

# IN SEARCH OF A FATHER



Although the main characters in this story are  
not real persons, the arguments and facts  
discussed are real.

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**PUBLISHERS**

Watchtower Bible and Tract Society  
of New York, Inc.  
Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

2006 Printing

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*In Search of a Father*  
English (sc-E)

Made in the United States of America

# IN SEARCH OF A FATHER

**K**ham Thong was tired. It had been a hard day, but he liked his work and felt contented. He had just enjoyed a delicious meal his wife had prepared, and was having a very pleasant time together with her and their two young children. His wife, Oi, was now busy sewing but not too busy to chatter away to anyone who cared to listen. While keeping up his end of the rather disjointed conversation, he began to think.

Was it his imagination or was his wife looking better than before? Even the meal seemed to be better than usual. Or was it just his mood? True, he was in a good mood. But casting a more careful look at his wife, he noticed that she was better groomed. But, more important, he noticed her face. It was more relaxed and cheerful than it had looked for a long time. He was pleased about that because he loved her and he believed the feeling was mutual, although their married life had been rough at times. His wife was hardworking and sincere but very touchy and apt to flare up under any kind of implied criticism.

As he pondered over this he realized that he and Oi had not had any bitter disagreement for weeks. He recalled the animated and friendly conversation they had enjoyed only the day before as they had eaten those delicious mangoes with sticky rice. True, they had had a disagreement once, but it had been carried on in a friendly spirit. He certainly appreciated that.

He had been brought up in a home without parents. His mother had died when he was young. As for his father—that had been somewhat of a mystery. He could not remember him, and the older members of the family implied that he had walked out on them. They never seemed to want to talk about him. His oldest sister had done the cooking and generally looked after the home. It had not, however, been a real home with a family spirit. Everyone just came and went as he pleased. No doubt she did her best, but always she seemed to be tired and short of time and money. He had understood that, in order to keep them going, she had been receiving money from their oldest brother Tuen, who lived away. But that was barely enough; so she had done some selling at the morning market. As for himself, no one ever showed interest in him as an individual. He had felt very much like an orphan, unwanted—and lonely. As a child he had often played alone, thought alone and later made things alone. That had tended to make him somewhat of an introvert.

#### A GO-CART AND LETTERS

He had developed a strong sense of appreciation for good workmanship. One thing that had influenced him a lot was a wooden go-cart made for him by his father before he left. His father had been a maker of buffalo carts. This go-cart was a wonderful piece of workmanship and never failed to generate in him a great respect for his father as a craftsman, especially as he grew older. In fact, that was what had stirred him to follow his father's trade; although it had meant teaching himself by trial and error, using his father's tools, which were still in the old house. Even when he saw his own children playing with it he always thought of his father, but with conflicting feelings in the background. How, on the one hand, could his father give him such a wonderful plaything and yet

walk out on the family and leave them without any care?

It was only when, sometime after his marriage, he was visiting his oldest sister, who was now married but living in the old home, that he got some enlightenment about his father. Having such a natural eye for good workmanship, he was casually admiring the house that his father had made. That brought his father to mind and caused him to raise the subject again as to what had become of him. "Oh, I don't know," she said impatiently. "Here!" she continued, "read these letters; they were from him, to Tuen," at the same time extracting a bunch of old letters from the back of a drawer and slamming them down in front of him. "You can have them. They are of no use to me." So he had brought them home and read them.

He remembered how he had become so excited about these letters that he even had read parts of them to Oi. "Just imagine," he had said, "my father was a good man after all! Not just a good craftsman but a good *father*. He had made provision for the whole family through my oldest brother Tuen. He did care for us after all. Why, he even mentioned me in one of his letters. It was Tuen who misused the money when he went off with that girl friend of his. What little he did send to my oldest sister he made it appear to be his own money. Just think of it," he stressed again to Oi, "my father was a good man and he cared about us." Those letters were not complete and did not give any clue as to where his father was or when he expected to be back. Kham remembered saying to Oi how he looked forward to knowing him better. "Maybe he will turn up one of these days," he said to her.

His musings on these recent events were interrupted by his little boy who wanted his pencil sharpened. Instead of just doing it he showed him how and helped him to do it himself. Noticing his boy's joy as he showed his sister

what his daddy had taught him made Kham feel he had scored an "A" grade there as a father, not just as a pencil sharpener. Thinking of this, he felt that he had played the part of a father better since reading those letters. But he was honest enough with himself to see that there must be a bigger cause for the improvement in the family atmosphere. 'What could it be?' he wondered 'What had caused Oi to change?'

He did not know just then that his excitement at finding out about his father had impressed Oi so much. But in fact this was the first time she began to realize how finding a good father could cause so much joy to someone who had never known one before.

Kham, lazily gazing around, but deep in thought, focused once more on Oi. Why, how radiant she looked! Just like the time he began courting her. Such a thought emboldened him to ask: "Oi, have you noticed anything about our home lately?" Then, seeing her puzzled look, he added: "I mean about the atmosphere." "Yes, I have," she replied. "It's better." Knowing how touchy she could be on matters involving her behavior, he asked rather cautiously: "Have you any idea what the cause is?"

