



Megiddo Message

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2002

To every thing there
is a season, and a time
for every purpose under
the heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

GOD HAS ABSOLUTES— ABSOLUTELY!

We live in a world without absolutes. A society long defying moral restraints has pushed discretion over the edge of acceptance, past shame and disgrace, to the point where “It’s OK if it feels good.”

But the law of God has not changed. Though secular immorality of every kind is unchallenged in our society, the Christian’s morals and eternal values remain the same. Right is right, and wrong is never right. Absolutely.

In order to speak convincingly of absolute morals, we must first be clear in our own thinking as to what are God’s absolutes. Then we must accept them, and agree to live by them.

Almost everyone regards love. Cozy, soft and fuzzy, love is thought to be the fountainhead of good. But all love is not good, and all love is not of God. Love is good only when it springs from a pure heart¹ and is motivated not by what feels good but by what God calls right. Perfect love must come from a pure heart, where disciplined thoughts issue from God’s spring of holiness.²

What does God’s Word say about perfect love relative to today’s society? In clear modern terms, it tells us that homosexuality is wrong. We are not free to choose any lifestyle our society condones. The Bible condemns it in terms unmistakable, placing it on a par with sacrificing children to idols and having intercourse with animals (Lev. 18:21–23). Sex outside the bonds of marriage is wrong. “*Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways,*” said the Lord. “*You must strictly obey all of my laws and regulations, and you must not do any of these detestable things...So be careful to obey my laws and do not practice any of these detestable activities. Do not defile yourself by doing any of them, for I, the Lord, am your God*” (Lev. 18:26–30 NLT). Indulgence was the way of the heathen!

“*Do not practice any of these detestable activities.*” Absolutely.

White lies, shady business conduct, and cheating are in the same category. God in His Word condemns them,³ and they are wrong. Absolutely.

Lust, greed, and uncontrolled passion are also wrong.⁴ Always. Absolutely.

Yet our world today propagates these ills. It propagates them by programs and movies on television,

video, and the internet. That is why we as professing Christians must be doubly careful in setting our standard so that we avoid anything God forbids. Holiness is not an option. It puts us in line with God’s absolutes. It teaches us how to make judgments

according to the standards set in the Word of God, even when our society supports a different philosophy. Holiness remains unchanged.

Holiness sets the standard, so when there is a conflict it is between the society and God, not the society and us. We stand strong when we stand with God. Absolutely.

Some things about our world today are different than in Jesus’ time. Life is faster paced. Sometimes it is more complicated. But God’s standard of holiness has not changed. It is the

same yesterday, today and forever.⁵ Set forth in the Bible, it must be the law of life for any who would want to belong. Do we have questions? Many of them are answered by the Word of God, and our conflicts are resolved by the absolutes of a never changing God who says, “*I am the Lord, I change not*” (Mal. 3:6).

God never says, “If it feels good, do it.” He says clearly, “Do this,” and “Don’t do that.” There is no reason for anyone to say, “If it feels good, do it.” Rather, he or she will say, “If it is in conformity with the word of God and God’s moral absolutes, you may do it. Otherwise, don’t! Absolutely.

It is as simple and straightforward as that. ♦



*Even in a
changing society,
God’s laws do not
change.*

¹ 2 Tim. 1:5

² 1 Cor. 13:4–7

³ Col. 3:9

⁴ Eph. 5:3–5; Gal. 5:21–23

⁵ Heb. 13:8

Fruit-gathering was a time of great joy in Israel. To the ancient people, the worth of the harvest was directly related to the fortune or misfortune of the people. The greater the harvest, the greater the nation's security against famine, the greater their wealth, and the greater their strength in siege or disaster.

We today may not depend on the harvest as directly as in former times, but the grower who plants an orchard has just one objective: fruit. What would motivate him through all the tiring days of planting, and cultivating if he could expect no harvest! He may admire the healthy young trees, their vigorous growth, their abundant blossoms. He may spend many hours watering, cultivating, pruning, spraying. But all has one objective: fruit. When the summer is spent and the work is done, there must come a harvest. Healthy branches, abundant leaves, sturdy trunks cannot make up for the lack of fruit. And to be prof-

itable these trees must produce fruit not for just one or two years but on and on, year after year after year.

Can't we see why the Lord compares His people to fruit-bearing trees? Why are we here? What is the purpose of our lives? It is all told in these words of Jesus: to produce fruit. *"My true disciples produce much fruit"* (John 15:8 NLT).

Just as the produce of the tree is its fruit, so the virtues we grow in our lives are our "fruit." God wants fruit. More emphatically, God *must have* fruit. Being a living tree is not enough. He wants fruit. Year after year may go by, but if we are not bearing fruit, we cannot expect any eternal place in God's garden.

What does it mean to bear good fruit?

It is a positive course of action in our lives. It is not merely refraining from doing wrong, it is actively doing right. To bear good fruit in

word, in action, in thought, in feeling, we must speak right, do right, think right, feel right in any and every situation as it arises.

