence in the Molk camp, but a great din from the Shrewds. They had special instruments for war (one can hardly call them musical), which played strange descants in minor scales, with high-pitched wails like a Scottish bagpipe, not at all pleasant to the ear. It put the fear of the dead into the Molks, but Maon said not to be afraid.

---

*Over in the east tens of thousands of lights appeared headed in the direction of the Shrewds, hovering just above the earth.*

---

It was just a device to break down their courage. He got the band to strike up some songs of courage and faith. One by one, the Molks began to sing. It was such a splendid sound that even the discords of the Shrewds' wails somehow faded, and eventually stopped.

The Molks thought it was because of their singing, which only caused them to sing louder, but later, captives from the Shrewd forces said that strange things had happened in the sky that night over the border mountains. The Molks did not see it, because an unusual black cloud seemed to hover over the Shrewd camp. To the Molks the sky above their heads seemed unusually clear and the moon and stars exceptionally bright. But the Shrewd captives later insisted that the night was fearfully dark, the moon appeared as red as blood and many stars seemed to fall. If the Molks had seen it, they would have been afraid (as the Shrewds were), for to the ancients these were signs of judgment and the Shrewds knew from then on that they would fail. Yet, with the thirst for blood that the wicked

have, they longed to kill, and so they did not retreat.

As soon as the light came, both camps rested for the day, in preparation for the battle which must come that night. Each had sentries mounted to keep watch in case the other decided to fight by day. But there were no incidents. Both knew that it would hinder their chance of victory to fight by day. Even still the Shrewds hoped to win, for counting on their numbers and their godless methods, they reckoned they should have.

That night, as soon as the light began to dim, both camps were animated by feverish action. Weapons were checked, and each side moved into formation around their own ark which housed tokens of their gods. Maon and his forces crossed the river over onto the plain where the fighting would take place. By then, full darkness had come.

Scouts were sent underground to listen for enemy approaches under the earth. It had been written long ago in the Articles of War for Nocturnal Animals that all war tactics must be above ground level to ensure fair play. However, over the last half-dozen battles between the Shrewds and Molks, the Shrewds had repeatedly ignored the Articles, almost making a mockery of them.

Suddenly the Shrewds advanced and now the war had really begun. As they came close, a muted cry of "Weasels and ferrets," passed through the Molk ranks. When it got to Maon, he sighed. The Shrewds had hired help from the worst kinds of animals—the weasels and ferrets with their hard, cruel eyes and vicious teeth, who killed for killing's sake and gave no honor even to their own kind.

It was when the Molks could smell the dust stirred up by enemy feet, could see in clear outline the cruel faces and sharp weapons, the crossbows and the spears, and could sense death in the air, that sudden deliverance came. Over in the east tens of thousands of lights appeared headed in the direction of the Shrewds, hovering just above the earth. It looked like a huge army advancing on them.

(They did not know it was only fire-flies!)

But the plan worked! The enemy saw the "army of lights" and turned in fear and silence. As they raced for the horizon, a distant low-droning grew louder and louder. Very soon a horde of hornets came zeroing in on the Shrewd forces. Hornets are not night insects, but this was a special nocturnal patrol. Their

Shrewds, was left behind. Some in their panic fell on sharp weapons and were injured severely or killed. Others were trampled in the rush, including the king. His body was awful to look at as his head had been crushed. They were the only casualties. The Molks did not have to harm even one of them. It was the only sort of war they favored.

After the hornets came the hail. The big black cloud which had hovered over the Shrewds by night suddenly dropped its contents—really big hailstones like tennis balls, big enough to give any weasel a headache.

Can you imagine the Molks as the fear and tension slid out of their bodies? Have you ever been really, really afraid and suddenly found out you didn't have to be? Can you see them throw their

helmets in the air, and hug each other, like football players when they score the winning point?

Can you hear the songs of praise and victory that drummed through the air in the wake of the fleeing Shrewds? What a grand night it was as they took home the captured Shrewd ark. In their joy and elation they threw Maon and Mishma up in the air catching them as they came down.

