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There is an Answer to Bible Problems

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Syracuse, N. Y.

THERE IS AN ANSWER TO BIBLE PROBLEMS

- ✓ **CREATION ?**
- ✓ **NOAH'S FLOOD ?**
- ✓ **AGE OF EARTH ?**
- ✓ **JONAH AND WHALE ?**
- ✓ **JOSHUA'S LONG DAY ?**
- ✓ **VIRGIN BIRTH ?**
- ✓ **RESURRECTION ?**

There is an answer to
BIBLE PROBLEMS

by

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To Pastors and Christian Workers:
For special prices on this booklet for distribution
in Churches write to

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Concerning Bible Problems . . .

- In your experience you have undoubtedly met people who claimed to disbelieve the Bible. When pressed for a reason the reply essentially was, there were too many mistakes, inaccuracies, unsolved problems on its pages. And until these were resolved, they felt they could not place confidence in the Bible's message.
- It is true there are problems in the Scriptures. In one sense this may be considered a mark of its divine authorship. If all the truth were on the very surface it would then be merely on the level of any other book. It would suggest human authorship. But if the problems appear which by diligent study and by prayer can be explained, then this becomes a proof of its higher inspiration.
- Let us predicate our belief at the very start. We do not believe there is any problem in Scripture which cannot be satisfactorily answered. It is our profound conviction that the Bible is in deed and in truth the Word of God and therefore absolutely trustworthy. We are assured that there can be no real disagreement between a true and proper interpretation of the Bible and a true and proper interpretation of the facts of science. We feel the difficulty has been that far too often the Scripture has been carelessly misinterpreted and just as often the facts of science grossly distorted.
- There is therefore great need to completely ascertain just what the Bible teaches. All the related passages to a subject should be pondered. The immediate context should be carefully studied. Petition should be made to God, who is Himself the source of all wisdom, for His incomparable enlightenment.
- In the same manner the material from scientific sources should be carefully sifted. That which is theory should be separated from that which is fact. Hypotheses should be considered only in their trial and error nature. Unproved theoretical material should not be allowed to rashly contradict sober Bible statements. This is not only honest, but it is wise.
- Let it be remembered that the Bible is an ancient and honorable Book. Uncounted multitudes have found it food for hungry souls and a pillow for tired hearts. It has enjoyed the full confidence of men and women of all centuries, including not a few intellectual giants who have dearly loved, respected and trusted the Scriptures.
- We believe that you too will come to acknowledge the Bible's unique superiority if you will approach it with an honest heart.

The Problem of . . .

- Are the Scriptures and science at hopeless variance in the matter of the beginnings of the earth? Do the Scriptures teach a creation that cannot be accepted by intelligent people? Must we put aside our reason if we accept the origin the Bible suggests? Has the modern scientific explanation of the earth's beginning been conclusively proved?
- The most modern theory of origins is that of organic evolution. Simply stated, this theory predicates that all which the earth contains has come into being by the result of innate, unaided forces. All things are related and difference and variety of forms and species have appeared (over an unbelievably long period of time) by means of environmental forces, chance, or resident characteristics. Whether there is a God is not considered, and His part in the scheme of beginnings is not admitted. Evolution passes God by.
- This explanation for the world with its incalculable variety of living things, laws and materials is the best the modern mind has been able to produce and is diametrically opposed to the teaching of Scripture. But there are also other very serious inadequacies in the evolutionary structure. First, there is no unanimity in the ranks of scientists as to its permanent validity. Many men of science utterly repudiate the theory. Others accept only portions, and still others have their own particular ideology. All admit evolution's serious inadequacy and incompleteness.
- There is a further serious lack in the matter of material confirmation. If organic evolution is true then there should be an overwhelming amount of proof substantiating its claims. But the truth is, there is a great scarcity of proof, and what evidence has been found is in dispute. You have heard of the search for the "missing link." As a matter of fact, the search should be for some million different missing links if complete attestation were required.
- Other very serious hurdles lie in the pathway of the acceptance of the evolutionary theory. One is the recognized impossibility of the transmission of acquired characteristics. This is the keystone of the whole evolutionary structure. If acquired characteristics cannot be passed on to posterity, then it would seem that the entire theory must fail.
- Then too, evolution has built its house on the proposition of the advance from the simple to the complex. In other words, all things started simply, as with a one-cell organism which grew through succeeding ages to the complex, many-celled creatures. If this be true, the strata of the earth should convincingly prove it. But it does not.

. . . The Beginning . . .

- What does all this mean? Simply that evolution is far from being proved, many scientists have never accepted it, it is still an experimental hypothesis and you are not in any way an ignoramus if you reject it.
- Therefore, if evolution's theory as to the origin of things is still a long way from being proved, there is no conflict between it and the creation theory. For evolution, because of its hypothetical character is not in any position to disprove what the Bible teaches. And it would not be correct to say that you cannot believe the Bible's story as to the beginning of the world because it contradicts what evolution teaches. For evolution as yet does not know what it teaches.
- Now may we look for a moment as to what the Bible states about origins. Naturally we turn to the first chapter of Genesis. There we find a simple yet majestic statement, ten words in the English, seven words in the Hebrew. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Here is a great deal said in very few words. Here is the Bible's magnificent yet concise statement of beginnings. What does it reveal?
- In this passage is shown the "*presence*" of God, for He was there in the beginning. Before anything was brought into existence, God was there. He antedates all things. He is the great Originator. Then, there is the "*personality*" of God. It was He who created all things. Creation is His work. God is not merely a force, an influence, nor is He the sum total of the world itself. He is an intelligent, rationalistic, omnipotent Being who personally created the heavens and the earth.
- Then, there is the "*power*" of God. God Himself created the all things. This mighty, sprawling, intricate universe was brought into being by the power of God. It is His vast ability that called it forth. It is His unequalled wisdom that fashioned its intricateness, which even today is beyond our power of measurement or calculation.
- Here then is the so-called problem. We are asked to believe that there is a God wise enough and powerful enough to bring a universe into being. But what kind of a problem is that? The answer is that no problem exists if your God is large enough. If you will postulate an all-mighty God everything is resolved. It seems that only to those who refuse to believe in the great God of the Bible is there any problem of origins.
- But must we accept the fact of an intelligent, powerful God only on the basis that Genesis 1:1 says so? Are there not other convincing evidences? Most assuredly, for the whole earth

is filled with evidence. From the tiniest blade of grass beneath our feet to the immeasurable galactic systems over our heads there is thunderous chorus of testimony to the creating power of God.

- Think with me of a well known and accepted principle, namely, "There can be no effect without an adequate cause." Let me illustrate: Consider the typewriter with which I am pounding out this booklet. It's an effect and calls for a cause. Typewriters don't just happen. They don't grow on trees. Their existence calls for the careful planning plus engineering ability of intelligent workmen. There must be a sufficient cause for typewriters. We all understand that.

- Or, look at the watch on your wrist. It's a mighty efficient aid to your promptness with its open face and busy hands. None but the foolish would believe that watches pop out of nowhere. They don't blow in with the wind. They're not manufactured out of dreams. Rather, there must be a chain of adequate causes from the planner, manufacturer, distributor, through the jeweler. Everyone accepts that.

- Consider now the amazing universe in which we live. It's filled to the utmost brim with effects. There are insects and animals by the thousands, each one complete and each one different. There are birds and bees, flowers and trees of infinite variety. But each separate one is an effect and postulates a cause. In fact, the universe itself, with all its systems, laws and contents, is a gigantic effect which also must be accounted for.

- Be honest with me . . . Who is the cause for the world and its contents? Who is great enough, who is wise enough to bring this unbelievably huge universe into existence and operation? Don't you see we must have a super-mighty Cause?

