

THE WISE MAN . and his baffling problems
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(PROVERBS 30:18)

Paul declared, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned " (1 Cor. 2:14). The experiences of the Christian are essentially spiritual, and as such they are beyond the comprehension of the unregenerate man. This fact is illustrated in the testimony of the ancient philosopher who confessed his inability to understand the ways of creation. He said, "There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not; the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid." A fundamental principle of the Christian faith is expressed in each of these word-pictures.

The Problem of a Man Trusting

There are many interesting details about the habits of the eagle, but the greatest of all is the method by which the young are taught to fly. The nest is usually built at the top of an inaccessible mountain, where there is little danger of interference. When the young birds are old enough to fly, the parent bird ruthlessly destroys the nest and pushes her offspring over the side of the precipice. Then, as the young eaglets are fluttering helplessly downwards, the mother bird swoops to catch the chicks on her wings. And in the repetition of this process, the frightened birds desperately spread and flap their wings, and ultimately make the astonishing discovery that by so doing they are able to arrest the downward urge and to follow their mother toward the blue sky. That scene illustrates the problem of the young man learning to trust God. He may hear the Gospel and feel inclined to believe its promises, but it is only when he launches out in faith, trusting that God will care for him, that he discovers "underneath are the everlasting arms."

The Problem of a Man Holding

The serpent has neither hands nor feet with which to climb, yet in some uncanny fashion it reaches precipitous places where man is unable to go. The ancient thinker had obviously marvelled at the way the serpent could take hold of the rock. All creation abounds with similar characteristics. The fly can walk on the ceiling, and for no apparent reason, stay there when all else would fall. The limpet clings to the rocks at the sea shore, and even the greatest waves are unable to dislodge it. And the secret of all these miracles is suction. The serpent takes hold of the rock, and the rock takes hold of the serpent, and with no foreign elements coming between, either one holds the other. So it is with the young Christian. Great cliffs of difficulty may block his path, and conscious of his own inherent weakness he may feel inclined to despair. Yet God's strength will be made perfect in his weakness when he learns to cling to the Rock of Ages.

The Problem of a Man Advancing

Huge ocean-going liners were unknown in Old Testament days, and sea-faring men had to depend upon sailing ships. They quickly learned that the set of the sails and

THE WISE MAN . and his baffling problems not the force of the wind governed their direction. Even though the winds seemed adverse, they could be used to good account by the skilful manipulation of the picturesque sheets of canvas high above their heads. And this is also true of the greater experiences of life. There are times when circumstances would drive our souls to the rocks of destruction; but the man whose heart is inclined toward the Lord will have his sails set in such a fashion that even the ill winds will be made to work together for his good.

The Problem of a Man Loving

"The way of a man with a maid." Love can make a selfish man considerate of others. Love can make a strong man weak. Love-real love for a sweetheart-will lead a man to sacrifice in a way hitherto unknown in his experience. Love can do almost anything. This is the great secret behind every experience of the Christian. It enables us to trust Christ; to cling to Christ; and to allow His hand to control us even amid the wildest storms of life. Perfect love casteth out fear. The heart can solve problems which baffle the intellect, for "love never faileth."

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