

I Am A
Skeptic

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Foreword

Just a short time ago the first edition of "I Am A Skeptic" came from the press. The publishers tell me that this edition is practically sold out, and that they plan to get out another printing. I have been surprised at the way this book has sold, and have had many reports from people who have read it. Many men with Ph.D, degrees have written me and have spoken favorably of the book. Best of all, many young people have told me of the great help and blessing it has been to them. It is a source of great satisfaction to me to know that the Lord has been able to use this book to help so many people. Since the first edition has had such wide reading, and has been used in such a wonderful way, I have felt led of the Lord to add to this book.

In the first edition, I dealt with skepticism in general, but in my travels I run into so many young people who are having trouble with doubts that are raised by some college professors about certain passages in the Old Testament, I am made to feel that it would be wise to deal with some of these debated passages. It is strange to me that teachers in our own church schools seem to be making a concerted effort to wreck the faith of our young people. I am a loyal Methodist, and have been true to my Church down through the years, but I feel that it is time someone speaks up against the unbelief that is so prevalent in many of our church schools.

We are asked to support these schools and send our young people to them. If we re going to send our young people to such schools, we have a right to expect

them to come back with a stronger faith than they had when they were sent there. If our church schools can't give our young people a faith that will stand against atheism and communism, then we are in a bad way.

In this second part of my book, I have used rather strong language in dealing with some of these faith wreckers, but I make no apology for doing it. It is time someone had the courage to speak out against the unbelief that is being fostered in some of our schools. It is our earnest prayer that God will be able to use this book to that end. I am,

Sincerely His and yours,

John R. Church

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RETURN TO THE MAIN MENU

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It is a very shocking thing to have a minister come right out in public and confess that he is a skeptic. Ministers are supposed to be men of faith. If they have doubts and questions in their own minds they are supposed to keep them to themselves. I hasten to add that I am no *ordinary skeptic*. That is the pathetic thing about it. If I were just an ordinary run-of-the mine skeptic that would not be so bad. There are millions of just ordinary skeptics. The woods are full of them. You find them on every hand. The trouble with me is the fact that I believe many things that people think I ought not to believe. In fact many people think I am naive and simple-minded to believe some things I do believe.

I have no trouble in believing in God. In fact I think the Bible is right when it says, "The fool hath said in his heart There is no God." No one but a fool would ever say such a thing as that. When any intelligent person stops to consider the magnitude of this universe, when you come to understand its complexity, and then when you stop to consider its orderliness, you are bound to confess, that back of this great universal system is an Almighty God. I have no trouble in believing in God.

I also believe the Bible to be the inspired work of

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God. I am convinced in my own mind that this book is a divine revelation from God. No man or group of men could have written such a book as this without the aid of the Holy Spirit. I have no trouble in believing this. That is settled in my own mind. Many great scientists stand with me here.

I also believe in the Genesis account of the creation. I believe the first chapter of Genesis is the only sensible and satisfactory explanation as to the origin of this universe, the origin of man, and the origin of sin. When I go back and read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," then I have something solid to stand on. When I turn away from that statement, and turn to science for an answer as to where this universe came from, they have nothing to offer me but *theories* and *guesses*. When I go back and read that God created man in his own image and after his own likeness, that makes sense to me, and I believe that, for I find plenty of evidence to support such a statement; but when I turn to the *theories* of science as to the origin of man, they just don't measure up to what I think is a satisfactory answer. They have too many missing links and have to depend on too many guesses, that do not make sense to me.

In fact, that is just where my skepticism comes in. I just can't accept some things that some people just swallow down without any question. The very things that I believe so firmly are the things that many people laugh at, and rule out of court. The very things they think I ought to believe are some of the things that I find it hard to believe. In fact, I have been a trial to

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some of my friends down through these years. They look on me with pity and sometimes with contempt. I really think that some of them think I am simple-minded and almost a moron.

When I was in college I was a great trial to some of my professors. In fact, one of them became so provoked with me that one day I thought sure he would have a stroke right there in class. He almost gnashed his teeth because I would not swallow some of the things he claimed to believe. Of course he belonged to that group of liberals that made a great ado about *tolerance* and *the right to freedom of speech*. He contended for the right to think for yourself. However, when I insisted on doing that he became terribly upset, and was about ready to throw me out of the classroom. Later, when this same man heard me preach, he confessed to me that he never expected me to make much of a preacher. He told me that when I was in his class, I was a great trial to him. Down through these years I have been a great trial to many people, and it is all because I am skeptical about some things they seem to be sure of. I just can't accept them.

CHAPTER II

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SKEPTICAL OF LIBERALISM

Back when I was going to college liberalism was all the rage. In fact if you were not a modernist back in those days you were simply out of step with the times. They were so cock-sure, and felt that they had all of the scholarship on their side. If you did not accept their views you were hopelessly out of date.

They assured me that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. They talked a lot about J. E. P. D. Q. or some such mythical characters as that. They assured me that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, for they did not even know how to read and write back in those days. Of course I had my doubts about their being right, for I had read about the great culture of the Chinese people that went back for thousands of years. Then, too, I had read in the New Testament where Jesus had said positively that Moses did write the Pentateuch. I had come to believe a long time ago that Jesus knew more about such things than some of these late comers. In fact, I am convinced that Jesus knew a great deal more than some of these liberalisms give him credit for knowing. I believe he is the Son of God, and that he came forth from God, and came into this world to reveal truth. He did not come to discover truth; he came to reveal truth. In fact, he

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was truth incarnate in human flesh. When he was only twelve years of age, he went into the Temple and confounded the lawyers and the doctors, and he has been confounding them ever since. He has proved to be quite a trial to some of them. Just about the time they think they have dismissed him and ushered him off the stage he comes marching back and they have him on their hands. I have come to feel that he is a very reliable teacher. I still take my stand with him against the highbrows.

I find that I was not too far wrong in my stand, for the archaeologists have discovered that they not only knew how to write in the days of Moses, but they have found that even back in the days of Abraham, those people were far advanced in their culture. They have discovered great libraries that were in existence in those days. It is generally agreed that Abraham could not only read and write, but there is strong evidence that he was a student of astronomy. Many seem to feel that he came to believe in God by his study of the movement of the heavenly bodies.

In passing, I might remind you of the fact that astronomy is the oldest science *known* to man. As far back in human history as you can go, you will find that men were studying the movement of the heavenly bodies. They had charted the heavens and given many of the stars their names. The twelve major signs and the twenty-four minor signs of the zodiac are still in use. You can't talk intelligently about astronomy without using those signs. The big dipper is still up there, and will continue to be there in spite of all the advance-

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ment of science. I find that so many of those things the liberalists were so sure about in those days have proved to be false. They used to hoot at the idea of there being a flood in the days of Noah. They tried to tell me that that was just one of those old myths that had been handed down through the centuries, and that I was not supposed to take it seriously. I never could swallow that idea; for I had read where Jesus said there was a flood, and that there was really such a man as Noah. Of course they laughed at me, and thought I was simple-minded for not accepting their assured facts.

I waited long enough to find out they were wrong and that after all there was a deluge. Science has verified the fact. Today there are three great branches of science that bear witness to the fact of the flood. The science of ethnology, the science of geology, and the science of archaeology; all bear witness to the fact that there has been a flood.

Some years ago I was browsing around in the library of Duke University, and happened to pick up a book, written by one of the greatest archaeologists in the United States. In that book I read where this great scientist said that in Mesopotamia he found conclusive proof that there had been a flood. The thing that made this so impressive was the fact that this man confessed that before he found this evidence he had always doubted the Bible account of the flood. However, he could not deny the evidence that he had found down there in the bowels of the earth. I found again that I was not so foolish as some of my friends had thought.

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In fact, they have been proved to be wrong so many times I really feel sorry for them. It must be a source of embarrassment to them to find out they were mistaken so many times. They used to feel sorry for me, but now I am inclined to sympathize with them.

These same liberalists used to tell me that the Bible account of the fall of Jericho was pure bunk. It just did not happen-according to their version of it. I just went right on believing it in spite of their contention to the contrary. Then the archaeologists came along and proved that I was right and they were wrong. They have found the ruins of Jericho and they find that the walls not only fell down, but they say they fell outward, and not inward as you would suppose.

These same fellows used to talk a lot about the two Isaiahs. Of course, I knew all along that there were two Isaiahs. There was the one before he met God in the Temple, and there was the one after he met God. Of course, it was the same fellow, but there was such a change in him that he was not really the same fellow after that experience. But this was not the kind of two Isaiahs they contended for. I just went along holding to my simple child-like faith, and then sometime ago they discovered the Dead Sea scrolls. Some of those fellows have been changing their views, and will have to re-write a lot of their books. They have found an almost complete copy of the book of Isaiah. They have also discovered a lot of other things that make them feel that they are not quite so sure about some things.

During the past forty years I have had so many

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things come along that have been such a comfort to me. They make me feel that sometimes it pays to be skeptical about some things. The archaeologists just keep digging, and every time they make a discovery it seems to sub-stantiate the fact that the Bible is dependable. Really, I am not at all sorry that I have held on to it, and I am not at all uneasy about what they will discover in the future. After all, the Bible has withstood a lot of attacks, and has come out with flying colors. I am rather proud I have been skeptical about some things. I have not had to back-track on a lot of things. I find that more, and more, people are coming to see that there are some things that are settled. After forty years of diligent and careful study I have never been able to find one *proved* fact of science that contradicts one single clear-cut truth that is set forth in the Word of God. Of course, I know that there are many *theories*, of some so-called scientists, that contradict the whole Bible. But I know there is a difference between a theory, and a proven fact of science. That is why I am a skeptic. I can't accept a lot of the theories that are set forth. They just don't jibe with the facts.

CHAPTER III

I AM SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Now I know that to make such a statement as that in public is almost blasphemous. To refuse to believe in the theory of evolution is heresy of the very worst sort. You can doubt almost anything and get by with it, but to raise any question about this sacred theory is to brand yourself as a fool. However, I just have to take my stand and declare that it is nothing but a *theory*, and *has never been proved by science*. There is not only one missing link, there are literally *millions of them*. I find that I am not alone, in my refusal to accept it as a proven fact. Many eminent scientists today readily admit that it is a rather shaky theory, and some have even repudiated it as being unsound. To show that this is true, I give you several statements from some of the greatest scientists of their day:

Dr. Ethridge, the famous authority on fossils, said, "Nine tenths of this talk about evolution is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation, and wholly unsupported by facts. The British Museum is filled with proof of the utter falsity of this view."

Lord Kelvin, who for a long time was President of the Royal Academy of Learning in England, said, "That man evolved from inferior animals is the wildest dream of materialism, a pure assumption, which offends me

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alike by its folly and arrogance."

Sir Ambrosia Fleming, Head of the Victoria Institute of England, and fellow of St. John's College, says, "The theory of evolution is a product of the imagination, and is not supported by facts."

Prof. Virchow of Berlin, and one of the greatest anatomists of his day, says, "The attempt to find the transition from animal to man has ended in total failure."

Now, when such outstanding men as these make such plain statements, you don't have to feel too bad about refusing to accept the theory that is so lacking in proof.

Not only is this theory lacking in conclusive proof, but even much of the proof that they do offer is very weak. I call your attention to some of the so-called missing links that they offer to substantiate their theory, and let you judge as to the validity of it.

