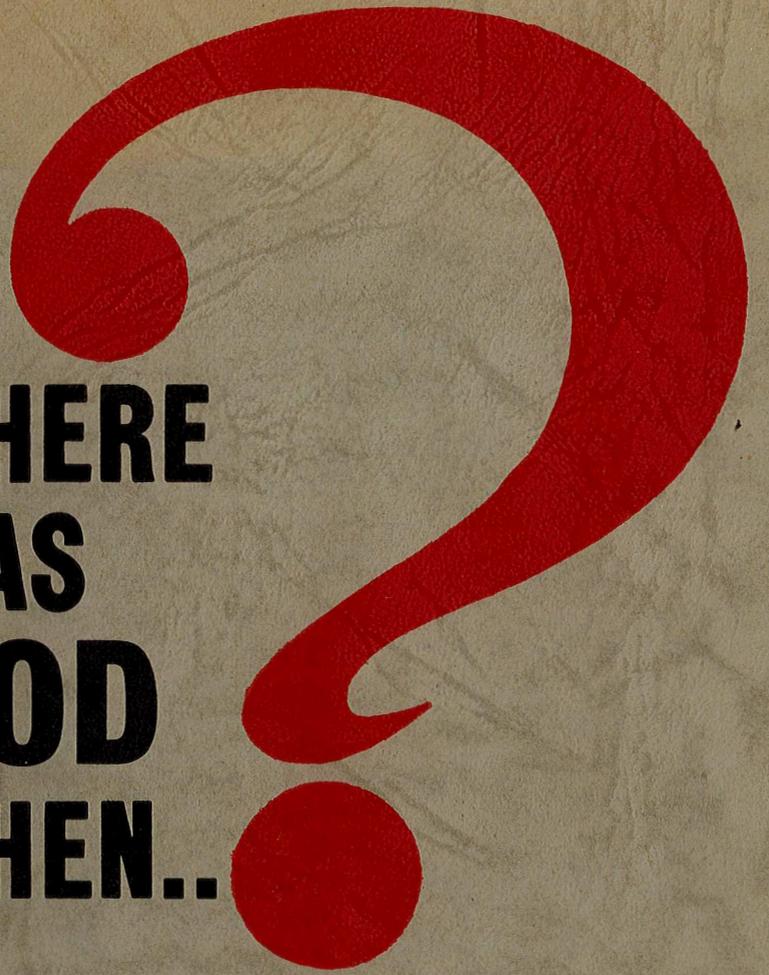


**WHERE  
WAS  
GOD  
WHEN..**



BY

*W. G. Hennessy.*

\* \*

There is a fascinating story behind the return of George Hennessy to tennis in Near South Coast.

George, one of Near South Coast's most able administrators and players over the years, has been hampered by a "dicky" hip, which made him limp.

Some weeks ago George was walking about his Belambi home when, for no apparent reason at all, the hip, which had been faulty for years, righted itself.

Something of a miracle, George sought an explanation from medical men on his recovery and they could give him none.

The recovery might explain George's sudden renewed interest in competitive tennis.

Welcome back, George, and good luck.

\* \*

South Coast Times  
April 1962

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# WHERE WAS GOD . . . WHEN . . . ?

By  
William George Hennessy

*W. G. Hennessy*

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APR 1962

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*To Marjorie  
whose name should be beside  
or perhaps above  
my name on the cover of this book;  
and to my friendly critics  
Evelyn and Rob.*

## FOREWORD

If you decide to continue reading past this point I have no doubt that there will come a time when you will say, "I wonder why 'this' has been included in a book like 'that'?"

or perhaps

"I wonder why 'that' has been included in a book like this?"

I have anticipated the question and prepared an answer.

Jesus Christ's invitation to "believe in Him" and to "live by faith is not an attempt to separate "religion" from every day living. On the contrary, He intimates that for man to exclude Him from any part of life is utter foolishness.

Therefore I see no conflict in presenting this seeming mixture of material within the covers of one book. I believe that they have a great deal in common — that they reflect something of the challenge that is part of living — and much of the peace of mind that too many people consider to be no longer available to man in the twentieth century.

My firm belief is that God, in Christ, still rules in the affairs of men, despite man's obvious lack of co-operation and abuse of God's gift of free will. I believe also, that the gifts of eyes to see and ears to hear; the gifts of friendship and love and laughter; are very much a part of our faith and so there is nothing incongruous in finding "Where Was God . . . . When?" between the same covers as "I Can't Play Golf Either."

or

"Christian Lay Witness" side by side with "Ah Me — I sigh . . ."

Much that is contained in this book has been presented to congregations in many churches throughout the City of Greater Wollongong on the South Coast of New South Wales — which means of course that I must now confess to being a Lay Preacher in the Church of England.

Something of my life appears from time to time in these pages because I feel that some knowledge of the author and his background is needed to assess the value of the material presented in a book of this kind; but I hope that the pronoun "I" does not loom so large as to intrude unduly upon the mind of the reader.

My sincere wish is that men and women may come to accept the fact that Christ and Christianity are not to be separated from everyday living — that the Christ of the scriptures is not a killjoy — that to understand the meaning of a life lived IN CHRIST, is to achieve the ultimate in living.

*W. G. Hennessy*

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*"Does the clay say to him who fashions it 'What are you making'?  
or 'Your work has no handles'?  
Thus says the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:  
'Will you question me about my children, or command me concerning the work of my hands?'"*

Isaiah 45 : 9-11

WHERE WAS GOD . . . . .  
. . . . . WHEN . . . . . ?



One night at home, at an hour when most sensible people are fast asleep, there was a knock on the door.

I had not long been home after a few days in hospital, so I had a wonderful excuse for not moving from my chair, which meant of course that my wife answered the door.

At such an hour, I naturally visualised some kind of emergency, but when it became obvious that this was not the case, and the conversation gave signs of going on and on, my curiosity got the better of me, and I decided to join the party.

Our visitor was seated on the doorstep, obviously quite drunk, and expressing very definite views on a subject that has been discussed by people, drunk and sober, for thousands of years.

The first words that I overheard were —

"I don't **believe** in your God!

There **is** no God!

Where was God when the Germans sent millions of Jews to die in the gas-chambers?

Where was God when London and Coventry and Berlin and other cities were being bombed?

Where was God when .....

A question as old as the human race — Where was God . . . . when? Or, to put the question in its more familiar form — "Why does God **allow** war? Why does God let people suffer?"

At this particular time of asking, the man who put the question was one who had known war at first hand and he remembered the horror and unspeakable suffering — he remembered what it was like to be in a position where one had to kill or be killed - - -

He was drunk and had a one-track mind, so we were only able to get a word in now and then — and we tried to tell him something of the love of God through Jesus Christ — but his monopoly of the conversation and very definite views helped to effectively shut out any other opinions.

The situation did have its humorous moments — although being kept standing at our front doorstep until 12.30 a.m. was not one of them — but, of course, in reality it was no laughing matter. The problem was a very real one — just as it is real in the minds of thousands of other people.

**The tragedy is that the majority of people who ask the question make absolutely no attempt to find an answer.**

They prefer to use suffering as an excuse to condemn and join the popular chorus of "There is no God" or "If there is a God He has no love or concern for mankind ! !"

However, suffering, to a greater or lesser extent, is obviously a part of life as we know it, and so it is perhaps not an unreasonable question to ask — especially in moments of great stress — at times of great personal loss - - -

Where was God ..... when?

I am reminded — and this is just a passing thought, but could be closer than we realise to an answer to the question I have presented to you - - -

I am reminded of a man saying in very hurt and angry tones — "Where was God when my son died in such agony?" And I recall the answer; "In the same place as when His own Son died on the Cross."

Think about it some time.

However, to return to our question, presented in words familiar to all of us — "Why does God **allow** war and suffering?"

First of all, let me make three statements of fact:

1. God does not **sanction** suffering.
2. It is not God's **desire** that men should suffer.
3. God does not **enjoy** seeing people suffer.

You and I who, I feel sure, claim to have within us the ability to love — the desire and ability to show concern for the welfare of others. You and I who are critical — for example — of those people who openly express hatred for the negro and other non-white races — and therefore **imply** that we look upon all people as our equals — you and I also claim, surely, that we hate suffering; that we have no pleasure in seeing people suffer.

The desire to love is generally — although I'm afraid not always — greater than the desire to hurt.

