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THE QUEST FOR CERTAINTY
By Russell V. DeLong

Beacon Hill Press
2923 Troost Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri

Printed in U.S.A. -- 1944
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A PICTURE OF RUSSELL V. DELONG INCLUDED

As hdm0884.jpg, a picture of Russell V. DeLong is included with this publication.

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FOREWORD

The sermon, "The Quest for Certainty," was first preached on Baccalaureate Sunday
morning to the graduating classes of Northwest Nazarene College, Nampa, Idaho. Later it was
repeated at the Michigan District Assembly, Pittsburgh District Preachers' Meeting, New England
District Campmeeting, Missouri District Zone Convention and at the Sunday morning worship

service at Kansas City First Church during the meeting of the General Board in January, 1944. So many requests came for copies of the sermon or excerpts or poems from it that the author decided to turn the manuscript over to the Nazarene Publishing House for publication.

The message is presented, not as a textbook, but as a sermon directed to the minds and hearts of the readers with the sincere hope and earnest prayer that thousands of hearts may be inspired and blessed and that many will find in Jesus Christ the only source of real certainty.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

The days in which we live are unusual. The things upon which people have depended have been swept away. What is left that is sure and reliable? Is everything change? Is everything relative? Is there nothing permanent and certain? What can I know and how may I know it with certainty? These are some of the questions that the sermon will consider.

The thoughts of people are indices of their unsettled, troubled hearts and minds. What are they thinking about? In the September 13, 1943, issue of Newsweek under the heading "Religion," appears a survey entitled, "Spiritual Blockbusters." This is a summary of the questions asked most frequently of chaplains by boys in the armed services. This survey happens to be of the British forces but the same questions probably clutter the minds of the American forces as well. And probably what the boys are thinking about the people back home are wondering about too. Here are the most popular questions listed under ten headings:

RELIGION: Is religion anything more than primitive superstition and fear? Is religion wishful thinking and make-believe? Is religion "the opium of the masses"? Can a man live without religion? How can we know that ours is the true religion; do not all religions claim to be true? What right have we to change other people's religion? Is not one religion as good or bad as another? Have not people got the religion most suitable to them?

GOD: How can we know there is a God? Which of the many is the true God? Has not modern knowledge destroyed the old belief in God?

JESUS CHRIST: Was Jesus "God on earth"? Was Jesus just an outstanding religious man? Did Jesus rise from the dead? Are the accounts of His miracles true? Was not Jesus a pacifist?

THE CHURCH: Why are there so many churches; which is the true one? What good has the church done in the world? Are not the churches dying out? Why do Nazis and Communists persecute the churches?

BIBLE: Is the Bible the infallible Word of God? Is the Bible out of date? What about the Bibles of other religions?

WORSHIP: What is the good of worship? Is prayer any use? Can a man live the Christian life without going to church?

IMMORTALITY: Do we rise from the dead? How? Is spiritualism true? Is there a heaven and a hell? When is the end of the world?

OTHER RELIGIONS: What is the religion of Japan? of India? Of China? Why are the Jews hated and persecuted?

WAR: Why does God allow war and innocent suffering? Can a Christian be a soldier? How can you reconcile war and the gospel of love? Should we not give up religion during the war? Does God "take sides" in war, or is He non-belligerent?

ETHICS: Is freedom of the will real? Do you believe in fate and astrology? How can human nature be changed? Is it true that "there will always be war"? How can we prevent future wars? Why did the churches not stop this war? Why are the churches reactionary? Should the church interfere in politics and social affairs? Why does the church allow race and color bars? What is wrong in fornication (if both the man and woman consent)? Why does the church condemn birth control? Why does the church condemn divorce? What are the churches doing for postwar reconstruction? Will the world ever be perfect?

The boys in the armed services are thinking. These questions also are in the minds of the folks back home. Are there satisfactory answers? Yes, the Church has an answer for each of the questions? This sermon will not be able to deal with all of them for lack of space but will endeavor to consider several.

* * * * *

THE QUEST FOR CERTAINTY

Scripture Reading -- I John 2:3, 5, 20, 21; 3:2, 5, 14, 19, 24; 4: 6, 7, 13, 16; 5:2, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20.

Text -- Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32).

Since the fall man has been in a search for certainty. He has groped his way through fog, darkness, superstition, ignorance, pain, suffering and sin. He has striven for intellectual certainty; for economic security; for political power; for the elixir of youth to guarantee health surety. Amidst change, flux, turmoil and tumult man greatly desires permanence, solidity and peace.

This quest for certainty has taken men through multitudinous labyrinths of philosophical speculation; through various educational enterprises and countless religious practices and rituals; all hoping to repose on the solid rocks of certainty. In the dim light of early Grecian speculation the Milesians were asking, "What is the original ground of all things?" and the Eleatics, "How are things changed from the one to the many?" The Atomists, Pythagoreans, Neo-Platonists, Cynics and Cyrenaics continued the quest. Centuries before Christ, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle made their searches. Stoicism, Epicureanism and Sophism followed the quest -- all unsuccessfully.

As we approach a more modern period we find Francis Bacon earnestly seeking to rid the mind of errors, prejudices and presuppositions, categorized under four headings: (1) the Idols of the Tribe -- fallacies natural to mankind itself; (2) the Idols of the Cave -- errors peculiar to individual men; (3) the Idols of the Market Place -- errors arising from our association with one another; and (4) the Idols of the Theater -- errors which have come to the minds of men from the dogmas of philosophers. After clearing the mind of the above types of error he proposed an inductive method by which to build a sure superstructure guided by prudent rules of procedure hoping to find certainty. It has been said of Bacon, "He undertook too much and failed to a great extent."

Descartes, an eminent French philosopher adopted a method similar to that of Bacon by first attempting to rid the mind of all acquired knowledge and then hoping to find some axiomatic, self-evident truths and upon these build a sound, incontestable structure of knowledge. He claimed to find three such truths: (1) the existence of the self, (2) the existence of the corporeal world and (3) the existence of God. Spinoza, Leibnitz, Locke, Berkeley and Hume furthered the quest with rather disappointing results, for we note Hume concluding at the end of his search for certainty with the following pathetic utterances: "I am at first affrighted and confounded with the forlorn solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad I foresee on every side dispute, contradiction, anger and detraction. When I turn my eye inward I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. All the world conspires to oppose me and contradict me. Every step I take is with hesitation and every new reflection makes me dread error and absurdity in my reasoning. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I return to these speculations they appear so cold and strained and ridiculous that I cannot find it in my heart to enter into them any further." For a certainty Hume had not found -- Truth.

