

FOUNTAIN

WINNIPEG CHINESE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



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 Christian friends 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 verse 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 hosts." (Zechariah 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 labourers into His harvest.'"⁶⁷

(Matthew 9:36-38)

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Second Class Mail

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"the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
(Hebrews 4:12)

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**To Mavis,
with love.**

Cynthia.

Dear Cynthia,

Someone was knocking on my door the other day. He said his name was Jesus Christ and he was a friend of yours. I wonder if you would give me some character reference about this person so that I can decide what to do with him. Thank you.

Mavis

Dear Mavis,

Thank you for your letter. I am glad you take so much trouble to find out more about Jesus. Many people just slam the door on His face, not caring even to see what He looks like. Well, I am glad to tell you what I think of Him.

Jesus Christ has been my friend for eight years. He is wise, sincere, kind and forgiving. Above all, He is a faithful companion. I would suggest that you talk with Him yourself. You will find that having Jesus as a friend is the greatest happiness in your life.

Finally, I would also advise you to read His biographies -- the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You will find that He is more than a man. He is Divine.

Do feel free to write again. I would be delighted to discuss with you on matters concerning Jesus.

Cynthia

Dear Mavis,

I am glad to hear that you are reading the Gospel according to Matthew and finding it interesting. Jesus is an amazing person, right? I was thrilled when I first read about His conversations with people, and I am still thrilled when I read them today. My first contact with Jesus was through the reading of His biographies in Scripture lessons. I found Him very wise. Once He was tested by certain people. "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" they asked. That was a difficult question. If He said yes, they would say that He was disloyal to God by paying tribute to a pagan monarch. If He said no, they would charge Him with disloyalty to Caesar, the Roman emperor. Jesus, however, answered, "Why try this trick on me, you frauds? Show me the money you pay the tax with." And when they handed Him a coin, He said, "Whose face is this and whose name is in the inscription?" "Caesar's." "Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God!" Wasn't that fantastic? I thought He would be stuck there, scratching His head, saying, "Well, this is a touchy point. You know, sometimes we have to compromise..."

There are many incidents like this which are interesting as well as thought-provoking. For example, "It is not what goes into a man's mouth that makes him unclean. It is what comes out of a man's mouth that makes him unclean" was Jesus' remark when the spiritual leaders accused His disciples of breaking the Jewish tradition by eating food without washing their hands. Then He added: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness and blasphemies. These are the things which make a man unclean."

Let us examine our hearts!

Cynthia

Dear Cynthia,

That business about our hearts bothers me but I think I shall leave that until later. Right now, what impresses me are his words, "Love your enemy, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Heavenly Father. For he makes his sun rise upon evil men as well as good, and he sends rain upon honest and dishonest alike." I have never realised that God is so generous. I need to thank him for that. But loving one's enemies! Is that possible?

I begin to admire this friend of yours now. He has a completely different standard of values: "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Food and clothing always are the topics of our conversation. But he says:

"Don't worry and don't keep saying, 'What shall we eat, what shall we drink or what shall we wear?' Your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your heart on His kingdom and His goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course. Don't worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day's trouble is enough for one day."

You are lucky to have a friend like this. There is no need for you to worry about anything. There is always such a wise friend to turn to.

Mavis

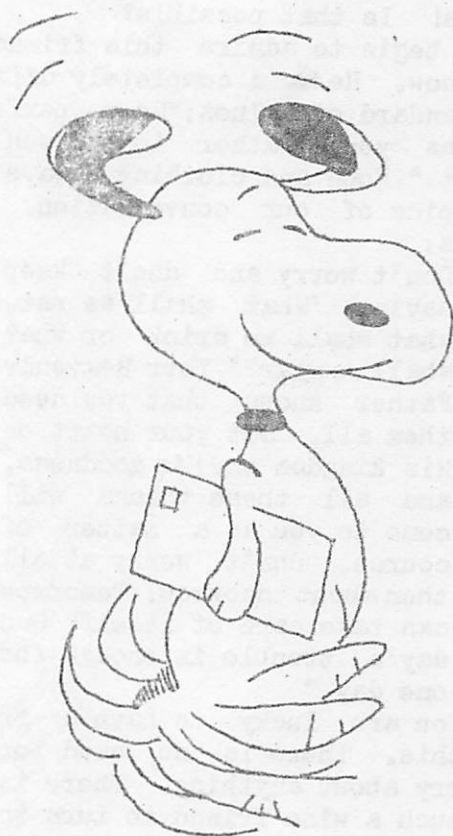
Dear Mavis,

Thank you for reminding me of that promise. I am ashamed to admit that sometimes I worry too. Those are the times when I concentrate on my troubles and forget what Jesus says.

Yes, by ourselves it is impossible to love our enemies. It is impossible to love even our friends at times. We need a higher and holier love to fill our hearts before we can love others.

