

Megiddo Message

Vol. 81, No. 4
April 1994



First Fruits
unto Life!

IN but not OF

In the last recorded prayer of our Lord, when He was soon to be separated from His loved disciples, He made some very significant statements which are often overlooked. He was concerned, deeply concerned for their welfare, those whom He had fathered in the faith, those whom He had personally instructed, who had been with Him during most of His ministry. And so He implores His Father in their behalf: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9).

Then He says (verse 14), "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Only two verses later He repeats the distinction: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (v 16).

Are we not foolish—and wrong—if we try to minimize the difference between the church and the world, between the believer and the nonbeliever? Our Lord set the distinction. He was not of the world, and *they* were not of the world. This distinctive status of the Christian makes him, in a spiritual sense, *apart from* the world. A new creature in Christ, he differs from the unregenerate in perspective, in life, in interests, in purpose, in destination. For him the world is only a means to a greater end; it has nothing to offer of itself.

The distinction is clear, and must be maintained at all costs, because the stakes are life and death. God is offering life, *eternal* life, but that life is not a free-for-all. It is the reward of living *in* the world and not being *of* the world.

Living in the world, a Christian is a citizen of another world, even of heaven, and as such

he is commissioned to exert a heavenly influence on his earthly environment. Our Lord compared His disciples to salt—which is meant to be tasted; and to light—which is meant to be seen. God forbid that we should lose our savor, or hide our light.

What is our purpose in the world? We are not here to conquer but to witness. We are here not to transform the world but to transform ourselves, and to give consistent and continuing evidence of the transforming power of the law of God.

Nowhere in the Bible are we told to expect that all will believe or that all will accept Christ's law of life. Always in Christ's teaching there was a distinction between two roads, two gates, two goals. And even for the believers there are two possible results: one of being accepted into "the joy of our Lord," and the other of being "cast out into outer darkness." We may not like the concept that all are not God's children, that some are children of the devil (of evil) and others are children of light. But this is the plain teaching of Scripture, and shall we deny it because it does not fit our ideas?

In the world but not *of* it. Herein lies the power and strength of the believer, in being bound to a higher goal and a higher hope, though living in the common environment.

The distinction between being *in* and not *of* is as real as that between life and death, between light and darkness. And maintaining this distinction is the duty of every one of us. Compromise Christianity to fit the world's pattern and instantly you bring over it the pallor of death. As Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians in no uncertain terms, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of dev-

(Continued on page 27)

Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events

The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

In this issue ...

Abib and New Year Issue

Editorial

IN BUT NOT OF2

Article

FIRSTFRUITS UNTO LIFE4

Jesus in rising from the dead became the firstfruits to life

Sermon

BEWARE OF CHRIST!8

The call of Jesus is a call to sacrifice.

Poem

"FOLLOW ME!"11

Feature

JESUS IS COMING! (DO WE REALLY WANT HIM?)14

"He shall come"...whether we are ready or not.

Book Feature

THE KNOWN BIBLE AND ITS DEFENSE (Section 2, Part 3)16

THE INERRANT WORD: WHY WE BELIEVE IT (2)

Jesus Believed the Old Testament Scriptures

A Story for Children

OBEDIENCE FIRST21

Article

APPLIED CHRISTIANITY22

The best faith is useless unless applied.

Poem

"HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL"23

On Matthew 19:21-24

by Rev L. T. Nichols

Nature Feature

GIANTS OF THE JUNGLE24

Article

THE FIRST MONTH: ABIB26

Lines to Live By27

Back Cover

WHAT DOES THE LORD THINK OF US?28

Megiddo Message

April 1994
Volume 81, No. 4

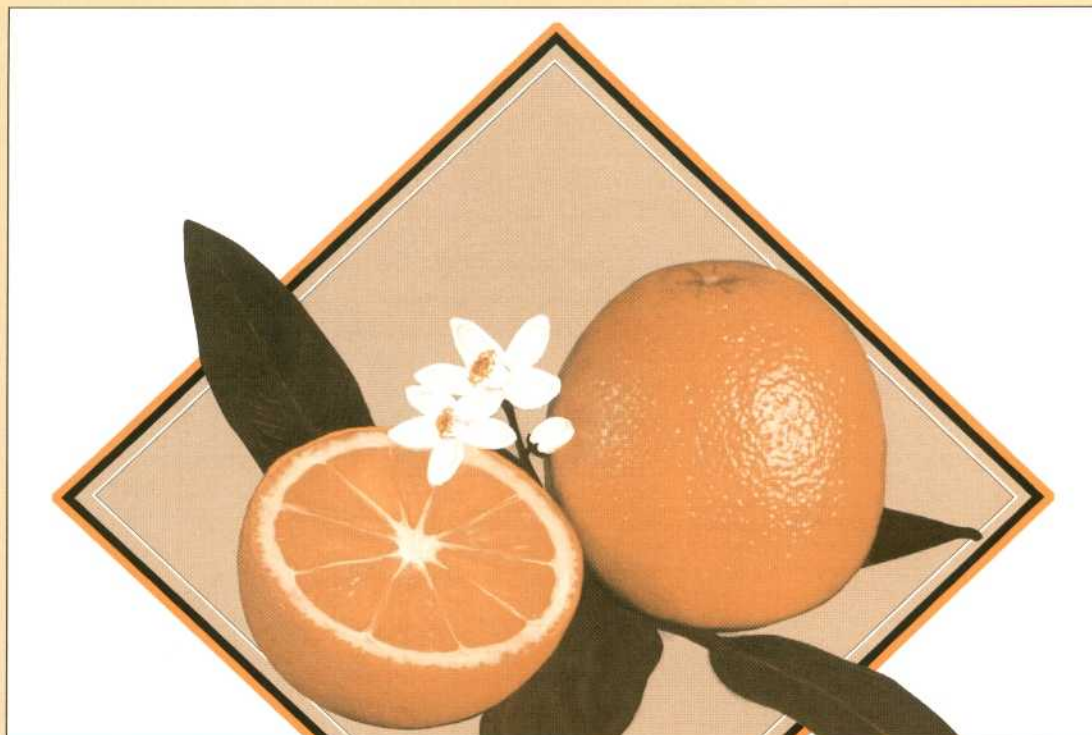
A religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church, L. T. Nichols, *Founder*; Newton H. Payne, *President and Editor*; Ruth E. Sisson, *Executive Editor*.

The Megiddo Message is available in microfilm from University Microfilms, Inc., Serials Acquisitions, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

The Megiddo Message (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year (eleven issues) \$5.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

Unsolicited manuscripts for publication are not accepted.

Bible Quotations: Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows: NEB—New English Bible; NIV—New International Version; NASB—New American Standard Bible; RSV—Revised Standard Version; TLB—The Living Bible; JB—The Jerusalem Bible; Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English; Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation; Spri—A Translation of the Old Testament Scriptures From the Original Hebrew, by Helen Spurrell; TCNT—Twentieth Century New Testament.



Firstfruits Unto Life

*Jesus Christ,
in rising from
the dead,
became the
firstfruits of a
great new order
of life.*

Firstfruits. By their very nature they are distinguished. Whatever is first of its kind is sure of recognition, be it the first automobile, or the first airplane, or the first ripe peach, or the firstborn child. The "first" suggests that it is something brand new, also implying that there are more of its kind to follow.

In ancient Israel, firstfruits were given special consideration. It was not an option; it was the law. Always the first and the best belonged to God. "All the finest olive oil and all the finest new wine and grain" were to be given to the Lord as the "firstfruits of their harvest" (Num. 18:12, NIV). The "first of the firstfruits of thy land" was to be brought to the house of the Lord (Ex. 34:26). When it was time for grain harvest, the first sheaf of grain harvested had to be offered, along with the first two loaves of bread baked and ready to eat (Lev. 2:14; 23:10, 17, 20). The firstborn child of a

family had to be redeemed for a designated amount of money (Num. 3:46-51). Every Israelite was well aware of the laws governing the firstfruits.

We cannot wonder that God uses the firstfruits as a parallel in describing His plan of salvation. In this plan, Christ is the firstfruits, first in terms of completing the entire program God designed. For centuries, men—godly men, wicked men, ordinary men, rich men, poor men—had lived and died. And that was all that anyone could see. Jesus Christ, in rising from the dead, became the firstfruits of a great new order of life which had been in the purpose of God from the beginning. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20). He who designed our planet did not plan that the lives of all its inhabitants should end in nothingness. Those who would choose God's way and follow His pro-

gram could have something better, *far* better.

Christ came to demonstrate that vastly better "something." He came to show the ideal, the perfect pattern, the glorious and eternal truth. By His life, death and resurrection, followed by His crowning with immortality, Jesus demonstrated for all would-be children of God the entire plan. With Him a new beginning was made. Here was a new harmony that displaced the old. Jesus met the standard, and met it perfectly. At peace with Himself and at peace with God, His life of prayer and faith and obedience would be henceforward a perfect guide for every seeker after life. For He had come to teach and to show that more abundant life, and He did it—perfectly. And God openly demonstrated His acceptance of Jesus' life-offering by raising Him from the dead. Now anyone could see how one may truly live, and live forever. Now anyone could know, because Jesus was the forerunner, the firstborn of the great God-ordained new order, the firstfruits unto life.

