

Registered by Australia Post-Publication No. WBG0048

GOOD NEWS

OCTOBER

1988

Australia



Editorial

"Surfers Paradise"

George Mikes once remarked that just as a man in a bull ring is the image of a Spaniard, or a man with a 2-foot cigar is the image of an American, so a man in a queue is the image of a true Briton (*How to Be Inimitable*).

And a true Australian? He is a man at the beach.

For generations, Australians have nurtured a love-affair with the beach. Despite the ever-present menace of sharks and jellyfish, nothing quickens the Aussie pulse like a fortnight of sun, surf, sand and whatever else. Paradise begins at the beach.

But in Bible times, it was different. Belonging to a land-locked nation with little maritime experience, the Hebrews dreaded the ocean. In the Psalms, the sea brings to mind thoughts of chaos, death and destruction. According to the Prophets, the wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest. Even in the New Testament, John assures his readers that in the ideal world, there will be "no more sea."

"No more sea." For a Jew, that was Paradise. But for the elderly, Paradise will be "no more stairs." And for all Australians: "no more flies." As another Bible writer says: "Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the future which God has prepared for those who love him".

Rob Cooper
Paul Porter



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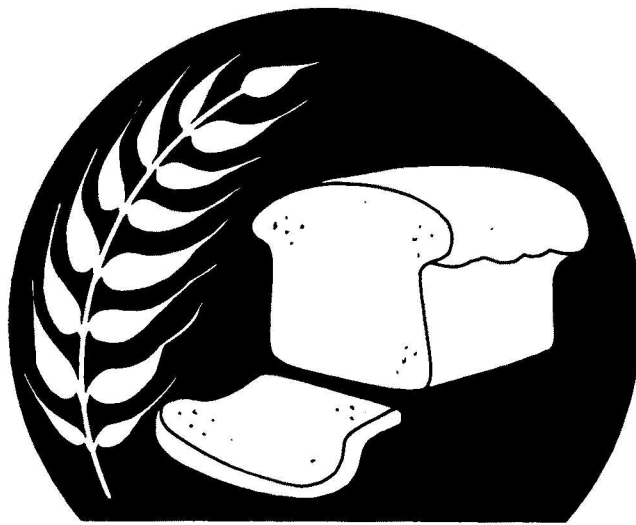
Good News Australia is published each month by **Good News Christian Ministries Limited** (Inc. in New South Wales and Queensland), PO Box 1603, Hornsby Northgate NSW 2077.

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ETERNAL LIFE—NOW!

Desmond Ford

The greatest discovery of the twentieth century has been a humiliating one. It concerns not mechanical marvels, but man; not technology but anthropology, i.e. not the increasing knowledge of and power over things, but the burgeoning disillusionment about the knower himself and his demonstrated inability. Not the conquest of outer space, but the conquest of inner space — the heart and mind of man, is the greatest challenge of our day. Not the bomb, but the bomber, is the darkening threat to civilization.

No sane man would deny humanity's accelerated mastery over nature, but to include human nature within the sphere of progress would be to testify to either ignorance of stupidity. Each material advance has been accompanied by a new threat.

Slaughter on the roads mounts with the increase in cars and highways; education instead of banishing crime makes it more efficient, chemical research leads not to medical triumphs but to moral dilemmas. The yield in bushels to the acres has been increased, but likewise the manifestations of our lusts, hypocri-

sies, and fears. The theme of almost all modern literature is "Man is sick."

All of which is a far cry from the unbounded optimism which marked the turn of the century, the era of the Titanic. The romantic illusions of Utopianism have been shattered by two world wars and by recurring economic depression. Whereas the early 1900's were marked by a faith in man which matched that of the idealist Greek philosophers, more recent years have seen a reversal of sentiment and a view of human nature almost identical with that of such pessimists as the Greek tragedians. Thus modern views of existence almost universally testify to the jaundiced eye of the beholder. Consider, for example, the confession of the playwright Ionesco in his *Notes et contre-notes*:

"I have no other images of the world except those of evanescence and brutality, vanity and rage, nothingness or hideousness, unless hatred. Everything I have since experienced has merely confirmed what I had seen and understood in my childhood: vain and sordid fury, cries suddenly stifled

by silence, shadows engulfed forever in the night."

In strong contrast is the triumphant testimony of the tragically handicapped Helen Keller: "I have found life so beautiful." Whom are we to believe about life, Ionesco or Keller?

Such a question reminds us that all our questions about the universe and existence involve the prior question of "What is man?" Who or what is this being that asks the questions? Only the Christian revelation as it is found in Scripture can rightly answer the question. It repudiates the two characteristic positions of the ages, naive optimism and cynical pessimism. It tells of Creation and the Fall as recorded in Genesis as the only adequate explanation of the nature of man. Man, made in the moral image of God, by disobedience has become a hybrid — half-angel, half-demon.

Three hundred years ago Blaise Pascal, scientist, mathematician and Christian, acknowledged genius of the seventeenth century, summed up the differences between Ionesco and Keller and the divisions of humanity they represent. he wrote:

Without Jesus Christ man must be in vice and misery; with Jesus Christ man is free from vice and misery; in Him is all our virtue and all our happiness. Apart from Him there is but vice, misery, darkness, death, despair.

The Christian religion, then, teaches men these two truths; that there is a God whom men can know, and that there is a corruption in their nature which renders them unworthy of Him. It is equally important to men to know both these points; and it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own wretchedness, and to know his own wretchedness without knowing the Redeemer who can free him from it. The knowledge of only one of these points gives rise either to the pride of philosophers, who have known God, and not their own wretchedness, or to the despair of atheists, who know their own wretchedness, but not the Redeemer.

(Pensees, Nrs. 545, 555)

The words are worth reading again. They sum up the human problem and the divine solution. Not only so, but they epitomize that most abstract and yet most practical of all branches of knowledge — theology, which in essence consists of the knowledge of God (that is, of his nature), and the knowledge of man, and the relationship between the two.

The gospel revolves around these truths. We will take one example which aptly illustrates our discussion so far. Let us consider that most beautiful of all Bible books — John.

While the first three Gospels use the metaphor of the kingdom of God to illustrate the basic message of the New Testament, Paul chose in Romans particularly the foren-

sic metaphor of justification and elsewhere adoption and reconciliation. Life in the Spirit which is the subjective side of being "in Christ" is also a Pauline emphasis. But for the fourth Gospel all these are assumed and John chooses rather to stress eternal life (see for example 5:24 and 3:16-18, 36). John has in mind a quality of existence, not just the everlasting duration of life for the saved. That quality of life is symbolized in Christ's seven miracles of transformation, all of which occur before the cross.

