

# FOUNTAIN

WINNIPEG CHINESE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



THE FOUNTAIN is published once every six weeks. It 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. The magazine is free of charge and is sent upon request.

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 laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" (Matthew 9:36-38)

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# History rediscovered

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## editorial

It is the time of Christmas.

Yet to the world at large, the celebration of Christmas marks but another yearly feasting occasion. The birth of a child, which is so much consecrated by religious circles, only signifies to the secular world the birth of the founder of a great religion. Indeed, today Christianity is being viewed as one of the major institutionalized religions of the world.

But Christianity is more than an institutionalized religion. It is the relationship between God and man. It tells of how God had revealed Himself to man in human history; how He sent His own Son to earth to become man and die to bear all of man's sins. In His Incarnate Son was the manifestation of His own Fullness. And henceforth man could grasp concretely what His love is. "In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins." (I John 4:10)

Nevertheless, because the teachings of a man on earth had been labeled as merely bearing intense religious overtones, what had occurred would unsurprisingly be viewed as nothing more than the emergence of man's still another major religious system.

The Infinite had intruded human history to become finite. It is our part to acknowledge that the Finite is authentically the Infinite. ☐

".....thou shalt call his name  
JESUS; for he shall save his people  
from their sins."

- Matthew 1:21 -

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We welcome written contributions both expository and evangelistic in nature. Articles may include testimonies, short reflective prose, stories, biographies, book reviews, Bible studies, topical discussions, poems, translated works and news of Christian groups. Please avoid adopting a didactic approach. The name and address of the author must accompany all contributions. Pseudonyms may be used, but anonymous articles will not be published.

# from FEAR to FAITH

- Van Pelt -

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Twenty-four more shopping days before Christmas, I still haven't figured out what to buy for Karen's Christmas gift. So this morning while we were on our way to the campus, I asked for her opinion. Before Karen could have the chance to say anything, Paula and Lynn, the other two girls in the gas pool, cut right in, "What about us, eh?"

"I'll go broke. Do you think a poor graduate student like me can afford to give to every Jack and Jill?" I protested.

"Surely you can afford to give to your dear Karen." Paula was trying to jeer me, but I didn't blush.

Then Paula turned to Karen and said, "Karen, you are a religious person.

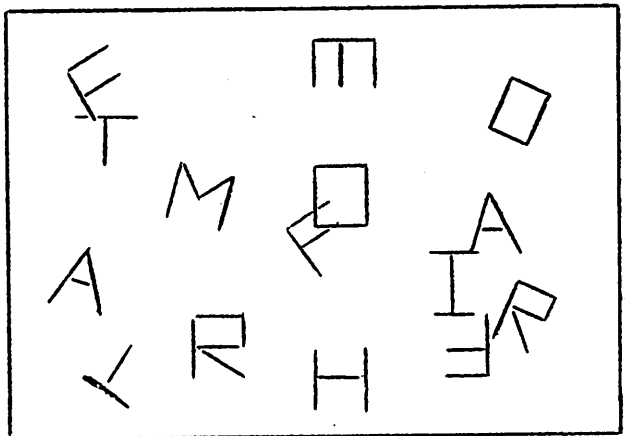
Tell me, who was the genius that invented this great idea of Christmas and Christmas gift?"

"Wasn't that big fat Santa Claus?" Lynn thought she was smart.

"I am not too sure," Karen replied after some thinking, "but I think it's kind of a blended practice of the ancient heathen European belief of St. Nicholas coming to give gifts to the poor and needy on the 25th of December and the later Christian celebration of Christ coming into the world."

"I sure won't mind to have more of these heathen beliefs so that I can get more presents from friends. But why should we celebrate Christ's coming into the world? Who is he anyway? Wasn't he just a Jew who claimed to be God and died two thousand years ago?" Lynn was puzzled.

By this time we had arrived at our parking slot, so Karen said, "Well, Lynn, why don't you go for coffee with me this morning? I'll tell you more about this Christ and the true meaning of Christmas, O.K.? Meet me at 10:30 in my lab. My experiment should be finished by then."



At lunch time, I asked Karen what she told Lynn at coffee time.

"Why are you so eager to know?"

"....Because....because I am puzzled by the very same question, you know. Karen, you've changed so much since last January when you said you had received this Jesus Christ as your...."

"Lord and Saviour," Karen added, with a confident and satisfying smile.

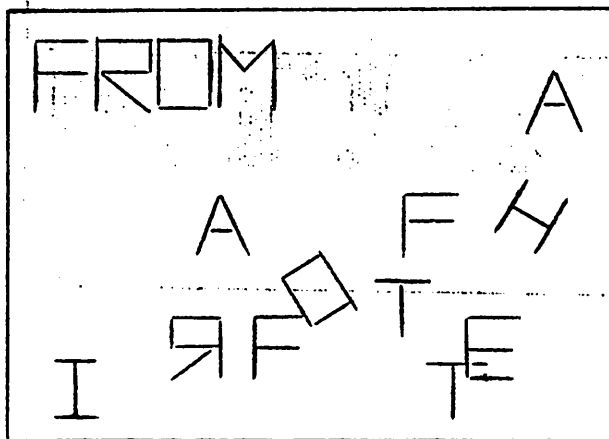
"Yes,...your Lord and Saviour. I mean I don't understand why you are so turned on by this Jesus Christ. Karen, I have known you since we entered the Honours Chemistry program, remember? Before, you were moody, often anxious, easily upset, and...." I hesitated lest I might arouse her old nature.