Immanuel Kant, one of the greatest of philosophers, started out with the avowed aim to discover what is certain and sure. He ended his search by becoming an epistemological skeptic and denied that one can have knowledge of metaphysical reality. Philosophers, scientists, religionists, poets, artists and musicians have all been on the quest for certainty.

Here we are today with the world in complete war. The things upon which men have placed their faith and confidence have vanished and countless thousands, yea, millions, are wondering just what life is all about and whether or not there is any certainty.

Dorothy Thompson, the well-known columnist and one of the most intelligent persons in America, wrote an article for a nationally read magazine recently, entitled, "Youth Challenges Education."* [* Ladies Home Journal, June, 1941.] Because of the fact that this article presents the dilemma and predicament in which the youth of America finds itself I am quoting quite liberally from it as a background for further comments in this sermon. In fact, Miss Thompson's article, in itself, consists mostly of the letter which was received by the president of a large eastern university, in fact, one of our greatest universities, from one of his undergraduate students. Miss Thompson opens her article by saying, "Better than anything else I have read, it sums up the dilemma of our 'educated' youth. It needs thoughtful reading by educators and parents." Here are excerpts from various paragraphs of the letter -- it would repay you to read the entire article:

You, sir, were brought up from earliest childhood in an atmosphere of traditional Christianity and Democracy. You read, learned and inwardly digested the Bible. Nearly every Sunday you went to church, and there you heard and believed sermons which postulated the divinity of Christ, eternal principles of right and wrong, the existence of the human soul, a personal God and a life after death. Thanks to your early training, your life as you have led it derives its meaning largely from the teachings of Jesus.

During your youth you also were educated to think that man is superior to animals, that he is a free agent capable of choosing between good and evil.

But what about us, the youth of America? What have we been taught to revere in the university you direct, and in other similar institutions throughout the land?

In the modern college it is probably fair to say that Christianity has progressively lost its grip on young minds. You may have noticed that, unlike you, most of us have scarcely ever glanced at the Bible.

When our elders refer to eternal verities, absolutist ethics, we are likely to recall the lesson your instructors in sociology have driven home -- that morals are relative to time and place, and what is good in one society is bad in another. Such teaching is separated only by a hair's breadth from the view that there can be no such thing as sin.

Have we not gleaned from our very own professors of natural sciences, philosophy and ancient history that religions are the product of myth and superstition and that men create gods in their own image; that if there is such a thing as a soul, no scientist has ever isolated it in the laboratory?

Turning to political systems, you learned that man is distinct from animals, and yet our Biology courses now conceive man merely as one species of mammal.

Furthermore, is not your traditional doctrine of free will at odds with the basic assumption of modern science -- determinism?

What reason is there, in the light of present knowledge, for continuing to accept any form of Christianity?

Personally, I fail to understand how you, or any other college president, can expect us to become ardent Christians and Democrats when the vital postulates on which these faiths are supposed to rest are daily undermined in the classrooms.

Our situation has indeed grown more serious than you think. Your generation must soon pass on to our hands the torch of Democracy and Christianity. Our hearts impel us to be faithful to that trust, but our heads, that you have helped condition, may decree otherwise.

If we are to be saved, our elders must assist us to harmonize our education with the old faith.

If our outlook is ever to rise above a selfish materialism, somehow, somewhere, we must find an answer to our questions.

I think it is time for us, as Americans, to pause a moment and ask ourselves a question, "Is this youth who wrote this letter to the University President correct and just what do we have, as Americans, that we can place our faith upon with some degree of certainty and surety, and not continue to be the victims of relativism in almost every field of endeavor and thought?"

Recently I came across what is called the "Rockefeller Credo." It embodies most of the things that we, as Americans, should believe and fight for. There are ten planks in this Credo.

1. I believe in the supreme worth of the individual and in his right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

2. I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty.

3. I believe that the law was made for man and not man for the law; that government is the servant of the people and not their master.

4. I believe in the dignity of labor, whether with head or hand; that the world owes no man a living but that it owes every man an opportunity of making a living.

5. I believe that thrift is essential to well-ordered living and that economy is a prime requisite of a sound financial structure, whether in government, business or personal affairs.

6. I believe that truth and justice are fundamental to an enduring social order.

7. I believe in the sacredness of a promise, that a man's word should be as good as his bond; that character -- not wealth or power or position -- is of supreme worth.

8. I believe that the rendering of useful service, to be the common duty of mankind and that only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed and the greatness of the human soul set free.

9. I believe in the all-wise and all-loving God, named by whatever name, and that the individual's highest fulfillment, greatest happiness and widest usefulness are to be found in living in harmony with His will.

10. I believe that love is the greatest thing in the world; that it alone can overcome hate; that right can and will triumph over might.

The above ten principles of the "Rockefeller Credo" are all Christian principles. They spring from Christ's teachings. We accept them. But how can I pass from a merely theoretical,

rational affirmation of these ideals to a practical, soul-possessing sense of their eternal reality to my own individual personality? This is the problem and concern of this sermon.

Certainty Of Personal Existence

Of just what are we certain? Suppose we go back for a moment to Descartes. He started with the fact of personal existence. "I think, therefore, I exist." *Cognito, ergo sum*. Descartes derives the substance of his argument from St. Augustine. It is true that I may have hallucinations, illusions and doubts and may be in error; nevertheless, the fact is that I am the one having the hallucinations, illusions, doubts and errors -- I exist individually. You cannot get behind the "I." When you doubt your own being -- your own existence -- nothing else in the realm of truth matters. David Hume claimed that you could never perceive yourself except at the point of a sense perception and therefore denied that the self exists at all for he claimed if you annihilated all the senses you have annihilated the self. This reasoning jumps to illogical conclusions. It is the existence of the self that makes a sense perception possible, not the sense perception the self. Immanuel Kant differentiates between the "empirical" self of Hume and what he called the "transcendental" self. The "transcendental" self views and studies the "empirical" self. But you cannot get behind the "transcendental" self. Hume, in denying the existence of the self, approached a house, as it were, looked into all five windows of the building and concluded there was nobody at home. But who was looking into the window? When he tried to perceive himself looking into the five windows of sense, who was doing the perceiving? His existent self -- his real self. We start all quests for knowledge and certainty with the self.