As with all other firstfruits, Jesus' coming also demonstrated that there would be more to follow. He was not the whole harvest, only the *first* of it. And so Paul exults over the resurrection of Jesus: "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (I Cor. 15:22). Here was the new pattern, and here was glorious hope and promise. Just as "in Adam," the natural unenlightened human race, all suffer eternal death, even so "in Christ," the new life lived as Christ lived it, the new life of hope and promise and victory, even so "*in Christ shall all be made alive*." Notice that all shall be "*made alive*"—they are not even counted as living until they are given immortality, released eternally from the thralldom of death. Only then do they really *live*!

Then Paul continues: "*But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*" (I Cor. 15:23). "*Christ the firstfruits*"—and what about the rest of the harvest, Paul? Where do they

fit in? There will be more, Paul adds quickly. "*Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*."

And actually, that "afterward" will include more firstfruits, for Christ was only the *first* of the firstfruits. At the coming of Christ, those who are harvested are counted also as "*firstfruits unto God*." We read in Revelation 14:4, where the Revelator is describing the saints who stand with Christ on Mount Zion, "*These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb*." This is the glorious "*afterward*," "*afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*" (I Cor. 15:23). When Jesus was taken to heaven, His longing disciples watching Him ascend were comforted by the words of two angels, who gave the reassuring promise: "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:11). The promise was sure, and the apostle Paul was standing upon it. Paul himself wanted to be part of that glorious "*afterward*," when the rest of the firstfruits would be gathered unto life.

That there might be no question about the time of which Paul spoke, he said further: "*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet*" (I Cor. 15:24-25). Here is pictured the entire earth under the authority and dominion of Christ and His new rulership, the whole "firstfruits." Only then is this portion of the harvest complete.

And still this is not the end. There will be no stopping until the earth is filled with the glory of God, and God is all in all (vs 28).

Paul's Telescopic View of the Plan of God

Here is what might be called the gospel of the larger hope. It sees beyond the present, catching a glorious vision of the future and all that it

Always the first and the best belonged to God.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

will bring. And what a world it will be, what blessedness of justice, peace and brotherliness, all united in perfect bonds of love and fellowship in the service of God! Nothing less than that goal in the vast reaches of eternity, nothing less is great enough to be worthy of so great a Gospel as Jesus and Paul preached at so great a cost.

Of this entire Gospel Christ is the first of the firstfruits, the pioneer, the principal of the new life. He it is who has blazed the trail, setting up the signposts,

and calling all to follow Him. Then at His return, those who have followed Him will share in the resurrection life, and share also in the glory of the firstfruits. For they shall be kings and priests with Him on His throne, and they shall "*reign for ever and ever*" (Rev. 14:1; 5:9-10). Then, step by step, will follow the growth and development of the afterfruits until the earth is filled with the glory of the Lord and all who live are immortal. And "*then cometh the end,*" the glorious climax, when God is all

in all, and everyone in all the world is under His dominion (I Cor. 15:28).

Do we wonder that Paul wrote, "*Every man in his own order*"—wherever God has placed us, that is our place to serve, with all our heart and soul and mind and strength! What a fitting corollary to the Master's own requirement that His followers seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. And what a glorious addition, that "*all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matt. 6:33).

Firstfruits, Afterfruits

The Bible borrowing an illustration from the world of agriculture, pictures the earth as one great vineyard from which the Lord is harvesting those who will be the inheritors of His eternal Kingdom. There are to be two great harvests, a first and a second. The first harvest includes those who are selected during a period of 6000 years, from the time of Adam to the Second Advent of Christ. These collectively are called the "*firstfruits*." The next crop, the "*after fruits*," are pictured as a very large number (a number not revealed) which will multiply and ultimately fill the earth with the glory of God.

The evidence to support this plan is scattered throughout the Bible. In various similes, God as the great husbandman is represented as maintaining a field, a vineyard, a garden. In Jesus' Parable of the Householder and His Vineyard (Matthew 20), God is represented as going out "*early in the morning*," also in the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours of the day, to hire laborers into His vineyard. Isaiah identifies this vineyard as the "*house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant*" (5:7). Paul said also, "*Ye are God's husbandry*" (I Cor. 3:9).

The Eternal being a God of order, we can expect no less from His activities than perfect order. And He has planned: "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*" (Gal. 6:7).

Carrying the spiritual analogy a step further, God sows the Word of life in our hearts. Jesus compared

the Word of God to the good seed of the Kingdom sown in various qualities of soil (Luke 8:5-15). A sower went out to sow his seed, and his seed fell into four kinds of soil, the "*wayside*," upon a "*rock*," among "*thorns*," and on "*good ground*."

And the immutable principle holds: "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*" (Gal. 6:7-8).

In Revelation 14, two reaping times are pictured: the harvest of the firstfruits, then afterward the harvest of the "*clusters of the earth*." The instructions to the first angel were, "*Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe*" (Rev. 14:15). After this, "*another angel*" gave instructions for another reaping: "*Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe*" (vs. 17-18).

The same two harvests are represented allegorically by the sons of Abraham, Isaac representing the greater-in-rank firstfruits, Ishmael representing the greater-in-number afterfruits. God's promise to Abraham concerning Isaac was: "*And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after*

thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger; all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession" (Gen. 17:7-8). Abraham was to have Canaan, this earth, for an everlasting possession if he walked before God and became perfect. Jesus repeated this promise, *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth"* (Matt. 5:5).

The Lord confirmed the promise made to Abraham in changing the name of Sarah before the birth of the promised child. We read: *"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be,"*—that is, the mother of high ones. *"And I will bless her; and give thee a son also of her:... kings of people shall be of her"* (Gen. 17: 15-16).

This is one promise to Abraham, but that was not all. There was to be another seed, greater in number, though lesser in rank—the populace of the Kingdom. We read: *"And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee."* And God said: *"As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly;...and I will make him a great nation"* (Gen. 17:18, 20). Two seeds were promised to Abraham, one to be the firstfruits, for rulers of the Kingdom; the other to be the populace of the Kingdom, the afterfruits.

The same illustration is seen in Jacob's blessing of Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, as they also were used to typify the same two groups of people. We read:

"And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?" Joseph replied to his father, *"They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he*

said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them....And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn" (Gen. 48:8-10, 13-14). It was customary for the chief blessing to go to the firstborn, but Jacob knew the plan of God, and in crossing his arms he placed his right hand on Ephraim's head (the younger). It had been revealed to him that the elder, or greater in number, should serve the younger, who would be greater in rank.

"And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head." Joseph thought that his father being old did not know what he was doing, and attempted to straighten him out. But Jacob was adamant. He said: *"I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh"* (Gen. 48:17-20).

The same arrangement pre-

ailed in the relation between Jacob and Esau, the elder again serving the younger. As the Lord revealed to Rebecca before the birth of Esau and Jacob, *"The elder shall serve the younger,"* or as it is rendered in the margin, *"The greater shall serve the lesser"* (Rom. 9:12).

Both harvests, both groups are to be part of the plan of God. Both will be inheritors of the Kingdom, in their respective roles.

This same fact is pointed out in Revelation 7, where Jesus speaks of both groups. He first identified the firstfruits or ruling group, the "sealed" ones, as twelve thousand from each of the tribes of Israel, a symbol of their distinct selection (Rev. 7:3-8). Then He speaks of another group: *"After this"*—later in time—*"I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number [a number not revealed] ...stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes,"* a symbol of moral purity. These *"serve him day and night in his temple"* (vs. 9-15). They are the second harvest, the afterfruits.

Another illustration of the two harvests, under yet another simile, is found in Ezekiel 37 (vs. 20-26). Here the prophet pictures them as "two sticks" which are to be joined in a happy union forever. *"And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all:... so shall they be my people, and I will be their God"* (vs. 22-23).

Two great harvests—and then *"the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab. 2:14). □

Beware of CHRIST!

*Following
Christ affects
every aspect
and avenue
of life.*

Highest in the ranks of earthborns, noblest of all the sons of men; first in honor, first in glory, first in achievement, first in influence, first in all that combines to form real greatness is Jesus Christ.

Do we aspire to be like Him? We reach for the highest attainment imaginable. Indeed, all to which we aspire—of glory, grace, beauty, life—is epitomized in the life of Christ. So spectacular was His achievement that we tend to forget it was not His at birth; that He, too, had to learn; He, too, had to grow.

Of the seed of David, of the tribe of Judah, He was, in the words of the prophet, “*raised up from among his brethren*” (Deut. 18:15, 18). He was made in “*all things like unto his brethren*” (Heb. 2:17). “*Made of a woman, made under the law*” (Gal. 4:4), He was born and grew to maturity like other men. Very few of those who saw Him at work in the carpenter shop of Nazareth would have surmised that He was different from any other carpenter in the village. Doing ordinary tasks—though in an extraordinary manner, we may be sure—He still seemed very much like one of His generation.

No Ordinary Man

But when He went out to preach; when He began telling why He was alive and what was His ultimate destiny; when He began to demonstrate the will of His heavenly Father, His high and holy commission, and His Divine authority; when He began calling others to a life of holi-

ness and delivering God’s inflexible standards of uprightness, they quickly realized that here was no ordinary man. “*Never man spake like this man,*” they said on one occasion (John 7:46). “*He teaches...as one who has authority,*” (Matt. 7:29), they gasped another time. And when He began laying down the laws of the Kingdom of heaven and the entrance requirements of all who should have part in it, those who comprehended raised their eyebrows and looked questioningly at each other. “*Who then,*” they demanded to know, “*shall be saved?*” Others listened, and were defensive. “*We be Abraham’s seed,*” they declared, as if that should settle the matter once and for all (John 8:33). Others were plainly bewildered. “*Is not this the carpenter’s son,*” they queried, “*whose father and mother we know?*” (Matt. 13:55; John 6:42). The face was His, and the form and features; but the words!—whence came they?