I tell you, they didn't hear from the Shrewds till sometime later. But hear from them

they did, because fools never learn. □



stings were very painful, and it didn't take many of them to get the enemy hopping and racing in retreat. The Shrewds dropped their weapons, causing the ones running pell-mell behind to trip over discarded helmets and shields. The ark, sacred to the

*Next time, Mr. Mole and Marley set off for the local museum, where they will inspect ancient paintings and relics collected from historic Molk battlegrounds and ruins.*



to say anything to Vern just now. It was still the boss' time.

Hours later Chris was relieved to see the hands of the clock giving him the signal to leave. He mustn't forget that supermarket call to buy items needed at home. The wifely instructions had been rather general: "Get some cereal for breakfast, and some snacks for the kids."

Chris knew that the body is the temple of God. He knew that the cardboard cartons of some breakfast cereals are more nourishing than the contents. How would the children take to whole grain rice, the brown stuff? Chris could hear their derision. Besides, true Christianity isn't a killjoy religion. Food should be palatable. But overly refined foods ultimately lead to disease. Still, the kids wouldn't know that, and wouldn't accept it.

"If only someone would make these decisions for me. O Lord, come! Wasn't that an early Christian motto? Not a bad one. . . ."

In your life and mine apparently trivial conflicts with conscience abound. There are also more serious tussles with far-reaching consequences. If I compromise my resolution as to what I will read, what I will watch on TV—can there be any stopping once embarked on that slippery path? Above all, what about my choices regarding "free" time, and what to be made of it, and those vital choices about my use of tongue and talent, passions and privileges?

Do not the divergences of train lines begin with the very, very slight veering to one side or the other from the original set of tracks? It has been said about bad habits: "Resist beginnings." While my going with the stream of traffic on the freeway may be difficult to fault, suppose I do the same with words, with stories among the other workers at the office? Suppose I do it with money, my health habits, with honesty, truthfulness, purity, fidelity, my children (remembering that the average father spends no more personal time with each of his children than it takes to shine his shoes)?

Life does not consist simply of

black and white. Gray abounds much more. Issues are rarely between simple right and wrong. More often they are between what is bad, and which is less bad.

Wise is that person who learns that "when two duties conflict, one ceases to be a duty." Hans Selye's advice was both idealistic and pragmatic when he said: "Strive for the highest possible aim, but never put up resistance in vain." The martyrs would have disagreed with the last half, and modern martyrs will agree with their prototypes, knowing that doing right for right's sake is never entirely in vain, whatever the appearance. Still, Selye's counsel is worth heeding.

As is almost always the case, error lies close to truth. In a world twisted and perverted by sin, choosing is not a simple matter for the conscientious. Because values constantly come into conflict in an unending series of life situations, the Christian is never relieved from the "strain" of faith: the necessity of constantly throwing oneself afresh upon the guiding Spirit of God. Amid life's bewildering circumstances faith ever looks beyond self to God; the Source of wisdom and strength, for each moment's new decision.

Christians will find mere rules quite inadequate. Rules must change with situations, though never principles. Principles never change. The strategies of war may dictate to a Christian politician necessary divergence from some rules, but woe to the politician who forsakes principles. So in the wider, more mundane, hemisphere of the rest of life. Only the prayerful, studious Christian will move wisely most of the time, even in the wider arena of compromise.

Yes, compromise is often inevitable. Do you question that? What would you do if you saw your family swept from the ship's deck by an unexpected giant wave, and knew that as a nonswimmer to jump overboard would be to suicide? And even if you did jump, which member of the family would you rescue first? The others you did not choose would surely be lost. If like

*Life does not consist simply of black and white. Gray abounds much more.*

*Chris knew that the body is the temple of God. He knew that the cardboard cartons of some breakfast cereals are more nourishing than the contents.*



DESMOND FORD

Mark Twain and Sir Walter Scott you found yourself threatened with bankruptcy, a fate only to be avoided by suicidal toil, which would you choose?