Oi continued sewing for a moment or two, although not so purposefully as before, then stopped. Kham almost held his breath. He knew this was a situation where she could infer criticism and flare up in anger. But he noted a thoughtful expression on her face instead of anger. "Well, finding out about your father certainly affected you, Kham. I noticed it at the time, and it really made *me* think quite a bit about the importance of having a good father. In fact," she said after a pause, "I think your experience in 'finding' *your* father is helping *me* to find one, too." "What! You—find a father? Why, you have always known your father. He lives over at the cross-

roads.” “Yes, I know, and maybe I took him too much for granted at times. But I don’t mean that father but another one—a *first* Father.” Kham was relieved at her general attitude but intrigued with her reply. He had had difficulty in finding *one* father—now here was “another one,” a “first Father.” “Whatever do you mean, Oi, ‘another one,’ your ‘first Father?’” Oi swung around, displaying a most captivating smile, which he had not seen for a long time. “Do you really want to know?” she asked. “Sure,” Kham replied with a laugh, easing himself up into a more responsive position.

Oi pushed herself clear of the sewing machine and came over to sit by Kham. “Kham, did you notice that a couple of girls have been calling on me on Tuesday afternoons?” “No, but I have seen some girls around that I didn’t seem to know. Who are they?” “Well, a few months ago those two girls appeared at the door and said they wanted to talk to me. They seemed friendly, so I invited them in. One of them started to talk about the unsettled conditions in the world and said there was a remedy. I then realized that they belonged to those people who go from house to house offering religious books. Anyway, I continued to listen, because—well, I believe we should always be polite—but also because what the girls said seemed to have some sense to it, although I could not understand some of the things they talked about. Then one of them made a comment that interested me. She said that the Creator—and hence Father—of the first man was now gathering people from out of all nations to bring them into one big family and become a Father. . . .” Then, after some hesitation, Oi continued, “. . . and God to them. As you can imagine, the idea of being part of a bigger family with a greater Father appealed to me. So I said I would like to know more about it. They came back the following

week to tell me more—and they have been coming every week since then. Now I am beginning to feel that what they say is true. That's why I said I found a Father."

Hearing that, Kham was silent and deeply disturbed. What she said about that "first Father" attracted him all right, but that word "God" worried him and made him wonder about Oi. Was she going to become a religious fanatic? Then he realized how she was sitting snuggled up to him. Why, it had been years since they had enjoyed such closeness when in serious discussion! Her new religious ideas could not be all that bad if they could change her so much. Quite the contrary he thought, as he responded by putting his arm around her and giving her a hug. That made him feel more relaxed—but still that word "God" troubled him. She must have known that it would, because he had noticed how she had hesitated before using the word.

Sensing their unusual closeness of heart and mind, he felt free to open his heart to her. "Oi, that word 'God' bothers me. How does it affect you?" "It bothered me too, at first, Kham, but I have never figured out why. Of course, most of the people around here don't believe in God, and some openly scoff at the very word." "Well," said Kham after a pause, "that could have a lot to do with it. You know, my family seemed to scoff whenever my father was mentioned, and I had feelings that way at times; and if it had not been for that toy cart, and of course those letters, I might have stayed that way." "That sounds interesting, Kham; it shows how easily other people's opinions can rub off on us. Wouldn't it be better to rely just on facts and not be influenced by other people's prejudices?" "Well put, Oi," he said, giving her a hug. "Let's make that a principle and not just follow the crowd. But there is something else that puzzles me. Most of those

that scoff at the word 'God' and say, 'Where is he?' or 'I can't see him,' go to great pains to satisfy demons that they can't see either. And many seem to have quite a fear of them. Do they associate God with someone to be feared and pacified?" Then he paused and asked: "Do you think that I am repelled by the thought of God because of my subconscious view of God as an all-powerful super demon who torments those who resist him?"

"That," she replied, "is probably true with many people, but those girls showed me that the real God, whose name is Jehovah, is not of that kind. True, he is powerful—but abundant in mercy even to those who do wrong; and he never torments anyone. He is like a very good but all-powerful father who never dies and so is always ready to help. He is not like demons. He takes the initiative in helping man. The Bible says he is a God of love." "‘Love,’ you say. If that is true it would appeal to me. Love combined with power could do a lot." "That is how I feel too," she agreed. "But," he added after a long pause, "that does not seem to fit the facts, and we just agreed to rely on facts. For instance, those nations or religions that claim to believe in a God don't produce any evidence of love. They exploit and kill one another the same as those who don't believe." "That's true," she exclaimed, "because they are not serving Jehovah but a god of their own making. In fact, they are misrepresenting God. Many of those nations claim to be Christian, but in fact there are no Christian nations on earth today." "Hum, I can see that such could be possible, but why would they misrepresent him?" he replied. "Well, why did your family misrepresent your father," she shot back, "especially your brother Tuen?" "Oh, I see now, especially in Tuen's case, it was to his advantage. You know, Oi, this is getting

interesting; but it all seems so complicated I don't know where to start," he sighed.