Have you come across the passage on Jesus' death? When He was crucified, men mocked and jeered at Him. And yet He said, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing."

Meditate on the cross of Calvary,
Cynthia



Dear Cynthia,

I read the passage on Jesus' death the other day. It was so moving that I had to turn to the similar accounts found in Mark, Luke and John and read them as well. The picture of the cross stayed in my mind and I could not brush it aside.

Yesterday I was bleeding some rabbits in my laboratory. I pity those poor animals. It is not a good thing to have one's ears damaged and blood extracted from one's body every other week. When I saw the crimson drops dripping from the rabbit's pink ear, I could not help thinking of Jesus on the cross. There he was — heart-broken, suffering pain without a word of complaint. His friends had deserted him. He was cursed and laughed at. And yet he was innocent! How could he still pardon those who nailed him there? Could he really be the Son of God?

I came across the following passage too:

"Anyone who puts his love for father and mother above his love for me does not deserve to be mine, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and neither is the man who refuses to take up his cross and follow me. The man who has found his life will lose it, but the man who has lost it for my sake will find it."

I am puzzled. Does he really expect so much from his followers? Is He so precious that we should love Him more than anyone else, even our parents, our lovers and ourselves? If that is the case, I am scared.

Mavis

Dear Mavis,

Yes, I am scared too. A whole-hearted devotion IS what Jesus demands from His disciples. That is why Jesus would rather tell His followers this right at the beginning.

And He deserves all our love.

As you have already noted, Jesus is not merely wise and innocent. Furthermore, He speaks with authority. He is sinless. He is more than a man. In fact, He IS the Son of God! Why then did He suffer such a shameful and agonizing death?

Do you still remember we have talked about examining our hearts? We have to admit that even though we are not robbers or murderers, deep down in our hearts there are hatred, jealousy, pride and all kinds of evil thoughts. We cannot deny the fact that we are sinners. But God is just. He has to punish unrighteousness. Only Jesus Christ, His Son, who is sinless can save us by suffering the penalty -- death -- for us. The wonderful thing is that Jesus was willing to give up His glory in heaven and come to this earth to be bound by time and space. He became a servant to the people whom He created. He experienced hunger and temptations. He was betrayed by His own friends.

"Surely He had borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

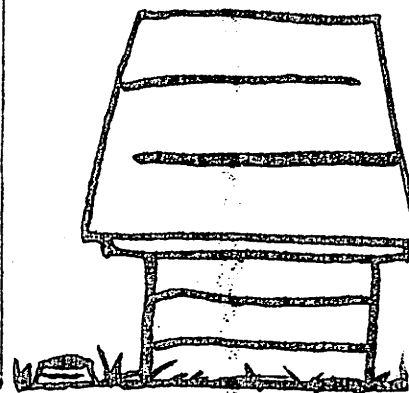
"It was while we were sinners that Christ died for us."

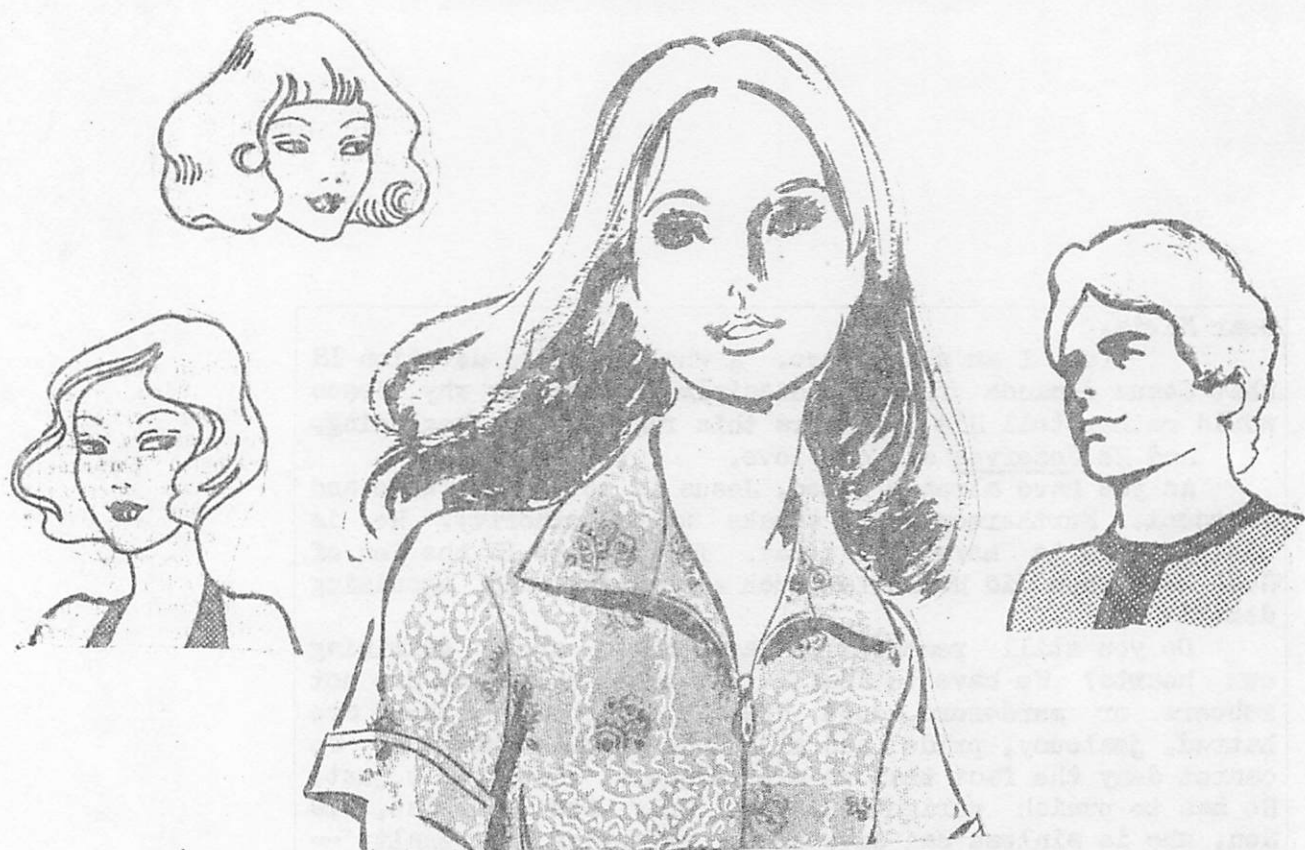
He not only forgave His enemies; He also died for them when they were still against Him. That was love.