It is clear to all of us that unless we have priorities, decisions are impossible. The starving Jew who chased a pig in the desert in order to live and not die, was surely pleasing to his Maker. Continuing to live on, though ritually unclean, is surely better than dying ceremonially undefiled!

Does the Christian view the practice of compromise with serene, untroubled regard? Never! Can a Christian avoid compromise altogether? Never! Must a Christian compromise with his resolve to do his best whatever the situation? The answer is the same. As change and constancy both permeate our environment, so adaptation, and yet unyielding loyalty to principle, characterize every Christian's life-style.

***Rules must  
change with  
situations,  
though never  
principles.  
Principles  
never change.***

Ours is a very complex world, and the anguished cry of Paul in Romans 7:14-25 is uttered by all believers on their way to glory, and continually so. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

We wish the necessity for adaptation, and apparent compromise of rules, did not exist. But it does. Instead of despairing over such necessity, let us see in it a challenge to a closer walk with God. Knowing that the gospel has reconciled us to God, and that the name of Jesus our Representative gives profound influence to our prayers, let us boldly pray for wisdom to see, and power to do, the right—whether functioning amid zephyrs or tornados, whether in light or in darkness. One day soon all the grays and all the blacks will alike be gone—morally as well as physically—and we will walk together in rainbow hours of everlasting day. □

# UNDERSTANDING THE WORD

*A new set of Cassette Tapes  
especially prepared by Dr Ford to help you  
discover the Gospel of Gods Grace in the Bible.*

- TAPE 1 — FINDING CHRIST IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES**  
**TAPE 2 — THE GOSPEL IN THE STORY OF JOSEPH**  
**TAPE 3 — SALVATION OF A LOST WORLD**

*Order your set now from:*

**GOOD NEWS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES LTD.**  
**P.O. BOX 1603, HORNSBY NORTHGATE, NSW, 2077**

**PRICE: \$15.00 POST-PAID**



# THE RABBI GIVES AN EXAMINATION

by Roy Gee

"RABBI JAKOBI," said the czarist captain with cultured accent. "I have come to ask you a favor."

The rabbi shifted nervously in his armchair. He was secure enough in this safe house, he thought, but why had this army officer arranged this secret meeting? The Czar's pogroms had made all Russian Jews suspicious of authority, and now the rabbi feared for the future of his isolated village.

"Yes, captain," answered Jakobi, still dreading a trap. "And what might that favor be?"

"I am an educated man, and in my wide reading I have come across the wisdom of the Talmud. [The authoritative body of Jewish tradition and learning.—Ed.] I find it exciting and unique. I wish for you to teach me talmudic thinking."

Rabbi Jakobi was pleasantly surprised. "My dear captain, you flatter me, and my people! But you ask too much. Our boys begin very young with their studies in talmudic thinking, and it takes them years before they can sit their examination."

"But I don't have years," exclaimed the captain. "It was difficult enough for me to arrange this meeting—how could I keep returning secretly without detection? You said your boys learn talmudic thinking very young. Surely an educated man such as

myself could learn more quickly than boys?"

"Of course you could learn more quickly than boys," assured the rabbi. "But still, learning this very special kind of thinking takes much time and study."

"You mentioned an examination," pressed the officer. "Why not test me now? In my reading I may already have picked up some talmudic thinking."

"But you're not prepared!" protested the rabbi. "True, there are only three questions, but they require many years of studious preparation."

The captain was a persistent man, and that persistence, combined with his military authority and power of life-and-death, quickly persuaded the rabbi to ask the three questions.

"The first question is this: Two men fell down a chimney. One emerged clean, the other dirty. Which one washed?"

"That's the question?" roared the officer. "Surely you mock me. It sounds like a joke! The answer's obvious—the dirty man washed himself."

"I'm afraid not, said the rabbi. "The dirty man looked at the clean man, saw he was clean, assumed he himself must be clean, and therefore saw no need to wash. But the clean man looked at the dirty man, assumed he too must be

**Two men  
fell down a  
chimney.  
One emerged  
clean, the  
other dirty.  
Which one  
washed?**



sooty—and washed."