- What's wrong with believing that the great Cause is God, the God of the Bible? What's wrong with linking up the principle of cause and effect with the first verse of Genesis One? Why can't an intelligent person accept the proposition that there is a God mighty enough, and wise enough to create a world? Don't you see, if you'll believe in a God that's almighty, there really isn't any problem at all.

- Let's look at another principle. It's a simple proposition but weighty none the less, that every design must have a designer. Let me illustrate. The world is filled with design. Things seem to have been precision made for the places they occupy. For instance, take the lowly earthworm. Now, not only is this humble burrower good for fish bait but also fills a very important part in the earth's economy. It is said that we could not sustain life on this planet without the services of the earth-

worm. He lives beneath the surface of the ground and burrows back and forth aerating the earth and making it fertile. He seems to do this without the least trouble. We say he's made for this . . . designed for this.

- The question is . . . who designed the earthworm? Well, who did?

- Or, lift your eyes and look at the woodpecker. Noisy little critter but so interesting. Has a super tough beak, and strong neck muscles with sharp hooks on his toes. Fastens himself to trees and pecks holes in the bark to eat the worms and insects there. For his place in life we must all admit that the woodpecker is really designed. The question is . . . who designed him?

- All through nature you'll find the same adequacy. Everything seems to be fitted for its place. All things fit into their proper environment and the environment is fashioned for them. Man too. We have eyes and there is much to see. We have ears and there is music. We have tongues and there are strawberries and cream. We have feet and there are challenging mountains to climb. Who designed us?

- Why is it difficult to think that an all-powerful, all-wise Creator has brought all things into being? Why is it a problem to give to God the honor of Master Designer? You have only to believe that God is wise enough and powerful enough to do so. And that's what the Bible teaches. He is the Sovereign of the universe.

- We might go on. There's the matter of life itself. In spite of all the research that has been done it's still true that life can only come from pre-existent life. All the life we see about us today . . . animal, plant, human, has come from pre-existent life. Where then did life originate? It's not self-generated. It's not manufactured. It has to come from a great Source. That Source is God. What's hard to believe about that?

- Let's come back to our original proposition. Some people profess to be unable to believe the Bible account that God is the Creator of all things because they say it is out of harmony with scientific deduction. But in reality, there is no proved scientific answer. Scientists are hopelessly at sea about origins. They do not know, therefore there is no basis of dispute.

- On the other hand, all the demonstrable facts of earth demand the recognition of a mighty Creator. One who is able to design and bring into being all the parts of the amazing universe we see around us. We believe this mighty Creator, or great Cause is the God of the Bible. The God of Genesis 1. The One of whom it is said . . . "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The Problem of . . .

● In the minds of many people a very serious hindrance to an acceptance of the Bible is the problem of the age of the earth. They point out that while the Scriptures seem to teach the creation of the earth in six days and its age at some 6,000 years, the geologists affirm earth's creation to have taken an infinitely long period with a resultant antiquity for our planet of millions, even hundreds of millions of years.

● It is true that many men of science believe the age of the earth to be in the multiples of millions. Some say 50 million, some 500 million. This difference of opinion of some 450 millions of years does not add anything to our confidence in the accuracy of geologists' thinking. Rather it seems to show that they are as yet struggling about, hoping to find solid ground on which to stand.

● But is the scientific estimate of the earth's age mere guess-work or is it based on definite facts? Are the millions of years just a nightmare of some professor's imagination or can they be substantiated by indisputable proof? In answer let us say that there are several measuring sticks used today to determine the earth's antiquity. One is known as radio activity. It seems that in certain elements such as uranium there is an internal activity which results in the lowering of atomic weight over a space of time. By careful calculation trained observers are enabled to estimate the age of the particular stratum of rocks in which the uranium is found. While all the factors involved in measuring by this method are not yet in, yet this plan indicates a very great age for the earth.

● Another measuring stick is in the realm of astronomy. With modern telescopes it is now possible to peer into space to the unbelievable depth of 500 million light years (a light year being the space at which light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second could traverse in one year . . . some 6 trillion miles).

● As we turn our telescopes heavenward and peer 500 million light years away the amazing thing is that we still see stars, lots of them. This means that there are stars and galaxies in our sky whose light left them some 500 million years ago. It has taken the light from these distant stars that long to reach our earth. Therefore it follows that the stars must be at least 500 million years old. Nor has our largest telescope yet reached the edge of space where there are no more stars.

● Does this then mean that the age of the earth is that much? What then becomes of the Bible's teaching that the earth is but 6,000 years old? Or does the Bible teach that . . . ?

. . . The Age of the Earth . . .

● Listen carefully, and hear me patiently. The Bible does not teach the age of the earth to be but 6,000 years. You may search the pages of Scripture minutely and you will not find any statement that creation occurred but six millenniums ago.

● Now do not misunderstand. We are not discussing the time man has been on the earth. That is another story entirely. The subject before us is actually how old is the physical earth and what is more, the physical heavens?

● Turn to the magnificent opening statement of Scripture . . . "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." You will note in this tremendous prologue to the Bible that the "who" is stated clearly, it is a personal God who did the creating. You will also find the "what" stated, for God brought into being out of nothing this vast, and as yet unmeasured universe. But you do not find the "when" stated except as it is written . . . "in the beginning."

● Just when the beginning was we do not know. Nor is there anything wrong, unscriptural or disloyal to accept, at least for a time, the sober findings of geologists who believe the earth's beginning to have been a very great many centuries ago. If it were a matter of *who* did the creating we would doggedly affirm and fight to the finish that God was the One and only One. Not a fortuitous combination of accidental circumstances as evolution predicates but a personal, intelligent, mighty and infinitely wise God. The God of the Bible.

● Now there should never be any disparagement between the findings of true science and the findings of a true interpretation of the Scriptures. For God has not one but two books. He has the Word and He has the World. He has composed them both, and they must therefore be in perfect agreement. If there is disagreement the fault must of necessity lie in an incomplete understanding of one or the other.

● The tragedy is, that far too often immature men of science have jumped to conclusions that were not based on proven facts. They have substituted mere hypothetical material for sober truth. And equally wrong have been men of the Bible who were more zealous than wise. Without proper study they have sounded off, accusing science of being both atheistic and anti-religious and adducing as proof their own pet interpretation of what the Bible teaches. Both classes are equally guilty of the wrong approach.

● Which brings up the puzzling question . . . suppose the earth is of great antiquity, why did God create it so long ago, particularly if man was to occupy it only recently . . . just yesterday?

- In answer may we point out that many thoughtful Bible students have noted a seeming inconsistency in the second great statement of Genesis, chapter 1. After the clear and definite affirmation that God brought the universe into existence the account goes on to describe . . . "and the earth was without form and void (literally waste and desolation) and darkness was upon the face of the deep."
- The question is . . . does God ever create anything waste and desolation? Is there anything in the whole of God's vast creation that does not exhibit beauty, harmony, perfection? Look up, look down, look anywhere and you'll only see symmetry, utility, gracefulness and design in God's handiwork. Consider the rose, the humming bird, the flying fish, the trees, the sunset, the rainfall, the seasons . . . everything. How then could it be true that God's work of creation was waste and desolation?
- This becomes even a greater mystery when we learn that the verb translated "was" in verse 2 could also be translated "became" and is so translated in other portions of Scripture. Could it be that hidden here is the key to earth's antiquity?
- Persuing this thought through other passages of Scripture we find a flat declaration that God did *not* create the earth waste and desolation but rather His divine purpose was that the earth should be inhabited. What was it then that happened on this beautiful new earth which caused it to become the dreadful ruin so described?
- While the Genesis record does not so state may we suggest that there are two other exceedingly illuminating passages which throw a flood of light upon the question of the age of the earth. Apparently both of these passages refer to that sinister being known in Scripture as Satan or the Devil. It seems that he was created a very marvelous and perfect being by God. His position was that of guardian of the throne of God. His home was the earth.
- But his heart was lifted up with pride and he desired for himself a position outside the will of God. It may have been that he planned a revolt against God. At any rate it is said that he desired to be like the Most High . . . God. And because of his sin he was cursed, cast out of heaven and so became the terrible monster he is today.
- But apparently this is not all. The earth too is cursed. Instead of being a place of beauty and a joy forever it becomes waste, empty, ruined and utterly desolate. The land is covered with a monstrous blanket of ice. The light is abysmal darkness. All life stops. The earth staggers in inky blackness.