And yet we, who make such claims for ourselves, know that **our** ability to love is but a tiny reflection of the love of God —

that God, who gave to each one of us the ability to "Love one another," has an infinitely greater capacity for love than we can ever hope to possess.

How much more then, must God, — WHO IS LOVE — God who is the very essence of all that love stands for and who, unlike ourselves, does not change — and is never inconsistent —

**How much more must He hate pain, suffering, the horrors of war, the wilful selfishness, the sinfulness of man which contributes so much to man's unhappiness and suffering?**

God hates all that is evil, but has love and compassion for the evil doer. God hates suffering and has no joy in seeing men, women and children suffer, but He does acknowledge the FACT of suffering and tells us that we, who are made in the image of God, can, BY THE POWER WITHIN US, MEET, OVERCOME and RISE ABOVE the circumstances which involve suffering.

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, reminds us that God still governs human experience — still rules in the affairs of men, and not necessarily **only** in the affairs of those who seek His guidance and help. However, to those of faith He does say, through Paul:

"No temptation has come your way that is too hard for flesh and blood to bear. God can be trusted not to allow you to suffer any temptation beyond your powers of endurance. He will see to it that every temptation has a way out so that it will never be impossible for you to bear it" . . . . .

and, in the words of Jesus Himself —

"Come unto me, all who travail and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

The apostle John states in his gospel (and I use the new English translation):

"The WORD (Jesus Christ) dwelt with God and WHAT GOD WAS THE WORD WAS."

And from this and countless other verses from the Holy Scriptures (e.g. 2 Corinthians 4: 4-6; Colossians 1: 15-20) we can see that if we wish to understand the true nature of God — if we wish to get a clear **picture** of God we look to the Christ of the Bible, and the MORE WE LEARN OF CHRIST, THE GREATER THE CERTAINTY THAT OUR GOD IS A GOD OF LOVE.

Do you remember the reply that Jesus sent back to John the Baptist when John — then in prison — found himself in need of re-assurance.

"Go and show John again those things that you hear and see. THE BLIND RECEIVE THEIR SIGHT AND THE LAME WALK, THE LEPERS ARE CLEANSED AND THE DEAF HEAR . . . . ."

or perhaps you recall these words to be found in the apostle John's first letter:

"We have come to **Know** and **Trust** the LOVE THAT GOD HAS FOR US. **GOD IS LOVE** AND THE MAN WHOSE LIFE IS LIVED IN LOVE DOES IN FACT LIVE IN GOD, AND GOD DOES IN FACT LIVE IN HIM . . . ."

THAT, SURELY, IS NOT A PICTURE OF A GOD WHO SANCTIONS SUFFERING! It is certainly not a description of one who takes a delight in seeing people suffer!

The Old Testament gives to us many pen pictures of what God is like. Typical of them is this one, when God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, says "I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST. I AM THE LORD AND APART FROM ME THERE IS NO GOD."

And through the prophet Malachi He says, "I AM THE LORD AND I CHANGE NOT."

And so, as we search through the Scriptures, we have revealed to us that THERE IS ONE GOD — HE IS ABSOLUTELY DEPENDABLE AND ENTIRELY CONSISTENT — HE IS GOD NOT ONLY OF LOVE BUT GOD WHO IS LOVE.

These facts — and this image of God — God who does not change — God who is entirely consistent — **must be kept in mind** as we read passages of the OLD TESTAMENT which, according to many people, reveal God as cruel and heartless — a fickle God who at times professes to love — at other times threatens — and is entirely inconsistent . . . such words, for instance as these, spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

"BEHOLD I WILL BRING EVIL UPON THESE PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT HEEDED MY WORDS NOR MY LAW BUT, REJECTED IT." (Jeremiah 6: 19).

Or again,

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel "You have seen all the EVIL I have brought upon Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah, and this day they are a desolation and no man lives in them." (Jeremiah 44: 2).

If a man took delivery of a Rolls Royce — factory tested and fully guaranteed — and before taking it away he asked that the petrol be drained out of the tank and the tank refilled with kerosene — it would not be hard to predict the horrified re-action of all who were involved in manufacture and sale of the car.

And if the buyer, despite all advice to the contrary, insisted that he wanted to run his Rolls Royce on kerosene, then it is easy to imagine the sales manager saying,

"Look! We know our product and we know of a certainty that if you insist on acting in this foolish way, you will regret it. If the car goes at all, it will be most unsatisfactory and inefficient — and finally, although we are **concerned** at your behaviour we cannot be held responsible in any way for the consequences which we **know** will stem from your refusal to heed the advice of those people who planned and built this car."

AND, DOES NOT GOD **THE PLANNER** — GOD THE **ARCHITECT** AND **BUILDER** — GOD THE **CREATOR** — say precisely the same thing?

He gives to mankind a warning and says "Look, I know what is in man (John 2: 23-25) I created him (Genesis 1: 26-27) (Colossians 1: 15-17) I know what is best for him — and if he insists on living apart from me and not seeking My guidance and help in ALL situations, then he is not realising his full potential and will **inevitably** suffer the consequences."

God does not threaten or wield the big stick but warns that without Him we are functioning on a level comparable with a Rolls Royce struggling along on kerosene.

Yes, a poor illustration I know, and of course Jesus said it all so much better nearly two thousand years ago if we would only take the time to read, and take Him at His word.

Remember?

"I am the true vine. Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine — no more can you unless you abide in Me." (John 15).

or again?

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. He who comes to me shall never hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst. As the Living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." (John 6: 32 etc.)

For full efficiency, the Rolls Royce needs to be used as its designer and builder intended it to be used — amongst other things, it needs to consume petrol, not kerosene.

Similarly, for maximum efficiency — for a full and satisfying life — for true happiness you and I need the direct contact with the True Vine — we need the sustaining nourishment that can only be obtained by eating, **daily** of the Bread of Life . . . .

And so, we now know that there is ONE GOD — that He is absolutely dependable — entirely consistent — that He is a God of Love — A GOD WHO **IS** LOVE, and that He hates evil and has no joy in seeing people suffer.

WHY THEN, DOES HE NOT USE HIS ALMIGHTY POWER TO PUT AN END TO WAR AND SUFFERING?

I believe that the answer is not hard to find.

God gave to us a very precious gift — a gift that I feel sure each one of us would fight to keep. Millions of people have risked their lives — indeed many have lost their lives — because they felt that they were in danger of losing this gift.

It is the gift of FREEDOM — freedom to make our own decisions — freedom of action — the gift of FREE WILL.

The complete loss of this gift of free will is the price we would pay. We would have to hand this gift back to God if we desired Him to put an end to war and suffering.

Let me take that thought a little further . . . . .

Suffering is no respecter of persons and no person can be said to be, automatically — or because of the position he holds or the money he possesses — free from the possibility of knowing what it means to suffer; and the circumstances surrounding the suffering do not, necessarily, make the burden any harder, or any easier, to bear.

This means — for instance — that a woman whose husband is killed in a car accident knows precisely the same sense of loss and anguish as does a woman whose husband is killed in the front line of war. A man, who loses a leg or an arm or his sight, knows what it is to suffer, irrespective of whether the loss was sustained at work or at home or in a war zone . . . . . so, even though many people may pose the question "Why doesn't God prevent war?," it can be seen that the suffering of war cannot be separated from the suffering of every day life. What we are really demanding is that God should eliminate ALL suffering; all car accidents; all swimming tragedies; all sickness; it even means that my ten year old boy must never be allowed to break his arm or skin his knee. We cannot say to God — "We don't really mind mumps or the common cold, but we rather draw the line at broken limbs or double pneumonia; and we certainly will not put up with paralysis or polio or death."

Of course, in actual fact, if this seemingly ideal state of affairs did exist, we would have no say at all. We would be puppets— automatons — with no minds of our own — no freedom to choose how we would use any one moment of our time, because while we are free to choose — while we possess the gift of FREE WILL — it is almost certain that a toe will be stubbed — a knee skinned — a bone broken — or something happen that will result in sorrow or suffering of greater or lesser degree.

YES, THE PRICE WE WOULD PAY WOULD BE COMPLETE LOSS OF FREEDOM — THE LOSS OF THE COVETED GIFT OF FREE WILL — loss of the gift that allows us to make a thousand and one decisions — for good or evil — for better or worse — but they are OUR decisions.