1. The Ape-Man of Java. They claim he lived 500,000 years ago. The remains of this so-called missing link were found by a man named Dubois, in September, 1891. While digging in a river bank in Java, he discovered a molar. The following month he said he found the top part of a skull about three feet from where he found the molar. A year later, in August, 1892, he claimed he found a thigh bone about fifty feet from the spot where he found the tooth. He also found another molar in the month of October, 1892. He found these bones in a place where the remains of many other animal species were abundant.

Three years after, he is *supposed* to have made this

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great find, he took his so-called evidence to the Third International Congress of Zoologists at Leiden, Germany, and presented them to the men gathered there. After he made his report, Dr. Rudolph Virchow, the foremost anatomist of his day, politely, yet plainly, stated that he doubted the value of this find, because of the fact that they were found so far apart. He claimed that there was no positive proof that these bones all came from the same animal. Other scientists agreed with him in this.

Mr. Dubois then took these precious bones to his home in Holland, and concealed them from the gaze of men for more than thirty years. However, in spite of that fact, they took *his word for it*, and from *his measurements* they made plaster of Paris, or clay models of this so-called ape-man, and they have been presented to unsuspecting young people as part of the proof of the theory of evolution. *Later it was brought out that the whole thing was a hoax*, and many text books have had to be rewritten, because many so-called scientists were gullible enough to be taken in by such a flimsy thing. Man! you talk about credulity, if that does not beat anything that I have ever heard of then I don't know what would. They laugh at us Christian people, and talk about our simple faith, but brother, it takes more faith to swallow some of the things they teach, than it would ever take to believe the Bible.

I have thought, that sometime when I can, I would like to visit some of the museums, where this fellow was once on display, and see what they have put in his place. I hope to find a card with something like this on

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it, "We Were Mistaken. It Was a Joke." But I suppose that is too much to expect, for after all, this theory of evolution is a very sacred thing in the eyes of many people. It is so hard to give it up. If you did you would not be up-to-date. Some one might think you were unlearned and backward.

2. The Dawn Man of Dawson or the Piltdown Man. This fellow is another one of their prize exhibits to prove the theory of evolution. It might be of interest to you to know just how much real proof is to be found in this man. I will give you the facts and let you be the judge.

Sometime about the year 1908, a man named Dawson, got from a workman digging in a gravel pit in England, a small fragment of a skull of some kind. A year later, while visiting the same spot, Dawson picked up two more small parts of a skull, making three parts in all. Another year later, which would make these discoveries stretch out over a period of three years in all, half or less than half of a jaw-bone of some animal was also discovered close by. Then a man named Woodward found a tiny fragment of a skull. A year following these discoveries, a half jaw was also found. Then later a priest named Teilhard also found a tooth. All of these were found in somewhat the same locality. In this same general region were also found bones of elephants, hippopotami, beavers, horses, and deer. These bones that were found were collected and placed together and this is all we have of the Piltdown Man.

Now with these few bones Dawson and Woodward

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proceeded to make them a plaster of Paris man, and place these bones where they *thought* they were supposed to go, and with this plaster of Paris man, they proceeded to give another proof of the evolution of man. Sad to say there have been many people that been have been willing to swallow this as *real evidence*.

Even with this meager evidence many of the scientists are not at all agreed on the re-construction of this Piltdown Man. Some contend that the skull bones should have been placed one way and some another. Then this tooth gave them a great deal of trouble. Dawson and Woodward placed the tooth in the lower jaw but many scientists of America claim that it should go in the upper jaw. And there we have an aching void that the world can never fill. Then to add further to the confusion many great scientists are agreed that this jawbone did not belong with the other fragments, for it belonged to *a chimpanzee*. Can you wonder that a fellow would be a little skeptical of such flimsy evidence as this? No reputable chemist or physicist would think of or such flimsy evidence.

3. Man of Heidelberg. This man is supposed to have lived some 250,000 years ago. In passing, I want to says that I can't vouch for the age of these fellows, for I have never found the scientific proof they have for their ages. So far as I know, it is just a wild guess. But after all you have to take some things by faith, even in science, for after all, positive proof is not as abundant as some people think. If it were not for faith, no man could ever get a Ph.D. He has to take someone's word for a lot of things. Of course, you have

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to have real evidence when it comes to Christianity, but in science you can swallow a lot of things on the other fellow's word.

But let us get back to the Heidelberg Man; for he is very important in this great chain of evidence for the theory of evolution. Really the evidence is not so great and the facts are not hard to present. Two workmen in Mauer, Germany, while working in a sand pit found a jaw bone. This *great discovery* was made in 1907. In spite of the fact that many scientists are agreed that the teeth in this jawbone are *human teeth*, yet they take this jawbone and construct an *ape-like man, with a wild boar on his shoulders*. Where in the world they ever got the boar I have never been able to figure out. I guess they must have found a bristle and did not tell us about that, and from that bristle I suppose they got the boar. After all, it does not take much material to make a boar. If men can make a whole man from one jawbone, then you don't need to worry about the boar. Really it would be silly even to raise a question about such a little thing as a boar. That would be very unscientific to raise a question like that. Human nature is a funny thing when you stop to think about it. I never cease to marvel at the simple, child like faith of some people. What a wonderful thing it would be, if some of these same people would manifest that much faith in the religious world. But you can't have everything. Some people are just different from others.

4. Neanderthal Man. The remains of this *human being* were discovered in 1856 in a cave in Western Ger-

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many by two laborers. They carelessly dug up these bones, and because of their carelessness many of the bones were lost. A skull and numerous parts of the skeleton were saved. It was very evident that these remains were buried, *showing a belief in the future life*, on the part of the race to which this man belonged. The great German scientist, Dr. R. Virchow, and others since his time, looked upon this skull as deformed by disease. In fact some consider it the skull of an idiot. He was definitely low-brow. But you can find many people living today that have skulls shaped very much like this one. Yet they take this skull to prove that man came up from a lower form of life. Such is the evidence they give us. These are the *strongest* missing links they have to offer for their theory.

While I was a pastor in western North Carolina, I had a very dear friend, who was six feet seven inches tall. He wore shoes, size 15, and his hands were as large as a small ham. He is now dead, but I shudder to think what might happen if, in about one thousand years, some scientist should come along and dig up his skeleton. To make things more complicated, in that section where my friend lived and died, they have a species of wild Russian boars. They were shipped in there years ago from the steppes of Russia. Now they roam over those mountains in great profusion. Can you imagine what would happen if they should find the skeleton of my friend, and also the skeleton of one of those wild boars? They surely would have a field-day out of such a find as that. Of course, in that same community they have men that are not more than

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five and one-half feet tall, but those little fellows would not stand the ghost of a chance with this big giant. They never would get their picture in the National Geographic. This big giant would make the front page and they would be left out in the cold.

All of us know young men that are big tall fellows, and then all of us have seen midgets that were only a few feet tall. If their bones were found together they would no doubt create a problem for the scientist. But I feel sure they would be able to handle the situation. In fact they have already figured out a way to handle such unpleasant situations. They have already dug up thousands of bones, but they do not fit in with their theory, and so they have pushed them aside, Now, that is not just my own opinion. It is admitted by these very men that contend for this theory of evolution. They admit that they have marry bones that do not fit in, and so they have discarded them. On with the proof. That is the main thing. Some people don't seem to be looking for truth. They are out to prove a theory at any cost. In fact it seems that some of them are even willing to falsify the evidence, if they can only prove their theory.

CHAPTER IV

SOME STUBBORN FACTS THAT MUST BE FACED TO BE HONEST

The word evolution has become so familiar and commonplace that many people use it in a way that does not make sense. We often hear people talk about the evolution of the cotton gin, the evolution of the automobile, or the evolution of the airplane. Now that is not evolution in its true sense. Those things are but development and improvement. We all believe in development and improvement. When you speak of evolution with its proper meaning you are supposed to be saying that one distinct species came from an entirely different distinct species. The theory of evolution contends that all life came from one single cell that started back in the beginning millions of years ago. They have never been able to tell where this first cell of life came from. Some so-called scientists contend that this cell must have come from some other planet, but really that does not help much, for you still have to settle the question as to how it originated on that other planet. After all, there had to be a beginning of life somewhere, sometime in the dim distant past. It surely did not come by spontaneous combustion. Even the most rabid scientists would not contend for such a thing as that. Even though they can't account for the origin of life, they still go on with their theory.

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They start with this one-cell creature and from that they build on the idea that by a slow, gradual process all of life has come into being, and that everything that we know today came up through gradual stages until we come to man. They contend that there have been many steps upward from one species to another.

Now when we come to the *facts, as they are known*, we run into all kinds of trouble, and run up against facts that deny this whole theory. Nature gives a different testimony. In spite of their finespun theory nature insists on bringing forth every one after his kind. There are many species in the world today, and you can find variety and improvement within the bounds of these species. There is a distinct species known as the dog. Within that species you can find all kinds of dogs, with all shapes and size, but they are all dogs and will not cross with other species of animals. You can't even cross the dog with the fox, even though they look very much alike in many respects. There are some species that will cross with other species, but you get a hybrid that is usually sterile and can't reproduce. If they do happen to be fertile when bred back they always revert either to one or the other of the original species from which they sprang. The mule is an illustration of this truth. You can breed an ass and a horse, and get a mule but you have a sterile animal. If you should be lucky enough to find two mules that were fertile and breed them, then their offspring would revert to either one or the other species from which they sprang. The honeybee absolutely refutes the theory of evolution. The working bee never

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reproduces, and the breeding bee never works. They just insist on going their merry way in spite of the theory of evolution.

Many great men have spent weary years in tedious, heart-breaking experiment in trying to cross the line of species, and trying to produce new species, but they have failed.

Mr. Luther Burbank, the great naturalist, did many wonderful things in the plant world, and produced some wonderful changes in flowers, but he was never able to cross the line of species. He thought one time that he had accomplished such a feat, and gleefully announced that he had broken one of the laws of God. Later he had to admit that he was wrong. His plant, that he thought was a new species, let him down and reverted to its original species. Many other great scientists have tried the same thing and have had to admit failure. Nature says, NO, to all of these efforts of the scientist and insists on producing every one after its kind. The law of God still stands today that everything must produce after its kind. Man can rave and rant, but nature goes on her merry way bearing witness to the fact that the command of God given in Genesis is still in effect and can't be broken. Mendall's teaching on the law of inheritance is generally accepted today as an established law of nature. This law bears witness to the fact that while there may be much variation within the species, yet there can be no crossing over from one species to another. Really, it is good that God should establish such a law as that in nature. If there were not such a law of nature, then

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we would be living in a world of chaos and confusion. The farmer goes out and plants his wheat with the expectation of reaping a crop of wheat. The farmer and the cattlemen breed their stock with the confident faith that they will get the kind of animal they bred for. Of course, they expect to make improvement within the breed, but they do not expect new species. They have had enough experience to know that like produces like. They know they can depend on this great law of nature, in spite of the fnespun theories of some so-called scientists.