- How long the earth remained in this state of gloomy wretchedness we do not know. But it could have been uncounted years. There are unmistakable evidences of the marks of the cataclysm deeply etched on earth's surface. If one desires to fit in long ice ages there is plenty of room here. Without a doubt the judgment of God must have been a severe one. There seems to be room for all the geologists' millions of years between the first two verses of the Bible. If you want to postulate that the earth is a million years old the Genesis record does not object. If you feel that a billion years is more nearly right the Scripture will not contradict.
- But let us make it very clear that we do not believe that man has been on the earth for these ages. While we may not disagree that the antiquity of the earth is very great we believe the Bible to teach the very recent tenure of man. Perhaps it may be some 6,000 to 10,000 years. Certainly no more than that.
- With this the science of paleontology (study of fossils) agrees. For the archaeologist as he digs down into the surface of the earth finds the skeletal remains of man only in the newer fossil beds. Despite the plaster busts of cave men in our museums and the beautifully planned textbook diagrams, the truth is that man's stay on the earth has been of brief duration. With this the Genesis record agrees.
- The remainder of Genesis 1 deals then with God's reconstruction work. Here God is shown removing the effects of the curse and renewing the earth, making it habitable for the new race of inhabitants, man. The time involved is but six solar days. There are no creative acts until it comes time for the creation of man, this new being who was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and the animal creation.
- It should be also observed that God's work on the first day of reconstruction is not to create light, which was created "in the beginning." Rather, God is here commanding the removal of a thick band of watery vapor which completely enshrouded the earth. So it is on the fourth day. We are not witnessing the creation of the sun, moon and stars, but rather the inauguration of their relationship to the earth's days and nights and the year's seasons—spring, summer, autumn, winter.
- Where then is the problem? Where is the conflict between the geologist's belief and the more complete understanding of the teachings of Genesis 1? Well, the problem has all but melted away. For the Bible has never disagreed with the belief of a great age for the earth. Rather, the Scriptures affirm this. We believe the earth to be ancient.

The Problem of ...

- It's not so much a question as to whether or not there was a flood of waters that at one time covered the earth. Most people accept this. The stumbling block seems to be the Ark of Noah. How could this boat have been large enough to contain all the animals that were to be preserved alive? Is the story of Noah mere legend or solid fact? If it is legend then the Bible is open to serious questioning for the Bible presents the story as sober truth.
- That there was an actual flood no one today seems to seriously doubt. There are deep pock marks over the entire face of the earth pointing unmistakably to a great watery cataclysm. It seems evident that many of our high mountains were at one time under water. In many places the world around we find evidences of marine life far into the interior. In addition to this out of 33 extant ancient racial records no less than 33 include a more or less detailed account of a great flood of water that at one time covered the earth and which resulted in the end of the former civilization. Not all of the records, which include Polynesian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Chinese, American Indian, agree in every particular with the details of the Genesis account.
- But there is an amazing similarity of many points. All of them include the heavy rain, the boat, the animals, the group which was preserved, the emergence from the Ark and the new beginning. Some of them add fantastic happenings. In most of them the *gods* of heaven were mightily displeased. In all of them there is a hero corresponding to Noah. The point is, all these various accounts demand the actuality of a flood. It is not possible that they should have sprung from nowhere. The Bible has always taught the story of the flood. The time was not too long ago and the occasion was the unprecedented wickedness and violence of mankind on the earth. God was greatly disturbed because "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." Consequently He prescribed an exceedingly drastic punishment. He purposed to bring the human race to an end with the exception of one godly family. With this family He would begin anew. He also planned to preserve alive certain air-breathing animals and insects by means of a large boat. The specifications of the boat and the manner of its construction were imparted to Noah by God Himself.
- The point of the story is missed entirely when we omit God's part. The judgment of the flood was of His sending, and the preservation of life was of His planning. If we seek to eliminate the supernatural we have no story.

... The Ark of Noah ...

- It is generally true that those who so strongly disagree with the Bible record are themselves little acquainted with the stated facts. Too often the whole matter is brushed off as impossible without serious consideration of just what the Scripture states. Here is a most thought provoking and far reaching incident which ought to merit diligent study.
- The Book of Genesis soberly points out that God instructed Noah to construct a large boat. The measurements were to be 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide by 30 cubits high. The boat was therefore to be six times as long as it is wide, a fact worth remembering because many of our modern vessels are built on this ratio.
- Although many artists have painted imaginary representations of the Ark, it should be remembered that we know nothing as to how it actually looked. The bare specifications are all that we possess. However, since the purpose of the Ark was merely to stay afloat and not to go anywhere, it is logical to conclude that it was rectangular and boxlike. There were neither sails nor oars included. There need be no sharp bow or receding stern. The entire amount of space could be utilized.
- The next item is the length of a cubit. This is an ancient measurement and generally supposed to be the length of a man's forearm from the inside of his elbow to the tip of his longest finger. Of course with different individuals the measurement would vary. But according to the opinion of archaeologists it is usually taken to be from 18 to 22½ inches. Without a doubt, however, a standardized cubit was adopted.
- If now we figure the measurements of the ark on the basis that the cubit was 22½ inches we have a tremendous and commodious boat. It would be over 562 feet long and nearly 95 feet wide. The height would be some 56 feet and if it were built with a flat bottom and square on both ends it would have the carrying capacity of nearly three million cubic feet.
- Or to put it in modern terms we could bring up a train of 1,000 loaded freight cars and find room for all their contents in the Ark. When we remember that the average circus uses only about 25 freight cars to transport its equipment and animals from place to place we begin to arrive at some idea of the enormous capacity of Noah's Ark.
- We should remember too that there were three stories or decks specified which would add to the available space. Further details mention that the decks were to include "nests" or stalls where the animals could be separated.

- The second factor in the resolving of our problems has to do with the number of animals to be included. The average person estimates a far greater number than would be required. Most people have the idea that some hundreds of thousands or even millions would have to be admitted if all animal life were to be preserved.
- However, we must remember that out of all the multiplicity of creatures on the earth some 60% already live in the water and it would not be necessary to make any provision for them. They could care for themselves.
- Then, while there are almost countless varieties of insects and birds it is correspondingly true that these require but little space and little food. They do not seem to present a problem. There's plenty of room for them.
- The problem seems to arise in the housing of the larger animals. How is it possible to include all the larger animals in the available space? In answer, we must remember that God's requirement was, that only a representative of every family of animals was to be included. It was not necessary that a pair of every variety be admitted.
- For instance, we have in the dog family many different varieties. There are large and small, hairy and smooth, fighters and runners, stubby or sleek. There must be hundreds of distinct varieties with the possibility of interbreeding hundreds more. But they're all dogs and it would have been necessary for only one pair of them to have been included in the Ark.
- In a recent comprehensive natural history survey of the area where Noah lived it was found that there were just 575 types or families of mammals or birds between the size of a mouse and the size of a sheep. Added to this there were just below 300 different families of animals between the size of a sheep and the size of a camel. So the problem of housing the animal population of the Ark definitely shrinks in size.
- Some may argue that there is still a problem in the inclusion of the huge dinosaur, mastodon and other like monsters. But here the sciences of paleontology and archaeology step in to report that these species were totally extinct long, long before the time of the flood. So they would not have had to be included.
- We must be careful, however, not to miss the main point. It is God who sends the flood and it is God who gives the specifications for the Ark. He knows fully how many animals there are and it is His will that preserves them. If we leave God out of the picture we miss the point entirely. Surely God knows what He's doing.