"Yes. Linus, you are right, and I was rebellious and arrogant too! But all that were of the past. The Bible says, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.' Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the sin-polluted world to save and change sinners, and I surely was one. And that is what Christmas is really all about. Remember last December when my project was all bogged down and I was very frustrated? Then Marion and Joanne came along and invited me to the Navigators' ski trip. It was a fun time, but the most exciting thing was that for the first time in my life I heard about and understood the real meaning of Christianity. Marion showed me from the Bible that I was a sinner, and yet Jesus Christ loves even a sinner like me."

"You really believe in these things? What do you mean by a sinner?" I interrupted.

"Well, to the best of my understanding of the Bible, a sinner is a person who rebels against God's authority, claims to be and acts as his own boss. And all the undesirable elements of human nature like pride, jealousy, hatred, lust, anger and injustice are simply manifestations of this basic thing - sin. As a result of the rebellion of man against God, man is separated from God's power, love, mercy and goodness. The consequence is meaninglessness, confusion, insecurity, frustration, anxiety, and even despair. I know I had all those symptoms and I was desperately seeking after peace, peace of heart and mind. I was convinced that there is a Creator - God of the universe. As I have told you several times before, God loves us and He is not willing that anyone should be separated from His love. Yet, He

is also a just and righteous God, and He cannot tolerate sin. In order to deal with the problem of sin, He sacrificed His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible describes this love of God in such a moving way: 'While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly'; 'He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.' My only reasonable response was to ask this just and yet all loving God to come into my life to forgive my sin - my rebellious nature - and to give me new life. After that I really found the peace and joy that God has promised."



I was quite touched by Karen's moving words, but I would in no way admit that in front of other people, especially in front of Karen. So I kept silent.

"Linus, this is a very serious thing which concerns life and death. Why don't you get hold of a Bible, read the Gospel of John and then we'll have more discussion, O.K.?" I nodded my head just slightly lest Karen should see it, and started to head for my own laboratory. Just as I was walking to the stairway, Karen raised her voice from the other end of the hallway, "Oh by the way, Linus, about the Christmas present you talked about this morning, I would like to have a leather bound Bible of the New American Standard Version. My old paperback is falling apart." And then she disappeared around the corner.



After a busy day's work in the laboratory, I drove Karen and the other two girls home, and I went downtown to a Bible bookshop to buy the leather bound Bible for Karen.

I also bought myself a paperbacked Bible.

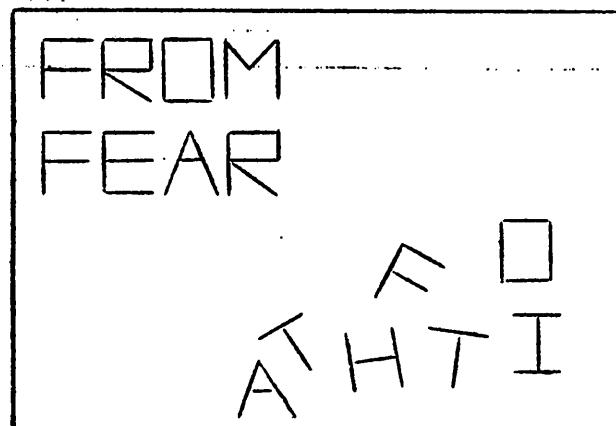
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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28

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Spending the last few days in reading some papers on the Self-Consistent-Field-Molecular-Orbital-Configuration-Interaction calculations of charge-transfer complexes was just too much for me. I put away those papers and walked round the laboratory. All of a sudden I was overcome by a cold spell. I couldn't help but shiver. I checked the thermostat, and it was at a comfortable 75 degree. How come I was feeling cold in a room with such a warm temperature! I felt tired, so I went up to the graduate student lounge and lay down on the couch. I closed my eyes, but in my mind I could still see vividly the regretful and desperate expression on that woman's face. I just wouldn't want to see that movie again! It was so horrible.

Yesterday afternoon Karen came to my laboratory and told me that there was going to be a premiere of a movie called "A Thief in the Night" in the evening in a local church. She asked me if I would like to go with her. So I did. But I wouldn't forgive myself for making such a big mistake -- I was so horrified after seeing that movie. I couldn't even go to sleep last night.



The movie starts off with a religious fanatic going around...telling everybody that Christ is coming again. He says that Christ came to this earth two thousand years ago in human form. By dying a cruel death on the cross, Christ made it possible what that fellow calls "salvation". But then that fellow also says Christ is coming to take the Christians away to heaven. One person believes in this fantastic talk, but his wife does not. Then all of a sudden, on a quiet, ordinary, sunny day, all the "born-again" Christians disappear, young and old, men and women, just like what a preacher says earlier in the movie. He is telling the church folks that Jesus Christ will come down from heaven accompanied by the sound of trumpets and the shouts of thousands of angels, and the dead Christians will come alive. Together with the living ones, these Christians will be brought to meet Christ in mid-air, and they will be with Him forever. This will happen suddenly and unexpectedly, just like a thief coming in the night. Not many people take heed to his words. At least that man's poor wife does not. But now she regrets terribly her negligence and stubbornness. She is left all by herself. Her husband is gone and some of her friends who are Christians are also missing, supposedly to be raptured to be with Christ in heaven. What is more horrible are the happenings that take place after that. Of the thousands of Christians missing, some are in high government offices and some are just commoners. Thus an emergency government is set up. People cannot trade without an identification number "666" on their forehead. People are persecuted more severely than they would have been if they were under the Communist or Nazi regimes. It is sheer horror even to recall what I have seen in that picture.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

After coffee break this morning, Karen came into my laboratory. We had some discussion on the synthesis of some halo-substituted phenanthrenes which were required in my study of the charge-transfer complexes. Then she spotted the paperbacked Bible I had bought the other day. She turned to me with a delighted smile, and said,

"Did you buy this?"

"Yes, I did, on Monday night."

"Have you done any reading?"

"Yes, a little bit here and there, and several chapters in the Gospel of John."

"How did you find it?"

"I don't know. I have never read the Bible before, I mean, not very seriously, and I am just beginning to give it some thoughts. Oh, by the way, remember the movie we saw on Tuesday night? Is what that preacher says true?"

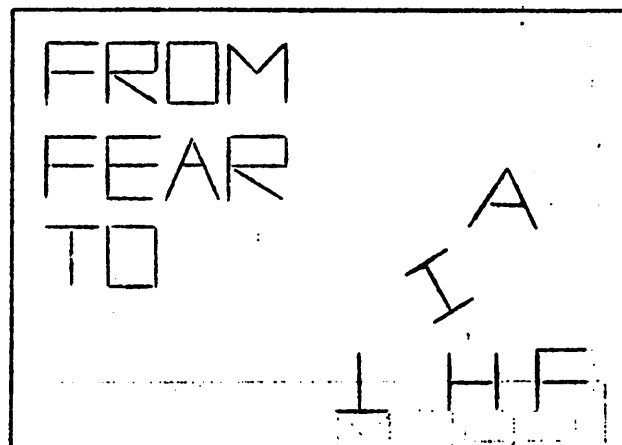
"Oh yes, it is absolutely true." She then picked out the Bible from the shelf and flipped it open to a certain section called the First Letter to the Thessalonians. And she was right. That preacher's words were quoted from here: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord....For you yourselves know well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

"You mean Christ is really coming again, and the Christians, whether dead or alive, will all disappear? Do you really believe in this? And...what would happen after that?"

"Yes, I do believe in this because the Bible says so." She spoke with such a confident tone. I had never heard her speak like this, not even when she gave a seminar of her favorite topic. She then flipped the Bible to the Gospel of John.

"Here in chapter 14 Jesus Christ Himself says, 'And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.' The angels testify to this coming event in chapter one, verses 10 and 11, in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, 'And while they (the disciples of Jesus) were gazing into heaven as He (Jesus Christ) went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.'" Also, the passage we just read in I Thessalonians is a testimony by Paul the Apostle. There are many other writings in the Bible prophesying this event too."

"But how can you prove that the Bible is credible?" I thought I was being scientific.





"It is a very interesting question, Linus. But before I try to answer that, let me cite the famous physicist C. A. Coulson from his book Science and Christian Belief. He says something to the effect that the greater part of a student's acceptance of science and rejection of religion springs from his unexamined belief that science accepts no presuppositions and must therefore be superior to Christianity which is overloaded with them. He comments that the phrase 'science without presuppositions' is a hopelessly superficial description of our discipline. My primary reason for accepting the Bible to be the truth is that it claims itself to be so. Of course, there are other reasons to support this belief, such as the harmony of the writings of forty authors over a span of some fifteen hundred years; the miraculous uniqueness of the Bible in its transmission and survival throughout the centuries and its worldwide acceptance and influence; the accuracy of the fulfilment of many of the prophecies in the Bible; and its fantastic effect in changing and motivating man to the cause of Jesus Christ. I wouldn't go into the details of each of these reasons, but I'll lend you the book Know Why You Believe by Paul Little. I hope it would answer a lot of your questions. Oh, before I forget, next Monday night we're going to have a Bible study, and the topic will certainly be of interest to you."

"What is it?"

"The second coming of Christ!"

Karen replied laughingly and went away.

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## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2

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After reading through half of the book Karen gave me last Thursday, I became a bit more convinced that Chris-

tianity is not as irrational as I thought it was, and I was looking forward to the Bible study tomorrow evening. Since I had never been to a Bible study before, I was eager to find out how the Christians study the Bible. I was also interested to know what the Bible has to say about the second coming of Christ.

Yesterday morning, I drove by the Bible bookshop. Aroused by curiosity, I went in to see if there were any books on the topic. The saleslady recommended Hal Lindsey's The Late Great Planet Earth and I bought it. I took it back to the laboratory and began reading it. I could not help reading through the whole book. I read it through again last evening and this morning. I was getting pretty restless. I was bothered by what Lindsey has written. Those things seem so real, and so imminent. The Middle-East War in October, the oil embargo, the energy crisis, the bowing of the European countries to Arab pressure, the use of emergency power by the governments of the big industrial countries to combat the situation, the bog down of the Arab-Israeli negotiation, all these seem to lead step by step to that Great Consummation talked about in that book. What am I supposed to do if Christ is really coming again? And what if Karen were taken away to be with Christ and I were left behind? I was scared!

I phoned up Karen and asked her if she could come over to my place. When she arrived, she seemed to have sensed what I needed. Without asking me anything, she took out a booklet called Do You Know The Steps To Have Peace With God and asked me to read it through with her. After that, she asked me if I would like to pray the prayer at the end of that book.

I did.

# FROM FEAR TO FAITH

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3

After supper, I went over to the computer center, thinking that I might be able to run a couple of programs before joining the Bible study at 7:00 p.m. But it didn't get done as quickly as I thought. By the time I got the printouts it was already 7:30 p.m. Immediately I rushed to the Student Union Building. When I walked into the room where Karen's group was meeting, the Bible study was almost half-through. I felt very embarrassed. Yet Karen graciously introduced me to the five or six persons in the group, and the leader, Wayne, responded by saying,

"It's nice to know you, Linus. Karen has just mentioned to us that you became a Christian last night. We are really happy for you and we welcome you to join our Bible study tonight. It's too bad that you missed the first half. We've just finished discussing the promises of Christ's coming again and what would happen when He comes. But we want you to feel at home while we continue to look

at the implications of Christ's second coming and what it means to us Christians personally." I was feeling too embarrassed to say anything because I was late, and I just nodded.

"Well, O.K., what does the Bible teach concerning our preparation for this great event -- Christ's second coming?" Wayne turned to the group. His confident voice really sounded like a leader's.

"Since Christ will come again only after the Gospel has been spread to every corner of the world, our task would naturally be to spread the Gospel quickly and widely."

"I think our task is more than just preaching the Gospel. Paul says in II Timothy chapter 4, verses 1 and 2 that we should preach the wholesome Word of God, that is the Bible, as well as teach, exhort, reprove and rebuke so that Christians can become mature!"

"Peter and Mary's points are good. But I would like to point out another important aspect -- the significance of Christ's coming on our own lives. The Apostle John says in I John chapter 3, verses 2 and 3 that we should keep ourselves pure, morally and spiritually, if we have this promise of becoming like Him and seeing Him face to face. Also, Paul, writing to Titus, says that we Christians should live a sober, self-controlled and godly life as we are waiting for Christ's appearing."

"Yes, I agree completely with Jim. Those verses are really a challenge to me," said Karen.

"I am really amazed at Paul's attitude when he was facing the prospect of seeing Christ. I mean, he was bubbling over with joy, and death to him

is just a stepping stone to eternal glory. I especially love the words he writes in II Timothy chapter 4, verse 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will reward to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.'"

"The Bible does not give a clear-cut indication of when Christ will be coming. It is important for us as Christians to be always on the alert, and do the work of God diligently while there is still time."

They also spent quite a bit of time in sharing how they applied these truths in their lives. Though the things they were talking about were so foreign to me, I found that these people were really sincere and seemed to mean what they said.

After the meeting, Wayne came to me and asked me how I liked the meeting. I shrugged my shoulders. He laughed, flipped open his Bible and said, "Linus, I understand that the things we were talking about might be a bit above your head. Here is what I would suggest to you. I Peter chapter 2, verse 2 says, 'As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.' Develop the habit and appetite to read and study God's Word, then as you grow in your Christian life, you will be able to know how to prepare for Christ's second coming. How would you like the idea of meeting me tomorrow to read the Bible together?" I told him I would be delighted and thanked him for his kindness.

While we were driving home, Karen handed me a piece of paper. On it was written:

"My faith has found a resting place,  
Not in device nor creed;  
I trust the Ever-living One,  
His wounds for me shall plead.

Enough for me that Jesus saves,  
This ends my fear and doubt;  
A sinful soul I come to Him,  
He'll never cast me out.

My great Physician heals the sick,  
The lost He came to save;  
For me His precious blood He shed,  
For me His life He gave.

I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea;  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me." ☐

FROM  
FEAR  
TO  
FAITH

# King of Truth

Simon

Two thousand years ago,  
Wise men followed the star.  
And came looking  
For one born King of the Jews.  
Today, wise men still follow the star.

Was Jesus really King?  
What if He were?  
What if He weren't?

From the court of Pilate  
Came the same question,  
"Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered,  
"I am not an earthly King.  
If I were,  
My followers would have fought  
When I was arrested by the Jewish leaders.  
But my Kingdom is not of the world."

Pilate replied,  
"But you are a King then?"

"Yes," Jesus said.  
"I was born for that purpose.  
And I came to bring truth to the world.  
All who love the truth are My followers."

"What is truth?"  
Pilate exclaimed.

And for two thousand years,  
Men have asked the same question.  
Some have found.  
Others have not.  
For those who found  
They have found it in the King.  
For even before the question was asked,  
The King Himself gave the answer --  
"I am the way, the truth and the life..."

Jesus said...  
"If you continue in My Word,  
You are truly my disciples,  
And you will know the truth,  
And the truth will make you free."

# BORN TO DIE

Cyrenean

The life of Jesus Christ is the pivot of human history. The whole Bible is centered on Him. The Apostle Paul writes that "And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory." (I Tim. 3:16)

One of the writers of the Gospels in the Bible, Matthew, depicted Jesus as the King, but His kingdom was not of this world. Another writer, Mark, brought out the fact that He was the Servant, but He was also the Master. Luke emphasized that He was a perfect Man, but He was no ordinary man. John wrote of Jesus in His Deity but he was much more than that. Even in trying to describe the things that Jesus did, John had to admit that the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

However, one theme common in all Gospels is that Jesus was born to die.

Even before the birth of Jesus, His coming was prophesied in the Old Testament of the Bible, and the first reference can be traced back to the aftermath of man's fall, when Adam and Eve had disobeyed God. But even as God executed judgement on man, He unfolded His plan of redemption. He declared that out of the offspring of the woman (Eve) would come One who

would be bruised in crushing "the evil one." (Genesis 3:15)

God continued to reveal His plan of redemption when He chose Abraham to be the Father of the nation of Israel from which the promised One would come. God promised Abraham that because of his faith in Him, his family and ultimately the whole world would be blessed. This promise was to be fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. God was true to His word -- He blessed Abraham's son, Issac and then Issac's son, Jacob who was the father of twelve tribes. In the tribe of Judah came David. And from the family of David, Jesus was born. Jesus' family line on earth can thus be traced back to Abraham.

The sorrowful death of Jesus was also foretold. Writing over seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, the prophet Isaiah predicted,

"He was despised and forsaken of men,

A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;

.....

But He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;

.....  
By oppression and judgement He  
was taken away;

.....  
His grave was assigned to be with  
wicked man,  
Yet with a rich man in His death."  
(Isaiah 53:3,5,8,9)

One only has to read the account of  
Jesus' death in the four Gospels to  
realize the complete accuracy of this  
prediction.

Then Jesus came. His very name  
means "Saviour", for He would save  
His people from their sins. (Matthew  
1:21)

Throughout Jesus' life, His mind  
was constantly fixed on His mission on  
earth. Even at the age of twelve, Je-  
sus said to His earthly parents, "Know  
ye not that I must be about my Father's  
business?" On another occasion He  
said, "My food is to do the will of Him  
that sent me, and to finish His work."

Jesus also referred to His death  
(and resurrection) on many other oc-  
casions. He drew an analogy from the  
Book of Jonah and said that just as  
Jonah was in the belly of the fish for  
three days and three nights, He would  
be buried for the same length of time.  
He spoke of His death after His trans-  
figuration. And quite to the indig-  
nation of the chief priests, the  
scribes and the elders, Jesus exposed  
their intention to plot against Him.  
He told them a parable in which He  
described how the tenants of a vine-  
yard killed the servants and finally  
son of the owner. (Mark 12:1-12) Did  
Jesus know about His death? Few would  
dispute it.

Not only did Christ know that He  
was "born to die", but He was also more  
than willing to accept it. He prayed  
to God the Father, saying, "I have  
glorified thee on the earth; I have  
finished the work which thou gavest me

to do." At the Last Supper, in His  
prediction of Judas' betrayal and  
Peter's denial of Him, and in His  
prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, He  
repeatedly mentioned about His own  
death. We are left with no doubt that  
Jesus was prepared to die. Indeed what  
a shout of victory that was when He  
cried out on the cross with His last  
breath: "It is finished!"

But why was He "born to die"?

The Bible tells us that the wages  
(result) of sin is death. But God  
wants us to have life and life eternal  
with Him. And God's plan of redemption  
was fulfilled in Christ. The sacri-  
fice of Christ's life when He died in  
our place was taken as the substitute  
for the punishment of sin for all men.  
Christ Himself took the form of flesh  
and blood that "through death He might  
render powerless him who had the power  
of death, that is the devil, and might  
deliver those who through fear of death  
were subjected to slavery all their  
lives." (Hebrews 2:14b-15) He conquer-  
ed death by His resurrection from the  
dead and now we have a living Christ.  
Hallelujah!

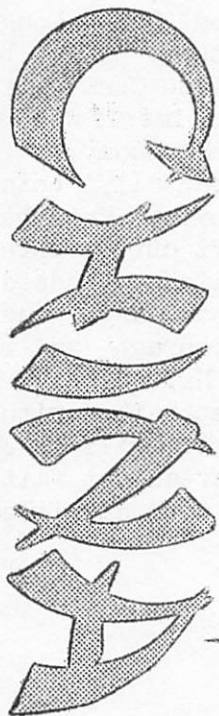
Towards the end of John's Gospel,  
John says, "But these are written, that  
you might believe that Jesus is the  
Christ, the Son of God; and that be-  
lieving you might have life through his  
name." Christ left the glory in heaven,  
became man, further humbled Himself  
to the point of death, even the death  
on a cross. Greater love has no man  
seen than this. □





BOOK REVIEW

by Lai



Christian  
Students  
Face the  
Revolution

David H. Adeney

The first reaction I had when I saw the title of the book CHINA, Christian Students Face The Revolution in a Christian bookstore was one of curiosity especially when I realized that the author was a Westerner. But when I recognized that it was another publication of Mr. David Adeney, I was very thankful to God.

When the Communists took over China, Mr. David Adeney was there helping Christians establish and maintain a witness for Christ. Since 1951, when he was forced to leave, he has been a China watcher. He is, at present, the Dean of the Discipleship Training Centre of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Singapore. I personally had the privilege of listening to one of his talks in Hong Kong several years ago. Since then I have been deeply convinced that this man does have a vital message for the present generation of Chinese Christians. Among his publications, the first one that I came across was a booklet titled Reality, in which reference was made to the compartmentalization of the mind of Chinese Christians in Hong Kong. To them, Christianity was merely a "spiritual" matter, so much so that they did not care to pray for the social happenings around them. An example given was that in the summer of 1967, the Chinese Christians in Hong Kong knew very well about the riots going on and yet they made no reference to the whole matter in their congregational prayers.

In this new book on China, the emphasis is not on the historical account of the 1949 revolution and its effects on Chinese Christians, but on the effects it should have on our mind. "If we can understand what lies behind

their story -- the thinking in the minds of the Christian students, the strategy of the Communist leaders -- we shall be in a better position to prepare for the crises through which the church in both Asia and the West may be required to pass in the days just ahead." (1) As Christians, we should learn how to respond to charges such as: "You Christians talk about the importance of love, but how can you solve the economic problems of this world through charity? Damn your charity! We want justice." (2) The lack of social consciousness of many Chinese Christians is a familiar target for Communist criticism. On the other hand, Mr. Adeney does not leave room for the implication of ideas of social Gospel. He repeatedly emphasizes that the ability to maintain a true witness does not depend solely on grasping the Christian answer to Communist arguments. It depends rather on the reality of fellowship with the risen Lord. "Christians who fail in a Communist society do so invariably because they have lost touch with the source of their spiritual life." (3)

In the last chapter of the book, Mr. Adeney records his suggestions given to a young Chinese Christian medical student who asked about the involvement he would have if he were to settle down as a Christian witness in the People's Republic. I find the suggestions very challenging. A Christian witness in China would form a sharp contrast to both the popular image of a "nice" Christian in the West -- one who keeps his beliefs to himself and tries not to cause any disturbance around him; and the not uncommon image of a "rice" Christian in the East -- one who goes to church only for the limited material benefits available.

Two other facts make this book particularly pertinent to this day and age. Firstly, one does not have to look very hard in order to recognize Communist influences in various Chinese student associations in North America. A new student, who came to Canada recently from Hong Kong, once told a Christian that he had been "advised" by some Chinese Communist students not to associate himself with any Christians on campus. Secondly, the bamboo curtain is gradually being lifted up before our eyes. But there is no sign of any short cut to spread the Gospel to the millions, indeed, we do not really expect any easy road. It is well to encourage and remind one another with Mr. Adeney's words: "Intellectual preparation without a burning love for Christ will never provide the courage and steadfast faith which alone can sustain true discipleship." (4)

Reference:

- (1) p.15
- (2) p.74
- (3) p.84
- (4) p.83-84

CORRECTION

In the last issue, Vol. VIII Number 7, page 14 should begin as:

"It must be pointed out, scientists say, that the time taken for the...."

We apologize for any inconvenience that might have arisen from the omission of these lines.



# To Come Forth as Gold

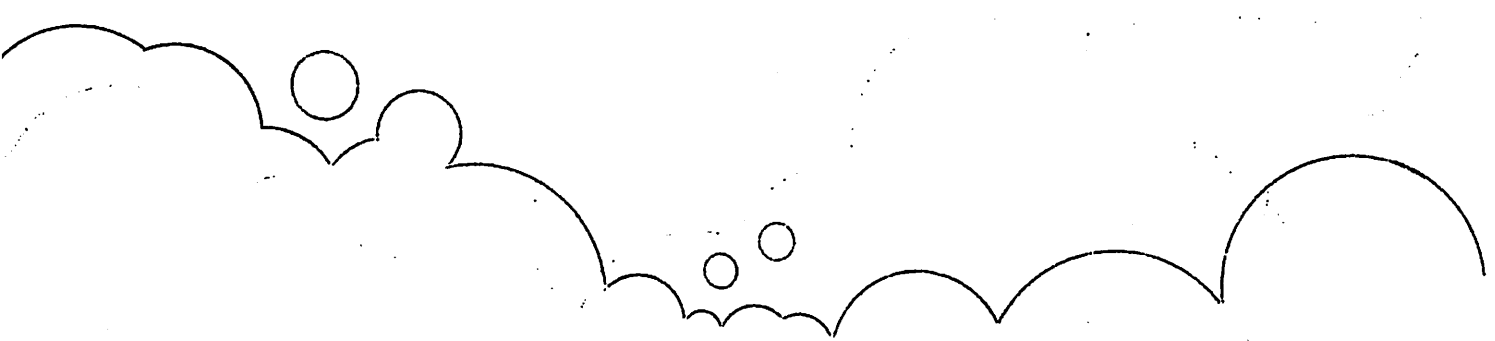
- Allan Low -

Have you ever wondered why you face problems and difficulties? You may question God and wonder if He is so far away that He cannot hear your prayers or wonder what you have done to deserve such punishment. As I look back into the past year and a half, I am ashamed to admit that I did not trust the Lord more but rather allowed circumstances affect my relationship with Him.

Two years ago as I walked up to the platform to receive my university degree, I was filled with many dreams of what I was going to do. As a Christian, I was aware of my purpose in life -- to preach the Gospel and share my faith with others. Consequently my dreams were built around how to achieve this. At this point I had not found a job though I had been searching for four months. When the situation seemed hopeless, I decided to apply to various cities across Canada as well. Several weeks after applying for a job in Ontario, I received word that I was hired by a particular agency in a city not too far from Toronto. I was thankful to God for His provision. However,

I was unaware at that time of what the future would hold for me and of the lessons I was to learn. As I left for Toronto, I realized I was leaving behind my parents and many friends. I knew virtually no one in the city I was going to and had not even met my employer or colleagues as I was hired on the basis of my resume and correspondence. I had mixed feelings about leaving but the Lord says in Joshua 1: 9, "Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Therefore I left with the confidence that the Lord would be with me

The weeks slipped by quickly and I settled into my job and new environment. The work was interesting and since it was summer I was busy visiting many new places. But eventually, I encountered something that is faced as well as feared by many people away from home -- loneliness and homesickness. Memories of my family around the dinner table constantly occupied my mind. Also I constantly thought of my past involvement with the church and




my fellowship with Christian friends I had left behind. I found that because I was no longer studying in the university I seldom associated myself with the campus Christian fellowship group. Instead I tended to isolate myself from everyone. I recall walking home from work and entering my room which was void of any sound -- with only my breathing disturbing the stillness. Sometimes the quietness was more than I could bear. As I faced the problem of loneliness, a crisis occurred which shattered my ego and brought on feelings of being rejected. I had to terminate a relationship with a close friend who had been a source of encouragement and moral support to me. I could not face losing this friend whom I had become dependent upon. Feelings of being hurt and bitterness filled me as I approached God questioning why He was taking her from me. My relationship with God became weaker after this and I spent less time with Him.

For several months I drifted along. Then one day I received a letter from a friend whom I had written to earlier describing my situation. God really spoke to me through this friend. In the conclusion of the let-

ter was written, "A mature Christian is one who can stand alone. He can offer help instead of receiving help, offer love before being loved, and offer comfort before being comforted." These words magnified my immaturity as a Christian and made me see how self-centered I was.

Was not God's love as summed up in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," sufficient for me?

I was already forewarned before I left for the job that I would face loneliness. But I had also been told that as a child of God I should not feel lonely for two reasons: (1) Being a child of God, I was on God's side and had Jesus Christ as my close Friend, (2) My purpose in life was not to please myself but rather to keep a close walk with God, to glorify Him, and to lead men to Him. How quickly I had forgotten these words! The dreams that I had at graduation never materialized as I became so preoccupied with my personal problems. I had to face the real issue of my relationship with God. I was not walking aright with



God. As I left for my job I was confident the Lord would be with me but I had in my weakness forgotten to be strong and of good courage. I feared loneliness and allowed it overcome me. Rather than entrusting all my burdens to Christ, I blamed Him for what had happened to me. In a time of frustration I allowed Satan take advantage of my weakness and cause me to doubt God's love. I had become too dependent on encouragement from my friend rather than on spiritual guidance from the Lord. I did not put my focus on Christ as a measure for living. As the Lord was patiently waiting for me, I realized I had to return to Him for strength and guidance.

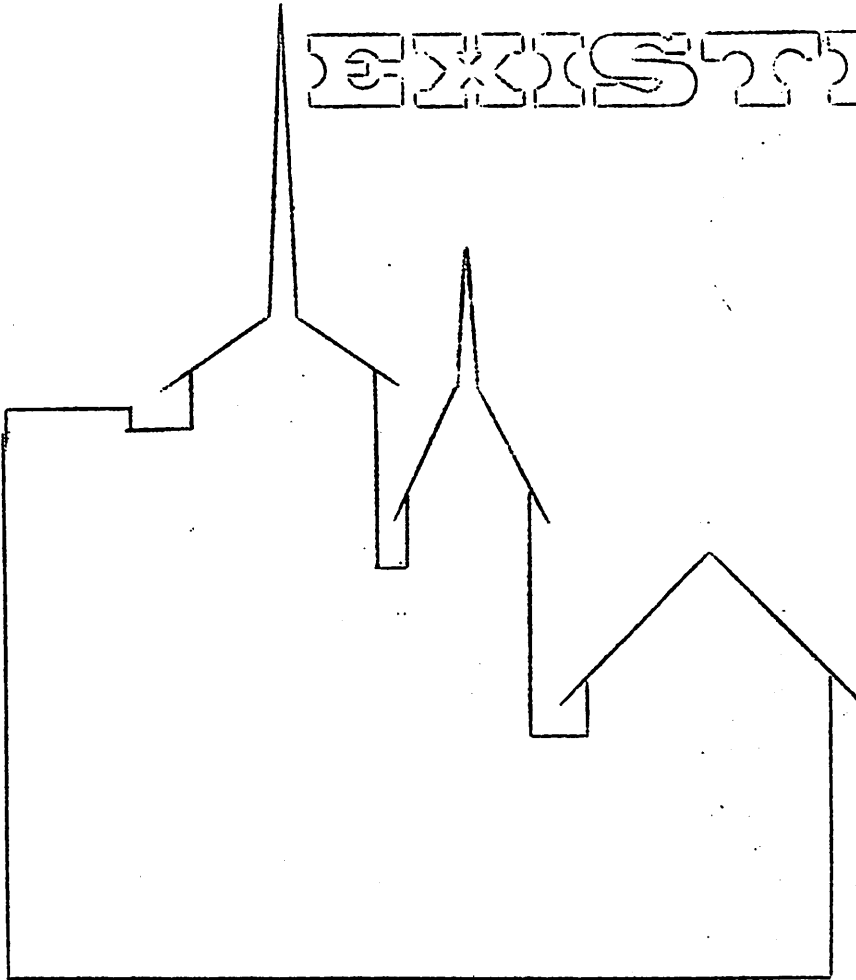
I drew closer to God and asked for forgiveness. I asked for strength to grow in His love and share His love with everyone. The Psalms became a source of comfort in my quiet evenings when I was alone. They taught me how to express my cares, needs and problems to the Master. As well as studying His Word, I began to read more Christian literature. I began to see that God does allow us face trials and suffering not because He does not care but because He does care for us. He

wants us to be made perfect. As someone said to me, "He trains us through many trials so that we will be made more like Him." Malachi describes God as a refiner and purifier who purges the children of God as gold and silver. (Malachi 3:3) I therefore realized that all the things that had happened to me were part of His training for me. He did hear my prayers and share my burdens but I had not given Him a chance to comfort me.

I could not comprehend why things happened because I now realize they were beyond my understanding. Yet the Master knew the meaning of these trials, I was to learn to be totally dependent on Him rather than on man who has his weakness. I was to learn what it is like to face loneliness so that I could be stronger and more understanding towards others who faced similar problems. I was to learn that I am imperfect. And I was to learn that I would continue to meet trials only to be made perfect like the Master. He has promised to grant me strength to meet these trials. I look forward to the day that I may declare as Job did, "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10b) ☐

# THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

- P.H. Wiebe -



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is at present teach-  
ing philosophy at  
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## II

### I

The question of God's existence has been discussed by western philosophers for many centuries. It has been proved to be a question of considerable philosophic consequence, given that many eminent thinkers have addressed themselves to it and given that agreement has been achieved with great difficulty, if at all. I shall briefly consider some of the attempts made by philosophers to cope with the question of the existence of God and then present what I understand to be the biblical position concerning this matter.