How far removed from the Christ so often portrayed in liberal pulpits today is the real Christ, the one of power and dynamite. He was a man of whom one could well take warning: “Beware.” He came teaching a law impartial in every particular, yet exacting, challenging, even dictatorial in its demands. The call He set ringing was a call to individual initiative and self-discipline; and its uncompromising demands for obedience and its Divine, unrelenting authority meant that no one could safely disregard it.

Hence our topic: *Beware of Christ*. Not that He came to frighten men, but

there came with Him an obligation inescapable. If we would share in the benefits He offers, we must share also in the responsibilities. If we are not willing for the latter, then "beware"—beware of Christ!

There was no evading it: Christ *was* different, very different from the average, or even the above-average, of humankind.

What Made Christ Different?

First is that statement of Christ's, unequalled in excellence or import: "*I and my Father are one*" (John 10:30). Who but Christ could make such a statement? Who could know and share such oneness with the great Creator, the God of the universe, He in whom all of us live and move and have our being?

Second, who but Christ could testify, "*The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him*"? (John 8:29). What other lips could truthfully frame those words? A few might be able to say, I do *many* things that please Him, or even, I do *some* things that please Him. But who—apart from Christ—would be able to make the statement so all-inclusive as "*I do always those things that please Him*"?

Third, Jesus was distinguished by what we might call natural heritage, by being literally the Son of God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, He was God's own Son. This did not mean He was Divine in nature, or that He was half God and half man, or that He was born perfect and sinless, as some claim. Nor did it mean that He had already spent ages upon ages with the Father in heaven and only now was taking on human form. These ideas have been borrowed from other philosophies and religions; they are not of God and are not taught in the Bible.

However, being God's own Son surely gave Him some extraordinary advantages. First of all, He inherited a tendency to evil from only one human parent. Then too, being the Son of God He must have enjoyed a nearer connection with the Divine, a closer link and a stronger bond than is open to most. And oh, can we imagine the rich, soul-strengthening communion He shared with His Father—

on the mountaintop, in the valley, or amidst the crowd? Wherever He went, He was not alone; His Father was with Him. No ordinary man was this. Here was a spiritual giant.

Fourth, Jesus possessed superior wisdom and knowledge, some of which must have been given Him by Divine bestowment through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we read that "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature*" (Luke 2:52), we can know that that wisdom was not the learning of the Pharisees, who prided themselves in being able to recite chapter upon chapter from the law of Moses; nor was it learning from the books of laws in which their own "wise men" had expanded the law to meet what they considered current "needs." Jesus' "increase" in wisdom was according to God's standards, not man's. His learning was in the depths of real knowledge, the knowledge of God. When Jesus spoke, He *knew* whereof He spoke. He did not have to wonder what was right, or what was true, or what was of God. He *knew*.

Then, too, Jesus was the Christ, the anointed, the Messiah, the chosen one. His own apostle Peter was the first of His followers to make this declaration: "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" and he made it with all the bold confidence of Simon Peter (John 6:69). The statement was unexcelled, and could apply to no other. Never before had any man walked on earth of whom this could be said. It immediately points up several facts: 1) that Jesus was no ordinary man; 2) that He was the Christ, 3) and that He was indeed the Son of God and the fulfillment of the prophecies made unto the fathers. And 4) it established the Divine authority behind Him. When He spoke, was He not echoing the voice of God? Who could close their ears to the heavenly tones? Who could disregard His message with impunity?

Still greater is His destiny as the Prince of the Kings of the earth, that greatest part of His career which is yet future. To Him shall belong power and dominion. Of Him it was prophesied,

*The call of
Christ is not
to mediocrity
but to the
highest type of
excellence.*

We must
refuse to be
satisfied with
anything but
the best, the
very best of
which we are
capable.

"And the government shall be upon his shoulder...of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:6-7). He, this man among men, will one day have "dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth....Yea, all kings shall fall down before him:...all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:8, 11, 17). He the Prince of the Kings of the earth, He whose power shall be wielded to subdue the forces of evil worldwide, let no one underestimate His authority. Rather, let them beware. Beware of Christ.

Then, too, Jesus was distinguished by His appropriate title of "Lord." What does this mean? It means that He is one worthy to be listened to, worthy to be obeyed. It means He has been delegated certain authority which demands our respect, that it is His part to command and ours to humbly listen.

He who is so far superior to us, yet He whom we must imitate and pattern our own lives after, can we not reverently call Him "Lord"? Yet if we do, let us beware. If Christ is Lord of our lives, He is Lord also of our affections; and if of our affections, then He is also Lord of our loves, ambitions, motives and every other aspect and attitude of our lives. If we would be truly His, we must learn to love the things He loves and abhor what He abhors. Our aspirations and goals must align with His; our friends must be His friends.

Then, too, if He is Lord of our lives He is Lord also of our minds, and we are permitted to think only the thoughts He would have us entertain. He becomes, too, the motivator and inspirer of our lives. Our disciplines, our devotions, our destinations all must be in line with His. We are His disciples, and discipleship implies obedience; and obedience implies that there are absolute commands to be obeyed. We are under oath to let Him direct. If we fail; if our actions and our words do not agree, then we can expect Him to say to us, *"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46). Why? Because Jesus is Lord.

The Significance to Us

What is the significance of all this to you and me as aspiring followers of Christ? How is it possible that we have any free moral agency to choose for ourselves if Jesus' authority is so far-reaching? Have we no liberty to choose as we please?

It all comes down to this fact. You may think as you please, do as you please, go where you please. You may pursue your own goals in life and seek the best this world can give. You may support the wrong and give your first loyalties to lesser things. You may. But if you do, **BEWARE OF CHRIST.**

What do we mean by "Christ" in the fullest sense of the word? Our first thought is of the physical Christ and all He means to us. Even this includes so much more than the mere thought of a person. Christ is to us the epitome of perfection. He is our perfect and complete example. When we think of Christ, we picture in our minds the full surrender, the entire race successfully run from starting line clear through to finish—to immortality. Christ is our life, our hope, our joy, our light. The apostle Paul spoke of *"Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col. 1:27). His heavenly message, His high standard, His holy ideals are all part of this spiritual "Christ in [us]." It is the whole Divine scheme from beginning to end, including all exhortation, admonition, inspiration and obligation. Should we not take such a matter seriously, very seriously? Should we not say it again, "Beware of Christ"? Should we not, in the words of Peter, *"pass the time of [our] sojourning here in fear"*? (1 Pet. 1:17).

Beware

Be watchful. Be alert. Why? Because when we pledge ourselves to His service, we are not our own. We become His stewards, His servants. And someday each of us shall have to face Christ to render an account of our stewardship. At the first only those who have made a covenant with Him will be called before Him. But His program is not limited to a few. Before the plan is complete, the

whole earth will be under His jurisdiction. Everyone who lives will be compelled to submit and give allegiance to Him. It will be either *obey and live*, or *disobey and die* (Deut. 11:26-28).

With such an eventuality before us, how much wiser, how much more sensible to beware of Christ *now*, to choose to let Him be our Lord and Master *now*, to let Him do the dictating in our lives *now*, to accept—even welcome—His authority *now* before the compelling time arrives.

We need to be stirred to action, to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jas. 1:22), lest all be not well with us in the great Day to come. Christ calls us to be activists, to bestir ourselves in our most holy faith, to act upon the principles we know. “We are [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

There is something to do, something to achieve, and this calls for excellence. We want to give Him our best to the limit of our possibilities, to demonstrate the love we feel for the reward He has set before us. It is a deep, genuine, impelling love which moves us to act. Duty makes us do things; love makes us do things beautifully. We must refuse to be satisfied with anything but the best, the very best of which we are capable.

Popularity even at the price of mediocrity, is a philosophy among a large segment of people today. A good father is one who is “one of the boys”; the popular minister is one who lives on a par with his congregation, who is “one of” them, not *below* them but not noticeably above them either. Leaders should be on a common level with the majority of people, even if it means the sacrificing of high ideals and principles.

If Mediocrity Is Your Aim, Beware of Christ

This philosophy may belong to the passing world, but there is none of it in Christ. The call of Christ is not to mediocrity but to the highest type of excellence. If we are to see Christ’s spiritual

stature, we have to look up. If we are to reach it, we must climb. No mediocrity with Him, nothing even slightly ordinary. When He speaks, He commands. When

“Follow Me!”

Lord, I would follow, but—

*First, I would see what means that wondrous call
That peals so sweetly through life’s rainbow hall,
That thrills my heart with quivering golden chords,
And fills my soul with joys seraphical.*

Lord, I would follow, but—

*First, I would leave things straight before I go,—
Collect my dues, and pay the debts I owe;
Lest when I’m gone, and none is here to tend,
Time’s ruthless hand my garnering o’erthrow.*

Lord, I would follow, but—

*First, I would see the end of this high road
That stretches straight before me, fair and broad;
So clear the way I cannot go astray,
It surely leads me equally to God.*

Lord, I would follow,—yea,

*Follow I will,—but first so much there is
That claims me in life’s vast emergencies,—
Wrongs to be righted, great things to be done;
Shall I neglect these vital urgencies?*

**Who answers Christ’s insistent call
Must give himself, his life, his all,
Without one backward look.**

**Who sets his hand unto the plow,
And glances back with anxious brow,
His calling hath mistook.**

**If Christ would claim him for His own;
He must be Christ’s and Christ’s alone.**

—Selected

Christ delegates responsibility, He means that we should take it seriously, very seriously. Where Jesus sits, He is King. Where Jesus lives, He is Lord.