● There have been critics who profess the greatest difficulty in the account of Noah and the Ark to be the ventilation. They rather contemptuously remind us that the provisions call for but one window and that window but a cubit square. They suggest that the air in the Ark might have become rather foul with all the animals therein.

● But here is another case of careless reading of the Scripture. What the Genesis record reveals is that the window of the Ark was commanded as "in a cubit shalt thou finish it above". That is, it was to be a cubit in width but was to extend around the entire circumference of the boat. This would provide ample ventilation, and would be protected from the coming storm outside by the low hanging eaves of the roof.

● Others have imagined a contradiction in the number of animals which were to be brought in. In one place the account says two of each kind and in another place the number is given as seven of each clean beast. But there is no difficulty here. First of all God is merely telling Noah that the animals were to be brought in by pairs, a male and a female. Later on He gives instructions that of the clean beasts there were to be seven and of the unclean beasts only two.

● We fear that some skeptics of the Scriptures would not be satisfied if the Genesis record had maintained that the Ark was a hundred times its stated size. They would still feel certain that it could not contain all which would have been necessary. They would still worry about the admittance of the elephants in spite of the fact that you can park a good many fleas on an elephant hide.

● But there is really no problem in the Ark story if you remember God's part. The wickedness which called for the judgment of the flood was a sin against God. The remedy for the wickedness was a supernaturally sent flood. The provision extended to one righteous family was a divine provision. What's wrong with believing all that?

● The entire structure of the narrative is imbued with divine intervention. It is God who instructs Noah as to the Ark's construction. It is God who attracts and leads the animals into the Ark. It is God who invited Noah and his family to enter and it is God who shuts the door. The rain descends at the command of God, and the fountains of the watery deep are stirred up by His voice. It is God who commands the rain to halt and opens the door for Noah to step out and start anew. If however, you bar God from a participation in the account you just haven't any story left.

The Problem of Jonah . . .

- It is probably true that more people disbelieve the story of "Jonah and the whale" than any other narrative in Scripture. This Old Testament incident has been the cause of more argument and more amusement than half a dozen other disputed points. The basis of all the difficulty seems to lie in the contention that there is no whale with the ability to do what the story claims . . . swallow the Prophet.
- What is the story of Jonah? Simply that he was one of God's Prophets living about the year 862 B.C. in the northern Kingdom of Israel. His story begins as he is commissioned by God to go and warn a large heathen city (Nineveh) of its sin and impending doom.
- Evidently Jonah was a man of intense patriotic fervor or else of deep national prejudice, so he refused to go. If God planned to destroy Nineveh that was all right with him. Instead of obeying God he turned in the exact opposite direction and took ship for Spain. But God was not to be ignored so He sent a terrific storm which didn't wreck the ship but caused the superstitious sailors to cast lots and toss Jonah overboard. This didn't seem to bother Jonah.
- But God still had plans and as Jonah hit the water he was immediately swallowed by a sea monster. The account continues by saying the interned prophet spent some three days and nights in the fish's belly before he finally repented and prayed to God for forgiveness. Then God spoke to the fish, who evidently was very uncomfortable due to his inability to digest Jonah, and he swam to dry land disgorged. From this point the chastened messenger marches on to Nineveh and faithfully discharges God's command.
- The climax of the story is really not the fish incident but in the complete repentance of this huge city of some several million people. Without a doubt the emergence of Jonah from the fish's mouth was witnessed by some of the citizens. And as the fish was considered one of the gods of Nineveh, it was noised about that there was an emissary with an ultimatum direct from heaven. It is easily seen how Jonah's message would command the closest attention.
- Nineveh proceeds to experience complete and abject contrition. From the King in the palace to the lowliest citizen there is a turning from unrighteousness and a cry to God for forgiveness. God hears, and stays the destruction of the city.
- Now the critics of Jonah seem to object to only one part of the multi-miraculous story. That part is the swallowing of Jonah by the fish.

. . . And the Whale . . .

- The basis of the criticism is that the story is manifestly impossible, for no whales exist with throats large enough to swallow human bait. The whale is said to feed on comparatively small surface fish which it strains from the water and swallows in bunches. Therefore, say the critics, we are not supposed to accept the Book of Jonah as historic but as allegorical or mythical.
- Here, however, is the place to point out that the narrative does not say that it was a whale that swallowed Jonah. It is difficult to figure out how a whale got into the story at all. The Old Testament account says that Jonah's host was a "great fish." The Hebrew word is "dag" and is consistently translated fish throughout the Scripture. The Hebrew word for whale is "tannin."
- In the New Testament where reference is made to Jonah, the word whale is used simply because the translators did not know that whale was a mammal and not a fish. They merely thought of the whale as the greatest of all sea creatures. But the root meaning of the Greek word "ketos" is simply great fish. So what the Scripture really says is that Jonah was taken aboard by a huge fish.
- What great fish then existed which could have become God's vehicle to teach a lesson in obedience to the erring prophet? There is one which seems to fit. It is the Rhinodon Typicus or "whale shark." The average length is 50 feet with weight of tons. It gets its name from the similarity of its mouth to the whale's mouth. Having no teeth, it strains its food through great plates in its mouth. It has a capacious maw and could easily swallow a man. As a matter of fact there are several authenticated instances in modern times where this has actually happened.
- The feeding habits of this great shark are interesting indeed. They move with terrific speed along the surface of the water engulfing whatever may lie in its path. The water is forced out through plates in the side of its mouth and whatever is left is swallowed without chewing. This monster could easily have been Jonah's transportation.
- However, we do not mean to give the impression that the fish in this story could not have been a whale. And while the Scripture does not so state, it can be reasonably and scientifically demonstrated that a whale could have swallowed Jonah.
- Everyone knows that the whales constitute the genus cetacea. This genus or class is divided into two general groups. The first is called the Denticete which means armed

with teeth. They crush their food as they eat and have an extremely small throat. Obviously this could not have been Jonah's fish.

- The other type of whale is called Mysticete. These have no teeth and in place of teeth are equipped with bone plates called balaena. They feed much as do certain types of sharks. Opening their mouths, they rush through the water at high speed forcing the water out of the mouth through the bone plates. When all the water is gone the whale proceeds to swallow what is left.

- It is in this type of whale that the very largest specimens are found. One is called the "humpback" because of a low, thick dorsal fin which makes the humpback appearance. They attain to about 50 feet in length and are covered with rows of skin ridges. They feed on anything that floats on the seas.

- The largest whale known is called the "sulphur bottom." The average length of these might be 75 feet but some have been found as long as 95 feet. One specimen captured off the west coast of North America had a weight of 294,000 pounds. This particular type would have absolutely no difficulty in swallowing a man.

- It should be remembered that the whale is an air-breathing mammal and cannot live without oxygen. So the whale must store enough air to meet its oxygen need while it stays under the water. To meet this need God has given to the whale a wonderful air storage chamber in his head which corresponds to the nasal sinus. In a very large whale the air-storage chamber could measure fourteen feet by seven feet by seven feet. Surely this would be enough to sustain life in a visitor for three days.

- The whale's stomach is complex indeed. There are from four to six compartments, in any one of which quite a number of men could be easily accommodated. But if a whale takes into its mouth any object too big to swallow, it thrusts it up into the air chamber, then swims to the nearest shallow water and ejects it.

- There are a number of well authenticated instances where whales have swallowed men and in one instance where a whale swallowed a horse. In at least one of these cases a man lived to tell the tale who was swallowed and stayed for 48 hours in the whale before it was captured.