Certainty Of Existence Of Corporeal World

Descartes' second item of apparent certainty was that, the corporeal world exists. Something besides myself exists. Other persons and things, all without and beyond me, exist. From whence did these things come? What is their explanation?

Certainty Of God'S Existence

This led to the third postulate of certainty, namely, that God exists. If I ask the questions, "From whence did I come?" and "From whence did the corporeal world come?" there is only one rational answer. It is true that there are three possible answers, but only one is reasonable.

The three possibilities are: (1) that all that exists, including myself, came from nothing; (2) it came from non-intelligence, and (3) it came from intelligence. You cannot get beyond these three possibilities. Everything that exists either sprang out of nothing, arose from non-intelligence, or is the result of intelligence.

The first alternative, namely, that all that exists came from nothing is ridiculous and is revolting to a rational mind, so we discard it. When I look around me and note all the items of intricate purpose, the seasons; the solar system; the vegetative life giving off oxygen being breathed in by the human organism which in turn gives out carbon which in turn is breathed in by the vegetative life; when I look at myself with all its delicate organisms, the eye; the ear; the heart; the lungs; the brain and other parts all synchronized perfectly for the purpose of the person, it

seems to be irrational to ascribe it all to nothingness. To adopt such a view is contrary to everything we know. It puts a potential power in nothingness that is without reason. We therefore leave alternative one and pass to the second, namely, that all that now exists sprang from non-intelligence. This leads us to a problem -- how can a greater spring from a lesser? How can intelligence come from non-intelligence; purpose, order, system from blind, chaotic, inert stuff? This is contrary to science. A greater can produce a lesser but not a lesser a greater. Intelligence is the greatest thing we know. How could it come from inanimate, static matter? We discard alternative two and have only one answer left, namely, that all that exists, including myself, came from intelligence. We label this intelligence, "God."

But the critic says, "Where did this intelligence (God) come from?" "Who made God?" Have you ever heard this smug question? And the critic thinks he has you stopped. But does he? Not at all. Let's ask him for his answer to the question, "From whence do all things come?" He has only three possibilities, (1) nothing, (2) non-intelligence and (3) intelligence. Numbers 1 and 2 we have discarded for rational reasons and have only Number 3 left. But he persists, "Where does intelligence come from? Let him answer: God must have come from:

(1) Nothing -- (2) Non-Intelligence -- (3) -- Intelligence

We discard Numbers 1 and 2 as being unworthy of rational thought and take the position that God must have come from Number 3 -- intelligence. This of course, would be a greater God. But the critic continues to ask, "Where did this intelligence, this greater God, come from?" Well, let him answer -- from:

(1) Nothing -- (2) Non-Intelligence -- (3) -- Intelligence

We discard Numbers 1 and 2 as being irrational and have only the third alternative to fasten our faith upon. We might keep on going ad infinitum. We have reached the end of the car line. You cannot explain the explanation. Intelligence comes from intelligence. Intelligence is the explanation of everything. When we read in the Bible, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God," we are not reading a trite, facetious, sarcastic statement. It is merely a statement of fact. It is an irrational mind that can conceive of everything coming from either nothing or from blind, chaotic, non-intelligent matter. The wise, rational mind says, "Intelligence is the explanation and that Intelligence we call, 'God'."

Intelligence is, therefore, the starting point from which all things proceed. If minds are rational then it seems to me that the only rational explanation is not to be found in non-intelligence but in intelligence, which we label, "God Almighty," as a personal Being. Therefore, we put our faith today upon the fact that the world is governed by a personal, intelligent Being. If we have an intelligent, personal being everything in the universe is purposeful.

Man is the greatest creation of this intelligent, purposeful Being, which we call God. By the process of dialectic it would seem irrational that an intelligent, purposeful God would not have a specific purpose for the crowning point of his creation, man. What is this purpose? How can we ascertain it?

It does not seem to square with reason to think that God would reveal His specific purpose for the human race to each individual member of that race, but rather, it seems that God would preferably reveal His will for the race in a codified, permanent, definite revelation. This leads me to the next step in the Quest for CERTAINTY, namely, that the Bible is God's Holy Book and reveals His Divine Will and Purpose for the conduct of man.

Certain Of Divine Revelation

Time and space would not permit one to go into the many arguments supporting the belief that the Bible is a Divine Revelation. That would be a sermon in itself. However, it is a fact that forty different men of varying vocations ranging from peasants to kings wrote the sixty-six books of which the Bible is composed and wrote at different times over a period of 1,600 years. Each brought his bit -- his contribution -- from his standpoint -- from his station in life -- and when they are put together we have an uncontradictory volume of sixty-six books fused into one Divine Revelation all pointing man to God's purpose for his life.

We might build argument after argument concerning the Bible as God's Word, but I think possibly one of the greatest arguments and that which will lead to perfect certainty is this fact: that men and women in the maze of modern complexities who will follow the precepts and truths as laid down in the Bible will find the riddle of life solved and the road to happiness.

This glorious day I feel like saying with David, "There is none like it, give it to me." David was being hounded by Saul, who was jealous because of the shouting of the multitudes, "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." He had driven David from the palace; from cave to cave; his very life was in jeopardy. One day he staggered into a synagogue tired and hungry, weary and fatigued. He rested a bit and then prepared to depart. Before leaving he asked the priest if he had anything in the synagogue to eat. The priest answered, "Nothing but shewbread." He inquired further, "Do you have any weapons of warfare? for my life is in danger." The priest replied, "No." And then the priest thought again and said, "Oh, yes, we have here on display, as sort of a relic of a great day, in our museum, the sword with which you slew Goliath." As he handed this great weapon to David, who was thrilled with the memory of that significant victory, he cried out, "There is none like it, give it to me." The Bible is the "sword of the Spirit," and I feel like crying out in the words of David, "There is none like it' give it to me."

There is none like it for popularity. Over a century ago Voltaire prophesied that there would not be a Bible in the world within a hundred years. There are more Bibles today than ever before. The Bible is the best-selling book every year. During the past twelve months (1943) there has been a decrease of 50 per cent in the sale of light fiction but an increase of over 2,500,000 copies of the Word of God.

