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WINNING POSITION

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THE FOUNTAIN is published once every six weeks. It publishes articles both expository and evangelistic in nature, testimonies, and news of Christian groups. The magazine is supported by free-will offering from Christians who have the burden to see the Word of God reach as many as possible. We depend on the all sufficient grace and providence of the Lord to meet our every need.

OUR AIM is to unite all Christian brothers and sisters who have the same burden to preach the Gospel unto all nations. We preach none other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

WHAT WE BELIEVE: The Bible is the basis of our faith. We believe that the whole Bible, every chapter, every issue, as originally given is inspired by God.

"You (Jesus) are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [Matthew 16:16]

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." [I Timothy 1:15]

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." [Acts 4:12]

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God - not because of works, lest any man should boast." [Ephesians 2:8,9]

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"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of host."
[Zecharias 4:6]

"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'
[Matthew 9:36-38]

Through the ages, men has been continuously exploring the highways and byways to paradise. Best known primitive paradise in North America was the Indians' "Happy Hunting Ground" located at the "far side of the Milky Way". Then there were the "Dilmum" (Garden of God) of the Sumerians, the "Asgard" of the Norsemen and the "Garden of Huitzilopochtli" of the Mexican Aztecs.

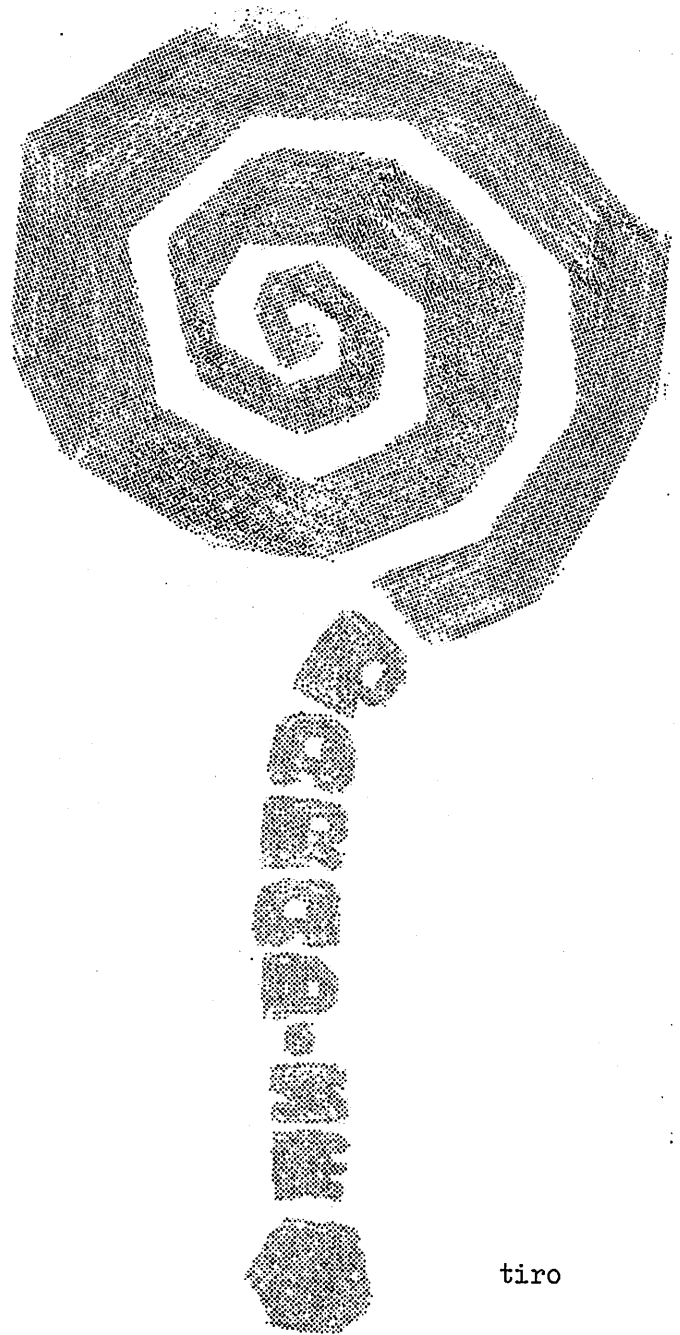
In the 6th century, Gautama Buddha convinced thousands of people that heaven was not eternal but temporary and led only to another rebirth full of cravings and frustrations. He taught that the final goal should be nirvana, literally "blowing out" as a candle. In this state, the fires of passion and desire are cooled forever and therefore freedom from the endless cycle of rebirth has been achieved.

Nowadays most Buddhists believe that while Gautama's final goal is worthy of a saint, most fallible human beings can never be sufficiently devout to attain nirvana. For the ordinary people who have almost achieved perfection in life (the bodhisattvas) they are sent to the "Western Paradise" where they are return seated crosslegged within the calyx of a lotus. For a time the soft petals shuts them in, but slowly they unfold and the bodhisattvas behold the full splendor of the Buddha's infinite light.

Modern man also has their dreams about paradise and they are as varied and as colorful as those in the ancient time.

Island Paradise

In the 19th century, romantic paradise seekers began searching the Pacific for remote islands with unspoiled civilizations. Famous writer and critic Robert Louis Stevenson found the land of his dreams on Samoa. Paul Gauguin, one of the 3 pillars of modern art also escaped to a Pacific isle called Tahiti to live like a carefree "noble savage". He thought that he had found the paradise by re-



tuning to the primitive, the child of the race.

In his "Noa-Noa", a poetic evocation of his first two years in Tahiti, Gauguin called the island "a land of delights, home of liberty and beauty"; he added, "I may be two years older but feel 20 years younger, less civilized then when I came but much wiser. Indeed these savages have taught much to a man from the old civilization of the art of living and happiness ... O mysterious world of ineffable light, thou has enlightened my inner being."

Did Gauguin really find his para-

dise? His last great painting "What? Whence? Whither?" tells the conclusion he has arrived at eventually. At the right side of the painting there is the same kind of sensuous beauty which symbolizes the concept of the "noble savage". But the left side of the picture is very different. There are 3 figures. The first is a young beautiful Tahitian woman. Beside her is a poor old woman dying, watched by a monstrous bird. This is what he says about it, "I have finished a philosophical theme ... A figure lifts up its arms into the air and, astonished, looks at these 2 personages who dare to think of their destination... Whither? Close to the death of an old woman, a strange, stupid bird concludes: What? ... The eternal problem that punishes our prides. O sorrow, thou art my master. Fate how cruel thou art, and always vanquished, I revolt." After Gauguin had finished this painting, he attempted suicide, though he did not succeed.

Paradise in the Outer Space

For centuries, man thought that there was a paradise in the outer space and he has long dreamed of his first space flight. This journey is no longer a dream. The first man has already been on the moon and it seems the whole outer space is now open for men's exploration.