- The summary of the whole matter is that there are creatures which swim the seas which in their very nature could have been hosts for Jonah. Their feeding habits coincide, their non-chewing method of swallowing their food is compatible, and their provision of oxygen agrees with the story. There is no

scientific reason to believe that either a huge shark or a whale could not have been the fish in the account.

- On the other hand it seems that if we cite merely the scientific possibility of the account we have missed the point entirely. The emphasis in the Biblical record is that God "prepared" a great fish. This is no ordinary happening. The honor of God is at stake. He has commanded His Prophet to go and the Prophet has refused. The lives of the inhabitants of a great city hang in the balance. God is willing to show mercy if they repent but someone must call them to repentance.

- The problem narrows down to the matter of whether or not God is able to prepare a fish that will swallow Jonah and still preserve his life. Does the God of the Bible have this power? Is He the God who in the beginning made heaven and earth? Is He not the God who cast up the mountains and dug the fruitful valleys? Does He not command the sea to go so far and no further? Has He not placed the magnificent sun in the heavens and does He not daily water the earth? Is this God able to have a proper fish at the proper place at the proper time?

- It is passing strange that we do not question a bit when modern "whales" do the very same thing. We all recognize the ability of these to swallow not one but a hundred men. They keep them safely for not only three days but three months. Oxygen is abundantly provided and no one is a bit worse for the trip. At the end of the time the modern fish disgorges the passengers on the shore. The only difference is that we call these modern fish, submarines.

- A far greater miracle than that of Jonah's undersea ride is the account of the complete and abject repentance of the city of Nineveh. This metropolis was the capital of a vast Assyrian Empire. Filled to the brim with people it was a center of the worst kind of vice and immorality. It was so bad that God had determined to destroy it completely from the face of the earth.

- But such is the grace of God that He gave these pagans an opportunity to turn from their wickedness and to cry out to God for mercy. Chosen to carry this message was Jonah who eventually arrived. For 40 days he stood in the city center and shouted the coming complete destruction of the city. So effective was his preaching, and so great was the fear of God that the city did repent completely, and God spared it.

- So the problem of Jonah is no problem after all. When all the facts are considered this ancient Bible Book is demonstrated to be scientifically reasonable and practically possible.

The Problem of . . .

- It seems to be the practice of some critics of the Bible to relegate to the category of legend anything that tends to emphasize the miraculous. So when they come to incidents in the Scriptures where God's hand is shown in its miracle-working power, these critics point out that the miracles did not really happen, but this is just the ancient writers' rather childish way of trying to explain facts that impressed him. Thus they assign the Bible to the same level as contemporaneous literature, having the characteristic inclusion of much mythological and allegorical material.
- But we must remember that an outstanding quality of the Scripture is its record of the imminence of God. He is constantly shown taking a personal interest in the affairs of men. Time and time again He is pictured as stepping directly into the lifestream of history and bringing to pass His own will. If we call this miraculous, then the Bible is completely a miraculous Book. For if you take this quality away from the Bible you have robbed it of its outstanding and unique characteristic.
- The story of Joshua's long day has always been the critic's scorn. They have pointed out the utter ridiculousness of believing the story at face value. They say that nothing like this has ever happened before, and if it should have taken place in Joshua's day, it would have meant reversal of the earth's rotation around the sun which would have caused the universe including the world to have fallen apart. My, my!
- Let us look at the story for a moment. The narrative has its roots back in the time when the children of Israel were emerging from their 40-year wilderness wanderings and beginning to conquer the land of Canaan. They had crossed the Jordan dry shod and had made their God-empowered conquest of Jericho.
- Upon learning of the irresistible progress of these invaders, the people of the land became desperately afraid and began to band together for mutual resistance. A confederacy of five kings is formed under the leadership of somewhat of a military strategist named Adoni-zedek (Lord of righteousness). Five city-empires pool their resources to resist to the death the advancing Israelites under Joshua.
- At this point, one of the cities privately decided that perhaps sly craftiness was the better part of valor and practiced a piece of wily strategem on the five kings and on the children of Israel too. The city was Gibeon.

. . . Joshua's Long Day . . .

- Feeling that their cause was already lost, they sent a strange embassy to Joshua and the camp of Israel. They clothed their messengers in threadbare clothing and mounted them on thin, scrawny animals. They put mouldy bread in their saddle bags and gave them wine skins patched and ready to fall apart. Arriving at the camp the messengers told of having heard of Jehovah's blessing on Israel and their long journey from a far country to make a league of peace.
- Without consulting God a vote was foolishly taken by the leaders of Israel and an oath was given and a pact made guaranteeing non-aggression and mutual assistance. With this assurance the sad looking visitors departed. What was Israel's consternation in about three days to learn that these "foreigners" were men of Gibeon, the very next city in their path of conquest. But the oath was given, the damage done, and they must make the best of it.
- However, when the five kings heard of the Gibeonites' betrayal and deflection they were bitterly angry. They feared that if Gibeon's men were added to the victorious Israelites their cause was hopeless indeed. So they altered their plans to march on Gibeon to destroy it first. When Gibeon learned that the army of the confederacy was on its way to attack their city they lost no time telling Joshua and pointing out that he had pledged to help.
- Joshua immediately responded and marched his army all night to arrive at the scene of battle for the next morning. Thus when the host of Adoni-zedek fell upon Gibeon, Joshua attacked their rear and right flank while the Gibeonites came out and attacked the head and left flank. Caught between the jaws of a pincer movement, the army of the league turned tail and began a retreat which soon turned into a complete rout.
- Bear in mind that the army of the confederacy was composed of some five kings whose cities lay ahead in the path of the conquering Israelites. If they were not thoroughly defeated here, they would flee once more to their fortified cities where they would have to be besieged one by one. It was imperative that this combined army be completely destroyed if at all possible.
- So the men of Israel, already weary from a 30-mile march all night in full armor began the task of pursuing and destroying the remainder of the coalition army
- To aid in this as the sun mounted high in the heavens a swift summer storm appeared and out of the black clouds fell huge hail stones which actually killed more of the retreating army than did Joshua's men.

● But even this was not enough. At this juncture Joshua looked out and fear struck his heart. The day was half spent, the sun was high in the heavens but the task of the conquest of the armies of the five kings was just begun. He was winning the battle but the enemy was getting away. Perhaps in quick desperation, perhaps in sheer realization of his dependence upon God Joshua boldly cries out for the sun to stand still over Gibeon and the moon to remain in the place he then viewed it as he looked through the valley of Ajalon, in order that the Lord's victory might be complete.

● It may have been either pure audacity on Joshua's part or divinely inspired wisdom. But whatever it was, there was an immediate answer from the God of all battles. We read . . . "and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies . . . and the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that Jehovah harkened unto the voice of a man: for Jehovah fought for Israel."

● The account is sober and clear. The sun "hasted not" to go down about the space of a whole day. Apparently the diurnal rotation of the earth slowed down and moved at a pace which added another twelve hours to that day. The moon also was slowed in her rotation about the earth in the same ratio. Moreover, this day is unique among all the days of time. Never had there been a day like it, nor ever shall be again.

● Now the critic immediately jumps to his feet to protest that such proceedings are utterly impossible, that the entire timing mechanism of the universe would be thrown out of gear if this were to occur. God, say they, has ordained inexorable laws of nature which are inflexible. Such would be a miracle of miracles, too incredible to believe.

● But what is a miracle? It is merely orderly happenings on a plane of higher laws unknown to us, but which are superior to the laws we do know. To be sure we recognize that God's entire creation operates on a meticulous system of well ordered law. For instance the earth keeps her daily schedule of one revolution on its axis each twenty-three hours, fifty-six and nine-tenths seconds without variation. But who is to say that God does not have a complete set of higher laws that He can throw into operation any time He sees fit, which would lengthen the day to double its ordinary time. God is never bound by the laws which He Himself has passed. It goes without saying that anyone who makes a law may rescind, amend or retract that law.