There is none like it for comfort. When your heart is crushed and the scalding tears run down the cheeks what can take the place of "Let not your heart be troubled." When the lights of your life all go out and you sit in the darkness of sorrow and bereavement what can bring illumination and help to your soul like God's Word?

There is none like it for guidance. Amidst the perplexities of life with many roads bidding for our feet the Bible is the safest guidepost. It will point us in the way we should walk and we will find God's goal.

There is none like it for literature. There is no occasion for one to bow his head in shame when the Bible is mentioned. It stands at the very apex of all the great literature of the world. It is sublime in style; lofty in thought and correct in expression.

There is none like it for durability. Other things are transient and passing. Friends, fortunes and fame may pass but God's Word endureth forever. You can depend upon it. It is sure and steadfast, always abiding. Atheists, skeptics, agnostics and infidels have destroyed the Bible by the thousands. Great bonfires have been made with the Bible as fuel. Predictions have been made that the Bible would soon be extinct. In the laboratory the Bible has been placed under the microscope by critics. It has been analyzed, torn to pieces, destroyed and yet it goes on in greater power and influence than ever. When atheists and infidels have rotted in their graves; when the sun has burned to a cinder and the moon has turned to blood; when the stars have fallen from their sockets and the earth has been rolled together as a scroll and cast behind the walls of oblivion forever, God's Word will go on in triumph and security. "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

The Bible is God's will for man. If it is not, then we, as human beings, are all mariners at sea without a compass or a chart. Your idea of right and wrong is as good as mine. There is no final tribunal of truth. There is no center of authority. Everything is purely relative. The Bible answers all the great questions of life, Where? Whom? What? From whence? Whither? and How? It offers proposed solutions and when followed will produce satisfaction and happiness.

Suppose I ordered a large, old-fashioned floor clock for my home from Montgomery Ward in Chicago. When it arrives to my surprise and astonishment it is unassembled. In the packing box I find wheels, pivots, posts, face, hands, crystal, body, nuts, screws, springs and all that it takes to make a clock -- hundreds if not thousands of parts. I am bewildered and perplexed. What shall I do? But as I dig down through the parts I find a book of instructions. As I peruse its pages I am informed that if I put a to a, b to b, c to c; put 1 to 1, 2 to 2, 3 to 3, etc., I can assemble the clock and make it function. So I follow the instructions putting this wheel on that pivot; cogging this wheel to that wheel; attaching this spring in this place, etc. After several hours of work following the instructions from the book, and not without some problems, I have the clock assembled and to my satisfaction and delight it runs carrying out the purpose of its maker. I conclude in my own mind that the man who wrote the book of instructions made the clock and that the man that made the clock wrote the book of instructions. The man who knew enough to make the wheels, pivots, springs, face, hands, etc., also knew enough to write a book of instructions. The author of the book and the creator of the clock are one and the same person.

Certainty Of Divine Revelation

Human beings and society are faced with many problems, desires, instincts, habits, ambitions, disappointments, sorrows, death, and a thousand and one complexities. Life is a maze of snarled, tangled perplexities. Man is in a quest for peace, harmony, order, purpose, contentment

and happiness. The Bible is the only book that will solve the riddle of life. If you will put a to a, b to b, c to c, and 1 to 1, 2 to 2, 3 to 3; if you will confess your sins, follow the Ten Commandments, do right, live the Sermon on the Mount and pursue the principles as laid down in the Bible you will find that life will work out happily and with prosperity. You will find that the One who wrote the Holy Book of Instructions, made man. You will conclude that the Being who created man with all his internal strivings, instincts and ambitions, wrote the Book. The Author is the Creator and the Creator is the Author. Your rational mind will tell you that the same Divine Person is the author of the Book and the Creator of man. You will find that if the man will follow the Book of Instructions he will have found the purpose of the Creator, and not only that, he will find the only happiness that can be found in this life.

The Bible is the only book which solves the mysteries of life and brings happiness and contentment of spirit. Tennyson will not do it; Emerson falls short and even Shakespeare is inadequate. The Supreme, Intelligent God who wrote the Book, the Bible, has given us instructions which will untangle the sorrows of life and bring harmony out of discord if we will put a to a, b to b, c to c' 1 to 1, 2 to 2, 3 to 3, etc. Follow the instructions and find happiness; make life run harmoniously and ultimately hear the Judge of the Universe say, "Well done."

The Anvil

I paused one day beside the blacksmith's door,
And listened to the anvil ring the evening chimes,
And looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter out those hammers so?"
"Just one," he answered, with a twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so I thought, the Anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon,
Yet though the noise of infidel was heard,
The Anvil is unworn -- the hammer's gone.

-- Author Unknown --

The Bible -- Yet It Lives

Generations follow generations -- yet it lives.
Nations rise and fall -- yet it lives.
Kings, dictators, presidents come and go -- yet it lives.
Torn, condemned, burned -- yet it lives.
Hated, despised, cursed -- yet it lives.
Doubted, suspected, criticized -- yet it lives.
Damned by atheists -- yet it lives.

Scoffed at by scorners -- yet it lives.
Misconstrued and mis-stated -- yet it lives.
Ranted and raved about -- yet it lives.
Its inspiration denied -- yet it lives.

Yet it lives -- as a lamp to our feet.
Yet it lives -- as a light to our path.
Yet it lives -- as a guidebook for heaven.
Yet it lives -- as a standard for childhood.
Yet it lives -- as a guide for youth.
Yet it lives -- as an inspiration for the matured.
Yet it lives -- as comfort to the aged.
Yet it lives -- as food for the hungry.
Yet it lives -- as water for the thirsty.
Yet it lives -- as rest for the weary.
Yet it lives -- as light for the heathen.
Yet it lives -- as salvation for the sinner.
Yet it lives -- as grace for the Christian.

To know It is to love It.
To love It is to accept It.
To accept its Christ means Life Eternal.

Certainty Of The Resurrection

Another fact which confronts us in our quest for certainty is the resurrection of Jesus. This event is corroborated by both sacred and profane history. Here is the picture. Look at it closely and critically. In the space of a very few hours two great tragedies presented themselves to the eleven disciples. First, the treasurer of that early group, the first Christian fellowship or church, had committed suicide after having betrayed the Master. That in itself would have been sufficient to upset the mind and heart of every one of the eleven. If the treasurer of your church committed suicide it would throw a pall over the entire congregation for months to come. The pathetic death of Judas brought sadness and confusion to the disciples.

