

fountain



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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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Second Class Mail

Registration # 1651

2	THE CLOSING COLLEGE DOOR	Veronique
5	MY CRY WAS HEARD	Ken Fong
7	HE GAVE IT SECOND THOUGHT	Linny
10	REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY	Vernon Ratzlaff
13	LIVING GUIDELINES	Jean

Announcements:	MOVING	12
	FROM THE EDITORS	16

We are desperately in need of articles and suggestions! This is why our magazine was sidelined for six months.

The co-workers of The Fountain are a group of university students who want to tell our fellow students across North America about the rich and precious life offered in the Bible, in the life of Jesus Christ. We have experienced the goodness and the care of God and want to share these with you.

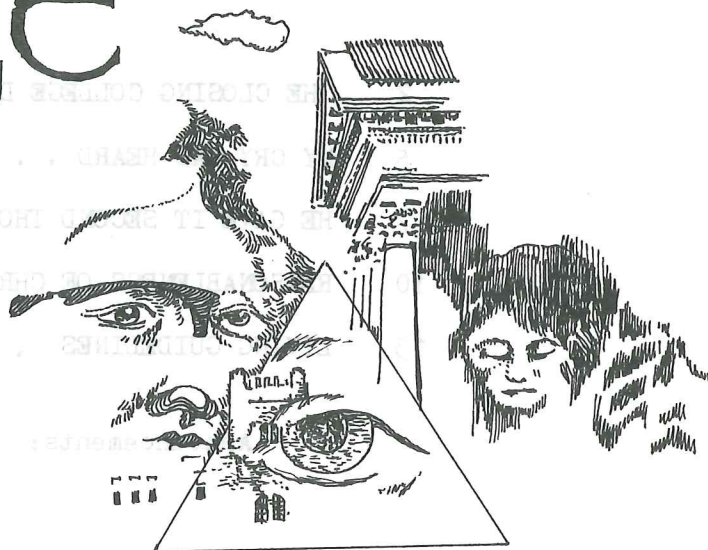
For the past six months, God has encouraged us and given us the determination to go on. He has been faithful in supplying us with the articles for this issue.

From the work of The Fountain and in our individual student life, we have found that His love is real. We urge everyone who has the same message to share with those who do not know Christ yet. We encourage you to send this magazine to your fellow students and distribute them on campus.

Write and share with us your testimonies and the many challenges that you face. We sincerely invite you to join us in bringing the Gospel to those around us!

The closing college door

Veronique



Ming stomped into his room, irritated to find that it was not empty. He had the craving to fling himself onto bed.

"Hi, how did it go..." Stan looked up and asked. He stopped short upon catching his roommate's expression.

An uneasy silence followed. Stan pretended to read aloud.

"January is named after the ancient Latin divinity Janus. He was at times depicted as a porter seated in a flamboyant throne, with a sceptre in the right hand and a key in the left ..."

It was just like Stan to be interested in this sort of thing, Ming mused. He could not help smiling as he recalled the day Stan brought back that pyramid. It was supposed to bring him magical blessings of "biocosmic energy". Gingerly placing a blunt razor blade under the pyramid, Stan announced that the dulled edge would be sharp again in three days. Nothing happened, of course. Stan, however, was undaunted. He placed the magic charm on top of his pile of notes.

"Janus was worshipped as the god

of gods; the sovereign disposer of war and peace; the patron of the fortunes of mankind. Some held that all doors (Janua) and all passages (Janus) were under his care..." Stan's voice droned on.

The bestower of fortunes! The guardian of all doors! "If only I could come to know him, whoever he is," Ming could not help thinking.

The thought of that interview he just had made him wince. The Board asked him those unexpected questions about his ability, his opinion regarding himself. Nervous and caught off guard, he kept stammering. His mind turned blank. It was a humiliating experience which further undermined his self-confidence.

Ming never did have much confidence in himself. In school, being half a foot shorter than the other boys, he was lost in the crowd. He was just one of those unimpressive-looking kids who blended so well with the background that he was generally overlooked. None of the teachers could remember whether his name was Ming Ling or Ling Ming.

He answered to both. All his life he had responded to "Hey" or "You there". He was used to being mediocre. After all, getting angry with himself did not seem to change anything.

"By the way," he heard his roommate talking to him, "Did you know that Rick got a job already? Lucky guy."

"Oh yeah? Some people have got it made, haven't they?" There was the slightest tinge of self-pity in Ming's reply.

"Blast those Econ! I'm going over to have a pinball game. Wanna come along?" Stan threw the Free Press under the table.

"Today my horoscope reads, 'Excellent planetary influences. Indications are that something very pleasant is about to happen.' Betcha I'm gonna hit on something big. A job maybe. Or a round trip to Hawaii. Who knows?" He whistled as he put on his jacket.