● It is folly to suggest that just because God has, by fixed law, regulated the earth's daily rotation to once every 24 hours He cannot step in at will and by use of factors or influences we know nothing of, lengthen the day to 36 hours or as long as He chooses.

● As a matter of fact, it is the interruption of fixed law that constitutes one of the marks of God's omnipotence. Miracles are always an invasion of fixed order. The power of God is proved by His ability to arrest or control mere mechanical forces. Otherwise He would not be God.

● For example, suppose an ignorant savage were to be suddenly transported into the centers of civilization. He looks with amazement as a huge locomotive thunders into a railway station. You can scarce restrain him as, terror stricken he falls to his knees to worship the iron monster. You assure him that the machine is not a god, it operates by fixed law. He cannot believe it. How shall you convince him? There is but one way and you will have to show him that there is a power, an intelligence, above the engine, a power that can change its course, speed it up, slow it down, stop it entirely. You prove this by the hand of the engineer who hold the throttle. So it is that God demonstrates His authority over fixed law.

● Moreover, without a doubt God has made provision for such a miracle as Joshua's long day. Consider a watch. In conformity with fixed law the hands move in only direction. Day in and day out they operate clockwise. But we find the watch is too fast. So we take it and move the hands backward, we interrupt the usual movement. But in doing so we have violated no law. We have merely manifested a higher law of superior intelligence. And actually, we find that there was already provision made in the watch for the reversal and correction. Who then will say that when God reverses the great hand of nature He has not already made provision for such reversal?

● The whole problem of Joshua's great day lies in one's acceptance of God's complete authority. When we admit that God is greater than the sum total of all which He has created, when we freely acknowledge that God has both the power and the freedom to step in and control any of the forces or laws which He has set in motion, then there is no problem whatsoever to our belief in the credibility of the miracle.

● Truly, miracles are not only possible, they are also expected. If there is a mighty God, and there is; and if He is interested in the affairs of men, and He is; then miracles are His hallmark, His imprimatur. We recognize God through His miracles.

The Problem of . . .

- It seems a strange paradox to speak of the problem of the virgin birth. It appears far more logical to label it the glory of the virgin birth. But the fact remains there are some who claim that this unique miracle is a stumbling block in their acceptance of Biblical truth. They profess to believe that Christ is more acceptable in today's world if He is born of natural generation.
- Does the Bible specifically teach the virgin birth? Is this doctrine vital to the structure of Christian truth? Can modern minds receive this wonder? Is the stature of Christ increased if we grant that He was born of a virgin? Can intelligent people honestly accept this "biological miracle"?
- What does the record say? The opening chapter in the New Testament first tells the story. There Matthew reverently and with appreciation of the delicate nature of the subject, sets forth simply yet frankly the order of happenings that led to the birth of Jesus.
- In the village of Nazareth there was a young woman named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph. During their engagement period and before the marriage was physically consummated Mary was found to be with child. Joseph who was an honest and upright man was naturally troubled and pondered what to do. At this point God revealed to him in a dream that Mary's pregnancy was the wonderful accomplishment of the long awaited coming into the world of the promised Messiah. Joseph is content, and although the marriage ceremony subsequently takes place, there is no physical relationship between Mary and Joseph until Jesus is born.
- In Luke's account the subject is treated a bit more intimately, for you will remember that Luke was a physician. It may have been that Mary opened her heart more clearly to him. Here we are allowed to listen to the actual conversation between God's messenger, Gabriel, and the maiden Mary. The divine announcement is given that Mary is to become the mother of a son. Knowing assuredly of her own virginity Mary with commendable modesty asks how this is to be brought about. She is told that the power of God will bring to pass this miracle within her body and that the holy Child will be called the Son of God. Luke concludes with a recital of Mary's contented heart being lifted up to God in a lovely psalm of deepest praise.
- The Scripture account is definite enough. At least ten times it is soberly stated that Mary was with child apart from natural generation. You cannot accept the record and not believe that Christ was virgin born.

. . . The Virgin Birth . . .

- Let us think for a moment what is involved if we deny the record. In regard to the character of Mary we would be driven to one of two explanations. Either she would have been with child sinfully by Joseph and her testimony of innocence would have been criminally dishonest, or else leaving Joseph out of the picture, the father of Mary's first born son would have been an unknown dissolute person who wronged her. In either case Mary would be shown to be a weak-minded girl who fell, or else an unchaste woman who sinned and then deliberately lied about her conduct. Both of these explanations are grossly unthinkable, and it is almost blasphemy to seriously consider them.
- But there is a far deeper implication. If Christ came into the world, as all others have come into the world, then He would have flowing in His veins the deadly venom of fallen humanity. For every baby that has been born since the beginning of time has been born with a fallen, sinful nature. All are sons of Adam, all are born sinners. Jesus too, would have been in this category.
- If Christ had been born of natural generation He could in no wise have become the Saviour of the world. Rather, He would have been under the condemnation of His own sin. He would have to die for his own transgressions. The ability to become the Lamb of God would have been completely nullified.
- It cannot be too strongly stated, that upon the point of the birth of Christ stands or falls the entire structure of salvation. Far from being an unimportant doctrine, the virgin birth is an absolute essential to our Christian belief. The Lamb of God must enter the world without taint of original sin. He must live faultlessly and offer offer Himself willingly. He must prove Himself before God as the perfect Substitute for the transgressions of an entire world. The work of Christ is utterly valueless if Christ be not virgin born.
- Consider too the testimony of Christ. He claimed to be the Son of God in a sense that no one else is a son of God. Over and over He challenged His enemies to find a single fault in Him. When He talked with God He testified that His heart was perfect before Him. But all of this is blasphemous untruth if Christ did not enter life sinlessly, nor is His teaching of any value.
- We say it thoughtfully. There is no salvation, there is no hope, there is no heaven for poor lost sinners if Christ be

not born of a virgin. We are yet in our sin; there is nothing ahead but death.

- Think also of the harmony of the miracle of the virgin birth with the miracle-filled life of Christ. Far more problems are raised if attempt is made to deny His birth. How would we then explain the absolute incomparability as to why Jesus Christ of Nazareth is head and shoulders above all the rest of humanity?

- All must admit that the life of Christ is peerless. There has never been another who lived so perfectly as He. Search the records minutely and you will find no flaw in His character. His friends adored Him. His enemies, though they hated Him, could find no imperfection in Him. Even under the cruel scrutiny of the exact Roman court the verdict was of complete faultlessness. His life is a human poem of love and grace. But . . . if there is no virgin birth . . . how do you account for it?

- His words are living, powerful, authoritative. Never had anyone before spoken so effectively as He. The common people heard Him gladly. When He spoke to children their little hearts were thrilled. Whether His audience were old or young, rich or poor, educated or uneducated made no difference. All were enthralled. His speech was simplicity itself, yet it contained the wisdom of eternity. He is the Master Teacher of all time. Yet why? What is the explanation? If Christ is but born in the common way, the record just doesn't make sense. But give Him the honest honor of a supernatural birth and there is consonance.

- His deeds . . . heavenly parables in an earthly setting. Never in all the days did anyone ever so bless the souls and bodies of men. Day after day He lovingly labored to bring comfort and help. Not in the sense that compassionate men have wrought. But He was the Son of God living among the sons of men. His feet were swift to bring aid. His hands were tender to alleviate suffering. His voice was kind to assuage grief. But be honest with me . . . if Christ were mere man, born as others have been born, how can this be explained?

- There is no other conclusion. Jesus Christ is the miracle of the ages. His words were without equal. His deeds have never been even begun to be matched. His whole life is a paragon of loveliness. His death is a supernatural death. His resurrection is the only one of its kind. Why then do we hesitate to acknowledge the unique manner in which this unique Person entered life? Without His virgin birth all else is inharmonious, inexplicable, strange. With His virgin birth all things are understood. He is God come to live among men.