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THE HOLD OF GEOLOGY

When you turn from the field of man to the study of geology, it seems that there is just as much confusion that, adds to your unbelief. I have always wondered how they could tell the age of these that lived so many centuries, ago. The geologists talk about hundreds of thousands of years, even million of years. But when I timidly ask them how they know the age of fossils, they look at me with condescension and inform me that they tell the age of fossils by the strata of earth in which they are found. Then, when they get to talking about the age of rocks and strata, I ask them how they know the age of such things, and they look at me with pity or contempt, and inform me that tell the age of rocks and strata by the fossils they find in them. They confuse me no little. To further complicate things, they tell me that the world is formed with one layer on top of another, and that each layer is supposed to tell its own story. Then I turn around and get to reading about the earth-strata and find that in many places in the world, the layers are not as the scientists say they should be, but they are turned upside down in many places, and there are areas of as much as 20,000 square mile or more which are involved in these faults. Now, when I call the attention of the geologists to these things, they say they are *faults*, and that nature does

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not behave in those places as she should. I sometimes wonder if nature is not more reliable than some of their wild guesses.

I try to keep abreast of the times and try to be well informed. Really I don't like to be a skeptic, but it surely is hard. I read where one man says that a fossil or a layer is 100,000 years old and then some other fellow comes along and says 500,000 or perhaps a million. I was about ready to give up on the whole thing, and then sometime ago I read where they had found a *sure scientific way of telling the age of bones*. They said that now they could measure the amount of carbon in the bones, and know *for sure just* how old those bones were. I heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Now we have something to stand on." And then, bless your heart, I picked up the newspaper and read where they had discovered *a more accurate way*. I was not opposed to all the accuracy they could find, but the trouble was this article admitted that the measurement of carbon was *not at all reliable*, for the bones were porous and would gather carbon from the air or soil. But now they were going to measure the gelatine in the bones and in that way they could tell for sure, just how old the bones are. But I have been fooled so many times by *so-called assured facts*, that it makes me wonder if even this gelatine idea might be a sure thing. It seems to me that over a period of say 500,000 or a million years that even the gelatine might dry out just a little and they might miss it after all.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAW OF GRAVITATION

Back when I was in college they taught us the law of gravitation, as it was first set forth by Sir Isaac Newton. They told us that was one law we could surely rely upon for it always worked. I went along believing that for years, and really I have found it to be a very reliable law. I was getting along fine with this law until Prof. Einstein came along with his theory of relativity. I read about it with some interest, and thought what a wonderful thing it was to have such a brilliant mind as his. And he was a brilliant man. However, his theory did not bother me too much, for I was told that there were only about a dozen people in all the U.S.A. that understood his theory. I did not happen to be one of those dozen people, so I did not let that theory bother me too much, until just a short time ago. I was preaching in Canton, Ohio, and one night I was trying to get the people to get some conception of the magnitude of the universe. I got to telling them how far it was to the nearest star, and how long it would take to make a trip to this nearest star. After the service was over, a bright young high school student came up and informed me that I was all wet on the whole thing. He told me that according to Prof. Einstein's theory of relativity that we could be there even before we started. It is amazing how bright some

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of these High School freshmen really are. They make up, old fogies feel little and dumb. I went to my room feeling very low in mind and spirit that I should be so far behind the times after I got to my room I happened to remember that the U. S. Government was spending billions of dollars on satellites and guided missiles and that they were having an awful lot of trouble, trying to overcome the force of gravity and get into outer space. That made me feel somewhat better. Then I picked up the paper one morning and read where one of our great space scientists out in California was advocating that the Government spend several million dollars trying to launch a -satellite into space and try and prove the theory of relativity, and prove that Prof. Einstein was right in his theory. And there I had it forced on me that after aid it was only a theory, and had not been *proved at all*. That made me feel a lot better.

In fact, I would not want you to let it got out, or me, *but I have come* to see that there is a vast difference a theory and a proved fact of science. I recognize that there are many great proven facts of science that have contributed to the welfare of men. I rejoice in all that science has done for us. I look forward to all they will do for us in coming years. But I hope you will excuse me if I keep on insisting that I don't have to believe every *theory* that comes along in order to be intelligent.

I took an, course in Deductive and Inductive Logic when I was going to school, and I learned to do some thinking for myself. It seems hard to get over this

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habit. I just can't swallow everything that comes along, even if I am looked down on for not doing it. I just have to insist on the right to wait a little until we have sufficient facts to prove the case. I won't fall out with you if you don't go along with me, but I demand the right to be a skeptic about some things.

CHAPTER VII

THE BONES AT ROBBINSVILLE

If you could know just how many times I have been shocked by things, and have been let down by so-called learned men, you would not be too much surprised that I am somewhat skeptical about some things.

I remember that when I was pastor in Andrews, North Carolina, they were building a railroad over into Graham County. In making a cut through a small hill they dug up some large bones. Some fellow just jokingly said, "Say, those may be the bones of some pre-historic animal that roamed these hills many thousands of years ago." As a result of that they sent for some eminent scientists from Newport, Tennessee, Knoxville, and other places. They came and looked wise and said, "Yes, it was the bones of a great mammal that roamed those hills. One man said it was 100,000 years ago, but another said it was 300,000 years. They even told us what this animal ate. Of course that sounded kind of fishy to me that they should be so far apart in their figures, for after all, a difference of 200,000 years is quite a difference, even between scientists. However, the thing was finally settled when some old native swore that it was the bones of an elephant that had broken loose from a circus at Newport, Tenn., and got out there in the mountains, and they ran it down and killed it, and there I had my faith shaken again.

CHAPTER VIII

CLARENCE DARROW AND HIS TOOTH AT THE SCOPES TRIAL

Just after I had this experience about the bones in Graham County, the Scopes trial broke, over at Dayton, Tenn. You no doubt remember reading about it. The State of Tennessee passed a law that it was against the law to teach the theory of evolution in the public schools. A Mr. Scopes decided that he would break the law in order to bring the thing to a test. They had that great trial. Mr. barrow represented Mr. Scopes and Mr. William Jennings Bryan took the case for the State of Tennessee. Just before this trial some fellow had found a tooth out in the State of Arizona. The scientists had said it was the tooth of a prehistoric man that had lived hundreds of thousands of years ago. Mr. barrow threw that tooth into the face of Mr. Bryan, and used it to try to prove that the Genesis account of creation could not be true. Mr. Bryan died in the midst of the trial and the whole thing fell through. However, after that trial they went back out there to Arizona to try and find the rest of that prehistoric man. They did find some more of the skeleton. In fact they found the *whole skeleton*, but it turned out to be the *skeleton of a pig* and not a man. Of course barrow never did make any public acknowledgment that he was wrong. But those things just go to show

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how many times these so-called wise men can be wrong about some things.

We must recognize that there is a difference between finding a specimen, and properly classifying, and interpreting that find with known facts. If you begin to deal in wild guesses and speculation, you are not being scientific. You are merely dealing in wild guesses. You cease to be a true scientist and become a guesser. The true scientist is willing to wait and see if his guess is the right one. The true scientist does not depend on guesses; he is trying to find the facts, regardless of whether they fit in with his pre-conceived ideas or not. The true scientist is willing to give up his theory for proved facts. That is the mark of a real scientist. He is not trying to prove he is right. He is a searcher after truth. Many great scientists are willing to spend months and even years to be sure they are right. My hat is off to that kind of scientist. I am willing to listen to him, but I am not willing to take wild guesses, and swallow them without any proof. I am a skeptic about some things.

CHAPTER IX

PSYCHOLOGY TRUE AND FALSE

In this day and age psychology is all the rage. Young and old talk very wisely about psychology, and many people seem to have more faith in the psychologist and the psychiatrist, than they do in the minister of the Gospel. Many ministers are dabbling in psychology and many of them are trying to substitute psychology for the Gospel. Much of what passes for preaching today is a shallow type of psychology. Many ministers seem to feel that they are not fitted for the ministry unless they have taken several courses in counseling. Many of them are far better trained in psychology than they are in theology and the great truths of the Gospel. They can tell you far more about what some psychologist had to say, than they can about what Christ and Paul taught.

I readily recognize that there are many people today who have their mental problems and need to have help along this line. However, we do need to see that psychology has its limitations, and that it can never take the place of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many people's problems go deeper than the mind. They have soul maladies that need to be dealt with. They need to be saved from sin. We also need to see that after all, psychology has its limitations and is not on a par with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Psychology does not pretend to do anything but to help a person to become adjusted to himself, and his conditions of life. The religion of Jesus Christ can get us adjusted not only with ourselves, but it can bring us into harmony with the God of this universe, and it can give us a power that can lift us above our surroundings and conditions of life, and help us to live triumphantly in spite of all of our conditions and surroundings.

I took a course in psychology while in college and have read scores of books on psychology since being in the ministry. I have learned a number of things about psychology that make me just a little skeptical about some of it. I have found that there are many things the psychologist can't possibly know about. When you begin to deal with the human mind and human personality you are dealing with things that can't be put in the test tube, and you have to do a lot of guessing about things back there. In fact strictly speaking, the science of psychology is one of the most inexact sciences known to us today. There are so many things the psychologists miss. As an illustration, the professor that I took my course in psychology under claimed to be an atheist. He did not believe a person was a spirit being. One day he was explaining to us how the body was the instrument of the mind, and how the mind acted upon the body. Then he went on to point out to us that we must direct our minds, and lead them to think properly. Of course I went along with that, but I spoke up and said, "Professor, you tell us that the body is the instrument of the mind, and that we must

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direct our minds into the proper channels of thinking. Now I wish you would tell us *who it is that is to do the directing*, if we don't have a soul." He looked at me rather startled, and finally he smiled and said, "Well, you are a Christian and I am an atheist. We won't go into that." But the question is very pertinent today. We are more than animals and we do not think and act like animals. We have the power to reason and make choices. We have a *conscience*, and moral *perceptions*, that no animal ever had or ever will have.

In fact, back some years ago there was one theory of psychology that was very popular. It was called "Behaviorism." It taught that your glands determined your actions and choices. They taught that you were not a free moral agent with the power of choice. You were the victim of your glands. In other words, St. Paul was a great saint because he had a certain kind of glands that secreted a certain kind of fluid, and it made a great saint out of him. On the other hand, Nero had another kind of glands that secreted another kind of fluid, and it made a sinner out of him. One young lady over in New Jersey took this course, but she was one of these skeptics that did not swallow everything the book said, or everything the professor taught. When it came time for final examination she answered all the questions in the way she had been taught. Then at the bottom of the page, she added this postscript, "This is what the book teaches, and this is what you seem to believe, but I don't believe a word of it. *My glands won't let me.*" I find that my glands refuse to function many times as some people seem to

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feel they should.

I have seen the psychologists change their position so many times, and there are so many different schools of psychology, I think I had rather have something that is a little more dependable, than some of the wild guesses of the psychologists. I have learned a lot about psychology by studying human nature, but I have learned far more from the study of God's Word. I have come to believe that Jesus knew more about psychology than any Ph.D., in the land today. He has a remedy for human ills that really works. In fact, even the great Apostle Paul, seemed to have deep insight into the human heart and mind, and he offered some remedies that worked back in his day, and have worked down through the centuries.