But -- still more tragic -- the Master himself had permitted Himself to be taken, tried, condemned and crucified on a cross and was at the moment lying in Joseph's new tomb dead as any other man might die. It was all upsetting and disconcerting.

Here were eleven men who had forsaken their business, left their fishing nets, wives, homes and families to follow a new religionist, who had commanded them, "Take up thy cross and follow me." They had staked their all on Him and had brought upon themselves the hatred, ridicule and ostracism of society. They believed Him to be the Messiah. They had faith that He would overthrow reigning governments and set up a heavenly kingdom. It is doubtful whether the disciples had ever caught the significance of a spiritual kingdom. After having followed Jesus for three years and more; had heard His matchless words; witnessed the healing of the sick, cleansing

of the lepers and raising of the dead, Jesus was apprehended and brought to the judgment hall of Pilate.

He was tried. Pilate washed his hands saying that he found no fault in Him; turned Him over to a howling, bloodthirsty mob who forced Him up Golgotha's brow amidst jeers and sneers. The eleven disciples saw Him nailed to the cross, witnessed His death and saw His body placed in the tomb. In addition to this the Jews, fearing that the disciples would steal His body by night, had gone to Pilate with the suspicion and Pilate had ordered his officers to go to the tomb and "make it as sure as ye can."

First, they placed a great boulder at the mouth of the tomb -- Physical Obstacle Number One. Then they placed the Roman seal on the tomb -- to break this seal meant death to any man breaking it -- Civil Obstacle Number Two. To make it doubly sure a guard of six-foot Roman soldiers were placed about the tomb -- maybe the finest soldiers the world has ever known -- Military Obstacle Number Three. They had "made it as sure as they could." Then earth and hell stood back and rejoiced. They had Him -- the One who claimed to be the Son of God. "He saved others, himself he cannot save." There lay the impostor -- the false Messiah. It looked as though the very plan of God had been defeated.

For three days the forces of evil held jubilee. But -- as the sun arose over the eastern horizon the morning of the third day, Jesus also arose, and in spite of the huge boulder and Roman seal and Roman guard of soldiers, walked out of the tomb, cried out in a loud voice, "I am he that was dead but am alive forever more and have the keys of death and of hell." The grave could not hold this mighty Conqueror.

There are, in the world, four or five outstanding religions -- Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. It is reported that thousands of Mohammedans make yearly pilgrimages to the Holy City of Mecca and lay floral tributes of all kinds upon the grave of Mohammed. Mohammed is dead; Confucius is dead; Buddha is not living; but the Founder of Christianity went one step beyond any other and came out of the tomb triumphant and lives today in the hearts of His followers. We serve a living Christ.

But let us return to the sad, pathetic condition of the disciples. Consider this picture carefully -- for here we have the background for the greatest historical proof of the resurrection. Here they were -- Judas a suicide and Jesus murdered. Both tragic events happened in the space of a few hours. It was bewildering, disconcerting and upsetting. We have had a tendency to put a halo around the heads of the disciples, but they were common, human men with ambitions, desires, hopes, fears and passions. They were confronted by two great tragedies -- the suicide of their treasurer and the crucifixion of their leader. They were downhearted; they were despondent; they were wondering and questioning and were discouraged. Everything seemed lost and gone. The lights were all out; the jig was up; the game was over.

These despairing disciples were ready to quit and go home. Peter said, "I go fishing," and they said, "We go also." It was all over. Back to the old life; back to the fishing nets. The future was black; the past was a disappointment and the present offered no consolation. Before they were about to break up and separate I imagine them sitting in the upper room where they had met so

often with the Master. In my mind's eye I see Brother Thomas rise to his feet and say, "Brethren, He was a great man but I always doubted that He was really the Son of God." He takes his seat and Brother John arises and says, "I don't understand it all. I thought He was the deliverer of Israel. And oh, how I loved Him." Impetuous Peter speaks, "I thought He was the Son of God. Remember that day down at Caesarea Philippi when he said, 'Whom do men say that I am?' and then He asked, 'But whom say ye that I am?' I responded, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' and He said, 'Simon, flesh and blood have not revealed this unto you, but my Father, which is in heaven,' I felt certain that He was the Messiah."

As they were sitting there conversing, wondering and questioning, footsteps are heard approaching the upper room. The door flies open! Mary burst in crying, "He is risen! He is risen!" And as though touched by an electric shock the eleven men spring to their feet. What a proclamation! It was the greatest news that could have possibly come to them. With the words, "He is risen!" ringing in their ears and bursting through their hearts, I see those men go down the stairs leading from the upper room two steps at a time. The Bible states that Peter and John staged a foot race to the tomb and John being the younger beat poor old Peter to it but when Peter finally made it he was so anxious to see his Lord that he rushed right into the tomb itself and found it empty. Neither in the tomb nor about it did they find the living Christ.

More confused than ever they returned to the upper room. Again I see them sitting about despondent, wondering and questioning. Brother Thomas arises and says, "Men and brethren, I am afraid that the Jews, fearing that we would steal His body, have taken it away and hidden it. I doubt that He has risen from the dead." Then I see John arise and begin speaking, "Remember Jesus said, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it.' He was not speaking of the temple at Jerusalem but rather of His own body. This is the morning of the third day and somehow I believe He is living." No sooner had he taken his seat than eccentric Peter cried out, "Yes, and remember He said, 'As Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth.' This is the third day."

Faith begins to catch. Tension is high. Anxiety is great. Eleven men reaching out for something tangible; something real; something certain. They were in a crisis -- yea, the crisis of their lives. An interval of three years between their old life and their future life. Which should it be -- a return to the secular or a dynamic for the future. Here they were -- wondering, doubting, questioning, grasping at a straw; reluctant to admit that they had been mistaken about the Messiah; tempted to quit; depressed by sorrow; overcome by tragedy; downhearted and discouraged. What a picture!

But -- "as they thus spake, Jesus himself, stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you" (Luke 24:36). Oh, what a moment! Jesus himself. Every doubt of the disciples took wings and flew away and every question mark straightened out into an exclamation point. Even poor old doubting Thomas in amazement saw and felt the nail-pierced hands, feet, the riven side and cried out, "It is He! My Lord and my God!" What an exciting, exhilarating, soul-satisfying moment! Jesus himself with them. A dead man living. Where there had been unrest, disturbance, concern, worry, sorrow and discouragement, His "Peace, be unto you," brought rest, quietness, faith, joy and courage. It was a tremendous experience. I would like to have been there -- wouldn't you?