Jesus explained this in several of His

*When we
pledge ourselves
to His service,
we are not our
own. We
become His
stewards, His
servants.*

parables. Think about the parable of the Talents. Three different men were given goods or "talents" with three different values. The talents in the parable represent the natural endowments and spiritual possibilities of each of us. There are wide differences in energy, zeal, and spiritual power. There are also differences in health, time, intellectual powers, earthly riches, influence. None of us could expect to serve in the capacity that the apostle Paul served Christ. Nor could we wish to rival the energy and spiritual power of our founder. But God does not ask us to be equal to one another. He asks only that we use what we have in the proper way, to the greatest possible spiritual advantage.

This was the commission to those to whom the master entrusted portions of his goods in the parable of the Talents. When the final reckoning came, the lord judged the diligence and the work

which each had expended, not the amount each had been given. The first servant had used his five talents to make five more, and his effort was approved. "Well done," said the master. The second, too, had done his best. His possibilities were not those of the first, but he was as good and holy and noble-hearted a man as his more highly gifted brother. His work was welcomed with the same high praise; faithfulness was the quality being judged.

The third servant lingered to the last. He was uneasy, but he could not escape his master's eye; he too must render his account. At length he comes, but not in humility. He has thoroughly convinced himself that he has done the right thing. So he comes with false excuses, justifying his action—or non-action; trying to shift the blame from himself onto his lord. He knew, he said, that his master was a hard man, harsh and exacting, requiring from

Eternal Father, the light of all our seeing, the source of all our living, and the depth of all our love, we lift our hearts in reverence to Thee this day for Thy bountifulness to us. We come because we need tranquility and strength.

O Thou from whom come all courage and certainty, today let the anxieties of time be seen against the large horizons of eternity. So grant that our worship may beget in us such purity of heart, calmness of spirit, wisdom of insight, depth of intuition, and certainty about Thee that shall make us strong through the days to come and ready to do our duty for Thee whatever that duty may be.

For all the light and hope that shines upon our lives we bless Thee, especially for the gift which Thou hast given in the life of Thy Son and our perfect Example. With humble footsteps and reverent hearts we seek to follow Him. Lead us away from our pride and conceit to copy His humility. Deliver us from all shortsighted fears and petty concerns that we may share His sublime faith. And may the Kingdom of Christ be the motivating power in our lives, and the triumph of right our whole concern.

Father, we pray for Thy guiding hand upon our nation and all nations, according to Thy will. We know that there cannot be peace on earth and goodwill among men until the King of righteousness shall

reign. But help us to make Him the supreme ruler in our lives now. Remind us that this time of tarrying is our time of opportunity, that when He returns He shall come as our Judge and earth's Conqueror, as well as our Deliverer. In light of this solemn truth, help us to beware of Christ, to take very seriously our promise to obey Him, realizing that we will have to answer for our use or misuse of all that has been entrusted to our care.

Our Father, we pray Thee to free us from the slavery of any impure thoughts and suspicions of one another. Unite Thy church in the unity that is in Christ, and inspire us to serve Thee as one family in the fellowship of faith. Renew our interest in each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and the love and loyalty of each of us to Thee and Thy true Church. Break down our crooked reasoning and all our foolish trusting in ourselves. May we not carry into this New Year any feelings of prejudice against another, any feelings of bitterness or ill will, any feelings of hostility or superiority or revenge. But may all our interests and all our aims be dominated by Thy holy principles of love and brotherliness, that the life of Christ may truly be seen in us and among us in all our dealing and working one with another.

So may Thy Kingdom come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, world without end. Amen.

his servants more than they could render, more than he had enabled them to render. So, this third servant explains, to be on the "safe" side he did nothing at all, lest in the risks and uncertainties of business he should lose some portion of it. So he had kept it safe: here it was.

This third servant is like those who say God is not just, that they are not capable of the work to which God calls them. His demands are so large, so deep, so far-reaching; He requires more than their weak human nature can give, more than ought to be expected of them. They shrink from trying, lest by failure they incur the wrath of God and bring themselves into danger. So they do nothing for God. They are no worse than others, they say; their lives are decent and respectable. Neither are they unbelievers; they readily acknowledge that all they have belongs to their Lord; and so when He calls they offer to restore it to Him.

"*There thou hast that is thine.*" But they do not see that their excuses are false, that negative obedience counts for nothing. The real issue cannot be evaded: that they are God's servants, and accountable. And belonging to Him, their time, health, strength, money, intellect are not their own; all are God's gifts, lent to them for a while; and in the great Day of reckoning they must give an account of their use of them.

What is the lesson? That spiritual possibilities cannot lie dormant within us. If they are not valued and used, they must be taken away. And they will be—and we be cast into outer darkness. God's bestowments cannot be neglected with impunity. Oh, let us beware of Christ.

Is not this also the message of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats? Who is doing the separating? Who is delivering the sentences of life and death? Is it not Christ? And is not the sentence to each just according to what they have proven themselves to be? Jesus is saying, I will separate. I will divide. I can distinguish faithful from unfaithful as easily and as accurately as the shepherd can divide sheep from goats. I cannot be deceived. I know. So beware. Get ready for My judgment.

What is the reward to the righteous? They are overwhelmed with their wondrous welcome. It is a joy almost too great for them to bear—a sweetness so penetrating that the heart fairly bursts with the joyous intensity of its rapture. Nothing they had done could deserve the unutterable blessedness now opening before them. Immortality—can they comprehend even the smallest part of its meaning?

But all are not accepted. And those who are not are cast aside. They loved darkness rather than light. They thought their obedience above reproach; they had grandiose ideas of their worthfulness. But the all-seeing eye of the Judge discerns the heart. And the heart was not right.

What is the message? Beware. Beware of Christ. He is the inflexible Judge, and His verdict will be final. If we win, we win all. If we lose, we lose all.

Solemn, too, is the thought that the condemnation of those placed on the left was not incurred only by disobedience. It was also by neglect of duty, by selfishness, by lack of love. Oh, let us rouse ourselves to the danger of selfishness; let us covet earnestly the best gifts, the choicest fruits, that we may be among the righteous who shall "go into life eternal."

Christ is coming. On which side will we stand, the right or the left? There is no joy so intense, so rapturous, as shall belong to those on the right, and no misery so awful as that of those on the left. Oh, let us beware; the decision of the Judge will be *right*, and it will be just according to what we have done.

Oh, let us beware of Christ. For someday soon we will have to meet Him, and give account to Him for the use we have made of the stewardship He gave us. Someday we will stand before Him. He is the Judge. He will have the last judgment, the last word, the last gesture, the last verdict on our lives.

Yes, let us beware of Christ, take His demands and challenges seriously, and make His standards ours. And before we act, or speak, or even think, let us say to ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" So shall we assure ourselves of His lasting friendship and be His through all the cycles of eternity. □

*If we are to
see Christ's
spiritual
stature, we have
to look up. If we
are to reach it,
we must climb.*

Jesus Is Coming!

Jesus Is Coming!

Jesus Is Coming!

Jesus Is Coming!

*Jesus is coming, O sound the glad chord!
Coming for those He redeemed by His Word;
Coming to reign as the glorified Lord;
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming, His servants shall rise;
Loved ones will meet in joyful surprise;
He'll change the earth into fair Paradise;
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming, the promise is true.
Who are the chosen, the faithful, the few,
Waiting and watching, prepared for review?
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming, His saints to release;
Coming to give to the warring earth peace.
Sinning and sighing and sorrow shall cease.
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming; it cannot be long
Till they're permitted to join the glad song
And stand with the ransomed, purified throng.
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming; O sleeper, awake!
Rouse from thy slumber, the dust from thee shake;
Put on thy fair garments, for Zion's sake;
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming; arise ye, and shine;
No more shall darkness and sorrow be thine;
With Joy and Salvation shall Love entwine.
Jesus is coming again!*

*Jesus is coming; He soon shall appear
To usher in the Millennial year:
And then will Eternity's Day begin
Jesus is coming again!*

We hear much these days of "end" times, the Second Advent, and sometimes mention even made of Armageddon.

Is Jesus actually coming back to earth? *He certainly is!* If we make any profession of believing the Scriptures, we cannot escape this message and this strong conviction: that Jesus Christ *will* return. He said so Himself: "I will come again" (John 15:12). The two angels who stood by when He ascended said so (Acts 1:11). It is one of the most positive of Biblical promises repeated again and again and again. Jesus *will* come again.

(Do We Really WANT Him?)

Into the midst of life as we know it will suddenly burst the presence of

the Divine—whether we choose to believe it or not, whether we choose to anticipate it or not. God is not waiting for us to

approve His plans. When the time is right He will act, and no human hand, however powerful or influential or dominant, will interfere. God will take command of the affairs of this planet, and He will not ask our permission. "*He shall send Jesus Christ.*" (Acts 3:20).