All kinds of people, with all kinds of problems, have tried his remedy and their lives have been transformed. The Gospel that he preached could save men and women from raw heathenism and multitudes of alcoholics have been transformed. In fact, the hardest of cases have been saved by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ - men like John Bunyan, John Newton, Jerry McAuley, Mel Trotter and thousands of others. Many people need something more than counseling, they need Christ. If the pastor fails to lead them to Christ, then he has fallen down on the job,

CHAPTER X

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROVED FACTS AND WILD GUESSES

In reading this message you may have jumped to the conclusion that I have little faith in and respect for science. If that is true, I want to assure you that you are sadly mistaken. I don't think there is anyone who has a greater appreciation for what science has done for mankind than I have. I am deeply grateful for every contribution scientists have made and are making. They have completely transformed our way of life, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude for all they have done. Many of them have been dedicated men and have been willing, not only to risk their lives, have actually died for the advancement of science. Many of them are humble, devout men and are worthy of our sincere praise. The thing I have been trying to point out to you is the fact that there is a vast difference between the proved facts of science, and many of the wild guesses of some so-called scientists. The true scientist will readily admit that what I am saying is true. In fact, one of the marks of a great scientist and scholar is his spirit of humility, and his willingness to admit that there are many things he does not know for certain. I have great respect for that kind of man. However, when I run across one of these cocksure fellows that thinks he has all the answers, and is ready

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to laugh you out of court, if you do not accept his theories, then I am inclined to be shy of such a fellow. When any man stands up before a class and sets forth theories as proved facts of science, then he disqualifies himself to be a safe teacher. All teachers have to teach theories. In fact much of what is being taught today is nothing in the world but theory. If you don't believe that this is true, then visit some great library and see the great stacks of books that were once looked upon as assured facts of science, but today they are out-of-date. In fifty years from now, our grandchildren can visit some of our libraries, and have a laugh at how simple-minded we were to believe some of the things that we now believe.

I have great respect for learning and real scholarship. In fact the first ten years I was in the ministry I spent \$3,000 for books. I almost landed in the poorhouse from buying books. Through these years I have read extensively. I have read all kinds of books. I have not had a closed mind. I have been an earnest seeker after truth. I have read Tom Paine's "Age of Reason," Bob Ingersoll's Lectures, Hume and Voltaire. I have read scores of books written by the modernists and the liberals. I have tried to keep abreast of the times. As I have read, I have tried to do some thinking, and have never been ready to swallow everything I have read. I have seen many of the things that were taught as assured facts go down the drain, and I have seen many men swing back from liberalism to a sound Christian faith. I could mention them by name, but that is not necessary.

CHAPTER XI

THE ONE BOOK THAT HAS STOOD THE TEST

In all of my reading and searching after truth, I have had the abiding conviction that the Bible was the truth given to us from God. I have never doubted its teaching. I have stood upon its truth, and this faith has held my soul as an anchor. I am more convinced than ever that it is the one book among all the others that can be trusted. The Bible has stood the test of the centuries. There is no book in all the world that has been given a more thorough test than the Bible. Every jot and tittle has been examined under the microscope. Many times it has been studied, not by its friends, but by its foes. They studied it not with the idea of accepting it, but with the purpose of trying to discount it. Some of the keenest minds of the past and present have tried to rule it out of court. Bob Ingersoll went up and down the land lecturing against the Bible. Someone has said he made \$500 a night lecturing on the mistakes of Moses, but you could not make 50 cents a night lecturing on the mistakes of Bob Ingersoll. While Bob has died and passed on and is now almost forgotten, yet Moses still speaks to this generation, and will speak to the generations to come. His message abides.

It is said that Voltaire once declared that the time would come that if you wanted to find a Bible you

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would have to go to a museum to find one. But the time came when the house that Voltaire lived in was used for the purpose of printing and distributing the Word of God. Many little hammers have been worn out on this old anvil, but the anvil still stands and will stand.

Men have been willing to give their lives to be able to translate this book into the language of the people. Others have been willing to die at the stake for its truths. Millions have read it and believed it. They have put their trust in its teaching, and have gone down their tomorrows with transformed lives. Dying saints have pillowed their heads on its promises, and have gone out into eternity with the Word on their lips. They gave the testimony that it had not failed them. Still others today love and cherish this grand old Book. Millions of copies of it sell every year. While many books of science have passed into the limbo and have been forgotten, the Bible still stands like the Rock of Gibraltar, and it will stand as long as time shall last.

It is God's Word and it will not pass away. I refuse to give it up for the wild guesses of science falsely so called. Even though I may not understand all of it, yet I believe it.

I have not written this message with any idea of trying to discount real science. I have written this message with the hope that I may say something that will help young people who are being exposed to the blatant unbelief of this day, and help them to see that there is something that they can hold to. I want to plead with them not to give up their faith in the eternal

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verities of God's Word for the wild guesses of some teachers that are making sport of their faith, and who take delight in shattering the faith of the young people that come under their influence. Young people, just remember that this book has stood for more than 2,000 years against all the attacks of its enemies, and that it will continue to stand. The Methodist Church has spent one million dollars to have a commentary on the Bible printed so that people might have a better understanding of its teaching. While I do not agree with all that is to be found in that set of commentaries, yet I want to remind you that a great church, made up of sensible men and women, would not spend a million dollars to try to explain a bunch of myths and fables. God has spoken unto us, and it behooves us to hear what he has to say. Hold on to your Bible. Read and study it, Fill your minds with its great truths. Commit portions of it to memory and it will enrich your life. Accept Its truths and teaching, and accept the Christ who stands in the center of this great Book, and you will never regret it. The Psalmist said, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." He declared, "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If you will study this Book and believe it, it will keep you out of sin. But sin will keep you away from this Book. In fact, that is one reason why so many people hate the Bible so much. They love darkness, rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Many people are not having head trouble. It is heart trouble that bothers them. Jesus has laid down

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a challenge that is just as reasonable and sound as it can be. He has said, "If any man willeth to do the will of my Father, he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God." This is a sound challenge. It is as sound as any test of science today. He is saying that you can go into the lab and run a test and know for yourself. I challenge any honest searcher after truth to try it. He will be convinced and will be willing to bow at the feet of Jesus and say, "My Lord and my God."

CHAPTER XII

A WORD OF CAUTION TO THE FAITH WRECKERS

As I travel up and down this land, I find many fine young people who have come under the influence of some skeptical professor, and have had their faith wrecked. Today they are either bewildered and confused, or have become cynical, and scoff and sneer at things that once were sacred to them. The tragedy of the thing is that they have not only lost their faith, but they have given up their moral convictions, and many of them are being wrecked and blighted by sin. Some professors will have a lot to answer for when they stand before the judgment bar of God. They are going to stand there whether they believe it or not. I have had many young people tell me that their professor took delight in wrecking their faith, and stood and laughed as he did the job. Some of these professors seem to get a great deal of pleasure out of wrecking the faith of young people. In fact while holding a meeting in the University Methodist Church of Wichita, Kansas, one young man told me that one of his professors said, "Anyone who has a faith that can be wrecked, then it ought to be wrecked for it is not worth holding on to." I suppose he thought that was sensible. I wonder if he would be willing to say that any flower in his garden that can be crushed ought to be, for it

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is not worthy to live? I suppose he would be willing to contend that if his tiny baby could be choked on a piece of cold roast beef, then it ought to die for it would not be fit to live. How dumb can some people be and still stay out of the insane asylum!

No honest doctor would think of taking a vital organ out of a human being, if he did not think it was the best thing for the patient, yet some professors are willing to rob young people of their faith, and give them nothing to take its place. If any person is going to rob a person of his faith, then he ought to have some thing better to put in its place. To rob a person of his faith is to turn him loose on the sea of life without chart or compass, and he is sure to end up on the rocks.

When I was in college, I had three very dear friends who were studying for the ministry. All three of these young men were bright, and gave great promise of being useful men in the work of God. They all three claimed to be called by God. They went on to a great university. Sad to say, it was a church school, and was supposed to be a Christian institution. In that university was a brilliant atheist. Why in the world any so-called Christian school would have an atheist on its faculty I have never been able to figure out. These young men came under the influence of this brilliant atheist, and they lost their faith and gave up the idea of going into the ministry. One of them made ship-wreck of his life and died in disgrace. Another one of these young men took up law practice, and came to my home city to practice law. He failed in that and a few years ago he took a pistol and blew out his brains.

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The third man now lives in my home city. He has a job collecting insurance from the colored people, and makes about \$60 a week. He is cynical and hard, and so far as I know has nothing to do with the church. I saw him sometime ago in the bank. He looked seedy and seemed to be ashamed for me to see him. There was a time when he was the most brilliant and most promising young man in the college that we attended. If it had not been for the influence of that skeptical professor, that man no doubt would be preaching the Gospel today, and perhaps winning souls for Christ. I surely would hate to be in that professor's place when he stands before the judgment bar of God. Jesus said, "It would be better for you to have a millstone tied around your neck, and be cast into the sea, than to offend one of these little ones, and cause them to stumble." I would hate to be in the faith-wrecking business. I had rather be the one that would help people find Christ, and teach them to live his Word. There is coming a time when God will judge the world through Jesus Christ. We are going to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. It may be great sport now to wreck faith and blight lives, but the time will come when such people will cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. His wrath will be terrific against such people; for they have rent and torn the sheep for which he died. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, *ye did it unto me.*" Brother, beware about this wrecking business. It is serious business in the sight of God.

CHAPTER XIII

FAITH IS THE KEY TO MUCH KNOWLEDGE

In conclusion I would like to remind you of the fact that even though a man may be a brilliant scientist and have a Ph.D., degree, that does not necessarily make him an authority on religion and many other things. I have seen brilliant men that had a Ph.D., but they did not know how to change a fat tire, or would not know which end of the horse to put the bridle on. And when I say that I am not throwing off on a Ph.D., degree, I am just reminding you of the fact that a man may know a lot, and still there are many things that he does not know. Most of the brilliant men readily acknowledge that. Just because Henry Ford made his millions making and selling Model T Fords does not mean that he knew everything. Luther Burbank was a wizard when it came to dealing with plants, and yet was very naive about many other things. A man may be a wizard in the field of physics, and yet not know much about astronomy and many other things. He may be able to split the atom and tell men how to build atomic bombs, and yet not know how to fly a jet plane, or even split wood without cutting his foot. I have seen many brilliant men who had a Ph.D., and they were very devout, consecrated men of God. Many of them put me to shame. In fact some of the most devout, humble Christians that I have ever known were college

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professors and outstanding doctors. They humbled me with their simple faith and their devotion to Christ. All down through the years some of the great scientists have been humble Christians, and believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. I am told Prof. Einstein confessed to a belief in God. I am happy to think that is true. However, if Mr. Einstein had been an avowed atheist, I don't think that would make any difference in my own personal faith. I have proved some things to my own satisfaction, and for me they are settled. I wish that all men believed in them, but whether they do or not, I am going right on believing them, because I know them to be true. There are some things you can prove to your own satisfaction, and there are some things that can only be *known by faith*. As long as you refuse to believe, then your eyes are blinded and you will never be able to see them. "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must *believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*" "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God." Not only do we know this by faith, but there are many other things that can be known the same way. In fact without faith you will never know very much. Every person that has a Ph.D. degree has taken a lot of things on faith. It requires a lot of faith to get an education. If you will stop and think, you will be amazed at the many things you have accepted by faith. *We live by faith.*

Now while many people are willing to accept a lot of things by faith, yet when it comes to the most vital

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things they hesitate and fumble. If anyone would manifest as much faith in the realm of religion, as he does in the class room, he would be astonished at the things he could learn.