The Absolute Certainty An Incontestable Argument

But -- here is the incontestable argument. If you are honest meet it! Let sincere critics look it over and answer it. Here were eleven men who were downhearted, discouraged, despondent. Just ready to give up. All of a sudden they are transformed from downheartedness, discouragement and despondency to the most dynamic, joyful, certain, courageous men the world has ever known. So changed were they that ten of them went forth to suffer all manner of persecution, torture and cruelty and finally die as martyrs. Both sacred and profane history corroborate the fact that the disciples lived and that most of them died for their faith. It is said that Peter when about to be crucified asked that he be nailed head downward, not being worthy to be crucified as His Lord.

Men do not die for myths. Not if they know that what they believe is a myth. Why then did the disciples die? Because they had seen a Man die; they had seen a Man buried and in the tomb for three days, but they had met this same Man living. They had seen a dead man live. They talked with Him; they walked with Him; they ate with Him and finally bid Him good-bye on the summit of Mount Olivet and witnessed His triumphant ascension into heaven. They obeyed His command to "Tarry for the Holy Spirit." On the Day of Pentecost He came as promised and sent by the risen Jesus.

These eleven disciples went forth throughout the known world preaching the gospel of Christ. They were threatened, hated, ostracized, tortured and finally killed. But they reasoned, "No matter what men may do to the body it cannot harm us. Even though they kill us, why need that deter us? We saw our Master die and we also saw Him conquer death. He arose from the grave. We too shall arise also." St. Paul later said, "If Christ be not risen our faith is vain. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen" (I Corinthians 15:14-16). What can you do with men like that? Nothing. They went forth with the personal knowledge and certainty that they had met a dead man alive again plus the internal power of the presence of the Holy Spirit. They were invincible.

Historical Proof

The two great proofs of the resurrection are: First -- the historical proof -- eleven, discouraged, despondent, downhearted men were transformed and went forth to die. How do you explain the change except that the resurrection was a fact? There is no other explanation. No other cause or dynamic would have been efficient to cause such a drastic change in eleven personalities. They had met Him who was dead.

Personal Proof

The second proof -- a personal one -- you can meet the risen Saviour for yourself and have Him talk with you and hear Him say to your troubled, bound, restless heart, "Peace be unto you." He is living and available for you. The text of this sermon can become a reality in your life, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today;
I know that He is living, whatever men may say;

I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,
And just the time I need Him He's always near.

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

-- A. H. Ackley

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Here we find embodied the entire personality. "I am the truth," -- intellectual certainty; "I am the life," -- emotional stability; "I am the way," -- volitional activity. What is truth? Truth is what God thinks; what God feels and what God wills. In Jesus Christ we see the personification of truth in a great, complete personality.

Within our constituent nature we find norms -- norms of beauty, norms of harmony, norms of symmetry, norms of justice, norms of goodness, of compassion, of mercy, of fair play and norms of truth. When in our experience we meet persons who fulfill, to a greater or lesser extent, any of these norms or approximate any one of them we admire them. Jesus Christ is the perfect fulfillment of every subject norm.

God created man in his "own image." In his "own image" rationally; man can think, reflect and reason. In his "own image," morally; man knows right from wrong. In his "own image," spiritually; man has a capacity for God. Man is wonderfully and fearfully made. He came from the hand of God perfect. He was primitively holy and pure. His constituent nature was created as God desired it. Intellectually he was flawless; the laws and norms of his mind worked without error and without friction. Emotionally he was pure and wholesomely holy. Volitionally he was in accord with God's will. He was a work of God in whom his Maker could say, "It is good." He gave man intellectual capacities; emotional areas to supply richness of personality and volitional possibilities to develop strength and attain worthwhile achievements. But sin upset this crowning creature of God's great work.

Sin marred man intellectually; blighted man emotionally and weakened man volitionally. Centuries have passed until the image of God is very dim; like a worn coin, the original inscription is very faint. Man is soiled, dirty and sinful. He has fallen so low until intellectually, emotionally and volitionally he is merely a very imperfect representation of what he was when he came from the hand of God.

There are some things we, as human beings, do not learn; some things that come with us as constituent parts of our personality. Physically, for instance, I never had to teach my daughters to like ice cream or candy; they came that way. Nor did I have to teach them to dislike bitter medicine. Some tendencies and tastes came along with their created natures. Esthetically, I did not have to be taught to prefer harmony to discord. It is a strange thing that I cannot make harmony but I can detect discord instantly. When I go into a room and note pictures hanging unevenly something

within me revolts and prefers that such wall adornments be level. In past years when it became time for a faculty committee to inspect dormitory rooms in the college when I entered a room, probably in the boys' dormitory, and found shoes scattered here and there, clothes parked on every and any piece of furniture, the bed unmade and everything topsy-turvy, something within me revolted. But when we entered a room in the girls' dormitory and found the bed nicely made with all manner of pretty little trinkets thereon, everything in its proper place, order, beauty and symmetry apparent, something within approved. Why? Why is harmony better than discord? Why is symmetry more pleasing than disproportion? Why are curves more satisfying than jagged lines? Why are order, system and harmony more pleasing than disorder, chaos and discord? The explanation is to be found in the fact that we have been created in a certain manner. And although the powers to appreciate beauty, harmony, symmetry and so on may be very weakened and dimmed yet they are still there in all of us at least faintly. Within our nature there are norms.

Whenever I meet a man who is just, my norm of justice is stimulated. When I meet a man who is merciful, my norm of -- compassion is aroused. When I see a beautiful picture or scene, my norm of beauty is activated. In life as a whole external experiences incite internal norms. When these internal norms approve we find satisfaction. When they disapprove we experience displeasure.

Certainty Of The Divine Personality Of Jesus

Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of every subjective norm. One of the greatest proofs of His deity is the fact that you cannot improve on Him. Every man we have met in our experience has a weakness or shortcoming. Every person we have ever met can be improved on by adding here and there. But with Jesus you cannot add one thing to make Him better; more just; more righteous; more compassionate; more merciful; more truthful; more kind or more beautiful. He is the complete objectification of every subjective norm.