Yes, His standard is high. His demand is great. But He is worthy of being loved and honored. Moreover, He has promised us strength to follow Him. He has called us friends, not servants. He has given us the power to become the children of God and from then on we can partake of the Divine nature of God. I was thrilled when I discovered this glorious plan of salvation God had for me. I was overjoyed when I discovered His feelings towards me. I whispered to Him that day, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today, come in to stay."

Jesus loves you in the same way. He wants you to enjoy the privilege of being a child of God. Why don't you open your heart's door and let Him in? Why don't you say to Him today, "Lord Jesus, thank you for your love. I want to love you back. Please stay by my side and help me to follow you?"

Cynthia





YES I DO

LYDIA LAW.

I stepped into the cold water. My hands held on to his wrist. The pastor asked me, "Lydia Law, do you accept Jesus Christ the Son of God as your personal Saviour?"

"Yes, I do."

"I baptise you in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

And I was immersed into the water.

Sitting alone in my room that evening, my thoughts were drawn back to the past. I studied in a Catholic school for fourteen years. I was given instructions on Biblical Knowledge. I studied them, even to the extent of memorising them, but it was for examinations' sake only. This long term of instructions had imprinted on my

mind the idea of the existence of God, some sort of supernatural power above us. When my friend asked me why I was not baptised since I said I believed, I would always put forward an answer, "I am afraid I don't have enough faith." This in fact was just an excuse for or rather an escape from such an embarrassing question, embarrassing indeed to me because I was not sure of what I was believing. To me, God was only a problem-solver, to whom I could turn to in times of trouble. My sister is a Christian. We often had hot argument on religion, and she always said, "The Bible tells us so" or "From the Bible we know". "Was not this ridiculous?" I thought. How could she take such a "textbook" so seriously?

Then came the big blow. I was rejected by the University of Hongkong. For two years of hard work, all I gained was a letter of rejection. With a discouraged heart I finally decided to go abroad, hoping to seek back the lost confidence. When I was about to

go to one of the Universities which admitted me, I received a letter of admission from the University of Manitoba. As I looked back, I found that God really had a plan for me.

I arrived at Winnipeg, knowing not a single soul but only a school-mate who arrived only a week before me. She came to meet me that night and the next day, we went to the University together. I registered in the morning and in the afternoon I had to attend my first class. That evening when I got back from the University, I could no longer control myself. Suffering under the pressure of a strange surrounding, exhausted due to the lack of rest after the long flight and depressed by homesickness, I finally broke into tears. For the first time since I left home, I cried. I had no one to turn to. I would not turn to God for I thought He had failed me ever since I received the letter of rejection. I was totally lost.