Alone, Ming found it even harder to concentrate on tomorrow's exam. Three more days to go, and he could throw away all his textbooks. At last his dream of getting a B.Sc. was materialized. So the numbing pressure of assignments and exams was bravely borne.

Ming remembered that day in the library. All of a sudden he panicked at the thought of the future. The fear of failure, anxiety about tomorrow, made up that pain at the pit of his stomach. He was beginning to doubt if he should have majored in Electrical Engineering instead. But was it not a bit late to think about that now?

Supper time. They were already lining up at the foot of the stairway to Pembina Hall. Ming noticed that lately the usual long line of people had dwindled.

He could remember as if it were yesterday the first time he queued up for supper. It was bad enough having to wear a "FRESHIE" badge on his T-

shirt. Worse still, everything on the food counter looked foreign. So whatever the person in front of him took. Ming followed suit. Things went well until he tried to tear open the triangular pack of milk. Before he knew it, he had the white liquid spilt all over his nose and spectacles.

That first week they managed to tub Ming twice. Even now, three years later, Ming still failed to understand how people could derive such pleasure out of dumping someone into the bathtub. To him, the whole idea of tubbing was not so much culture shock as poor taste.

Then came Halloween. It was fun watching those weird-looking creatures walk along the darkened corridors. Soon it was time for Christmas decorations: crazy cartoons all over the walls; light bulbs wrapped in gaudy-colored paper. Then the unusually quiet holidays when nearly everybody had gone home...

Ming took his usual seat beside the window. Roast beef! He was glad it was the last time he had to eat that tasteless meat. Anyway, it was better than submarine sandwiches or those cheesy stuff.

That noisy bunch was sitting across the table again. Ming could hear that science freak Jerry talking with his mouth full, gesturing excitedly.

"... the crew of Apollo 15... a journey of 475,000 miles... returned to the earth's atmosphere... approached the earth through a corridor only 4 miles wide..."

"Was that ever neat!" Ming said to himself. There was just one entrance to planet Earth; the spaceship had to find that narrow passageway. What about human beings? Where could they find direction?

Who did Stan say was supposed to be the guardian of all doors? Ming wondered why people would believe in biorhythms, astrology, the occult sciences and other bizarre things. He was

sure that if these people were honest, they would admit it was all superstition and psychic nonsense. Yet they chose to believe in whatever they wanted to believe in. Perhaps this was because they wanted to be intrigued and mystified. After all, fiction and fantasy always appeared more appealing than truth and logic. In the midst of this confusion regarding the unknown, wasn't there someone who could say, "Here, this is the way," or "Come, I am the door"?

The dining room was lit up by the radiance of the setting sun. From where he was, Ming could see the glittering Red River. He thought he would miss the tranquil beauty of the place. It was a delightful surprise when he woke up one frosty morning to find the trees almost crystallized. He loved the frozen river as it lay silent and dazzling white under the wintry sun. He was thrilled by the lush green of spring, the cloudless blue summer skies...

Yet how many times had he told himself he did not belong here? On the other hand, he was not sure where he **really** belonged. It was not just homesickness that made these three years seem so much longer. Rather, it was a feeling of restlessness, a sense of loneliness in the midst of the crowd. Had he not been eager to leave home in search of a fulfilling university life?

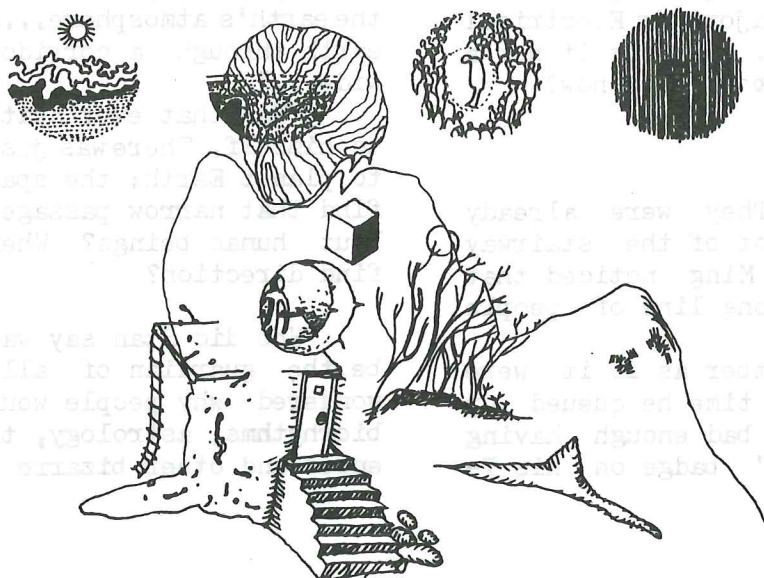
Perhaps this was what they called disillusionment.

