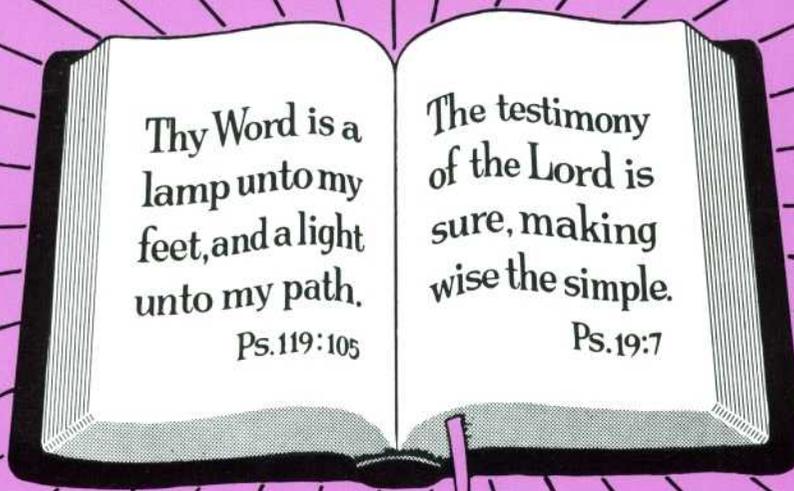


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



RESURRECTION:

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Judas: Hero or Traitor?

Ecumenism—1984

“I Won’t Be There”

THERE IS something in us that does not like to disappoint others’ expectations of us. Even if we know their expectations are not in our best physical or spiritual interests, we still dislike saying no. To take the positive side is so much more gracious, pleasant, and satisfying.

But there are times when we have no other choice, when NO is the only answer we can give—and receive the favor of God.

A variety of situations confront us from day to day. Perhaps it is an invitation from a friend. We would like to accept, but we are not free to do as we would like. Problems of health or other physical factors beyond our control have interfered. To continue our former pattern is not possible at the present time. Can we decline—and hold no feeling of jealousy, no touch of sensitiveness, no whimper of hurt—because of what we are unable to do?

Or it may be our new sense of duty to a higher cause forces us to decline. When we are serving Christ, we simply do not have time for all the diversions of this world. Nor do we “fit” in all circles. It may be that this particular event in former times, under former conditions, was a highlight on our schedule. We planned on it, around it and for it. The same might still be true—had we no *higher* interests. But all things considered now, we must decline.

This is painful enough, but when the kindly reminder comes, perhaps in an indirect manner, we have to say it again, in one way or another: “I won’t be there.”

Can we do it bravely, kindly, graciously, knowing that we have better interests? Does our tone convey

the message that we are *glad* to be missing, that absence is a privilege because *better* things now absorb us? Too easily we feel ashamed. Too often we cower from the facts we know we must face. We hesitate, and our “I won’t be there” carries an apology of “. . . but I wish I could be.”

Have we registered the message of the Master when He spoke those warning words: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels”? (Mark 8:38).

There is a time and a place from which we as Christians are honored to be absent. We have nothing in common with those who give no thought or concern to His interests. At such times we can say it proudly, for all to hear, that such were we in former times, but a change has come into our lives and consequently we “won’t be there.” It is a sign of spiritual progress, achievement, growth. The Word is plain: “Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge” (Prov. 14:7). “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul” (Prov. 22:24).

What if the question comes up again? Our answer will still be the same. No bitterness, no strife, but simply, “I won’t be there.” Even if it means being alone instead. This was Jeremiah’s reasoning: “I sat not in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand” (Jer. 15:17). Sometimes solitude is better.

MM

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 of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible quotations

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

Megiddo Message

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May, 1984

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The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is 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*; Kenneth E. Flowerday, *President and Editor*.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. 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, \$2.00. **POSTMASTER:** Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

RESURRECTION: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Scripture: Luke 28

A certain church board discussion centered around a recent storm in which lightning had struck two stately pine trees that adorned the church property. One of the members addressed the chairman: "What can we do about this? We can't keep losing our pine trees!" to which the chairman replied, tongue in cheek, "Very well, I make a motion that we have the lightning stop striking our pine trees."

Can you legislate lightning by a vote of the board? Can you vote for the rain to stop, or the sun to shine, or the volcanoes to cease their eruptions?

One day another legislative body convened and solemnly voted to seal up a grave so as to contain the remains of its occupant. "Make it as tight as you can," they said. "Patrol it night and day if you need to. Just see to it that the carpenter from Nazareth with his strange ideas doesn't get loose."

We want to ask that Sanhedrin: "Why? What are you afraid of, guarding a grave! Dead men don't walk—or do they? You saw the dead body. You know for a fact that He is dead. His friends buried Him. Who, pray tell, would want to extract the corpse from its resting

place? What is there to worry about?"

And what did it all mean? The Sanhedrin wondered. The disciples wondered. Why a man like Jesus *dead*, at only thirty-three years of age; one who claimed to be the Son of God, and whose potential for good was unlimited—it could not be true. But it *was* true. Why? Why did God allow it? Why did it have to happen?

But we know the end of the story. The Sanhedrin *did* have reason to worry. The dead man *did* walk out.

Without that next event in the story, how hopeless would be our situation. What would we have to look forward to—if Christ were still sleeping in that silent tomb? Indeed, "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

But this is not the end of the story. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:14-23).

What a difference that one event makes to our lives, our hopes, and all our prospects in this world. Were it not for this glorious conclusion to the story, our plight would be much like that which Leslie Weatherhead described in a parable. He wrote: "On a long sea journey round the world I once meditated on what would happen if the captain, one day, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, summoned us all to the deck and said something like this: 'There is plenty of food on board. Life will proceed as before. Meals will be served, games played, entertainments arranged, concerts provided, but I have decided not to make for a port. We shall just cruise around and around in the ocean until our fuel is exhausted, and then I shall sink the ship.'

"Mark this," said Weatherhead, "the next few days would appear just the same as those which preceded them. Only one thing would be different. The captain's speech would have snatched from every

mind the concept of purpose, meaning, and goal. And, in my opinion, very soon afterwards, on a dark night, first one and then another passenger would jump overboard. The mind hates meaninglessness."

And meaninglessness would be exactly the word to describe the ignominious death of our Lord if indeed that were the end of the story. There would have been no Christian church, no preaching apostles, no Pentecost, and no prospect of His Second Advent and Kingdom.

But praise be to God, death was not the end. The ship will not cruise in circles. There is a port. That port is named Resurrection. And so today the message still rings: "He is not here, he is risen. Come see the place where the Lord lay."

Yesterday He lived,
Yesterday He died,
Yesterday He rose . . .
That is history.

We believe this history.

Yesterday . . .

Christ arose; and with the full realization of that resurrection, His disciples, cringing cowards only hours before, became bold and daring crusaders carrying their ringing message to all who would hear. Their cry: "Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, him hath God raised up, . . . whereof we all are witnesses." They saw Him, honorable men like John, James, Peter, Philip, and even a man inclined to doubt like Thomas; trustworthy women like Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and the other women who were among the disciples. They saw Him, talked with Him, walked with Him after His resurrection.

Many other events happened in that grand yesterday. It was the day

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it that shocks us. It comes unbidden, interrupting all our fond plans and dreams for the future, all our ambitions and hopes, forcing us to let go of what we love most.

But with the resurrection of Christ, death is conquered. Though still in the land, it is under control. Death need not be the end of all endeavor. There is a way out.

So it was for the disciples of Jesus' day. Before the resurrection, all seemed to be lost. After the

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added to the Sacred Record.

Mine was not the privilege of seeing all that happened yesterday, but I believe—because all that I see today was influenced by what happened yesterday. Indeed, if Christ be not risen, what have we in which to place our confidence? If the part of the Bible that discusses the resurrection is not dependable, what is? Nothing at all.

Yesterday the canon was closed, and today we have the complete Word of God just as its Author intended us to have it—whole and free from contamination, a thorough furnisher unto all good works, revealing God's plan for the salvation of mankind and how we can be part of that plan. Yes, God was working yesterday, even for us.

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Death has a certain finality about

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It is a promise from the angels. Jesus *will* come again, just as surely as He went away. The promise remains, intact, unfulfilled. He *will* come.

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Today we face temptations; but again we are not on our own. Jesus lives and extends the challenge to us, to prove our likeness to Him, to face our temptations as He would face them, in His strength and the strength of the same written Word He summoned, saying, "It is written." He is our pattern, our strength, and our confidence.

Today we experience sufferings and fears. But Jesus has the answers: our sufferings are but for a day, and our fears will vanish with

the morning, in the better Day to come. Right now, our greatest fear must be that of displeasing Him, our Risen, Living Lord. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we are under obligation, because He lives.