Accidentally I came to know of C. One night she invited me to have supper at her place. To my great surprise, on her book shelves, I found books that seemed quite familiar to me. Oh yes, I had seen them at home too on my sister's book shelf. I never bothered to read them. Looking at the expression of excitement on my face, C. smiled and told me that she was a Christian. That evening, after supper, she invited me to attend a meeting on the campus organised by a group of Chinese Christians. Not knowing how to refuse this sincere invitation and having the desire to meet more Chinese students, and above all, aroused by curiosity, I accepted the invitation. It was the first time after my arrival in this foreign land that I saw so many Chinese. I felt warm and at home. Never before had I thought of such a thing as a Christian group organised by Chinese students in Canada. Together they prayed and sang hymns with such a spirit that really stunned me. A film was shown too. In it Nicky Cruz testified how he came about to receive Christ and experience a great change in his life. I could never

forget that scene when Nicky entered the Church, with a firm assurance to himself, "I won't believe, I won't believe, I won't believe." But as the pastor's sermon went on, unfolding Nicky's sins one by one, there seemed to be a force behind Nicky that made him no longer able to stand on his own feet but finally kneel down on his knees. He confessed his sins and received Christ. "It was the power of the Holy Spirit revealing to me my sins." He later told us. The whole film was so impressive and appealing. "Could God really do such a wonderful thing?" I went home that night, unable to put off this question from my mind.

The next evening, C. came to visit me. She talked to me about the love of God and the death of Jesus Christ. Then, she showed me a tiny little blue booklet. Printed on the cover were the words: "Do you know the steps to peace with God?" Together with C. and my room-mate, we began to read through this booklet slowly. It told me how God loved us and had a wonderful plan for all of us. Yet, men had sins and were separated from God who is holy. But God loves us and provided the only possible way that we could be reconciled to Him, and that was through Jesus Christ who died for us and that by His blood our sins were washed away. I was really struck by the fact that all men were sinners, including me. At home, I was a nice daughter, in school a good student. Among my friends, I was open and honest. I never smoked, drank wine or gambled. Me! A sinner? But, it was clearly written in the Bible!

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

(Romans 3:23)

I began to feel very uneasy. Then we came to the last step. I was to make my decision, to receive Christ or not. C. looked at me. "Do you want to make your decision now?" she asked. I kept silent for a few moments. My heart was bothered by the uneasiness that I was a sinner. From what I had just read, Jesus was the only person who could

save me from sin. Thus, on one hand, I wanted to make the decision but on the other hand, I was scared to make such a big decision. But, as if that force that was behind Nicky Crutz was pushing me, I finally nodded my head and I invited Christ to come into my life with a short prayer. I had to admit that at this very moment, the mystery of salvation was still beyond my comprehension, yet the power of the Holy Spirit revealed to me the truth that I was a sinner. I had to confess this before Christ and had to ask Him to take control of my life. It was by this simple faith given to me by the Holy Spirit that I came to receive Christ.

I would never regret that I have made such a decision as I experience this new life in me after I received Christ into my heart. With the Holy Spirit in me, the Bible is no longer a "text-book" but a means through which God talks to me. It has revealed to me that God is not merely a problem-solver but a God of love. It has taught me how to have communication with God through prayer and to let Him live in me.

I experience a change in my life as I feel the presence of the Lord within me day by day. With this new life, I have a different view on matters that came up in my daily life, things which I see and things which I do. Something which I believed that had nothing to do with sin before, now I know that this is sin in the eyes of God.

"I am the light of the world;
he who follows me will not
walk in darkness but will have
the light of life."

(John 8:12)

I really have to thank the Lord for giving me this light. With this light guiding me, I am able to have this sensitivity to sin. I can now feel the pain of sin which I can never sense before.

I can now understand why Nicky Crutz could have such a wonderful change in his life as I also experience Christ doing the same work in me. Not only do I feel the love of God as He

guide me through my daily concerns, but I also experience the peace and joy even when I am in trouble. I really come to experience the reality of a Christian life. When we are happy, we praise the Lord for giving us this joy. The mystery is that when we are down and in trouble, we also feel the peace and joy. I remember now at one time I had great difficulties in my school work. And the uncertainty of my future really bothered me. But God gave me the assurance again through His words:

"Trust in the Lord with all
your heart, and do not rely
on your own insight. In all
your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make straight
your paths."

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

God has a plan for me, so why should I worry? Instead of feeling very depressed, I felt a sort of inward joy in me, a joy which I cannot explain to anyone in words.

I wrote to my friends telling them of the peace and joy of receiving Christ. Most of them wrote back, asking me not to be too hasty in my decision and not to let my emotion overcome me. To them, religion was an escape from reality. To me, to live in Christ was in fact a reality in itself. To them, I had chosen religion as an outlet for my loneliness and emptiness which I would surely have felt then when I first ventured into a foreign land all by myself. To me, I had not chosen God, but He had chosen me instead. As Christ said,

"You did not choose me, but I
chose you and appointed you
that you should go and bear
fruit and that your fruit
should abide, so that what-
ever you ask the Father in my
name, He may give it to you."

(John 15:16)

By a simple faith I have received Christ. He has given me evidence of His love as He walks with me through joy and sorrow. Fully assured of His presence now, I can answer the pastor "Yes, I do." and I wish the whole world could hear me when I said, "Yes, I do."