- The inevitable question of course is . . . how did the birth of Christ take place? In answer we must confess that we are no wiser here than the Scripture. The maiden Mary has asked the same . . . how shall this be seeing I know not a man? To this Gabriel replied that the formation of the new body within her was to be accomplished by the overshadowing power of God administered by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. Do we need to ask more? Could we understand the mystery if God were to tell us? Is it not better to admit that this is God's secret and it is wonderful in our eyes?

- Why should it be thought a "biological miracle" for God to build a body for His Son within the body of the virgin Mary? Do we not remember that it is the hands of God that took of the red clay of the garden of Eden and formed the body of Adam? Or, His hands that formed the body of Eve from the flesh taken out of the side of Adam? Have we forgotten that Christ Himself took clay from the ground and formed new eyes to give to the blind man? Why is it so difficult to believe this is God's own way to make the incarnation of His Son a reality?

- It is asked, and rightly so, how it could be that Christ being born of Mary could know no taint of sin from His mother's side? Was Mary also born without sin? No, for Mary was born of natural generation. She too possessed a fallen, sinful nature. She too must receive the sacrifice of her Son for her salvation.

- This is a great mystery. Perhaps an inkling as to its answer is found in the Scripture . . . "a body hast Thou prepared me." It was the hand of God that prepared the body. Within the womb of the virgin the power of God builded Christ's body. This body was to be in all respects a human body except that it was to be free from sin's stain.

- The mystery of the virgin birth becomes less of a mystery when one accepts the mystery of salvation. It has always been true that those who feel the virgin birth unacceptable also do not see the necessity of a personal faith in Jesus Christ as a Saviour from sin. On the other hand, when one has come into the knowledge of sin forgiven and new life received by believing on Christ, the virgin birth of our Lord seems a doctrine greatly to be desired.

- We shall understand its mystery some day. In God's good time He will explain to our wondering minds the magnificence of the miracle. But until that day we'll believe it with all our hearts, and as the Wise Men . . . fall down and worship Him!

The Problem . . .

- It seems strange that the very citadels of the Christian faith should be attacked. Yet it is on such vital points as the physical resurrection of Christ that the Enemy seems to have directed his strongest assaults. Believe it or not, but there are many who do not see the necessity of maintaining a belief in the actuality of the resurrection. They profess to be able to think just as much of Christ if the entire story is shown to be the result of overworked imagination on the part of the disciples.
- What are the facts here? Must we keep our confidence in the account of Christ's rising from the dead at all costs? Is the resurrection link an indispensable one in the chain of evidence proving the deity of the Lord? Or does the uniqueness of the person of Christ not require the endorsement of this miracle? Is the resurrection a problem?
- Fortunately we are not left in doubt as to the answers to these questions. The resurrection of Christ is all-important evidence, not only to the claims of Christ as the Son of God, but also to the Christian's claim to immortality and eternal life. The Scriptures are dead in earnest as they point out that if Christ be not risen . . . our faith is vain . . . we are yet in our sins . . . our loved ones who have passed away are perished . . . we are of all men most miserable.
- What is the importance of the resurrection in the structure of Christian truth? While it is difficult to place one teaching over another in value, still it can be safely said that the story of the resurrection is the capstone of all truth. We know of a surety who Christ is now, because God has raised Him from the dead. No more need there be any doubt. No longer need anyone question His claims. All of these have been settled, for God has demonstrated His approval in that He raised Him.
- The value of the work of Christ is forever attested. The world had hated Him and had nailed Him to a cross of shame. There He did not look like a King but rather like a condemned criminal. His work seemed lost, His cause defeated. But the resurrection changes all that. Now we can see things in their true light. The cross was triumph, victory, glory. It is the very plan and purpose of God for a lost world.
- The resurrection too adds incomparable comfort to human hearts. Death is conquered, the grave is spoiled. Because God raised His own dear Son from the grave, we know that God will raise us from the grave. This is our guarantee, this is our hope, this is our future. Because He lives we too shall live . . . forever.

. . . The Resurrection of Christ . . .

- Is the story of the resurrection on uncertain ground? Must we accept it only on the basis of the blind credulity of faith? Do the enemies of Christ have any substantiation in their case against it?
- There is no need to fear. No fact or doctrine of Scripture rests upon more unimpeachable truth. It seems that God has seen to it that this amazing miracle is surrounded with a wall of absolutely impregnable evidence. There isn't the slightest suggestion of a crack in its defences. It's a perfect delight to examine the facts.
- Think first of the pre-testimony of Christ. He said He would rise again. He had told of His coming apprehension, trial and death. All this had come to pass as He had spoken. However, in the same breath He testified that He would rise again. By what law of honest exegesis can we accept one statement and reject the other?
- Then there is the incontrovertible voice of circumstantial evidence. There is no question but that He had died. The Roman government certified to that. Also, some loving friends who took the broken and bruised body down from the cross and with a great quantity of burial spices, and almost uncounted yards of wrap-around linen cloths, prepared the body for the tomb.
- It was a new tomb hewn out of the solid rock. No one had ever been placed there before. After the Lord's body was entombed therein it was made sure. First there was the huge stone, then the unbreakable government seal, and then the guard of soldiers. After all this there was no doubt that the dead body of the One who had been crucified on the center cross that day was resting safely in the tomb.
- Now come to the resurrection morning. The soldiers, frightened out of their senses, have fled to the city to tell their incredulous story. The seal has been broken. The ponderous stone has been rolled away and the entrance now invites inspection. Inside, the linen clothes, stiffened by the spices, lie as if they still encased the body. All the convolutions are there but the body is gone. The napkin that was over the face is laid by in another place. Believe it or not, but sitting triumphantly by are Angels who exultantly tell of the triumph of redeeming love.
- There are, it seems, a never-ending chain of witnesses who actually see Him alive. Mary, Peter and John, the rest of the Disciples, the Emmaus Pair, Five Hundred Brethren at once,

the Apostle Paul. These are sober people. They tell of seeing Him, hearing Him, talking with Him, handling Him, eating with Him, following His commands. We may believe them.

- Not so, however, His enemies. It seems that scores of explanations have been invented to endeavor to explain away the thrilling story of the resurrection. The oldest one is of course, that His Disciples came and stole the body while the soldiers slept. This would seem to be the weakest of all.
- Were the Disciples that brave? Before, they had all forsaken Him and fled. Even on the resurrection morning they hesitated to believe. And did all the guards sleep? Was not one awake to sound the alarm . . . even when the huge stone was being shoved aside? And, how did they steal the body and leave all the grave clothes exactly in place?
- Others have suggested that the witnesses went to the wrong tomb. You see there were many tombs, and through grief their eyes were blinded with tears. So they came to the wrong tomb which was actually empty and with sudden joy, they ran to tell that they imagined the Lord had risen.
- This seems strange. We might expect tragedy-stricken women to become confused as to the identity of the tomb, but what confused the Angels? And how did the guard of soldiers fall down as dead men? And what of the identical clothes and napkin which Peter and John saw? And how do we explain the Lord's appearance when He showed them His nail-scarred hands and feet?
- Not a few critics have suggested that Christ never really died. Rather, He merely swooned. And in the coolness of the tomb He revived, pushed aside the stone and came forth saying that He had risen from the dead.
- If this be true, then there were a great many people who were wholly deceived. First, Christ Himself told an untruth, for He prophesied He would die. The imperial Roman Government was wrong, for they signed the death warrant. Christ's two honorable friends, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were wrong for they testified of His death. The Guard of Soldiers were mocked for they were told they came to watch over a dead body. The Jews were deluded for they were convinced of His death. And then what can we do with the evidence of the wrapped around grave clothes? How did this weak, blood-drained sufferer get out of them and not leave them in a heap on the floor? And if He had, would it have been possible for Him to appear as a glorious, victorious Conqueror before the eyes of the ones who loved Him? Or would He not have had to

seek the nearest hospital to endeavor to convalesce from the terrific ordeal of the cross?