Some years ago I was holding a meeting in Spencer, North Carolina. A very consecrated Christian girl was attending this meeting. She was a university graduate and had a very keen mind. One day after service she told me of this very striking incident. She said, that in the university she attended, they had one teacher who was very skeptical. He was brilliant and a great teacher, but he did not believe in God, the Bible, or in Jesus Christ. She said that day after day in his classes he would go out of his way to take a fling at religion. He would scoff at the idea of there being a God, and would make fun of people that believed the Bible to be the Word of God. He would ridicule people who put their faith in Christ as their Saviour. Even though it was a State institution he would deliver his tirade on practically every class. This young lady said she stood it as long as she could, and then she felt that she would be untrue to Christ and her convictions if she did not give her testimony. One day she arose to her feet and said, "Professor, it grieves me to hear you keep delivering these tirades against the Bible, God, and the Christian: religion. You have no right to do it. In the first place, this is a State institution, and it is against the law to teach religion in this university. This institution is supposed to be *neutral* when it comes to the subject of religion." She said, "If it is against the law to teach religion in this institution, then it

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ought to be against the law to teach *against religion.*" Then she said another thing! "Professor, you are entirely out of your field. You don't know what you are talking about. According to your own admission you don't even believe in the existence of God, and how can you know anything about something you don't even believe in? By your own admission, you never read and studied the Bible, except to criticise it. You don't come to it *with the same respect and consideration that you give to other books.* According to your own admission you have never prayed, or put your trust in Christ, as your Savior, and therefore you can't know whether he can do for you what he claims he can, for *you won't meet the conditions that must be met to prove Leis claims.* You are just talking about something you don't know anything about." Then she said, "Professor, you know many things that I don't know, but I know something that you don't know. I know there is a God for I have met him and have daily fellowship with him. In fact he is the greatest reality in my life. I know him better than I know my closest friend. I know the Bible is the inspired Word of God, for it inspires me to live the kind of life that God wants me to live. I know that Jesus Christ is the Divine Son of God for he does for me what only God can do."

She told me that she sat down with a great peace welling up in her soul. She said the other members of the class looked at her in amazement. She said the professor stood there for almost a minute, and then the tears welled up in his eyes. He finally spoke up with a tremor in his voice and said, "Young lady, you

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re right. I am out of my field. I am talking about a something that I am grossly ignorant about.” Then, said, he swallowed a few times and said, "I will she degree that I possess say this: I would gladly give every today, if I could have the peace and the joy that you seem to have. The radiance on your face, and the deep peace that you have, shines out through you. I am sure you must know what you are talking about." It is very strange to me that brilliant men will go to college, and take the word of their professor for so many things, and yet when it comes to the great eternal verities of the Christian religion they draw back. If they really wanted to know the truth, they could prove it as clearly as any test they ever made in the chemical laboratory. However, the conditions must be met, *in this field*, lust as they must be met in the field of chemistry, and the results are just as certain. Let anyone honestly try it and he can know for himself. Many thousands have witnessed to the reality of it.

**"CAST NOT AWAY THEREFOR THY CONFIDENCE
WHICH HATH GREAT
RECOMPENSE OF REWARD."**

**"TO HIM THAT COMES TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE
CAST OUT."**

"O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD."

A SUPPLEMENT TO

I Am A Skeptic

By
John R. Church, D.D.

The Herald Press - 1960

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SKEPTICISM IS NOT NEW OR MODERN

Many times in talking to young people who have come face to face with skepticism for the first time, I find that they seem to feel that what they are running into is something new and modern. I feel that they need to be brought to see that there is nothing new or modern about the things that are being presented to them. In fact, I have been a careful and diligent student of the Word of God, and have also tried to keep abreast of what is being taught; and I find that there is not one single argument that is offered today against the Bible and the Christian faith, that has not been offered down through the years, and back for many centuries.

Many of the arguments that have been offered in recent years against the deity of Christ, miracles, the virgin birth, and the resurrection of Christ have been offered many, many times before, and have been refuted again and again by the ablest of scholars.

Sometime ago I was preaching in a minister's conference with Dr. William Cannon, Dean of the School of Religion at Emory University, and to my mind, one of the most able scholars of this age. One day in the course of our discussion, he mentioned a theory that had been presented by an outstanding liberal against the virgin birth of Christ. It was the theory that Christ was the son of a German soldier. The only evidence (?) that this so-called "scholar" had to offer for this idea,

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was the fact that it was *supposed* that a German garrison was stationed near Nazareth, at or near the time that Mary became the mother of Jesus. He suggested, that she, like many girls of today, became careless of her conduct and became pregnant by some unknown soldier.

In commenting on this theory that had been offered, Dr. Cannon said, "Well, it is very unfortunate that this man should have advanced this *old exploded idea*." I spoke up and asked, "Dr. Cannon, how old is that idea?" He replied, "Well, it was presented along about the first of the third century." Then he grinned and said to me, "Why did you ask that question?" I replied, "Well, Dr. Cannon, I have been a student for many years, and I find that much of this stuff that is called "modern" is at least a thousand years old." If you will study much of this stuff that is called "modernism" you will find that it is not modern at all. It is at least a thousand years old.

Noah Had Skeptics to Contend With

The modern skeptic may think he is modern and up-to-date, but his crowd has existed for many thousands of years. There were skeptics in the days of Noah. Jesus makes a very striking statement about those skeptics in the days of Noah. He says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came." Notice that statement, "*They knew not until*

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the flood came." Why did they not know that the flood was to come? They certainly did know, for Noah had preached to them and told them of the coming flood. He had not only warned them and pleaded with them, but he backed up his preaching by his action.

There are some people who talk about the coming of Christ, but live as if they did not expect him in a million years. However, Noah backed up his preaching by his conduct. While he preached and warned of the flood to come, he worked away at building the ark. These people had warnings, but they did not *believe the preacher*. They were like so many of the skeptics today. They thought Noah was a crackpot and an old fogey. They went their way and continued to live in sin and were suddenly overtaken by the flood.

That same thing is going to happen with many of the skeptics today. They may scoff and sneer at the Bible and those who accept it as the very Word of God; but the time will come when these same skeptics will cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

Peter Tells Us That There Will Be Skeptics In The Last Days

In II Peter 3:3 we find these words: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, *scoffers, walking after their own lusts*, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the be-

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ginning of the creation." We see by this statement, that the scoffers and the skeptics will be with us right up to the very last. These skeptics in the last days will be just like those in the days of Noah. They will refuse to believe the Word of God. In fact, Peter tells us that these scoffers are *willingly ignorant*. Peter points out that they deliberately shut their eyes to historic truth. They argue that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. In other words, they argue that nothing has happened yet, and therefore nothing ever will happen.

Peter reminds us, and them, that all things have not continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. He points out that there was a time in human history when God did step in and intervene in the affairs of men. He reminds us that God sent a flood upon the world and destroyed the human race, with the exception of one man and his family. He also points out that this same world is kept in store for a judgment of fire in the last days. The same Word that brought the flood will also bring the judgment of fire.

Why do these skeptics willingly ignore this great fact of history? Why do they try so hard to disprove the historic account of the flood? Certainly there is plenty of scientific proof for the flood. There are three great branches of science that bear witness to the fact of the flood. The science of ethnology, the science of geology, and the science of archaeology all bear witness to the fact of the flood. These skeptics willingly ignore these facts, for they do not fit in with their phi-

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losophy of things. They are enamored with the idea of gradual progress and development. They have accepted the wild theory of evolution and gradual progress, and they don't like the idea of God's stepping in and doing things in his own way. They want to do it. They think they can get along without God and they rebel against the idea of God's coming in judgment. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." He is coming whether they believe it or not. Jesus is coming back to this earth again.

Jesus Had Skeptics to Contend With

In Mark 12:18-27 we have the very interesting account of Jesus in his encounter *with* the liberals of his day. The Sadducees were the modernists of his day. They did not believe in miracles, the supernatural, or in the resurrection of the body. They were the advanced thinkers of their day. This group of skeptics came to Jesus with a catch question, with the hope they could put him to shame in the eyes of the multitude. I can picture them, as they come to him with their smirk of pleasure. They will show this young upstart just where he stands. They think they have an iron-clad case, that he can't possibly answer. They remind him of the Law of Moses, with reference to the marriage of a man who dies and leaves a wife behind.

They tell him of seven brothers that married the same woman, and then they ask the question, "Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?" That really

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sounded smart. It looks as if they have him on the spot. Jesus replies to them with a very startling statement. He says, "Do ye not therefore *err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?*" Think of it. Jesus stands and tells these high-brows that they are ignorant. *They err because they are ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the power of God.* They quoted Scriptures, but he tells them that they know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

What Jesus said to the skeptics of his day could be said of many of the skeptics today. Many of the arguments that are offered today against the Old Testament are based on ignorance and not a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. As an illustration of this, I cite a few instances that have come under my observation: The man who did not know the difference between the ark that Noah built, and the ark of the covenant.

A friend of mine told of preaching in a college center, and there was a man who was supposed to be very smart. He was an avowed atheist. One day he arose and asked my preacher friend if he believed the ark that Moses built was as large as the Bible said it was. My friend assured him that he did accept the Bible account of the size of Noah's Ark. Then the skeptic said, "Well, if that ark was that large, how in the world could four men carry it through the wilderness on two poles?" This poor fellow thought he knew something about the Bible, but he did not have sense enough to know the difference between Noah's ark and the ark of the covenant!

THE PREACHER WHO WAS MISTAKEN ABOUT GOD AND DAVID

Some years ago, I was working with a pastor in a revival meeting. He had been well trained in liberalism. One day we got to talking about the Bible. He informed me that he could not accept the Old Testament, because it said that God commanded David to number the people of Israel, and then punished him and the people for doing what God told him to do. I told him that God did not command David to do that, but that it was Satan that put it into the heart of David to do it. I knew where the Scripture was that told this, but would not tell him where it was to be found. I thought it would not hurt him to do a little searching of the Word for himself.

The next morning he came down to breakfast with his eyes red and swollen. He had stayed up until 2:00 A. M., to prove to me that I was wrong. After we had asked the blessing, he looked at me and said, "You are right. It was not God, but *Satan*, that told David to number the people." If some people would spend a little more time in reading and studying the Bible, instead of listening to what other people have to say about it, they would be a lot better off.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick and His Boner

Some years ago I was reading Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick's book "A Guide To An Understanding of the

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Bible." (Really, the book is misnamed. It would be better to call it "A Guide to a Mis-understanding of the Bible.) In this book, Dr. Fosdick tries to prove that at first the children of Israel thought that their God was a God of the hills. In proof of his contention, he cites the case where God told Moses that he would not go with him up into the land of Caanan, but that he would stay at Sinai.

Now, if Dr. Fosdick had read his Bible a little more carefully, and with an open mind, he would have never made such a break as that, for in Exodus 22:3, 12, 16, God plainly told Moses why he would not go up with him into the land of Caanan. He told him, "For I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff necked people: *lest I consume thee in the way.*" So we see that it was not the fact that God was a God of the hills, but it was because of the sins of the people that he would not go with them.

Really, there are a lot of things that people could learn if they would only read and study the Word of God. The trouble is, so many people are listening to what other people say, and do not give God a chance to speak to them through his Word "Ye do err, because you know not the scriptures, neither the power of God."