If Jesus had never lived historically -- someone just like Him ought to have lived -- for He is the living example of everything which God originally implanted in the personality of man. He is perfect goodness; perfect truth; perfect justice. If you analyzed all the great men of history; picked out their outstanding traits of greatness -- if you analyzed all the men you have personally admired in your life and drew out the outstanding characteristics of each and then tied these approved traits up in one personality -- even then Jesus is all of that and more. He is the Ideal of ideals. From my innermost nature I pull out my ideal of justice; my ideal of truth; my ideal of mercy; my ideal of goodness; my ideal of beauty and wrap them all together in one personality -- Jesus Christ -- to whom heart, will, mind, conscience and emotions can say, "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done."

What a Personality!!! Subtract Christ from Christianity and you have nothing left. Confucianism is not dependent on the personality of Confucius nor Mohammedanism on Mohammed. But not so with Christianity -- what Christ is, Christianity is. What is right is always Christian; what is true is always Christian; what is good is always Christian and what is Christian is always right, true and good.

Jesus is the Example, the Ideal and the Pattern for every man. But He also is the Dynamic by which men may approximate the ideal life. Through His shed blood there is power to make man

a victor -- not a victim of his environment. Truly in Him we find an intellectual field wherein we can revel without error; we find an emotional field wherein we can feel without condemnation; and we find in Him a volitional field in which we can achieve without sin. He truly is "the way, the truth and the life."

Ye shall know the truth. Ye shall know Him and He shall make you free emotionally; make you free intellectually and make you free volitionally. He shall set you free. Intellectual freedom -- freedom from ignorance and superstition; emotional freedom -- freedom from fanaticism, fear and sin; volitional freedom -- freedom from tyranny, oppression and sinful acts. Freedom to think; freedom to feel and freedom to will.

Personal Certainty

Jesus opened the blind eyes of a man. The critics said, "It cannot be; it is contrary to science; it is impossible." The blind man said, "I may not be able to answer you scientifically, but this one thing I know, that whereas I was once blind I now see." Let me assure you, my friend, that the basis of certainty for your own individual soul rests in Jesus Christ. Whereas once you were filled with ignorance, superstition, fear; were bound by sin you can say, "This one thing I know, whereas once I was intellectually blind I now see clearly; whereas once I was emotionally bound by superstition and fear my soul has been released; and whereas once I was fettered by sin I have been set free." Certainty is to be found in contact with Christ. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." He said, "I am the truth." Ye shall know Him and He shall set you free.

Years ago, it is reported, \$25,000 and \$10,000 were offered as first and second prizes respectively to the artists throughout the world who could best paint a picture depicting Peace and Rest. Many months were given for the painting of the pictures. An expert board of judges was selected. When the time arrived for the unveiling of the work of the artists it was found that more than one hundred had participated from many different countries. After days of careful study and examination the judges eliminated all but two.

The artist who was awarded the second prize of \$10,000 got his easel, paints, canvas and brushes and went to work painting a beautiful lake surrounded with verdant foliage and trees. On yonder hillside sheep and cows could be seen grazing contentedly. The sun was shining and apparently the birds were singing. The lake was placid, tranquil and quiet with the foliage and trees beautifully mirrored in its waters. The artist labeled it, "Peace and Rest," and received the \$10,000 award.

First prize of \$25,000 went to an artist who had a little different conception. Instead of painting a beautiful pastoral scene he painted a river rushing on at a breakneck speed with jagged rocks protruding from the shore causing foam and spray to rise. The skies were black. One could see the lightning flash cutting the clouds and almost hear the thunder roar. A storm was raging. The river rushed on to a great precipice and its waters went plunging downward hundreds of feet to meet upturned rocks. Everything in the picture was rage and change, tumult and turmoil, storm, lightning and thunder. One wondered. But in behind the waterfall the artist had painted a bush and on that bush a bird's nest and on the nest a bird was singing contentedly in the midst of the storm. He labeled the picture, "Peace and Rest" and received First award.

There is the picture -- the true picture of Christianity. Though everything without may be fluctuating and changing; storms may be raging; friends forsaking; financial reverses and war yet the great truth of Christ is that in the inner sanctum of one's soul; the holy of holies; there can be a peace of mind, a tranquillity of spirit and a satisfaction of heart that can come only when one meets Christ personally and hears Him say, "Peace be unto you." Here one finds certainty.

Miss Doris Goodrich, who at one time was a member of the church pastored by the writer, has summed the matter up splendidly in the following beautiful, meaningful poem:

Blessed Assurance

They say my Lord was not divine,
But walked as all men walk.
Was bound by sin as all men are,
And talked as all men talk.

They say He's not the Prince of Peace,
And peace cannot impart,
But He has placed a settled peace,
In this poor fainting heart.

They say He could not raise the dead,
And give them life and make them whole.
But say! He's wrought a work in me,
And put His life within my soul!

They say He could not bring a calm,
Upon a stormy sea.
But friend, He calmed the storm of life,
That nearly shipwrecked me.

They say He could not cause the blind
To see the sun's pure ray,
But He has opened my blind eyes,
And changed my night today.

They say He fed no multitude,
On the fishes and the bread.
But there was hunger in my soul,
And that hunger has been fed.

They say He could not cause a rock
To become a living spring,
But He has quenched my burning thirst
Relief this world could never bring.

I wasn't there in Bethlehem,
When the Son of man was born;
I wasn't there in Nazareth,
As the days and years sped on.

Nor yet was I in Galilee
As He taught there by the sea;
Nor yet in old Jerusalem,
When He gave His life for me.

I didn't see the empty tomb,
On that resurrection day;
I didn't stand on Olivet,
And watch Him go away.

But I am here in a world of sin,
Saved by His grace divine,
To testify that his same Christ
Has changed this life of mine.

To tell to those who live in doubt
Because they cannot see,
That Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
Can set a prisoner free!

-- Doris Goodrich

This entire sermon has been dealing with a personal problem. What is certain? What is sure? Men down through the centuries have found certainty. They have found it in a Person. And you, too, can meet Him.

In conclusion, I am asking a few of these men and women to take the witness stand and testify concerning their experience with Christ and His relationship to them.

First -- Miss Lydia Baxter, will you take the stand? What have you to say concerning Jesus? She replies:

Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe
It will joy and comfort give you,
Take it then where'er you go.

"But Miss Baxter, in temptation does He help?"

Take the name of Jesus ever

As a shield from every snare;
If temptation 'round you gather,
Breathe that holy name in prayer.