One of the space-agency administrators was quoted in Newsweek shortly after the astronauts had returned from the moon. "Should man" this official said, "fall back from his destiny ... the confines of this planet will destroy him." Why was there written deep in man's subconsciousness this hidden longing to leave the earth and create a paradise in outer space? Could man really succeed?

Two points should be considered. First there is the question as to where do we intend to flee. The entire

Solar System is bleak and crater-strewn. Mercury bakes in an inferno of heat beside the sun; Mars is a chill desert; Pluto is a cold dot of reflected light over 3 billion miles from earth. And the nearest star was 4 light years and many many human generations away. Would there be any hope for this generation of man?

Space flight undoubtedly is a brave expedition. It is the symbol of the greatest achievement of the scientific age. But this glamor makes man's utter failure even more obvious - by enormous expenditure and effort we have ventured a small way out into the Solar System. But we have scarcely begun to penetrate the distance, no less real, that separate man from man. This problem is not automatically solved in a new planet! No matter where we go in the universe, war, hate and injustice seem to be a necessary doom for mankind.

Paradise in Our Own Heart

Beginning around the turn of the century, certain western intellectuals suggested that paradise was obtainable here and now through love and the full realization of man's capacities.

British writer and critic John Middleton Murray (Husband of famous writer Katherine Mansfield) was a strong advocate of the idea that a pure uninhibited love relationship between man and woman was the true manifestation of the love of God. In one of his essays, he wrote, "Peace depends upon the transfiguration of man-woman by the divine-natural reality of love, wherein woman seeks no secrecy and man no dominion ... From this new experience alone can flow the power to create the new religious society"

Modern men and women have fully exploited his idea of "free" love. The phenomenal increase in the number of broken families and young couples

who ended up in the psychiatric institutes is an undebatable proof that free love has in fact brought hell into our heart.

Instant Paradise

In all ages and all part of the world men have used a variety of flowers, roots, seeds to transport themselves into an instant paradise. Hallucinogenic mushrooms were used by the Aztecs; Peruvian Indians prepare an hallucinating brew from a jungle vine called "caapi"; natives in the Orinoco basin use an hallucinatory snuff known as "Yopo".

Modern man also uses such hallucinogenic drugs as mescaline, psilocybin and lysergic acid to provide him and instant way to "paradise". Young people "Puff the Magic Dragon" and take the "Yellow Submarine" in order to achieve a "first order experience".

Famous writer Aldous Huxley wrote in "The Doors to Perception" that mescaline produced in him an effect that seemed like seeing a beatific vision; he urged the readers to use drugs to explore the great esthetic and mystic experiences beyond those of ordinary life.

It is true that drugs do sharpen perception. But the price paid is much too great. Although most of milder drugs like S.T.P. and marihuana are unlikely to cause any immediate harm or lead to addiction, most of the other drugs can simulate symptoms of certain forms of psychosis to the point of permanent derangement. Furthermore the feeling of extreme emptiness after coming out of the "high" is an unbearable experience to most people.

The booming of the drug culture in the 20th century is a reflection of the fact that man has given up hope to find a purpose or meaning in life

through the rational and logical way. He therefore seeks a "first order experience" through the non-rational and non-logical by the use of drugs.

No Paradise

Most modern men have a very different concept about the universe. They do not believe there is a God who created man and the material world. Man is the supreme being there is and the whole universe came into existence only by chance. Since there is no God, divine revelation does not exist and humanism (or rationalism) becomes the system whereby man, beginning absolutely by himself, having only man as his integration point, to find all knowledge, meaning and value.) Cause and effect also become meaningless if there is no God in control. Man only reaps what he sows by chance. The German philosopher Hegel has rightly said that cause and effect could no longer be the answer to our problem, but synthesis is the new way to truth. Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism went a step further and concluded that one could not arrive at synthesis by reason. Instead, everything of real importance could only be achieved by a leap of faith. Thus the "modern man" was born.

It all sounds very fine in the surface. But actually man has been led into a dilemma. If everything comes by chance, then all that makes man a man-hopes of purpose and significance, love, morality, rationality and beauty - cannot ultimately be fulfilled and are thus meaningless. As Jean-Paul Sartre has concluded, "We live in a absurd universe. The total is ridiculous."

Very few modern men could live up to their logical conclusion. It is one thing to proclaim this in a lecture hall and another thing to tell one's wife that he loves her only by

chance and it is meaningless. It really takes tremendous courage to be able to do this. John Cage is such a man. He betan to "compose" his music through the tossing of coins. Each note in his music were determined by flipping a coin. Thus he is "composing" his music through pure chance. Though Cage's music is no more than noise and confusion, he has lived consistently with his position. Sometimes his work is being booed by the audience. However, when they booed at him, they are in reality booing the "logical" conclusion of their own belief.

Man often hope to find some kind of meaning in the sexual area of life when they have given up the search elsewhere. But even sex is being smashed by the modern man. To most readers, Henry Miller (author of the books, "The Tropic of Cancer", "The Tropic of Capricorn", etc.) has just written something which is dirty in a trivial sense. But actually he has murdered everything that is meaningful, including sex. To him, there is no meaning in life, only machines.

Bergman of Sweden, one of the four leading modern film producers of the world is another example. In the film "The Silence", man does not even have the chance to authenticate himself by an act of the will. The film simply contains a series of snapshots with immoral and pornographic themes. The camera just takes them without any comment. "Click, click, click, cut!" That is all! Life is like that: Unrelated, meaningless and having no moral.

Such is the logical conclusion man has arrived at. That is why man like Dylan Thomas have ended by weeping. To live in such despair is like to live in hell. Therefore why not go ahead and drop all the H-bombs, what does it matter?

But most modern men have not

such courage to face their own logical conclusion. In order to live on, they try to put some meaning into life by a leap of faith.

Man's problem today is that he is too frail, too finite to wrestle with the problems that confront him. This leads people like Albert Camus and Baudelaire to say, "If there is a God, he is the devil." The statement was simply the logical deduction from the premise that man, with all his cruelty and suffering, is now as he always has been. Nevertheless, because both of them cannot live with this conclusion, by an act of blind faith they say God is good. Such are the attitudes of most modern men. In order to live on, they have, by an act of blind faith, assumed that it is reasonable to love and have compassion and that life as a whole makes sense. To live in such a state is no paradise. In fact it is like hell itself!

Christianity and the Modern Man

Modern man is truly in the hours of a dilemma. Because he believes there is no God, the logical alternative he could arrived at is that the impersonal, plus time, plus chance have given rise to this universe and man has been kicked up out of that which is only impersonal by chance. He is confronted with two choices. Either he'll side with people like Dylan Thomas and John Cage and believes that man is dead, dead in the sense of being meaningless. Or he could take a leap of faith through a non-rational, non-logical, non-communicable existential experience which would give meaning to life.