Today is ours for a purpose not normally known to mortals. We are living today that we may prove the sincerity of our love to Him and the eternal worth of our lives. Today is ours to demonstrate the superqualities of faith and courage He is seeking. Today is ours to restrain those irregular inclinations and subdue

those rebellious passions; to bring ourselves heart and soul to the high standard He has set for us; to form ourselves to that temperance which no affliction can overwhelm; to that patience which no irritation can ruffle; to that integrity which no self-interest can bribe.

Today is ours to master our doubts and multiply our faith and make subservient every thought and impulse that is not inspired by His glory. Today is ours to let our convictions stand triumphant. Today is ours to learn those little lessons of everyday—how to let go our little gripes and grievances, to overlook slights and think of greatness rather than pettiness; eternity rather than time.

Today is ours, to take ourselves firmly in hand and show ourselves every hour the masters of our des-

Let Us Pray . . .

O Thou Eternal One, who makest the stars and turnest the shadow of death into the morning, we thank Thee this morning for the Resurrection of Thy Son and the everlasting hope that it inspires within us, and for the gospel which has brought life and immortality to light. We rejoice that the darkness could not hold Him and that He is alive forevermore.

Father, we worship Thee for Thy great glory and all that Thou hast done, both in giving us this life and in opening up to us the possibilities of life beyond. Thou hast set eternity in our hearts, and we long, we yearn for that which lasts.

Thou God of our faith, increase and sustain us in the faith we sometimes dimly and sometimes strongly affirm. Let this Resurrection morning be for us an end to all weak-kneed faith and wavering resolutions, and may we henceforth show ourselves strong and unfaltering in the faith which was once delivered to the saints. May Thy truth be such a transforming power in our lives that we will no longer be the selfish, self-centered crea-

tures we used to be but be wholly transformed in nature, and become persons worthy of Thy love.

Thou God of hope, may we be lifted day by day by the hope which Thou dost hold before us. Before we ever voice it to Thee, Thou dost know our fractured understandings, our weaknesses, our sins. Thou dost know how, like a grindstone life sometimes seeks to grind us down. God our Father, we thank Thee for the hope Thou dost always hold before us, for the sense of Thy approval we feel when we know we have done right, and the sense of meaning and purpose in all the common things of earth, from the blooming of springtime to the dawning of each new day.

Thou God of hope, be with all Thy people everywhere, who are seeking Thee in sincerity and in truth. Be with Thy Church in all its work; lead, guide, and protect us in all our ways, in all we do that is in harmony with Thy will. Support, comfort, and strengthen as Thou seest we have need. And may all our service to Thee be not a burden but a delight, a glory and a joy transcending all the pleasures of earth.

Thou God of love, sustain us in the ever-present bond of fellowship. Thou in Thy goodness hast called us into Thy family; draw near us and show us the way until we have grown to the full stature of Thy Son and are new creatures in Christ. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

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tiny; to train ourselves in this masterful way of life, to show in deed and in truth that we belong to God; to stand firmly on the rock of ages and not let any blast of evil shake us. Today, right now, is the

Today Jesus lives!

time to act. If not now, when? What can we do when today becomes yesterday?

For today is not forever. At the moment God is waiting; but He will not wait forever.

This is our challenge, today! This very day! Shall we stand the test? Shall we meet His approval—shall we be on the right side when the glorious Tomorrow is ushered in and we are called to meet Him face to face?

Tomorrow . . .

Where does the Resurrection part of our story continue? Not today. Today is but the day of preparation. Tomorrow is time future, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16). It is the time when "He shall come again."

Someone has said, "If Jesus lives and rules, then I am no longer completely without hope." How true! If you and I believe in yesterday, then we must also believe in tomorrow, and we must believe that today and yesterday affect tomorrow. For if Jesus really did walk out of that grave—and we know He did—then death's power over Him was destroyed, and He has proved to us that there is life beyond the grave.

And if there is life beyond the grave, then each of us can qualify for that resurrection experience. And if we are prepared for that experience, then His words become vitally important to us.

But oh, the weight of that word *preparation* and all that it means to us today. It means making the very most of our precious, God-given time, as a sacred trust. It means following His example every day, all the way. It means listening so closely to what He says for us to do that we will not even hear the thousand other voices that clamor for our attention.

And what did He say? He talked of solid values and great determinations. He showed men the way of obligation, sacrifice, crossbearing, and surrender. He talked of humility, peace, and patience; of giving up the things at hand in exchange for the long-range values of eternity. He let everyone know that the way to life is plain and *difficult*, not plain and *easy*. And only those who are committed, who are ready to stake their whole lives upon it, who are willing to give themselves heart and soul and mind and strength to Him will secure that life.

Yesterday He lived among men. Yesterday, He "suffered, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps." Yesterday He

marked out the way.

And today He extends to you and me the opportunity to follow, to follow all the way, to relinquish our hold on the things of the present, to make His ways *our* ways, His thoughts *our* thoughts, His values *our* values. Today He extends the loving invitation, to give up that which is worth so little in exchange for that which has value beyond measuring, even resurrection, life and glory everlasting.

And then, tomorrow—oh, the glory of tomorrow. Tomorrow He shall come again. Tomorrow those

"If Jesus lives and rules, then I am no longer completely without hope."

who sleep in Christ shall rise. Tomorrow we shall meet Him, face to face.

Yes, He is coming. And how will it be with us then?

Oh, the joy unspeakable and full of glory that shall be ours tomorrow—if we have met our obligations today. MM

A party of engineers became lost in the jungles of Africa. Their food supply soon gave out. They found some berries which seemed perfectly to satisfy their appetites. They ate them for some days, but became weaker and weaker, and one after another died, until, when help finally arrived there was only one left to tell the story. He still had some of the berries, but when they were analyzed they were found to be absolutely worthless as a food. While they did satisfy the men's appetites, they were actually starving to death. Many people are like that—perfectly willing to starve their souls on food of no nourishment when they might be feasting on the true Bread of Heaven.

—Selected.

Judas:

Hero or Traitor?

JUDAS. His very name is anathema. Nineteen centuries after his criminal act, his name lives on in infamy among those who name the name of Christ. Even the sound of the name sends a chill down the spine. Why, oh, why did he commit such a despicable act? Why would anyone design to betray such a great and good man as Jesus Christ? How could one who had been so close to the Master turn against Him to the point of delivering Him up to His enemies?

Webster's Dictionary defines traitor as "one who betrays under the guise of friendship." Judas was a traitor in every sense of the word. He was the betrayer par excellence. But Judas had been "one of the twelve"; he had been numbered among Jesus' closest friends. Certainly he was no traitor when Jesus chose him; the fact that Jesus chose him as one of the Twelve indicates that he possessed the same potential as the other eleven. When chosen he must have been a man of high potential, else he would not have been chosen.

The night before Jesus chose the

Twelve, He spent all night in prayer; surely He saw in Judas higher possibilities. Like the others called, he was willing to forsake all to follow Jesus. And he did follow, for three years. He walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, broke bread with Jesus. Judas saw the dead restored to life, witnessed the feeding of thousands with a few loaves and fishes, heard Him say to the storm, "Peace, be still." He even went out with the eleven preaching and performing miracles himself.

As far as we can know from the record, Judas was among those who heard firsthand the Sermon on the Mount. He was present when Jesus spoke His many parables, and listened intently as He expounded their meaning to the Twelve. He heard from the lips of the Master that the wicked shall be cast out (surely he did not think he was one of them!), and when Jesus talked of the dividing of the sheep from the goats, he pictured himself among the sheep. When Jesus answered Peter's query, "What shall we have therefore?" can we not imagine that he thrilled with the

other eleven at Jesus' words: "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28)?

The fact that he was chosen as treasurer of the group speaks of the confidence the other eleven and Jesus had in him at the beginning. Surely such a position would not have been given to one thought to be irresponsible or untrustworthy. Matthew, because of his previous experience with money as a tax collector, might have seemed the most likely candidate for the position, yet it fell to Judas. He must have had an aptitude for business and must have appeared honest and devoted at the time, else he would not have been chosen.

But in spite of all that he had seen and heard, in spite of all that he knew of the Master's teachings, Judas committed the most despicable act. He knowingly betrayed his Master. No one asked him to do it. He conceived the idea himself and went to the religious hierarchy to learn what there would be in it for him, should he reveal Jesus to them.

WHY? Why did it happen? Why did Judas do it?