Elisha and The She-Bears

Sometime ago a professor, in one of our Methodist colleges stood before his class and told them of Elisha and the little children that ran after him, calling him

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an "old bald-head." The prophet of God turned and pronounced a curse on them and some she-bears came out and destroyed them. Then this professor looked wise and said, "Now how do you think that compares with the picture of Jesus as he takes little children up in his arms and blesses them." To many young people that could be very confusing and get them upset.

Now, if this teacher had been strictly honest and had done some searching, he never would have pulled such a boner as this. If you will turn to II Kings 2:23-25, you will find the record of this. If you have a marginal reference Bible, you will notice by the words, "Little children" a letter refers you to the margin. In this margin we are directed to I Kings 3:7, where it speaks of Solomon as being a *little child*, and yet at that very time he was already anointed king of Israel, and had taken many wives unto himself, and made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

So we see here is one case where the Bible speaks of a *grown man as a little child*. If you will also turn to I Kings 11:17-19, you will find where the Bible refers to Hadad as a *little child*, and yet he was large enough to be a soldier and Pharaoh gave his wife's sister as a wife. If you will turn to Genesis 44:20, you will find the record of Joseph and his brethren as they talk together. Judah, in telling about his father and the family back in Canaan, refers to Benjamin as a *little child*. At that very time Benjamin was married and had a family of children.

These passages lead us to see that these people who scoffed at the prophet of God were not *tender, inno*

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cent children. They were grown men who had *rejected* and *despised* the servant of God, and hated him for the message he had brought to them. They were scoffers just like we have today. This was not a petulant man who resented being made fun of because of his bald head. This was the spokesman of God, and he was dealing with a bunch of skeptics just as God has had to deal with down through the years.

I just wonder if this skeptical professor ever gave any time to the study of this passage? Was he being honest with his class when he sat in judgment of the Bible and tried to insinuate doubts into their minds? I have a feeling that if a man is going to teach in one of our Church schools, he ought to try and help the young people to understand the Bible, rather than to try to wreck their faith. If our Church is going to ask us to support our Church schools, then they ought to give us the kind of teachers that can inspire faith, rather than wreck it.

I might also say that I have found it wise to give God the benefit of the doubt, rather than sit in judgment upon him and condemn before all the evidence is in. The old Testament has stood a long time, and was *accepted by our Lord as the Word of God.* Some of these skeptics will wake up some day and find that they are mistaken, and it may be too late for them. It is a dangerous thing to wreck the faith of young people. When you rob a person of his faith in God and his Word you are cutting him loose from his mooring. Be careful how you do it.

Is God A Dirty Bully?

Some years ago one of our Bishops referred to God as a dirty bully, because he commanded Saul to go down and utterly destroy the Amalekites. To me this sounds like a petulant, spoiled child, who rebels against the authority of his parents. In fact, when I was a boy, and my father saw fit to punish me for something that I had done, I sometimes felt that he was a bully and was being hard on me. I have lived long enough to find out that my father was not being a bully when he corrected me, but he was being a good, faithful father. He knew more than I did, and knew better what was good for me.

We are living in an age when there is rebellion against all discipline and authority. Some people are ready to sit in judgment on the God of this universe. It might be well for us to pause and remember that we are finite and God is infinite. Naturally, God's ways are above our ways, and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. It might be well for us to stop and think that perhaps God may have a good reason for doing some things. We may not understand everything he does, but we can at least believe that he knows best. When I say this, I am not begging the question and not trying to offer an alibi for God. He does not need that; but we do need to see that even though we may not always understand God's ways, yet he knows best.

Now, let us see if God was a dirty bully in his dealings with those people back there. In the first place,

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I would like to refer you to Genesis 15:7-18. In this passage, you will find the record of where God entered into a covenant with Abraham. In this covenant God told Abraham that he would give to him and his descendants the land of Canaan as an eternal inheritance. However, in the 16th verse, God tells Abraham that it will be *four generations* before his heirs finally come in to possess the land. He tells him why this will be true, "*For the iniquity of the Amorites, is not yet full.*"

Think of it. God keeps his chosen people waiting for four *hundred years* to enter into their inheritance. Why does he do that? He is giving the Amorites four hundred years in which to repent and turn from their sins. Does that sound like God is a dirty bully? Many people have never come to see that God dealt with these people for all of these centuries, and gave them chance after chance to repent and turn to him.

I just wonder if the good Bishop who referred to God as a dirty bully, ever gave any serious consideration to just who the Amalekites really were? If he will study his Bible carefully, he will find that Amalek was a grandson of Esau. Esau was a twin brother to Jacob. Both of these brothers had the same light about God. However, Esau was a man of the flesh and loved the pleasures of this world more than spiritual things. He was willing to sell his birthright for a mess of beans. In other words, he despised things of spiritual and eternal value. As a result of his example his people turned away from God and went into idolatry. When the people of Israel came out of Egypt and were on their way to Caanan, Amalek came out against them

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and tried to destroy them. In fact, the first battle that Moses and the children of Israel had after they got out of Egypt was with the Amalekites.

Now, in spite of this act on the part of Amalek, God did not destroy them at that time. In fact, Moses instructed the people, that when they passed through the land of Esau, they were not to destroy any property, and that they were to pay for whatever they needed from these people. Does that sound like being a dirty bully?

We need to see that these Amalekites had had ample opportunity, and *plenty of light*, but they had gone on in their rebellion against God. We also need to see that these women *were not innocent women*. They were just as guilty and vile as their husbands. They were just as responsible as the men. If anyone will study the history of those heathen nations, he will find that they had fallen to the very lowest depths of sin and degradation. It is true that the children were innocent, and not to blame for the sins of their parents. However, we also need to see that sometimes it is a more merciful thing for God to take innocent children to heaven, rather than leave them to grow up in such an environment as those children had to grow up in.

When I was a pastor in a certain city, I was asked to go one day and pray for a child that had spinal meningitis. They told me that the mother was a very wicked, sinful woman. In fact, she was a harlot and kept a bawdy house. When I went into this home, I tried to talk with this woman about her soul. I *begged*

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her to repent of her sins and get right with God. She informed me that she did not send for me to talk about her condition; but she wanted me to pray for her child. As I stood there and saw the attitude of the woman, and realized the kind of home that child would have to live in, I felt led to pray for God to ease it of its awful pain and take it home to heaven.

As I laid my hand on that child's head and prayed, it ceased to whimper and cry and became perfectly quiet. The mother was amazed, and said to me, "That is the first time that child has been quiet in 24 hours." The child went to sleep and never did wake up. I suppose the Bishop would think I was a dirty bully for praying such a prayer, but *I felt that God led me to do it*, and it seems that he *granted my request*.

If anyone will take the trouble to study the historic record, he will find that as long as the Amalekites lived, they were the enemies of God and God's people. If you will turn to I Samuel 27:8, you will find that it was an Amalekite that finally slew king Saul. Saul disobeyed God and *spared them* and *they stew him*. If you will turn to Esther 8:10 you will find that wicked Haman was an Agagite. In other words, he was a descendant of the very man that Saul spared in disobedience to God's command. Wicked Haman was the persecutor of the Jews. It may be the Lord had some inside information that the Bishop did not know about. He may not be a dirty bully after all. He is wise and merciful.

I don't think anyone could fairly accuse Paul of being a dirty bully, and yet in Romans 1:18-25 we hear

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him saying, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; *for God hath shewed it unto them.* For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; *so that they are without excuse.*"

When people have been given light, and they reject it, then there is nothing for them but the judgments of God. This same thing will be true of the skeptics of today. God has given them light and they refuse to accept. Paul tells us that when people love not the truth, then God gives them up to believe a lie. You will either believe the truth or you will come to believe a lie. That is sound from the standpoint of psychology. Man is going to believe something. God has given us the truth in his Word, but some people seem to prefer to believe a lie.

The Wisdom of God in Dealing With Israel

There are too many people who are inclined to judge the Old Testament by the impression that it makes *on them*. That is no fair way to judge the Old Testament. We need to judge it in the light of what God was trying to do, and the impression it was meant to make on the people to whom the truth was given. We need to have some idea as to the condition of those people

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when God brought them out of Egypt and *we need to see what God was trying to teach them*. They had spent four hundred years in Egypt surrounded by idolatry and superstition. They had been deeply impressed by all of this. Even after they got out of Egypt they still were inclined to revert to the sins of the people with whom they had lived for so long. It might pay you to go back and read the records of just what they did, and how God had to deal with them.

When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush, he told him, "I have seen the afflictions of my people, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters." He was mindful of them and was about to deliver them. They had taken enough, and it was time for God to remember his covenant with Abraham. God keeps his promises. He never fails. It may seem that he has forgotten; but he is still mindful of his people.

When Moses and Aaron stood before Pharaoh, and told him that the Lord God had said for him to let the children of Israel go free, Pharaoh said, "*Who is the Lord God* that I should obey him in letting the children of Israel go free?" Now that was a perfectly proper question to ask. He was a heathen and worshiped *many gods*. However, it happened that *he did not know the Lord God*. When he asked the question, Moses did not give him a philosophical dissertation on the nature and attributes of God. He gave him a concrete demonstration of who the Lord God was. He held up a rod before Pharaoh.

Now Pharaoh knew what a rod stood for. He wielded a rod himself. He knew that it was a symbol

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of power and authority. Moses threw this rod on the ground and it became a writhing, twisting serpent. Pharaoh looked at that serpent and said, "Bring in my magicians." His magicians were the *representatives of his gods*. When they came in, and Pharaoh told them what Moses had done, they threw their rods down and they, too, became serpents. Now up to that point, the Lord God did not have a thing on the gods of Pharaoh. They were on an equal footing. The gods of Pharaoh had been able to do the same thing the Lord God had done. However, right at that point is where business began to pick up.

The serpent that had been Moses' rod went around and swallowed up all the other serpents. Moses picked it up by the tail and it became a rod again. In other words, Moses showed to Pharaoh that the Lord God was the *supreme God*. He was the God above all other gods and the God of absolute power and authority. Pharaoh should have been convinced by such a demonstration. Instead of being convinced, and yielding to the demands of God, he hardened his heart and set himself against God and God's plans.

In that mighty contest in Egypt, God gave to Pharaoh, the people of Egypt, and to the children of Israel, ten of the greatest demonstrations of his majesty and power that this world has ever seen. It is rather striking, too, to notice that each time God manifested his great power, he struck down one of the gods of Egypt. They worshiped the river Nile because it brought fertility and life to their land. God turned this river into blood and made it stink before them. They worshiped

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the gods, who they thought could protect them from frogs and lice, and God made their land to swarm with them. He showed them how impotent their gods were. They worshiped the beasts of the fields, and God slew them with hailstones. They worshiped their first-born sons, and God sent the death angel through the land and slew all of their first-born. They worshiped the sun, and God made it as black as sackcloth.

When God got through with these mighty manifestations of his power, there was not a god of Egypt left upon its pedestal. He had overthrown every one of them. While God was manifesting his power, Pharaoh would cry out for mercy and ask Moses to pray for him. However, just as soon as one of these plagues was lifted, he hardened his own heart, and would not let the children of Israel go free. In other words, God hardened Pharaoh's heart by giving him light and he would not walk in it. He gave him truth and he would not believe it. He gave him demonstrations of his power, but Pharaoh would not be convinced by it.