Christianity has the answer to modern man's dilemma. It gives a proper diagnosis and then a solid foundation for an answer. Christianity has a true interest in man, a real care for the individual and yet it is also realistic.

Christianity is realistic because it says that there is hope only if there is truth and there is truth only if there is an adequate base. It leaves absolutely no room for a romantic answer.

Christianity agrees with modern man that man is in real despair. The world must be viewed realistically. Christianity refuses to say that there is hope if you are basing your hope on changes for the better in mankind. Anyone can persuade himself that man is due for a rosy future. But this again is a leap of faith if there is nothing to show that man will be better tomorrow than he is today. In the realm of morals, Christianity does not look over this tired world and say that it is only slightly flawed and can be easily mended. Christianity is realistic and says that the world is full of evil and man is truly guilty.

So Christianity is poles apart from any form of optimistic humanism. Yet in Christianity there is hope which is based on truth with a solid foundation. If there is no God, man is but a machine which reacts to various external and internal stimuli in a certain pattern. There is no real meaning in personality that makes it reasonable to love and have compassion, a real reason to keep humanity alive. No matter one believes human history is a straight time-space continuum or a series of cycles, what happens to the individuals still does not matter. History just rolls on! An Henry Miller says, "What matters, in the ultimate, if for a few aeons of time this creature called man remains in abeyance, absent from the scene?" In other words, there is absolutely no value in the individual man at all!

Christianity does not agree with the above conclusion. According to the Bible, man, in the presence of God, is truly wonderful. He is created in the image of God. Since God is per-

sonal, man is also personal. Personality is intrinsic in the make-up of man and does not come by chance. Therefore it is not meaningless when man expresses his personality in art, music and literature.

The Trinity was before the creation of everything else and love existed between the persons of the Trinity before the foundation of the world. This being so, the existence of love in our make-up does not originate in chance but its origin is from that which has always been. The validity and meaning of love rest upon the reality that love exists between the Father and Son in the Trinity. Therefore, love is no longer a nonsense word, it now has meaning.

God, being non-determined, created man as a non-determined person. Therefore man has free-will and could choose to obey God and love Him, or revolt against Him. To ask that man should have been made so that he was NOT ABLE to revolt is to ask that man should be reduced to machine programming and become a robot. The very value of man lies in the fact that he could choose between good and evil and therefore his choice is significant and of importance. Adam in this way was able fundamentally to change the course of history.

If man is of such great value and so wonderful, then why the present misery? Christianity says that man is now abnormal. Man has sinned. He is separated from his Creator by true moral guilt. (God is holy and therefore cannot approach sin) As a result, he is now also separated from his fellow man, from nature and from himself. Hence, there is now war, hate, injustice, suffering and cruelty in this world. When man is involved in cruelty he is not true to what he was originally created to be. Cruelty is a symptom of the abnormality.

This is not the end. God has an answer to man's dilemma. In history, about 2,000 years ago, Jesus, the sinless son of God has died on the cross in space and time. When he died, there is propitiation and substitution. The true moral guilt is met by the infinite value of Jesus' death. Because of this infinite value of Christ's death, God does not have to surrender His absolutely holy character or violate man's significance in order for Him to be able to forgive sins and restore man's broken relationship to Himself. Man could now, use his FREE WILL and choose to accept this free gift of God. The true value of man is not lose.

His choice is again of real significance and importance. Man is able fundamentally to change the course of history for a second time.

The true joy of man is the restoration of his relationship with his Creator, the infinite-loving God. This was expressed in an ecstasy by Dante in his "Paradiso":

"Light intellectual full of love,
Love of true good full of joy,
Joy which transcends every
sweetness."

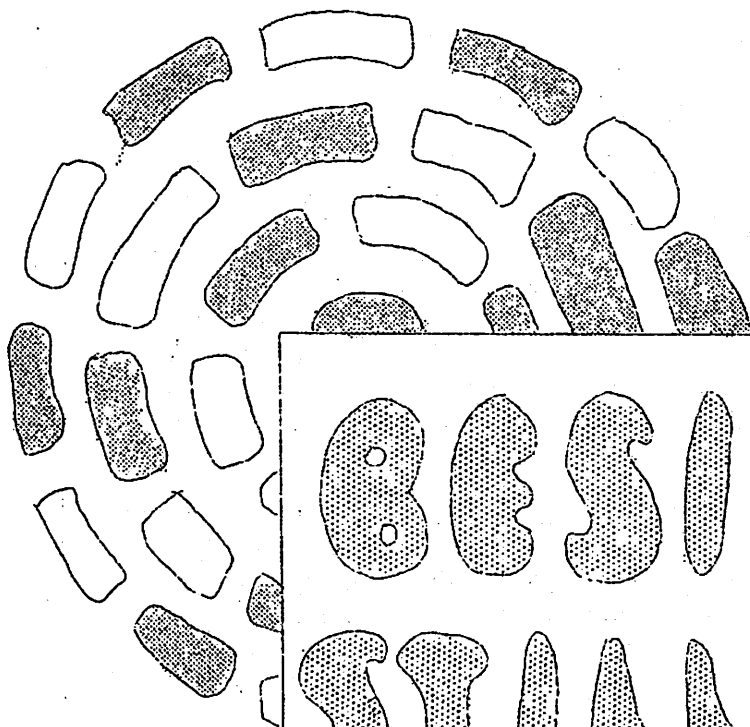
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BESIDE the STILL WATERS

henry cheng

As a humble token of gratitude to God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon me, I have long desired to write a testimony in the hope that it will bring blessing to others as well. Even though my English is insufficient for this task, nevertheless I must try.

I embarked in the manufacture of garments ten years ago, and my factory is in Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Looking back to the way God has led me through the many crises in the past years, I could honestly say that without God, I would have been a complete failure. As the Apostle James puts it: Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that'. (James 4:13-14)

How well have I learnt that the hard way!

I shall not forget the days when I knew not the Almighty and His goodness - the days of despair. Instead of giving you a long and unpleasant account of the hardships I have gone through, I will borrow the remark made by an experienced garment manufacturer friend of mine in Hong Kong: "If you hate a friend, advise him to go into the garment manufacturing business, and you can be sure that he will suffer for it."

Let me explain to you very briefly how we make our garments: we make them part by part, namely, the collar, the sleeves, the pockets, etc., until the whole garment is completed. A group of workers do the collars while other groups do the other parts. If any one part is poorly made - even a small part which costs as little as twenty-five cents in labour out of the total labour cost of twenty-five dollars for a dozen garments - it remains to be a defect and the garments may be rejected by the customer. And

inasmuch as a normal order involves thousands of garments, a minor negligence may result in an unbearable loss to the factory. High conscientiousness on the part of the management and employees may prevent such misfortune, but conscientiousness is a rare human quality nowadays.