ESTHER the Queen

lai

"MAY I INTRODUCE YOU TO QUEEN ESTHER?"

Esther is a Persian name which means "Star". Esther, the young Jewish maiden, was among the Jews living in exile in Babylonia which was governed by the Persian Empire. Because of her beauty, the Persian king Ahasuerus chose her to be his queen after putting away Queen Vashti. Through her courageous pleas to the king, Esther was later used by God to deliver her own people from massacre.

The story of Esther is recorded in the Old Testament, in a book named after her. The name of God is never mentioned in this book,¹ nor is there any allusion to the book in the New Testament. Also, there is no direct reference to prayer. Yet it is inter-

esting to find that the main theme of the book is God's providential care of His people. Nowadays it is rare to find the mention of God in news headlines, except about His supposed death perhaps. Yet it is comforting to know that He is caring for His children just the same.

"HONOUR THY FOSTER FATHER"

Esther lost her parents when she was very young and, being a relative of Mordecai, was adopted as his daughter. Her obedience to Mordecai is well demonstrated throughout the book. An example of this is "Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her, for

Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care."²

The fact that she became the Persian Queen did not change her attitude towards Mordecai. Her accustomed obedience to Mordecai enabled her to save without hesitation her own people from the deadly persecution.

Do you find your parents always tracking you down? Is your boss ever so ready to pick on you? Rather than thinking of ways to change that, have you ever thought of them as sent by God for a purpose?

"GO AND FAST"

Although there is no direct reference to prayer, it is implied throughout the Book of Esther. When Esther was facing a decision that would affect her own life, as well as the lives of many of her own people, she sent this request to Mordecai: "Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way."³ For the Jews, to fast is to devote oneself completely to prayer. If Esther had not experienced the power of prayer before, she would not have bet her life on it.

There have been times when I was pressed to make critical decisions in a very short time. On one occasion, I could not find a quiet place anywhere so I had to pray in a washroom. These were occasions when I found my God very close to me in just a prayer away. I am also reminded of what David Bonnard, missionary to the Indians, said of the times he spent in prayer: "My joints were loosed; the great man down my face and body as if it would dissolve." Many followers of Christ have gone through the experience of Gethsemane.

"IF I PERISH, I PERISH."

It was Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman, the Persian minister, therein ignoring the command of King

Ahasuerus, that put the Jews into hot water. Bowing before a man, according to the Jews, is worshipping him; and they have been commanded to worship only God. Haman took the offence very seriously and decided not only to destroy Mordecai but also all the Jews throughout the Persian empire. When Queen Esther learned about the King's approval of Haman's plot to massacre the Jews, she decided to literally take her life in her hands and beg the King to spare her people. At that time, the rule was that no one should enter the King's inner court unless he or she had been sent for. If not, unless the King should show mercy and hold out his golden scepter to the unexpected intruder, the latter would be doomed to die. Now, Queen Esther had not been called by the King for more than a month. She knew very well that if she went to the King without summons to plead for the Jews, her own life might be in jeopardy. She might simply lose her life before the other Jews lost theirs. On the other hand, being the Persian Queen, if she refrained from offending the King, her life would probably be spared during the massacre of the Jews.

As it turned out, Esther actually risked her life twice for her people. This uncompromising attitude of facing the challenge is the common thread that strings together the numerous martyrs throughout the church history. Martyrs are not all fearless and impulsive but are willing to pay the price because their loving Savior has first died for them. To be truly courageous is to do something that you may be afraid of and yet still go ahead and do it because of its value.

"ARE YOU INDISPENSABLE?"

"For if you (Esther) remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such time as this?"⁴

Esther also realised, as Mordecai

had pointed out, that she was not indispensable in the sense that if she should refuse to plead for the Jews, God would still save the Jews through some other means. In any area of Christian service, it is well to check against the good feeling that you are the most important worker and that without you the whole work will collapse. It is one thing to realise the opportunities by which we may be able to serve God and quite another to feel indispensable and let pride rule. The Bible makes it very clear that God resists the proud. God can always raise someone else to work for Him.

"PLEASE COME AGAIN TOMORROW"

After three days of fasting, Esther entered the King's inner court and was fortunate enough to have the King's scepter of mercy. She requested that a banquet be prepared for Haman and the King. During the banquet, the King pressed Queen Esther again to find out what she really was after. We can easily imagine how eager and anxious Esther was to expose the blood-thirsty plot of Haman. But instead, for some reason, she invited Haman and the King to come again for banquet the next day. It was that very night that King Ahasuerus had trouble sleeping and ordered the historical records of his kingdom from the library. He came across the record telling how Mordecai had exposed the plot of two eunuchs who planned to assassinate the King. Learning that he had not honored Mordecai, the King ordered Haman to put noble robes on Mordecai and to lead him through the streets of the city, on the King's horse, shouting: "This is

the way the King honors those he delights in."