Along with this fact comes also a shocking thought which Scripture addresses to each of us individually: What is our relation to this greatest of all events? How do we feel about it? Are we thrilled with the expectancy of hope, or is there a slight shadow of dismay upon our expectation—for whatever reason? Do we really *want* Christ?

How instinctively in the throes of pain or sorrow we long for the redeeming Christ; or when life seems to fall apart and nothing is secure. When we think of the devastation of war, or of man's inhumanity to man, or of the tragedies of fire and flood, or of the needless suffering caused by human mismanagement, we long for Christ. He is the only answer.

But when health is abundant and all is well, when we temporarily forget the ills of the

world in our excessive involvement with near goals, the pull of eternity is not so strong. When life is pleasant and days come and go in peaceful succession; when work is fruitful and neighbors are friendly and life has an abundance of creature comforts, then there is danger—grave danger—that deep down in our hearts we may feel satisfied with things as they are. Not for a moment would we deny our belief that Christ *is* coming—*Never!* But so absorbed are we in our own small circle of existence, so settled in our selfish, shortsighted contentment with the present that we do not feel the fiery fervor which kept Christians of an earlier age living on hope.

The thought was expressed by a young mother who told her minister: "There must be something wrong with me. You asked us this morning whether we 'love the Lord's appearing,' and I don't. I'm happy with my family....I guess you could say I'm *reconciled* to Christ's coming back, but it's not exactly top priority on my list of wants."

What of us? The apostle Paul said Christ would return to those who "*love his appearing*" (II Tim. 4:8), who are looking and longing for it so intensely that to prepare for it is their one and foremost desire. Do we qualify? Are we among these?

Whether we realize it or not, all of us need delivering from mortality. None of us can expect the present to continue long. We live in a world where nothing is permanent but change.

Christ *is* coming. What is *our* reaction, yours and mine? Are we each day loving—looking—living—longing to see Him? Do we really *want* Him?

Some day soon the trump of God will shock us from our complacency, and things as they are will be swept away by the things that shall be. Are we preparing for that moment—mentally, morally, spiritually? Are we really longing for it? Are *we* among those who "love his appearing"?

Jesus is coming, and He has told us to get ready. Not only should we be getting ready, but we should be eager. For however good the present may seem, the future will be infinitely better. What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, what is beyond the mind of man to conceive—*all* that God "has prepared for those who love him" (I Cor. 2:9). □

The Inerrant Word: Why We Believe It (2)

► *It is far easier to believe that the Jesus of the Gospels brought about the Christian community than that the community created Jesus.*

Why do we believe the Bible is without error in the original form in which God directed His servants to write it?

To anyone who has been captured in heart and mind by the Bible and its teachings, there are a host of reasons for believing in the authenticity of its records. To regard the Gospels as the creation of the Christian community suggests a marvelous effect without plausible cause. Here is the greatest literature of all time, yet supposedly created by the imaginations of an undistinguished community? Far easier and more reasonable is it that the Jesus of the Gospels brought about the community than that the community created Jesus.

For one who does not want to see, there is no invincible argument. But for anyone who is open-minded enough to consider the evidence, there is no lack. One point stands out in particular: that the teachings of the Gospel are not what one might expect from human teachers. They are liable to offend, perplex, and even upset. What human teacher would go out and preach that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," as did the apostle Paul? (I Cor. 3:19). Or who would teach, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," as did Jesus?

(Luke 9:23). Who, seeking popularity for himself, would write, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God," as Paul wrote? (Rom. 13:1). Or who would advise, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," as did the apostle John? (I John 2:15). Who but a man of God would have the audacity to say, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Who but Jesus writing by inspiration would say to the leaders of a church, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth"? (Rev. 3:15-16). Hundreds of examples could be cited, which would be liable to irritate or upset—which indicate and confirm that the Bible is not a human production.

Someone has compared the evading of evidence that our Lord believed the Scriptures were God-given to the effort of the mathematician in attempting to prove that it is theoretically possible to dodge an avalanche. One may think that he can find ways of disposing of many of Jesus' statements about the

Old Testament. But these statements cannot be considered individually. Together they form a great avalanche of cumulative evidence that cannot be honestly evaded. Furthermore, the items of evidence support one another, suggesting that they derive from one consistent mind and not from a miscellany of traditions.

Jesus' Believed the Old Testament Scriptures

However much one may criticize the Gospel records, the overall picture cannot be changed except by a wholesale rejection of all the evidence. And this is a position which even very few critics will take. The evidence is abundantly clear that to Jesus the Old Testament was true, authoritative and inspired; and that the God of the Old Testament was the one living God, and that the teaching of the Old Testament was the teaching of this one living God. To Jesus, what Scripture said, God said.

There are points at which skepticism becomes an absurd position. For example, take the existence of the Roman Catholic Church today, the history of which can be clearly traced back to the early Church Fathers and—before they apostatized—the early Church and the preaching of the Apostles. What could account for the emergence of the early Church if Jesus had not lived and died and been resurrected, and if the Gospels did not accurately record this information? Without the facts about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, it is wholly impossible to understand how the Church came into being, and how it succeeded in creating the sublime Figure portrayed for us by the four Evangelists. As John Wenham has commented, "It is important to be on our guard as to where uncritical acceptance of Biblical criticism may lead us. It is important to continue to take the Scriptures as the primitive and historic Church took them and understand them."

There is an abundance of evidence by which we may determine Jesus' view of the reliability of the Old Testa-

ment, its persons, events and statements. If we cannot know Jesus' teaching about this, we cannot know His teaching about anything.

When looking for Jesus' position regarding the Old Testament Scriptures, we are not confined to a few key statements but have a host of quotations and allusions that appear in a great variety of situations.

More than even this, Jesus cited Old Testament Scripture again and again as a confirmation of what was happening. Again and again we see the phrase, that such and such happened "so that the scripture might be fulfilled." Jesus' own life was a fulfillment of what had been written, a testimony to the authority of the Old Testament. In this way, Jesus was emphasizing His own belief in the accuracy of the Old Testament.

Jesus gave even greater authority to the Old Testament when He said that "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:18-19). Jots and tittles were among the smallest marks used in the Hebrew language. By making this statement, Jesus was indicating the precision of everything God has spoken in the law and prophets, and the Divine authority behind it all. He was emphasizing also how important obedience was to that law, and that such obedience would be the criterion for greatness in the Kingdom of heaven. "Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (v.19).

Again Jesus said, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46-47). Such a statement would have little

*To Jesus the
Old Testament
was true,
authoritative
and inspired;
and the God of
the Old Testa-
ment was the
one living God.*

meaning if Jesus did not have complete confidence in the writings of Moses, which were part of the Old Testament. The Jews were claiming to believe Moses' writings but rejecting Christ. Jesus replied that they did not really believe Moses or they would not reject Him, because Moses foretold His coming. Here Jesus did not merely quote Scripture but used it to criticize the Jews' rejection of Him. The Scripture was authority. The writings of Moses were part of the Word of God, and had been fulfilled, and they in their unbelief were closing their eyes and ears to that fulfillment.

On another occasion, Jesus answered His challengers, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?"

If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34-36). Here Jesus quoted a fairly obscure Psalm (Psalm 82:6), and gave to it the full authority of the Word of God. After citing it He added, "And scripture cannot be broken." It cannot be wrong, it cannot fail, it cannot be rejected as we might reject the words of a human writer.

In citing historical narratives, Jesus consistently treated the Old Testament as a straightforward record of facts. Often He used them to draw a deeper lesson, but there was never a question

Jesus Quoted From or Made Mention Of the Old Testament

Abel	Luke 11:51
Noah	Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27
Abraham	John 8:56
Institution of circumcision	John 7:22
Sin and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	Matthew 10:15; 11:23, 24; Luke 10:12; 17:28-30
Lot	Luke 17:28-32
Isaac and Jacob	Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28
Giving of manna in the wilderness	John 6:31, 49, 58
Serpent in the wilderness	John 3:14
David eating the consecrated bread in the tabernacle	Matthew 12:3-4; Mark 2:25-26
David as a Psalm writer	Matthew 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42
Glory of Solomon	Matthew 6:29; 12:42; Luke 11:31; 12:27
Elijah a prophet	Luke 4:25-26
Elisha also a prophet	Luke 4:27
Jonah	Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-30, 32
Zachariah	Luke 11:51
Moses—the giver of the law	Matthew 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 20:37; John 5:46; 7:19
Sufferings of God's prophets	Matthew 5:12; 13:57; 21:24-36; 23:29-37; Mark 6:4; 12:2-5; Luke 6:23; 11:47-51; 13:34; 20:10-12
Popularity of the false prophets	Luke 6:26
Passages from Genesis 1 and 2 cited and approved	Matthew 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-8

as to whether He believed the historical data. (see chart above). These quotations were taken by our Lord more or less at random from different parts of the Old Testament, making it evident that Jesus was familiar with most if not all of the Old Testament, and treated all parts of it as equally factual. And strangely enough, some of the narratives least acceptable to modern minds are the very ones Jesus quoted most often.

Someone may argue that Jesus' use of the Old Testament records did not necessarily imply that He regarded them as authority, or even as history. It is legitimate to use commonly known legends to illustrate spiritual truths. However, a careful review of Jesus' words and quotations precludes decisively any idea that He considered the Scriptures as anything less than historical and authoritative. And even if Jesus applied to them a new meaning, even then He was not degrading His confidence in the Old Testament. He was simply taking it as it was, and superseding it—which He was fully commissioned to do.