Not long ago, a garment factory owner committed suicide because his goods were rejected by his customer who even threatened him with a claim for the ungotten estimated profit as a result of the rejection.

I was no clever manufacturer, and I had no extraordinary lenient customers, nor had I any secret escape from the troubles and problems that surrounded me day after day. I was in torment. I could not understand why life would be so difficult even when a person was merely striving for survival in a decent trade. I cannot remember if I ever had a cheerful day or a restful night without worrying about the next day. Life became so undesirable that I literally wished it could end quickly for me.

Then one night when I opened the Bible, the Lord spoke to me in Matthew 6; "Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's trouble be sufficient for the day." Totally unlike what I had heard from any one before, these words had a touch of authority and genuine concern that could be trusted, "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life?"

O Lord, tell me now what must
I do! I pleaded.

"Seek first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness; and all these
things shall be added to you." Then
like streams of living water to a
thirsty soul, He revealed Himself
to me. Why, this Jesus is the very
Redeemer of mankind; there is no
salvation in any one else, for there
is no other name under heaven grant-
ed to men, by which we may receive
salvation. He is the help of the
helpless, and the hope of the hope-
less. Henceforth I was aware of a
wonderful thing between God and me -
Grace!

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many a danger, toils and
snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe
thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

After that night, I became more
interested in God's Word than in my
troubles. If you ask me what be-
come of my factory when I was no
longer concerned about its troubles,
I can tell you: the troubles that
would not part with me lost their
deadly sting, for I discovered that
I had a Caretaker in my factory, who
said, "Come to Me, all who are weary
and heavy laden, and I will give you
rest." And I did.

Not long ago I received a big
order from a customer for many thou-
sands of printed pyjamas. After the
pyjamas were cut, I took home some

of the printed cloth to make a bed
sheet and a pillow case for myself.
It is not my habit to look into the
closet to check the bed sheets know-
ing that I had enough of them to
last for a long time. But I did
this once by accident shortly after
I had gotten this new one in search
for something else. There, right
before my eyes, was the new sheet
washed and ready, but the colour had
faded so badly that it looked like
a five-year old sheet.

"O, no!" I said. My face turn-
ed pale. My hands trembled. I for-
got completely what I was looking
for. Instead, I shuddered at the
thought of what might become of the
many thousands of these pyjamas in
the factory.

Textile specialists were imme-
diately consulted. Their explanat-
ion was that it might have been cau-
sed by insufficient colour stabili-
zer and baking during the finishing
process of the fabric. Additional
treatment could be applied on the
piecegoods, but not on the finished
clothing. Besides, it would damage
the tearing strength of the fabric,
causing it to be unfit for wearing.
In other words, there was absolute-
ly nothing that could be done.

As a believer, I have learnt
to look to God for wisdom and guid-
ance in moments like this. "O God,"
I said, "What shall I do?" "Bake
it," It flashed into my head. A-
gain I said, "O God! What shall I
do?" "Bake it." came the same ans-
wer. I cannot explain why the words
"bake it" kept coming into my head.
But it finally struck me that I
could try out this so-called baking
in my own factory by way of hot
ironing. There seemed to be no fur-

ther harm in having a small piece of cloth tested that way, even though I doubted if it would work, I asked an employee to iron a small piece of that printed cloth with the hottest possible iron but without burning the piece, then rub it well in hot soap water. Half an hour later, my men came to me with the tested cloth. The colour stayed! The tearing strength remained! My heart cried out: Hallelujah!

Immediately my people treated the finished pyjamas exactly as they had treated the piece of cloth. And thus, thousands of pyjamas were saved.

During the last ten years, there have been many rumours of the devaluation of the pound sterling. This could cause me heavy losses since my business was mainly transacted in pound sterling. In spite of these reported dangers, I had never considered taking precautionary measures to safeguard my sterling contracts. Somehow, the rumours of 1967 disturbed me more than all previous ones. So I went to a friend in a foreign bank and asked for his advice. He assured me in good faith that there would be no devaluation, giving me many convincing reasons. As a result of his assurance, I decided to forget the whole thing. But one night when I was in bed reading some religious books, the thought of devaluation struck me again, so forcefully that I had to promise myself going to the bank in the morning to convert my sterling contracts, irrespective of devaluation or no devaluation. Then I went on reading for a while and fell asleep.

The next morning, I converted

my sterling. And the very next day, the news of devaluation was announced by the government!

Now every time I recall these crises, and many others, I cannot help whispering this Hymn:

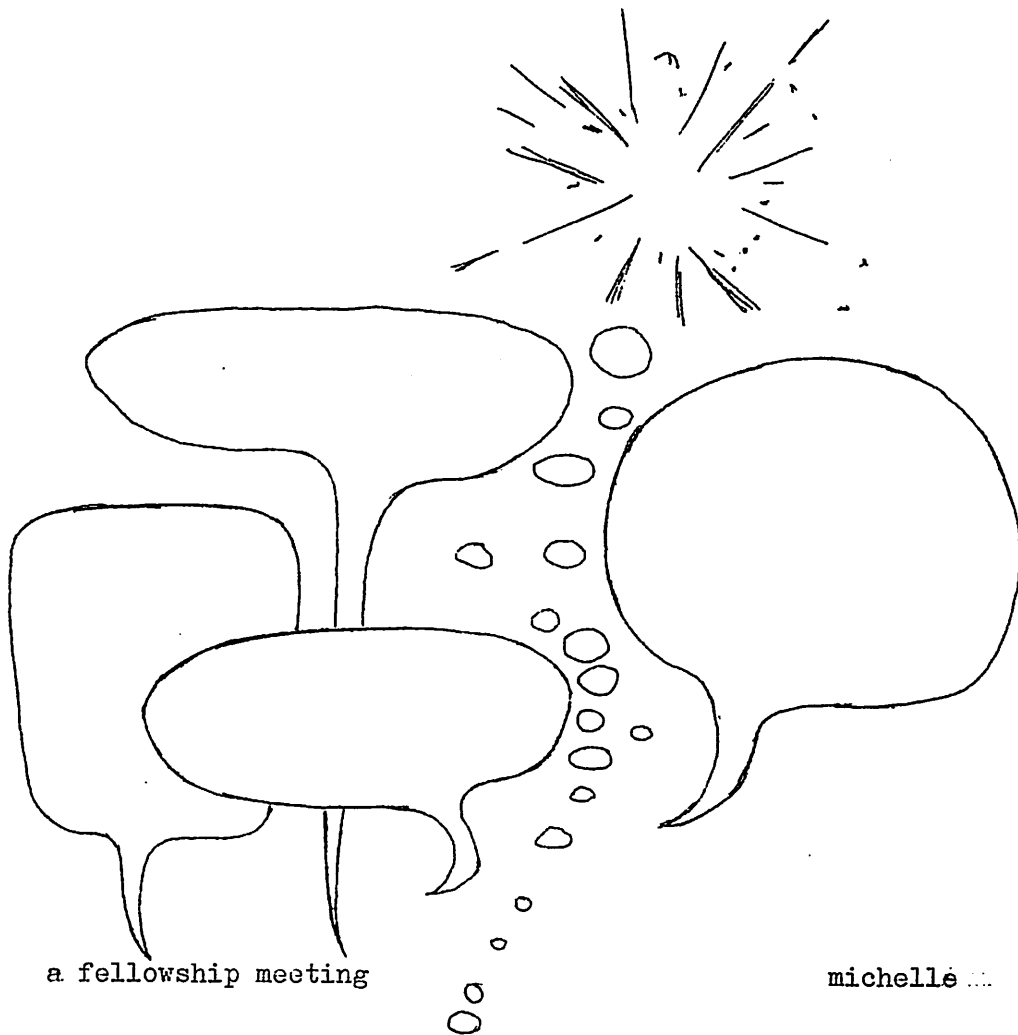
He leadeth me! O blessed thought,
O words with heav'ly comfort
fraught,
What'ever I do where'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that
leadeth me.