One of the most important decisions we have to make in this exercise of FREE WILL, is a decision to accept or reject that which Jesus Christ has to offer — accept the love that Jesus **invites** — does not **demand** or make it impossible for us to choose an alternative . . . . . and just as those of us who are parents prefer to be loved by our children BECAUSE THEY CHOOSE TO DO SO OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL and not because we force them into a position where they have no choice —

SO GOD THOUGHT IT BEST TO TAKE THE RISK OF BEING LOVED OR HATED OR IGNORED BY MEN WHO WERE FREE TO CHOOSE, RATHER THAN CREATE PUPPETS WITHOUT FEELINGS WHO WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE — PUPPETS WHO WOULD BE INCAPABLE OF KNOWING RIGHT OR WRONG — GOOD OR EVIL — LOVE OR HATE.

We are what we are, because God, WHO IS LOVE, made us this way — and we have within us, by the grace of God, a capacity for fellowship with God which leads to peace of mind, and a power to MEET, OVERCOME and RISE ABOVE the circumstances which involve suffering.

I, for one, prefer it that way.

And, in case you may get a wrong impression and think this attitude is that of a selfish person to whom life has always been easy — the attitude of one who feels no concern for the welfare of others — I feel called upon to finish on a very personal note. I know you will not misinterpret my motives.

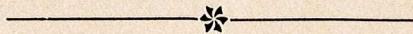
My mother did not blame God when my father died, leaving her to cope with four children under twelve years of age. I did not blame God when I had to leave school to spend what proved to be two years on crutches plus the added encumbrance of a splint from chest to ankle; nor did I blame Him for the fact that, when I was fit enough to look for work, the year was 1934 and there happened to be over 300,000 other people in Australia also looking for work — or for the fact that my first job lasted only three weeks because I went all too close to losing my left arm — with the help of a piece of machinery. I had turned twenty-five before I knew the feeling of security that goes with a permanent job . . . . .

If there are times when you begin to doubt the reality of Christ's promises — if at times of great stress or personal loss you find that you have a desire to ask yourself, or even

speaking aloud, that very human question — "Where was God . . . when . . . ?" you can be very sure that He has always been right at your elbow and the only reason you have not been aware of His presence is because you have neglected to seek Him within the pages of your Bible — forgotten the power of prayer — neglected your opportunities to worship in His house — forgotten to count your blessings — perhaps lost your ability to say "Thank you!"

Give thought to — and take home with you — these words, and let us pray that we may know the same certainty that John and the disciples knew —

"We have come to KNOW and TRUST the LOVE that GOD has for us. GOD IS LOVE, and the man whose life is lived in love does in fact live in God and God does in fact live in him."



## "AH ME, I SIGH . . . ."



Some evenings after work and each Saturday morning as I remove my scythe from its place of honour in the tool shed and walk out to survey my little quarter acre, I hear around me strong proof of man's inhumanity to man.

It is said that about 1830 Mr. Edwin Budding, the inventor of the lawnmower, used to disturb and mystify his neighbours by practising on his own back lawn after dark.

The mystery was solved long ago, but the addition of a motor to a direct descendant of the original mower was the beginning of a sequence that has added variety to the disturbance and increased its intensity to about 120 phons.

First comes a note of warning which takes the form of sounds emanating from owners of motor mowers that refuse to start. This is closely followed by a richer, even more expressive mixture of human and mechanical sounds involving the owners of mowers that almost start. Then the inevitable crescendo of sound for which I am never quite prepared, and from which, short of shutting myself in the house, I know but one means of escape.

The quiet swish of my blade moving through the grass leads my mind away from the surrounding atmosphere of urgency, of hurry-no-time-to-spare.

It is natural that my thoughts should turn to one whose ability with the scythe is legendary. With his quiet, liesurely approach he is able to whittle away at time gradually, giving us a full sixty seconds for each minute. Can you imagine the scorn on the old gentleman's face if it were suggested that he would do a better job with a motor mower? Or the chaos that would occur throughout the world if he DID fall for a tempting offer from some wealthy collector of antiques and exchange his scythe for a gleaming, automatic, life-long, trouble-free, quick-starting, time saving motor mower?

There would enter into him a sense of urgency — a desire to get his work over and done with — and that would surely lead to complications: a fifty minute hour perhaps, or a six day week? Birthdays and anniversaries being not merely forgotten, but obliterated!

But perhaps such fears are unfounded. Both he and I know the value of relaxation and to use a scythe correctly is just another way of saying "relax." A scythe is also used for making friends; it is to lean on whilst making friends . . . . .

Many strangers have stopped, watched and confessed to the frustration they have experienced in attempting to use a scythe. They have commented on the apparent lack of effort, the easy rhythm of my stroke as the blade shaves the grass a fraction of an inch from the ground. I make a friend as I demonstrate true technique; explain the need for razor edge sharpness; the importance of achieving a smooth, semi-circular sweep with the blade as distinct from a dragging action; the desirability of taking only a two or three inch swathe. I enthuse on the advantages of the scythe; its economy, its serenity, its enhancement of meditation. I speak of the venerable history of the scythe.

(As everyone knows, the scythe evolved from the sickle which was one of the primal implements of civilisation. The sickle was used by people of the Natufian culture of food gatherers who inhabited caves in Mt. Carmel in Palestine over 8,000 years ago.

Materials used in its manufacture varied from flint to bronze and thence to iron. The use of iron led to the gradual development of a short-handled scythe which in turn gave to mankind, the long-handled scythe about the beginning of the Christian era.)

The passing of time turns my new friends into old friends and as such they claim the right to regard my adherence to the scythe as foolishness.

"Don't you ever knock off? Mind your toe! Why don't you put a motor in it?" and similar witticisms obviously stem from minds frustrated with their own inability to master the scythe.

I am led to compare the complicated workings of the human mind with the beautiful simplicity of the scythe. It is one of those rare things with perfect balance, achieved because of and not in spite of its peculiar shape.

(The scythe maker simply bends the long sneath (handle) near its middle so that the line of the nearer half passes through the centre of gravity of the whole instrument).

The obvious longing for serenity and peace implied in the words written by a poet of old, "Ah me, I sigh to see the scythe afield," leaves little doubt that he was one who like the Prodigal Son, sought for happiness in the environs of a big city and had been sadly disillusioned. One can only hope that the sight and sound of the scythe was not denied him before old Father Time demonstrated HIS ability and quietly gathered him in.

And therein is the true worth of the scythe expressed. It does not boast loudly of that which it is doing. It goes about the set task quietly.

The scythe is unique in that, although expressly designed as a work tool, it can take control in a world of noise and transmit to its owner a feeling of tranquility and peace.



*" . . . all men praised God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. "*

Acts 4:21-22

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*" . . . many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did but Jesus did not trust Himself to them because He knew all men and needed no one to bear witness of man: for He Himself knew what was in man. "*

John 2:23-25

## TWO OF A KIND



At the risk of being accused of preparing to deliver a sermon, I am going to quote from chapter three, verses twenty and twenty-one of Paul's letter to The Ephesians.

"Now, to Him who by His power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine — to Him be glory for ever and ever . . . ."

The year was 1962, the month was April and the day an ordinary working day. I walked into the A.M.P. building in Wollongong intending to catch the first available transport from ground to third floor — and then made a sudden decision to use the stairs. Instead of behaving like the staid, middle aged gentleman that I really am, I glanced around to make sure that I was not observed and then ran up the stairs TWO AT A TIME.

Such childish behaviour demands an explanation, and I shall give it after drawing your attention once again to portion of chapter three of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

"Now unto Him, who by His Power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine . . . ."

It is with this in mind that I want to tell you of two miracles that I have experienced in my life. One SPIRITUAL and the other PHYSICAL — and yet in the latter a remarkable suggestion of the spiritual. I will tell them as simply as I know how, because they are essentially simple, unheralded, and yet so profound that even after the passing of years, there is no doubt in my mind that these things did indeed come to pass.

I have been lay preacher and Sunday school teacher for over twenty-five years, and for most of those years I believed — and when the occasion presented itself, I taught — that it is not given to man to know, in this world, of the certainty of Salvation. I believed that any man who made such a claim was only fooling himself and was self-righteously assuming a knowledge far beyond the power of the human mind . . . .

On the morning of 5th June, 1959, at fifteen minutes to six, as I sat down to read my Bible before going to work, I had no thought in my mind — no prayer on my lips saying "Lord, give to me **now** the certainty that I am acceptable to you."

I read only three verses of Psalm 51 — a Psalm in which David seeks forgiveness for a great wrong that he had done.