God is hardening the hearts of people today just like that. Many of the skeptics are being hardened in heart just that very way. The more they reject light and truth, the blinder they become, until some of them have even gone so far that when they hear truth they think it is a lie. When they see light, they think it is darkness. When they see the power of God manifested, they think it is the power of the devil. They are getting to the place where the people were in the days of Jesus. They saw him cast a devil out of a man, and they thought he did it because he was Beelzebub, the

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prince of the devils. Jesus had to warn them against the danger of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

When the children of Israel got out of Egypt, they were convinced that their God was a mighty God of power, but they knew nothing about the *moral character of their God*. The gods they had worshiped in Egypt were of the vilest kind. Even in their worship of these gods they indulged in the worst kind of immorality and sin. They even had harlots in their temples, and engaged in the grossest kind of evil in the worship of their gods. For an example of this, read about their building of the golden calf in the wilderness. God had to teach them that he was a different kind of God from those that they had worshiped for so long. He wanted them to know that he was the *Holy God* of the universe, and that he *wanted them to be holy, too*.

In order to teach them this great truth, he set about the stupendous task, first, by giving them the law at Sinai. He caused the mountain to smoke and they heard the rumbling thunders. This was not an empty display on the part of God. He wanted them to know that he was different from the gods of Egypt, and that he must be revered. He began to build up the idea of the difference between sin and holiness. He made a distinction between the clean and the unclean. He brought them to see that sin meant death. In fact, while God takes only one chapter to tell us about creation, yet he takes many chapters to tell us about worship.

Some of these fellows who are going overboard on his idea of worship today might learn something if they would go back and study the Old Testament and

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find out how God did it.

It might be well for us to remember that while God took only six days to create the world; yet he took forty days to instruct Moses and the people about true worship. By a long, tedious process God instilled into the hearts and minds of these people that he was the Holy God of this universe. In fact, he gave to them the highest conception of the holiness of God that this world has ever known. If you don't believe this, then turn to the other religions of the world and see how sadly lacking they are in this great conception of God.

I might also say that the church is in danger today of losing this great conception of God. Sometime ago I read a devotional book, written by a man whom I greatly admire. This book was supposed to be based on the First Epistle of John. In this book the writer indicates that he is familiar with the error of Gnosticism that John is refuting in his epistle; but this writer just glossed over the great truth, that John is trying to set forth when he says, "*God is light and in him is no darkness at all.* If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." This writer spends chapter after chapter talking about love, but seems to forget the fact that John said, "*God is light*" before he said "*God is love.*" To ignore this great central truth of the Christian religion is to give a false conception of God. I believe that God is love, but I believe that he is holy and hates sin. He is just as opposed to sin as light is to darkness, and will not have fellowship with sin. He loves the sinner, but he hates sin, and will not have fellowship with sin.

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Before there can be fellowship between man and God, the sin question must be faced and settled, according to the Holy nature and character of God. To overlook this truth is to miss the great central truth of the Christian religion.

A True Revelation of God in Christ

Jesus came into this world to reveal God to us, and he certainly revealed to us that God is holy and hates sin. Some years ago I was working with a minister in a revival in his church. He was very liberal in his theology. One day as we sat in his home, we got to discussing theology. In the course of our talk I said something about eternal punishment. This preacher smiled and said, "I don't believe in eternal punishment. That is not my conception of God." I looked at him and said, "Ed, when I hear some of you liberals talk about your conception of God, I feel like saying to you in the language of the great Apostle Paul, "*Whom you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.*" I said, "Ed, the God that I worship and serve is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe in the God that is revealed in and through Christ, and certainly Christ taught us about the wrath of God, just as surely as he taught us about the love of God.

Jesus not only told us about a place of many mansions; but he also told of a place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. He not only taught us about eternal life; but he also told us about eternal punishment. He not only told us about those things; but he revealed them in his own life while here in the flesh. The same Christ that took little children up in

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his arms and blessed them, is the same Christ that stood in the temple with blazing eyes and a whipcord in his hands, and drove the money changers out of the temple. He said, "This place was meant to be a house of prayer, and you have made it a den of thieves." He was revealing God just as much then as when he blessed little children.

The same Christ, who looked with such compassion upon the lost and helpless, also stood and said to the religious leaders of that day, "Ye vipers, ye hypocrites, ye whited sepulchers, how shall you escape the damnation of hell. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will for you in the day of judgment." He was revealing God just as much then as when he wept over Jerusalem.

Even as Christ hung on the cross and died, he not only revealed the love of God for lost sinners; but he also *revealed the judgment of God against sin*. If you think sin is a little thing in the sight of God, then go to Calvary and watch Jesus die, and remember that he is dying because of sin. He is not dying in order to appease the wrath of God or to win God's favor; but he did die in order to uphold the moral law of this universe. He died to let us know that sin has its penalty, and that God cannot and will not forgive sin under just any kind of conditions. Eternal holiness and justice must be respected.

In fact, we need to remember that God is not only a father God, but he is the *sovereign ruler of this universe*. He is under moral obligation to himself and all creation to uphold the moral law. If he did not, then

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We would *be* living in chaos instead of cosmos. If science has taught us anything about the God of this universe, then it has taught us that he is a God of Law and Order. He does not do things *by* whim or fancy. He works according to law.

Just as surely as there are physical laws that govern this physical universe, there are also moral and spiritual laws that govern the spiritual universe. Just as surely as you will suffer if you break the physical laws of this universe, you will also suffer if you break the moral laws. If you do not believe that, then go back and read history, and find out what happened to individuals and nations that defied the moral laws of God. If you don't believe the Bible, you will have to believe the records of nations that have gone down into decay. "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God. Toward them that perish, severity, but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness. Otherwise, thou also shall be cut off."

Men may laugh and sneer at these great truths that are revealed; but God is not mocked. The same Christ that delivered the sermon on the mount, also tells us in one of his parables, that when the king heard how the people had treated his servants, and the invitation he had sent them, he was angry and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. The liberalist may laugh at this kind of language; but just remember that God did permit that very city of Jerusalem to be sacked and burned. The time did come when the temple was destroyed, just as Jesus said it would be, and the Jewish nation

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was scattered. Since that time they have been hounded from place to place; and, today, many of them live in mortal fear.

Many years ago a very dear friend of mine went to the great Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, to hold a revival meeting. This man was a brilliant man and was very highly educated. In that meeting, he became acquainted with a young man, who had gone off to a great university and had come under the influence of a skeptical professor. This teacher laughed at the idea of there being a God. He ridiculed the idea of the Bible being the Word of God. He made fun of people who put their trust in Christ as the Son of God. This young man had come home very cynical and sneered at religion and the Church. My friend stayed in this young man's home. He and this young man became quite chummy. One day as they walked in the flower garden together, the young man turned to my friend and said, "Doctor, I don't see how a brilliant, highly educated man like you can believe in God, and accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God." MY friend said, "I have no trouble believing in God. It is the most glorious thing in the world to know God and worship him. I have no trouble in accepting the Bible as the inspired Word of God. To me it is the most glorious Book in all the world." This young man said, "But Doctor, the Bible is full of contradictions." My friend said to him, "Well, I did not know that. Suppose you point out some of those contradictions to me." The young man said, "Doesn't the Bible say that God is love? Doesn't the Bible say that

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God is a consuming fire?" My friend said, "Yes, the Bible says both of those things and I believe them with all of my heart."

The young man said, "But Doctor, how can you reconcile those two statements? How can God be love, and at the same time be a consuming fire? That sounds like a contradiction to me." My good friend pointed to a flower that was growing there in the garden, and said to the young man, "Do you see this flower? It could not live without the sun, could it? It gets its life and beauty from the sun. If it were not for the sun, it would either die or become a pale, sickly thing." The young man admitted that that was true. Then my friend reached down and plucked the flower up by the roots and dropped it right back where it had been before.

He turned to the young man and said, "Now what will happen to that flower?" The young man said, "It will wither and die, of course." My friend said to him, "what will wither it? What will kill it?" The young man said, "The sun will wither and kill it." My friend looked at him and said, "Now that is strange. You just now told me that the flower could not live without the sun, and now you tell me that the sun will wither and kill the flower. That sounds like a contradiction to me. How can you reconcile those statements?" The young man said, "But Doctor, the roots of the flower are out of the ground now. It is not in the right relationship to receive the benefits and blessings of the sun." The Doctor said, "Yes, my young friend, and that same thing is true with reference to

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you and God. If you are rooted and grounded in Christ, and are living in harmony with God's will, then God is light and love. He is everything that your soul will ever crave. But if you are out of Christ and living in sin and rebellion, then God will become a consuming fire to your soul."

There is no change in the nature of God; but a lot depends on our attitude and relationship to him. When Adam was in harmony with God, he ran to meet God and rejoiced in the fellowship they enjoyed. However, when Adam sinned, he ran and hid from God. He confessed that he was naked and afraid. The Bible says that, "without holiness no man shall see God." In fact, without holiness no man will want to see God. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Sin blinds the eyes and clouds the mind of man. Unbelief is of the heart and not of the head.

* * *

"Ye Do Err, Not Knowing the Power of God"

In the early part of this message, we referred to the interview that Jesus had with the liberals of his day. In that interview, he told them that they erred for two reasons. First, they did not know the Scriptures. We have tried to show that many times people do err because they do not really know the Word of God. Jesus told these same liberals, the second reason they erred was because they did not know the power of God.

Many liberals claim that they believe in Christ, but the Christ they seem to believe in is not the Christ of the New Testament. He is a Christ of their own

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making. He is a Christ that has been stripped and robbed of his majesty and power, and is a pale, anemic Christ, who has no power to do anything for us today. He is a God of the far off places.

Some years ago, a man wrote a book on the title, "The Man Nobody Knows." He certainly gave the book the right title, for the Christ that he tried to tell us about was one that nobody has ever known, or ever will know. In fact, it would not be worth-while to know such a Christ as he pictured in his book. The Christ of the New Testament is a Christ of power and authority. He was the Christ who could heal the sick and raise the dead. The liberals may quibble and question about the miracles of the New Testament but there are some of us who know that Christ is the Christ of power, for we have seen him perform miracles in the lives of men and women.

Anyone, who has ever preached the pure gospel, and seen its effect on the lives of men and women has no trouble in believing in miracles, for we have seen them take place before our very eyes. We have seen the lives of people transformed by the power of the gospel, and can say, with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God, unto salvation to every one that believeth." The greatest proof of the gospel of Christ is the transformed lives of men and women that have been changed by it. All down through the centuries, millions of people have believed it, and their lives have proved that it is true.

The cross may be a stumbling block to some, and foolishness to others, but to them that believe, it is

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the *wisdom of God* and *power of God*. There is something about it that changes the lives of all who will accept it. The psychologists are coming to see that one of the great urges in the human breast is to be *loved* and *needed*. This urge is stronger than the sex urge. It is stronger than the desire for power. God has implanted a desire in the human breast that cries out for something. We want to feel that we are loved and needed. When any person stands at the Cross, and comes to see that it is the supreme expression of God's love for lost, sinful men, it will surely do something to him. When they come to see that the great God of this universe loves them and needs them, it gives new meaning to life.

It is an established fact that you have never won any person until you win his affections. It is not enough to convince the mind. The heart must be touched and our affections must be won before our wills can give consent. God won the love and loyalty of Israel when he delivered them from the cruel yoke of bondage. He wins our love and loyalty when he delivers us from the bondage of sin. There is nothing but the cross that can really touch us at the very depths of our affections. The liberals may scoff and sneer and call it a "slaughterhouse religion," but *there is power in the blood*. The cross breaks our hearts and melts our stubborn wills. We can say, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my love, my all." When he wins our hearts, he has all of us.