He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
By His own hand He leadeth me;
His faithful follow'r I would be,
For by His hand He leadeth me.

Looking back over the past years of my life and my friends', I cannot but regret for our follies and our love of money, knowing full well that naked we came, and naked we shall go. And money will not save us from our doom; for we are not sure which direction (heaven or hell) we go until we know to whom we belong (to the heavenly Father or to the devil and his kind).

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me (John 14:6). Every one who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven (Matthew 10:32-33)."

Dear friends, let me tell you again, there is no other name under heaven for men to call on to save them. (Acts 4:12)



Last night we were having a fellowship meeting
'Neath the halo of a lamp.
Everyong's feeling kind of blue
When waitin' for somebody to break the ice.
And we sat and waited,
Couched in our indifference, like shells upon the shore.

There seemed to be no more things to talk about,
'Cause we're afraid of being hurt
And thrown away into the dark.
We thought we might as well be apart,
But everybody's too proud to be the first to leave
And so silence continued to reign.

At last somebody started to say something,
And I also shared a few words.
I didn't know why I spent my time
Saying things that I didn't believe to matter at all.
I couldn't treat my friends honestly anymore -
Honesty costs too much pain.

I sat there again feeling very empty,
As memories trickled down like drops of blood
From a wound that seemed never able to be healed.
Oh, how I longed for the good old days
When our memories were still unstained
By the wrongs we've done each other.

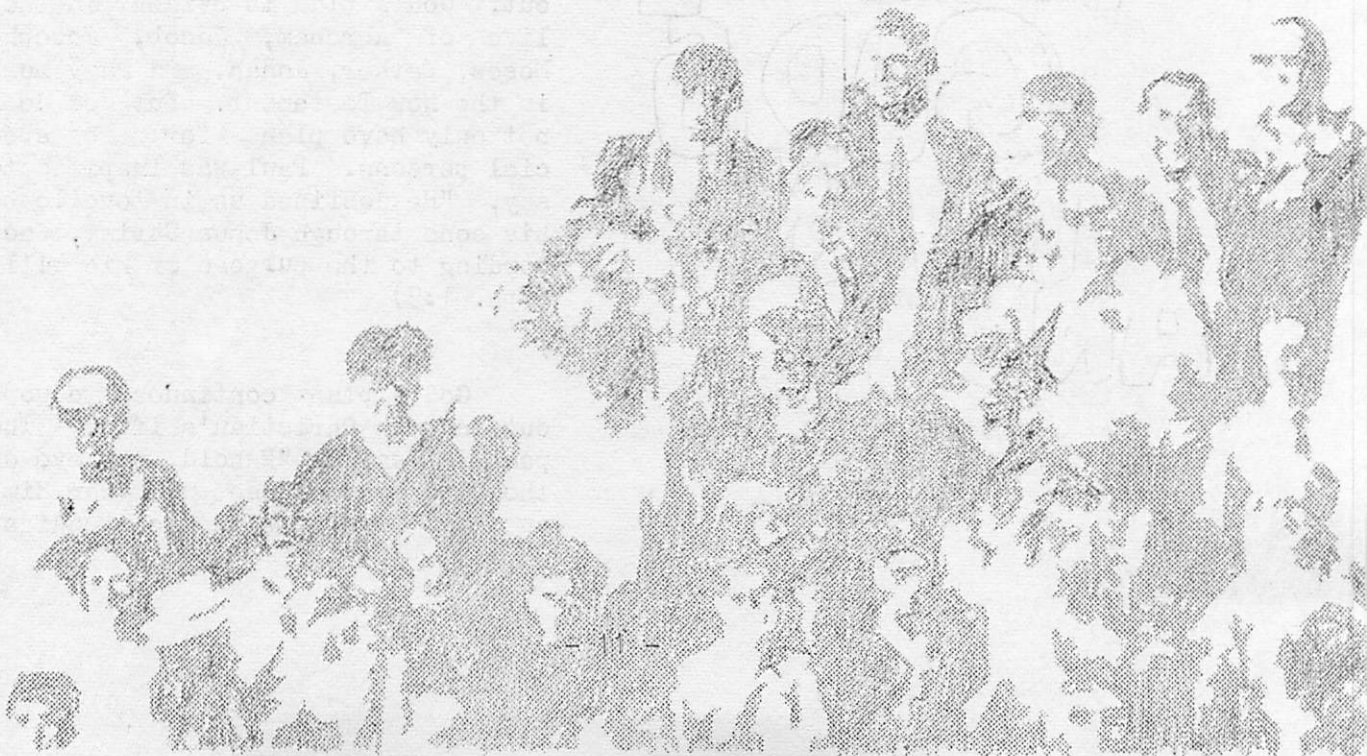
We're still very young and simple then,
With little sense of seniority or pride.
No one's so easily offended,
Or so hard to please.
We felt very free and easy,
And talked about things that really mattered.