This question has been asked again and again. And it has been answered in varying ways. Generally speaking, the answers fall into one of the following categories:

- 1) That God was ultimately responsible, Judas being only the instrument to accomplish God's purpose
- 2) That Judas was only mildly responsible—he was weak and could not resist the temptation, fully expecting that Jesus would be forced to declare His kingship, overthrow the Roman rule, and set up His own Kingdom
- 3) That Judas was entirely responsible for both the idea and the act of treachery.

How are we to understand Judas and his part in Jesus' death? Was Judas not responsible for what he did? Was he only playing the part assigned him, only acting a part in a drama he could neither understand nor change?

THE first thought on why Judas betrayed Christ is that God—not Judas—was ultimately responsible, that Judas was only playing the part assigned to him by Providence, that Judas could not help behaving as he did.

Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. God never allows His divine sovereignty to overrule human freewill, else why the entire plan of salvation? Why reward the man or woman who does right, if they themselves are not responsible for its doing? And how unjust to punish anyone for evil-doing if the individual perpetrator is not responsible for that evil!

If we say Judas could not keep himself from the evil deed, we are in effect blaming God. This we cannot do, "for God cannot be tempted

with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (Jas. 1:13). Neither can we say that Judas was chosen to be the traitor, for Judas said of himself, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4). Like David, when confronted with his sin Judas said "I have sinned . . . I have betrayed the innocent blood." The thought that led to the evil deed had come from within, not from without. He knew it was his fault; he did not try to shift the blame to anyone else. He accepted the responsibility for his own transgression.

If God was ultimately responsible for Judas' sin, then why was Judas condemned for it? Should not God

How are we to understand Judas' part in Jesus' death?

be condemned instead of Judas? Should not Judas be the hero rather than the villain, if Judas was performing God's will? The idea of Judas' responsibility is closely linked to the purpose of Christ's life. If we allow (in accordance with the average church) that the total purpose of Jesus' life and death was to free mankind from the guilt of sin, then Judas is in reality the hero in the drama, because it was necessary for Jesus to die for the salvation of mankind, and Judas was an essential link in this plan, an essential step in fulfilling the plan of God for man's redemption!

However, nowhere does the Bible place Judas on God's honor roll. Nowhere does a single Bible writer give Judas a place among God's great. The apostle Peter says of

Judas that he received "the reward of iniquity" (Acts 1:18). Jesus called him a "devil."

Far from honoring Judas, the Bible condemns both Judas and any others who had part in bringing about the death of Christ. Those who "killed" Jesus were called "murderers," "wicked men," men with "wicked hands."

Nor does the Bible say that Christ died to rescue men from the guilt of their sins or to pay the price they could not pay. Jesus Himself stated clearly the purpose of His life. When asked by Pilate, "Art thou a king?" He replied in these immortal words: "Certainly I am a king. This is why I was born, this is why I came into the world" (John 18:37, Moffatt Bible).

THE second explanation of why Judas betrayed Christ also effectively relieves Judas of responsibility, stating that Judas was only weakly responsible for the transgression, not being humanly strong enough to resist; or that he was seduced by false reasoning, for which he was not to blame. This position is equally untenable, for it says that God allows temptations to come upon us which we are unable to resist; thus, when we are overcome, God is at fault. The Bible addresses this point directly, saying that we are not tempted beyond what we can resist if we will. In the words of the Apostle, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

Closely associated with this third explanation is often the thought that Judas was in the grip of a power stronger than he, that is, the devil. This thought comes from a misunderstanding of a few passages in the Gospels, such as the fol-

God foreknows, but He does not predestinate.

lowing: "Then entered Satan into Judas . . . , and he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them" (Luke 22:3-6).

"Then entered Satan into Judas." To those who believe in a literal devil or superpower of evil, this is the clue to why Judas did it. "The devil made me do it" has been popularized in recent years, even brought into the courtroom as a defense (but it was thrown out). Popularity alone is not sufficient basis for religious belief. The Bible does not teach a superpower of evil. Rather, evil men and women are the devil, or Satan of Scripture. Satan did not enter into Judas against his will; Judas opened the door to him. Judas was himself the devil or Satan.

Judas Was Responsible— and Condemned

What was God's part in Judas' act? God foreknew that Judas would betray Jesus, and in this sense we might say that the betrayal was part of God's plan, but the betrayer was entirely responsible for his part in that plan. God foreknows, but He does not predestinate one to do good and another to do evil.

Jesus showed His understanding of the plan when He said of Himself, "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to

that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born" (Mark 14:21). Divine knowledge foreknew, but foreknowledge is not predestination. Judas decided his own destiny when he decided to betray Jesus. As in all cases, man is a free moral agent; he himself chooses to obey and live, or to disobey and die.

The Downward Slide

What led Judas to betray Jesus? What caused him to be a traitor? We can only speculate. But this we know, that evil men do not become evil overnight. Judas did not act on an impulse that suddenly crossed his mind. No, such a heinous crime was the end result of a slow slide downhill. When he started out to follow Jesus, he never dreamed of betraying Christ. Perhaps the change was so gradual that no one noticed at the start. He may have become disillusioned because things did not seem to be working out as he had expected. Again, he may have loved excitement and there was little of that in being just a humble follower of the lowly Jesus.

As time went on, Jesus talked about His impending death, and although the Twelve could not understand it, they must have sensed that they would soon be leaderless, for they could see His enemies plotting against Him, and without Him where would be the glory for His followers? Judas' disillusionment was evident when he criticized Mary for using expensive ointment to anoint Jesus. These are His words: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" But Jesus rebuked him. He saw what the other apostles could not see, that Judas' motive was evil and Mary's was noble. Judas had no special love for the poor; he was

overanxious to get his own hands on the money.

Judas was covetous; there is no doubt about it, for he bargained to do the evil deed for money. "The love of money is the root of all evil," said Paul to Timothy. Judas had often heard Jesus warn about that very thing, but he never thought to apply it to himself. After all, money was handy to have; it was pretty hard to get along without it, and so he reasoned to himself, What's so bad about it? Greed was the first step in the downward slide that led to the betrayal.

Warning, But No Repentance

The fact that Jesus foreknew what would happen could have been taken by Judas as a warning, and Judas could have repented, if he had wanted to. When Jesus was teaching, He said to them all, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). Jesus did not say one of them was possessed of the devil, or that the devil had entered into one of the Twelve, but one of you is a devil, and that devil or Satan was none other than Judas. He "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25). Judas was the one not clean; Judas was the Satan. Yet, did Judas say, "Lord, I am wrong—forgive me"? No, He continued entertaining thoughts of betraying his Master and pursuing his evil course headlong.

Again at the Passover Supper, Jesus gave Judas further warning—and more opportunity for repentance. When He washed the disciples' feet, Jesus said: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean" (John 13:10-11). Jesus had divine

(Continued on page 12)

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



God has given so much evidence that we need not have a lingering doubt. I do not know how we can have a sign of a doubt. If we have any doubts it is because we have not opened up our minds to take in the evidence and grasp it.

There are unmeasured depths to God's knowledge. Oh, if we open our minds and expand them to take in the depth of that knowledge, it will cause us to believe and know He is able to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." And how is He able? "According to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Oh, this mighty universe! it is "world without end."

I would like to know how a man is going to run a literal race with weights tied to him? He might use weights while practicing until he became strong, but when he started to run the race would he keep them on? Never in the world! You would say he was a fool if he did. He would clear the road, get all the stones out of the way, and then run. So will we do, if we are wise. We will try to get all the obstacles out of the way that would hinder our onward progress.

It is a great accomplishment to overcome all envy. You look around and see people have something you have not. It would seem we would get all over envying others, but the feeling can steal over us so quickly if we are not exceedingly watchful and careful. We must watch we are not envying those who have something we cannot have. And above all watch evil speaking. I think that is the worst. Oh, this tongue! bring it in subjection, rule and govern it at all times.

We can acknowledge the truth in words, but unless we lay it to heart, it will do us no good. We must realize how wrong every feeling and word is that is not governed by the truth. If we confess our sins but do not lay to heart the lessons we learn, we are not growing. We might confess and confess, but we want to get where we confess to mean it, feel it.

God is working upon us to get rid of the rough places, our own mind, our thoughts, forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forward for the grand and wonderful promises before us. Forget old feelings of years ago. Oh, they are so liable to spring up. Watch, no matter who you are.

The religion of the Bible is the grandest that ever was thought of or spoken. It teaches men and women to become somebody, to rule their baser instincts and be governed by better, higher and nobler qualities. These are they with whom God in His mercy has promised to fill the earth.

We must rend our hearts now if we want safety in that coming Day. That is, we must get our mind right if we want God's mercy then. The question is, How can we get the mind right? There must be a change of mind. We must let the word of God work in us, until we become new creatures. Our acts will be different, our thoughts will be God's thoughts, and we will be new in all things.