"Have mercy upon me O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

**For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me."**

And there I stopped. I could read no further. I experienced a profound feeling of elation and turned, in that very wonderful moment from unbelief to a certainty I had thought to be impossible — and I asked forgiveness for ever doubting that, despite the sinfulness of man, God, in Christ, had made it possible for man to know, in this world, the certainty of salvation.

My joy — and this small, often ridiculed word can best describe my feelings — was not, as might be imagined, followed by any impression of self-righteousness or desire to assume a "Holier than thou" mantle. On the contrary, in my own experience "sin" took on a new and deeper, and yet not frightening, meaning and I felt strangely glad that I was— **and still am** — the kind of person that Christ came into the world to save; fortunate indeed to be able to see clearly my need of, and dependance, on Him.

There is so much positive teaching in the New Testament on this subject that I have since marvelled at my lack of understanding — although it is obvious to me that this revelation was not the result of any exercise of intellect or wisdom on my part.

(For example, Jesus' use of the present tense, as recorded in John 3:36 and John 5:24, stresses the fact that it is possible to know, in this body and in this life, the certainty of salvation.)

I have described what to me is a miracle. And surely it is a miracle that Almighty God should so concern Himself with the affairs of men that it is possible to know peace of mind **now** . . .

But perhaps that is not the kind of experience that most people would look upon as a miracle. Webster's dictionary defines a miracle as:—

"An event or effect in the PHYSICAL world deviating from the known laws of nature, rising above and beyond the limits or powers of our knowledge of those laws. An extraordinary event brought about by superhuman agency."

I mentioned a PHYSICAL miracle. Let's see how this measures up to Webster's definition.

At the age of fifteen I was on holidays at a little country centre called Myrree — some twenty-five miles from Wangaratta in Victoria. One morning I set out on horseback to collect the mail, but had ridden only a short distance when a stab of pain in my right hip affected me in a way that made it impossible for me to ride any further. I dismounted and walked back to the house.

The outcome proved to be two years in a splint from chest to ankle, and crutches as my only visible means of support.

The particular affliction is called a Perthes hip. Its symptoms include a slight shortening of the leg, evidence of disease in the hip joint or socket clearly visible on an X-Ray picture; a certain and obvious restriction or stiffness in the hip movement; an occasional "locking" of the hip joint; always after sitting or kneeling for any length of time, a slow straightening of the hip before walking.

The habit of the particular disease is to reach a certain stage of deterioration and then stay put — according to specialists and authorities in this field in A.D. 1931 — "for as long as ye both shall live."

This did not worry me unduly. I was far from being crippled, and enjoyed tennis; worked for years in farming areas, and for twenty-two years worked in the steel industry — so I gratefully accepted the ability to do these things and was never at any time desirous of saying **or** praying "Lord God, take this affliction away from me . . . ."

It was at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of the 19th April, 1962, that I was walking down the back steps of my home in Bellambi, with the intention of doing some work around the tennis court, when I stopped, turned back, walked inside the house and said to my wife,

"Something has happened to my hip!"

To the obvious question, "What do you mean by 'something'?" my intelligent response was,

"Blowed if I know — just — something!"

Despite a remarkable and complete absence of any feeling or happening of a physical nature I knew of a certainty, because something — someone? — had told me, that the restriction and stiffness; the muscular tightness; the symptoms of thirty years — had gone. I no longer "favour" the leg when lifting weights or climbing stairs. The little episode mentioned earlier of taking stairs two at a time was a test which I passed with honours . . .

A miracle? I think so.

If this thing had happened to you what would be your reaction?

TWO MIRACLES! ONE SPIRITUAL — the other PHYSICAL, and yet strangely spiritual — the first essential to man, although of course I am aware that the way through to Christ may differ from person to person; the second perhaps an aid to faith but not essential.

The first essential because therein is revealed the love of God through Christ in that — as Paul writes, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God is essentially personal and is concerned with every aspect of our lives. He has made available to all men a free gift which brings with it a knowledge of what Christ meant when He said,

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you.”

Ask of Him in faith. Ask of Him on behalf of others as well as for yourself. Keep contact, seek His guidance and help, be conscious of His presence in all situations — and count your blessings.

If, at times, things appear to go wrong. If you ask and the answer is not as you think it should be — or if time goes by and there appears to be no answer, remember it is true that we have **One who, by His power within us is able to do far more than we ever dare to ask or imagine . . . .** and if you feel that it may help then by all means remember that, like the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, I too was “above 40 years of age,” and do not despair — ask in faith and seek His will in all things and above all, give God The Glory.



## SOME DAY, I'LL GO BACK



Strong, probing fingers of light forced shadows to seek the protection of trees, rocks, and even blades of grass, as the sun climbed over the hill, bringing with it the promise of a perfect day.

As I watched, I drifted back in memory some thirty years to the pleasant surroundings and associations of a certain two-hundred acre “mixed” farm — one of many set in the hills that stretch away northward from Mt. Buffalo in Victoria.

The boss was a man about sixty years young; greying hair; tanned face, remarkably free of wrinkles; ready smile; stoop-shouldered, and legs slightly bowed for reasons that need no recording.

Ensuring a sufficient supply of food to satisfy the ever-recurring needs of one hundred and thirty farm personnel was a full-time job, but one that, aided by the organising ability of the farmer, was not beyond the capacity of the farm.

The “mouths to feed” belonged to: the boss, his wife, a son and daughter past school age, myself — all proud possessors of appetites that are, traditionally, the heritage of those who live close to the soil; thirty head of cattle, all known by name and to whom chewing become a habit; forty sheep, whose dainty nibbling, and seemingly finicky picking was mere camouflage for a second-to-none ability to denude the ground of all grass, thus necessitating day to day control of their movements; Blossom, a draught mare to whom an elephant could give away little in point of size and whose drooping lower lip always reminded me of a spoiled, petulant child. Bloss’ appetite was matched only by her great strength and courageous heart; Suntoon, sixteen and a half hands of perfection whose performances, together with his supply of cups and ribbons won in fair combat at Shows — Adelaide, Melbourne and all points north — were a constant source of pride to all the family; Kate, a satiny black beauty with a vicious dislike of strangers, capable of gracing a sulky or pulling a plough with equal efficiency; Ned, sheep dog par excellence; Nigger, too full of years — and cunning — to work; six pigs; twenty two fowls; eleven turkeys and ten ducks . . . .

Of course, over the years many changes have been wrought. Suntoon, Kate and Blossom now graze in greener pastures; old age, or human necessity has spelled the end for many another of

these my friends; the son and daughter have married, and have moved away from the district.

But, one day I will re-visit this farm, and if its new owner will allow me to wander around at my leisure, I will perhaps, re-capture some of the friendly atmosphere that was so much a part of the place; know again the peace of mind that belongs only to those people who partake of a steady diet of congenial work — work that does not know monotonous repetition, but leaves one to finish the day, not with a sense of relief, but rather, one of contentment and achievement.



## CHRISTIAN LAY WITNESS



The Layman, in any field, is generally acknowledged to be inferior to the expert, and it is reasonable to look upon the priest or minister as the expert in Christian teaching. I am sure that the experts are willing to admit that there is no clear cut line of right and wrong in situations involving the layman in Christian Witness, and therefore it naturally follows that it would be very foolish of me to suggest that I know all the answers. It is not always easy to find the answers to situations in which I am involved; obviously any attempt to point the way for others is even more difficult.

However, I am convinced of one thing — and this despite my liking for group discussion and pooling of thoughts and ideas in relation to all Christian activity — I am convinced that the solutions to the problems of Christian Lay Witness are to be found **ONLY** in and through Jesus Christ and involves the individual at a **very personal level**. There is an answer in **all** situations, even though the answer, in similar situations may differ with the individual. Our Lord is not ignorant of the fact that this is the year we call nineteen hundred and seventy. He has always known that there would come a time when the problems of the 20th century would confront His followers — although many who claim to be His followers appear to believe that He lives only in the past and is quite incapable of giving positive instruction and leadership in 20th century situations.

I do not intend to spend time quoting scriptures at you but it is well to remember that Jesus Christ **is** to be trusted; that He **did** claim to be "The Way, The Truth and The Life;" that He does not work 9 till 5 with breaks for morning and afternoon tea and public holidays off! He has promised to be on call for 24 hours a day — and does not forget that many of His people have problems in the field of Christian Witness when on afternoon or night shift or at a Public Meeting or even at a party or on a golf course . . . . .