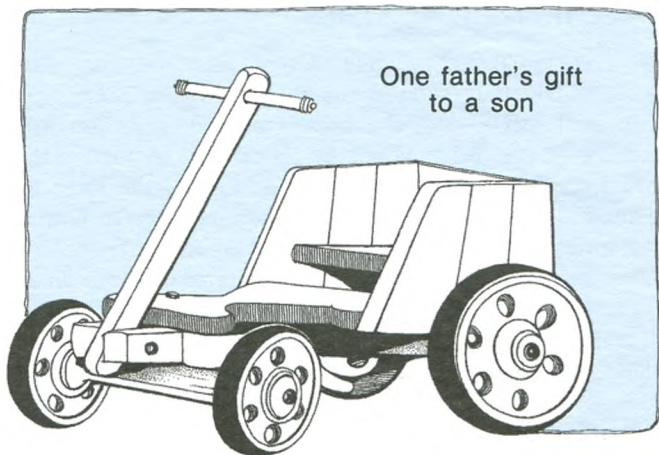
### A WONDERFUL THOUGHT

Oi turned to face him squarely with an earnest but friendly expression, and asked: "Tell me frankly, Kham, do you believe in a Creator?" "That," he replied, "is a little hard to answer. You see, on the one hand there must be a Creator, to produce all the wonderful things around us." Then after a pause he looked more closely at Oi, studying her fine regular features, the gleam in her eyes and oh—that smile. 'How could that come about,' he wondered, 'that beauty of form and profile; surely not just by chance or blind forces—impossible!' There was artistry behind it. Noticing her clear, fine-textured skin he recognized it as a great aid to beauty, but not the main one. He recalled seeing pictures of starving children. In spite of their still-smooth skin, their hollow cheeks and staring eyes made them look pitiful. All their fat had gone. On the other hand many people past their prime of life had plenty of fat, but they had lost their beauty of form. The fat was in the wrong place, no longer under control, artistic control.

"Well, Kham," said Oi, breaking the long silence, "I can see that you are looking at me, but where are your thoughts?" Relaxing into a smile again, he said slowly: "You know, Oi, how could a beautiful girl like you exist, just by chance, without a Creator—and a most artistic one at that? But with all the evidence of a Creator, I am still puzzled. All the trouble and outright wickedness having a free run. Why? There must be a Creator, but why doesn't he *do* something?" "That," she replied, "is what used to puzzle me also. But those girls showed me there was a good reason why God had not acted before, but that soon he would do something."

"You said that they 'showed you.' How did they 'show you'?" "Oh, they showed me in their Bible." "OK, you talk as if seeing it in the Bible makes it final. But what exactly is this Bible you talk about?" he replied rather puzzled. "It's a big book," she explained, "the most ancient history of mankind, from their beginning. One of the girls described it as a collection of letters from God. Over 60 I think she said." "Letters from God," Kham repeated, betraying some excitement. "You know, Kham, I remember your telling me that at the time you read those letters from your father you said they gave you a new view of your father, a sort of belonging." "Yes, they certainly did, because they showed that my father had not deserted the family as had been implied, but that he cared for us and that the trouble was caused by my oldest brother, Tuen." "Well, do you know, Kham, I got just that same feeling when I read the Bible, those 'letters' from God, my first Father. They, too, showed where the true responsibility for trouble lay." "You seem to be quite excited over those 'letters' you talk about," he observed, smiling. "Yes, weren't you excited over those letters you found? And they were only from a man!" He had to laugh. She had a point there.

"Why were those letters so important to you?" she asked. He thought for quite a while before answering. "Well, I had always had a *feeling* that my father was a good man, but after those letters I *knew* he was good and I understood how he had been misrepresented, and then I could openly acknowledge him and defend him." "Yes," she replied, "and that's just what the letters from my first Father did—they cleared his name. The girls promised to bring me a copy of those letters—the Bible—on Tuesday." Kham's interest in those letters began to stir, but he did not want to show it too much. In fact he wanted time

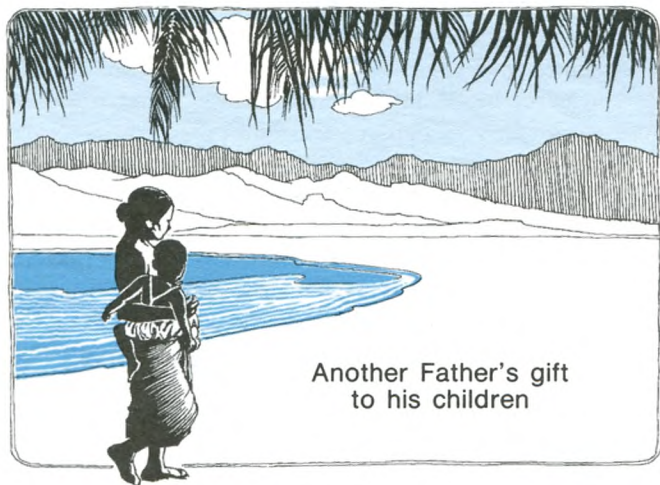


to think. His little girl came to his aid by distracting her mother over something she had spilled. The mother then decided that it was bedtime.

The fact was—there was something pricking his conscience. He realized that since finding his father's letters, he had developed a sense of gratitude and responsibility to his father for what he had done for the family and for himself. Should he not have that same feeling toward the original Creator of man—that is, if there really was such a one. He felt an urge to settle that question in his mind, but how could it be settled? He recalled how the workmanship of that go-cart had been a means of stirring his interest in his father. Then a thought struck him. 'Did that first Father leave a "go-cart" behind? Well, of course,' Kham thought as he watched the antics of a house lizard on his ceiling. Why, he reasoned, the whole of nature was really like a go-cart for man to study! So why not study it? He decided to do so as he gave his attention to the lizard busily hunting insects. Cute little

legs it had—far more difficult to produce than wagon wheels. They had to hang down from the ceiling on little suction pads, not just rest on the ground. Who designed and made those? He knew he couldn't. He recalled his first experience in making his first wagon, especially the wheels. How simple they seemed—at first; but what a struggle to make the first one. Yes, he had to *think* to do it. If simple wheels needed so much thinking, how much more thought lizards' legs would need!