"Well, talmudic thinking really is different," mused the captain.

"Press on with the second question."

"If you insist," said the rabbi.

"Question two: Two men fell down a chimney. One emerged clean, the other dirty. Which one washed?"

"That's the same as the first question," shouted the captain.

"Not so," quietly answered the rabbi. "The context of the second question differs from the context of the first. Context is very important in talmudic thinking."

"It must be," said the captain.

"Alright, but the answer is the same. The clean man washed."

"I'm afraid not. The clean man looked at his hands, saw they were clean, and saw no reason to wash. The dirty man looked at his hands and saw they were sooty, so immediately washed."

"I'm not doing so well," thought the officer. "Talmudic thinking is very tricky."

"Let's finish the examination," he said aloud.

"As you desire," nodded the rabbi. "Question number three: Two men fell down a chimney. One

emerged clean, the other dirty. Which one washed?"

"I give up," cried the captain. "The clean man, the dirty man—I don't know!"

"It is impossible for two men to fall down a chimney, and for one to emerge clean, while the other emerges dirty,"

reproached the rabbi. "If you cannot understand that, you will never understand talmudic thinking!"<sup>1</sup>

### Gospel Thinking

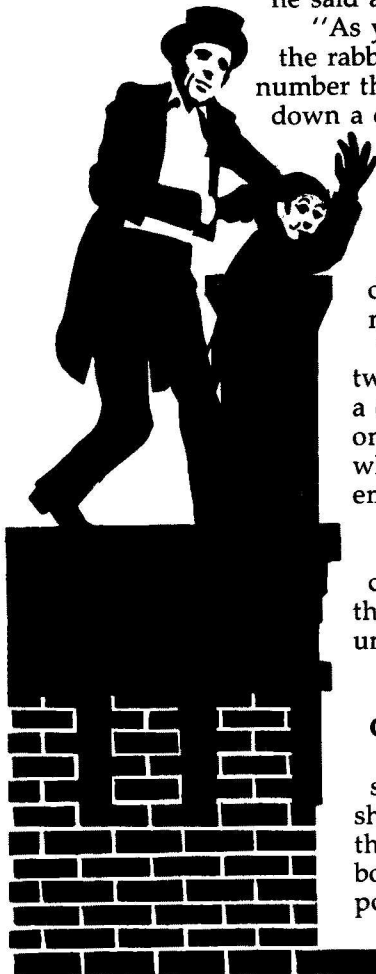
Unless we understand the gospel, we shall never understand the Bible. The sixty-six books of history, poetry, wisdom,

prophecy and biography will forever be for us an intimidating confusion, unless we first grasp gospel thinking.

The whole point of the Bible is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. God became human, lived, died, rose and ascended on our behalf, and reconciled us to himself. We are forgiven every sin, welcomed into the kingdom of God, given eternal life—all because of Jesus. To understand this is to have the key to the Bible. Without it the Bible will remain an impenetrable mystery, a closed book. With it, the Bible becomes to us God's Word. □

1. Adapted from a story by Sholem Aleichem.

*We are forgiven every sin, welcomed into the kingdom of God, given eternal life—all because of Jesus.*



## THE INSIDE STORY

by Gillian Ford

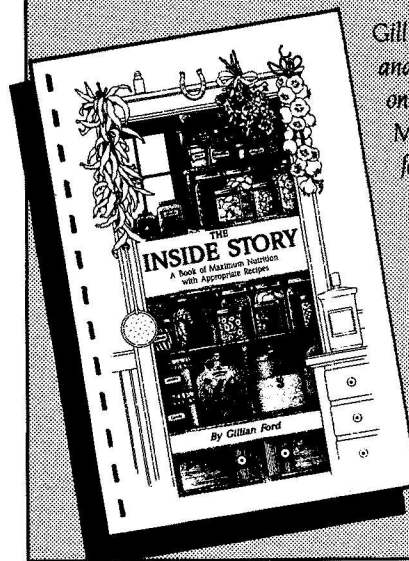
A book of Maximum Nutrition with Appropriate Recipes

115 pages, plus Index

Spiral-bound, varnished cover

Gillian Ford works full-time as typesetter, graphic artist, and author. As a PMS counselor she has helped many women with hormonal problems. She is best known as writer of "Good News For Kids." Gillian is also the wife of the founder and president of **Good News Unlimited**, Dr. Desmond Ford.