Perhaps I should warn you that during the course of this address there will be times when that little personal pronoun "I" will intrude — and now and again I may feel called upon to draw a member of my family into it. I do not intend to apologise for this, although at the same time I ask for sympathetic understanding of my motives for doing so. I believe that words spoken

on such a subject as Christian Lay Witness must be the sincere views of the speaker and therefore a part of him — part of his life . . . . .

I remember a very good friend of mine — an old man when I was still young — who combined, in very attractive fashion an outstanding memory and a vivid imagination. Any kind of discussion was meat and drink to him and he loved nothing better than to attract attention by clearing his throat in very noisy fashion — sinking just a little deeper into his favourite chair — and saying,

“Much as I dislike having to use the personal pronoun when in company, I feel that my experience in this particular field qualifies me to . . . . ., and then the little word “I” would be overworked during the course of a description of some real, or imagined, personal experience.

And so, much as I dislike using the personal pronoun in company, I feel called upon to tell you something of my background — not because there is anything terribly exciting or outstanding to record, but because it may enable you to accept or understand a point of view with which you may otherwise disagree or even object to strongly. And because my subject is one that is very much an **individual** or **personal** matter, it is even possible that you may hear a little of some thing that is relevant and applicable to the problems of Christian Lay Witness.

To justify these thoughts — and as, perhaps, a poor example of what I am trying to convey to you . . . . .

It is possible that a speaker on this subject may be tempted to suggest that Christians should find time to be involved in community affairs outside the church as well as — and even at times **instead** of — activities within the church. He might lend support to his statement by referring to his fifteen years as Secretary of the local Progress Association or the four years involvement with the Community Rock Pool; or he may mention his years as an executive of the Near South Coast Tennis Association — and then add that he is very privileged to have had over twenty years as Lay Preacher and Church Warden and . . . . .

Your reaction to all this could be, “It’s all very well for him to talk. Obviously time is no problem to him and he can conveniently fit these activities into his life.”

However, should the speaker decide to add — and he may not necessarily do so — that his wife takes two sessions of Sunday School each week and one school scripture class; is both speaker and organist for Mothers’ Union, and church district visitor; and they have five children of their own plus two adopted children . . . . .

You still may not **agree** with the statement regarding community activities but the extra personal knowledge could at least leave the impression that the speaker was not just suggesting that “other people” should do these things — and it may even cause some of his hearers to wonder if it is their own lack of **desire**, rather than lack of time, that may be the reason for avoiding involvement in community activities outside the church.

A very good friend of mine, whose name is John, has a small fabricating shop in Mittagong. He is regarded as a man who can be trusted — a man who will not send out shoddy or inferior work, and so part of his daily witness as a Christian is in the calibre of his work.

As you walk into his workshop, there can be seen on the wall another expression of faith. It is a notice board made of steel plate and the letters and words are welded letters and words. The wording is as strong and permanent as the board itself. It reads,

“The name of Jesus Christ means everything to me. Please do not blaspheme or misuse His name while you are in this shop.”

And so, everything about the shop is a witness to a man’s faith. The calibre of his work; his obvious pleasure in the fact that he is **able** to work; his attitude to his job and to people; his love of Christ and his belief that others need to know and love Christ.

And yet, there is still a question to be asked.

“What does John do if a man does, in actions or words, blaspheme or misuse the name of Christ?” And the answer is, perhaps strangely, NOTHING. In this, I believe he is right. John has made his stand — it is very obvious to any visitor — and the Christian’s job is not to antagonise unnecessarily but to KEEP CONTACT; to make sure that the door remains open so that, should the opportunity arise, we may be able to witness just a little more to our faith; witness in the atmosphere that we know best — the familiar surroundings of the home; industry; the factory; the office, the farm. It is well to remember that it can take less than ten seconds to be tagged “hypocrite” — and ten years to shake it off. Such a title is earned by a man or a woman through inconsistency — **not failure to be perfect**, but inconsistency. I believe it is a name deservedly given to the half-hearted Christian — the man whose Monday standards and set of values differ from outwardly expressed Sunday standards — the man who, quite wrongly, believes that to be acceptable to his work mates — believes that to be regarded as “one of the boys” by his work mates, he must blaspheme a little and show appreciation of all the crude jokes and expressions that he hears,

and even occasionally show how broad-minded he is by telling a few doubtful jokes himself.

However, that does not necessarily add up to the fact that it would be good witness, in this kind of situation, to run around madly and loudly protesting — and therefore antagonising. There is a time to protest, and a time to leave well alone — perhaps by avoiding, in the least conspicuous way, becoming involved.

Jesus protested openly and very strongly when the money changers and sellers of animals and birds profaned His Father's house, but it was his quiet witness and obvious willingness to show friendship that caused Zachaeus, the chief taxgatherer, to see the error of his ways. Remember the unpopular little man who climbed a tree so that he could see Jesus? Jesus invited Himself to dine at the home of Zachaeus and, although the record shows no word of condemnation, we find Zachaeus confessing to all kinds of skulduggery and promising to make amends to all whom he had robbed or cheated in any way.

And now, in case you have forgotten, I had better repeat that, much as I dislike using the personal pronoun while in company . . . . .

I was born in Narranderra, N.S.W. and moved to Yanco at the age of five. Schooldays involved two schools only — Yanco Public School and Leeton High School. My father died in 1927 when I was eleven, my brother twelve and two sisters seven and five. At fifteen years of age, with thoughts of offering my talents to an eagerly waiting world, I found myself, instead, at the beginning of what proved to be two years in a splint from chest to ankle and using two crutches as a means of locomotion.

I am fully aware that I had plenty of time to practice, but I look back with some pride on the fact that I was regarded as the best four-legged tennis player in the Riverina (I have at times been reminded that I was the **only** one — which may have had something to do with the fact that I was the best?)

Nineteen hundred and thirty four, and once again ready to look for work which I eventually found in the Leeton Canning Factory — work of a seasonal nature, which ended more abruptly than would normally have been the case when I very nearly left my arm in a capping machine.

A few months on compensation; and then followed seven years made up of harvesting rice — wheat — picking fruit — dairying — cutting and thrashing broom millet — **SOMETIMES !!**

Finally, twenty two years in the steel industry — and if I was keen to advertise I would tell you that I am now Organiser for the Wollongong Hospital Contribution Fund . . . . .

These years of mixing with people in many and varied circumstances — good years and years not quite as good — war years and depression years — revealed to me that "getting along" with people does not mean a lowering of standards of behaviour; taught me that witnessing to the kind of faith I profess to have means "holding fast" in many kinds of situations. Mixing with men on seasonal work invariably involved a testing period of a few days — and it is good to remember that many a self-styled tough character, blasphemer and professed unbeliever recognised honesty of purpose—a consistency in the pattern of behaviour — a sincere desire not to be "one of the boys" in the accepted sense of the term. Such recognition generally gained a grudging respect—and more often than not respect and friendship, and I could truly claim to be one of the boys in a much more satisfactory and satisfying sense.

Let me again repeat that one who professes to the Christian faith, and in the eyes of his fellow men does not live it out in his way of life and his attitude to others, is not only ridiculed and labelled hypocrite but he is responsible for lowering the level of what may be regarded as normal and acceptable behaviour for one of the Christian faith. A wrong impression is given that the Church is just another club which functions at precisely the same level as other clubs and carries similar obligations. I do not belittle the wonderful work carried out by many service clubs — but surely if we claim the presence of Christ in our lives it should be noticeable. The ultimate should not be "I'm as good as the next bloke" but to show forth something of the compassion and love and patience of Christ, and not be unduly concerned with whether we believe ourselves to be as good as the next bloke or not.

As we live or work alongside people, coming to be regarded as a friend who is dependable, and even patient, at times when it is not easy to be patient; being regarded as conscientious in attitudes to work as well as behaviour; then we have available to us an opportunity — not available to the minister — of giving effective witness to our faith. We must, under God's guidance, be able to recognise such opportunities and, armed with a knowledge of our faith — this is terribly important — be ready and willing to give an account of our faith.

Organisations outside the church are many and varied — many of them showing a great deal of concern and love for people who are in need of help, or serving community needs in a variety of ways. We cannot effectively witness to such people unless we are doing **at least** as much — and this **could** mean that we have to examine very closely our activities within the church — that the most effective witness **could** be given as a member of one such organisation.