Thus we see that somehow God had guided Esther to postpone pleading for the Jews during the first banquet with Haman. And she obeyed. The timing was perfect in that Mordecai was honored by the King that same night. Hence it is important to recognise the time difference between our watch and God's clock and to go ahead according to the latter. And we can be reassured that His timing is never too late.

"WHERE IS TODAY'S ESTHER?"

When the Russian astronauts explored the Space and came back, they said that they did not find God. When people learn about the happenings around the world through various news media, they do not see the Hand of God at work. Christianity is phasing out, they say. God's name is no longer mentioned even in some of the modern churches. This is the time we should seriously study the Book of Esther, to be reminded of God's providential care, though His interference may not be apparent at times.

Prayer moves the Hand that moves the world. A devoted maiden moved a determined monarch. Constant obedience, faith in prayer and boldness for God do not appear in a Christian's life overnight. In the Book of Esther, we are seeing only the sparks that have escaped from her glowing furnace of experience with God.

Are you willing to be the Esther of this day and age, ready to risk your life for God? Who knows whether it is not for such a time that you have become what you are? Besides, you are not indispensable. ☐

Reference:

¹ except in The Living Bible which is a paraphrased version.

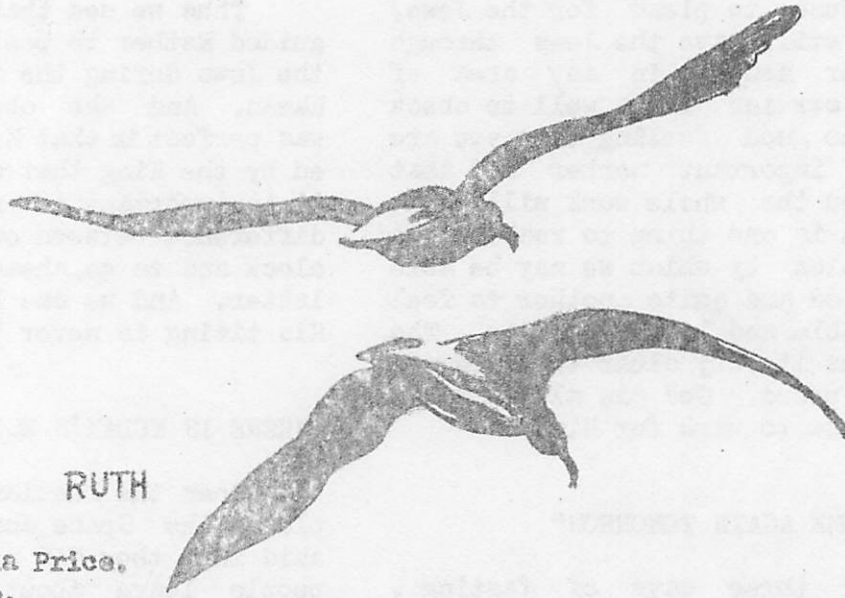
² Esther 2:20

³ Esther 4:16

⁴ Esther 4:14

THE BURDEN IS LIGHT

RUTH



Her name is Eugenia Price.

She was born twice.

The first birth was on June 22, 1916.

She lived in several, different, new houses

Built from money that came by Dad's profession -- dentistry.

Pleasing her mother nearly became her god.

I.Q. tests enabled her to skip 2-B, 4-B and 5-A.

She became an atheist...

...after the course in Comparative Religion in College;

...when she learnt how to write the formulae for a sunset
with certain colours.

In her Sophomore year she switched to Liberal Arts

With major in English.

Writing became her god.

She made brilliant marks but she was not free.

Science then caught her attention.

Enough pre-dental credits were piled so that...

She was the only woman accepted for entrance

In the Northwestern Dental School the following year.

For three years she made honour grades, got bored, and quitted.

Philosophy took over.

A longing for simplicity of life plunged her into poetry writing.

After three years of searching,

Philosophy and her own poetry turned into ashes in her hands.

Then writing for radio became her career.

She had her own production office,

Her own apartment,

Her own record collection,

Good food,

Friends to love,

She has everything she wanted

But.....

"ALL OF LIFE WAS A BURDEN.
A VERY HEAVY BURDEN."

Eugenia was born the second time on October 2, 1949.
With her production office gone, heavily in debts,
No job, no "nice" apartment,
She still felt like the daughter of the King
And for the first time in her entire life she knew..
She was free !!!!!
What had happened in the second birth?

She lived in an "English basement"
With Ellen Riley.
They had to kneel to bail the water out of the bath-tub
Because it slanted in the wrong end.
Both lived in the "Glop-Era" which began with rice
Until on Friday it found itself consisting of needles and...
"The more 'Glop' the more Glory and the more Glory the more 'Glop',"
Eugenia exclaimed joyfully.
What had happened in the second birth?

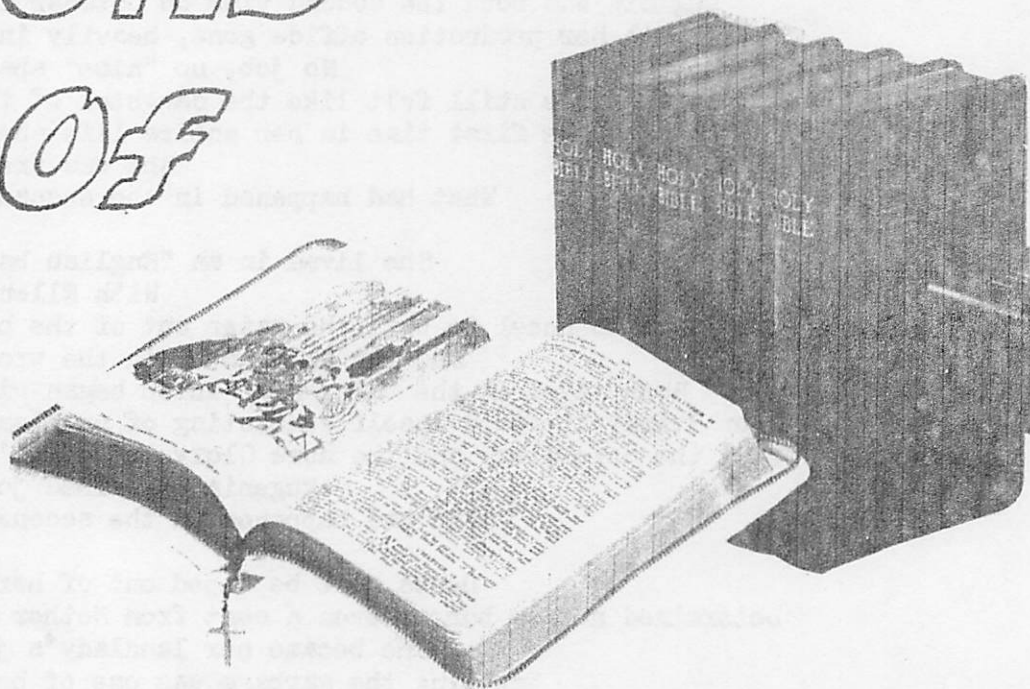
Debts must be wiped out of her slate.
Determined not to borrow even a cent from Mother and Dad
She became her landlady's janitor.
Emptying the garbage was one of her jobs.
She stooped low to pay her debts --
She, who once went to work by taxi!
What had happened in the second birth?

Later she got a job in the radio station --
Sharing Christ with her audience.
Her radio programs became so popular that it overshadowed others.
Result: She was fired from her job.
Reaction: "Hey, St. Paul is right! I'm rejoicing
Even though I've just been fired!"
What had happened in the second birth?

By faith she and Ellen bought an old house which they could not even pay.
It was named "Old Toot" where all were welcomed
...The alcoholic in his greasy jacket
...The overworked office girl in her "salo-tweed"
...The widow in the mink coat.
All found, like Eugenia, the burden to be LIGHT!
What had happened in the second birth?

If you would like to know the answer, get a copy of
"The Burden Is Light" by Eugenia Price.

GOD'S AUTHORITY WORD OF



REV. D.K. PEARSE

One of the attractive elements about the person and ministry of Jesus as He taught and preached throughout Palestine was the ring of authority in His message. At the very earliest stage of His ministry we are told that, "They were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one that had authority and not as the Scribes." (Mark 1:22) No doubt this is one of the reasons "the common people heard Him gladly."

Who does not want to know the answers concerning the fundamental questions of life? Who are we, what is our true nature and purpose, and where are we going, -- what is our destiny? Everyone longs for a word of certainty and authority concerning

these things. "Why doesn't God speak; why doesn't God show us the truth and give us a clear and certain word?" is the complaint of many. Yet this is precisely what God has done and has declared to us.

Christianity of all different types and denominations has always declared this truth, that God has revealed Himself to mankind, and therefore we have an absolute and unchanging authority. Controversy has raged, however, as to where this authority may be found. The Roman Catholics and others to lesser degree have affirmed that the authority is in the Church (which really means in the ordained officers of the church), while Evangelical believers and churches have always believed the authority is in the

Bible as the very Word of God.