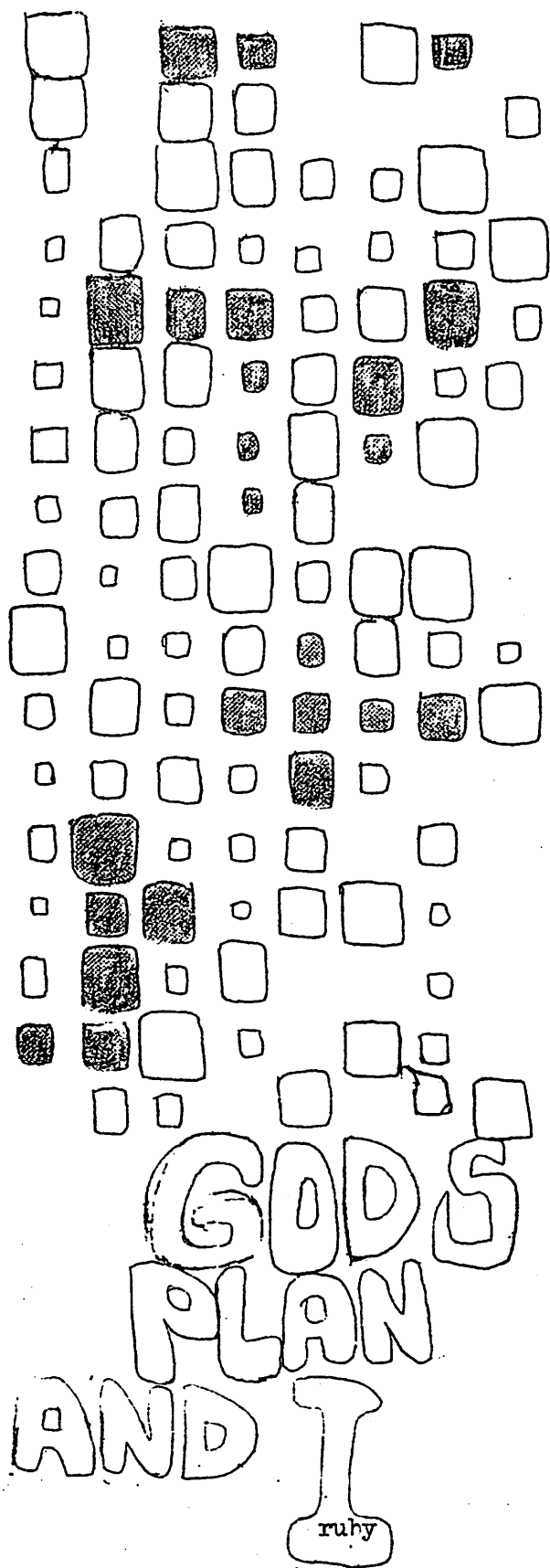
But now you've got your Ph.D,
And he's become the chief engineer,
Education and age and experience have built walls -
A fortress strong and high -
That none may penetrate,
And true fellowship has forever been buried under the grave.

We're still sitting there like pieces of unfelling statues
'Neath the halo of a lamp.
But I could only touch your shadow -
You seemed like a stranger now unto me.
Blood continued to trickle down from the wound.
And no one dared to disturb the reign of silence.

"Confess to one another therefore your faults - your slips, your false steps,
your offences, your aims : and pray also for one another, that you may be
healed and restored."

James 5:16a (Amplified Version)





"God has a plan for my life" is a concept entertained by most evangelical Christians. If you ask for the reason for such a statement, the Christian would probably say, "Well, since God has chosen me and saved me, He must also have a purpose for my life. He knows my future, He will show me and guide me in everything that I do, according to His plan and His will." But the question remains how does one know that God has a plan for his life?

A Christian often looks back at his past experiences - his searching for God, his conversion; days of sorrow or joy; or even any single failure or success and knows that none of them just occur by chance or because of circumstances. Each incidence has a purpose behind it. The Christian attributes them to the plan of God and likewise he sees the future as already planned by God.

However, the ultimate basis is from the Bible. It was full of records of how God has long beforehand made definite plans for the lives of many men and women. Sometimes it even goes into the very detail of how such plans were carried out. God's plan is evident in the lives of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Esther, Jonah, and many more in the New Testament. But God does not only have plans for a few special persons. Paul was inspired to say, "He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will" (Eph. 1:5)

God's plan continues to work out in each Christian's life. The psalmist said, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His steadfast

love." (Ps. 33:18), and "Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." (Ps. 139:16)

Also, Paul wrote to the Romans, "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the first born among many brethren, and those whom He predestined He also called; and those whom He called He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified." (Rm. 8:29,30). Thus, for every Christian, God's plan for his life consists of calling, justification and glorification.

But what about the details in life? Paul tells "... in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose." (Rm. 8:28) In Matthew 10:29 - 30, the Lord said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will; but even the hairs of your head are all numbered." But now the question arises: does God's plan include every minute decision that a Christian has to make? Are Christians just automations within His plan? Are they free to will and to make their own decisions?

Calvin and the Reformed Church believe in absolute predestination. They claimed that God's purpose is absolute, immutable, unconditional and independent of the creation. God does not merely foresee or foreknow, as Calvin himself explained, "We mean by providence not an idle observation by God in heaven of what goes on in earth, but His rule of the world which He made; for He is

not the Creator of a moment, but the perpetual Governor. Thus the providence we ascribe to God belongs not only to His eyes but to His hands."

Calvin went on to quote Acts 17:28: "In Him we live and move and have our being." He asserted that man's counsels, wills and endeavours are overruled by God, that God works in the hearts of men, directing their plans and moving their will so that they do nothing but what He has ordained.

To this the Arminian question the Calvinist as to what they actually mean by the will of man. According to the Calvinist, if there is any freewill, it is but an illusion, for everything is predetermined. Further, does man responsible for their actions? The Arminians think that the Calvinist destroy and deprave man of his free-will. To them, God has a general but not a specific plan. But this does not solve the problem, for the immutability of God would be at stake. And as the Arminians cannot disregard God's omniscience which points to foreknowledge of all things in the future;, they have difficulty maintaining their idea of free-will.

So there still remains the unsolved dilemma. But taking a look at history, we find examples of God's predestination and men's free-will working parallel with each other in the lives of many. In the life of Joseph all the harms that were done to Joseph by his brothers were clear-

1. Calvin, J. Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God (p.162)

ly done in their own free-will. Yet through this God worked out His plan in Joseph's life; as Joseph himself recognised this and told his brothers, "You sold me here; ... God sent me before you to preserve life." (Gen. 45:5) Similarly, for the crucifixion of Christ, Peter witnessed in Acts 2:23 that "... Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." Although Jesus' death was in God's plan, the Jews were also responsible for it. For there are certainly free acts of men involved in this event such as the rejection of Jesus by Jews, the parting of Jesus' garments and the casting of lots by the Roman soldiers, and Judas' deliberate act of betraying Jesus. All these agents exercised their free-will and yet unconsciously they fulfilled the divine prophecy of the great salvation plan in the life of Christ. Thus the Bible witnesses to the sovereignty of God in harmonizing these apparent contradictions.