Leaving Pembina Hall, Ming walked towards that familiar stump. Here he used to sit for hours, aimlessly throwing pebbles into the river. Did life have to be such a meaningless rut? Why get a degree when you haven't the slightest idea what to do with it? Surely there had to be a purpose behind it all.

Ming had thought about the meaning of life before. Though he was at a loss regarding the answer, it did not bother him. The immediate goal of getting a degree took precedence over everything else. There was no time for extra-curricular activities. He did not join functions or listen to lectures on current issues. He was not interested. Besides, why should he get involved? He was just an immigrant, a foreign student with the privilege of finding employment.

The moon rose slowly from behind the row of trees on the opposite bank. A full moon. The loneliness and uncertainty made Ming's search for meaning an unbearable suspense. If only the knowledge accumulated over the past three years could show him the way.

The thought of skipping tomorrow's exam loomed large. Did he dare? ☐



MY CRY WAS HEARD

Ken Fong

The author is a third year
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I became a Catholic at the age of 14. Then, I had little understanding of God's purposes in sending His Son Jesus Christ into this world. How God could relate to me was a mystery. Despite my ignorance, I never tried to find out more from the Bible, or any other sources. I thought I would be saved if I was good enough. Reflecting on my past, I could say that I was worshipping the system rather than God. I was more familiar with the method of worship than God Himself.

In 1975, I came over to Canada for Grade 13 in Kingston, Ontario. I did not have too many problems in my studies, but at times I prayed to God about it. I continued to go to church, but soon found it meaningless and the people cold. At times, I felt like talking to someone, but there was none, and I did not want to take the initiative.

One night during the mid-winter break, I had a discussion with two roommates. We talked about God's relationship with men. Our discussion started off in a diverse manner, on Buddah, Mohammed, Jesus and others. But the question that we zeroed in was "Has God been real to us?" The discussion went on from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. Finally we agreed that "God is me", since we could function and make decisions without Him. He did not exist and those who believed in God were weaklings who wanted something to cling to.

I was quite happy to realize that "God is me" because it meant that I could do what I wanted and not feel

guilty. So I went to parties, got drunk, feeling big and mighty. My conscience accused me when I had gone beyond "the limit", but I was not too hung up on it. My self-image was deteriorating slowly. I finally decided that I wanted to change for the better. I made a couple of resolutions, but they were never carried out. There were just too many opportunities for me to enjoy myself. I did not understand why even after I had come to the conclusion that "God is me", I was still restless.

One night, I was so frustrated over the whole "God is me" issue that I jumped onto my bed, punched it as hard as I could, and screamed silently. "God, if You are alive, let Jesus appear before me and I will be convinced that You exist as the Bible says You do." I was quite certain that Jesus would come to my rescue. I opened my eyes slowly to see if Jesus was standing in front of me or if an angel was floating around. To my disappointment, nothing happened. The whole thing seemed to be unreal. I said to myself that it was just another fantasy.

A week later, Jesus answered my cry. One night while I was at the laundry mart, I met a Queen's University student. We talked about school life. Gradually, he slipped in this question, "Do you believe in anything spiritual?"

"Well, well," I laughed within myself and told him how I believed that "God is me". However, I did not mention to him the frustration and questions I had concerning this issue. Then

he asked if I would like to know what a real Christian is. Since I was waiting for my laundry, I agreed. He shared with me about Jesus, telling it as if Jesus was his friend. I found it strange, but on the other hand, I was impressed. He told me that we are all sinners and are separated from God. He added that Jesus, the Son of God has come to die for our sins providing the only way to God. It then struck me that Jesus had already appeared to establish a relationship between God and me.

However, I started giving all kinds of excuses not to believe in Jesus. I told him what I was pretty good compared with some of my friends. He explained to me from the Bible that I could not come to God by good works or any other ways except through believing what Jesus did. Ephesians 2: 8,9 said, "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."

I did some fast thinking, and decided that I would try Jesus out to see if He was real or not. He said that Jesus would make me perfect before God and that I did not have to struggle. Finally my friend asked, "Is there anything stopping you from believing right now?" I could not think of any, so we prayed together and I asked Jesus to forgive me and to come into my life. He did and I felt clean inside!

We took our laundry home and immediately my friend asked me to memorize some Bible verses concerning what he had just told me.

After I had asked Jesus to control my life, I started to read the Bible. I believed that it is God's word and is one of His means of communicating to me. My Bible reading schedule however, was quite haphazard. I did not have a regular time and I just read it when I felt like it. In spite of this, I really thank God for showing His love to me and encouraging me to understand the Bible. His love was manifested to

me by this friend who led me to accept Jesus. Each morning, he would come to my apartment for 15 minutes of reading, praying and talking. He explained to me that having a consistent quiet time is essential as a child of God. It is only through spending time with Him that I can get to know Him more. Each meeting with God to me is a great privilege.