- Do we not see plainly that the resurrection of Christ is the divinely ordained climax to the greatest life ever lived? Why is it in any way difficult to accept the Lord's unique rising from the dead? To be sure it's a miracle, but so are all parts of His life. His birth is a miracle . . . God did something unheard of. His life, words, deeds are not to be compared with any other who ever walked the earth. His death was a supernatural death, unequaled in the annals of time. Why then should one stumble over the wonder of His resurrection? Cannot we see all of these transcendent events as a part of a harmonious whole?
- Christ must rise from the dead. For this was proof that He was actually the Son of God. Other religious leaders have died. Some have died for their religious convictions, some have died a martyr's death. But none other has even been raised from the dead. Christ was more than a religious leader, He was the Saviour of the world. He had said for all to come to Him and He would give them rest. He had prophesied that as He was lifted up on a cross, He would draw all men unto Him. He had promised to prepare mansions in glory for His followers, and to come again and take them there. These were astounding claims to make. But they are proved to be true by the resurrection.
- The cross had seemed like defeat. To the casual observer this seemed like the end. The Shepherd had been taken and the sheep were scattered. It was a seeming triumph for His enemies. There He hung, bruised, shamed, mocked, deserted. Even the sun hid its face from the dreadful scene.
- But the resurrection changes all that. The cross is seen in its true light. The death of Christ is not defeat, it is victory. It is not the end, it's the beginning. Christ is not dead, He's gloriously alive. And the whole series of events is part of God's matchless plan to save a lost world.
- The cross was necessary, for there the Lamb of God paid the supreme penalty to an outraged God in heaven. But the resurrection shows that the cross is acceptable to God. God is satisfied with the death of His Son. Now we understand what salvation is . . . it's God's own plan to save our souls. Not only that we might be forgiven our transgressions, but that we might be partakers of the marvelous newness of resurrection life.
- The problem of the resurrection? Surely, there is no problem here. It's the gladdest good news in the entire Bible. It's the complete opening of the floodgates of God's love. It's the promise of a glorious tomorrow. It's life, it's joy, it's peace.

Other Problems . . .

Cain's Wife

- Not a few people profess to have difficulty in receiving the message of the Bible because they are unable to account for Cain's wife. The Genesis account (4:17) merely states that Cain had a wife and began to raise a family. The critics have pointed out that here is a real blunder of Scripture in that while only three sons are mentioned, Cain is said to have become married.
- But the key to the understanding is to be easily found (5:4) in the statement that Adam and Eve had daughters as well as sons. Also there was neither the stigma nor the danger of intermarriage at this time and evidently this was God's planned method of the early propagation of the race. The answer simply is that Cain married a sister or a niece. Seth, the other mentioned son of Adam and Eve, evidently had to do the same.
- Someone has taken time to estimate the number of available young women from whom Cain might have chosen if he had waited until middle age before he married. Conservatively figuring, there could have been at least 1,000.

Slaughter of the Canaanites

- This problem concerns God's direct command that the Children of Israel were to put to death without mercy all men, women and children in many of the cities which were conquered in the promised land. The criticism has suggested that God was both capricious and cruel in ordering such a slaughter of innocent people.
- But the spade of the archaeologist has come to the rescue in this problem by pointing out that the immorality of these cities was almost beyond description. Sins of the grossest sorts were commonly practiced and the unrighteousness of these cities was a filthy cancer on the face of the earth. As a matter of fact, just as the surgeon must do, if God had not completely cut off these festering sores from among mankind the whole of civilization could have become tainted with the deadly virus of social disease resulting in a world full of imbeciles.
- It should be remembered that God's mercy was exercised here too. Long before the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, God had contemplated their punishment, but had refrained in order to give them opportunities to repent and turn from their sinful ways. (Genesis 15:16). We must remember too, that the sin which caused God to rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah was this same terrible sin of lustful living.

Age of the Patriarchs

- In the early chapters of Genesis some space is devoted to the genealogical list of the early patriarchs. The average age at that time is said to have been in the neighborhood of 900 years, Methuselah living the longest with 969 years to his credit. Some "wise" people have pointed out that these ages were not intended to be solar years but lunar years. They suggest that the ancients counted the moon's monthly cycle a year so that the ages of the patriarchs should be divided by 12, resulting in a reduced total of some 70 to 80 years.
- On the surface this may seem reasonable until you come to a situation where, for example, Enoch became the father of his son, Methuselah at the age of 65, or counting by the lunar method, shortly after he was five years of age, (Genesis 5:22).
- The answer to the problem is simple enough. These men were the progenitors of the race. God was interested that they would overspread the earth, cultivate it and control the animals. He had commanded them to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth, (Genesis 2:17), and this was following out His command.
- Everyone knows that the human body recreates itself approximately every seven years. God has written into our bodies the ability to replenish every cell with a new cell some ten times in our lifetime. If this can be done ten times why is not God able to speak to our bodies that it can be continued twenty times or fifty times? Evidently this is what happened until God's purpose in subduing the earth was accomplished.

Manna for 40 Years?

- Part of the story of the wanderings of the Israelites on the way to the promised land concerns their wilderness experience. During this time God is said to have provided bread in the form of manna for their sustenance over a period of forty years. Is this to be taken literally or is this just figurative language?
- Why should this be thought impossible? God provides for two billion people today. He causes the sun to shine, the rain to fall, the soil to produce. True, it takes the grain some months to mature. But is God unable to "ripen" bread overnight if this pleases Him? If you subtract the miraculous (God's part) element from the stories of the Bible you just have nothing left. Providing manna for three million people for forty years is no more difficult for God than feeding the millions of birds, fishes, animals during their lifetimes.

There's Really but One Problem . . .

- All the so-called "problems" of the Bible seem to melt away when they are placed under the searchlight of truth. If one will come to the Scriptures with an open mind and a seeking heart there is no question but what may be satisfactorily answered. How then, may one have that open mind and seeking heart?
- You may as well know, the Scriptures themselves definitely state that all men are born with their faces away from God, are dead in trespasses and sins, and are incapable of understanding aright divine truth. If there is to be a complete understanding of the mysteries of God and man there must be a transformation of man's inner self.
- This then is the only real problem. Man must deal with the desperate sinfulness of his own nature before he can hope to understand and appreciate the secrets of God's truth. The blindness of his spiritual eyes must be removed, the deafness of his spiritual ears must be lifted. Then, and only then, can he know the truth.
- Can this be accomplished? Yes, a thousand times yes. In fact, this is the gladdest news of all. For God has made provision for this very thing. He has sent His dearly beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to fully bear the sins of man. When Christ died on the cross this tremendous fact was accomplished and now there is salvation freely offered to all who will believe.
- What does one believe? Simply that he's a lost, condemned sinner, worthy of perdition and on his way to a Christless hell. But that Christ is a Saviour from sin and will become his own personal Saviour if he will receive Him. And when the sinner opens the door of his being to Christ, that opens also the floodgates of God's mercy, and the miracle of transforming grace is accomplished. (John 1:13 3:16-18; 3:36; 5:24; Romans 10:9).
- Then the Bible becomes a new Book. The problems seem to vanish into thin air. The mountains of difficulties are no more. The "contradictions" of Scripture cannot be found. New truth is to be found everywhere, and the Bible becomes easily the greatest Book in the world.
- It may be that some who read this booklet need to solve this greatest of problems. The problem of your own relationship to God. May we suggest that you settle it now? God stands ready . . . are you?

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