Jesus often used historical happenings as a foundation for future events. In comparing the days of Noah to the time of His second advent, Jesus drew a vivid picture with a powerful lesson. In fact, what could be more powerful than to point His hearers to a dramatic event in history where God intervened with appalling judgment—which both He and His hearers accepted as Divinely authorized Scripture and fact—and then added, "Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:29-30). Such a statement would have had little force if the event cited from history were not valid in the minds of His hearers.

When Jesus was teaching at Nazareth, and "the people were furious....they took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff" (Luke 4:28-29, NIV). Such violent reaction would be highly unlikely if Jesus

was citing events which the people did not believe had really happened. Both Jesus and His hearers believed what Jesus was citing from the Old Testament.

In matters of controversy Jesus often used the Old Testament as a court of appeal. With both Pharisees and Sadducees, He did not question their appeals to Scripture. Rather, He rebuked them for failing to study it profoundly enough. Even where He seemed to indicate that they were wasting time with their detailed regulations, He commended rather than condemned. "These you ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23). At times He superseded their law with a higher law, but at no point did He indicate that their law was without foundation or basis. When He said, "It was said of old time,...but I say unto you...", He was not in any way berating the Old Testament or questioning its authority, but only amplifying its message. He was citing law, and obedience was the requirement, first, last and always.

The Sadducees escaped no more lightly. Their rationality was met by fierce and scathing denunciation, and more recourse to Scripture. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29; see also Mark 12:24). On another occasion Jesus said, answering an opponent, "Have ye never read..." as if to say, Don't you know the Scriptures? and don't you believe them? (Matt. 22:31-32; Mark 12:26).

When a certain scribe came to Jesus asking, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus immediately referred to the Scriptures, and replied with two quotations from the book of Leviticus (Mark 12:28-31). After citing the laws, Jesus added His own personal endorsement to what He had quoted: "There is none other commandment greater than these" (v.31). In other words, these are the heart of the Old Testament law. There is no law higher.

*Jesus often used
Old Testament
historical events
as a basis for
drawing powerful
lessons, also
for predicting
future events.*

No suggestion of Jesus depending upon the Old Testament Scriptures is more obvious than in the accounts of His temptation, when He answered the tempter each time with the same formula: "It is written," and immediately followed by a quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures (Matt. 4:4 ff.; Luke 4:4 ff.). And Jesus was replying to a person who seemed to be a Roman official. By

It seems that Jesus had kept the Scriptures alive in His mind, had committed them to memory, and in the hour of crisis was able to draw upon them as a heavenly reserve.

Jesus not only believed the Old Testament history and Scriptures but regarded them as final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. To Him, the writings of Moses, the Prophets and David and the other Scripture writers were the writings of God. There is no trace of the modern idea that the men were inspired but not the writings. Jesus accepted the writings as of God. At the same time, He made no attempt to whitewash the characters of those He quoted.

We have further evidence that when Jesus cited the Old Testament, He quoted the words as though God were the ultimate author, even though He was citing a certain writer. For example, when Jesus quoted David, He said that the words were spoken by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 22:43). Again, speaking of Himself, Jesus said, "The scriptures testify about me... If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me" (John 5:39-46, NIV). To say "The scriptures testify" was equivalent to saying "God said."

On this topic, B. B. Warfield has said, "Our Lord and His Apostles looked upon the entire truthfulness and utter trustworthiness of that body of writings which they called 'Scripture,' as so fully guaranteed by the inspiration of God, that they could appeal to them confidently in all their statements of whatever kind as absolutely true; adduced their deliverances on whatever subject with the same 'It is written,' as the end of all strife; and treat them generally in a manner which clearly exhibits that in their view 'Scripture says' was equivalent to 'God says'" from (B. B. Warfield, "The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs," from *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, p. 580).

(To Be Continued)

Resolved...

*If I could live to God for just one day,
One blessed day, from rosy dawn of light
Till purple twilight deepened into night,
A day of faith unfaltering, trust complete,
Of love unfeigned and perfect charity,
Of hope undimmed, of courage past dismay,
Of heavenly peace, patient humility—
No hint of duty to constrain my feet,
No dream of ease to lull to listlessness,
Within my heart no root of bitterness,
No yielding to temptation's subtle sway,
Methinks, in that one day would so expand
My soul to meet such holy, high demand
That never, never more could hold me bound
This shriveling husk of self that wraps me round.
So might I henceforth live to God away.*

saying, "It is written," Jesus was saying in effect, "Here is the permanent, unchangeable witness of the Eternal God, committed to writing for our instruction." To Jesus it was authority. Shall we challenge it?

Obedience first

A Story for Children



Some years ago, in company with some friends, I visited a large house on a big country estate. The house had a large and beautiful yard in front of it. One gate in this yard led to the farm buildings, and another opened onto the main driveway.

The lady of the house, showing us around her estate, presently took us through the gate leading to the farm buildings. Immediately, from every direction, great dogs rushed upon us. They were very much bigger than normal dogs, more like huge bloodhounds. I had never seen so many big dogs swarming around me before. I began to think it would be well to get back to the other side of the gate as quickly as possible.

Then an amazing thing happened. The lady lifted her right hand and spoke just one word.

"Obedience!" she cried with a note of command.

Instantly the dogs stopped frisking about us, and followed their mistress like a flock of lambs.

The lady told us that some of these big dogs were, in fact, only puppies six months old, but that all of them were being trained with the utmost care to obey instantly her word of command.

After a tour all around the farm—on which the dogs had accompanied us—we returned to the front yard through the other gate that led onto the main driveway. As we entered the front yard we fully expected them to follow us. But they did not.

Believe it or not as you please, those great big dogs lined up in a row across the open gateway and would not so much as put a paw into the front yard! And, mind you, there was no gate or obstruction of any kind to keep them back, not even a painted mark on the ground.

I looked at the dogs in sheer amazement. There they stood like so many soldiers on guard. Then one of them put a paw forward as if to take a step.

Instantly a voice behind me called out the magic word, "Obedience!"

Without a moment's hesitation the offending dog drew his paw back and stood with all fours behind the line.

And then another remarkable thing happened. A little terrier, the house dog, suddenly appeared on the scene. He came bounding into the yard, making himself quite at home. I turned in surprise to the lady.

"Oh, it's quite all right," she replied with a smile. "He is the only dog allowed in the front yard. The others know they must stay outside."

"Well!" I said, "if that isn't extraordinary!"

And the last thing I remember about that visit is the picture of that row of giant dogs lined up like a regiment of soldiers across the open gateway.

As I came away I began to think what a happy world it would be if all the children in it were just half as obedient as those dogs! What a blessing it would be if when parents said, "Obedience!" the children would instantly do what they were told without a fuss.

How is it in your home? Do you always obey pleasantly, happily, without a murmur?

Not always? Well, then, I want you to read this text in the third verse of the first chapter of Isaiah:

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider."

This means that, in God's sight, the animals are oftentimes more thoughtful and considerate than human beings. They remember who feeds them, but children sometimes do not. The animals try to serve faithfully those who look after them, but children sometimes treat Father and Mother with much rudeness and disrespect. What must God think of us when we act like that?

We mustn't let it be said that the animals are better than we, surely! Of course not! So next time Mother says, "Obedience!" I want you to think of those wonderful dogs I have told you about, and, mind, you mustn't put even a paw across the line! □

From *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories*, Volume Four, by Arthur S. Maxwell, copyright 1964 by Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C. Used by permission of the publisher.

APPLIED

Courses taught in our schools and universities today include many to which are attached the word "applied." There are courses in Applied Science, or Applied Mathematics, or Applied Electronics. The design of such courses is to bridge the gap often existing between knowledge and application. This was the purpose of Jesus' life also. He came to teach and show Applied Christianity: the dedicated life *lived*, the cross *carried*, the law of God affecting every situation of daily life. In Christ the high ideals of the prophets became flesh and blood; He personified the law of God. He lived it, talked it, thought it, prayed it, practiced it. This is our calling also, to follow His steps, to apply what we know to what we do. How else can we merit Christ's approval?

Many were the lessons His disciples received in the various aspects of Applied

Christianity

*Jesus more
than preached
the law—He
lived it, talked
it, thought it,
prayed it,
practiced it.*

Christianity that Christ was teaching. When Peter asked if he could come to Jesus, walking on the water, was that not a lesson in Applied Faith? Faith was no problem so long as the boat was sound and the sea calm. But when there was nothing to uphold but the power of God—was Peter's faith prepared for this? Peter thought it was; he found out that it was not.

Jesus was traveling with His disciples. They were tired, and a certain Samaritan village refused to give them food or lodging. What did a couple of the disciples recommend? They would give these unreasonable Samaritans their just deserts for such unkindness and such ill prejudice. If *they* were in Jesus' place, they would call down fire from heaven and finish them. But what did Jesus direct them to do? *"They went to another village."* It was a lesson in Applied Forbearance.

One day Jesus was talking to a "*certain ruler*" who came to inquire of Him.

"*Good Master,*" he asked, "*what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" (Luke 18:18-22). Jesus began stating a few of the commandments, concluding with this all-inclusive demand: "*Sell all that thou hast,...and come, follow me.*" It was a lesson in Applied Sacrifice. Anyone could talk about what they might give up, but Jesus would have it *done*.