As a growing Christian, I still tend to disobey God by giving various excuses. Sometimes, I do not take God's word seriously enough. The Bible tells me to be gentle with people, but when others provoke me in a conversation, I usually respond very rudely by giving an outburst of anger. I tell myself that it is my nature. God would then remind me that I lack this quality and need to have a change in me.

In Romans 12:2, it says, "Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." After 2 years of following the Lord, I could see this verse unfolding its truth. When my mind is being renewed by the transforming power of Christ, God will prove Himself real to me. He has done this by changing my attitude towards His word.

God has been keeping watch over my life and He is doing this through another faithful friend of mine here in Winnipeg. Along with him, I have a group of brothers and sisters to encourage and strengthen me. Moreover, God has blessed my life by filling my heart with a constant flow of joy. This joy comes in the form of singing songs of praise to the Lord in my heart and rejoicing over a person who has accepted Christ. In these years, I have been encouraged to see people come to the Lord, finding that God does give life and make it worth living. It is amazing to see how God changes a person! But the greatest joy is to know that my name is written in heaven and Jesus has promised in John 10: 28,29 that no one is able to snatch me out of His hand. □

He gave it Second Thoughts

Linny

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile
and you are still in your sins."

I Corinthians 15:17.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ actually rose from death?

Some people are just too willing to disregard this question, whilst others, who are concerned about finding out the truth, would at least read the historical accounts of the matter before giving a definite answer.

Frank Morison, the writer of Who Moved The Stone?¹, was once a person who refused to accept the record of Jesus' life in the Bible as reliable. However, he set forth to study the Gospels. He did so partially because many critics in his generation were disputing the truth of the Gospels and partially because Morison himself respected Jesus as "an almost legendary figure of purity and noble manhood."² Originally, Morison chose to leave the issue of resurrection alone mainly because the miraculous elements in the Gospels seemed so contradictory to physical science. He wanted, most of all, to analyse the

seven days leading to the crucifixion of Christ. He could not understand why a good and respectable teacher like Jesus could die such a ghastly death. As well, he wanted to find out Christ's response to His own suffering. Such is an example of a non-believer who cared to adopt an objective approach in order to unravel the mystery of Christ.

But Morison never finished that book he meant to write. The study of the Gospels brought new light and he was forced to go on with a research on the possibility of Christ's resurrection, as truth spoke for itself. In Who Moved The Stone?, he reveals his systematic approach and his confession of the discovery of historical truth in the four Gospels.

Morison tells us how astonished he was at the strangeness in the monuments that he studied. In his mind, he reconstructed the scenes recorded in the four Gospels that concerned

Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. In the study of Jesus' trial before the High Priests, we are told that every detail fits into the picture perfectly. Morison analyses the background of the case by going into non-Biblical sources. He studies the peculiar nature of the charge against Christ. He examines the emotional and psychological response of the Priests, which indicated their immense desire to get rid of Jesus. In addition, he examines the inner struggle of Pontius Pilate and makes the reader more aware of the situation that forced the Roman procurator to shift his responsibility to others. Morison draws the conclusion that Jesus was innocent.

The reader is also encouraged to read the details of Jesus' crucifixion so as to perceive what actually took place in Calvary almost two thousand years ago. The emphasis is not so much on the pathos of the scene as on its historical value.

After studying Jesus' death, Morison found a deep interest in examining the following days as well. The Gospels had revealed truth to him up to the point of Jesus' crucifixion but that alone, however true, could not prove that He had come and died as Messiah, the true Son of God and Saviour of mankind. In his search for truth, Morison went on to read carefully about Jesus' resurrection.

That the tomb was empty on the third day of Christ's death was not disputed by even the most extreme enemies of Jesus. How and why that happened was the problem to be solved. Listing all the hypotheses put forward by people who think that Christ never rose from the dead, Morison shows how each of them can be shattered by sheer logic and common sense.

Morison points out that Christ's body could not have been removed to some other tomb by Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of Christ's grave. He was a follower of Jesus and would not steal the body. He did not mention such a

thing when the news of Jesus' resurrection was later announced by the disciples. If he had removed the body to another grave, others would find out sooner or later. Morison goes on to invalidate another hypothesis which states that the Jewish or Roman authorities had taken the body away. Objecting to Jesus' teaching and His followers' witness to Jesus' resurrection, these authorities would very gladly have produced the dead body just to upset the followers' belief of such a supernatural thing, IF they had known where the body was. But the authorities had nothing to say in order to overthrow the belief. All that they could do was to intimidate the apostles secretly, charging them not to speak in Jesus' name at all. (Acts 4:18)

Neither could Christ's body have been stolen by His disciples, as some have suggested. By common sense, we know that they were too afraid to do so in the first place. Most of them were scattered once Christ was arrested. Further, to steal the body was an action that contradicted their frank and down-to-earth character. Thirdly, they were only bold enough to declare Christ's resurrection seven weeks later, when they were absolutely sure.