As his eyes roved rather aimlessly around the room they settled on Oi, now back at her sewing machine. She was frowning slightly and holding a piece of paper. Feeling the need to show interest in her efforts, he asked: "What are you making?" "Making!" she retorted, "why, I can't even get started. I bought some material for a dress, but I can't figure out how to cut it out and still have enough." "Why, do you have to figure it out to make a dress?" he



Another Father's gift  
to his children

asked rather teasingly and then paused to see her reaction. "Figure it out, figure it out," she exclaimed, "of course you have to figure out how to make a dress. It doesn't just happen!" "Yes, I agree, things don't just happen," he said, and they both laughed as he told of his own conclusions about lizards' legs.

As Kham's wife returned to her 'figuring out,' he returned to his. Glancing again at the lizard he recalled that, only a day or two before, he had watched how a newly hatched lizard immediately went hunting for flies. Who programmed it to do that? He recently had read how robots had been made that could be programmed to do different jobs such as welding car bodies. It had taken man thousands of years of collective thinking to reach that point; and he doubted if one of those could be programmed to outmaneuver a fly. And so, the more he pondered over it, the more he became convinced that there must be a Creator, and an amazingly clever one at that. But to be more satisfied on the matter Kham felt the need to have a serious discussion with some of those who denied a Creator. In fact, as far as he could recall, he had never heard anyone talk seriously about it.

#### UNSATISFYING ANSWERS

A few days later, while passing through the town, Kham met a former classmate whom he had not seen for some time, and they stopped to have a chat in a coffee shop. He was a likable young man and quite smart. In fact, he had gone on to a university and was considered an up-and-coming intellectual. When he asked Kham how his wife was, Kham suddenly had a thought. Why not try him out on his views about a Creator. So he told him how she was interested in a religion that believed in God.

The scoffing response he got surprised Kham because his friend had not been of the scoffing type. Anyway, it

opened the way for a direct question: "Where did man and all the things we see in nature come from?" Although he listened intently, Kham had difficulty in understanding it all. His friend spoke of chaos in the beginning with the four elements, fire, water, air and earth (as far as he could remember), but things began to develop step by step, by chance. First there was the first simple cell that multiplied. In the course of time other things developed. If good, they continued to multiply; if not, they died out. They appeared by chance and survived according to circumstances. Kham did not know much about cells, but he was very practical—so he compared them with something he did know about—wagon wheels.

Since even the simplest cell would have to be able to reproduce itself in order to be of use, it would have to be fantastically more complicated than a wheel. Cutting square holes in a wooden hub and making spokes to fit firmly and true seemed so simple—before he began. But what a problem he had to make each spoke true and tight in its socket. In spite of all the figuring out and care in cutting the wood, he had quite a pile of scrap spokes before he managed to make just one wheel. Relying on chance alone would be like throwing some wood and a chisel into a cement mixer. How long would it take before getting just one spoke? Chance could produce only junk. Relying on chance for everything is no way to run a business, whether making wheels or cells. Just by relaxing his thoughtful control over one stage of his wheel manufacture he was in trouble; he had learned that lesson the hard way. Surely it must be more true when it comes to making cells and even whole bodies. 'Why!' he thought, 'is that not what happens when a person has cancer? Maybe just one cell runs amok and begins to reproduce cells outside the previously thought-out pattern

and clutters up the body with its junk and at the same time starves the healthy cells of their nutriment. The game of chance could be a source of death—but never of life!

Whenever Kham tried to argue against his friend's theory he was met with the reply that each step would take millions of years, this expression being used as if it had some magic property in itself. Kham was rather amused as he walked back to his home and recalled the efforts of his friend to help him to visualize what a million really meant. He succeeded all right, but not in the way he intended. What Kham visualized was, not the appearance of useful cells after millions of years, but faulty lizards' legs—mountain-high. And so the more he thought about it, the more he felt convinced that there must be a Creator.

#### A MYSTERIOUS QUESTION RAISED

But the parting shot from his friend worried him. "If everything has to be figured out ahead of time—where did your Creator come from?" Now, Kham was a very honest man, not just in money matters, but in thoughts and beliefs. He did not want to deceive either himself or others. Getting at the truth of a matter was more important to him than winning an argument. So, to satisfy himself he wanted an answer to that question. There *must* be a Creator, but how did he come about? He would not let go of the subject until he got a satisfying answer to it. Maybe Oi would have some answer to this.

Returning home a little earlier than usual, and still having this troublesome matter at the back of his mind, he lingered in his garden. This time he had a specific purpose. He wanted to view it to appreciate the workmanship, as he had done with his father's products. How amazed he was! Why had he not seen it before? He was aware that he had developed an eye for good craftsmanship for things made of wood and metal. He was quite proud of it, too;

it had been the means of first drawing him to his father. Now he felt the urge to give his analytical attention to things in nature, to widen out his appreciation for things not man-made.