Though the "now" and the "not yet," the "first-fruits" and the full harvest, must even be distinguished, John is telling us that to receive the gospel of Christ is to receive a real foretaste of eternal life now. Let us consider the seven miraculous transformations in their order:

1. The turning of water into wine at Cana's marriage feast.

2. The healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum, while Jesus was still at Cana, half-a-day's journey away.

3. The Bethesda healing of the impotent man who had been ill almost forty years.

4. The multiplying of the loaves and fishes for the 5,000 guests.

5. Walking on the waters of the Lake of Galilee and calming the storm.

6. The restoration of sight to the man born blind.

7. The raising of Lazarus from the dead.

These seven miracles are a symbolic portrayal of the needs of sinful man and of the sufficiency of Christ, the divine Saviour. They describe our nature and his. Let us first consider these signs as they relate to our human condition, remembering that no one appreciates the good news until deeply aware of and groaning under the bad news.

The cry, "They have no wine" at Cana's marriage aptly points to the lack and disappointment which characterize our existence. Man is always seeking a more exhilarating life. The youth and beauty of the marriage festival, its song and flowers, its music and dancing intimate the expectations that we all cherish as we confidently stride upon life's stage. But how quickly our illusions are dispelled! The music fades, beauty turns to ugliness, the flowers wither and the wine runs out. As men set forth the good wine first and then afterwards that which is worst, even so does the world with its gifts. What is begun with eager excitement and admiration turns to disgust and sorrow. Even health, life's greatest wealth, deteriorates and with it life's most beautiful scenes become shadowed.

The second miracle points to our lack of spiritual health. We are all typified in the nobleman's son as he lingers on the verge of death.

Unless the Great Healer speaks the word of our healing our spiritual sickness will lead to eternal death.

Not only do life's exhilarations, health of spirit and body decline but also our physical strength. This is symbolized in the crippled man at Bethesda. Trials and temptations reveal to us our impotence. Failure follows upon failure and we are plunged into despair.

But not only are we without joy, health, and strength, we also lack true nourishment. The fainting, hungering 5,000 represent us all. Until we know Christ, we suffer from spiritual malnutrition.

These miracles present a picture of the sorry plight of all humanity. The situation worsens with the fifth miracle. The fragile boat on the stormy seas is a picture of mankind without safety, ever trembling on the verge of imminent di-

saster and death. The sixth story, the healing of the man born blind, intensifies further our sad case as it points to our spiritual blindness from the dawn of consciousness. Finally in the man who had been dead some days we see ourselves as "dead in trespasses and sins." What a marvellous portrayal of man's sinful nature and hopeless plight! The cluster of signs in John's Gospel witness to the fact that the unconverted man is without joy, health, strength, sustenance, safety, sight and life. All the events of history, all the accounts of modern literature, all the testimony of today's news media confirm the helpless state of man as reflected in these seven stories. As Pascal affirmed: "Without Christ man is in vice and misery, in darkness, death, and despair."

But is not the gospel "good news"? What good news is there in John's portrayal of our woe? For *that* we must consider the other half of the testimony of the seven signs. It speaks of Christ's nature, of the infinite capacity of the strong Son of God to meet our needs. Each of the seven miracles reveals him as being able not only to meet our peculiar problems but all similar problems. In each mighty act we see him as the Transformer. He transforms water to wine, disease to health, impotence to strength, hunger to satisfaction, danger to safety, darkness and blindness to light and sight and death to life. All the miracles bespeak his divinity, for "these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jn 20:31). Note how he is strong where we are weak.

1. The miracle at the wedding feast reveals the power of Christ to bring a new quality of life into human existence. Water becomes wine.

2. The feeding of the 5,000 shows his power over *quantity*. A few loaves and fishes become enough to feed an army, and there is plenty to spare.

3. The healing of a man who had been ill almost forty years shows Christ's power over *time*.

4. His sending of the word of healing from Cana to Capernaum shows Christ's power over *space*.

5. His walking upon the water reveals his supremacy over *natural law*.

6. His healing of a man who was born blind illustrates his control over *apparent chance*, i.e., over nonlaw.

7. The raising of Lazarus testifies to Christ's power over *death*. He is "The resurrection and the life."

Thus each of these mighty works testifies that Christ is no mere man only. He is God. The divinity of our Lord is our assurance of eternal life and our guarantee that he is sufficient for all our needs in this present time, as well as in the world to come. The Gospel of John has as its message the glorious truth that once we are united to Christ by living faith, our only limitation will be the welcome one of the will of God which is always good. Despite our weakness and our sinfulness, all things — the failing of supply, of health, of strength, of apparent safety, etc. — work together for good. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But most of all the Gospel is de-

claring that the spiritual ravages of our nature made by sin can be healed by our contact of faith with the living Christ.

John is as aware of the simplicity of salvation by faith alone as certainly as Paul, and therefore he uses various forms of the word "believe" approximately 100 times and in most chapters of his Gospel this concept is emphasized (see, for example, 1:7, 12; 2:11, 23; 3:12,15,16,18,36; 4:28,39,53; 5:24,38,44,46,47; 6:29, etc.). That salvation is free is the glorious good news told again and again.

Sense can be made of the nonsense of life only as we believe the words of Christ. Listen again to some from the most beautiful book in the Bible.

... him that cometh to me
I will in no wise cast out.

... he that heareth my
word, and believeth on him
that sent me, hath everlasting
life, and shall not come
into condemnation but is
passed from death unto life.

... he that cometh to me
shall never hunger; and he
that believeth on me shall
never thirst.

I am the resurrection and
the life: he that believeth in
me, though he were dead,
yet shall he live.