Morison goes on to show the absurdity of the hypothesis that Jesus did not really die. He appeals to our common sense again by stating that if a man has been nailed to the cross, with wounds on his head, feet, hands and sides and has even been assumed to be dead, he will hardly be able to walk, let alone rolling off a huge stone to escape in less than three days after he is crucified! The other hypotheses that the women were mistaken or that they did not visit the tomb are equally improbable since the vacant tomb was soon known to everyone in the city. The curious ones would have paid a visit to the tomb for sure.

Morison does not conclude that the account of Christ's resurrection is a true one just by pointing out the

unlikely of the above hypotheses. He had far better support than that. It is a particular study of the positive consequences of the discovery of the empty tomb that confirmed the statement of the Gospels. It is the drastic change of several historical figures that poignantly reflects the powerful force of truth itself. The people that Morison examines include Simon Peter, a rugged fisherman, and Saul, a most enthusiastic persecutor of early Christians.

The same person that denied Jesus three times stood up fearlessly seven weeks later to declare himself a witness of the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:32) The change that fell on Simon Peter likewise fell on Saul, who had to abandon his former hatred of Christ and submit completely to the real Son of God. He was called to suffer for Christ and he had to obey. Both of these men later died as martyrs, but they had stood up to truth, which could not be disregarded. Christianity flourished under persecution and was introduced to the Western world.

In the book, Morison makes it clear that sometimes, the Bible tells us strange and extraordinary things that seem impossible, not conforming to our general notions. But it is plain history told by true witnesses and not a romantic fiction written to please its readers. We are not particularly encouraged to identify ourselves with the characters as we are when reading fiction. The writers of the Gospels did not attempt to convince their readers by using rhetorics either. They simply wrote what they knew.

The entire Christian faith is based on Christ's resurrection. That He had died for our sin is not enough but that He has been raised from the dead shows that He is the one prophe-

sied in the Old Testament to conquer death, the consequence of sin. History books have told you about the growth of Christianity. The time and place of the growth coincide with those recorded in the Gospels. We do not doubt that Napoleon lost the battle in Waterloo although we did not see that happen because we have faith in the history written by others. If you do not confine the power of the Creator of this universe to the narrow, mundane scope of the non-miraculous, you will see the truth revealed in the Book that God has inspired, and view your past, present and future very differently.

Often we ask why God does not do this or that. We are so self-centred that we want God to serve us and please us in the way we want. If we are truly sincere to know God's will for us, let us examine what has been claimed to be His word instead. Morison, realizing the change in his attitude towards Christianity, has said,

"It is easy to say that you will believe nothing that will not fit into the mould of a rationalist conception of the universe. But suppose the facts won't fit into that mould? The utmost that an honest man can do is to undertake to examine the facts patiently and impartially, and to see where they lead him."³

We should all study the Gospels before we personally accept or reject these records. This is the lesson I, as a Christian, have learnt, by reading Frank Morison's Who Moved The Stone? ☐

FOOTNOTES:

1. Morison, Frank, Who Moved The Stone?, Faber & Faber, London, 1971.
2. Ibid., p.10.
3. Ibid., p.67.

REASONABLE OF CHRISTIAN

Vernon Ratzlaff

"Reasonableness" is not an easy term to define; what is reasonable to one person is not always reasonable to another. Some people require more evidence than others to believe; some people believe in flying saucers while others do not, even though both have access to the same information. Also, for some statements we require more evidence than for others before we accept them as being reasonable. Consider three statements. 1) The sun will shine tomorrow. 2) This used car will last you a long time. 3) A man rose from the dead. We would require different kinds of proof, and more of it, for accepting the "reasonableness" of the third statement than of the first. We would require varying amounts of proof for each of these statements before we would accept their reasonableness: less for 1), more for 2), most for 3). So some people require more proof than other people before believing something to be "reasonable". However, there are some guidelines that can be held generally acceptable which help us see that Christianity is reasonable.

These guidelines, however, are just

that -- they are guidelines, not absolutely certain statements. They are not the result of deductive arguments, but of inductive. Deductive arguments, like mathematics, are valid because the words that make them up define their meaning; inductive arguments, like science, are valid but never entirely certain, because they depend on experience, not on definition. A deductive argument will yield a true conclusion because that is how we have chosen to define the words that make up the sentences; it is dependent, then, on us and how we use words. Not admitting the truth of the conclusion would result in contradicting our first statement. E.g. all circles are round. This is round. Therefore this is a circle. We cannot deny the conclusion without resulting in a contradiction.