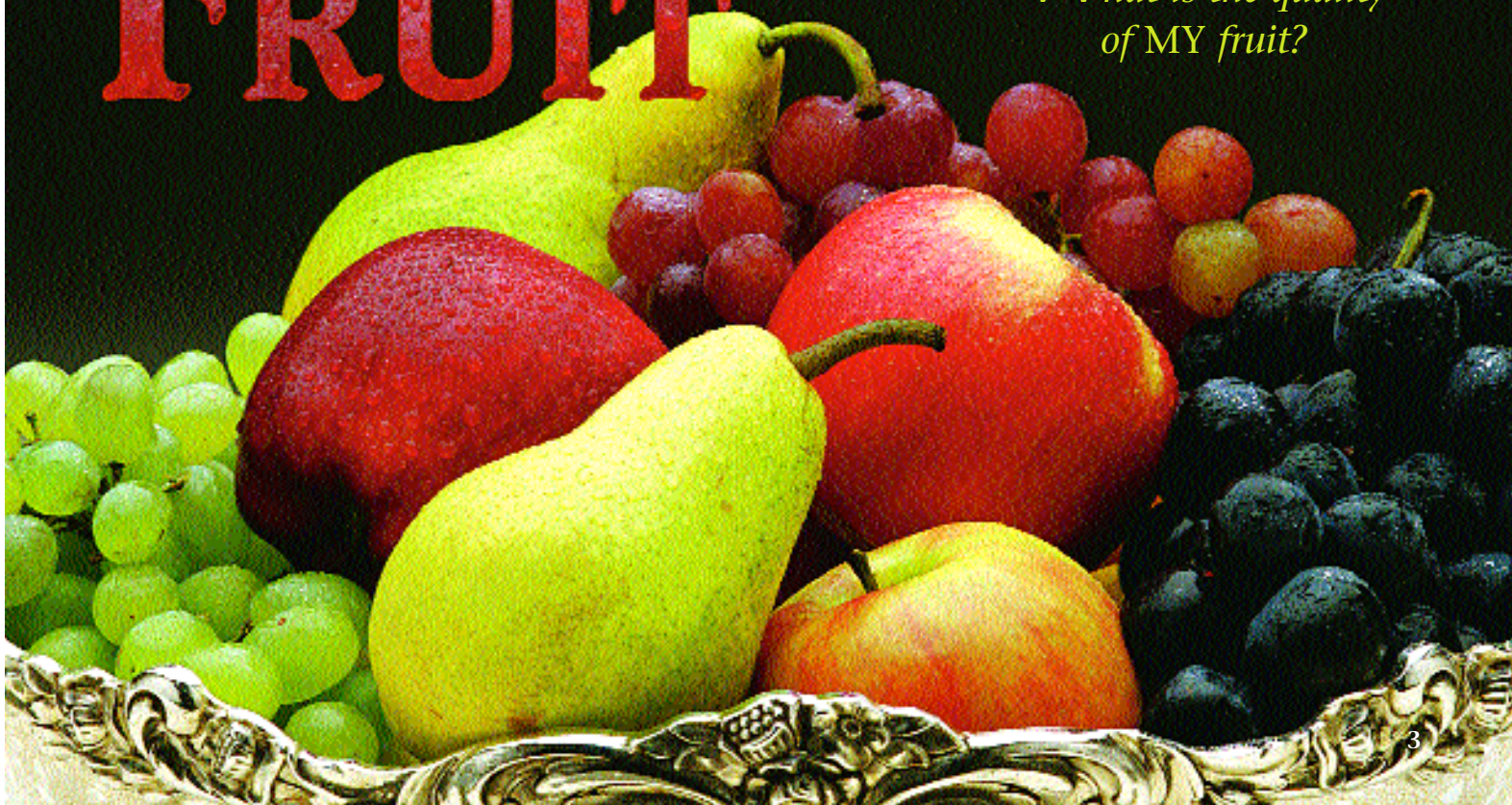
The Sacred Record speaks often of this fruit-bearing. The Psalmist compared the godly man to a tree, *"planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season"* (Ps. 1:3 NLT). The prophet Jeremiah makes a similar comparison but lets us know also that this fruit-bearing is not a short term project: this special tree shall never *"cease from yielding fruit"* (Jer. 17:8). Day in and day out, whatever the season, whatever the circumstances, this tree will bear fruit.

John the Baptist was keenly aware of the need for fruit-bearing. *"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance"* was the central note of his gospel (Matt. 3:8 NIV). And this was not a gentle request but a command upon which was suspended the entire weight of the law. For *"every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and*

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KNOWN BY OUR FRUIT

*What is the quality
of MY fruit?*



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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 (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

WE BELIEVE...

- ♦ in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- ♦ in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- ♦ in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to

heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

- ♦ in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- ♦ in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- ♦ in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- ♦ in ourselves as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

- ♦ in the promise of God, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

KNOWN BY OUR FRUIT

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thrown into the fire" (v. 10).

What was the fruit which John demanded? John saw life as God-given for accomplishing our God-ordained task. He disciplined his own life to this holy end. A stern realist about matters of right and wrong, he saw all fruits of life as either good or bad. There was no such thing as mediocre, half-good/half-bad fruit. In an effort to appear as good as possible, we might be inclined to judge our conduct as "partly" or largely justifiable, but to John it was either good fruit or bad.