We know that on those wonderful worlds above exists a life and glory that will never pass away. We can be just as sure of it as we are that there is death in the world now. When we know beyond a doubt that these things are true, it would seem we would want to get rid of this natural will. It would seem we would long to be clothed upon with our house from heaven, that we would be anxious to do anything to obtain that robe of immortality.

Judas

Hero or Traitor?

(Continued from page 10)

foreknowledge; He knew Judas' mind. How did Jesus know? He could read men's minds; He knew the heart. Jesus' remark did not serve to soften Judas' heart and lead him to repentance; he only hardened his heart the more.

Later the same evening at supper, Jesus startled the Twelve with the announcement: "One of you shall betray me." The quick rejoinder, "Lord, is it I?" spoke their disbelief. They were still unaware of what was happening; no one turned and accused Judas. And after Jesus identified Judas as the traitor, it is doubtful that they understood.

Still Judas was not ready to abandon the idea; he had gone so far that there was no turning back. He went out immediately. He had dwelled on the idea so long that his conscience was seared and he gave no thought to repentance. Because he had been so long with Jesus and the Twelve, he knew the place of prayer to which they would resort later, so he went to the chief priests to collect the 30 pieces of silver.

Jesus taught, and surely Judas knew, that it is from within, out of the heart of man, that evil proceeds. First the evil thought, then the evil deed. No one put the thought of betrayal into Judas' heart. It was a product of his own evil mind. Had he banished the thought, he would not have committed the act. He was wholly responsible for his actions. God had no part in it; He leaves men to choose their way.

Lost Opportunity

Judas could have been at Pentecost to witness and partake of the Holy Spirit.

Judas could have stood by Peter and John at the gate Beautiful and given the lame man a hand to rise to his feet.

Judas could have gone with the other Eleven throughout the then-known world, witnessing to the resurrection of the Master and proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God. He could have been remembered for his dedication, self-sacrifice, and missionary zeal as are Peter, Paul and John.

A permanent place of honor could have belonged to Judas—his was

the highest calling of the Master. The name of Judas could have been one of the twelve which John saw inscribed on the foundations of the wall of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14). But—

The name of Judas lives only in infamy, the chilling echo of lost opportunity. Instead of being one of the chosen, he is only "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

God grant that we may have the honesty to see ourselves as God sees us and turn before it is everlastingly too late. MM

On the Unpopular Side

The chariot of learning outruns the wheels of righteousness! We need not check the understanding, only help the heart to catch up.

Jesus' teaching did not outrun His soul. His oratory was the photograph of His life. His words were few, but His conduct vast.

The same can be said of that great man, Saul of Tarsus. His actions corresponded in every way to his converted beliefs. His actions and preaching stirred up Christ's enemies in Damascus to such a high pitch that they were determined to murder Saul. However, the Christians being practical people, got Saul out of the city by putting him in a basket and letting him down on the outside.

If Paul was rated on a popularity scale, he was certainly a hopeless failure. He was never given the key to the city. Instead, they put him in jail.

According to one writer, popularity is the scale on which most present-day ministers are rated. The measure of a man's ministry is determined by his popularity. If you do not entertain the mob and use all the gyrations of psychology, you are out, he says.

How to make friends and entertain people is the motto of the moment.

Paul never went about the Roman Empire giving messages on the subject "Over the wall in a basket." He never had to resort to gimmicks to get the attention of the crowd. He preached the Word.

When he left, the town had either a riot or a revival. Present-day preaching is not motivating the saints to take the Word of God to the world. If the preacher does step on a few toes, he will be thrown over the wall without a basket.

O Paul, we know you only tried to please your Master, never to please thy self. We want to be like you.

*I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all.*

—Contributed

Habits

*The greatest iceberg once was just
A tiny flake of snow;
And flake on flake adhered to it
And it did slowly grow.*

*And so it is with habits good,
Or habits very bad;
In time they'll give you lots of joy
Or make you very sad.*

1st . . . or . . . 14th

THE following was reported in a recent issue of a national magazine:

To advertise a new history book, the publisher asked 28 historians, educators, and journalists to rate the 100 most significant events in history. When the poll was finished, in first place was Columbus' discovery of America. In second place, Gutenberg's development of moveable type. Eleven different events tied for third place. Five tied for fourteenth place: The United States Constitution takes effect, ether makes surgery painless, x-ray is discovered, the Wright Brothers make their first heavier-than-air flight, and Jesus Christ is crucified.

What do you think of that? The best Jesus can do is a fourteenth-place tie. In the lives of some people, Jesus rates even lower. How about us? The Bible says that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ are the most important events in history.

Do we give Him first place in our hearts, in the way we do our work, in the way we treat our neighbors, in the way we spend our time and money?

From the way we live, would others get the impression that we have placed Christ first in our life, or fourteenth?

—Contributed

Who Has Ears to Hear?

HE that hath ears to hear, let him hear. These were the words with which Jesus often closed His remarks. A more persuasive speaker never lived. Yet the multitude that sat before Him, listening to His voice, never heard what He had to say.

When we grow dull in recognition, it is not because there is nothing to hear. There is always something to be heard if there is a Moses listening. The midnight call will cause the responsive child Samuel to reply, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." If the voice of God does not reach the heart, it is the hearer and not the speaker that is lacking. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Oh, beloved brethren, we have already lingered too long with the mis-hearing and the non-hearing crowd. It becometh us all to quicken our discernment of God.

The reason we have not heard is that we have closed our ears. Life can become so sensitive to the reality of our God that every message which comes to us through His Word in this dark night of sin will ring clearly and constantly in our ears *and* in our hearts.

The hour is not far distant when He will cease to call. If we have a disobedient ear, it will be a day of sorrow, distress, anguish. Then we shall seek for a message of consolation, and there will be none. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. . . . But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

The universe is full of voices, but only the sensitive mind instructed by the law of God is fitted to discern among them that one Voice that speaks a message divine. The ability to speak in season to a weary heart comes directly from one's capacity of listening to God. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."

When the Lord called to David, saying, "Seek ye my face," David had ears to hear. He answered, "My heart hath said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

Who of us has ears to hear and a heart to respond to the heavenly call? MM

It is not always the conspicuous who deserve the most praise. Any man can work when every stroke of his hand brings down the fruit rattling from the tree to the ground; but to labor in season and out of season, under every discouragement, by the power of truth—that requires a heroism which is transcendent.



Lines to Live By

*O JESUS, ever present,
O Shepherd, ever kind,
I come to bring my offering
Of tongue, and heart, and mind.
Thou brought me through my childhood
To learn of things above;
And won my hardy manhood
With cords of mighty love.*

*How oft to sure destruction
My feet had gone astray,
Wert Thou not, patient Shepherd,
The Guardian of my way.
How oft when I have fallen,
Been wounded sore by sin,
Thy hand has gently raised me,
And healing balm poured in.*

*O Shepherd good, I follow
Wherever Thou wilt lead;
No matter where the pasture
With Thee at hand to feed.
Thy voice, so clear, so mighty,
Shall make me strong and bold
And bring me, ere the dawning,
To Thine eternal fold.*

—Selected

The Tree God Plants

Matt. 15:13

O THOU, to Whose all-searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light,
Search, prove my heart, it pants for Thee,
O burst these bonds, and set it free!

Wash out its stains, refine its dross,
Nail my affections to the cross;
Hallow each thought; let all within
Be clean, as Thou, my Lord, art clean!

If in this darksome wild I stray,
Be Thou my Light, be Thou my Way;
No foes, no violence I fear,
No fraud, while Thou, my God, art near.

When rising floods my soul o'erflow,
When sinks my heart in waves of woe,
Jesus, Thy timely aid impart,
And raise my head, and cheer my heart.

Saviour, where'er Thy steps I see,
Dauntless, untired, I follow Thee;
O let Thy hand support me still,
And lead me to Thy holy hill!

If rough and thorny be the way,
My strength proportion to my day;
Till toil, and grief, and pain shall cease,
Where all is calm, and joy, and peace.
—Selected

The human mind is not a deep-freeze for storage but a forge for production; it must be supplied with fuel, fired and properly shaped.

THE WIND that blows can never kill
The tree God plants;
It bloweth east, it bloweth west,
The tender leaves have little rest,
But any wind that blows is best;
The tree God plants
Strikes deeper root, grows higher still,
Spreads wider boughs, for God's good will
Meets all its wants.

There is no frost hath power to blight
The tree God shields;
The roots are warm beneath soft snows,
And when Spring comes it surely knows,
And every bud to blossom grows.
The tree God shields
Grows on apace by day and night,
Till sweet to taste and fair to sight
Its fruit it yields.