Another time, when great multitudes were following Him, He turned on them with this shocking demand (the account is found in Luke 14:25-30): "*If any man come to me, and hate not (be not willing to suffer the loss of) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*" Another lesson in Applied Sacrifice.

Jesus then followed immediately with another advanced lesson: "*For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*" It was a lesson in Applied Engineering. It let them know that nothing about the Christ life is automatic. It must be planned, thought through, and thoroughly decided. And in *advance*.

When Peter asked how many times he should have to forgive his trespassing brother that continued to wrong him, what was Jesus' reply? "*I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven*" (Matt. 18:21-22). Surely Peter did not miss the point. Nor should we. Forgiveness was to be more than an ideal. It was to be sincerely felt and openly expressed. It was a lesson in Applied Forgiveness.

Jesus observed those seeking the great things of this world. What was His answer? "*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*" (Mark 8:36). How well Jesus knew that life without God is only a pinpoint on the periphery of the everlasting, appearing for a moment and then gone forever. It was a lesson in Applied Perspectives.

Another time, Jesus gave this strange command (found in Mark 4:24-25): *"Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."* It was a lesson in Applied Discernment.

The last night before the crucifix-

ion, when the disciples were all gathered in the upper room, they were arguing quietly among themselves which should be the greatest. What was Jesus' answer? The great of this world worry about such things, He said. But *"It shall not be so among you...but he that is greatest among you, let him be as*

the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26). It was a lesson in Applied Humility, a humility that is more ready to serve than to be seen?

Yes, Christianity is a faith to be applied. Jesus did it, and so must we, if we would obtain the benefits it offers us. □

"He Went Away Sorrowful"

(Matthew 19:21-24)

"Sell that thou hast," the Master said,
"Come, follow Me; to world be dead.
Give freely now unto the poor,
And you'll receive a treasure sure."

On hearing this the young man turned
And took away all he had earned;
Possessions, they were very great,
Nor could he give for Jesus' sake.

A camel can through needle's eye
Much easier go, than such to die
Unto the world, his means to give
To Him who said, "You *must* to live."

How hard it seems for some to give
Up everything, for Truth to live!
Though Kingdom bright is very nigh,
They'd rather with their riches die.

Though sad in heart, they go away;
They will not yield, their Lord obey,—
They linger on 'til far too late,
Too late to enter Zion's Gate.

Oh! what are worldly fame and wealth
Compared to saving of thyself?
They are so light they will not weigh
Against the glories of that Day.

Take all the earthly fame and power—
They are not worth a single hour
Of glory in the Kingdom bright
That soon will come, now just in sight.

The coming pow'r will be supreme,
'Twill spread o'er earth to each extreme,
And coming wealth will always last;
Bright hope that earth can never blast.

If all our sins we now forsake,
Of all these pleasures we'll partake;
In endless glory we shall bask
If we perform the little task.

Christ's yoke is easy, burden light,
To those who in it take delight;
But those who halt, or count it hard,
Will never gain the great reward.

O come, count earthly things but dross,
Nor think it hard to suffer loss
For Him who is our living Head,
He who arose from 'mongst the dead.

Our wealth for sin will not atone
When standing 'round the great white throne.
It will not ope the gate so wide,
Nor keep us from destruction's tide.

If we are wise we will redeem
The time to us that is unseen,
Will use it all, with all our power,
To help prepare for coming hour.

How short the time to now prepare!
We'll have to use the utmost care
To have our robes all clean and white,
To welcome be where comes no night.

Oh, what a joy supreme 'twill be,
To faithful in the Kingdom see.
To grasp their hand with loving heart
And know from them we ne'er shall part!

'Twill be far more than all gold found;
Ten thousand lifetimes in this realm
All are not worthy to compare
To life within Christ's Kingdom fair.

—Rev. L.T. Nichols



Giants of the Jungle

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that elephants have the largest brain of any land mammal.
- ✓ ...that elephants touch each other's mouths in greeting when they meet with a touch as earnest as a handshake and gentle as a caress in a display of ponderous affection.
- ✓ ...that elephant tusks, when full grown can be as long as six feet and can weigh as much as a man.
- ✓ ...that there are 40,000 muscles and tendons in the elephants trunk, allowing it great flexibility. An elephant can lift a log, or pick a tiny flower.
- ✓ ...that elephants have played a key role in grooming and replanting the tropical forests of Africa.
- ✓ ...that the name "pachyderm" which elephants are sometimes called means thick-skinned, but the elephant's skin, although an inch thick, is sensitive to tick and insect bites.
- ✓ ...that where sufficient water is available, elephants bathe several times a day. When water is not available, they take mud baths to rid themselves of insects.
- ✓ ...that to stop the killing of elephants, 105 nations joined together and agreed to ban the raw ivory trade in 1989. This law, together with conservation programs, has stopped the mass slaughter.
- ✓ ...that the elephant's foot is especially designed to carry its great weight. This heaviest of all animals actually walks on its toes, under which is a large pad to cushion the impact of each step.
- ✓ ...that elephants, in spite of their size, can run at a rate of 24 miles per hour—almost twice as fast as a man.

Scientific data from *The National Geographic*, "Elephants, Out of Time, Out of Space," May, 1991, pg. 2; also *Zoobooks*, "Elephants," published by Wildlife Education, Ltd.

Elephants, those huge creatures that one must see to believe: where did they come from? Did they originate from a tiny bit of "primordial soup" as evolutionists would have us believe? Or are they another masterpiece of our Creator's handiwork? Surely the God who created "*the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein,*" could make the giant elephant as easily as the tiny ant.

Imagine a single portion of food weighing as much as 500 pounds, then add 50 gallons of water, and what you have is a day's meal for the elephant, the largest land animal on earth today. While his appetite is small compared to that of the blue whale, which consumes a titanic eight-ton portion, the elephant munches an estimated quarter-ton per day of bark, grass, leaves, branches and whatever vegetable food he can find in the jungles and on the plains of Africa.

The African elephant males average ten feet tall and weigh about 12,000 pounds (six tons). The largest known was 13 feet tall at the shoulder, and weighed 22,000 pounds, as much as 150 average size men! Females are generally smaller, averaging only three tons. But in spite of their huge size, they are very fast, able to run at a speed of 24 miles an hour—twice as fast as a man can run. Surprisingly for such a large animal, elephants are very good swimmers, sometimes swimming long distances with only their trunks above the water.

The elephant calf when born weighs approximately 200 pounds. Babies nurse for as long as two years and stay with their mothers for several more years. They are not considered adults until about fourteen.

Elephants are longlived creatures, often reaching 50 or 60 years. It seems that the length of the elephants life depends on its teeth. Because foraging is so hard on their teeth, our Creator has designed that elephants have a total of six sets, one original and five replacements. When the last set has worn out and the elephant can no longer chew its food, it dies.

Elephants are social creatures, living in families often consisting of several generations of females. Males congregate by themselves, or roam alone, visiting the family only occasionally. Both males

and females affectionately greet familiar members of the family entwining trunks and clicking tusks as they trumpet and rumble. Elephants stand by sick or wounded herd members, supporting them with their trunks and shoulders when necessary, sometimes even bringing them food when they need it. They also take note of the death of a member of the herd, seeming to conduct a memorial as they quietly gather around the dead body for several days, sometimes covering them with branches and dirt.

Mothers are very protective of and devoted to their offspring, often using their trunk to caress as well as to discipline (spank) them. Groups of mother elephants gather and help each other in raising and protecting the young. It is not unusual for young elephants to get stuck in mud when attempting to drink from a pond or river before they have learned to drink with their trunks, and sometimes the elders must use their trunks to rescue the youngster.

The elephant's ears, which average 100 pounds each, serve a unique purpose, acting as a cooling apparatus for the animal in very hot weather. (Could they possibly have developed this feature through evolution?) Since the blood of their whole body circulates through the many blood vessels in its ears, when the elephant is hot he flaps his ears. The cooled blood then circulates through its system and cools the whole body. And the bigger his ears, the greater the cooling effect. (Is it by chance that the African elephants, which live in the hottest region, have the biggest ears?)

The elephant's large head holds a large brain, the largest of any animal, making them more easily trainable by men than other wild animals. They are also notable for their tusks (which are really two very long teeth), their trunk, and

their unusual feet. The elephant walks on his five toes on each foot, cushioned by a soft pad behind the toes.

An elephant's trunk is a marvel of design, serving as the elephant's arm, hand, nose, hose and shower head all in one. The trunk contains as many as 40,000 muscles and tendons, making it very strong and flexible, and allowing him to control it with great skill. (Imagine the evolutionary leap necessary to develop such an instrument!) The tip of the trunk is very sensitive and can be used to pick a single leaf or a fruit. The same trunk can shake fruit from a tree—and tip over the tree so that the elephant can strip bark to eat, as well as the roots when food is scarce. Using his trunk as a hose, the elephant pulls about two gallons of water up into it, then drinks the water by pouring it into its mouth or showers it over his body (elephants love water). During the dry season, he uses his trunk, tusks and front feet to dig holes to find water in dry river beds. In hot, dry weather his trunk becomes a vacuum cleaner which he uses to vacuum dust from dry ground and then to spray into the air above him, making a cloud of dust which protects from sunburn and repels insects. Although he has leathery skin, he is bothered by insect bites.

Because of their superior animal-brain capacity, elephants are useful. In Asia they are trained as beasts of burden for use in logging camps, festivals and religious ceremonies. Elephants are easily taught to use their great strength to lift heavy logs and carry them out of the forest with their trunks.