Jesus' message was the same, requiring the sternest and most exacting standard in everyday life. Well He knew how we try to evade the real facts about ourselves. Well He knew how easy it is to condemn others and justify ourselves. And so He set the criteria for judgment in plain black and white—as plain as fruit on a tree. *"Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."* And then, in case there should be any doubt as to the need for fruit-bearing, He states even more clearly His standard of judgment: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 7:17–21 NIV).

The fruit reveals the tree. As our founder so aptly illustrated, if you wonder what kind of tree you have, you do not scrape the root, or peel off the bark, or eat the leaves—you simply look at the fruit. In the same way we can judge: by the type, quantity and quality of the fruit.

What was the lesson in the Parable of the Sower? Was the ground judged by the number of plants that germinated, or by the abundance of leaves that grew, or by the number of the blossoms, or even the depth of the root? All these may have been factors, but the final judgment of its worth was this only: its fruitfulness. *"And the seed that fell on the good ground is like those who hear God's*

teaching with good, honest hearts and obey it and patiently produce good fruit" (Luke 8:15 NCV). The seed that fell *"on good ground...grew and made a hundred times more"* (v. 8). The seed that fell by the wayside, or on the rock, or among thorns *germinated*, but it was condemned because it did not *bear fruit*.

And if the fruit be lacking, the entire effort is lost.

Jesus gave yet another lesson on fruit-bearing. *"...open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together"* (John 4:35–36 NIV). Much more than

the literal harvesting is meant, for what literal harvest was ever *"for eternal life"*? He was speaking of the spiritual fruit that must be grown and ripened for the eternal harvest.

The apostle Paul also exhorted his brethren to fruit-bearing. There are two kinds: fruit unto death, and fruit unto life. Every life yields one fruit or the other. These are Paul's words: *"What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life"* (Rom. 6:21–22 NIV).

Should we not be glad and anxious to bear fruit unto *"everlasting life"*!

Fruitfulness qualifies us for all the blessings and benefits, both present and future, of belonging to Christ. *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples"* (John 15:8 NIV).

What type of fruit is God seeking? What can we learn about the fruit which our lives should produce?

First, we need to realize that God does not ask what we cannot give. Yet we know at the same time that He asks our all—else how will He, or we, ever prove our worth? And God wants our

best. If we will not give it, He will find others who will.

Second, we must *continually* bear fruit. God does not place any age limit on fruit-bearing. We are responsible for bearing good fruit to the limit of our ability as long as we live. Natural trees may decrease in fruitfulness as they

If you wonder what kind of tree you have, you do not scrape the root, or peel off the bark, or eat the leaves—you simply look at the fruit.



increase in age; God's trees *"still bear fruit in old age,"* good fruit. Fruit-bearing is a very serious and individual matter. Each is personally responsible for the fruit of his life. Others can help us to plant and water, others can nourish and encourage us and tell us how to grow. But the task of using all this help in actually producing the perfect, fully ripe fruit is a task we ourselves must do.

We need to review carefully our own

OF VINES AND BRANCHES

Jesus illustrated the importance of fruit-bearing graphically in His last sermon on the night before He was crucified. His illustration was simple, yet how appropriate: a vine, branches, and fruit. Years earlier God's prophets had compared Israel to a vine, but the vine had proved unfaithful, "*an empty vine*" (Hos. 10:1), non-fruitbearing, fit only to be cut off. Perhaps to make a point of contrast, Jesus identified Himself as the "*true vine*." "*I am the true vine*," He said, "*and my Father is the gardener*" (John 15:1 NIV). Again He said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches*."

What is the duty of the vine? The vine is the support, the strength, the source of nourishment for the plant.

And what is the duty of the branches? Grape vines do not make suitable shade trees. And the branches are of no worth for lumber. They would not even make good kindling. The leaves likewise are worthless except as they give nourishment to the vine. The one task of the branches is to *bear fruit*.

Christ is the Vine; and each earnest disciple is a branch. These branches—you and I—must bear the fruit. This means that we show the love; we demonstrate the peace; we be the long-suffering ones; we be meek and humble, gentle, good, full of faith; we show by our lives what it means to be temperate, disciplined, self-controlled. The branch bears the fruit.

And if we do not bear fruit...? "*He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit*"—it is forcefully removed. And if we *bear fruit*? "*While every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful*" (John 15:2 NIV). When a branch bears fruit, there will be purging, pruning, tearing away the useless leaves and wild growth. But always there is but one objective: more fruit.

What if a branch should decide that it does not need the vine, that it can grow better on its own? These are the words of Jesus: "*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me*" (v 4). Unless we abide in the vine we cannot bear fruit; and unless we bear fruit we cannot abide in the vine.

God will not have His good vine eternally cluttered with worthless, non-fruitful branches. If we would abide in the vine *we must bear fruit*.

"*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing*" (v.5)—nothing, because unable to bear fruit. ♦

Christ is the
Vine; each
earnest disciple
is a branch.

fruitfulness. How much fruit am I bearing to life eternal? What is the quality of my fruit? Is it the very best I am able to produce? These are difficult questions to answer, and we should review our lives carefully, frequently, earnestly, in the fear of God. For someday we shall have to answer for what we have done, or failed to do. His command is unchanging: "*that you bear much fruit*."

It is not how much we read, or meditate, or talk about the glories of the coming Kingdom that will make us acceptable to God. It is not even

how much we resolve to do, or intend to do, but how much actual fruit unto holiness we are bearing—how patient, how kind, how forgiving, how self-controlled we are in the everyday situations of our life.

Fruits to Look For

We should call to mind Jesus' parable of the tree upon whose branches the owner did not find the expected crop of fruit. The parable is recorded in Luke 13:6-10 NLT. The owner's immediate response was, "*Cut it down. It's taking up space we can use for something else*." But the caretaker interceded: "*Let it alone another year yet. I will dig around it, fertilize it, water it, and maybe next year it will do better*." Haven't we more than once been this fig tree, in need of another chance to do what we should have done long ago? How grateful each one of us should be to the merciful God who gives us another, and another, and yet another opportunity to bear fruit. But let us not deceive ourselves—opportunity is not forever.

How is our fruitfulness, yours and mine, right here and now? As the Master Gardener surveys the fruit of our lives, what does He see?

The Apostle Paul mentions a number of outstanding fruits which grow on every Christian tree (Gal. 5:22-23). First, there is the fruit of **love**, love toward God and toward our brother in the faith. This love is not a sentimental feel-

ing but a genuine commitment to obey God along with true brotherly kindness and concern for our brother.

Rare indeed is the fruit of love that is always patient, always kind; that knows no jealousy, makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; never glad when others go wrong; love that is always gladdened by goodness; always slow to expose; always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient (1 Cor. 13:4-7 Moffatt).

How much true love do we show our brother? Have we the love to tell our brother of a fault in a true and kindly spirit of love, not critical and faultfinding but mutually helpful and upbuilding? Is our first concern always his best spiritual interests? Are we longsuffering with his weakness? This is another fruit we must bear. Do we try to help him overcome his weaknesses? Or do we assume an attitude of, *"If he's any good at all, he'll come along by himself. Why should I waste my concern on someone who won't do any better than that?"*

How is our crop of **peace**? How abundant is this fruit on our vine? When someone challenges our opinion, or our judgment, or our intentions, is our perfect peace undisturbed, save for the fact that our anxiety to see ourselves as we are is aroused? And do we still maintain a true feeling of brotherliness toward that person?

How about our fruit of **temperance**? Have we the inner stability, the self-control to keep ourselves always firmly "in hand," so that we are ready for any emergency with all our senses intact? How much does it take to upset us? It has been said that one sure measure of our inner stature is the size of the issue that it takes to disturb us. It is possible that by such a scale we sometimes find ourselves frightfully small!

The fruit of **patience** has several varieties, all of which we need to bear in abundance. First, we need patience with ourselves, to keep trying when we have failed. Then we need to extend this same patience to our brother—in supermeasure—when he has transgressed against us.

We also need patience with circumstances. Why should we waste our energy fighting against that which is

beyond our control—when we could be investing that same energy in building character?

Quality Fruit

Loyal and devoted Israelites did more than voice their gratitude to God in celebration and song. They demonstrated it in sacrifice and freewill offerings. The law required certain sacrifices, but above and beyond the requirements of the law were the completely voluntary sacrifices and offerings which the truly grateful could bring and offer to the God they loved. Then,

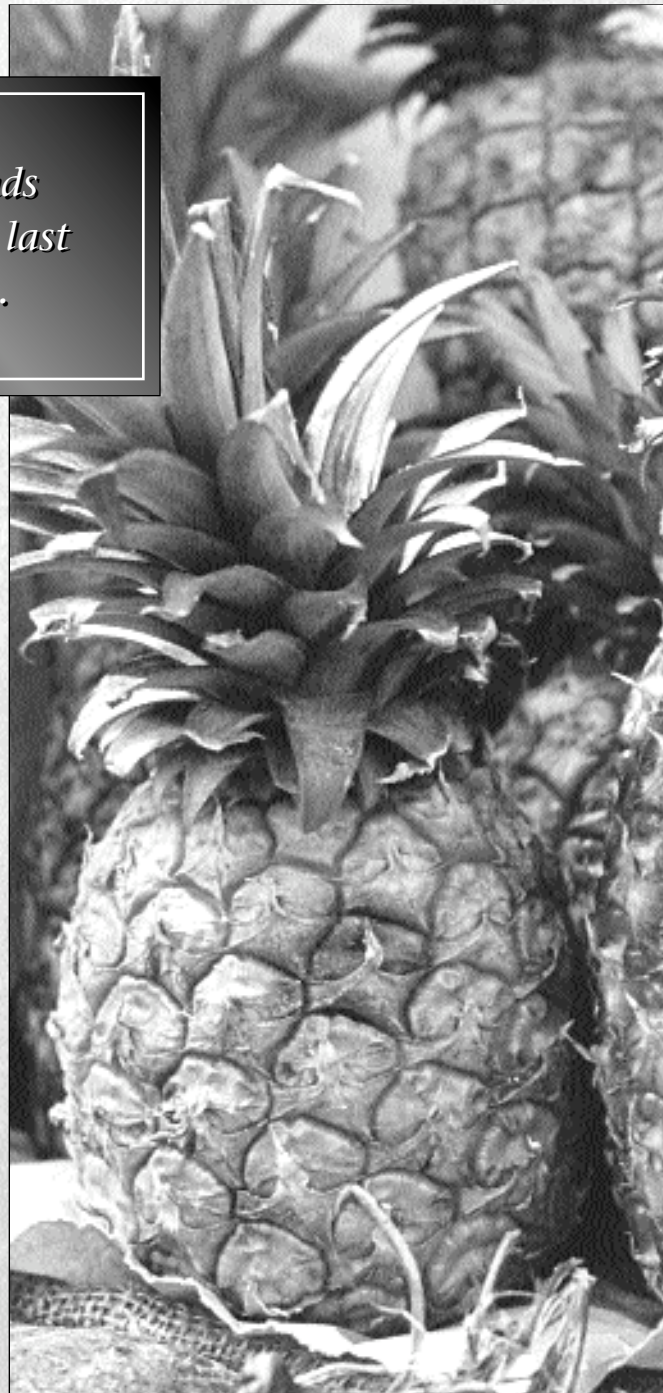
ers in Israel presents his offering, whether in payment of a vow or as a freewill offering, which is offered to the Lord as a burnt offering, to be accepted you shall offer a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep, or the goats. You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you" (Lev. 22:18-20 RSV). Why was this the rule? Because *anything less than the best dishonored God.* Anything less than the best was an expression of insult and base ingratitude. ♦

*God demands
the best—first, last
and always.*

as now, God valued the deed above the word. Gratitude expressed in sacrifice and service meant more to Him than mere words.

What about the quality of the voluntary offering? Might we assume that since the offerings were not required, the grateful person could offer just about anything and it would be accepted and appreciated? Since the offering was a "bonus" gift to God, might not anything look like gracious generosity and genuine love?

The answer is no. Anything offered to God, whether by law or voluntarily, had to be perfect. Just anything at all was *not* better than nothing. Poor animals were no more acceptable as thank offerings than as any other type of offering. God demands the best—first, last and always. The law was explicit: *"When any one of the house of Israel or of the sojourn-*



How Do I Get Closer to God?

by Gerald R. Payne

"How do I get closer to God? I try and pray and I attempt to read the Bible daily. But somehow it slips my mind."

There is no one right answer, but one thing that has worked for me for many years is to be sure to read and study my Bible daily. To do this I must set aside a certain time to do it and stick to it. I started doing this many years ago and now I cannot turn off the light for sleep unless I have first read something from my Bible or from a good religious source. It did not come automatically, but the more one does it, the more automatic it becomes. But just reading is not enough. You need also a plan of study to come to understand what the Bible teaches or much of it will be meaningless to you.

Something else to remember: don't blame someone else or something else for your failures. Blaming others is a sure course to failure. That is one reason why you find so many people calling themselves Christians but who do not know what they really believe or why. They will go through life as servants to sin, never learning how to face the Creator and communicate meaningfully to Him through prayer. The Divine promise is, *"You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart"* (Jer. 29:13).

To get closer to God, you must learn about Him and His plan for mankind and this earth. Be assured that there is no more important study in the whole world than the study of the Bible, because it is a communication from the God of heaven and our only source of reliable knowledge about future life.

♦ God's Way of Salvation

"I was looking at your website, and I wonder if you have read the book of Romans. Among other things, it says that by the works of the law 'no flesh' (human nature) will be saved, for all have come short, missed the mark of holy perfection God requires to be saved and live with Him for eternity. Please reread this for yourselves."

"Please ask God to reveal His truth to you, lest you fall short of salvation by not obeying God's way of salvation through Jesus His Son. For Jesus said of Himself, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.' The power to become the sons of God is growing to be conformed into Jesus' image after relationship with God is already established through faith by grace, not of works!"

You have presented a very good summary of what is widely believed to be "the way" of salvation outlined in the Bible. However, we find that if we accept that line of thought, we

have to close our eyes to the literally hundreds of passages of Scripture which place responsibility on us as individuals, and which indicate that our conduct is a condition of our salvation.

We are not trying to be different for the sake of making a difference, but only for the sake of understanding what the Bible really teaches, so that we can obtain the salvation which Christ is offering.

Permit me to comment on a few of your statements briefly. I realize this will not be a complete answer. For deeper understanding of this subject, please refer to our booklet, *The Atonement*, which I think you will find to be helpful on this subject.

When Paul said that *"by the works of the law"* no flesh would be saved, what law was he referring to? Read carefully the book of Romans, and you will find he is constantly comparing the ineffectiveness of the law of Moses with the superior law of Christ (the gospel, the law of faith).

If we accept the popular idea that we are powerless to help ourselves and must rely totally on Christ and His righteousness, what are we to understand from Romans 2, where Paul says that God will *"render to each one according to his deeds"*? He then is specific that God will give *"eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"* (Rom. 2:6-10). Doesn't this sound like God will dispense "eternal life" or "tribulation and anguish" according to what one does? He says a few verses later, *"for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified"* (Rom. 2:13). Those who will be justified must be *"doers of the law,"* not those who accept the righteousness of Christ to cover their sins.

In chapter 3, Paul begins to discuss the advantages of the Jew over the Gentile. He is very specific that the Jew had the oracles of God, the rite of circumcision, and special favor from God (Rom. 3:2-4). Paul says very definitely that none—Jew or Gentile—are righteous by nature, that we are not naturally good, but he is making the point especially that *"by the works of the law [Moses' law] no flesh could be saved."* We need Christ's law of righteousness, which we must believe and obey.

Jesus is *"the way, the truth, and the life"* and He taught meekness, He taught obedience, He taught purity of heart, He taught forgiveness, and He said that many would seek to enter in *"and shall not be able"* (Luke 13:24); that one must *"strive to enter in at the strait gate."* He taught that the narrow, difficult road leads to life, while the broad, easy road leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14).

He taught that *"Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My father in heaven"* (Matt. 7:21). He taught that our righteousness must surpass that of those who merely profess to belong to God (Matt. 5:20), or we will *"by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."*

How do we become "sons of God"? The apostle John said that everyone who has that hope *"purifies himself, just as He [Christ] is pure"* (1 John 3:3).

Jesus placed definite conditions on receiving salvation when He said, *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city"* (Rev. 22:14). Who will have the right to eat of the tree of life? Only those who *"do his commandments."* Earlier in Revelation, in writing to the seven churches, He emphasized that the blessings would go to *"he who overcomes."* This important teaching is repeated seven times in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3 (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

We truly believe that salvation is a gift, but that we must meet God's standard, we must qualify for it, before we can expect to receive it.

We realize this is not the popular thought, but if you study the Bible seriously and with an open mind, we believe you will come to the same conclusion.

♦ Can We "Earn" Salvation?

"I am wondering what you mean by this. You say, 'Through our Creator's generous provisions, everyone at birth receives a preliminary free package (mortal life). Anyone wanting more may seek it on His terms (Rom. 2:6-7). To do this they must relinquish their normal "rights" in this world and live by His law of life as revealed in the Bible (Rev. 22:12, 14). In exchange, He will give them an unending life that will grow continually more productive, more useful, more challenging and satisfying (Rev. 21:6; 3:21; 3:11, 14).

"Are you saying that we earn salvation by living by God's law?"

You are correct in saying that we cannot "earn" salvation. We could not earn everlasting life if God asked us to serve Him for five hundred years or five thousand years. Any service we can give is far from an equivalent value to what God is offering. If God asked us to sit in prison our whole life, or to live on bread and water, or any other physical requirement, in no way could the value of the sacrifice ever equal the value of what He is offering. His salvation would always be a gift out of all proportion to our service.

But He does have qualifications, minimum standards which He requires of those who will receive His salvation. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that salvation is free for the asking. The Apostle Paul compared it to running a race, where the prize is given to the winner. Only he noted the most important difference: That in this race for eternal life, everyone who runs can win. But he was well aware, too, that not everyone will want to run, and not everyone who runs will win. As for himself, he was giving his best effort, running full force, because he wanted to win. He said, *"I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to*

others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

We want to say only what we find taught in the Bible. When the Apostle Paul says in Rom. 2:6-7 that God will *"render to each one according to his deeds,"* that He will give *"eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality,"* we feel compelled to believe it. If He will *"render to each one according to his deeds,"* how can He give salvation on any other terms? Jesus Himself indicated that salvation would be at the end of the course, not at the beginning. He said, *"He who endures to the end shall be saved"* (Matt. 24:13). He could have said that He would give salvation to all who accept Christ, and then later reward according to one's doings, but that was not His statement.

Jesus described the way to life as a narrow road, traveled by very few; and the road to destruction as a broad thoroughfare having many travelers (Matt. 7:13-14). When His disciples asked Him, *"Lord, are there few that be¹ saved?"* He answered, *"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"* (Luke 13:23-24). Why would this be the case if each was given salvation when he was converted? Seven times Jesus said there will be *"weeping and gnashing of teeth"* when the unworthy are removed, while the select remain. *"There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out"* (Luke 13:28 NRSV; See also Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).

In writing to Timothy, Paul expressed the requirements associated with salvation. He said, *"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"* (2 Tim. 2:10). Note that he says, *"that they also may obtain the salvation"*—Paul was stating conditions, it was not yet a surety. And notice the *"if"* in his next statement: *"If we died with Him [Christ], we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him"* (verses 11-12). The opposite of this statement, in light of Scripture, is equally valid: If we do not die with Christ, we shall not live with Him. Paul wanted to die with Christ, i.e., die to his former life, his naturally self-gratifying instincts. He also wanted to suffer with Christ, to have the opportunity one day of reigning with Him. And he appealed to Timothy and his followers to do the same. It is the only way to belong to Christ. As he said a few verses further on, *"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'the Lord knows those who are his,' and 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity'"* (2 Tim. 2:19).

We cannot earn salvation, but neither is it free for all. Jesus' words are definite: *"he who endures to the end shall be saved"* (Matt. 24:13). Why? Because Jesus said it, and Jesus spoke only the words of His heavenly Father. ♦

¹ The phrase, *"that be saved"* would be more correctly rendered *"that are being saved."* The Greek word, *sozomenoi* is a participle, and "the Greek participle corresponds for the most part to the English participle, reflecting *"-ing"* or *"-ed"* being suffixed to the basic verb form. The participle can be used either like a verb or a noun, as in English, and thus is often termed a "verbal noun."—Pierce, L. Tense Voice Mood. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship. It is rendered *"being saved"* in the original Greek. (See the 26th edition of *Nestle Aland Greek New Testament with McReynolds English Interlinear*, and *The Complete Biblical Library*.)

"Keep yourself pure"

-St. Paul (1 Tim. 5:22)

IF YOU **USE THE INTERNET...**

Recommended Safe Policy

Today the Internet is a readily available source of information on just about any subject of interest. But, like any other means of communication, it has material unfit for viewing. As Christians we are committed to viewing only that which we believe God would approve. To this end we have attempted to define a recommended safe policy.

USING THE INTERNET

As a church we recommend a filter to all users (see below). But even the best of filters will not filter out all objectionable material. Therefore, a filter alone will not completely meet our needs, but is certainly a good tool to help us keep our Internet experience honorable in the sight of God.

RECOMMENDED SAFE POLICIES:

- ♦ Be accountable. You are responsible for what you view. If you feel you may be tempted to view unacceptable material, let someone else you trust be responsible for your password and accepting sites for your viewing.
- ♦ Search, don't surf. Learn to use the search engine you choose for your searches. Be specific when searching by using phrases or a combination of words. Advanced find techniques are recommended.
- ♦ Read each item carefully before continuing to that site. If in doubt, don't.
- ♦ Avoid any items you would be uncomfortable sharing with Jesus, your family and closest Christian friends.
- ♦ Install and activate a filter before using the Internet. Make sure all settings are set to filter out as much objectionable material as possible and still allow useful research. If certain sites are filtered out that you know have safe material, these sites can be added to your filter program as acceptable. Before adding sites for viewing it will be necessary to enter a password.
- ♦ If possible, use a filter service that is automatically updated, or keep your filter updated.

USING E-MAIL

Spam mail. If you begin to receive spam mail, you may want a filter for filtering unwanted email.

As a safeguard against receiving spam mail, you may

consider e-mail account names consisting of characters and numbers that cannot be easily guessed. Give this address only to those whom you can trust not to share with anyone else without your explicit permission.

- ♦ Be considerate of others. Never give another's e-mail address to anyone without their express permission.

Also, be aware that when you include another's e-mail address in a group mailing you are giving out that address to the others in the group. Be sure that they are aware of this fact and do not object. If in doubt, include any addresses of those who might object in the Bcc (Blind carbon copy) line so others on the list will not see it.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS:

- ♦ Discuss guidelines with your children.
- ♦ Establish rules for Internet use (browsing, e-mail, chat rooms). Both parent(s) and child should work together to establish these rules. The child will be more willing to abide by the rules if he/she takes an active part in "making the rules."
- ♦ Write up the agreement as a contract and have the child sign it, and keep it at the computer as a constant reminder to the child.
- ♦ The child should agree to report to you anything he/she sees on the Internet that makes him/her feel uncomfortable.
- ♦ Get involved with your child's Internet usage. Take an interest in his/her Internet activities.
- ♦ Position the monitor so anyone walking by can see what is on the screen.
- ♦ Avoid chat rooms unless there is a specific need and the content is known to be of high standards.

Among the filter programs available, you may want to consider one of these:

Afamily ... SurfClear ... Surf Watch ... Cyber Patrol ... Cybersitter ... NetGuardian ... Net Nanny ... Net Shepherd

For further information and listings of web filtering programs, visit:

<http://www.childwelfare.com/kids/webfilt.html>; or www.getwise.org; or www.safekids.com ♦



Know Your Bible?

ANIMALS FROM THE BIBLE

1. A _____ is a vain thing for safety.
2. The devil, as a roaring _____, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
3. *"Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the _____."*
4. A living _____ is better than a dead lion.
5. The little _____, that spoil the vines.
6. I have bought five yoke of _____.
7. The _____ also shall dwell with the lamb.
8. Blind guides strain at a gnat, and swallow a _____.
9. Absalom rode upon a _____.
10. Every beast of the forest is mine, and the _____ upon a thousand hills.
11. The _____ of the tribe of Judah will open (bring to pass) what has been promised (sealed).

MIRACLES

1. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong wind from the _____ so that the Israelites could cross over.
2. When Moses cast a tree into the water at Marah, the _____.
3. According to the prophet Elijah, the widow's cruse was kept miraculously full of _____ and the barrel of _____ wasted not.
4. Elijah restored the widow's son to life when he _____.
5. Jesus healed the centurion's _____ of _____.
6. When Jesus healed the paralytic and forgave his sins, the scribes accused Him of _____.
7. The two blind men that had their sight restored were admonished by Jesus to _____.
8. Jesus fed the multitude of over 5000 with _____.
9. When Jesus walked on the sea, _____ asked to come to Him on the water.