Throughout the Gospel of John the word of the divine Christ works transformation. It raised Lazarus from the dead. That same word received and believed by you and me places us too on resurrection ground translated into the eternal kingdom of God.□

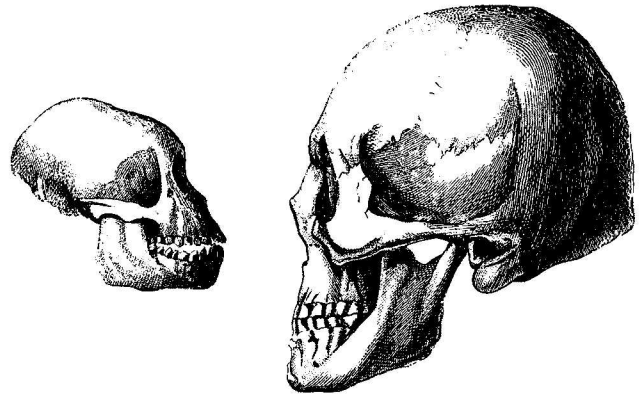
Desmond Ford is founder of
GNM.

Sense can be made of the nonsense of life only as we believe the words of Christ. Listen again to some from the most beautiful book in the Bible.

Parents who feel reasonably comfortable inside themselves about the prospect of their own death will communicate with the child in a more or less relaxed way, which can provide an atmosphere of safety and security. . .

Talking with children about death

Kenneth Ralph



One of the challenges of parenthood is dealing with children's questions about death. Most mothers and fathers want to help their children develop good feelings and beliefs about dying and death.

Parents have a lot to learn from their children. One mother whose eight-year-old daughter died of a rare blood disease after a long illness said: "My daughter prepared me for her death." She did that by the way she accepted that she was dying, by talking about it openly and by her vivid positive descriptions of a heaven to which she was sure she was going. When the mother was distraught and tearful it was the daughter who gave her reassurance.

Many children help their parents as this little girl did. Their persistent questions require adults to think through the issues. Many of them are more open to their feelings about death and more comfortable speaking about it than their parents, and this can help adults turn towards rather than away from what they may see as a harsh, unpleasant reality.

Children have a need to know. They are often more curious than their parents.

They seek and want explanations about a death or a loss in a family. If this is not provided they will proceed to invent one for themselves. The fantasies which they construct in order to make some sense for themselves out of the changed situation can sometimes be most confusing or can lead to them blaming themselves.

Out of an understandable desire to protect children from suffering, parents can sometimes be over protective. A teacher once called together the parents of a class to consult with them on how they should tell the class that one of their classmates had suddenly died of a rare disease.

One of the dads suggested that they should say to the children that their little friend had moved to another town. Other parents objected to this factor of concealment, pointing out that children are very adept at sensing when something is covered up, so it was decided to be open with the class. The teacher informed the children that their little friend had died. Thus began a long series of questions and class discussions that proved rich and educative for all. We must not minimise our children's ability

to take in and positively handle loss and death.

It is, of course, not easy to know what to say to children when they pose questions, since differing concerns can lie behind the framed question. Very young children's questions can be based on their fear that they will be separated from their parents and family, so an answer has to provide assurance that death doesn't come to most people until they are very old.

Older children will seek factual information. They may ask questions like "What happens to bodies?", "What goes on at funerals?", "Where do people go to when they die?" In other words they are beginning the process of forming some coherent view of the world in which they live.

Describing death in natural terms is always important. Phrases like "when we die we stop moving and breathing" need to be said and analogies to dead pets can be helpful at this point. Children also need to be told that being dead is not nasty or painful. Phrases like "we won't see Grandma again" are also helpful.

Children's questions about death often come without

warning, while you are shaving, driving the car, cooking the tea or after watching TV. They give parents little time to frame a carefully thought out answer. So what comes through to the child in these situations is often not the words but the emotion the parent is having at the time.

Parents who feel reasonably comfortable inside themselves about the prospect of their own death will communicate with the child in a more or less relaxed way, which from the child's point of view can provide an atmosphere of safety and security, rather than one of alarm and dread. Even if, as often the case, the content of the reply is less than satisfactory to the child, nevertheless a reassuring tone will bring support.

Not everyone grieves in the same way, so different members of the same family will handle dying in different ways. One mother described the way her three children responded to their grandparent's death, which occurred while they were on vacation.

Her nine-year-old boy showed no emotion for nearly two months, after which a lot of aggression emerged around why his parents "took him away" when grandma died, referring to the holiday. He was especially close to his grandma. He like taking flowers and gifts to the grave and once wrote a letter telling his grandma that everything in the family was going OK, and that they still loved her.

His eleven-year-old sister on the other hand cried a lot, both at the time of the funeral and afterwards, which helped the mother because they cried together. Similarly the girl's angry talk about how unfair it was also was helpful since Mother felt exactly the same.

The youngest in the family was a little philosopher who

voiced wise sayings like "It was really hard luck for grandma wasn't it". He did not cry and if he was around when Grandma's death was being talked about he would immediately leave the room. But later he began to draw pictures about people going away on holidays.

It is important that parents respect these diverse ways of expressing feelings. Attempts to discourage anger or bring out silent thoughts can often be counter-productive. Children will handle the stresses of loss in the same way they deal with other anxieties. Some will become detached and quiet, others will cling to Mum or Dad, others will get angry. No two children in the same family will act the same way.

Research and experience has shown that some explanations which in the past have often been used may need to be looked at more carefully.

1. *Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.*

We sometimes see this little poem above a child's bed and it is intended to bring reassurance of God's nearness through the night. But if you look at it from a child's point of view, the possibility of dying in the night in his or her own bed or of their soul being taken away, can cause a child to imagine all sorts of frightening possibilities.

2. "Passed away." This is another time honored phrase, but people these days are encouraged to be more direct and simply say "he died."

3. "Gone away." This is another not too helpful phrase, since what has gone away can also come back, which is not the case with someone who has died.

4. "Falling asleep." In former times this was seen to be

a helpful way to describe death, but is now rightfully discouraged since it does not describe what happens and it can give rise to childhood fears that they might not wake up in the morning.

5. "It is God's will." Some adults with a religious faith may find this a helpful explanation, but children usually won't. The concept of God's will is too abstract and philosophically advanced for primary age children and raises in the child's mind the legitimate question of why God would want to do something that brought so much suffering to the family.

6. "Gone to Heaven." Many clergyman these days caution parents to be careful how they use this image with their grieving children, since it can often be confusing rather than supportive. One mother described how, after a cot death at home, she and her husband took their little child to hospital.

When they returned home some hours later one of the other children said: "Have you got the baby?" "No" said the mother. "Well, where is she?" came back the question.

Mother replied "In heaven." "Gee," said the little one, "It didn't take her long to get to heaven."