In addition, we must believe implicitly — and be willing to say so — that **they** and **we** are **incomplete** and fall far short of our true potential if we fail to draw power from the One to whom thanks is due for the abilities that we possess. Man does not, necessarily, have to be an active member of a church to show in words and actions that he is capable of love and concern for others. Man, made in the image of God — **God who is Himself love** — naturally has the ability to love. **It could not be otherwise.**

I believe that our task is to show forth the love of God in Christ in such a way that these men and women who do not give Christ a place in their lives will come to realise that this gift of love in which I have no doubt many of them find a great deal of joy and satisfaction, is theirs **only** by the Grace of God — a God given gift. This also applies to all creative power, the amazing amount of knowledge, and the great variety of individual abilities that man possesses.

Let a man observe around him men who show forth in their lives that a life lived **in** and dependant on Christ is not an admission of weakness but a sign of strength — and such a man will seek to know more of Christ. You and I must be ready and willing to put ourselves out to help him find the path that he must tread, but, at the same time we must take care **not to trespass on his freedom as an individual** — an individual whose way through to Christ may differ in some respects from the way that others have trod.

I have indicated that we must be equipped with knowledge — be ready and willing to put ourselves out to serve others. This means a willingness to put aside selfish excuses — and perhaps at times even reasonable excuses. It means that we must often overlook our own needs and desires to attend to the needs of others.

We appear to be reasonably conscious of the need to make an effort in this direction where it applies to friends and acquaintances and even strangers — but all too often we tend to overlook the need that exists in our own homes. This witness must also be to our children and involves answering a cry of anguish from someone wrestling with Maths I or II or Latin or French — or someone on the verge of giving up music for ever — never taking away from the child the need to think through the particular problem on hand but meeting important and essential needs and creating an atmosphere which indicates personal interest and demonstrates something of Christian love and understanding.

Christian witness in the home is not always easy — and a youngster can hardly be blamed for being bewildered, or for acquiring a distorted and cynical view of Christianity if Dad, who

claims to be a Christian, has frequent outbursts of temper; if Mum is over critical of her neighbours; if lip service only is rendered by one or both parents to the precepts of Christ's law of love.

Finally, let me leave you with the thought that although Christian witness finds its chief outward expression in duty to our neighbour — although we must look **outside** ourselves to serve, and we recognise an obvious need to meet together to share our faith and our problems — Christianity **begins** with the individual and teaches us that from within, out of the heart of man, proceeds all that makes for right or wrong attitudes; all that makes him a blessing or a curse to his neighbour; to his community — and perhaps even to the world.



## ALL THIS . . . . AND MORE



I've listened to the people in the crowds that pass me by,  
Heard them grouch and grumble, and asked myself just why  
Their theme is of the things they lack. I fall to wondering . . . .  
Have they ever seen a sunrise. Ever heard the song-birds sing?

Have they ever watched the moonlight on the waters in the bay,  
Heard the thunder of the surf — been drenched by flying spray;  
Have they ever learned the lessons that the trees and flowers  
teach  
Or caught the scent of blossoms from the apricot and peach?

I feel a touch of pity for the grumbler 'cross the street,  
And for the man whose attitude speaks clearly of defeat,  
And I wonder, have they ever seen a Rembrandt at its best,  
Read a line of Kipling's 'IF' — or travelled Lawson's west?

Did they ever ford a mountain stream or breathe the bracing air  
Amid the stately snow-clad peaks, or see the beauty there?  
Did they ever hear a Gershwin tune — the soft lilt of guitars  
And do they know the glory of a night spent 'neath the stars?

The fireside, companionship, the touch of loving hands,  
A quiet evening spent at home — Why is it man demands  
As his just right, the things that never help to calm life's storms?  
The gifts we have, if used aright, could all the world transform . .

Until the thoughts of men would turn from greed for worldly  
gain,  
And God's great gifts would dominate a world no more insane;  
"Love of Neighbour;" "Peace of Mind;" "Goodwill on Earth to  
Men."

All This . . . . and more, a Heritage until the last Amen.

## FREEDOM



My reasons for watching T.V. generally centre around Test Cricket, Davis Cup Tennis and the News — although I sometimes find it necessary to go through the house by way of the T.V. room when the youngsters are watching Bugs Bunny.

However, one night recently I allowed T.V. to dictate the evening programme and deliberately settled down to watch a film — one that brought back pleasant memories of my courting days. The name of the film is also the name of what was once a popular song. I still like the song but was reluctantly forced to admit that my pleasant memories of the film must have been due in no small part to the circumstances prevailing at the time of my original viewing.

However, I believe that the sentiments expressed in the title convey a remarkable truth. I firmly hold to the opinion that "The Best Things in Life **are** Free." (Oh yes! I know that such a statement tends to be regarded as foolish, rather naive and even downright corny. Certainly very much open to argument and most likely completely false. Money is **so** necessary and buys so many essential ? things.)

And yet, the things of lasting — of eternal — value are not to be purchased. It is surely true to say that the best things are those that neither moth nor rust can destroy — that thieves can never take away from us . . . . Priceless possessions often ignored — perhaps ridiculed — always available. There is really no need for me to tick them off one by one, but I suggest that you go out and look deep into the heart of a flower; walk through the bush or along the beach at sunrise; seek and find the love in your home — and not just take it for granted; put your hand into the hand of God; kneel at the foot of the Cross of Christ and know something of the **free** gift of God.

There is a story in the book of The Acts of the Apostles concerning a man called Simon Magus. Simon witnessed the wonderful transforming power of the Holy Spirit, and noticed that this Power appeared to be given through the laying on of hands by the Apostles. He offered Peter and John money and said "Give me the same power, so that when I lay my hands on anyone he will receive the Holy Spirit."

Peter rebuked Simon in words that can be applied with equal force and truth to many people who seem to believe that they can bribe God and buy their way into the Kingdom of Heaven.

"You and your money! What makes you think that God's gift is for sale? Repent of this wickedness and pray the Lord to forgive you for imagining such a thing!"

Perhaps it would be best — and may save argument — if I change the name of that old song just a little and suggest that "The Best **Thing** in Life **is** Free." God's gift of Salvation **was** purchased with the shed blood of Christ — but it is free to you and to me.

In chapter three of his letter to the citizens of Rome, Paul states that no human being can ever hope to achieve the perfection that is demanded by the law, and so it would not be possible for any man to be justified in God's sight by works of the law. He goes on, "but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified by His grace **as a gift**, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith."

A further statement in Chapter Six of the letter to Rome gives added force to the above. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Man's sinfulness and futile efforts to prove himself capable of getting along independently of God, made it necessary for God, who can only condemn sin, to sentence all men to death — the maximum penalty of the law. And then God, who condemns sin but has infinite patience with — and love for — the sinner, took the punishment upon Himself. God Himself — God in Christ — paid the penalty.

There is a story told which sets forth very clearly this thing that God has done. The story concerns a Judge who was faced with the task of passing sentence on a man who had been convicted of a particular offence. It was not a pleasant duty because these two had once been firm friends. The convicted man — once a prominent lawyer — was now an alcoholic, and men who knew something of their background wondered how the Judge would treat his old friend.

**The Judge imposed the full penalty that the law allowed — and then paid the fine himself.**

His friend did not **earn** the right to go free. He was guilty and deserving of punishment, but the love of an old friend set him free.

And it is LOVE that sets us free — free from the punishment that we deserve. This freedom that we enjoy by the grace of God — the unmerited favour of God in Christ — has been purchased at a price.

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, states: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price."

In the Gospel of John, it is recorded that Jesus said to some of His followers:

"If you continue in my word you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. And if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

**FREE! FREEDOM! TO BE FREE!** The words conjure up a wonderful picture . . . . .

One day recently in Wollongong, I was standing patiently waiting for the traffic lights to co-operate and allow me to cross the road, when a man standing near me turned to his companion and said: "There's one thing about the old Lake Cargelligo, we don't have to worry about this business of being told when to STOP or GO, and whether to WALK or DON'T WALK."

He sounded a little weary of the regimentation of city life. Obviously his idea of freedom was the wide open spaces — and I admit to smiling a little because it was rather humorous picturing WALK and DON'T WALK signs around Lake Cargelligo, 413 miles west of Sydney.

Christian freedom is slightly different to that. It is still a freedom that allows plenty of room to move — even more room than you will find around Lake Cargelligo — and yet there are, necessarily, certain restrictions. It is rather like an old rhyme that ends something like this:-

"And so you see, I can do as I like,  
As long as I do as I'm told."

Paul states in his first letter to the people of Corinth that a Christian is free to do anything, but this freedom must be used judiciously because all things are not necessarily beneficial.