Inductive arguments, used in science, do not give this absolute certainty because they deal with objects of experience, not objects of our definitions. Christian claims are inductive, because they have to do with experience, not with mere definitions.

This difference between deductive

NESS ITY

and inductive systems is important. If Christianity could be proven deductively, i.e. indubitable, completely, two consequences would follow. 1) It could do so only as a result of using definition-- and definitions are arbitrary, i.e., the human being decides what they will be. 2) Our faith would rest on the proof, on the deductive system. Proving God's existence, Jesus' divinity or the trustworthiness of the Bible by a deductive method would lead us to have faith in the proof, not in God.

That Christianity is inductive in its explanation is important when we think back to what we meant by "reasonable". Inductive, arguing from specific cases to a general statement, is a way of gaining reasonable reassurance, not of absolute irrefutable proof. This is where science and Christianity undertake similar ways of arriving at conclusions. Christianity claims to be a historical faith, open to historical and scientific investigation. Such investigation holds historical events to be true as based on proba-

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bility, reasonableness. The deductive approach might say "By definition Jesus lived"; the inductive system says, "Based on experience with historical documents (the gospel and church history records), it is highly probable that Jesus lived". The Christian faith is open to investigation, when; it rests on claims about what God did in space and in time, and these claims can be tested by the same methods we use in the social and the natural science. So Christianity is first of all reasonable because it uses the same criteria of investigation that other disciplines use in arriving at reasonable conclusions.

Secondly, it is reasonable because it follows the use of the inductive method in accepting that hypothesis (theory) which accounts best of all the available data. In science, theories that cover the widest range are accepted. For example, if I look at the fraction $16/64$ and claim that I can simplify this by crossing out the common integer (6), I get $1/4$, which is correct. But this theory does not work for the fraction $12/24$. So I have to adopt a

theory that will work for all fractions, not just one. Further, theories are chosen on the basis of their ability to explain and to predict. Christianity is reasonable because it is a hypothesis that accounts for a great many data, in fact, for all observable data. On the basis of Christianity's claims I have a basis for doing science (because there is a God of order who sustains the creation), for aesthetics (because there is a God who has created beauty; if it were not for this, why should I think a sunset to be more beautiful than a crumpled cigarette package?), for ethics (because there is a God, it matters what I do; if it were not for Him, why should I prefer protecting life to taking it?). Believing in God and in Jesus allows me to make sense of these data and more; Christian belief is thus reasonable. Without God I cannot give a reasonable explanation of why there is order and dependability in the universe; with God I can assume continuity and uniformity of natural law.

Thirdly, I find Christianity to be reasonable because it is based on historical events which I can read about, and because what I read is found in reliable records. The reliability of these records (the Bible) related to two questions. 1) Is what we have today an accurate record of what was first written by the apostles? 2) Was what was written by the apostles an accurate record of what actually happened?

Christianity is reasonable because it can reply "yes" to both questions as a result of two disciplines. Textual criticism tests the accuracy of the manuscripts of the Bible (over 3,000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament alone) to see whether they agree with each other and thus reflect what was originally written. Social tradition theory tests the accuracy of cultures in transmitting oral material over several decades. Archaeology also tests the reliability of these records. All these methods combine to make me more confident of the reasonableness (relia-

bility) of the biblical records of Christianity's claims. I can trust what the records (the Bible) say.

Fourthly, in all this talk of the reasonableness of Christianity, I have not mentioned the concept of "faith". All of us use faith. The scientist has faith that phenomena will continue, that what he observes today is repeatable and predictable for tomorrow. The chemist assumes that gases will expand when temperature is increased and pressure remains constant, and that this will happen tomorrow and the day after. This "uniformity of nature" illustrates the inductive method, the belief (faith) that things will continue to be what they have been. And it is only on the faith assumption of a creator God of order and dependability that we can continue to believe in the dependability uniformity of nature is seen as reasonable. My saying Christianity is reasonable is thus similar to those who see science as reasonable.

My belief in the reasonableness is thus based on the same kind of reasoning that produces my belief in the reasonableness of the scientific methodology, reasoning that relates to understanding the world around me, to making sense out of data (e.g. a man raised from the dead), to seeing documents (the Bible) as believable. ☐

MOVING:

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LIVING GUIDELINES

Jean

Becoming a Christian was the beginning of a brand new life for me. It was a challenge, and a very big one. Since then, there has been a desire within me to close the door to my old way of life, because it was miserable and unfulfilling. Moreover, I want to walk with God on a higher plain. I want to grab hold of His hand and let Him lead me.