As Christians, we have been shown clearly in God's word what we are supposed to know and do. God has a plan for each one of our lives and He knows what the future holds. Paul reminded us that "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) And out of His goodness and love, He plans everything for the good of us. So God's plan for our lives should encourage us. It actually gives us confidence to rest in God, for He is in control of our lives.

In Philippians 2:12, Paul asked the Christians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, since we work along with God, so God's plan does not mean that we

can simply do "whatever we want" without taking heed of His Word. Nor does it mean that we can ignore the work of Satan, for we are often reminded of Satan's temptation and deceit. When writing to the Romans, Paul assured them that no person or thing shall ever separate the elect from the love of Christ (Rm. 8:31-39). He also warned them not to be proud, but to be fearful; if they do not in faith continue in the goodness of God, they will be cut off as were the unbelieving Jews (Rm. 11:20-22). Thus the Bible reveals to us our responsibility - we are to abide in Christ, to walk in the Spirit and to keep His commandments.

God has a plan for each of our lives, and these plans might even include the minutest detail. But the whole is just known to God. On our side of the picture, we may not know and we do not need to know the full plan to its details. For God chooses to reveal to His faithful ones only step by step according to His wisdom and judgement. Our part is to seek to know only the step just ahead of us.

To conclude, here are the words of J. Calvin, "the faithful, since they set before themselves the directing hand of God, will not hesitate to cast all their cares upon Him. And as they know that the devil and all the ungodly however much uproar they may make, are not only tied fast by the chains of God but even compelled to render Him obedience, they will proceed quietly on their way."² [end]

2. Calvin, J. Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God (p.167)

GOD'S CANDLES

Proverbs 20:27

"The spirit of man is
the candle of the
Lord, searching
all the inward
parts of the belly
(emotional life)."

dottie

...God is light (I Jn.1:5)
... His light dispels my dark-
ness ... only to the extent I al-
low Him to consume me. (Galat-
ians 2:20; II Corinthians 4:5)

- The Christian life is searched:

The purpose of a candle is to
be lit and used to reveal what
is otherwise unseen. Unless I
yield my "candle" (spirit) to
Him, He cannot use it as His
own. Once He lights my "can-
dle", my inner attitudes and e-
motions, are revealed. How
much am I willing for these to
be seen or corrected?

THE MORE GOD REVEALS MY "DARK"
AREAS, THE MORE I AM MEANWHILE
DYING TO SELF.

Luke 11:33

"No man, when he hath lighted a
candle, putteth it in a secret
place, neither under a bushel,
but on a candle stick, that they
which come in may see the light."

Psalms 18:28

"For thou wilt light my candle:
the Lord my God will enlighten
my darkness."

- The Christian life is used:

The function of the "candle" is
not to conceal my testimony, but
to be willing to shine in God's
choice of candle stick, (or the
situation into which God puts
me), and to make others aware
of His Light and their own need
of it.

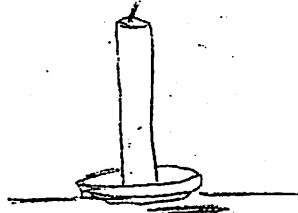
- The Christian life is submitted:

The candle is a source of light.
Only God can make my "candle"
useful by lighting it, because:

The following poem seems to fit this meditation very well.

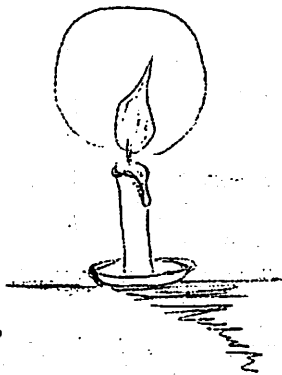
SERVICE

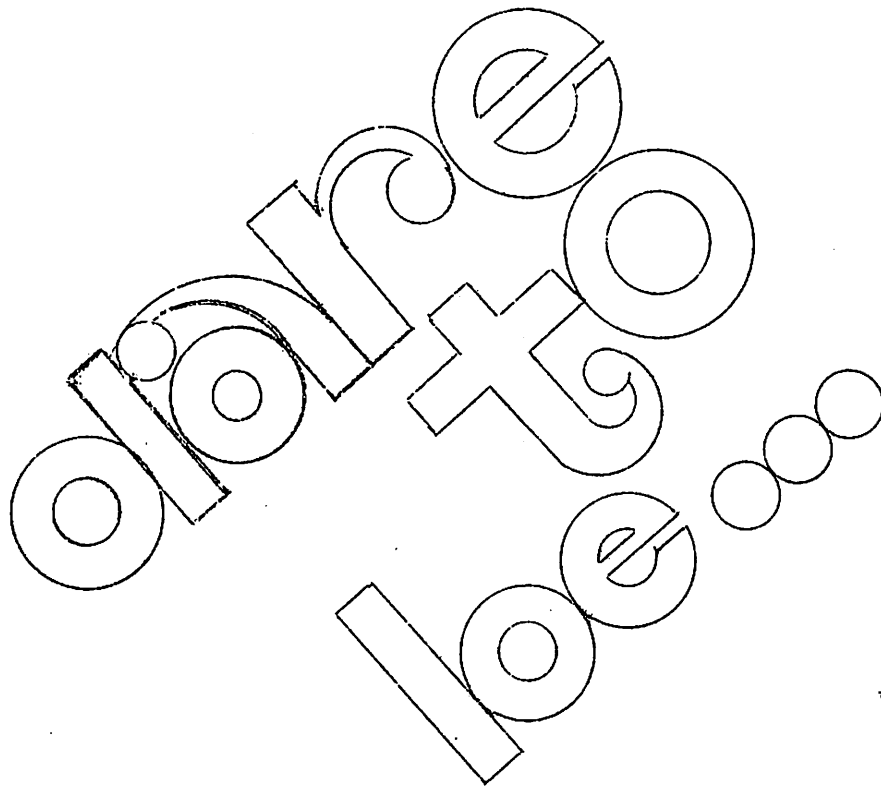
A timid little candle
Lay secluded on a shelf,
And in the quiet darkness there,
It talked thus to itself.
"With all my late companions gone,
'Tis lonely, I have learned.
But what an awful fate was theirs,
As one by one they burned.
How fortunate I am to be
Preserved from such a fate.
I am forgotten and can rest,
Oh, what a blessed state."



And so it lay quite useless,
Of life's joys unaware,
Until one day the shelf was cleaned,
And someone saw it there.
Placed on a candlestick it did
Protest with all its might,
Until a match was brought,
And it burst into glorious light.
The burning it had dreaded so
Was painful, it is true,
But quickly was forgotten
As its golden brightness grew.

And when it saw how needed
Was the light it did impart,
A joy that it had never known
Near burst its breaking heart.
And as it was consumed it found
The joy that comes thru pain,
And understood its little life
Had not been lived in vain.
How sad to save our lives for self,
And lose them for away,
What joy to lose them for our Lord,
And find them in that day.