There are many powerful passages of Scripture to support this position, but I shall only consider two at this point. The first one is the opening statement of the Book of Hebrews, 1:1-2, -- "God, who at sundry times and in various ways spake in time past unto the fathers through the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us in His Son." The other Scripture text is in II Timothy 3:16 which says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Both of these passages tell us in clear and powerful declarations that God has spoken, and that all the Scriptures (Writings) of the Old Testament (Prophets) and the New Testament (His Son) -- all come from the mouth of God. The words which we read in II Timothy 3:16 "by inspiration of God", come from only one word in Greek (theopneustos) which is a compound word Theo (God) and pneustos (breathed) and being in the passive voice it should be rendered, "that which is breathed out by God." "All Scripture" is of this Divine origin; it comes from the mouth of God; God spake.

The greatest endorsement of the authority of the Bible as the Word of God comes from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is not too much to say that the authority of the whole of both the Old Testament and New Testament and the credibility and reliability of the Person of Jesus Christ stand or fall together.

Jesus authenticated the Bible of the Old Testament which He used and read and quoted in His day. Those who have studied the matter deeply, declare that Jesus not only referred to all the sections of the Old Testament, but that He actually quoted or made reference to passages from almost every book of the Old Testament. The apparent exceptions are the Book of Esther and the Song of Solomon.

There are striking examples in the gospels of Jesus' use of particular Scriptures. For example, in His defense against Satan in the wilderness temptation (Matthew 4:1-11), Jesus crushes every subtle temptation with

a clear refutation of Satan's suggestion from God's Word saying, "It is written". He also answered the Sadducees concerning their rejection of a resurrection and a life beyond physical death by saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." (Matthew 22:29) Here Jesus quotes from Exodus and the Words of God spoken to Moses at the burning bush, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob", and then Jesus adds, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," (Matthew 22:32) In the same chapter (verses 41-46) Jesus proves that the Messiah is more than the son of David, and indeed that Messiah (the Christ) is the Lord, according to David's Spirit-inspired words in Psalms 110:1.

Jesus not only used verses and statements of the Old Testament in His authoritative teaching, but He also authenticated all the Old Testament by clear and positive and comprehensive pronouncements. Contrary to the opinion of many, Jesus declares in Matthew 5:17,18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets... for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The terms "the law" or "the law and the prophets", could refer only to parts of the Old Testament or they could be used to refer to the entire Scripture. This word concerning the Scriptures came early in His ministry. The second one to which I refer came after His resurrection as a rebuke to the ignorance and unbelief of the disciples in Luke 24:25 "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Then we are told in verse 27, that "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself. And finally in verse 44, "... all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

So Jesus clearly declares the accuracy, the authority, and necessary

fulfillment of all that is written in the law of God, by Moses, by the prophets and in the Psalms!

Likewise Jesus claims for His own words and teachings a divine and everlasting authority. In John chapter 7 where Christ's person and claims are under discussion, Jesus declares in verse 16, "my doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." Again in John 12:48-50, Jesus says, "I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak... whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." Again in John 14:10 Jesus says, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works", and in 14:24, "the Word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." And finally, that word of Jesus which echoes the authority of the Old Testament, in Luke 21:33, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORD shall not pass away."

All of the NEW TESTAMENT, of course, was written after Jesus left this earthly scene, and there is need of special intervening power from God so that the teachings of Jesus Christ and the message of His salvation should be given to us in accurate words through God's chosen writers. This is exactly what Jesus promised to His immediate followers. In John 14:26 Jesus promises the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, "Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Again in John 16:12-14 a similar promise is made where Jesus declares that there are some things which He cannot say or teach to them because they could not bear them. Then He says, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

So, the promise of Jesus is that His teaching shall be remembered by the Holy Spirit and that He will guide them into all truth. His whole purpose will be to take the things which Christ did teach and the things which Christ could not teach and the future things God wants us to know, and to reveal them in such a way as to glorify Jesus Christ in it all. Have you ever wondered how the writers of the New Testament could remember the details of the teachings of Jesus? Or how they could choose which stories and incidents to be recorded? Jesus makes it very clear in these verses that it was carried out under the perfect knowledge, control, and wisdom of God, through believing, submissive men.

What more impressive and decisive evidence for the authority of the Scriptures could a Christian want than that of Jesus Christ our Lord? Almost all "Christians" and "Christian Churches" confess their acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and yet relatively few accept the infallibility and the authority of the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ would list all who reject or neglect His Word as foolish men who build their houses upon the sand.

The Word of God, the Holy Scriptures are intended to give believers an unshakable foundation of assurance of salvation which cannot be obtained from any other source, as well as a guide in the moral chaos and darkness of a wicked and confused world. Both for our own physical and spiritual welfare, and for our message and witness to others, we must always insist that God has spoken. And God shall be true to His Word though all men should be opposed to it. "Let God be true and every man a liar," if necessary, as the Apostle declared.

In our particular day, multitudes are turning away from the authority of their traditional churches because they are confronted with constant changes, contradictions and confusion. More than ever before we need to stand upon the clear and certain promises and pronouncements of the Bible, and we need to be diligent, bold, and faithful in going everywhere preaching the Word. □

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