What about the explanations often found in well-known textbooks, which present a convincing "sequence" of elephants, from the pig-sized *Moeritherium* (now extinct) through a series of forms, which show a steady increase in trunk size, teeth morphology, etc., to the modern elephant? Says a modern scientist, "It requires extreme elasticity of the imagination to see anything more than a very superficial resemblance between the available parts of the skeletons of the earliest hyraxes and those of the *Proboscidea*." In other words, a few excavated bones—plus a capable and imaginative artist—can "create" almost any missing information for the evolutionist! And very often, disproportionate weight has been given to skeletal likeness, while overlooking other important characteristics. (Must similarity mean a same point of origin?)

When we consider the wonders of even the humblest creatures, can we not say, "*The Hand that made them is Divine*"? □



The First Month: Abib

The Mosaic law included definite instructions about the counting of time. Since this law ceased with the end of the Jewish nation, we are not dutybound to observe its festivals. But we want to remember their significance, as they were God-given mandates for His people.

Abib 1 is New Year's Day. (April 10-11)

it shall be the first month of the year to you....This day came ye out in the month Abib" (Ex. 12:2; 13:4). Abib means "the month of green ears." The Sacred new year begins with the first new moon after the vernal equinox. The first day of the new moon, then, is the first day of the year, the first day of the month, and also the first day of the week. The day is "from even to even" (Lev. 23:32).

Abib 1-3 (April 11-13)

These were feast days for Israel, and David and his family had a yearly reunion at this time in Bethlehem. (See I Sam. 20). "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day." This observance was a statute for Israel (Ps. 81:3,4; Num. 10:10).

Though we cannot be certain when Christ was born, the available evidence points to the first day of the Jewish Sacred Year. Because Joseph and Mary were of the house and lineage of David they came to Bethlehem, "the city of David," to be taxed. Taxing was not compulsory on Mary but she came with great desire to keep the New Moon and Passover feasts. And while they were there, on the first day of the New Moon feast, our Lord was born. The angels announced to the shepherds who were watching their flocks on the hills of Judea: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Abib 4-6 (April 14-16)

The New Moon feast and enrollment over, those who could afford it journeyed on to Jerusalem to be present for the Passover.

Abib 7 (April 17)

1st SABBATH of Bible year as observed by the Israelites. The day begins with the evening of April 16.

Abib 8 (April 18)

On this day Jesus, just before His crucifixion, went to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus, where Jesus had previously raised him from the dead. The family made Jesus a supper, and Mary anointed His feet with the precious ointment. Jesus said: "Against the day of my burying hath she kept this" (John 12:1-7).

Abib 9-11 (April 19-21)

Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a young ass, and much people that had gathered for the feast took palm branches and went to meet Him, saying, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (John 12:12-17). He entered the temple and cast out them that sold, and overthrew the tables of

the moneychangers. (Matt. 21:12,13). Following this, He taught the people for the next several days. At night He withdrew to the Mount of Olives. The chief priests took counsel how they might take Him.

Abib 12 (April 22)

Jesus astonished His disciples "two days before the Passover" by saying that He was to be betrayed to be crucified (Matt. 16:2). Before the close of this day Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Last Supper (Luke 22:7-13).

Abib 13 (April 23)

THE NEW PASSOVER INSTITUTED. Jesus met with the Twelve on the beginning of Abib 13 to eat the Passover (Luke 22:14). It was here that He instituted the New Passover. (The anniversary of this event falls on the evening of April 22 this year.) Jesus took the cup and divided it among them, took bread and broke it, and gave it to them; girded Himself and washed the Apostles' feet. He expounded to them (chapters 13-16 of St. John). Supper ended, they sang a hymn and went out to Gethsemane. On this same night Jesus was betrayed by Judas, led before Caiaphas, and denied three times by Peter. In the morning He was taken to Pilate. Pilate sent Him to Herod, and Herod returned Him to Pilate. At the 6th hour (12 o'clock noon), He was crucified; at the 9th hour (3 o'clock), He died, and before evening He was placed in Joseph's tomb.

Abib 14 (April 24)

2d SABBATH & JEWISH PASSOVER as kept by the Israelites in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt. (It was to this feast Jesus came with His parents when He was twelve years old.) This day the women rested after the stirring scenes of the crucifixion and prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body the following day.

Abib 15 (April 25)

RESURRECTION DAY Jesus lay in the tomb from the close of Abib 13, through the 14th, and "very early in the morning" of Abib 15 when the women "came unto the sepulcher" (Luke 24:1), they found the sepulcher opened and heard those sweetest words, "He is not here, but is risen." These women reported the incident to the Apostles, who did not believe it. That same afternoon Jesus appeared to two of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, and reproved them for being "slow of heart to believe." Shortly after this, when the Eleven were gathered together, Jesus Himself appeared and made Himself known to them, and again reproved them for their unbelief.

ASCENSION DAY. Jesus was with His disciples during the next forty days (Acts 1:3). He commanded them to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit. His ascension is recorded in Acts 1:9-11. This year the day comes on June 3.

PENTECOST is fifty days after the old Passover, this year June 13. On this day the disciples received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). This was the outpouring of the early or former rain foretold by the Prophet Joel.

Abib Moon

*O'er the hills of old Judea,
Holy night so long ago,
Rang the sweet angelic chorus
With majestic ebb and flow.*

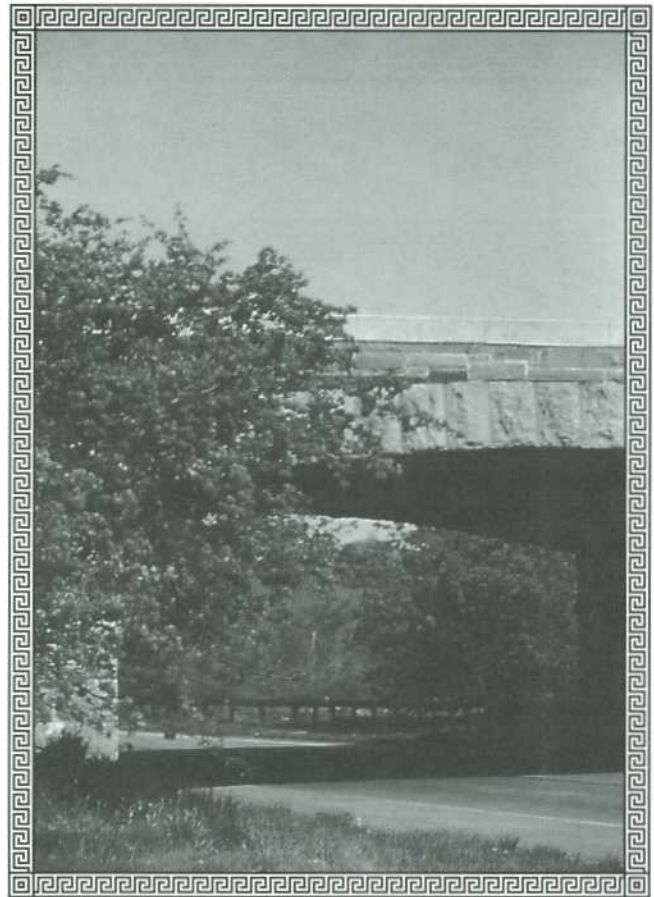
*"Peace on earth, give God the glory;
Peace on earth, good will to men,"
King of kings—a royal Savior;
Soon He comes to earth again.*

*Abib moon, the springtime bringing,
Time of flow'rs and verdure bright,
Dimly shone in western heaven
On that cloudless, silent night.*

*"Christ is coming," sound the chorus,
Peace to bring from shore to shore,
Blessed Abib, happy New Year;
When Christ reigns forevermore.*

When tempted to do anything in secret, ask yourself if you would do it in public. If not, don't do it.

We may hope, and resolve, and aspire and pray, but our feet must rise, or we fall again.



IN but not OF

(Continued from page 2)

ils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (I Cor. 10:21). He did not say "you may not" but "you cannot." If you are doing the one, you cannot do the other.

There can be no stronger statement of the reality of our situation than that made by the apostle John: "We know that we are God's family, while the whole godless world lies in the power of the evil one" (I John 5:19, NEB).

In the world but not *of* it: How do we do it? By using what God has provided us in this world as a means to achieving our greater goal but never compromising in thought, or conviction, or loyalty to any lesser standard than that of Christ; keeping our goal fixed on Christ, pleasing Him and winning His honors and being dead to the honors (or criticisms) of the world around us.

We are here to fight a battle, "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We are here to engage combat against the whole colony of evil in ourselves, to rout from our lives any of the influence of the world (our own lower nature is the most dangerous!); so that we can present ourselves a pure and righteous offering to God (Rom. 12:1).

Fight by God's rules, using God's weapons, and victory is sure. Compromise with evil, become part of the world, and your defeat is sure.

There is no other way to belong to Christ, except to be *in* but not *of* it, until the world passes away and the lust thereof and he who does the will of God abides forever (I John 2:17). □



A freshly grafted
young and eager branch,
restless,
trying a new life,
yet striving to be
what I dreamed
I might have been had not
the graft been made;
striving to be myself,
or someone great—



I felt the pruning shears.
And gone was what I
longed for most!
O how I prayed
that I might be free
to grow and bloom
on my own.

*Y*et wisely, Lord,
You denied me the freedom
to become
what I might have been—
a tumbleweed
or a piece of kindling.