Sitting on a log, Kham just gazed around. Whether he focused on the tree-covered hills not too far from the back of his workshop or on the many varieties of flowers his wife had planted—everything was so pleasing, soothing and satisfying, so different from the man-made lean-to shacks surrounded with the litter of discarded plastic bags, bottles, and other debris, which he had just passed by on his way through a nearby slum area. 'Yes,' he thought, 'the Creator has not been a maker of slum property.' Kham knew enough about people to realize how slums came about. Basically slums were due to lack of facilities and abilities, to tiredness and laziness, and to indifference to the giving of pleasure, to the doing of things with a minimum of thought and care. But obviously, the Creator of the things he now viewed did not have any of such weaknesses.

The great depth and vast scope of wisdom and understanding revealed in all the things that moved, that had life, began to fill Kham with wonder. How completely different they all were from the things made by man, things like wheels he could hope to copy! They were within his scope. That was mainly why he had been interested in them. He recalled how he had once torn apart one of his father's old wheels, to see how he could make one. Seeing a bee emerge from a flower nearby made him realize how futile it would be to tear either of them apart in order to reproduce them. Idly gazing at the bee in action, he began to see it in a new light. It was a honey factory, so efficient, yet clean and beautiful. 'Why,' he thought, 'couldn't the sugar factories be like

that?' He remembered reading how they were polluting the rivers and the atmosphere. And they were far from beautiful. As a craftsman he knew it took extra effort to make something both efficient and beautiful. The Creator must have cared a lot for man to surround him with such delicious honey produced by such an attractive factory.

Kham now began thinking of the Creator as being a benevolent person, rather than just an unfeeling computer. Seeing the passive flower and the very active bee, he began to think of the wide range of ability shown in creation. That bee even had some ability to think in some way in order to do its job. He then noticed a field lizard perched rigidly on the top of a fence post nearby, staring intently into the distance. He watched it patiently. Suddenly it went into action and shot down the post and headed for its dinner it had spotted in the distance. Yes, the field lizard too must do some thinking of a kind and maybe more than the bee. His mind then began to work



Why couldn't  
sugar factories  
be like this  
honey factory—  
efficient, clean  
and beautiful?

on the different abilities to think. It was obviously not the same in all levels of life, but each seemed to have what it *needed*. Obviously man had the highest, but even man could not understand some things. He also had his limitations. So what? Could he not accept his limitations and use what he had? 'Ah!' he thought, 'doesn't that bear on my problem "where did God come from?"' Why, he did not even know who God was! Was he an intermediate creator or was he the very original Creator or first Father? Possibly man's brain was not made to reason it out on his own; or maybe Kham just did not have enough facts to go on. But did he need to understand how God came to be?

Why, Kham had never been able to get the facts about his own father until he found those letters! Could it be then that man *needed* letters from his Creator in order really to understand him? Nature, his creation, bears evidence of his existence, but nature does not tell what God's thoughts and future purposes are. Men cannot read the thoughts of other men whom they can see, so how could they read the thoughts of God whom they cannot see? Yes, man *needs* letters from God really to get to know him.

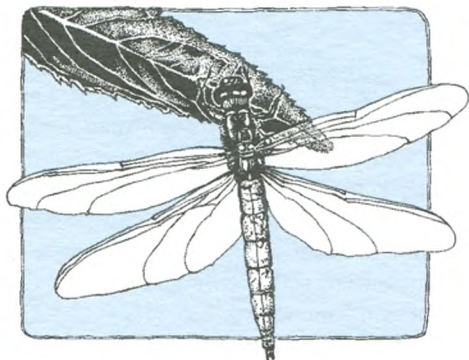
Kham's interest in the letters from God that Oi spoke about began to grow yet more. Accepting our limitations and studying those letters would seem to be the keys to real progress in getting knowledge and benefits from Him. For instance, Kham did not know why a chisel was so much harder than wood; but by taking good care of the chisel and using it according to instructions, he was able to make wheels. Making chisels was not his business; nor was making gods. Or to take another example: Does a person insist on knowing every detail about his employer's background before working for him for a livelihood? In reality it was sheer presumptuousness to insist on knowing how God came to be before listening to him in order

to get a better life. Then Kham recalled that his friend did not insist on knowing where the 'elements in chaos' came from before he put faith in his theory of mindless evolution by chance.

Kham knew people generally attributed all things not made or done by man to "nature." He had, too. He pondered over the difference: "Nature," "Creator," "God." With "nature" all benefits come free, without even any obligation to feel thankful. However, using the word "Creator" called for a feeling of gratitude, even though not expressed. To Kham the word "God" implied actual expressions of that gratitude and also submission to Him because of His position. Was that reasonable? He wondered. Kham was his own boss and liked it, but he was still under authority. He could not cut down trees for his wagons without a permit. He, and all the people in his district, even though they talked so much about being a free people, were under the authority of the governor and his assistants. He felt that such was necessary to maintain order and was not a burden if the governor was a good man. So Kham felt he had no moral right to refuse submission to "God" if He was in fact the Creator of man. Then, he began to feel somewhat guilty as far as gratitude was concerned, for he had taken the beauty of all the things around him for granted. In fact he had never even expressed any thanks to his wife, who had taken the trouble to plant and care for the flowers in front of him.