The most exciting experience since becoming a Christian is reading the Bible, and discovering for myself the Bible's priceless gems. It has led me directly to God. The more I read about God, the more I realize how great His love is to all mankind, and to me as an individual. Through my daily reading, I find out that the Bible is the book of God's heart, a book that God wants me to read, believe and obey. It is the book that has since set out guidelines for my daily living, and a book that offers me warranty for eternity.

As I open the Bible for my devotion today, I realize that it is the old familiar Psalm 23 that I will be reading. After reading verse one, I cannot help but stop right there and meditate on the words. It reads, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

As I repeat aloud this verse to myself, it tells me that the Lord my God is my shepherd, and relying on Him I shall have everything and not want anymore. How nice to have a shepherd to guide me through life! My life will then be protected and I will not be wandering here and there. As I reflect on the past years, I can only say that I have experienced God's love and care

for me. He has been my shepherd in every aspect of my life, be it academic, spiritual or social. As I think about God's care and providence, one incident comes to my mind...

It was the time when a friend and I were stuck in the car on a side road a mile off the main highway. To make the situation worse, it was in the heart of winter, and there was nobody around. The only house we remembered seeing was a small shabby-looking cottage a mile back. At first we tried to drive the car forward and backward hoping to get it out, but the tire just spun round and round. We tried to put some leaves and twigs under the tire, but nothing seemed to work.

Exhausted and cold, we got into the car and prayed. After praying, we decided to walk out and call for help. As we trudged against the wind, we were worried about the cost of calling for a tow truck. We had heard that the charge was about five dollars a mile or more if we had to call one on the highway. Besides, it must have been over twenty miles away that we saw the last gas station. My heart was in turmoil. But somewhere deep inside, I knew that God cared and He would somehow answer our prayer.

Finally we got to the house. We rang the door bell but nobody answered. "Oh, no!" I said to my friend. Then we opened the door and yelled, "Is anybody home?" At length we heard the shuffling of feet and a sleepy-looking middle-aged man came out. After telling him about our situation, he volunteered to try and pull our car out. So we drove back in his car and he did manage to pull it out. What a relief!

How caring and loving God is. He

walks into my life and takes care of me in very specific ways and on many occasions. This incident is just one of many which show me that God is my shepherd.

"I shall not want." What does this mean? Will I not want anything? It must be great to have every need fulfilled. Yet the verse clearly assures me of this. The biggest thing lacking in my life a few years ago was a close relationship with God. My high school days suddenly come back to me. There were morning assemblies, hymn-singing, reciting the Lord's prayer and chapel services. I can remember each moment vividly, and how I thought I was a Christian. The startling moment came when I read an article which stated that God has no grandchildren. It said that having parents who are Christians does not make the children Christians. Neither does going to church and doing all the rituals. I can still remember that my reaction then was a big "What?"

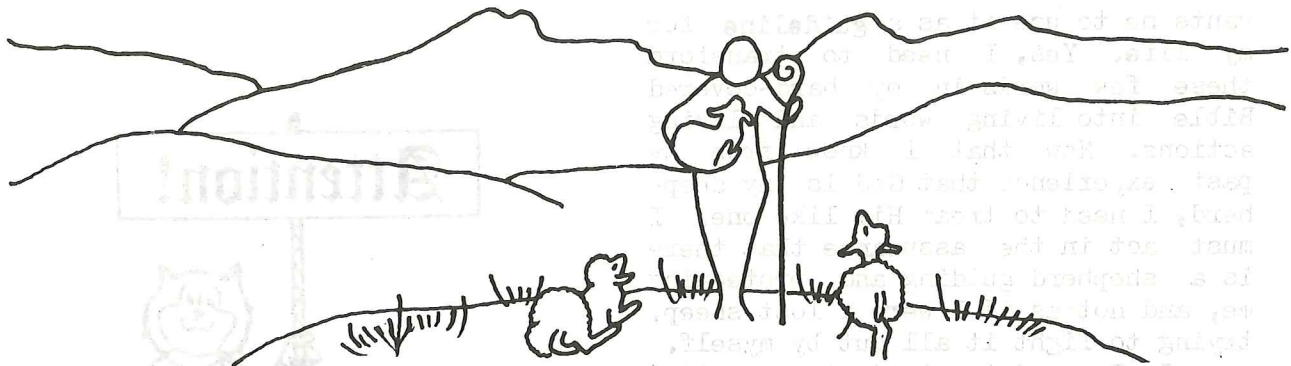
For the rest of the week it bothered me and I wanted to know badly where I stood, inside or outside God's family. I wanted to find out how I could become a Christian. I reasoned that if I was not made His child by an adoption into His family, I would have no part of Him. I longed to be His own child. I realized that my relationship with God was on a "He's up there, I'm down here" basis. There were fear and acknowledgement on my part because He is God. But there seemed to be a gap. I guess in a way I was a grandchild of God. I really did not feel the

closeness of a father and daughter relationship. Besides, I really lacked the fulness and richness of a Christian life. Nobody knew the inside of me except God and myself. I had to be honest and admit that I needed God to enter my life and take over.

Finally, after a long week of thinking and searching, I told God that I really wanted to be His child. I acknowledged that I had sinned, and in my life there were hatred, pride, jealousy instead of love. I asked for His forgiveness in simple prayer and asked Him to take me into His family. I also thanked Him for His love in dying on the cross for my sins. I did not really understand why He did it because I did not deserve all this. It would be hard for me to understand His love because I did not possess that kind of love in me. Maybe in due time I would, but even then, I really appreciated it. I claimed before Him the verse in John 1:12, "But as many as received Him...to them He gave the right to become children of God."

This was the most precious moment in my life. God did fulfill my want. What is more, He has since come into my life and taken over, and has given me the assurance that I am His. I guess the key is the preceding verse. I must recognize that God is my shepherd first before He can satisfy my needs.

I remember in the Old Testament, God says that He is the great I AM. This to me is very true. When I need peace, He is peace. When I need love, He is love. As in the incident when I was stranded in the snow, I had to be calm to handle the situation, to have the faith that everything would be all



right, to know that God was with me. I recall that He indeed provided me with all these, and did assure me in the midst of my turmoil that He was in control.

These two experiences bring me back to the reality of this verse. I have to admit that it is very true in my everyday life.

Meditating on this verse and putting emphasis on each word and phrase adds more meaning to it. As I think about the phrase "The Lord", it speaks to me of God's uniqueness. It would certainly be a lot more different if the word "The" were replaced by "A". Yes, God is the one and only one Lord who deserves my obedience.

Moving on, I come to the certainty of this verse -- "is". Surprisingly enough, there is no condition, no "if". Just a simple "is" stating the fact. How extraordinary! I guess I am too used to the norm of this society, when I have to pay for what I get. Just yesterday I found out that if I do not pay two dollars, I will not get a transcript. After all, I did pay the student fees! Life is certainly full of "ifs" and conditions. But life as God's child is so different. There are no conditions. He loves me unconditionally and in fact, He loved me even before I came to Him. God IS my shepherd, and I know that for certain.

"My shepherd." This phrase makes me think of how loving and personal God is to me. I always have the im-

pression that a shepherd loves and cares for his sheep. In fact he would make every effort to protect his sheep and to keep them from wandering astray. How comforting to know that God is my shepherd and I am His sheep, His very own.

The next phrase is another fact -- "I shall not want". Although I have read this verse before, it has never occurred to me until today that I shall be in such a state of not wanting or lacking anything. In my Christian life, I always seem to either want this or that. Although I have told God to take over my life, I am still anxious about my future and even tomorrow. Also I find myself lacking in love, peace, joy and most of all, patience. Coming back to this verse, I cannot but marvel at how direct and precise it is. It points right to my needs, to what I am anxious about, telling me that I need not want anymore. These are but a few words but there is such depth to them. What is more, it says that it is "I" that shall not want. I really thank God for this verse!

I find myself being caught up in the richness and fullness of this verse. It is nice to dwell in such a state, but I need to move on to see how I can use it in my life. As I think about this, I realize that to apply this verse is the hardest, yet the most important. After all, what meaning is there to read the Bible if I read it without applying it? I know that God

wants me to use it as a guideline for my life. Yes, I need to transform these few words in my hard-covered Bible into living words and living actions. Now that I know from my past experience that God is my shepherd, I need to treat Him like one. I must act in the assurance that there is a shepherd guiding and protecting me, and not as if I were a lost sheep, trying to fight it all out by myself.

So I am determined to practise what I have learnt from this verse. I am determined to go back to my computer assignment in this manner. I must not be frantic and uptight when I cannot get it running because this will just be a hindrance. Also when I see my savings account reaching the two-figured mark, and I still have not received the cheque from home, I will not worry. Instead, I will hand all of these over to my shepherd who is always beside me. By God's help, I am sure that there will be no more sleepless nights.

This verse really means a lot to me. It makes me think a lot about my past, and it certainly brings me closer to God. Not only this, but it also reminds me of my relationship to Him and the rich life that I should be living if I treat Him as my shepherd.

As I think about my past few years as a Christian, I can say that the Bible indeed is very precious to me. It has pointed me to God who has given me a new life. It has also brought me into the family of God, so that I can stand face to face with my Father. This to me is very valuable and meaningful.

The exploration expedition began a few years ago and it has been exciting and fulfilling. The wonderful thing is that I not only have guidance but also a very special Guide. Would you like to join me in exploring the Bible? ☐

Attention!



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