A Christian is free to do anything that Jesus Christ tells him to do — anything that does not hurt himself or others. The only restriction on Christian freedom is that which is dictated by Christ.

In His service is to be found perfect freedom — a freedom of the Spirit. This physical body can never really be free while there are chores to be done — meals to be cooked; lawns to be mowed; crops to be sown; children to care for — but to know Christ is to know peace of mind, which is to feel free; and if we feel free then we are free and the daily tasks are no longer a burden.

This freedom — this peace with God is not to be thought of as a tranquiliser which shuts out reality. It does not transport to a carefree dream world which takes away responsibility. On the contrary Christ reveals the need to face up to reality and to accept responsibility, and set the supreme example Himself in His own life and death.

Christ was free to choose — “No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again” — and He chose the way of the Cross, to reconcile men to God. Jesus Christ — Son of God and Son of Man — faced up to reality and accepted responsibility so that men might be free.

**“And if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.”**



*I have pleasant memories of a friend of mine - admittedly a very good friend - chuckling at least twice as he was reading a copy of "I Can't Play Golf Either", and I like to think that the Lord may have looked over my shoulder, as I was writing it, and smiled just a little too; because you see, He was there at the time . . .*

## I CAN'T PLAY GOLF EITHER . . . .



My psychiatrist says that mine is a rare case. It is quite uncomplicated.

He says that people who come to him complaining of a feeling of inferiority, a lack of drive and initiative, and an inability to do anything well, generally have good reason for such a state of mind. They may have lived for years with a maiden aunt or been bitten by a pomeranian or something in childhood; perhaps suffered from a Mother complex or T.V. fixation.

My psychiatrist says I'm different. When I complain of a feeling of inferiority, a lack of drive and initiative, and an inability to do anything well, it is simply because of a feeling of inferiority brought about by a complete lack of drive and initiative and an inability to do anything well!

And yet at school, in a class of forty seven, I held the same position year after year. Only once did I run the risk of losing my reputation. It was in an examination held during my seventh year at school, when I was in fourth grade. I moved up to forty sixth place!

However, it was only a matter of weeks before I regained my old position. All my friends agree that I have been a model of consistency ever since . . . . .

A discussion on the possible reasons for Ted's car using too much oil or whether the knock in Henry flivver is caused by the Big End or the little end or because the sump — or sumpthin', is missing, invariably leads to someone suggesting that Henry Ford would not have allowed me to tighten even one nut on the spare wheel of his Model T.

To, me, a "universal joint" is one big enough to supply the week-end meat for a family of fourteen and mention of the "force feed" system immediately sends my thoughts wandering back to last night's dinner and my efforts to make my two year old son eat his vegetables.

The other day I joined a group of men in time to hear mention of "the exhaust stroke," and I enquired very solicitously after the speaker's health. I gathered, from the scorn heaped on my head, that the term "exhaust stroke" had absolutely nothing

to do with heat prostration. I have been told that my pathetic facial contortions, brought about by mental effort whilst trying to visualise the exact nature of a King Pin and a Fly Wheel are . . . . . but why go on? It's the same in the garden ! !

And my efforts to achieve some sort of fame in the field of sport only serve to emphasise that which I have already hinted at — although I **was** partially successful in my attempt to run a four minute mile. That is, I used up the four minutes all right but was told after I regained consciousness, that I still had about nine hundred yards to go.

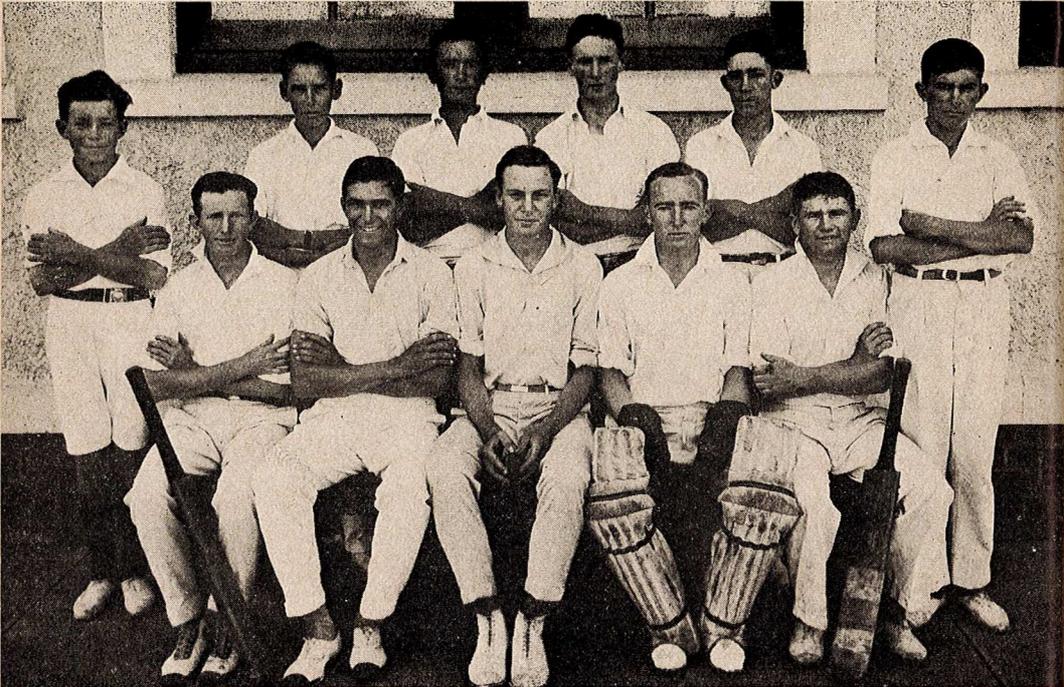
You will gather that I am a trier. For instance, I did not hesitate to accept a recent challenge from my son to a game of tennis. He led me three games to one and thirty love, when rain saved him from a hiding. He'll be five next month.

My psychiatrist once said that his psychiatrist had been advised by a psychiatrist to recommend birdwatching to a client, whose problems were apparently similar to mine. For three months I followed his advice and had become quite attached to the bird when it died.

I thought about buying another, but if the same thing should happen again . . . . . !



LEETON INTERMEDIATE HIGH SCHOOL 1930  
1st ELEVEN



Standing: G. Hennessy, R. Bailey, C. Lamont, H. Ross, V. Hennessy,  
H. Cornelson  
Seated: G. Dare, J. Bevan, H. Davies (Capt.) T. Owen, M. Owen

DAYS IN THE SUN



Do you recall  
When the sound of the ball  
On willow, was balm to the ear.  
To the Bowler, the battle  
Was sweet when the rattle  
Of stumps, brought the victory near.

To the Batsman, the game  
Brought quick, fleeting fame  
When a flashing late cut added four;  
But the ultimate goal  
Was in filling the role  
Of a century maker — on tour.

Though we played for the team  
A "hat trick" was the dream  
Of the speedster and spinner alike  
And each "white flannelled fool"  
Was a part of the duel  
Between Bowler — and Bat taking strike.

There were games lost and won  
On those days in the sun  
And we knew both reproach and acclaim.  
But whatever the score  
Whether Win, Lose or Draw  
The fun, was in Playing the game.



*"He is the image of the invisible God,  
the first-born of all creation; for in Him all  
things were created, in heaven and on earth . . .  
all things were created through Him and  
for Him. He is before all things and in Him  
all things hold together. He is the head  
of the body, the Church . . ."*

Colossians 1:15-18

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*"There is one body and one Spirit . . .  
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Father of us all . . ."*

Ephesians 4:4-6



The prophet Isaiah, in chapter fifty-three of the book called Isaiah, outlines for our benefit his great vision of God's plan for the redemption or salvation of mankind.

Isaiah tells of the blameless Servant who suffers so terribly — suffering because of the sinfulness of others and not because of any wrong that He Himself has done. It is seen that He has been punished unjustly and, in reality, those who watch are the ones who should be punished. And then, when the Servant, who is the Saviour Christ, has suffered "unto death" — the death of the Cross — we who watch realise that this is part of the Will of God; part of His — to us — strange way of destroying evil and bringing righteousness into the world.

Jesus Himself often bears witness to this fact. One such occasion was when He was being questioned by Pontius Pilate. In reply to the query — "Art thou a King?" Jesus answered, "I am. My task is to bear witness to the Truth. For this was I born. For this I came into the world and **all who are not deaf to truth** listen to my voice."