Even Lord Byron, dissolute and vile as he was,

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said, "If ever man was God, and if ever God was man, then Jesus Christ was both." A great Hindu philosopher said, "If the heart that governs this universe is like the heart of Jesus Christ, then I can love it and giveth at my allegiance to it." Well, thank God, the heart governs this universe is not only like the heart of Christ, *it is the heart of Christ. God was in Christ.* In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead." God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Yes, God has spoken unto us. It behooves us to hear what he says to us. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was *confirmed unto us* by them that heard him; God also *bearing them witness*, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."

PAUL DEALS WITH SKEPTICS OF HIS DAY

In the days of Paul there were skeptics, that denied the New Testament teaching on the resurrection of the body. Paul, in the 16th chapter of I Corinthians, answers their arguments. He points out to them that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then our faith is in vain and we are yet in our sins. In fact, he says that if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men, most miserable. Those who deny the resurrection of Christ need to see the point of this argument. Those who deny the resurrection of Christ have no gospel to preach. The Christ they preach is a dead Christ and went down into defeat. The only thing we have left to us is a nice little set of ethics and the noble example of a man who died as a defeated man. Paul has a different Christ from this to offer to the world. He cries out with a shout of triumph, "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." He is not dead. He is alive forevermore.

We serve not a dead leader, but the risen Lord of life. The fact that Christ rose from the dead is established by evidence that cannot be denied by any honest, intelligent person. There is as much concrete evidence for the resurrection of Christ as there is for the Battle of Waterloo, or the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States. The fact that some people do not believe it *does not change the facts* in the least. It is an established fact of history.

In his great treatise on the resurrection, Paul an-

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anticipates the skepticism of many. He says, "But some man will say, how are the dead raised up and with that body do they come?" This sounds familiar. Many people offer all kinds of objections to the resurrection of the body. They can offer all kinds of objections, and ask *how can these things be?* Listen to the answer Paul gives. He says, "*Thou fool.*" That is kind of hard on the skeptics. It is rather rough to call a man a fool. Now listen to why Paul says, "Thou fool." He points out to the skeptic that when you sow a seed it has to decay before it can come up. He also points out that the plant that comes up is not the same body that was sown. *God gives it a body.*

We may not know how it is done, but it happens millions of times every year all around the world. We see the farmer sow his seed. It falls into the ground and dies; but the plant comes up. Paul says that the same thing will happen to our bodies. They will decay, but God, in his resurrecting power, will bring them up again.

Paul then goes on to point out to us that there is more than one kind of flesh. (In spite of the arguments of the evolutionists, that all flesh comes from one cell, we who have eaten fish and beef know there is more than one kind of flesh. In fact, the scientists tell us that there is more than one kind of blood.) Paul points out to us that there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts, another of fowls, and another of fishes. He also points out to us that there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial. He also points out to us that there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of

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the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory. I wonder if you catch the real point of Paul's argument and see why he says "Thou fool"?

Paul is saying to us that, if God can let trillions of grains of wheat, corn, and other grain fall into the ground and die, and yet they come up again, and never make two alike; if he can make the seas to swarm with fish and never make two fish alike; if he can make the air to swarm with birds and never make two birds alike; if he can create billions of stars, planets, and asteroids, and yet make them so different, that astronomers can pick up a ray of light from one of them, and tell you which star it came from; if God can clothe the moon with one glory and the sun with another glory; then certainly he can provide adequate bodies for his precious children, *who have been redeemed by the precious blood of his only begotten Son*. The only trouble with these skeptics is they have a little, puny God. They do not know the Lord God of heaven and earth, who holds the universe in its place by his Word.

These skeptics are like the man we read about in the Old Testament, who cut down a tree. He used part of it to build himself a house. He used another part to warm his body and to cook his food, *BUT WITH THE RESIDUE, HE MADE HIMSELF A GOD*. The skeptics have whittled God down, and have stripped Christ of his majesty and glory until they have no God that is adequate for our needs.

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In the Old Testament we are told, “The Syrians have said, ‘the Lord is God of the hills but he is not God of the valleys.’” These poor, benighted people knew so little about the true God that they thought he was confined to the hills. They thought if they could just get Israel down in the valley they would be able to defeat them, for their God would not be able to help them. There are many people today, who are so ignorant of the true God of the Bible that they think he is a God of the high places. They can believe in a God who is so far off that no one can know him. The God of the Bible is the God of the universe. He not only upholds all things by the word of his power, but he is mindful of the fallen sparrow.

‘A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.’

* * *

II Peter 1:16: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses of his majesty*. For *he received from God the Father honour and glory*, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased. And *this voice which came from heaven we heard*, when we were with him in the holy mount. We *have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time *by the will of man*: but *holy men of*

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God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In this great passage, Peter has just told us of what he had heard *with his own ears*, and what he *had seen with his own eyes*. Then he makes this startling statement "*WE HAVE A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY.*" He is saying that there is something that is more reliable than that which a person may see and hear. The Word of God is the surest thing in all the world. More than three hundred Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled at the first coming of Jesus Christ. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle shall pass until all shall be fulfilled. *Jesus said it, and I believe it.*

APPENDIX

Since many of those who hold to the theory of evolution and other theories that are being advanced today, are so dogmatic in their position and inclined to look with contempt on all who dare question their position, I am giving some quotations from reputable scholars and scientists of the present day, to show that I am taking a sensible position in calling in question some things that are being taught as assured facts of science.

For sometime now the Saturday Evening Post has been running a series of articles on the general topic, "Adventures Of The Mind." These articles are written by men of high standing in their respective fields of learning. I quote from three of these articles to let the reader know what these men have said on the subject.

I give several quotations from an article that appeared in the Saturday Evening Post of January 10, 1959. This article was written by Charles H. Hapgood, a graduate of Harvard University. He is professor of history and anthropology at Keene Teachers College in New Hampshire. He claims that before the death of Prof. Albert Einstein he submitted his theory to him, and that Dr. Einstein gave it his endorsement. The title of Mr. Hapgood's article is, "The Earth's Shifting Crust." I will give just a few brief quotations from this article.

"It has recently become apparent that many of the

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established and *hitherto accepted principles of geology are not leading us to a solution of the basic problems of the earth.*"

"Since that time at least *fifty theories* have been produced to explain these ice ages, *but none of them has been accepted.*"

"These climatic puzzles are connected with *unsolved problems in the theory of evolution*. It is still widely supposed that the principle of natural selection explains the origin of new forms of life. *The truth is on the contrary, that the impossibility of explaining evolution through natural selection, without the assistance of some other factor, became obvious to the geneticists about the year 1900.* As a way out of the difficulty it was *suggested that mutations might account* for more rapid changes in life form. It soon became evident, however, that a very great majority of all mutations, since they are random, must be harmful and will be eliminated, in due course, by the process of natural selection itself. The net result of mutation, therefore, must be to slow down, rather than to accelerate, the process of evolution. *The time element is by no means the only problem left unsolved by the evolutionary theory.*"

"With regard to the last ice age, we have recently come into possession of new information that *deepens its mystery*. This discovery challenged the fundamental principle of the system established by the nineteenth-century geologist, Chas. Lyell. He supposed that geological processes in the past always proceeded at their present rates."

"The other new method of dating, which we call the ionium method, has also produced *a major upset*."

"The importance of all these problems *compels us to admit that we do not now have an integrated, effective theory of the earth we live on*.

Now these quotations are from a man of science, who is supposed to know what he is talking about. Since he is so frank in his admission that there are many things the geologists do not know about this earth, then it is not so unreasonable for a person of good sense to refuse to throw away his faith in the Bible, until the scientists are able to produce some more *solid facts*. I would suggest that you secure and read the article referred to above.

The second article that I quote from is, "Can Man Be Modified?" by Jean Rostand, one of France's leading biologists, as well as a man of letters. I give just one quotation from him, and it speaks for itself.

"*Contrary to popular belief, man has long since ceased to evolve*. The human being of the Twentieth Century does not differ essentially from the human being who lived in the caves of the Quaternary Age, some 100,000 years ago. Already *at the origin of the species*, man was equal to what he was destined to be come. He carried within him, potentially, all the things that were destined gradually to expand and fructify in industry, in technical skill, in science, in art, in philosophy and in religion.

"The fact that, starting from a certain moment to his history and thanks to the combined play of intelligence and group instincts; man has been able to become

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what he now is, is due first and foremost to the occurrence of a small change in his physical organism. *We do not know the exact nature and cause of this change, but we do know that hardly had it established itself in human heredity before the great game had been implicitly played—all the rest being merely the consequences and the working out.* From that moment, because of that small alteration in his animal nature, *man was bound to break forever with the past.* From the *superior mammal which he was, he became something."*

In this quotation Mr. Rostand readily admits that there is *something in man that makes him entirely different from all other animal creation.* He can't account for *how and when* this great change came about but he readily admits that it is there.

He also points out that much that is *popular in theory* today is simply *not true.*

I next give one brief quotation from an article that appeared in the Saturday Evening Post of May 30, 1959. This article was written by Dr. R. W. Gerard, who is an eminent psychologist, teacher and scientist-at-large. He has held professorships at five universities.

"The vastly enhanced repertoire of actions means an *increased uncertainty as to which will actually occur.* This unpredictability amounts to a sort of freedom, associated with a sense of purpose. We are satisfied that the organ of the brain plays the tune of the mind: *we are far from a full understanding of how it does so.* And since each answer in science raises new questions,

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there will always be a penumbra of ignorance surrounding our zone of illumination."

May I say that it is perfectly logical that this be true. When you begin to deal with the human mind and personality you are dealing with intangibles. They do not lend themselves to such proof as can be found in the test tube of the chemical laboratory. In spite of all the delicate instruments of modern science there are some things in human personality that can't be explained by the test tube. Love, patriotism, and worship are realities but they can't be weighed and analyzed. They are just as real as anything in the universe. We experience them but can't explain them.

I might give many other quotations from many eminent scientists to support my contention, but content myself with this one in conclusion.

In the May issue of "Christianity Today," is an article, written by Robert E. D. Clark, who was an honor scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge University. He has his Ph.D., from Cambridge, and is now teaching Post-Graduate Chemistry at Cambridge Technical College. This is what he has to say:

"Not long ago (March 9, 1958) the British Broadcasting Company carried a symposium on the "Origin of Life." All the speakers took the view that life had in some way arisen spontaneously from non-living matter at a remote epoch in time. But in his summation, Dr. J. D. Bernal, who was in the chair, made the statement, *"It would be much easier to discuss how life didn't originate than how it did."*

"A similar comment might seem appropriate to al-

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most every attempt to unravel the problems connected with the distant past."

The mystery as to the origin of life is the greatest, or one of the greatest that confronts modern science today. The only answer they have to offer is a wild guess and *vain speculation* that do not satisfy *their own mind*. This is one question that will not be answered by wild guesses. There is too much involved. The only satisfactory answer that has ever been given is, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And God said, Let there be life and there was life. Of course this is too simple and sensible for the highbrows, but it is sensible, and answers to the facts as we know them. O consistency thou art a jewel!

(The italics in the above quotations are our own to give emphasis to the facts stated.)

THE END

RETURN TO THE MAIN MENU