Wayne Herrod

A person's experience in coming to the Lord and then learning to walk in His ways is greatly affected by his former experiences. Therefore, no two people's experiences will be the same. God takes us through various experiences to show us what we are, to make us willing to accept His way and then to develop His way in us.

My home background was nominally Christian. Early teaching and my own selfish desire for instant easy answers to life's problems made me have the idea that to accept Christ was the magic formula that would forever remove the desire for sin. I thought I would no longer have any problems and following Christ would be automatic.

But, what I expected and what I experienced were quite different. Gradually doubts arose in my mind regarding the trustworthiness of the Bible, the resurrection of Christ, God's existence, and later even my own existence. For the first time a struggle between good and evil was raging in my heart. I began to see evil within as real evil, and became aware of tendencies that scared me. Although I saw God's way as right and knew it to be best, I also saw it as demanding and costly and I was strongly tempted to reject it and remain in my own way. But knowing the consequences of doing this kept me seeking God.

Disappointed expectations call forth reactions from us and I am no exception. I was offended at what was happening. I did not want the discipline and struggle. But I also believed that there was something very wrong in me, and many times I concluded that I could never be a Christian. The terrible corruption and perversion within frequently led me to despair. Once I even attempted suicide but I was restrained by the Lord.

As I heard the testimonies of other Christians, I concluded that no one else had the same experience as mine. They did not have struggles, doubts, evil tendencies, or strong temptations in their lives. At least if they did they seldom, if ever, shared it.

Why did all these happen? If they are common Christian experiences, then why is it so? Before I came to Christ I was a willing slave of Satan, although I did not realize it. But when I turned to the Lord Satan did his best to turn me back to himself and he did everything conceivable to accomplish this. He tried to convince me that God's way was hard and miserable; that I was hopeless and did not really want God's way. All these discouraged me very much.

To me, faith was the intellectual assenting to facts. God permitted doubts to come because this was my vulnerable point. Doubts were more threatening to me than sin and these doubts drove me to seek God and a true faith. Through searching the Scriptures I came to see that true faith involves yielding to and putting wholehearted trust in Jesus Christ.

Another area of struggle that I have had, and still do, is in the area of emotions. We are all prone to live the Christian life on the same principle as when we lived without God. Naturally, our wills are under the dominion of our carnal desires. We do what we like and avoid what does not promise some sort of selfish fulfillment. The principle of the new life in Christ is that our wills are to be subject to Him and His will. But because we find it hard to do what we do not like, we pray, read the Bible, or obey Christ only when we "feel like" doing them. Learning to exercise our wills according to His will in the face of our selfish desires results in a struggle. So we tend to postpone obedience until we "feel like" obeying. At such times, our feelings can be very threatening and formidable and strong. Therefore, I was very weak in obedience and usually waited for the "moving of my feelings." As you can imagine, I lived a very fluctuating and unstable life.

"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord." Psalm 27:14. There is the answer. I lacked the courage and determination to act contrary to opposing feelings. Though I had the knowledge that God would make it possible, the tendency to fall back into living by feelings is still there no matter how often I tried to step out of it.

Expecting emotions to correspond with God's will and His written Word was bound to bring confusion. Often my feelings contradict what the Bible says. I found it hard to trust in the face of my distrusting emotions. Shall we judge by our feelings then?

But the real problem was unwillingness to do all that I knew God wanted for me. The frightening awareness of inward wickedness, plus chastening and the confusion that came with rebellion were all part of His way to break me. But in order to encourage me in this continual struggle, God gave me insight into the reason of these experiences early in my Christian life. This He did through a poem which I quote here, entitled, "How Prayer is Answered."

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In love and faith and every grace,
Might more of His salvation know
And seek more earnestly His face.

I'was He who taught me thus to pray
And He, I trust, has answered prayer,
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favoured hour
At once He'd answer my request
And by His love's constraining power
Subdue my will and give me rest.

Instead of this He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed
Blasted my gourd and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this" I trembling cried,
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"It is in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for faith and rest."

"These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou mayest seek thine all in Me."

Learning to trust the Lord and learning to choose His way consistently and persistently requires time and a variety of experiences. I need to keep seeking the Lord in the face of all that would discourage me. And to do this I have to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner part, so that Christ may dwell as Lord in my heart by faith.

I believe that I have learned a few things, but I feel I have only begun. Accepting myself and the daily struggle is a daily struggle by itself. I do thank the Lord for what He has been doing in me thus far and trust that He will continue until I am all that He desires me to be.

11th Canadian Chinese Christian Youth
WINTER CONFERENCE

Date : December 27 - 31, 1971.

Place : Winnipeg Bible College,
Otterburne, Manitoba.
(About 50 miles south of Winnipeg)

Theme : Christ - The Ultimate.

Speakers : Devotional meetings - Mr. Un-tak Wu
Evangelistic meetings - Mr. Sam-Kiang Lam

Fees : \$17.50 (Room and Board)
\$ 1.00 (Registration)

Delegates from different cities will arrange for their own transportations to the Winnipeg Bible College.

For further informations, please write to the following address:

Mr. Stephen Ng,
The Planning Committee,
808 St. Paul Street,
Winnipeg 10, Manitoba.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

1. After much prayers and discussions, the Fountain Subcommittee has decided to put out its Southeast Asian Edition in the near future. About 2,000 copies would be printed in Hong Kong and distributed from there. Please pray for now Hong Kong Representatives and also our readers in Southeast Asia.
2. The first shipment of "The Starseekers" has already arrived at Winnipeg. It is hoped that they could be sent out to our North American readers by the end of October. Please continue to pray that God would use this book to reach out for the non-Christian readers.
3. Many of our reader would be moving after the new semester has started. So please don't forget to send us your new address (as well as the old) so that the "Fountain" may be sent to you in time.
4. Financial situation

"The Starseekers"	:	Amount required - Can.	\$4,000.00
		Amount received -	\$2,850.00
Printing machine	:	Amount required -	\$ 900.00
		Amount received -	\$ 750.00

YOUR DECISION

剪寄之頁

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第六卷

Volume 6

第 期

Number

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My heart is moved after reading this magazine and I would like to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. Please pray for me.

☐ 我是基督徒，讀此刊後，心中受主愛的激勵，願將自己完全奉獻給主，求主帶領我的前途，請為我禱告。

I am a Christian. I would like to dedicate my life to Christ and trust that He has a plan for my future. Please pray for me.

☐ 我是基督徒，但曾冷淡，現願將自己再一次奉獻給主，請為我禱告。

I am a Christian but have turned away from God. After reading this magazine I would like to rededicate myself to the Lord. Please pray for me.

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