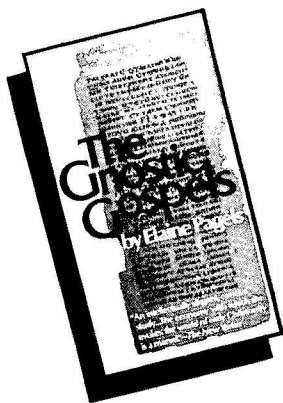
Des and Gill live with Luke in a quiet house in the countryside of northern California. Ebony, a friendly dog, also lives there, but Lucy often has to stay outside because she's a noisy cat.



Gill's useful book on nutrition and recipes has been offered on TV 42's popular "Worth More Than a Million!" series for a suggested donation of \$10.

Contact:

**Good News Unlimited,**  
11710 Education St.,  
Auburn, CA,  
95603-2499.



## The Gnostic Gospels

*The Gnostic Gospels*, Elaine Pagels, Vintage Books, New York, 1981, (originally published by Random House, 214 pages.

When Muhammad Ali went out to dig the soft soil of Jabal for use as fertilizer, he and his brothers had already entered a blood feud to avenge their father's murder. Digging around a massive boulder Muhammad hit a red earthenware jar, almost a meter in length. He was afraid to break the jar, lest it contain a genie. Later, thinking it might contain gold, he raised his mattock and smashed the jar, only to discover thirteen leather-bound papyrus books. He took them home and dumped them on the straw piled next to the oven. His mother began to use them for fuel.

Soon after, his father's enemy was nearby, and he and his brothers "hacked off his thumbs... ripped out his heart, and devoured it among them as the ultimate act of blood revenge" (p. xii).

When Egyptian police came investigating, Muhammad thought the books might attract attention, so passed them on to a priest. Thirty years were to pass before he ever publicly told his story.

### Delays

The cover-up of this gruesome murder helps explain why it took so long from the 1945 discovery of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts, to publication of scholarly books about the valuable find. (*Gnostic Gospels* was first published in 1979. By com-

parison, materials on the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1947, were published much earlier.)

Study was also delayed because it "has been beset from the beginning to this day by a persistent curse of political roadblocks, litigations, and most of all, scholarly jealousies and 'firstmanship'" (p. xxv). Antiquities dealers trying to get rich have not helped.

And another mysterious delay: Why has it taken so long for this review to appear? No especially guilty secret here. I just didn't find the book until recently. Even then I was not impressed with *gnostic* gospels. Why study other gospels when there is so much yet to learn about New Testament Gospels?

### Elaine's Clear Discussion

But I had not reckoned on how splendidly easy to read Dr. Pagel's book is, especially for a theology book. Her credentials are impeccable (Harvard and Oxford), her experience trustworthy (she worked with the NH manuscripts, and helped translate them), and her approach fascinating. This book is no dry dissertation on the gnostic gospels themselves, but a lively study of their teachings, and what those teachings reveal about the historical controversy between gnosticism and orthodoxy in the first and second centuries. Elaine's area of expertise is the relationship between religion and politics, and how beliefs bear social and political implications. Her historical insights have much to say to people today caught in the struggle between individual faith, and organized religion.

The gnostics were Christianity's earliest heretics. Their name is from the Greek word for knowledge, 'gnosis.' (A more accurate translation in this case would be 'insight.') Until Nag Hammadi, the main source of information on the gnostics was what the church fathers wrote. But that is akin to learning about Luther from the writings of John Eck.

The NH documents make it clear the fundamental teaching of gnosticism was that truth was inside oneself. Self-knowledge was to know God.

GNU readers would obviously disagree with such a premise; yet it is interesting to discover that gnostics developed some practices more appealing to modern Christians than the practices of their opponents, the emerging orthodox church.