Next -- Joseph Scriven, will you take the stand? "When friends forsake and sins overcome does Jesus remain sure?" He answers:

What a Friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

"But, Mr. Scriven, in the times of trials, when tempted and when in dire trouble can He be counted upon?"

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

"But when we are weak and burdened; when friends despise and forsake, will He remain steadfast and sure?"

Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arm's He'll take and shield thee;
Thou wilt find a solace there.

"Thank you Mr. Scriven. We now call Edward Mote."

"Mr. Mote -- this question, Does Christ bring you any hope?" He answers:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

"But Mr. Mote, in time of darkness; when hope is gone and the sea of life is raging -- what then?" He replies:

When darkness seems to veil His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

"Your testimony is exhilarating, Mr. Mote. Lowell Mason will you please take the stand. What have you to say for Christ?"

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise
The glories of my God and King
The triumphs of His grace.

"But Mr. Mason, in time of sorrow is He near?"

Jesus the name that calms my fears,
That bids my sorrows cease,
'Tis music in the sinner's ears;
'Tis life, and health and peace.

"But when I am bound by sin and feel that I am the chiefest of sinners, what can He do?"

He breaks the power of canceled sin
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

"Your words and experience are definite, Mr. Mason. Samuel Stennett will come to the stand? Please tell us what you think of Christ?" He begins to sing:

Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Saviour's brow
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o'erflow.

"But, Mr. Stennett, what does he mean to you personally?"

No mortal can with Him compare
Among the sons of men;
Fairer is He than all the fair
Who fill the heavenly train.

"But what has He done for you?"

He saw me plunge in deep distress,
He flew to my relief;
For me He bore the shameful cross,
And carried all my grief.

And then, exultingly, he cries:

To Him I owe my life and breath
And all the joys I have
He makes me triumph over death;
He saves me from the grave.

"Your testimony is convincing, Mr. Stennett. Isaac Watts will you come and be our final witness. Will you tell us what Christ means to you?" And Isaac Watts testifies as follows:

When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died.
All earthly gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

During the summer of 1941 Mrs. DeLong and I visited Mexico City as delegates to the International Congress of Religious Education. It was a glorious experience. En route we stopped at Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. In my opinion this is the greatest natural phenomenon in America if not in the entire world. Accompanied by five hundred others we followed the official

guide to a depth 850 feet beneath the surface of the earth. We walked single file from one great room to another, squeezing through small openings in the rocks, observing the beautiful formations and gorgeous coloring of the stalactites stalagmites.

At noon we entered a great underground restaurant capable of seating more than 2,000 people. Following lunch we then took the trip through the great room, sometimes called the "big room" or the "King's chamber." It is a mile and a half long, 450 feet across and 320 feet to the ceiling and no one knows how deep. We encircled this great room walking possibly four miles. At the end of the trip we approached what is called the "Rock of Ages," a massive formation of rock extending upward many feet and protruding forward. The guide requested all to be seated on the sloping incline of that great spectacle. He then informed us that in a few minutes all the lights in the cavern would be extinguished and requested that all cigarettes, flashlights be put out and that silence reign calling attention to the fact that for the first time many of us would find ourselves in stark darkness. Soon the lights were turned off and we were in darkness and in silence. I felt creepy and very uncomfortable. There we were sitting 850 feet beneath the surface of the earth. If the earth should quake only God would know where we were. After about ten seconds of such stark darkness I felt like saying to the guide, "Well we have seen it and felt it, please put on the lights." But another ten seconds passed and the uneasiness increased and finally when the thirty seconds had elapsed -- it seemed like an hour. Then away down at the end of the cavern -- more than a mile -- approximately 8,000 feet -- a little speck of light appeared. At the same time a male quartet from that distance began to sing softly, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me; let me hide myself in Thee." The light grew larger and larger until it illuminated every corner and crevasse of that cavern. As the light increased in intensity the singing grew in volume and as that blazing light filled the room the quartet struck the last verse with all the vocal power they had:

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death;
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Lot me hide myself in Thee.

Well -- something happened to me. It seemed that a new room in my soul had been opened. Something within me was stirred as never before. I felt like shouting and praising God for the one sure, steadfast thing in all the world, the Rock of Ages. When everything else is changing and fluctuating there is a sure foundation which never changes. Certainty!!! As I sat in that darkness I remembered that away back 1,900 years ago the world was shrouded in spiritual, stark darkness when one night a speck of light appeared in Bethlehem's manger and down over the centuries it has grown in intensity and clarity until it has penetrated and cast its glorious rays to the farthest corners of a sin-darkened world.

In these days of uncertainty and change, turmoil and tumult, thank God there is a rock upon which we can place our feet with certainty and security. There is a light which can dispel the darkness of the soul. The Quest for Certainty can be found in a personal Christ.

As the five hundred of us left the "big room" and returned to the spacious restaurant and approached elevators the guide said, "You can take your choice -- for twenty-five cents you can take one of these elevators and in ninety seconds it will carry you up 850 feet or in two and one-half hours you can walk out of the cavern." For several reasons we decided to take the elevator. Finally after waiting our turn eighteen of us entered the cage-like affair and in ninety seconds went up and up and up and into the blazing sunlight with eyes blinking trying to adjust to daylight after hours in the darkness. I thought of Plato's Figure of the Cave where men saw only shadows -- not reality -- and I was reminded of St. Paul's words, "Now we see through a glass darkly." Here we were living in the midst of sin, war, suffering and death. One day we shall be called upon to enter a casket -- but it is only God's elevator -- to take us up and up and out of this life to the blazing light of eternal day. Christ overcame death. We too, as His followers, have the faith that because He lives we too shall live.

We have now explored briefly the realm of certainty:

- (a) the Certainty of my own personal existence.
- (b) the Certainty of the existence of God.
- (c) the Certainty of Divine Revelation.
- (d) the Certainty of the Resurrection of Jesus.
- (e) the Certainty of the Divine Personality of Jesus.
- (f) the Certainty of Personal Experience.

We concluded with the personal testimonies of several witnesses. You too can meet Him -- talk with Him -- know Him. He is a Reality. The Quest for Certainty is to be found in a personal Christ who is the personification of truth. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Meet the risen Christ today and let Him set your soul free. Freedom from sin -- peace of heart -- rest of soul -- these you can receive from Him.

* * * * *

THE END