Just then his thoughts were interrupted, or momentarily paralyzed, by a deafening chop-chop sound as a military helicopter passed very low overhead doing routine surveillance of the guerrillas operating in the nearby hills. His eyes and head followed it, indeed they seemed to be forced to do so by the very intensity of the noise, until it passed behind the shelter of some tall trees. Being me-

Superior to  
a helicopter



chanically minded he would normally have been interested in it as a machine. But now he was intensely irritated at the noisy intrusion. ‘Why,’ he thought, ‘do they have to be so noisy; and just as I was drinking in the peace and beauty of this garden? Couldn’t they be made to run quieter?’ Then as if by magic he got his answer—a quiet but resounding ‘yes!’ Right before his very nose was a miniature working model of a most beautiful helicopter; close as it was, he could not even hear it. There it was—a dragonfly. Watching its maneuvers as it darted hither and thither in search of insects, he realized that it was superior in every way. Man might not be able to make a quieter helicopter, but he felt sure the Creator could. He realized something else, too, that he had never been aware of before: the need to tune out the raucous blare of propaganda concerning man’s accomplishments and tune in to the quieter but all-pervading evidence of his Creator’s more wonderful works. As Kham got up and headed for the house, he resolved to spend more time looking at his garden—“God’s go-cart,” and devote less time to reading man-glorifying propaganda in the newspapers.

As he entered the house his wife called out: “I saw you sitting there in the garden. What were you doing all that

time?" After pausing a moment he replied: "Looking at the 'go-cart.'" She looked puzzled. Then looking up, she said: "You mean—'God's go-cart'?" "Why, don't I have a smart wife?" he said with a smile. "And later I am going to ask you some more about those letters and a problem that has been bothering me."

That evening, after they had eaten and settled down, Kham turned to his wife and asked, "Oi, what would you say if someone asked you, 'How did God come to be?'" "He didn't," she replied, "he always was. The Bible speaks of him as being 'from everlasting to everlasting.' He was the great supreme cause." "Hum, let me think about that," muttered Kham, thinking aloud, "'an always-existing first cause.' That seems hard to comprehend." "But what is the alternative?" she countered. "That's a good question, Oi. The answer would have to be, nothing, *absolutely nothing*. If that were so, where would the first thing to exist come from? It just couldn't exist because there was nothing, not even a cause, to bring it about. So there must have always been a causing power in existence—and there would have to be a thinking power, a person, to bring about all those things in nature."

"Then the answer to my question 'How did God come to be?' would be like you just said: 'He always was.' But," turning to Oi, Kham asked, "does it bother you not to understand *how*?" "Why should it? There are lots of things I don't understand. What is electricity? I don't know, but if I press this foot switch here it drives my sewing machine. You don't have to understand everything to get its benefits. That would be presumptuous, especially in connection with man's Creator," she added, giving Kham a meaningful look. "I agree with you, Oi. But it took me a lot longer to arrive at the same conclusion." "Well, of course," she replied teasingly, "you just said what a

'smart wife' you had." Then, more seriously, she added: "Don't forget, Kham, I have been getting some help from the Bible." "All right, 'smart wife,'" he laughed, "how would you answer this one? The other day you said the Bible was like a collection of letters from the Creator to mankind." "Yes, I remember." "Well, how could I know that they were really from God?"

Oi paused before answering: "I suppose really it would be by the things written in them." "That does not sound too convincing," he objected. "Well, how else could we know? How did you know for sure that those letters you read were really from your father?" As he thought about it, he had no real proof. He had not seen his father write them. He did not even receive them directly from his father. They did not even contain a signature of the father. Even if they had, he had no means of verifying that signature. In spite of that he had no doubt they were from his father. They were all in the same handwriting. They all indicated by their contents that they were from him. They all revealed intimate knowledge of and consideration for the family, and they all indicated at the conclusion that they were from "your loving father." Who else would be motivated and able to write such wonderful letters? So he was satisfied that he had plenty of evidence to support his belief. Why, even the way they were found supported that belief!

Turning to Oi he said: "I have a question, but think carefully before you answer it. Do you have absolute proof that the Bible consists of letters from God? Or do you just have convincing evidence?" Oi paused a long time. She couldn't figure out what Kham was leading up to. Finally she answered: "I don't know about absolute proof . . . but I am convinced." Now it was Kham's turn to ponder. Could there be any benefit in having it that way

—evidence instead of absolute proof? Again turning to Oi he asked her: “For whom was the Bible written and for what purpose?” Again she pondered for quite a while before answering: “I would say: For those seeking God, so that reading it, they could be drawn to him. I remember the girls’ showing me where Jesus said he spoke only in illustrations so that those who opposed him would not understand, but the sincere ones would ask for more understanding and get it. And that has been my experience with the Bible. Many parts are very hard to understand, but when I ask I usually get satisfaction.” “You know, Oi, this raises an interesting question. The Creator of man and the earth could easily have had his message thundered from the heavens or blazoned in the skies in such clear and simple language that every man could understand; and yet you say he uses the Bible, which is hard to understand and takes some searching for understanding. Why? Any ideas?”