This girl's sister filled out her heaven picture even more fully when one day she said to her mother: "Wouldn't it be lovely if they had parachutes in heaven? Then baby could parachute back. But she wouldn't know which was our backyard would she?"

These two comments show literal pictures of heaven which may be helpful to some adults but do not necessarily convey comparable support to children. Indeed they can be perceived in a most unhelpful way.

Some children who have

been told that heaven is a place "up there" where you go when you die, have been known to try to kill animals. M. Rudolph in her book *Should the Children Know?* tells of a teacher having to rescue a pet turtle on which a boy was jumping. On asking him why he was hurting the turtle his answer was very honest, "I wanted the turtle to die so that I could see it go to heaven."

We also have to take into consideration the fact that no matter how satisfying it might be to parents, no picture of God or Heaven could ever make up for the loss of someone in the child's experience.

An appropriate religious view of death for children emphasises that God made the world to have a beginning and ending, that no one stays alive forever and when our own lifetime is finished (which usually doesn't happen until we are old) we go to God, which is nice, safe and warm.

Imagine the friendliest thing there is: God is like that. That is another way of saying "God is love."

Religious parents who have a belief in an afterlife may also wish to say that our bodies don't go to God, they go in the ground or are scattered as ashes, but the thinking, feeling part of us does go to God.

Words like "soul" or "spirit" should only be used when a child is old enough to make sense of such concepts, which probably won't be before high school. Of course, not all religious people believe in the survival of personality at death, in which case they would say something like: "At death the person stops moving and thinking and feeling. They have come to the end of their lifetime, but we remember them in a loving way and so too does God."

It is important to give some transcendent view which can be a basis for them to build on in the future.

Funerals are for the family so children need to be given every opportunity to go rather than be influenced away from going. They too have needs to mourn, to remember, to say thank you and goodbye, to be with the family when a special family function is taking place. Being excluded from the ceremony can be confusing or distressing.

It is wise to tell children beforehand exactly what will happen at the service. The funeral director or minister are usually helpful in this respect. Talking with children at the service to help them understand what is going on can also be helpful, not just for that moment but in the weeks and months ahead when the child may wish to talk about any of those many questions which will inevitably occur in those families where death is not treated as a taboo issue but as part of the fabric of life. □

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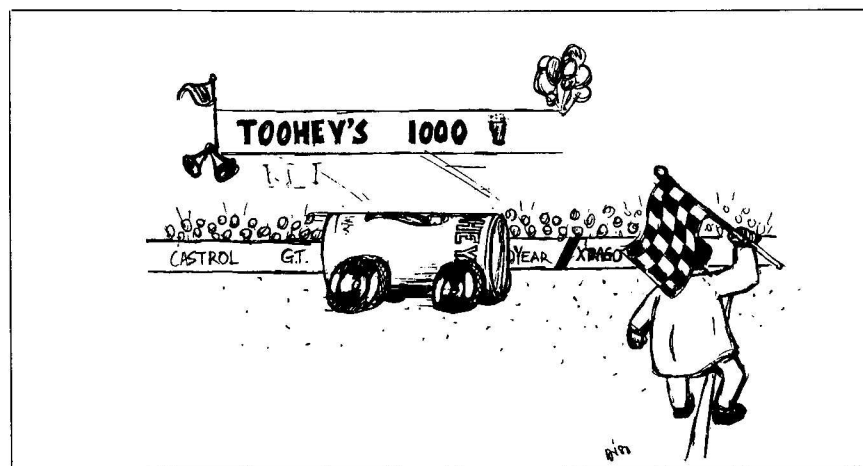
Outsiders

Dave Wood

More than a few of us, I am sure, were surprised when Mr Keating announced a reduction in the beer tax for the 1988 Budget.

It was a bold move, and scarcely consistent with the much publicised, multi-million dollar, nationwide Drug Offensive, launched it seems only yesterday, and aimed particularly at drug abuse among the young. Of course we all know what drug is the most abused among Aussie youth!

Equally disturbing is the seemingly casual acceptance by the authorities, of the nation's premier motor race (the annual Bathurst event) being sponsored by one of our largest liquor producers. Appar-



ently, alcohol, motor vehicles and speed DO mix, despite growing statistics of alcohol-related road deaths.

Clearly there are many anomalies in our nation's behaviour and attitudes. The Immigration Debate, the Aborigine Problem, the Nuclear Debate, the Chamberlain Case and numerous Royal Commis-

sions expose in one way or another discrepancies between our nation's ideals and its behaviour.

Can we hope, one day, to eradicate such embarrassing examples of hypocrisy from our society? Or is the legacy of our human nature so strong that despite all our attempts to rise above it we are destined to fail miserably? After all, there is no shortage of Chris-

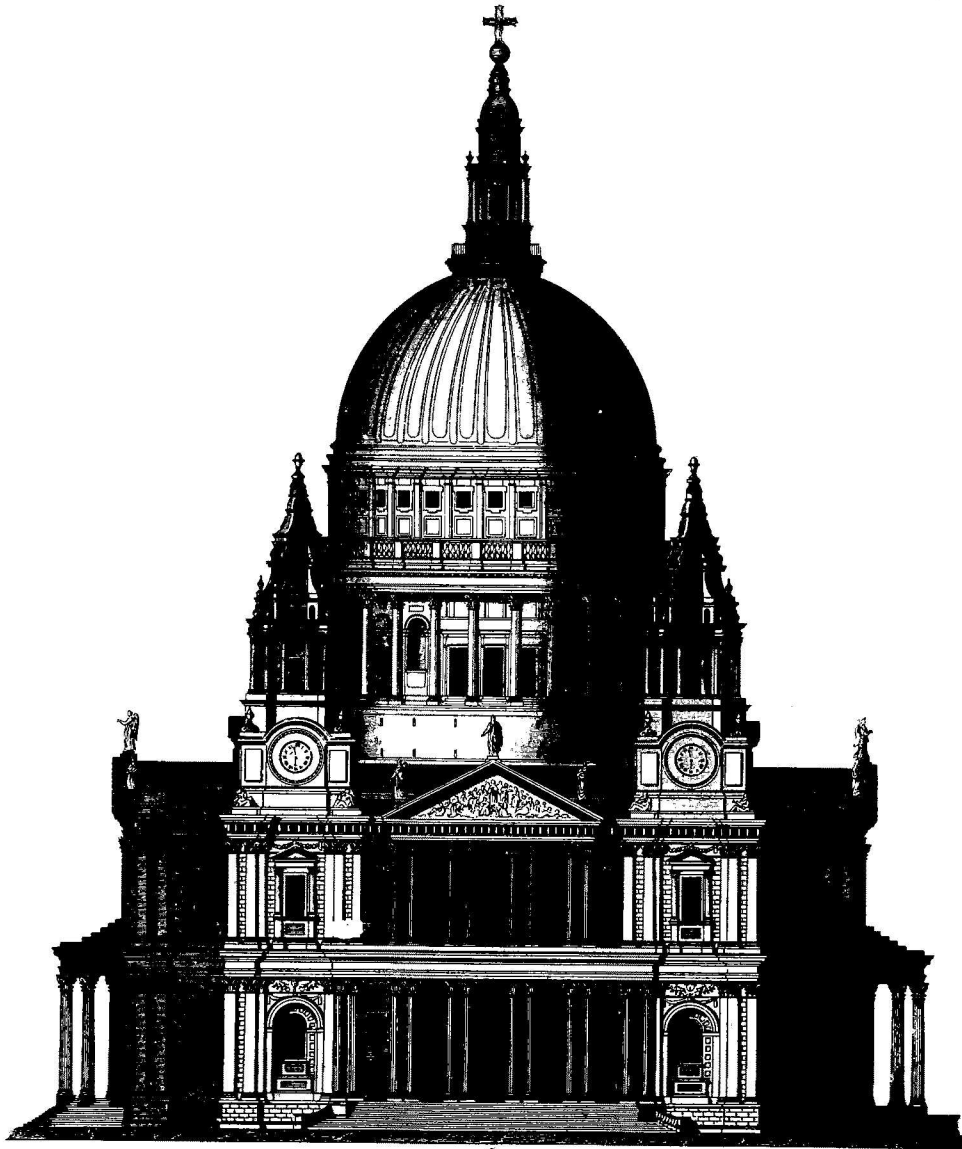
tians whose attitudes and behaviour belie their creed. (One only has to look at history!) And surely each of us, if we were honest, would have to admit to many double standards in the personal life? Like our community leaders, we

tend to "zoom in" with one eye on a single issue, ignoring in the process peripheral inconsistencies obvious to the outsider.

For it takes an "outsider" to see the obvious. And whereas the church may readily spot

the sins of the world and *vice versa*, it is the Lord who is above us all who understands the complexities and contradictions of our common human nature.□

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Be Quiet

Keith Sandars

Every month, thousands of magazines and periodicals are circulated throughout the world in a legion of languages. One of the lesser known is called "*The Dome*". It is the official journal, written and published for The Friends of St Pauls Cathedral, scattered throughout the world. It is ap-

propriate that such a magazine should be called by this name, for The Dome of the Cathedral is perhaps one of the most widely known landmarks, not only in London itself, but throughout the world.

The Dome itself is not only an engineering masterpiece and memorial to the genius of

Christopher Wren, but is a tourist attraction. After entering the Cathedral, one can reach the base of the Dome by climbing some 700 low spiral steps. It is here that one finds the unique and fascinating phenomenon — The Whispering Gallery. By walking around the narrow catwalk to the opposite

side it is possible to place one's ear to the wall and hear quite distinctly the soft voice of the Verger who not only welcomes you there but informs you of the wonder of this Whispering Gallery. To hear this unforgettable voice, one must be completely still and quiet and be ready to listen. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to visit this Gallery and to hear the incredible sound will remember it for life.

Being still and being quiet. The great Sir Winston Churchill once said "To be heard, one must learn to be silent; to be active, one must learn to be still." Throughout his full life, this great statesman made daily provision to be still and to be quiet. Because of this, the world was enriched.

The secret of "being still" as the Psalmist of old expressed it is nothing new. All the great philosophers and religious leaders of the world have advocated its worth in so many words. Every man and woman if they are to be strong in every respect must learn to be still and give himself or herself time to think, time to plan and yes, time to pray. Many of the most momentous decisions in world history have been made after periods of quiet and solitude. Remember Moses after climbing Mt Sinai spent those ensuing forty days in complete isolation and quietness. From this time and experience emerged the formulation of The Ten Commandments and those numerous laws and plans which were not only to affect the destiny of his own people but of those generations ever since. Isaiah, the great prophet of the eighth century B.C. in his challenge to the wayward nation of his time urged them to pause and remember that "in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

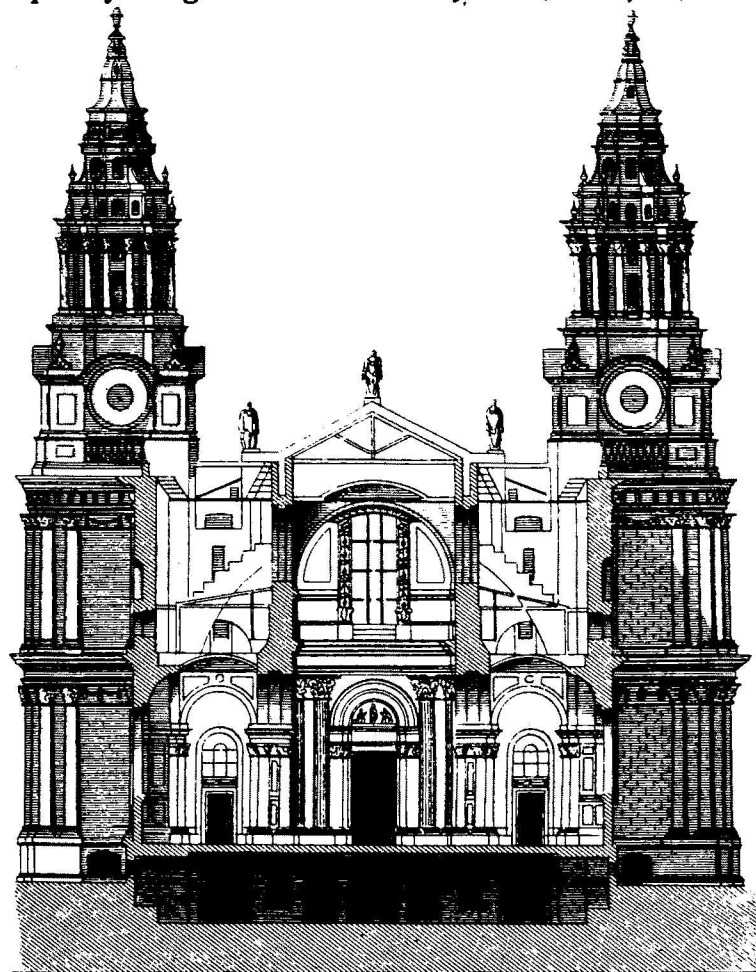
Even Jesus Christ Himself

took care in his daily round to "be still." The location or the time seemed to matter little, but the discipline and exercise of being still was religiously kept — in the deserts of Judea, by the shores of Galilee or in the isolation of Gethsemane. Without exception, the momentous acts in the life of Christ were preceded by a time of isolation and quietness. Here lay the secret of His "inner strength."

I wonder about our strength, be it physical, mental or spiritual. Is it up to the mark these days or do things seem to be constantly below average? For many of us this is so true, and the key to the situation lies in this business of finding time to "be still and being quiet." This seems to be virtually impossible these days. Rush and bustle, stereophonic sound, the constant and inescapable blare of transistors all make quietness very difficult. Consequently our general state

of health and strength is affected. Let us face it, most of us have lost the art of "being still." In fact, in many instances, people can't bear to be alone with themselves and their inner thoughts. It embarrasses them. If this is your problem, the solution is not to be found in patent medicines and tranquilizers, but within yourself. Take time — discipline yourself to give a set period in your day, just to be quiet and still. The place or time is immaterial, but by so doing you will find that your thoughts and plans are lifted and strange as it may seem you have come closer to God and He to you. With God's help, discipline yourself to be still each day and you will find Isaiah's advice is true — "in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."□

Keith Sanders was for many years Master of Trinity Grammar Preparatory School, Strathfield, NSW.



Getting Even With Those Who Hurt You

Gordon Moyes

Scripture: Genesis 42: 1-24

I was sitting in an airport lounge when a father and two children sat down behind me. I didn't mean to overhear them, but I am interested in what other people have to say. These two children were about to be sent back to their mother. The father said: "It is all her fault you know. I kept working all the time. I believe in working hard and in having a good family life but she was playing up all the time, you didn't understand that. I have old fashioned values. If it was up to me we would all still be together. We are having a good time, aren't we? She is living in my house with that fathead on my money." Here was a man beefing to the kids, trying to get at his wife by manipulating his children. He was full of resentment.

Resentment eats into many marriages. Sometimes children feel resentment because their parents show discipline or restriction. Sometimes it is between parents and perhaps grandparents. It is surprising how resentment can be there over generations. Even in mature adults there may still be resentment because of what happened decades ago. The action was in the past but the pain can last in the hearts of people.

Resentment is not only in families, but in political parties, businesses and in work. Someone gets a promotion and there is resentment by other

girls. Someone is a successful salesman and others resent the fact that he gets all the kudos. It is a fact of life that people feel resentful and bitter towards others who do well. Sometimes they want to get even and they have deep feelings of revenge. I think you see this vividly in the life of Joseph.

The brothers had wanted to get rid of Joseph. They resented him because he was his father's favourite, so they tried to get rid of him. First they decided to murder him, then they bashed him up and threw him down a deep well. Then one of the brothers argued that they shouldn't leave him to die, that they could make money out of him. So they sold him as a slave and he was sent to Egypt. Joseph could have been bitter, his heart could have been full of resentment.

But Joseph a slave, a prisoner, gradually worked his way up. Eighteen years passed and he became chief of the agricultural economy of Egypt. Joseph dressed in his mighty robes stood there and through an interpreter spoke to his brothers. He wanted to test them, to tease them, to find out something about their character and background. The tables were turned. He is in power and he is going to get even with them.

Resentment a human response

To feel resentful toward another person is a very human

thing. We have discovered that resentment can cause a great deal of illness — in our minds and also in our bodies. If you harbour resentment deep inside you, it can poison your system, emotionally, mentally, psychologically and physically.

There are many causes of resentment but we seem to resent people who do better than we do, or who achieve more than us or who get something we feel that we should have.

Joseph's trouble didn't begin with Joseph. It wasn't even his brothers' fault. Joseph was Jacob's favourite son — he treated him differently. Frequently we are resentful against other people because of the influence of our parents. The resentment that came into Joseph's family was really the responsibility of the older generation.

Sometimes resentment starts in our own home. For example, when a new baby is brought into the family and there is a young boy there. He suddenly feels left out because Mum and Dad are all over this brand new baby. Wise parents always make sure the other child is very much part of the family.

Resentment comes out in many ways. Sometimes in the things we say, sometimes in our attitudes behind a person's back. Resentment can get so bad it can even affect your sanity.

Let me tell you about an

Armenian who grew up hating the Turks. This Armenian man and his wife were crossing a road and a car hit them, knocked them both over and killed the wife. The man driving the car happened to be a young Turk. Immediately in my Armenian friend's mind came the thought: "The Turks did this." And before long he tells me the Turks are out to get him all the time. And that the Turks had planned to kill him and his wife and being run down by a car was deliberate. That sense of resentment became so obsessive that he has become mentally sick.

The price of resentment in our lives can be high indeed. Wanting revenge and bearing bitterness towards others can dominate our thinking.

Joseph who had been sold into slavery has his brothers where he wants them. He keeps his identity from them. He talks through an interpreter. They keep their eyes from looking at him, and they are bowed to the ground. He remembered the dream that he had dreamed about them. He was in control.

Joseph said: "Isn't there another brother somewhere?" They said: "Yes, there is one more at home, named Benjamin. We did have another one, Joseph, but he is dead." Joseph said: "Well, before I give you any grain I want to see him. And what is your father's name? Oh, Jacob is it? Well, I want to see him as well before I give you any grain." Joseph said: "Bring your youngest brother to me. That will prove you have been telling me the truth." They agreed, but said to one another: "Now we are suffering because of what we

did to Joseph. He begged us for help but we wouldn't listen." Reuben said: "I told you not to harm him. Now we're being paid back for his death." And Joseph understood all that they said but they did not know it. How does Joseph get even?

How to get even

Do you know the best way to get even with people that hurt you? Live well. They all want you to be miserable. When people hurt you they want you to fail and not be able to cope. The best way



ever of getting even is to live well and be in control of yourself and be able to smile and look them in the eye.

