

danger, warnings and wonderful promises. **God's written word reveals the Creator—Redeemer God** searching for His lost and straying and rebellious people. How thankful we are for what He has done.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who came to live on this planet almost 2,000 years ago, and who will return in great power and glory to be the Judge of all the living and the dead, **He can come to mean everything** to the trusting believer who dares all for Him out of grateful love.

Some people hate Almighty God and are constantly attacking true religion, yet they could come to be like Paul the apostle (chosen messenger) who originally hated Jesus Christ and rejected His claims.

Jesus Christ arrested Paul's downward progress and wonderfully changed his life. He then sent him out to serve and suffer (gladly) for His sake. In the Bible (2nd Corinthians, Chapters 11 and 12) you will read that Paul lived a life of great adventure **He was in constant danger** from false friends, clever, devilish enemies, and difficult circumstances.

Maybe Christianity is too much for our security-loving, ease-loving generation. **Which is more important, security or freedom?**

Jesus Christ, **the only Saviour of mankind**, gives a freedom which sings and soars. Not a freedom **from** responsibility and caring, but a liberating demand for **costly caring and steadfast devotion to duty.**

Where are our red-blooded, sun-bronzed, heroic Australians?

Honestly admitting your guilt, facing up to the demands of the Lord Jesus Christ, (we cannot see Him now, but eventually we will) trusting in His undeserved kindness, (which even accepts us just as we are) makes us become **true men and women.** Ingratitude is an unhappy state of mind.

Someone has said that the Australian's most popular song was "I Did It My Way". However, always pleasing self eventually leads to a sense of lostness and despair, and ultimately to madness and pain forever (Hell).

The truly wise person, who is truly enlightened, will say (by God's grace): "I want to do it God's way". **Self-will blinds us to reality**, but God's Book Tells us: "He (or she) who does the will of God abides forever". **Everlasting life begins here and now**, in this life, do you have it? Are you grateful for all of God's generous gifts?

Here is **the one true God's** (maker and controller) **wonderful promise** to all genuine wholehearted seekers:

" You will seek me, and find me, when you search for me with all your heart."

(Jeremiah Chapter 29 Verse 13)

Bible Translations Recommended: N.I.V., N.A.S.B., N.K.J.V.



True Christianity Means Real Pleasure and Adventure

BY REV. NEIL T. BAKER

Australians are a nation of pleasure-lovers, but it seems to me we often seek our pleasures in the **wrong** places.

Believers share **some** pleasures with non-believers, such as **enjoying the beauties of nature**, of God's creation. But for the believer even the world of nature is his (or her) Heavenly Father's domain.

Some non-believers also share with believers **the pleasures of a happy marriage.**

True Christians are not kill-joys, they actually enjoy richer and deeper pleasures than non-believers, for which they are deeply thankful.

For the believer there is **the joy and gladness of sins forgiven.** The wise philosopher said: "Know yourself". But true self-knowledge means we realise we are **not** what we should be — in technical terms we are part of "fallen" humanity.

The good news of the Christian faith means we need not stay the way we were. Jesus Christ, the central Person of history, can recreate us. This may begin as a painful experience, yet it is like the surgeon's knife before a successful operation. Restoration to spiritual health is very pleasing to the new convert, a reason for gratitude.

Then there is the pleasure, for believers, of a **personal friendship with the one true God**, who meets us in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christ of the Bible. In private and public worship of God there is **the pleasure of His company**, and the pleasure of the company of like-minded friends (fellow believers in Jesus Christ).

After our conscience has been cleansed of guilt by the atoning blood (death) of Jesus Christ, God's final Word, (we all feel the need of "some-thing being done " about the guilt of breaking God's moral laws) there is the grateful satisfied pleasure of a **good conscience**.

When, by God's help, we continue on the pathway of duty and responsibility, there is the **pleasure of purposeful living** and moral and spiritual achievement (by God's grace)

Also, if we have lived faithfully for the true God and His Son Jesus Christ all our lives there is **the pleasurable expectation** of His "Well done, good and faithful servant", at the last great day of accounting. And **the indescribable, exquisite pleasures** of a beautiful eternity. **Living forever in a world of perfect love and justice**, without sickness, suffering, sorrow or sin,

in the company of the Lord and all His redeemed people (Heaven).

Coming back to earth, in the midst of life's ordinariness and drudgery, there is **the pleasure** (for the believer) **of Bible study**. God's Book, is, for the Christian believer, sweeter than honey. It is more precious than gold.

Developing a love for the Bible is like developing a taste for beautiful music. It usually comes gradually, but satisfies our deepest needs.

Next there is **the Pleasure of doing good** to others, and **helping people**, especially if done secretly. We do not do good in order to earn merit, or deserve God's favour. We do not help people in order to receive thanks or blow our own trumpet. But helping others is part of pleasurable, purposeful, Christian living.

Added to all these pleasures is **the excitement of answered prayer**. The non-believer simply says: "Oh — coincidence". But as one great Christian leader once said " When we pray, coincidences happen....." However, nothing ever really happens by chance. In **everything** give thanks!

Of course there is the mystery of unanswered prayer, but at the beginning of our Christian lives God is often very gracious and kind. As we grow and mature in faith He tests us. He is **always** more kind than we deserve. The test of obedience to the ever-present, all-powerful, infinite God comes to see whether we love Him truly (for Himself alone) or for what benefits we receive from **His abundantly generous store**.

Another pleasure for the believer in Jesus Christ is that of **satisfying service**. We need not enter the ministry of the Church to serve the true God full-time. This is really a misunderstanding. The Christian believer serves the Heavenly Father full-time in whatever position God has placed him (or her.) As a policeman or soldier, or preacher, or teacher, or nurse, butcher, labourer, politician, a housewife and mother, a journalist, etc. The main way we serve is not by ramming God's truth down people's throats, but by doing a **worthwhile job of work**.

Then there is the **pleasure of seeing some** of our non-believing friends, relatives, neighbours and workmates **won to trust themselves completely to the Lord Jesus Christ**, even if by our own stumbling efforts at sharing the good news. How glad and grateful we are that they have been reconciled to the Holy God before it is too late.

Now, about the adventure side of true Christianity.

Sad to say, for **some** people, the Christian Church seems to consist of dull, boring sermons (talks) and dull, half-dead people.

This is a great tragedy.

God's written word (the Bible) is a **most interesting and challenging Book**. It is a love-letter from the Eternal God to all His people. It must make the one true God rightly **angry** to hear His Book expounded by dull preachers in a lifeless manner. How many people realise that in the pages of the Bible there is realism, romance, heroism, adventure,