“Well, I understand that the Bible was written to reach people’s hearts. In fact, I remember reading once how it was compared to a sharp sword that could reach in and discern the intents of the heart.” “So,” interrupted Kham, “convincing evidence would be more effective than incontrovertible proof. The Bible therefore would be like a magnet, which would draw only the sincere ones; but others could wriggle out if they wanted to and thus reveal their heart.” Oi laughed: “I agree with you, Kham, but what amazes me is why you are figuring all this out now in advance when you have not even seen a Bible.” “Well, Oi, I have learned that the more you think ahead, the better the results. Don’t forget, that is how I learned how to make wagons. In any case I don’t have a Bible yet. And I certainly know better now what to expect of the Bible when I do get one.

"All of this raises the question as to why it has taken so long for the Bible to be made available to people." "Well, first of all," she explained, "the ones who originally had custody of it turned bad in the course of time, stopped circulating it and even persecuted those who tried to circulate it." "Why would they want to do that?" he asked. "Well," she retorted, "why did your brother Tuen stuff those letters from your father into a drawer instead of letting the whole family read them?" "I see your point. He had something to hide, and those letters would have exposed him. He had been stealing the good name from his father and building one for himself." "Exactly, and that is just what the so-called Christians have been doing with God's name Jehovah. The letters from God expose both the false teachings about him and the wrong behavior of those who claim to be Christian but still fight and kill one another." "Yes," said Kham, "and I can see I must get to read those letters."

#### A DISCOVERY

Then a thought struck Kham. He got up and went over to his desk and started rummaging among the papers in the drawers. Finally he found what he had been looking for: a small booklet entitled "Genesis." Waving it in front of Oi, he asked: "Has that anything to do with the Bible?" "Why, yes it has!" she burst out. "Where did you get it? Actually it's the first letter." "It's been in my desk for a long time. I don't remember where I got it," he replied as he sat down and began to read.

After a long silence his wife was startled by a cry from Kham: "Say, Oi, this is wonderful! It's just what I wanted. It tells about creation." Oi said nothing. She was eager to tell him all she knew so as to stir him up to study the Bible along with her; but she knew he would want to come to his own decision. She also found it tantalizing

because she was bursting to read that letter too. She herself had only read some verses from the Bible the girls had brought to her. However she carried on with her sewing, knowing Kham would talk when he was ready. He did.

“Oi, are you ready to answer some questions?” “OK, go ahead, but remember I myself am just learning.” “Well, I am just reading about the first man and woman on earth. They were told they could eat fruit from any tree in that garden in Eden—except one. If they did, they would die. Why was that? Was it poisonous?” Oi came over so she could get a peek at what he was reading. “No,” she answered, “God was using that tree as a symbol of something. You notice it was called the ‘tree of the knowledge of good and bad.’ It represented a moral issue, that is, Was that man prepared to accept God’s authority and right as Creator and Owner either to give or to withhold—or was he determined to do and take what he wanted? The whole universe was a place of order under God’s direction. Man was to be given power over the things on the earth so that the whole earth could become an orderly place, too, under God’s overall direction—the same as that garden already was. A great responsibility rested on that first man and woman. What they did and taught would be passed on to their children and hence to all mankind. So that first pair were being tested as to their moral fitness for the job, their loyalty to their owner and supreme ruler.”

After a long pause, Kham said: “I agree that you can’t build a good house on a poor foundation, and God was building more than a house—he was building a world of billions of people, and loyalty to the owner would be vital. Why, that’s what is wrong with this world! There is no common loyalty to someone who has a right to it. Why, even I can see that, and I am just beginning to believe in a God!” “But look here, Kham,” interrupted Oi. “Did you

notice what it says here? The serpent—that's the Devil, by the way—said to the woman: 'You will *not* die because God knows that on eating from the tree your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad.'" Kham looked puzzled. "I don't quite see the point here." "Well," said Oi, "wasn't the Devil in effect saying to that woman that God was lying to her in order to keep her in subjection and that she could be independent of God and make her own rules?"

"Just a minute, Oi. You keep mentioning the Devil so glibly—but who is he?" "Oh, sorry," she said, "I should explain. Before creating material things, God created spirit creatures, called angels, higher in intellect and power than man. Like man they had free will. Like man they had power to imagine. One of these let his imagination rove beyond the limits set by loyalty to God. He thought how nice it would be to have a lot of men under his power and influence. So he tempted the first woman to follow his guidance by offering to liberate her from God." "Oh, I see now. And look what it says next: 'The woman saw that the tree was good for food . . . yes, the tree was desirable to look upon. So she began taking of its fruit and eating it.' That's interesting—she put her *own* ideas above what God had said. She thought she had become her own enlightener, whereas in fact she was coming under Satan's false enlightenment. Then, you see what happened: 'The man also ate and they were cast out of the garden so they could not get to the tree of life and get everlasting life.' To me that means something. It's a warning against self-enlightenment, against philosophizing in a direction contrary to God. Or perhaps I should put it another way—building a religion on just what man thinks, on philosophy, will not lead to everlasting life."

Kham went silent for a long time, but he was thinking

about what he had read. It gave him a new slant on the cause of misery and suffering, and more important, a way out. His mind went back to the time he had read those letters from his father. At first he had been exhilarated, but afterward he felt a bigger void than ever before. He felt he had just had a glimpse or a taste of something that had whetted his appetite and no more; leaving him with a yearning for something he could not define, for answers to questions he could not formulate. He still remembered the time before he was married, when he had been very unhappy. He had never contemplated suicide, as many did, but he had felt that life was really miserable, with no way out. He had read, or been told—he could not remember which—that this life with its miseries was repayment for individual sins committed in a previous life. But he wondered about that. It seemed contrary to justice. Why, he could not even remember what he had done wrong in his own previous life—and yet he was now being punished for it! It was like being sent to jail and yet not being told what law he had broken. How could justice enforce punishment if the punishment in itself was not just? How could he avoid repeating those sins if he did not even know what they were? It had all seemed to leave him with a sense of futility and hopelessness, with no one to call on for help. Now he realized what the yearning was. It was for a source of help and enlightenment. Reading those generous and stimulating letters from his father had sharpened his awareness of the need of help from outside. That letter from God that he had just been reading had begun to satisfy that yearning. He sensed a degree of happiness that he had never had before. It could become a permanent feature of life, never to be marred by sickness or death—if only those letters were actually from the Creator.

"I was just pondering," said Kham after a long period of silence, "over what you mentioned earlier that those girls had told you: that man was made to live on the earth. Well, what we have just been reading bears that out. As the human family grew, that original garden would have been enlarged gradually until the whole earth would have become a garden. The fact that the first man and woman were cast out of the gardenized portion seems to show that they had lost the privilege of even temporarily staying in that perfected, or should we say tamed, portion of the earth, but were permitted to live for a while in the untamed part." "True," replied Oi, "they were cast out of God's family and lived on the earth like squatters. But you see what it says next, that 'they had children.' What would *their* standing be in God's sight?" "I suppose they would just be squatters like Adam and Eve," said Kham, "and would be tainted with the rebellious attitude of their parents, although they hadn't each personally rejected God." "That's true," agreed Oi, "and Jehovah, who is such a merciful God, has promised to provide a way for these squatter children to have their taint covered over and to be brought back into his family so that he becomes their Father." "So that's what you meant by finding a Father, Oi. Mankind would cease to be squatters and join God's family."

"Does it say anything about that in this letter here?" "Well, yes, but only briefly. You would have to read all the letters to understand the whole arrangement. Look, Kham, see what it says here: 'By means of your seed all nations of the earth will bless themselves, because you have listened to my voice.'" "'Your seed'—what is that?" he asked. "That was spoken to Abraham, who lived about 4,000 years ago, and who is the ancestor of both the Arabs and the Jews. He was a man famous for his

faith and obedience to Jehovah. It would take too long to explain even what I know about the 'seed,' but as far as I understand, it is the means to lift the taint from Adam's offspring and prepare them to become Jehovah's children." "In that case they would be brought out of the untamed jungle of this world into God's garden," said Kham. "Yes, that is it," confirmed Oi. "Hum," muttered Kham, "mankind is living in what amounts to a social jungle—every man for himself. True, there may be some who are really trying to do good, but their efforts are largely swamped by the general jungle-like environment. There is no one equivalent to a head gardener to direct the doers of good into an overall pattern. You know, Oi, it seems more and more evident that what mankind needs is a supreme, universally accepted, all-seeing head, who would act like a father. He alone would be able to reward the doers of good. As for the doers of bad, a fatherlike power to restrain them seems even more necessary to prevent them from dominating or even crushing the doers of good, the way it has happened in some countries under wicked dictatorships. What about the incorrigible doers of bad, Oi? What is to become of them?"

"Well, wouldn't they have to be removed?" replied Oi. "It's true," continued Kham, "in the world today men are killing one another, either on an individual or a national scale. I think that is all wrong. But surely the Creator of life could rightfully destroy those who refuse to do what is right. What father would allow a rabid dog to roam around in his compound to bite his children? Surely, the function of a father is not just to give life to his children but to care for them and protect them from their enemies." Oi then burst in: "Kham, as far as I understand it, all that you have been saying is just what the Bible teaches. When Jehovah gathers his family together into

his compound, which would be the whole earth, he would then continue to care for them. In fact, the main theme of the Bible is God's Kingdom, which is his means of doing just this."

Kham paused for quite a while. Then, looking across at Oi, he said, as if measuring his words: "IF WHAT YOU SAY . . . PROVES TO BE TRUE . . . IT IS . . . THE MOST WONDERFUL GOOD NEWS . . . THAT MAN HAS EVER RECEIVED. Do you agree, Oi?" "*You know* I do, Kham. You've seen it. That is why you asked me the other day what was the cause of the better atmosphere in the home. It was because of me. I admit it; I have changed. Yes, ever since I first began to learn of this good news I began to get a real hope for a bright future and a new attitude toward life now."

Kham jumped up and moved over to Oi, facing her squarely. Holding her by the shoulders, he urged: "Oi, how about us, the two of us, going in search of the Father, together—do you agree?" Her smile gave the answer.

#### DEAR READER:

Very likely you will now be wondering how the search for the Father by Kham and Oi turned out. But please remember that they are not real persons; however the Father, the Creator, is real and so are the issues involved. Therefore we encourage *you* personally to search for Him. Doing so will bring you much happiness because you will understand the most important questions about life and because your life will become truly purposeful.

But how can you pursue this search for the Father? Jehovah's Witnesses are willing to help you in this by studying the Bible with you free of charge. Please contact those who may have brought you this booklet or write directly to the publishers.