First of all learn to get angry with people who have hurt you, but to be angry without sinning. Jesus was angry with the Pharisees who hurt the widows and the orphans. We have to learn to be angry in the right way with the right person and for the right length of time. You have to learn to be expressive of your anger and then get it out of your system. Repressed anger turns into resentment.

Learn to forgive people and be forgiven. There is a beautiful point where David is re-

sentful and he has done wrong. He says: "Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs have been pardoned. Happy is the man whom the Lord does not accuse of doing wrong and who is free from all deceit. When I did not confess my sins, Oh God, I was worn out by crying night and day. Day and night you punished me, Lord. My strength was completely drained as moisture which is dried up by the summer's heat, but then I confessed my sins to you and I did not conceal my wrongdoing and you forgave me my sins."

When we seek forgiveness for what we have done wrong then we learn to be free. Learn to forgive and be forgiving.

Learn to live at peace with your brothers — even the spiteful brothers, even those who have wronged and hurt you. A passage in Hebrews 12 speaks about resentment being like a plant that has a rotten root on it that grows strongly and overcomes everything

else. Resentment is like that: if you let it take root it is bad within your system and it takes over everything else.

You must try to make it up with people. It is our responsibility to go to the one who has hurt us, not wait for them to come to us. We must seek reconciliation. Jesus said: "If you are going to offer your gift to God at the altar in church, and then you remember that your brother has got something against you leave your gift at the altar, go at once to your brother, make peace with your brother and then come back and give your gift to God." If you feel resentful you have a responsibility to make it up.

As the scripture says: "If your enemy is hungry, feed them; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for by doing this you will make him burn with shame." There is a way of getting even, and you get even best when you do good to those against whom you feel resentful. Look at how Joseph tried to get even with his brothers. He kept his identity secret for a while but he gave them food. He wanted to be reconciled with them. He caused them to bring his little brother down to visit him and his father as well. He returned their money to them in the sacks of corn that he was going to give them. He did everything possible that was good and inevitably that led to reconciliation and to family reunion.

Karl and Edith had been married for 23 years. Karl worked for a bank and frequently went to Japan to the head office of a Japanese bank. He would spend half his time in Japan and half back at home with Edith. After a while he didn't ring while he was away.

He seemed to stay away longer. There were no gifts after each trip. Edith discovers that he is living with a Japanese girl and that the girl is pregnant. Karl tells Edith he is divorcing her to marry the Japanese girl. In a few years they had two daughters. Edith wrote to them, she still loved Karl and she kept in contact with them. A few years later, Karl died in Japan of cancer. His daughters were not accepted in Japanese society and Karl's last wish was that his daughters might go back home and receive an education. When Edith heard this she said: They are his children and I loved him. And instead of being resentful she offered to look after his two daughters. So the two little girls came out and she went back to work to send them to private school for a good education. And then she got sick. Edith said, I know what I must do. So she sponsored their mother Aiko to come to Australia. Edith was feeling all tense and tight within herself, then this tiny Japanese girl who seemed so small and so

afraid, came into the passenger terminal and Edith ran to her and threw her arms around her and kept praying to herself: "Oh, God, I loved Karl. Give me the grace now to love the girl he loved and his two daughters." And so it was that she took Aiko into her own home. And the two older women and the two young girls still live together today in a bond of fellowship. Because instead of resentment she showed accepting love.

I'm not telling you it's easy — it's Christian, it's healthy. From the lesson of Joseph, we can learn to accept even those people who hurt us and to love even the unlovable. That is precisely what Jesus did. Even when He was nailed upon a cross and shed His blood for us He said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And He forgives us. Instead of being resentful He is forgiving and accepting. He offers you an all-embracing love and a new way of life. □

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"People hate to be saved"

Paul Porter

As a teenager, Ronald Reagan, (later U.S. President), worked as a summer lifeguard. He saved a total of 77 people from drowning. Years later he remarked that not one of them had ever thanked him: "I got to recognize that people hate to be saved; almost every one of them later sought me out and angrily denounced me for dragging them to shore."

"People hate to be saved." Of course they do. And with good reason.

First, *people hate to be bored*. Another U.S. President,

Calvin Coolidge, came home from church one Sunday. "What did you hear?" asked his wife.

"The preacher," he replied.

"What did he talk about?"

"Sin."

"But what did he say?"

"He was against it."

Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote in his diary: "Went to church today and was not greatly depressed."

Second, *people hate to be manipulated*. All protests to the contrary, being a clergy-

man is not without its perks. People with a natural (or unnatural) desire for power are attracted to the profession. An M.D. once taunted his minister: "When you clergy get sick, you always come to us." To which the minister replied: "When you doctors die, we bury you!"

Third, *people hate to be peasants*. Nobody likes administrators, least of all those with God on their side! Alan Cor-en's anti-papal satire represents this sentiment.

"It's your audience for ten

a.m., Your Holiness," murmured the secretary. "One man?" said the Pope. "You call that an audience?" (Alan Cor-en, "Believe Me").

Yes. People hate to be saved. So why bother to attend a Christian church? Sometimes one wonders. But in the meantime, one answer suffices. As disciples of Christ, we

are called to follow one Master. Just one. And the word of this Master is that his Church consists of ordinary people who have tasted something of God's forgiveness — to them, personally. And because they have been forgiven much, they are invited to love much. This is where it is at. All else is embellishment.

Jesus knew that people hate

to be saved, and he warned of the danger. But his strongest words were reserved for the lifeguards of the religious establishment: "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practise."

Care for a swim? □

Non Sequitur

David Waterworth

I have a little girl who loves nothing better than to lie curled up in bed and listen to *Milly Molly Mandy* Stories. These stories exude a warmth of childhood joy and predictable niceness. Occasionally, though, the little girl's father gets a mischievous glint in his eyes and . . .

Once upon a fine Sunday morning Milly Molly Mandy woke to find the birds singing in the apple tree and the beautiful spring sunshine streaming in the window. "It's Spring," she said to herself, "I shall have to ask Little Friend Susan and Billy Blunt if they should like to go black berrying."

Milly Molly Mandy sprang out of bed and raced into the kitchen. "Muvver," she said, all out of breath with excitement, "after I have had breakfast, tidied the kitchen and polished everybody's boots could I possibly go black berrying?"

And so it wasn't long before the happy trio could be seen wandering down the back country lane with their baskets. "I shall have blackberry pie," said Milly Molly Mandy. "And I shall take mine home for blackberry jam," said Billy Blunt.

Rounding the bend they came to the blackberry fields just covered in luscious ripe berries. Millicent Margaret Amanda looked at all the lovely fruit, turned to little Friend Susan and Billy Blunt and said to them ever so politely: "I want all these for myself. Shove off you two or I'll ram the briars up your nose!!"

Non sequitur has been used as a comedy agent for centuries. You just don't expect the story to turn out that way. It's unexpected. The surprise turns to humour.

Once upon a time a young man had had enough of working for his father and so he demanded all the money he could get out of the old miser and left for greener pastures. He then proceeded to have a very good time indeed. No wasted money in IBD's, appreciating assets or even tax deductible expenses.

Of course, it wasn't long before he blew the lot. "No problems," he thought. "I've lots of friends." But they didn't want to know. "Scot," they said. "Scot." "He scot no friends."

He couldn't get the dole till the qualifying period was

up and he was starving. "I know," he thought, "I'll go back to the old man. If I grovel enough he'll at least give me enough to get by for a while."

And so, he returned to his father. But when he got near the place, his father set the dogs on him, cursed him to his face as a waster and sent him away with nothing but shame.

That's not a *non sequitur*. That's what you'd expect to happen. But when Jesus told this story, He used a different ending. You see, He wasn't describing me or you; He was describing God. God always does the unexpected. The Bible says the father kissed him. That's a *non sequitur*. It just doesn't add up.

Certainly, the message of the Bible doesn't add up. "God so loved the righteous that He gave His own Son." That we could understand. But not if He loved the world. That's everyone: noisy neighbours, pesty children and boring relatives. Even us.

In a sense God's love does add up. And when it does, we can't fight it. It's bigger than us all. □

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KID'S COLUMN

Be Up and Doing

Desmond Ford

Years ago, boys and girls, there was a poem that was taught in almost every school in the country. It as a poem that crossed the ocean and spread like wildfire throughout the countries of Europe, being translated into many languages, even into Sanskrit, a well-known language of India. Even in the little-known country of China the poem was printed on a fan and became tremendously popular. Great men like Henry Ford memorized this poem and declared how much it inspired them towards effort and achievement. The famous Mahatma Gandhi, just a few days before his death, quoted it.

Well, in case you have not been taught it so far, let us give you some of the words:

*Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!—*

*For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.*

*Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our life sublime,*

*And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;*

*Footprints, that are perhaps another
Sailing o'life's solemn main,
A forelorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.*

*Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;*

*Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.*

But what I particularly want to tell you is how that poem was written. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a young professor at Harvard and to him sudden tragedy came with the death of his beautiful wife. For years the torment of his heart did not cease and his grief continued to overwhelm him. Though he was a poet, he lacked the heart to put pen to paper anymore. It seemed that he had no heart for anything and that life had become an empty dream.

One morning as he gazed out of his windows towards some beautiful elms in the fields outside, a conviction rushed upon him that he must cease to act as though life was an empty dream. He must be up and doing. For the first time in months he felt the desire to write poetry once more and very quickly he traced the lines we have just given you above.

Longfellow called this poem "A Psalm of Life." Originally he did not show it to anyone else for he viewed it as a message just for his own heart. Later, however, he allowed it to be published and it went to the hearts of millions, blessing them as the thoughts had blessed him. On one occasion when this nation was polled to find its choice of the best poem, this one won first place with ease.

Into every life, even every young life, there come days when life doesn't seem worth living. At such a time we have to believe with all our hearts

and minds that our sun will rise again and the shadows flee. We must go on living whether we feel like it or not, go on working whether we feel like that or not. Remember that the darkness of midnight is never permanent and that clouds always break and that every tunnel has its exit.

Do you remember that preacher who spoke fervently about the tragedy of Christ's sufferings on the cross and then added "that was Friday, Sunday is a'coming." Our Lord's death and resurrection are a pattern of life itself. In many sad and hard situations we will have to murmur to ourselves "this is Friday but Sunday is a'coming."

Our Lord Jesus, while hanging on the cross, was tempted to come down from it. The crowd jeered at him saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." But of course *he could* have saved himself but if so he would not have saved the world. There will be many crosses for us to bear in life and we will often be tempted to throw them away. But if we can learn to endure the cross and to do God's will however hard it seems, joy and fruitfulness and glory will not be far away.

Yes, you too can make your life sublime. You can make footprints on the sands of time, making the world a better place for your having been in it. Life is not but an empty dream, and the grave is not the goal. Therefore, "act, — act in the living present!, Heart within, and God overhead!" Let us, then, be up and doing. For if God be for us, who can be against us?

Chamberlain Convictions Quashed

Athol Wilson

Legal proceedings against Michael and Lindy Chamberlain found them guilty of murder and accessory after the fact. Those convictions were written against their names — a stigma they would have to carry forever. If they applied for visas their criminal records would be cited. If they sought employment their besmirched characters would be remembered. Their alleged crimes were an indelible blot visible to all and fated to be remembered in history.

Doggedly the Chamberlains fought for their names to be cleared. Eventually they were pardoned, but they were not satisfied. What the court did was tantamount to saying, we still believe you committed the crimes but we are prepared to waive any prolonging of the penalty and legally forgive you. The alleged crimes still remained in the record book. It was simply as if crosses were

scratched over the top of the record. One outrage was that history would still read what was written underneath the word pardoned.

Does this bear any resemblance to God's brand of forgiveness? Must we live with our crimes tabulated for universal gaze albeit with a few pen strokes through them?

The Chamberlains struggled for something more than a mere pardon. They wanted their records wiped clean — to be regarded by the Court as completely innocent from the very beginning. And that is exactly the final decision they were eventually given.

God's brand of forgiveness wipes the record clean. There is no stigma, no messy aftermath that haunts a mortal. Perfect forgiveness is best described by Peter when he pled with his countrymen after Calvary to "repent, then, and

turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (Acts 3:19 N.I.V.). His significant choice of words suggests not a book full of blots and crosses but a slate washed pristine clear of any murky records.

We would not suggest the Chamberlains were guilty and were subsequently declared innocent. The point we make is that the court's final decision of innocence leaves them in the same legal position they enjoyed originally — impeccable, unsullied, faultless.

All mortals, including the Chamberlains, are in a different predicament in the eyes of God. We are all guilty of sin, but those in Christ have a record that is wiped so clean it is as if their lives were always immaculate. Such is the brand of forgiveness found only in Christ.□

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