

but think she had. If she had not, it was soon afterward that she became interested, and then came to believe. But the death of her husband had left her with only a very poor house, and many debts, and she soon learned that if she accepted Christ as her Saviour before paying her debts she would be called "a rice Christian" (one who becomes a Christian simply to get a living). This she did not wish to do, for she was seeking Christ for salvation, not for temporal wants. She wanted her boys to become Christians also, and feared they, as they grew older, might feel that she was not in earnest.

To pay her debts, she said, she felt might take years. Would she live that long? Many questions arose, yet she could not bring herself to accept Christ and be called a rice Christian; she must so live that her boys would believe and trust Jesus, and her neighbors would believe and trust her.

So, asking the Lord to help her, she began the struggle to pay the debts. It was no small task, and year after year slipped by. The debts grew smaller each year, but still were not paid. At times her faith almost failed. Yet it seemed she could not give up this great hope for peace and salvation, not alone for herself, but for her boys, and so she struggled on.

Some of our Christian people came to know of her great desire, and urged her to make a public confession of Christ in baptism. This she said she felt she could not do until she could come in a way that her boys would trust her and her friends might have faith in her and this new religion. So the time went by and the boys were growing into manhood. They were now able to earn money. The time would soon come when she would be free. She had taught the boys what she knew of Christ, and had so impressed them with her earnestness that they also became interested.

Then the day came when she was able to go and pay the last debt, and was free! Free to do as she had planned all these years. Free to seek and know that Jesus and His religion which could bring peace, joy and salvation from

sins; not for herself alone, but also for those sons. Truly, this was a great day. Can you imagine what that meant to this poor, ignorant, soul-starved woman, who had only known sorrow, suffering and poverty all her life? It was a great day of rejoicing in that home.

About that time our band of workers arrived to spend a few days preaching in that community. They had chosen this village as their headquarters. God had sent them just at the right time. Here was her great opportunity. She and her sons talked the matter over, and decided they would go to the preachers and ask what they should do. They told her, but she wanted to see the missionary, and now I was there, at last.

It did my heart good to hear her tell her story, but I knew she might, and very likely would, have some hard times yet, and I wanted her to be prepared and to see just what she still had to face. So I tried to show her that when the people of the village came to know the stand she was going to take they would probably persecute her and try to drive her out of the village. She only said, "I'm ready to follow Jesus." After talking to her for some time and finding her firm, we planned to go to a stream close to the village and baptize her and the three sons.

When we gathered at the water a large crowd of the villagers came also, and I feared she would lose courage, as they might give trouble. We sang, read and explained what it meant to follow Jesus in baptism, then prayed for God's blessing to rest upon this service. Still the people kept coming. One of the preachers went down into the water. I said to her, "We are ready, do you wish to follow Jesus?" I even then feared she might hesitate, seeing the large number of people; but she replied, "I am ready," and with a smile on her face she walked out to where the preacher stood, and was buried with Christ in baptism. We sang as she walked up the bank. Her oldest son started down into the water at the same time. As he and his mother passed each other there was such a look of peace and contentment on her face as I can never forget. So one after another of those sons followed their mother. I never saw a happier family. God surely