For example, gnostic organization was less authoritarian than orthodox, with its bishops and priests. Naturally, if truth is within you, you will not become overly dependent upon outside authority. Women also fared better in the gnostic system than in the orthodox, because a woman's self-truth is as good as a man's.

### Chapter-by-Chapter

Chapter-by-chapter Elaine discusses how some of the finally triumphant orthodox insistences may have been partly in response to gnostic teachings:

1) Orthodoxy insisted on the importance of apostolic succession. This possibly arose from emphasizing the importance of the apostolic witness to the resurrection. This rightful insistence on the historical death and resurrection of Christ was used to counter the gnostic idea that Christ had risen only symbolically in the believer's heart.

2) Gnostics believed the God of the Old Testament was **not** the true God. The true God was **behind** the OT God. In contrast, orthodoxy rightly insisted on only **one** God—but that was soon politically translated into one Bishop!

3) Gnosticism, which actually consisted of many groups, was ambivalent toward women. Some insisted women were not worthy of the mysteries until they became "male." Others ordained women. Most used language for God which included female terms as well as male. Orthodoxy used male language exclusively, and by 200 A.D. men and women were segregated during worship in orthodox churches!

4) Gnostics and orthodox agreed that Jesus had suffered and died, but understood those facts differently. Gnostics considered Christ only **appeared** to suffer and die; such docetic views led them to avoid martyrdom. Or-

thodox Christians tended to esteem martyrdom, some unhealthily seeking it.

5) Though many gnostics continued to worship and fellowship with orthodox Christians, they had a different understanding of what the "church" was. Gnostics tended to believe that **all** who had self-insight were members of the church, while orthodoxy tended to think of the priestly hierarchy as the church.

### The Struggle Today

Elaine's topic from the first and second centuries may seem remote to the eighties. Yet, only a moment's thought, stimulated by her vivid writing, helps us see many of the same issues raised in that ancient struggle between gnosticism and orthodoxy survive today.

For example, orthodoxy developed a creed, a ritual and a clerical hierarchy—and survived. The more open and individualistic gnostics never developed such a superstructure—and faded away.

And what of a modern-day gospel revival movement? Can such a movement survive without creed, ritual and priesthood? What price would be paid in developing such a structure? Does a gospel revival movement **need** to survive? Is it sufficient that only the gospel go on, rather than some cohesive organization?

What is the source of religious authority? One's own experience, or that of the creed, the ritual and the hierarchy? What is a whole-some relationship between the authority of one's own experience, and that of the Scriptures, Christian ceremonies, and the clergy?

Our love for the historical, outside-of-us gospel denies us the desire to ever become gnostics. Yet the history of the tension between gnosticism and orthodoxy raises many interesting issues that are still alive today, especially for those Christians re-examining their own relationship to organized religion. □

by Roy Gee

**AVAILABLE NOW**

# **THESE MY BRETHREN**

## **The 1987 Congress Audio Cassettes**

DESMOND FORD	—	"The Blood that cried"
DESMOND FORD	—	"Whitewash Religion is a dangerous affair"
DESMOND FORD	—	"Hell and Heaven. Other people?"
DESMOND FORD	—	"Worth more than a million"
DESMOND FORD	—	"Heaven & Eternal Life — Now"
RON ALLEN	—	"Jesus and the Poor"
NEVILLE MCKENZIE	—	"Dynamic Encounters or Dusty Descriptions"
GRAEME GOLDSWORTHY	—	"You hindered those who were entering"
FRANCIS MACNAB	—	"I was in prison"
ROBERT BANKS	—	"Part One"
ROBERT BANKS	—	"Part Two"

---

*Order your "These My Brethren" set now. Cost is \$25.00 post-paid.*

*Write to:*

**GOOD NEWS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES LTD.  
P.O. BOX 1603, HORNSBY NORTHGATE, N.S.W. 2077**

**GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED**

P.O. Box 1603  
Hornsby Northgate  
N.S.W. 2077

POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA