

# 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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Aberdeen, Hong Kong.

"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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Jesus Christ the same yesterday,  
and today, and for ever.

- Hebrews 13:8 -

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JULY 14, 1974.

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 4

2 QUOTATIONS

4 FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE .....Cis

8 ANNOUNCEMENT: SERVICE FOR NEW STUDENTS

9 FAITH, GRACE, REDEMPTION.....John White

13 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.....Lawrence

17 JEHOVAH-JIREH .....Editors

18 FROM OUR READERS

18 FINANCIAL REPORT

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CIRCULATION: 6,600 COPIES

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.

Let observation with extensive view  
Survey mankind, from China to Peru;  
Remark each anxious toil, each eager  
    strife,  
And watch the busy scenes of crowded  
    life;  
Then say how hope and fear, desire and  
    hate,  
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze  
    of fate,  
Where wav'ring man, betrayed by ven-  
    t'rous pride  
To chase the dreary paths without a  
    guide,  
As treach'rous phantoms in the mist  
    delude,  
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy  
    good;  
How rarely reason guides the stubborn  
    choice,  
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the  
    suppliant voice.

- Samuel Johnson -

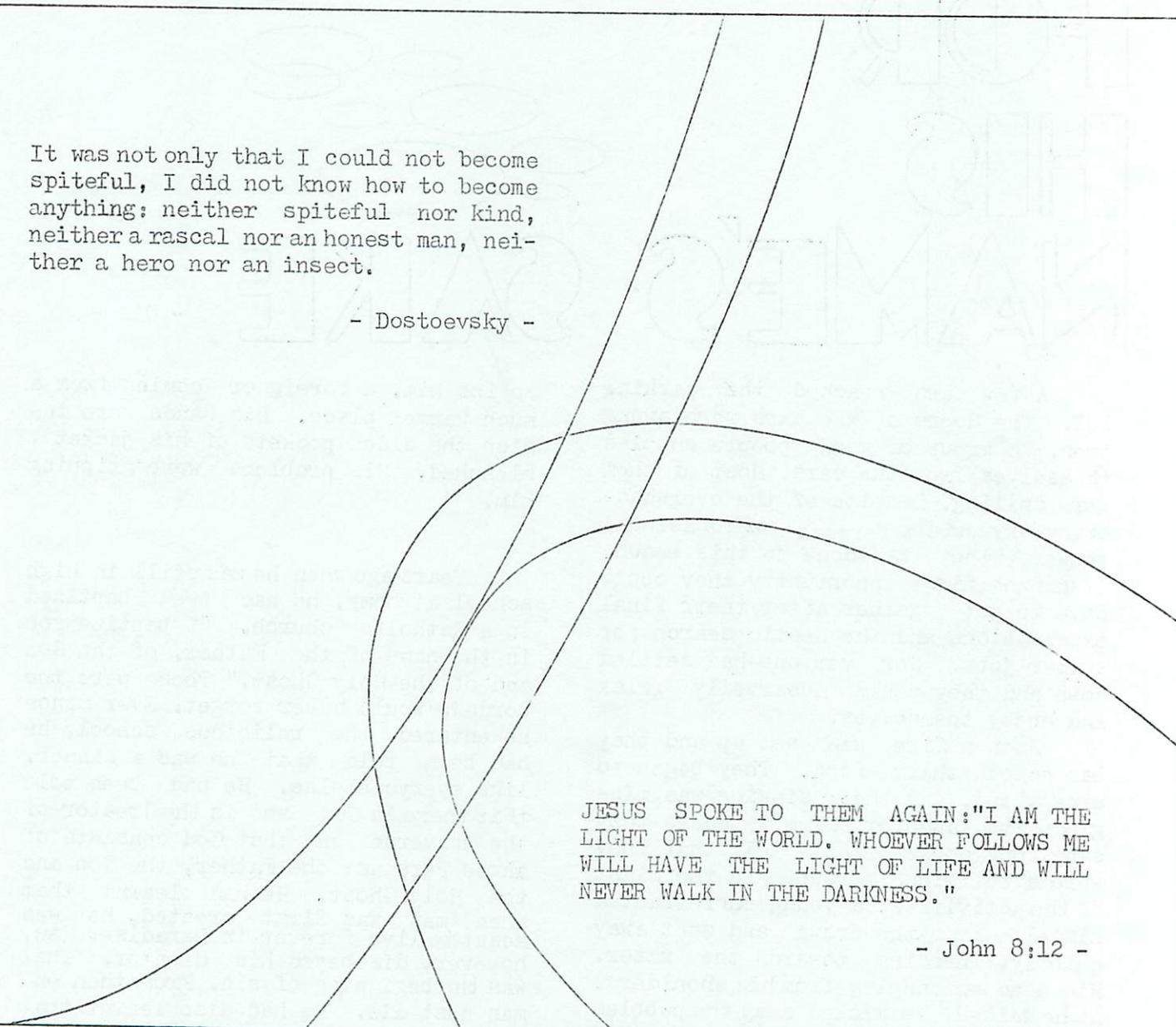
The intense view of these manifold con-  
tradictions and imperfections in human  
reason has so wrought upon me, and heat-  
ed my brain, that I am ready to reject  
all belief and reasoning, and can look  
upon no opinion even as more probable  
or likely than another. Where am I, or  
what? From what causes do I derive my  
existence, and to what condition shall  
I return? Whose favour shall I court,  
and whose anger must I dread? What be-  
ings surround me? and on whom have I any  
influence, or who have any influence on  
me? I am confounded with all these  
questions, and begin to fancy myself in  
the most deplorable condition imagi-  
nable, environ'd with the deepest dark-  
ness, and utterly depriv'd of the use of  
every member and faculty.

- David Hume -

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It was not only that I could not become spiteful, I did not know how to become anything: neither spiteful nor kind, neither a rascal nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect.

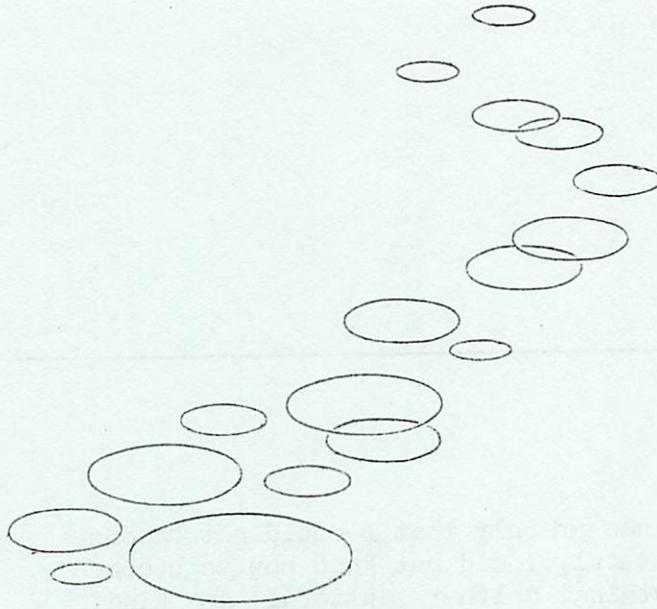
- Dostoevsky -

A series of abstract geometric lines and curves are drawn across the page. Two straight lines intersect to form a triangle. Two large, overlapping arcs are drawn below the triangle. A horizontal line runs across the page, intersecting the arcs and the triangle's base.

JESUS SPOKE TO THEM AGAIN: "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. WHOEVER FOLLOWS ME WILL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE AND WILL NEVER WALK IN THE DARKNESS."

- John 8:12 -

# FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE



- Cis -

A few cars reached the parking lot. The doors of the cars were swung open. A group of young people emptied themselves from the cars. Most of them were smiling. Despite of the overshadowing sky and the forecast of occasional showers, they had come to this beach. It was the first opportunity they could have to get together after their final examinations and the hectic search for summer jobs. Now everyone had settled down and they could deservedly relax and enjoy themselves.

Soon a fire was set up and they barbecued their food. They began to sing aloud, and their singing was mingled with laughter. From the songs they sang, one could easily tell that they were a religious group. In the midst of the activities, a young man retracted himself from the crowd and went away quietly, heading towards the water. His head was hanging from his shoulders. As he walked, he kicked away the pebbles that lay in his way, as if he could get rid of the problems in his mind by doing so.

The sun had not come out for days. Even though it was June, the weather was still chilly, and it was especially

so for him, a foreigner coming from a much warmer place. His hands were inside the side pockets of his jacket, clenched. His problems were gripping him.

Years ago when he was still in high school at home, he had been baptized in a Catholic church. "I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Those were the words he would never forget. Ever since he entered the religious school, he had been told that he was a sinner, like everyone else. He had been told that there is God who is the Creator of the universe and that God consists of three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. He had learnt that when man was first created, he was meant to live forever in Paradise. Man, however, disobeyed his Creator. That was the beginning of sin. From then on, man must die. He had also learnt that God the Son, Jesus Christ, had come as a human being to die on the cross for the sins of the world. Anyone who believes in Him would be cleansed from his sins and would be given a new life.

He accepted all these and he was baptized.

In the evening after his baptism, his heart was filled with hope and joy. He thanked God for this wonderful salvation and promised God that he would lead a pure and holy life from then on.

For the first few days that followed he watched his own thoughts, words and deeds carefully. Although he came close to sinning on several occasions, he refrained himself from so doing. Gradually he relaxed his vigil and sinned. One thing he had been told which he thought very peculiar was that there were two types of sin: the mortal sin and the venial sin. A mortal sin was a grave offense with serious consequences, committed willingly and full-knowingly. A venial sin was a sin lacking any of the conditions that made it mortal. A mortal sin, he was warned, would separate him from God and would invalidate the salvation he had received unless it was confessed to the Priest. A venial sin, however, would not affect his salvation and could be pardoned much more readily. So, every time he sinned, he pondered on the sin he committed and tried to classify it as mortal or venial. Many a time he exhausted himself mentally in making the decision. However, that was not the major problem. He could always put this aside when he felt he could think no more. He just went to the Priest and confessed everything.

The major problem was that he discovered he sinned too frequently. He felt powerless in dealing with sin. When temptation came, he yielded too readily. Worse still, he found himself seeking temptations. And worst of all, he had great pleasure in sinning. He was absolutely frightened by this realization. His ego was deeply hurt when he saw that his actions fell far short of his ideals. He was in agony. He refused to accept himself.

He began to worry about his salvation. Since he was so liable to commit mortal sins, his salvation must be in real jeopardy. Unless by some luck he died right after he had confessed all his mortal sins and before he had

committed any, he would be doomed, he thought. He had been confident of his moral strength but now he knew his inability. He was downright frustrated. Could he be saved?

Time had diluted his worry about salvation. He was still young and there was so much in the world to gain. It was not that he wanted to gain the whole world at the risk of losing his soul, but since salvation was so fleeting that he was not able to retain it, he might as well gain something from the world. It would be foolish to lose both.

He concentrated on his studies. He chose for himself a professional field as his goal. He worked very hard. He even prayed to God to give him success. He expected God to grant him his wish.

Several years had gone by. He had not been exactly successful in his studies. At last, in an important examination, he had failed to achieve what he had hoped, worked and prayed for. He did not know what was wrong with him. He became very bitter towards God, bitter that God had not created him with a strong personality to resist all mortal sins, and bitter that God had not granted him a good career. God, he thought, owed him something.

Drying all his tears, he left home to study abroad. And he came here. He noticed that many people did very well without God. He asked himself what he needed God for. Salvation was an impossible dream. It was not for him to possess. Success in this world was not for him to gain either. He decided he would have nothing to do with God from then on.

On this strange land, he met a group of young people. They were the people with whom he came out to the beach on this gloomy day. He had known them for two years. They had been a great help to him when he first arrived. They had become his friends. But sometimes he just wished he had not known them at all. Had it not been for their telling him once again about the love

of God and salvation, his mind would have been completely at peace. He had already resolved to leave God once and for all. He might not be prosperous on his own but he would accept whatever he could achieve because that was all he could have. But now his mind was in great turmoil. His friends showed him from the Bible what God had done to reconcile man to Himself and what salvation really was. He was completely confused; He disagreed with them. But somehow he knew he was wrong somewhere.

He had come to the water-front. He chose a rock to sit on. For a long while he had not prayed. But then and there he could not help but pray to the God whom he had disowned. He wanted God to show him the right answer.

His thoughts wandered back to the key question of his struggle - salvation. He knew he had been saved years ago when he confessed that he was a sinner and accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. However, he had been warned that salvation was his to keep only if he remained free from any mortal sin. He was sure he had received salvation but he was frustrated because he had failed so badly to keep it in his possession. Yet it had struck him as reasonable and it had appealed to his pride that salvation should be taken from him when he committed a mortal sin. His pride had been deeply hurt because he had not been able to keep constant vigil against mortal sins. But it remained reasonable that God's salvation was to be taken from anyone who had committed grave offenses.

Somehow his friends understood the matter differently. They said that God's salvation, once given, is a permanent gift. Nothing could alter it. He strongly disagreed with them but they showed him ample evidences from the Bible to support their saying. Failing to disprove them, he searched for biblical support for his own opinion. To his surprise, he could not find any. There certainly are emphases on action and on the practice of faith in the Bible, but there is nothing which

says that a believer's salvation will be taken away when he sins. Furthermore, he simply could not find any evidence in the Bible that warrants the classification of sins into mortal and venial ones. In fact, he remembered that a friend in the group had shown him a Bible verse, "For whoever breaks only one command of the Law is guilty of breaking them all."

It scared him to realize that all the sins he had called venial were in fact as serious as the mortal sins. But a slight hope dawned on him. He was sure that he had once received salvation. If what his friends said about salvation was true, then he was securely saved. He took out the Bible which he was carrying with him and tried frantically to turn to the verses that his friends had once shown him. How he wished he had written down every single verse! He regretted that he had not. Perhaps he had been too eager to prove that he was right and had not cared what the others said to him.

Finally he came to one verse that he had seen before. "I give them eternal life, and they shall never die; and no one can snatch them away from me." It clearly indicated to him that he was under the protection of Jesus. His salvation was not based on the shaky ground of his own righteousness but on Jesus Christ Himself.

A strange feeling enveloped him. On the one hand, he was happy to concede that he had been wrong because it would mean that he was saved after all. On the other hand, he regarded it unreasonable because it would also mean that those who had found salvation through Jesus could keep on sinning, for they would be saved anyway. He was lost in thought. Unconsciously he loosened his grip on the Bible and it almost dropped to the ground. Fortunately he retrieved it before it landed on the sand. But a small card fell out of the Bible. He quickly picked it up. On it was some familiar hand-writing, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should

boast." He became convinced that his own striving in the past to maintain his salvation was totally unnecessary. What he wanted to understand now was why he should not sin after he was saved.

He had heard his friends said a thousand times that Jesus was their Lord and Saviour. 'Saviour' means the One who saves and he understood that. But what did 'Lord' mean? Their explanation was that they were servants to Jesus, doing whatever Jesus commanded. They also said that the next step which followed salvation was sanctification. One could be saved but without the constant practice of holy and pure living, one could not please God.

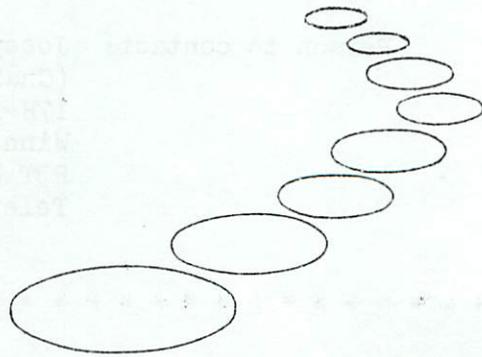
He burst into laughter. He was laughing at himself. He remembered while he was taking a psychology course at the University, he used to laugh at the immature thoughts and attitudes people had. Yet he suddenly realized that he identified very well with those he once laughed at. He knew that when he had tried not to sin, he had done it out of the fear of punishment, and not out of the desire to please God who loved him.

He sobered up once more. He remembered his weaknesses. He had definitely tried very hard to keep himself from sinning. Time and again, he would feel sorry for the wrong he had done, and promise God that he would never do it again. And yet he was so prone to sin. Once he left the church he was helpless. When he met his friends on this new land, he had asked them about this. The answer he received was not satisfactory at all. 'Yield to the Holy Spirit and let the Holy Spirit work in you' was what many of them advised him to do. Obviously they were talking above his head. He could not understand them. "Yielding? Yielding? ...." He repeated the word to himself aloud. Out of frustration, he kicked heavily at the sand and drove some of it into the water. As the sand grains were sinking down, something remained afloat. He looked at it. It was an ant struggling desperately. Knowing that it would drown soon, he picked up

a dry leaf and laid it close to the ant. The ant quickly climbed onto it. He lifted the leaf back onto dry land and the ant disappeared among the sand.

He stood up, stretching and yawning. He had left the group perhaps for an hour, but he did not know or care if he had. In his left hand was still the card on which was written, "For by grace you have been saved through faith.... not as a result of works....". He opened the Bible to store it. He did not want to lose it. As he was closing the Bible his eyes were caught by some words on the page opposite the card. "The Lord also has taken away your sin .... to blaspheme....". He opened the Bible again and read the verses over. "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme ...." His eyes became moist. For the first time, he realized when he sinned, it was the name of God which was being blasphemed. Now he knew that the name of God would be at stake when he sinned.

He headed back to his friends. He knew that for the sake of the name of God who saved him, he should not sin anymore. But he felt weak as he was faced with this challenge. He knew himself that he was unable to do this. Suddenly a thought flashed through his mind. He remembered the ant struggling on the water. He hastened his pace towards the crowd. As he was yet a dis-



tance away from them, they waved at him. They were singing a strange melody but he caught some of the words,

"The Lord is my shepherd;  
.....  
He restoreth my soul;  
He leadeth me in the paths  
of righteousness for his  
name's sake.  
....."

righteousness for his name's sake." He stood still and repeated the words very slowly after them. Something went through his mind. He looked at the sky and gave a sigh of relief.

The sunshine had pierced through the dense clouds. The place was brightened up. He felt the warmth of the sun. He took off his heavy winter jacket and threw it aside.

"He leadeth me in the paths of

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# SERVICE FOR NEW STUDENTS

God has been giving opportunities to the brothers and sisters of The Winnipeg Chinese Christian Fellowship to serve Him in various aspects. The new student reception (NSR) subcommittee of the Fellowship has been set up this year to provide free assistance for prospective high school and university students who will be coming to Winnipeg to study this fall. Our voluntary services include reception and providing temporary accomodation upon arrival in Winnipeg, and also providing information and help concerning housing and academic registration.

It is our intention to help both Christian and non-Christian friends alike. Please feel free to write to us.

Person to contact: Joseph Law,  
(Chairman, NSR subcommittee)  
17B-1430 Pembina Highway,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada,  
R3T 2C1.  
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This article is a written summary, made by the editors, of a talk given by Dr. White in a Sunday service at the Church of the Way.

# FAITH GRACE REDEMPTION

- John White -

Minister  
at the  
Church of the Way,  
Winnipeg

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But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

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- Romans 3:21-26 -

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Righteousness, like intelligence, is not usually thought of as something one can give to somebody else. But in the Epistle to the Romans in the Bible, Paul uses "righteousness" not only to refer to that quality of God, to the fact that God is righteous and just, and cannot do wrong because of His righteousness; but also as something that God can somehow impart or give to other people. And this giving of His righteousness to other people is known as justification. Now we shall look at some expressions in the very condensed doctrinal passage of Romans 3:21-26. Faith, grace and redemption are the three key words that we are going to consider. Firstly we shall look at the idea of faith. In verse 22 it tells us that righteousness comes to us by means of our faith in Christ, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." We have to ask ourselves what faith is and what Paul

means here by faith. Secondly we shall look at the idea of "being justified freely by His grace" in verse 24. Finally we shall discuss the meaning of "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," which is also in verse 24.

What is faith? Faith is not a feeling. Sometimes I feel full of faith and everything is easy to believe. Sometimes I do not feel full of faith. I feel full of doubts. But my feelings have nothing to do with faith. Faith might result in feelings but it never results from feelings. So, if you want to have faith, do not try to work yourself up to a feeling of faith inside yourself, because that feeling is not faith. Faith is an attitude and an action. We cannot be commanded to have a feeling. If you go to someone who is depressed and say, "Stop being depressed! Be happy," he cannot. Or, if you see somebody shivering in the cold and you say, "Stop being cold! Be hot," he cannot. But on the other hand, the Scriptures commands us to have faith, which means it is something we can do.

Faith is a decision to accept a certain truth and an action to place our trust in that certain person, resulting in a continuing attitude of trust in that person. "I will and do believe" is the language of faith. "I feel full of faith" is not. Faith is something that my will does. I will

FAITH IS SIMPLY SAYING "YES" TO GOD.

and do believe on the basis of God's word, and in the evidence that is presented to me. I will and do believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died to save man. I will and do entrust myself to Him. The action of faith is followed by an attitude of trust toward Christ. Faith also has to do with the invisible. It is that which connects us, who are living in a world of time and space and solid material objects, with the invisible, the beyond-the-material and the spiritual. It is the only link which we can have with eternity. Faith also has an object. It is not a blind reaching out to nothingness. Its object is Jesus Christ Himself. I place my faith in Him.

How does faith work? I think we must look at this very carefully. In some books I have read the argument runs like this; faith is that by which the Holy Spirit can come into my life, and then by yielding to the Holy Spirit the righteousness of God can be worked out in my life, so that I become more and more like God. But that is not what Paul is talking about in the passage in Romans. That is not the meaning of faith in the Scriptures. That was Augustine's idea of faith. I am very fond of Augustine. But at this point he was mistaken. Of course the Holy Spirit can come into our lives. The Holy Spirit can bring about transformation in our lives. But that is not what Paul is saying when he talks about our being justified or made righteous by faith. When God's righteousness was imparted to us it meant that God regarded us as righteous and treated us as though we were righteous whether or not we were. This may sound a little immoral. Nevertheless, this is clearly what Paul is talking about. Faith is

not merely allowing God to take over my life or trusting Him more and more and yielding more to His Spirit so that more and more of His likeness might be seen in me, because my faith will never be enough, and I will never have enough righteousness to compare with the righteousness of God.

No one among us would qualify on the basis of such a faith to be justified to go to heaven. There is not one person who has yielded enough or trusted enough in God the Holy Spirit to be able to say, "I am righteous enough to go to heaven," unless he is totally ignorant of the sinfulness of his own heart. Again, I am not opposing yielding to the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit certainly does try to work out His righteousness in us. But that is not the basis of our justification, because none of us could meet God's standard. And again, if this were what faith meant, we would all become centered in ourselves. We would all concentrate on our degree of progress in spiritual things and this is exactly the cause of many Christians' fall into the trap of becoming self-centered and wrapped up in their "holiness". Faith looks outward instead of inward.

Faith is simply saying "yes" to God. That is all. We do not need a tremendous degree of faith. Faith is saying, "All right, God, I do believe and I will believe in you. Thank you. Thank you for saving me. Thank you for dying for me. Thank you for giving me your righteousness." It is merely the channel through which God mediates His faith to us. It is not a virtue, or something which God admires in us.

This brings us to the second

GOD'S GRACE  
MEANS HIS KINDNESS, HIS LOVE AND HIS  
BOUNTY.

point. We are justified freely by His grace (verse 24), that is, we are justified without any cost to ourselves, any cost of our work, our effort, our prayers, our repentance, or our sincerity. Sincerity gets one nowhere. It is not wrong to be sincere, but sincerity cannot save a person. No quality in us merits salvation. Salvation is given to us at no cost of money, work, or anything, so that God might be glorified, not we. This is what it means by "being justified freely by His grace". It is something unmerited and undeserved. God's grace means His kindness, His love and His bounty. He wants to pour out His riches upon us. He does not want us to have to earn them. Now someone may say this is horrendous. This will mean we can do what we like. But it is sufficient just to say that the person who has received the righteousness of God and is justified by faith in this way is a changed person and should never want to sin again.

The final word we want to look at is the word "redemption". God has given us righteousness by His grace "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus". Redemption has something to do with money. This word was used most commonly in the Greek of the New Testament time when financial arrangement was dealt with. But it came to be used around the first

century B.C. and the first hundred years after Christ to mean having to do with setting free slaves or other objects. Nowadays if I get into debt I have to declare myself bankrupt, but in the olden days I could give myself or sell myself as a slave to the person whom I owed money. If somebody were to "redeem" me, that is, to buy me back and to set me free from slav-

THE PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION IS THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD HIMSELF.

ery, he would have to pay a sum of money. This is what the word "redeem" means basically in this passage. We are all in the pawn shop. We are all slaves and money needs to be paid to set us free. The price of our redemption is the life and death of the Son of God Himself. He shed His blood because that was the cost of our redemption, our being set free from sin's slavery and our being made righteous, and with this price He redeemed or bought us back from slavery.

We have talked about three things: faith, grace and redemption. Faith is not a feeling; it is simply an attitude. It is certainly not a virtue or something to work ourselves up to please God with. It does please God, but it does so only because it opens the door and says "yes" to God who wishes to give us His righteousness, to treat us as though we were righteous, and to regard us as being righteous. Faith is simply my saying, "yes, Lord;

thank you, Lord." For the person who does that, who realizes that God's arms are open wide because of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, a change will come in his life. He will begin to become in fact righteous in his daily walk. And the Holy Spirit will begin to work in him. But salvation has been given. It is not earned by his subsequent behaviour, not even by his subsequent yielding to the Holy Spirit. It is therefore freely his by God's grace, by God's favour, by God's kindness, and by God's love. Nevertheless the price had to be paid. But it was not we who paid the price. Someone paid it for us on the cross of shame. It was through redemption, or the buying back and setting free of us from slavery. It was through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

If there is someone here who does not know this simple faith, who has never said, "yes, thank you Lord," who is still trying to rely upon his religiousness or righteousness, or his effort to fulfill the law and the commandment, I must say that he is insulting God by his life and his behaviour. God says in the Bible that our righteousness is like filthy rags. They do not satisfy Him. They are altogether substandard and they are nothing to be compared with the righteousness that God is offering to us freely. For those of us who know this righteousness how much ought we to praise God and thank Him for the wonder of His gift, and for the amazing wonder of the price that was paid. May God grant that with glad hearts we may go forth from here such that men may see, by the shining in our faces, that we are slaves set free to serve a gracious Master.

# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

- Lawrence -

The theological problem of the existence of evil has been an enduring issue in centuries of philosophical discussions. At the outset, it may be well to accentuate the crucial point that the whole problem of evil

arises only if there is the initial assumption that God exists.

C.J.Ducasse, in his book A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion, aptly

comments that the problem of evil

is "evidently an intellectual,

and more specifically a theoretical, problem,

which arises at all only if one assumes 'ab initio' that

a God of the kind described exists and created the world."<sup>(1)</sup> Without

the initial assumption that God exists, the existence of evil

would not pose a theological problem, but only a

practical one. The task would then become one of how to eliminate

or at least minimize evils in the world. Ducasse gives Humanism

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(1) C.J.Ducasse, A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion,  
Ronald Press, New York, 1953, p.352.

as an example, "For contemporary Humanism too, which, being naturalistic, rejects orthodox monotheism, the only 'problem of evil' is the purely practical one of doing whatever may be possible to remedy particular evils." (1)

To phrase in simple terms, the traditional problem of evil in Western philosophical circles states that if God is omnipotent, then He could prevent evil if He wanted to; and if God is perfectly good, then He would want to prevent evil if He could. But the fact is that various kinds of evil exist in the world. Hence either God is not omnipotent or He is not perfectly good, or God does not exist at all. It is obvious that the traditional problem of evil as such puts Christianity in jeopardy, for if the conclusion that an omnipotent and perfectly good God does not exist is reached, then the whole monotheistic tradition of Christianity would collapse.

As to the kinds of evil, Ducasse classifies evils into four types. Firstly, there are physical evils such as pains arising from diseases or natural disasters. Secondly, there are psychological evils which include suffering due to anxiety, fear, frustration and loneliness. Thirdly, there are moral evils which encompass all defective moral traits such as hatred, greed, jealousy, selfishness, or cruelty. Lastly, there are intellectual evils which comprise states such as stupidity, insanity, or defective perception. (2)

There have been innumerable theistic attempts throughout the history of Western philosophy to defend the omnipotence and perfect goodness of God. These theories to defend God are called theodicies. However, most of these intellectual attempts by theistic philosophers to defend God have failed to con-

vince the skeptical atheists. One theodicy states that there is actually no evil in the world. All the so called evils are only apparent but not real ones. What we call evils are not evils according to God's standard which is totally different from ours. Yet John Stuart Mill denounces this theodicy, saying that "to say that God's goodness may be different in kind from man's goodness, what is it but saying, with a slight change of phraseology, that God may possibly not be good?" (3) If God's standard of goodness is completely different from ours, so that what we call evils are good things according to His standard, then what is the use of saying that God is good? We no longer understand His goodness. There is another theodicy which argues that there is no good without evil. However, while it may be true that there would not be the idea of good without the relative idea of evil, it does not necessarily follow that there are no real good things by themselves without the existence of evil. Hence it is fallacious to assert that the absolute existence of real good things depends on the existence of evil. Still another theodicy says that evil is a means to good, therefore evil is necessary. Yet J.L. Mackie contends that "it would be a causal law that you cannot have a certain end without a certain means, so that if God has to introduce evil as a means to good, he must be subject to at least some causal laws. This certainly conflicts with what a theist normally means by omnipotence." (4) If evil is a necessary means to good, then God is not omnipotent, for He cannot produce good without bringing in the undesirable evil elements. In fact, most of the theistic philosophical arguments to defend God are merely fallacious ration-

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(1) Ibid., p. 353.

(2) Ibid., pp. 356-357.

(3) Nelson Pike, ed., God and Evil, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1964, pp. 42-43.

(4) Ibid., p. 52.

alizations. They cannot stand up to atheistic criticism, let alone convincing the atheists that God exists and that God is both omnipotent and perfectly good.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that the atheists have won the discussion concerning the problem of evil. As a matter of fact, both the theistic and atheistic philosophers have taken the problem of evil out of its original context. They both ignore the original biblical account of the problem. The theists have tried just to use their intellectual skills to formulate theodicies to defend God. But since most of them are faulty, it seems that the existence of the Christian God has been denied together with the collapse of these arguments. Colin Brown gives a very enlightening statement regarding this point, "The dangers of aligning Christianity too closely with a particular philosophical system or idea are at least twofold. On the one hand, the Christian faith has to be manipulated to make it fit. Some things have to be stretched, while others have to be lopped off or at least discreetly ignored. And on the other hand, when some flaw is detected in the system, the impression is given that the Christian faith must collapse together with the system it has been wedded to."(1) The atheists also merely consider the problem of evil by itself, disregarding its biblical origin. As a result, it has become difficult for them to reconcile the assertion that God exists with the fact that evils exist in the world.

T.C. Hammond, in his book on systematic theology, In Understanding Be Men, says that "the ultimate mystery of the origin of evil is not open to ex-

planation by man, whether he approaches the problem through philosophy or through revelation."(2) The Bible does not give a purely cold, intellectual account of the problem of evil. The emphasis of the Bible is primarily on the relationship between God and man. And it would be more rewarding if one approaches the problem of evil in this context. The biblical account tells of man's first willful disobedience to God his Creator in the Garden of Eden. Man had sinned. Henceforth, sin came into the world. By choosing to disobey God out of his own free will man became sinful in nature. In addition, God said to Adam that "cursed is the ground because of you."(Genesis 3:17) Nature was involved in the consequences of the sin of man. It too was condemned. Man disobeyed God and fell of his own free will, but the universe automatically and involuntarily was corrupted with him, according to God's decree. The Apostle Paul expounds this fact in a poetic and vivid manner in the eighth chapter of the Book of Romans in the Bible. Paul endows the universe with consciousness and presents a personified description of the deplorable state of the universe, "for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will..."(v.20); "we know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now"(v.22). John R.W. Stott comments on verse 20, saying that "this futility or frustration, to which God has subjected nature, is explained in the next verse(21) as a 'bondage to decay', the continuous cycle of birth, growth, death and decomposition, the whole process of deterioration in a universe that appears to be running down. Further, this process is (whether literally or metaphorically) accompanied by pain. Futility, decay and pain; these are the words which

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(1) Colin Brown, Philosophy and the Christian Faith, Tyndale, London, 1969, p.270.

(2) T.C.Hammond, In Understanding Be Men, Inter-Varsity Press, London, 1968, p,74.

the apostle uses to depict the present suffering of nature."(1) In another word, sinful man is living in a world of death and decay. The Bible does not give compartmentalized intellectual answers to the existence of physical, psychological, moral and intellectual evils in the world. Instead, it reveals the authentic fallen picture of both man and the universe. The world is rife with sins, evils, pains and sufferings. This is the reality. It is not because God is not omnipotent or not good. But the consequences of sin have to be dealt with because God is righteous.

C.S. Lewis writes in his book, The Problem of Pain, that Christianity "is not a system into which we have to fit the awkward fact of pain."(2) No fruitful discussion will result if the problem of evil is taken out of its original biblical context. Indeed no human intellectual efforts, no matter how brilliant they are, can formulate satisfactory answers which are immune from philosophical criticism. If one wants to tackle the problem of evil, one should in the first place study carefully the biblical account of the problem, for the problem first arose from the biblical context.

Nevertheless, while biblical theology tells of the condemned and corrupted situation of man and nature, it also tells of a positive solution to the problem of evil. Man and the universe are condemned. They are helpless. But they are not without hope. The Bible does not present a gloomy and fatalistic view concerning the future of man and the universe. In Christ God has prepared a provision. Those who believe in Christ have eternal life. Their sins are cleared away. They are reckoned righteous by God. More than this, they all share a glorious hope. At present

the Christian still lives in a world which is full of evils. As William Barclay puts it, "the Christian is involved in the human situation. Within he must battle with his own evil human nature; without he must live in a world of death and decay."(3) Yet the Christian looks forward to the Day when Christ comes again to this earth. Then he will be with Christ forever. As John Stott phrases it, "we are going to be given new bodies on the last day, set free from their double burden, their frailty and their 'flesh'. Our resurrection bodies will have new, undreamed-of powers, and no indwelling sin."(4) That is why Paul says in Romans 8:23 that "not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." As for the universe, Paul says with a poetic vision that nature also waits for liberation from the death and decay that man's sin had brought into the world. If we are to share Christ's glory, nature is going to share ours. Bondage, decay and corruption will give place to liberty and incorruptible glory. There will be a new earth when Christ comes. Hence the creation was also subjected in hope (Romans 8:20) and "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God."(Romans 8:21)

It is important to study the problem of evil in the whole context of biblical theology. And it is still more important to realize that even being viewed in the correct perspective, the problem of evil does not encompass any pessimistic element. For the future and glorious solution of the problem of evil has already been made known. And that solution will bear a sure note of finality.



- (1) John R.W. Stott, Men Made New, Inter-Varsity Press, London, 1966, p.95.
- (2) C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain, Fontana, 1957, p.12.
- (3) William Barclay, The Letter to the Romans, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1957, p.115.
- (4) Men Made New, p.96.

# JEHOVAH - JIREH

- EDITORS -

In the last issue of The Fountain we have shared with our readers the vision which the Lord has placed in our hearts to carry out the work of The Fountain more effectively, and to do greater things in Him. We have also shared with our readers that the co-workers of The Fountain have unanimously agreed to buy an offset printing machine and that the motion was passed in a meeting in April of all the members of The Winnipeg Chinese Christian Fellowship. The change from mimeographing to offset printing in the future will enable improvement in printing quality and further expansion, but at the same time it also implies that more efforts will be demanded both in printing and in editorial work. Most of all, the change demands from us greater dedication and deeper commitment to the Lord.

We have informed our readers in the last issue that the financial cost of this major and significant move is estimated to be 8,000 Canadian dollars. The printing machine costs about \$7,000 and a metal-plate maker \$1,000. We have set a period of five months to accumulate the necessary fund. We trust that the Lord will provide us with the full fund in September and then we will place the order for the machine.

However, very recently we were informed by the sales representative of the machine company that the original cost would go up by 16% starting from

the end of June. Therefore if we order the machine in September, we will have to pay approximately 1,000 dollars more than what we originally planned to pay. We were faced with two alternatives. We can wait until we have obtained the full fund (which now means more than 9,000 dollars) and then place the order for the machine. Or we can order the machine before the end of June, but then we will have to pay the 8,000 dollars within 90 days which means before the end of September. After praying together before the Lord, the co-workers of The Fountain all felt that we should trust our Lord totally for His provision. We decided that we will place the order for the machine before the end of June and then paying the 8,000 dollars by the end of September. We trust that the Lord will meet our need.

The co-workers of The Fountain have the conviction that any decision concerning the work of The Fountain should not be made merely on the basis of expediency. We feel the urgent need to carry out the work of The Fountain more effectively in the future and we trust the Lord knows our need, therefore we believe that the Lord will provide for us financially. We need consistent prayer support from brothers and sisters.

Let us all pray to the Lord and commit ourselves totally to Him. Let us trust in the Lord, and say, with full confidence, "Jehovah-jireh" --- "The Lord will provide".

# FROM OUR READERS

From a reader in West Kalimantan, Indonesia:

Dear Editor,

When I was in Java Island, I often read The Fountain which was lent to me by friends there. It really brought great blessing and much help to my spiritual growth. When Rev. Wong came to our school, he promised to send us The Fountain regularly. Yes, he really did. But after a year, The Fountain stopped visiting us.

Last year, in March, God called me to His service in West Kalimantan. Please note that the people in the area mentioned above are Chinese in majority. We love to read the Word in the characters we understand. So, would you be so kind as to send me copies of The Fountain regularly in order that the others can receive the blessings of God as well? If this request is fit enough, your kind help will be very appreciated.

We will hold a youth convention in August next year, for which we need your prayers. Two conventions for young people will be held this year in some areas (interior places) in West Kalimantan. Those conventions will be held especially for the Dyak tribe.

Please pray for West Kalimantan!

From a sister in Hong Kong:

Dear friends in Christ,

I happened to read The Fountain one night and found it very good indeed.

I am a nurse in Queen Elizabeth Hospital which is a government hospital in Hong Kong. I have known Christ since I was twelve but I am not a good Christian. I would be very happy if you would kindly send me The Fountain. Thank you with all my heart, and may God be with you.

From a reader in Chicago, Illinois:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have read through one copy of The Fountain which I borrowed from my friend. By the time I had finished a few pages, I was so eager to read through all of it within a couple of hours. I even wanted to swallow it and keep it in my mind. I found that its contents would really enrich my knowledge of Christianity. Please send me one copy of The Fountain.

## FINANCIAL

## REPORT

( JAN. - JUNE, 1974 )

### Income:

Offerings from outside	
Winnipeg	2823.14
Offerings from Winnipeg	1946.29

Total	4769.43
Deficit	
Deficit from year 1973	

### Expenditure:

Postage	932.22
Printing materials	4399.91
Service charge and exchange	
from bank	49.23
Stationery and envelopes	215.81
Sundry	18.17
Rent for church basement	36.00

5651.34
881.91
305.42

Total Deficit

1187.33

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Please put (NC) after name if he (or she) is a non-Christian.  
若親友為非基督徒,請在姓名後加註「未信」二字。  
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# YOUR DECISION

# 剪寄之頁

日期 Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEX 性別	M. 男 <input type="checkbox"/> F. 女 <input type="checkbox"/>	Education 學歷	Univer- sity 大學 <input type="checkbox"/>	High 中學 <input type="checkbox"/>	Others 其他 <input type="checkbox"/>
AGE 年齡	10-20 十至二十 <input type="checkbox"/>	21+ 廿一歲以上 <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupation 職業		

我不是基督徒，但希望進一步認識基督的真理。請與我通信。

I am not a Christian, but I want to know more about Jesus Christ. Please correspond with me.

讀此刊後，心受感動。我願意信耶穌，接受祂為我的救主。請為我禱告。

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，求主帶領我一生。請為我禱告。

I am a Christian. I would like to dedicate my life to Jesus 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.

我是基督徒，樂意在此事工上有份。

I am a Christian, and would like to support this work of God.

附上獻金 元為  '泉源' 之用  印刷機獻金。  
Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for  Fountain General Fund.  Offset Machine Fund.

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Attach address label here.

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