Philosophers frequently characterize God as an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, perfectly benevolent being. This characterization is thought to capture the pertinent features of the being worshipped by at least the persons adhering to the Christian, Jewish, or Moslem faiths. Many Christian theologians, I suppose, would endorse such a characterization as adequate to the conception of God. The foregoing characterization should not be accepted without careful consideration, however. One philosopher has recently argued that the biblical authors ascribe to God the property of



being almighty but never the property of being omnipotent, and that the two properties in question are not identical.' Modification of the conception of God so that the property of being almighty (roughly, having power over all things in the universe) is ascribed to God rather than the property of omnipotence (roughly, being able to do everything) might serve to avoid some or all of the paradoxes of omnipotence, one of which is expressed in the question: "Can God create a stone that He cannot lift?"

Attempts to provide deductive arguments for the existence of God are well known to students of philosophy. The famous arguments of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Anselm are examples. In order for a deductive argument to provide a legitimate basis for claiming that a statement is true, however, the argument must be not only valid but also sound. An argument is valid if the relationship between the premises and the conclusion of the argument is such that it is impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion false. A sound deductive argument is a valid deductive argument with true premises. One of the chief difficulties associated with using deductive proofs to defend that truth of the assertion that God exists is to obtain premises known to be true. We might find an argument in which  $r$  is validly deduced from the premises  $p$  and  $q$ , but in order for this argument to provide grounds for believing  $r$  to be true, we must also know that  $p$  and  $q$  are true. If we have more reasons for thinking  $r$  to be false than for thinking  $p$  and  $q$  to be true, we may argue that at least one of  $p$  and  $q$  is false. Many philosophers have thought it implausible that one could ever have an argument from the premises of which one could validly deduce that God exists which would be such that one would have greater reason to think the premises true than to think the conclusion false.<sup>2</sup> Many Protestant theologians agree that deductive proofs are not and cannot be satisfactory.

The reasonableness of beliefs

need not be based wholly upon deductive arguments. As a matter of fact, many beliefs which people hold do not have deductive support; the support is inductive. One of the more famous attempts to supply inductive grounds for the assertion that God exists is the argument known as the argument from design according to which the order and perfection of certain natural objects and creatures is attributed to an infinite and powerful designer. David Hume criticized this argument in his famous Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion contending that design in nature can be explained by many different hypotheses, none of which require postulating a supernatural being. Many philosophers have concurred with Hume's attack.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that the possibility of inductive support for the belief that God exists cannot easily be ruled out. This area needs more attention from philosophically minded theologians and theologically minded philosophers.

### III

No proof for the existence of God is contained in the Bible. The authors assume that God exists and at least one contributing writer, David, asserts that people who sincerely deny that there is a God are fools (Psalm 53). The portrayal of God in both testaments is closely associated with unusual phenomena or events in which some characteristic of God or God Himself is manifested. For example, the signs done before the Pharaoh by Moses and Aaron and the phenomena accompanying the giving of the Law (Exodus 19, 24) are a manifestation of the power and glory of God; Jesus is the manifestation of God in human form, and His resurrection from the dead is attributed to the power of the Spirit of God (Romans 8). The position of the biblical writers appears to be that such phenomena are appropriately attributed to the power of God; that only a fool would fail to recognize such events as a result of the activity of a supernatural being.

The position, common among philosophers and other academics, that the unusual phenomena reported in the Bible simply did not actually occur and that such phenomena just do not occur today is a simple but an unformed approach to the problem of how such phenomena are to be explained.

St. Paul appears to espouse the view that God's existence is revealed to man in the created world. He asserts that "... ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom. 1:20, RSV). This view is also expressed by David in Psalm 19 in which he maintains that the heavens declare the glory of God. The day and the night give knowledge of God (v. 2), and no person anywhere upon the earth is denied this knowledge (v. 3-4). St. Paul, making an allusion to Psalm 19, reiterates that mankind generally is given a knowledge of one Lord (Rom. 10:12-18 esp. v.18). The revelation of God that has been made available to man is a general revelation of His eternal power and deity ("divineness," Knox; "Godhead," AV). A more detailed revelation, as described in the Old Testament, was made available

to the Israelites, and an even greater revelation, as described in the New Testament, has been made available to Israelites and non-Israelites alike in the person and life of Jesus Christ.

Philosophers have criticised the view that divine revelation could be a source of knowledge. Many contemporary philosophers, if they are willing to speak of sources of knowledge, are inclined to include only sense experience and reason as sources of knowledge. There is no a priori ground for limiting the sources of knowledge to just the two mentioned, however, and it is arguable that there is evidence in favour of the claim that there are additional sources of knowledge. No doubt many Christians are of the conviction that their knowledge of God and of Jesus as the Christ was based on divine revelation. Someone has quipped: the man with the argument is at the mercy of the man with experience. Perhaps knowledge by divine revelation is not merely an intellectual affair but something which depends on one's meeting certain conditions of character and attitude. Controversy regarding God's existence is likely to rage as long as this possible avenue to knowledge is ignored and remains unexplored.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. P.T. Geach, "Omnipotence," Philosophy V. 48 (1973).
2. See J.J.C. Smart "The existence of God," in New Essays in Philosophical Theology (London: SCM Press, 1966). ed. Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, for a discussion of this point.
3. A provocative re-evaluation of Hume's position is provided by Nelson Pike in his edition of Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970) which includes a substantial commentary. Pike suggests that Hume may have developed two different arguments from design, one of which is rejected and one of which is accepted.
4. For an interesting but brief discussion of this and related points see Philosophy, The Bible and the Supernatural by Derek Prince (one time philosophy Fellow of King's College, Cambridge). This short pamphlet contains a public defence of the Christian faith given in U.D.C. in 1963 and is available from its author (Box 306, Fort Lauderdale, Florida).



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