There is no storm hath power to blast
The tree God knows;
No thunderbolt, nor beating rain,
When they are spent it doth remain.
The tree God knows
Through every tempest standeth fast,
And from its first day to its last
Still fairer grows.

If in the soul's still garden-place
A seed God sows—
A little seed—it soon will grow,
And far and near all men will know
For heavenly lands He bids it blow.
A seed God sows,
And up it springs by day and night;
Through life, through death, it groweth right;
Forever grows.

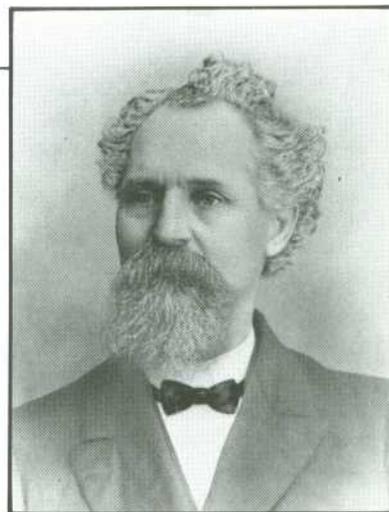
—Selected

Thou shalt not be a man of words

- Week 1:** The faster we travel on the King's highway, the safer we are.
- Week 2:** Dig your well before you get thirsty.
- Week 3:** We should scan our conduct for every sign of the old nature.
- Week 4:** The more we drink of the water of life, the better it will taste.

*The Life and Work of
REV. L. J. Nichols*

An Honest Man



"One who was faithful to his God, and loved his fellowmen."

Chapter Seven

New Horizons

ALTHOUGH retarded somewhat by heavy snow, the travelers reached Rochester on January 27, 1904, and were met by one of the brethren who had preceded them and arranged for temporary quarters at 55 East Ave. They were soon comfortably settled and remained there until the last of February, when the present property on Thurston Road was purchased. At this time there was no street car line nearer than Genesee St., about a mile away. This part of the city was as yet undeveloped and much of it was swamp.

The property purchased by Captain Nichols consisted of six acres of land, one large two-story house and two small cottages. These sufficed for a short-term home for part of his large "family." Within a few months a three-story house was constructed, which was ready for occupancy July 4, 1904. Since then, several smaller residences have been added. The original building contained a large double parlor. This at once became the assembly room, where all gathered each evening and on Sundays for worship.

Captain Nichols now purchased a large number of vacant lots lying on Cottage, Sawyer, Enterprise and Ellicott Streets. These he sold to his brethren at cost, as he did also the lumber which he bought in large quantities at wholesale prices, and they were soon engaged in erecting houses, which were to be rented, thus providing employment for the workers as well as adding to their incomes. Through his efforts the New York State Railways extended their line through Arnett Boulevard and Thurston Road to Brooks Ave. Water and sewer accommodations were secured within a few years and the building went steadily forward.

A number of houses were built by the brethren, while the city did its part in the way of pavements and sidewalks. Meanwhile the city expanded, and

a sufficient number of high-grade business firms located in the area.

The spiritual work was not neglected during this time. In August, 1904, the tent was erected at the corner of Genesee Street and Bronson Avenue. Services were conducted for a week, all meetings being well attended. Campaigns were also conducted at Sea Breeze and Charlotte during the summer. In November, the Colonial Hall was secured, where meetings were held for some time. Plymouth Church at Plymouth Avenue and Troup St., was then hired, and here the group worshiped regularly for 18 months, until the church was sold to the Spiritualist Society. The last sermon preached there was on Aug. 5th, 1906. In this address Captain Nichols said, "I stand ready today to buy the Plymouth Church outright and make the Spiritualists a clean present of it if they will produce one phenomenon which I fail to explain upon reasonable investigation." He was never called upon to make good his offer.

Plymouth Church was the scene of the first true Christmas celebration given by the Megiddo group for the public. Captain Nichols had been engaged for some time in collecting and tabulating the evidence showing that Christ was not born on December 25 but in the spring of the year. The anniversary of Jesus' birth fell that year (1906) on March 25th, and the church was elaborately decorated for the occasion with artificial flowers of many varieties—to the number of 10,000, all handmade by the ladies of the group. A suitable program of recitations, songs and selections by the band was rendered, closing with an address by Captain Nichols on the subject of "The True Christmas," giving Bible evidence.

During these years, home mission work was being extensively

carried on in many parts of the United States by house-to-house canvassers offering books explaining the Bible by subjects. Captain Nichols offered to pay the railroad fare and furnish the books at cost to all who would go out and help to carry the light in this way to a world in darkness. Many responded, some giving their entire time to the good work. Several more publications were added to the list during the next few years in Rochester, vis.: *What Must We Do to be Saved?* *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, *Treatise on the Trinity*, *Treatise on Elijah and the Coming of Christ*, and the aforementioned *Treatise on Christmas and New Year*. The *Spiritual Creation* was a posthumous work of Captain Nichols, published in 1914. This made a set of thirteen books furnishing a comprehensive study of the Bible.

The point that the prophet Elijah will return to herald the second advent of Christ, though discovered late in the list, was a very important find. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," This prophecy had stood in plain view for centuries, as had the statement of Jesus, "Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come and restore all things" (Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 17:11). Yet the subject was beclouded by those who had tried through the years to apply these texts to another individual or to a class or movement. A study of the subject convinced Mr. Nichols that there could be but one meaning; the passages were literally true, and the old Prophet Elijah, who was translated to heaven so many centuries ago, was being trained for a special work and would return to herald the com-

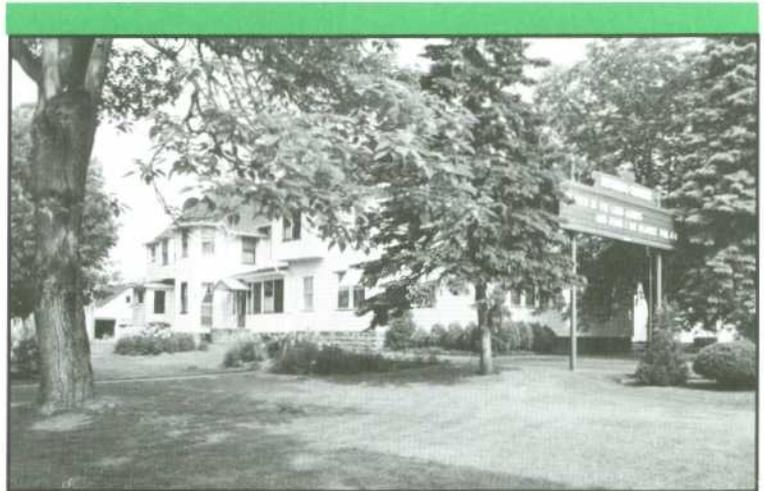
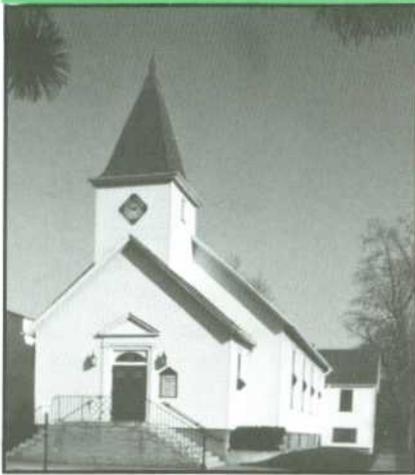
ing of the Messiah. With this agreed the records of the primitive Church, according to the earliest secular historians. Thenceforth the message of the Megiddo Missionaries was the imminent coming of Elijah to sound the final warning.

The Captain had for some time felt the need of a larger place of worship for his growing band, so in the autumn of 1907 he decided to build a church. No sooner was the plan mentioned to the brethren than the work was begun. The location chosen was at the corner of Thurston Road and Sawyer Street, just opposite the Mission Home. The building erected is 76 feet long by 36 feet wide, and has a seating capacity of 400 persons. Several trees which stood on the premises were cut down and sawed into building material, which was used in the church. (A saw mill and flour mill were part of the equipment of Captain Nichols' shop.) The pews, which were of chestnut and beautifully finished, were the work of the Captain and his men, while the cushions for the same were made by the women.

This little church, when completed, presented a very neat appearance. Though it has been remodeled several times, the original structure still stands and is used today. Its distinguishing feature is its interior decoration—large wall plaques lettered artistically with Bible verses, proclaiming to all who visit that the Bible is the rule of this church.

The total cost of the church was about \$5,000, and it was all paid for when completed; yet no one outside the Megiddo Group was asked to contribute a cent and no collections were taken to defray the cost. Two hundred and fifty people attended the dedication service which was held March 22, 1908.

Now that the public could be ac-



commodated, the celebration of the true Christmas with a free entertainment became a regular yearly feature of the work. Programs consisting of recitations, dialogues, songs and music by the band, long attracted capacity audiences, and many times large numbers were turned away for lack of room. These programs, which required a great deal of hard work and practice, were not simply to entertain the public but to call attention to these wondrous Bible truths in a way that would make deep and lasting impressions. Captain Nichols always made an address, giving Bible evidence for commemorating the Saviour's birth at this time of the year. Hundreds of people partook of the delicious Christmas dinners which were served to the public at a modest fee, and the handmade flowers with which the church was profusely and elaborately decorated at this season were an attractive feature and won much admiring comment from visitors.

Each year, immediately after the New Year/Abib season, the missionaries began preparations for active work in the field. Books and trunks were packed and each group departed for its individual field of labor. A party consisting of from

four to twenty persons would locate temporarily in a city, and, by house-to-house canvassing and personal talks with the people, a great many books were sold and given away. The missionaries' efforts were directed toward arousing more interest among the people in Bible study, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the Word of God.

Their missionary labors did not cease with the summer: when cold weather came on they turned their faces southward, where the work could be carried on in comfort, several groups customarily spending their winters carrying the good

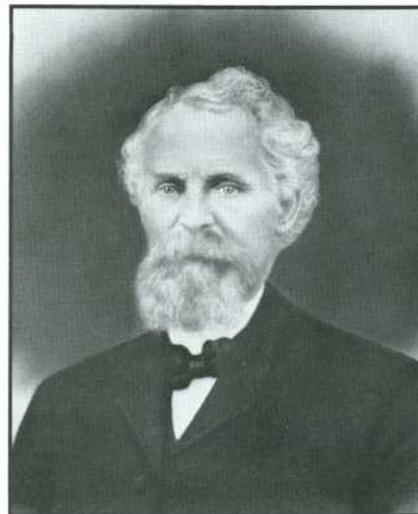
news of the Kingdom to the inhabitants of various Southern cities.

Through the foresight and good business management of Captain Nichols, the work was established upon a sound financial basis, so that there has never been a cessation of the work on account of lack of funds. Believing that the tithing system, which was instituted long prior to the existence of the Mosaic law, was the method of giving approved by the Almighty, that method was adopted by the organization upon their location in Rochester and has proved effective and satisfactory, affording all an opportunity

of assisting in the work and causing no hardship to any. The tithe money is not used to pay the minister, organist, choir or band, however. All the workers give their services absolutely free, following the example of their leader, who during his fifty years of service never accepted one dollar of remuneration. The money paid in tithes pays the railroad fare of missionaries, settles

advertising bills, and spreads the gospel in whatever way is deemed expedient.

By these methods, during the lifetime of Brother Nichols more than a million publications were placed in the hands of readers the world over. A small-scale work, in these days of large figures? Perhaps so, but the number present at the first Pentecost, as we recall, was not large either.



Chapter Eight Interruption

IN THE midst of these crowded, happy years (he loved activity and accomplishment), a chilling cloud appeared in the smiling sky. Man is mortal, and the human organism will endure just so much and no more. Now this great, good man, who had lived several lifetimes in his sixty-seven years, who had never spared himself the hardest labors and for whom little sleep or rest had sufficed, he whose buoyant enthusiasm and zest for living increased with the years, began to find that he was paying toll to Nature. His health failed perceptibly; his heart was no longer equal to its task at his former pace. Urged by those near him to take rest and treatment at the Battle Creek (Mich.) Sanitarium, he consented with reluctance, as this was a new and unwelcome thing for him. On the evening of Feb. 13, 1912, he bade farewell to friends and loved ones, and, accompanied by his wife and his sister, he began the journey from which he was not to return alive.

"You have worn yourself out," the examining physician told him, "trying to save sinners."

At first things went well: he felt stronger day by day. The following Sunday he planned to preach to friends in Battle Creek, and in a few more days he would return to dear Megiddo. On February 28 he retired to the dressing room to prepare for a treatment, and there he was found shortly afterward in the quiet embrace of the King of Terrors. God had been kind to His faithful and wise servant; death had come as he would have desired it, suddenly and painlessly. An interested friend, Mr. F. O. Downer, took charge and accompanied the grief-stricken sisters, together with the body of Captain Nichols, to Rochester.

The funeral was conducted on March 1st by his assistant pastor, the Rev. Maud Hembree, now leader of the band, in the little church he had built four years before. He was then borne by his sorrowing band to Mount Hope Cemetery and laid to rest to await the Resurrection Day.

Words cannot convey the sadness his death brought to the Megiddo Band, and to none was it more poignant than to his devoted wife, with

whom he had lived happily for 48 years. Not one of his followers but felt that he or she had lost an important cog in the machinery of existence. Nor were these alone in their sorrow, for hundreds of friends and acquaintances, Catholic and Protestant, came to join in their tribute to the genius who had built up a part of the city and worked with sure purpose among ten score of followers.

His life's work was complete. Like Paul, he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

He lived to see the truth which was his lifelong quest freed from the last muddy streak, the last taint of error, as a result of his own untiring efforts and the help of the Eternal. He rests from his labors, but the work he inaugurated goes steadily forward. The gems of truth he exhumed have lost none of their brilliance, the household still receive their portion of "meat in due season."

(To Be Continued) MM

Christian Success

A LEADER in the field of human resources was asked on one occasion if anyone ever does poorly on all aptitude tests for natural abilities. "About one in eight thousand," he replied. "But we never worry about that individual. He usually ends up president of his firm. Since nothing ever came easy to him, he learned in his youth to work hard."

The first law of success in this day when so many things are clamoring for attention is concentration—to bend all the energies to one point, and to go directly to that point.

Demosthenes, the greatest orator of the ancient or modern world, as a child had nothing to recommend him as a speaker; but hearing a famous speaker pleading a case and seeing how that speaker held and swayed his hearers, Demosthenes there resolved to learn to do as well. Neither his timidity nor his weak body nor his stammer should stop him. He cured his stammer by speaking with pebbles in his mouth and shouted against the waves.

There are many more examples in history of men whose success has not come from unusual talents or fortune, but who have worked and succeeded by persevering. It is said that

the father of Success is named **Work**. The mother of Success is named **Ambition**. The oldest son is called **Common Sense** and some of the boys are called **Stability, Perseverance, Honesty, Thoroughness, Foresight, Enthusiasm** and **Co-operation**.

The oldest daughter is **Character**. Some of the sisters are **Cheerfulness, Loyalty, Care, Courtesy, Economy, Sincerity and Harmony**. The baby is **Opportunity**.

Get acquainted with the father, **Work**, and you will be able to get along with the rest of the family.

Work is important to a Christian's success. "Work out your own salvation"; "Strive to enter in at the strait gate"; "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure"; "Be ye doers of the word"; "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." God has given each of us what we need to reach the ultimate goal—salvation with all its pleasures; but without a great deal of effort, time and determination, we cannot succeed.

The applicant for life eternal enters God's school with the bright lights of the coming Kingdom of God illuminating his every step. Yes, he tells himself, he *can* succeed—he must succeed—he *will* succeed. And with this determination he thinks success; he speaks success; he acts and dreams success. Every evil of his nature can be conquered!

But better is the end of a matter than the beginning thereof, we are told, for only a successful finish brings eternal rewards.

In these closing days of our schooling, to assure ourselves of success we must search out every factor contributing to a possible failure and counteract accordingly. Lack of ability is not our problem, for all who are called of God are able to complete their service. Our lack is of a sustained intensity that can carry our first determination to a successful finish.

We need to establish some definite plan for success. Exactly how can we succeed?

1. *By application.* So frequently we fail to apply what we know. Webster defines the word "apply" in these terms: "To put to use, especially in a particular case, as to apply a rule, devote to a particular purpose; to engage with close attention, devote assiduously, as to apply oneself to a task."

The Wise Man says: "Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge" (Prov. 23:12). As trustees of God's holy oracles, it is our great privilege to apply every principle of His law in our daily lives. All of our God-given faculties—the intel-

lect and all the senses—must be active in His exalted service. They must be applied.

2. *By concentration.* And concentration means, first, attention. We have no time for random thoughts and wandering imaginations. If we would keep our minds on God, we must pay attention to His law. If our thoughts are not centered on right things, our concentration will be poor and our spiritual progress will be minimal.

We should have our thoughts always focused in one direction: to keep our spiritual energy active. Christ and His divine certitudes are our source of power. If we pay exact attention to all of His corrective mandates, we will share His energy. We will be able to say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

3. *By full-time service.* We often sing, "Ready to go, Ready to stay, Ready our place to fill; Ready for service lowly or great, Ready to do His will." But unless our hearts are fully set in us to do good at every turn of life's road, we are not really ready.

Every truly successful one will have a record of full-time service. The angel's book will show that he did not take up his cross one day and relax the next. The sinews of his new nature were kept renewed and growing stronger by daily nourishment from the storehouse of God.

Part-time service to God can bring, at best, only partial success. And anything less than complete success is not truly success.

What does full-time service mean? Our Lord said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). But, says one, I must eat, I must take care of my home and work for a living. All very true; God sees and knows our needs, and often gives us much pleasure in satisfying them. But our chief concern through all our tasks must be how to perpetuate our lives beyond this short moment of time. Making a living must be secondary to making a *life*. All must be secondary to seeking the Kingdom of God and His right doing.

If we would succeed, we have to bend all our energies to one point, and go directly to that point. In the words of the apostle Paul, "Give your whole attention, all your energies, to these things, so that your progress is plain for all to see. Keep a critical eye both upon your own life and on the teaching you give, and if you continue to follow the line I have indicated you will not only save your own soul but the souls of many of your hearers as well" (I Tim. 4:15-16, Phillips). He also said of himself, "Brothers, I do not infer that I myself have laid hold; but one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and reaching out for what lies before, I push on to the

goal for the prize of God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14, Berkeley).

We need incentive to spur us on to work. And God, foreseeing our need, has provided: He has set before us a prize so magnificent that it surpasses mortal description: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). How can we relax our spiritual energies with such a reward before us?

We can finish what we have started. Why should we let such a magnificent hope collapse because of some interest of the fleeting present? With the prize of eternal life almost in view, why give up? Why—the Lord is pleading—why will ye die, O house of Israel, when you can live?

Success and suffering are vitally and organically linked. We cannot succeed without offering our bodies a living sacrifice. And sacrifice means suffering. But only as we suffer with Christ will we share in His success. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer we shall also reign with him." MM

O Lord, Thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail inconstant heart;
Henceforth my chief desire shall be
To dedicate myself to Thee,
To Thee, my God, to Thee!

Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my soul with joy;
That silent, secret thought shall be,
That all my hopes are fixed on Thee,
On Thee, my God, on Thee!

Thy glorious eye pervadeth space;
Thou'rt present, Lord, in every place,
And, wheresoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit cleave to Thee,
To Thee, my God, to Thee!

Renouncing every worldly thing,
Safe in the shadow of Thy wing,
My constant thought henceforth shall be,
That all my joy shall be in Thee!
In Thee, my God, in Thee!

—Selected

Ecumenism—1984

ECUMENISM, a word unfamiliar to the average citizen a few years ago, is taking on new meaning at the present time. Until the "Second Ecumenical Council" was convened in 1962, the present generation was largely unfamiliar with the term. The council was called "ecumenical" referring to its worldwide scope, representative of the Christian church throughout the world. Ecumenism is the "beliefs, principles, or practices of those who desire and work for worldwide unity and cooperation among all Christian churches."

For centuries the Roman Catholic Church and her popes ruled the religious world. The rule was harsh and demanding, often brutal. The popes, claiming to be successors to Peter, declared themselves to be supreme in matters of faith and their word to be infallible. Beginning in the 10th century, however, many disputes arose in the church resulting in a split between the Roman church and the Greek Church. Rome no longer ruled the whole church; Constantinople became the seat of power of the Greek Orthodox church, and the highest ranking Greek bishop or patriarch became its head.

The next upheaval came when Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenburg, Germany in 1517, in which he denounced the practices and power of the mother church. From this original break came all the Protestant churches throughout the world. The break was final and complete—or so it was thought. But time has a way of healing breaches, and now nearly half a millennium later the mother church is making advances to the separated daughters. Martin Luther would never have believed it could happen.

The movement toward church unity began with the convening of the Second Ecumenical Council in 1962. It was the first time in nearly 2,000 years that such a council had been convened, and the first ever to which Protestant observers were invited. The expressed purpose of the Council was to "search for means of removing obstacles to the reunification of the Eastern [Greek] Orthodox churches with Rome and the improving of relations . . . with the Protestant denominations."

Pope John XXIII died before the council finished its work, but it was reconvened by his successor, Paul VI, with the same agenda. This time more Protestant observers were invited. Paul VI took the first step toward healing the breach by meeting with the leader of the Greek church—the first time a pope had met with an Orthodox patriarch since 1439, a first giant step toward unity.

From 1963 to 1979 there was little movement on the issues, the only notable success toward unification being achieved between the Roman Catholic church and the Anglican Church of England in 1971. An agreement "reached on essential teachings on communion" was described as a "major milestone." Also there has been a move underway to smooth the rifts between various branches of the major denominations.

But with the elevation of John Paul II to the papacy in 1978, [he chose his title to identify with his predecessors who started the ecumenical movement] the movement has once again come to life. Pope John Paul II, Polish by birth, and with an outgoing personality, has broken with precedent and traveled throughout the world promoting unity. And with notable success. Wherever he travels, he is acclaimed by millions.

During the past few months several moves have been made toward a uniting of the major churches, moves that would have been unthinkable a few decades ago. November 10, 1983 marked the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, the man who split Christendom apart. But not only are Lutherans celebrating the occasion. Other Protestant churches around the world are joining them with lectures, concerts and special services. Unlike the days of Luther, the emphasis is not on the split, but on unity. "The Reformation spirit itself is taking on a whole new look," says one. "Such mainline denominations as Lutherans and Methodists are laying the theological groundwork for important breakthroughs, including a common liturgy for all Christians."

This anniversary season witnessed some dramatic agreements between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. For the first time in history, Lutherans joined with four

major denominations in a joint statement defining their ministry, bridging an early rift that had occurred between Luther and Calvin. Another conciliatory move was made in September between Lutherans and Episcopalians, concerning sharing communion. Episcopalians are American followers of the Church of England, once arch rivals.

"Hatchets are being buried at such a pace that many theologians say that Lutherans, Anglicans and some other denominations may reconcile with Rome long before Protestantism's next centennial," says a writer in *U.S. News & World Report*. And what is said to be one of the greatest achievements of the ecumenical movement occurred this past summer at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Vancouver B. C. At this meeting a joint statement of faith was issued which had been agreed upon by 100 Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox theologians.

Quoting further from the *U.S. News and World Report*, "Unity among Catholics and their closest cousins in Lutheranism and Anglicanism took a big step (also in September) when theologians from each church resolved the historic battle over faith vs. good works. The panel's statement largely upheld Luther's contention that faith is the key to salvation—a doctrine that he used in opposing the practice of medieval clergy of asking money from parishioners in exchange for 'indulgences' that would secure better treatment in the next world."

The most recent event to call attention to the ecumenical movement was Pope John Paul II's appearance in a Lutheran church in Rome. A Lutheran pastor in the city of Rome held what was described as "a historic church service" on Sunday, December 12, where the pope prayed and preached the sermon. The pope's presence at the service marked the first time a Roman Catholic pontiff had attended a Lutheran service. Speaking in German, the pope told his audience, "We desire unity, we work for unity."

Is this the meeting of minds that will bring together the nations of earth that will rise up against Christ at His coming? Recent headlines suggest such a possibility. Just how near at hand is the completion of the union that is in the process of being formed we cannot know, but Bible prophecy leads us to believe that this unification will be one of the last steps before the Lord's coming. Noting the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the signs that would point to Christ's coming, we can say with certainty, "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11, Moff).

This is not to say that all major differences have been

ironed out; other hurdles remain. But given the present attitude of those in charge unity is possible at some point in the future. Certainly such reformers as Luther and Calvin of the 16th century and Roger Williams and the Puritans of the 17th century would never have believed that reconciliation was possible given the depth of the differences. God's word informs us that there will be a meeting of the minds when Christ comes and all nations will rise up against Him. Current events seem to be pointing in that direction. MM

*Off when the waves of passion rise,
And storms of life conceal the skies,
And o'er the ocean sweep;
Tossed with the long tempestuous night,
We see no ray of heavenly light,
To cheer the lonely deep.*

*But lo! in our extremity,
The Saviour walking on the sea!
E'en now He passes by;
He silences our clamorous fear,
And mildly says, 'Be of good cheer,
Be not afraid, 'tis I.'*

*O Lord, if it be Thou indeed,
So near us in our time of need,
So good, so strong to save—
Speak the kind word of power to me,
Bid me believe and come to Thee,
Swift walking on the wave.*

*He bids me come: His voice I know,
And boldly on the waters go,
And brave the tempest's shock:
O'er rude temptations now I bound;
The billows yield a solid ground,
The wave is firm as rock.*

*O come, come in, Thou Prince of Peace,
And all the storms of life shall cease,
And fall, no more to rise;
If I still true to Thee remain,
Thy highest heights of goodness gain,
Then I shall share the prize!*

—Selected

• **“Precept upon Precept”**

“What is the meaning of Isaiah 28:10, ‘precept must be upon precept, . . . line upon line, . . . here a little and there a little’?”

The original word translated “precept” in this passage is the Hebrew word for “law, commandment.” As the passage reads in our KJV, it would seem to be instructing us in proper methods of teaching and study, i.e., by repetition (“precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept”), by comparing (“line upon line, line upon line”), by establishing of proper relationships between one passage and another, (“here a little and there a little”).

In the previous verse the question was asked: “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?” And the formula for obtaining this knowledge is “precept must be upon precept, . . . line upon line” etc. The Prophet was informing us of the way God has designed for us to arrive at the knowledge of His Word. Any one verse or any one chapter will not contain all the information that God wishes us to have on a given subject, hence the need for comparison with other portions of His written Word. We can be sure of this: that all of God’s inspired writers will speak alike, and we are to build upon the words of all, “here a little, and there a little.” In the words of the apostle Paul, we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20). When we arrive at the correct understanding of the Bible, we will find that the precepts given in one part are the same as the instruction given in another part. Thus Peter, James, and David all speak alike on a given subject.

There is doubtless another thought in this passage which the newer translations point up, and which seems significant in the light of Isaiah’s prophetic mission to the nation of Israel.

The first portion of the chapter (vs. 1-7) is a warning to Assyria and Judah of impending trouble. Then is told the response of the people (priests and false prophets) to Isaiah’s message. “These, too, are reeling

with wine, staggering from strong drink. . . . they are muddled with wine; strong drink makes them stagger, they totter when they are having visions, they stumble when they are giving judgment. Yes, all the tables are covered with vomit, not a place left clean” (vs. 7-8, JB). While the rulers and priests may have been incapacitated by self-indulgence and literal drunkenness may have been a problem, it seems that the real message here is their being drunk on their own ideas and oblivious to the word of the Lord. In either case, the men accused retort indignantly that they are not children to be lectured by Isaiah. They are leaders and Isaiah is talking to them like a schoolmaster teaching small children. “Who does he think he is lecturing? Who does he think his message is for? Babies just weaned? Babies just taken from the breast?” (vs. 9-10, JB).

The next verse is the text in question: “precept upon precept,” etc. It has been suggested that this phrase has one of several meanings. It may be:

- 1) meaningless babble, as it is rendered in the Jerusalem Bible: “sav lasav, sav lasav, kav lakav, kav lakav, zeer sham, zeer sham!”
- 2) a repetitious recitation as of children learning their alphabet
- 3) a drunken man’s muttering of the words “command” and “measuring line” as in verse 17 (JB)
- 4) it may be Isaiah’s slow way of spelling out the root of “distress,” so that the lesson does not fall on deaf ears.

In any case, the next verse shows God’s determination: these stammering-tongued people will receive punishment from another stammering-tongued people, who will chastise them and hurt them. It is a prophecy of doom. There is menace in the words, as if he had said: “You will hear it again, God’s lesson. You will hear it in the speech of strangers and learn it at the hands of aliens” (vs. 11, JB). And then you will not be able to close your ears to the message, for it will be the intolerable, inescapable judgment of God upon you for your wickedness.

There is only one way to avoid feeling the threat of these words, and that is to obey the word of the Lord.

MM

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So near us in our time of need,
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Bid me believe and come to Thee,
Swift walking on the wave.*

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And brave the tempest's shock:
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The billows yield a solid ground,
The wave is firm as rock.*

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In the previous verse the question was asked: “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?” And the formula for obtaining this knowledge is “precept must be upon precept, . . . line upon line” etc. The Prophet was informing us of the way God has designed for us to arrive at the knowledge of His Word. Any one verse or any one chapter will not contain all the information that God wishes us to have on a given subject, hence the need for comparison with other portions of His written Word. We can be sure of this: that all of God’s inspired writers will speak alike, and we are to build upon the words of all, “here a little, and there a little.” In the words of the apostle Paul, we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20). When we arrive at the correct understanding of the Bible, we will find that the precepts given in one part are the same as the instruction given in another part. Thus Peter, James, and David all speak alike on a given subject.

There is doubtless another thought in this passage which the newer translations point up, and which seems significant in the light of Isaiah’s prophetic mission to the nation of Israel.

The first portion of the chapter (vs. 1-7) is a warning to Assyria and Judah of impending trouble. Then is told the response of the people (priests and false prophets) to Isaiah’s message. “These, too, are reeling

with wine, staggering from strong drink. . . . they are muddled with wine; strong drink makes them stagger, they totter when they are having visions, they stumble when they are giving judgment. Yes, all the tables are covered with vomit, not a place left clean” (vs. 7-8, JB). While the rulers and priests may have been incapacitated by self-indulgence and literal drunkenness may have been a problem, it seems that the real message here is their being drunk on their own ideas and oblivious to the word of the Lord. In either case, the men accused retort indignantly that they are not children to be lectured by Isaiah. They are leaders and Isaiah is talking to them like a schoolmaster teaching small children. “Who does he think he is lecturing? Who does he think his message is for? Babies just weaned? Babies just taken from the breast?” (vs. 9-10, JB).

The next verse is the text in question: “precept upon precept,” etc. It has been suggested that this phrase has one of several meanings. It may be:

- 1) meaningless babble, as it is rendered in the Jerusalem Bible: “sav lasav, sav lasav, kav lakav, kav lakav, zeer sham, zeer sham!”
- 2) a repetitious recitation as of children learning their alphabet
- 3) a drunken man’s muttering of the words “command” and “measuring line” as in verse 17 (JB)
- 4) it may be Isaiah’s slow way of spelling out the root of “distress,” so that the lesson does not fall on deaf ears.

In any case, the next verse shows God’s determination: these stammering-tongued people will receive punishment from another stammering-tongued people, who will chastise them and hurt them. It is a prophecy of doom. There is menace in the words, as if he had said: “You will hear it again, God’s lesson. You will hear it in the speech of strangers and learn it at the hands of aliens” (vs. 11, JB). And then you will not be able to close your ears to the message, for it will be the intolerable, inescapable judgment of God upon you for your wickedness.

There is only one way to avoid feeling the threat of these words, and that is to obey the word of the Lord.

MM

• Concerning Debt Spending

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We agree with you that excessive government spending is placing a severe burden on this generation as well as the next just to pay the interest on our national debt.

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As for Christians being effective in controlling government spending, we do not see that as our duty. A complete change of government is coming to this planet. There will be Divine intervention very soon. Then the rights of all citizens will be respected and the rulers will be above graft, corruption, political expediency and the influence of pressure groups clamoring for their share of the spoils. As the prophet Isaiah expresses it, "I will also make thy officers peace and thy exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders." The Lord has promised to take over the affairs of this planet, and even though we find many things that need changing, we feel that to be a part of trying to force a certain policy on the government at this time would be unwise. Jesus summed up the Christian duty in Matt. 22:21, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

• Baptism into Christ's Death

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of Holy Spirit power. It was simply an outward form representing the inward cleansing which must take place in each convert.

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The baptism which ranked highest in Paul's scale of values was the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. In Romans 6, he explains what he means by this "one" baptism. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" To be baptized into Jesus Christ means that we are to live by the principles of Jesus Christ, the words which He taught. It would be impossible for us to be baptized into the man Christ. But we can be baptized into Christ's death, a death to sin, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24).

Continuing in Romans 6 we learn more about this one baptism: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." This one baptism requires that we "walk in newness of life." Baptism into Christ's death demands a new life according to Christ's principles, in contrast to the ritual of being immersed in literal water, which could not bring eternal salvation but was only an outward form.

In almost every recorded instance of water baptism, the rite was also accompanied by the bestowal of the Holy Spirit power. That does not and cannot happen today. It is not wrong to baptize today, but we do not believe that it is required or that it accomplishes what its proponents claim for it. MM

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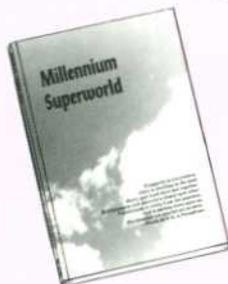
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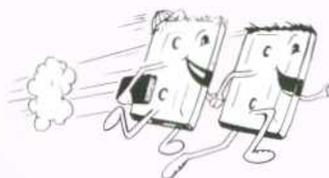
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