The story of the Servant is the story of Christ and Him crucified, and Paul discovered very early in his ministry that the real job — the essential task for all who would serve the Lord — was to present Christ to the world in just this way.

In his first letter to the people of Corinth, Paul writes: "I resolved that while I was with you I would teach nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Paul goes on to emphasise the fact that there is but one solid and sure Rock upon which an individual life can be safely built — one foundation; and that foundation is Jesus Christ.

In the book called "The Acts of the Apostles," Luke tells of Simon Peter, under arrest for preaching in the name of Jesus, but refusing to be silenced. Peter witnesses for Christ in these words:—

"This Jesus is the Stone, rejected by the builders but now become the chief cornerstone — **and there is no other name under heaven, granted to men, by which we may receive salvation.**"

No one else has the right or the power to bring to completion God's plan, designed to bring peace of mind to all who respond in faith — to all who accept the fact that Christ's giving of Himself is personal — a direct offer to each individual — and as such must be **accepted or rejected** at the personal level.

In his letter to Titus, Paul puts it this way: "Long ages ago, God, who cannot lie, made a promise and now with the coming of Christ, the Grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all mankind."

The promise is not — as many seem to believe — one that can only be fulfilled after death. Jesus does not say that the life we now live must necessarily be a vale of tears and we are here to put up with misery and unhappiness so that we may — by comparison — look forward to and really appreciate a wonderful hereafter.

What Jesus **does** say is that we can experience something of that joy and peace here and now:—

"Verily verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me HATH everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but IS ALREADY passed from death unto life."

The One who speaks in such an unprecedented manner is given an extraordinary diversity of names in the unique book we call "The Holy Bible." He is The Blameless Servant; The Rock; The Stone; The Mighty God, Immanuel, Son of God and Son of Man; Saviour Christ; and reference to Him is made in other incredible ways.

It is written that "in Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things were created through Him and for Him."

And just as Christ is the source and chief of the natural creation, He is also "The Head of the body, the Church." That is, the True Church, which is the Church of Christian believers; a Church without a building; an invisible Church with a membership of all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The members of any one particular denomination or sect who claim exclusive rights to the title "The One True Church" can find no warranty in Scripture for such a claim, and an outward show of attendance and participation in the services of any one of these organisations does not necessarily or automatically assure membership of the True Church.

However, if we claim to know Jesus Christ as Lord, we are expected to use our own particular outward visible Church and its organisation as the channel through which we serve Christ, who is the Head of the true Church . . . .

The visible Christian Church(es) today is often subjected to a kind of criticism that has resulted in building up in the public mind an image of the Church which portrays it as old-fashioned and obsolete — unwilling and unable to relate its teaching and its activities to the many and varied problems of "man in the 20th century." It is accused of "not doing its job;" and this implies a behaviour pattern and attitude that reflects unfavourably on all that the visible Church represents in a community, with the result that the Church(es) would appear to be turning "man" away from, instead of drawing him to, Christ and the True Church.

We, in the Church of England, (It would be wrong and presumptuous of me to speak for any other denomination, so I will apply my remarks to the one I know best) make no claims to perfection and indeed are very well aware of imperfections, but it is time to challenge, and in some cases to condemn the kind of constantly recurring, meaningless criticism that is accepted as truth.

Much of the critical comment stems from the fact that, in recent years, there has been created by the general public an image of the "infallible scientist" — one whose knowledge transcends that of lesser mortals in all fields of human endeavour and knowledge, and whose word is truth.

To be fair, few scientists have gone out of their way to seek this status, but the fact is that the scientist has only to suggest the **possibility** of such and such an expression or thought or opinion being true — and Mr. and Mrs. Public quote him as saying "It is a fact."

Of course, people from many walks of life offer criticism, and I have seen statements to the effect that "salvation" is a selfish, petty and rather ridiculous and impossible claim; that there is certainly no **personal** God with a love and concern for mankind; that in Christian teaching it is hard to separate fact from fiction; that the idea of inspiration or revelation from God to man is foolishness; that Paul's conception of God is certainly not of a God of love, but rather reveals Him as a somewhat narrow-minded petty dictator.

Twentieth century man has become air-born and space conscious, and so has been able to nibble at a minute corner of an infinite universe and discover many amazing facts about this incredible creation of God — and in his arrogance and conceit, man is claiming to be master of his environment; planner of his own destiny; and implying in no uncertain manner that he desires no outside interference or help — least of all from the Jesus of the Scriptures about Whom such fantastic and impossible claims are made.

And so, the man who has no desire to seek the Truth that Christ reveals—the man who criticises the Bible and avoids Church attendance and does not believe in prayer, appoints himself as an expert on the affairs of the Christian Church, and says that the Church is old-fashioned, obsolete and “not doing its job.”

Such statements should not be a cause for consternation amongst the clergy and people **unless and until** the critics can give a more specific answer to the question — “What **is** this job that we are not doing?”

I have asked that question on occasions and have yet to receive a constructive, reasoned and reasonable answer.

We, in the Church of England, want to know if we have left undone things we should have done — but I fail to see any reason for retreat or apology when confronted with vague statements such as — “The Church is not doing its job,” or “The Church is out of touch with the needs of young people today.”

In this age of realism, people look for evidence of the Church’s practical concern for people and suggest, foolishly, that this concern is almost non-existent. The evidence is there — clearly visible to those who want to look for it. \*

BUT — and here I borrow words from the Rev. C. Kelby, the Rector of St. Andrew’s Anglican Church at Lakemba — “I cannot believe that Jesus came into the world to start a social service agency imparting respectability to charitable ventures. These things **flow from** a vital faith but do not **produce** faith itself.”

The task of the Church is to tell of and to teach Jesus Christ — Christ and Him crucified. The obligation of the Church is to guide young and old into attaining a faith in Christ which will be to them a guiding light all the days of their lives. From the strength of such faith there will flow a conviction that the job of the Church is to care for people — to meet the material needs of people by building and maintaining, IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, homes for the aged, the orphan, the sick and for the many where a particular or personal need has to be met.

I am not suggesting that we are in a position to be complacent and can claim to be doing all that we should be doing, but while we have ministers and laymen and women teaching and witnessing to the Good News of the Gospel — AND WE HAVE — and while we are striving, in the name of Jesus Christ, to meet the material, and at the same time the essential spiritual needs of people — then we have no need to apologise.

However, in case we tend to become a little self-righteous in our thinking, it is well to remember that while we have people **within** our Church who see no harm in mixing “at the other fellow’s level of behaviour” during the week — who forget the

\* See page 48

need for daily and not just “Sunday” contact with Christ through prayer and the written word — who do not realise the need for regular worship — then we are not as strong as we should be.

And while there are people **outside** the Church who have turned their backs on, or not faced up to, the challenge of Christ in their lives, then we are not realising our full potential.

Finally, let us remember that it is not for us to **lower** our standards in an attempt to win people or to add numbers to our Church. Christ mixed freely with every kind of person, but the standards set for those people who wished to follow Him were precisely the same.

Man today is not prepared to give time and effort to seek the truth from the Christ of the Scriptures, so, all too often he tries to hide his lack of knowledge by loudly criticising.

However, one thing is certain — GOD IS **NOT** DEAD. The promises of Christ are still, and will remain, inviolate and Christ’s Church, visible and invisible — to again quote Rev. C. Kelby — “will outlive this age, these present problems, politics and nations, and will become simply the same Church in another age facing the problems of that day,” and — despite all its weaknesses, man’s foolishness and pride and unwillingness to learn — destined to last forever, because the One who is the Rock upon which the Church is built said — “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of time.”



**Organisations within the framework of the Church of England  
— and typical of many other denominations include:**

1. Marriage Guidance Council.
2. C.E.N.E.F. Youth Centre.
3. Pallister Home for Delinquent Girls.
4. Charlton Memorial Homes for Boys.
5. Children's Court Work.
6. Hammond Hotel for Pensioners.
7. Retirement Villages.
8. Family Service Centre.
9. Archbishop's Annual Winter Appeal, Christmas Bowl Appeal.
10. Missions to Seamen.
11. Parish Home Nursing Service.
12. Chesalon Nursing Homes.
13. Home of Peace Hospital.
14. Home Mission Society etc.

The Australian Council of Churches has set aside \$1 mil. for 1970 to assist in such projects as food production; missionary and evangelistic work; refugee care; health and community development. The largest proportion of the aid will go to South East Asian Countries, but projects in Africa and the Middle East will also receive assistance.



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