10. When Jesus healed the 10 lepers, only _____ returned to thank Him.
11. When the two blind men cried out to Jesus for mercy, the crowd _____.
12. In Mark, before Jesus calmed the storm, his disciples _____.
13. Lazarus had been dead _____ days before Jesus raised him.
14. Tabitha (Dorcas) was raised from the dead by _____.
15. The Maltese decided that Paul was a god when he survived despite being _____.

PROPHETS

1. What prophet prophesied to the city of Nineveh?
2. Who was the great prophet of David's time?
3. What prophet foretold the time when *"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions"*?
4. What prophet had the vision of the gold lampstand and the 2 olive trees?
5. What prophet is repeatedly called *"son of man"* in his own book?
6. What prophet rendered a spring healthful by putting salt into it?
7. Who said, *"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down"*?
8. What prophet was bidden to lie on his left side 390 days and on his right side 40 days, each day for a year of his nation's iniquity?
9. What prophet saw the vision of a stone cut out of the mountain without hands?
10. What prophet was *"a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit"*?
11. What prophet was beaten and put in the stocks, and uttered a prophecy against the governor who put him there?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12

How Salty Are You?

"Ye are the salt of the earth." —Matt. 5:13

If you were to evaporate a ton of water from the Pacific Ocean, someone has calculated that you would get approximately 79 pounds of salt. A ton of Atlantic water would yield 81 pounds. From the Dead Sea the same amount of water would yield 500 pounds. As these statistics demonstrate the earth's bodies of water vary greatly in their degree of saltiness.

So do Christians.

Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth. But we all have different levels of salt content and that is something within our control.

How salty are you?

Let's look at a few Scripture references to see what it means to be salty.

Salt indicates purity in speech, good flavor, acceptable, appealing. *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt"* (Col. 4:6).

Salt signifies keeping a promise. *"I am giving you all these holy offerings that the people of Israel bring to the Lord. They are for you and your sons and daughters, to be eaten as your regular share. This is an unbreakable*

covenant between the Lord and you and your descendants" (Num. 18:19 NLT).

Salt enhances flavor. *"People complain when there is no salt in their food. And how tasteless is the uncooked white of an egg!"* (Job 6:6 NLT).

Salt is a symbol of goodness. *"Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other."* (Mark 9:50 NLT).

Check your salt content. Are you the kind of person others like to be around? Is your conversation pure, upbuilding, stimulating? Do you keep your promises? Are you characterized by goodness? The unbelieving world is watching and listening. What do they see and hear? How salty are you? Perhaps you need to add more salt today.

Look to God's Word for guidance. Study Jesus' pattern of life. As you follow Christ's example, others will see what it means to be seasoned with salt and some will want to taste for themselves. ♦



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 11

ANIMALS FROM THE BIBLE

1. horse (Ps. 33:17)
2. lion (1 Pet. 5:8)
3. Lamb (Rev. 19:9)
4. dog (Eccl. 9:4)
5. foxes (S. of Sol. 2:15)
6. oxen (Luke 14:19)
7. wolf (Isa. 11:6)
8. camel (Matt. 23:24)
9. mule (2 Sam. 18:9)
10. cattle (Ps. 50:10)
11. Lion (Rev. 5:5)

MIRACLES

1. east (Ex. 14:21–22)
2. bitter water became sweet (Ex. 15:23–25)
3. oil, meal (1 Kings 17:10–16)
4. stretched himself out on the child three times (1 Kings 17:17–24)

5. servant, paralysis (Matt. 8:5–10)
6. blasphemy (Matt. 9:1–7)
7. See that no man know it (Matt. 9:27–30)
8. 5 loaves and 2 fishes (Matt. 14:15–21)
9. Peter (Matt. 14:26–29)
10. one (Luke 17:11–19)
11. rebuked them (Matt. 20:29–34)
12. had to awaken Him from sleep (Mark 4:35–41)
13. Four (John 11:38–44)
14. Peter (Acts 9:36–41)
15. bitten by a viper (Acts 28:1–6)

PROPHETS

1. Jonah (Jonah 1:1–2)
2. Nathan (2 Sam. 7:1–5)
3. Joel (Joel 2:28)

4. Zechariah (Zech. 4:1–3)
5. Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1,3, 6, 8, etc.)
6. Elisha (2 Kings 2:19–22)
7. Nehemiah (Neh. 6:3)
8. Ezekiel (Ezek. 4:4–8)
9. Daniel (Dan. 2:35, 45)
10. Amos (Amos 7:14)
11. Jeremiah (Jer. 20:1–6)

Errata

The article on page 10 of the August, 2002 issue of the *Megiddo Message* should have been credited to author Jan Hansen. We apologize for the error.



A Tribute

TO THE FOUNDER OF THE MEGIDDO CHURCH

Rev. L. T. Nichols • 1844 –1912

by RUSSELL HAMBY

Though the Rev. L. T. Nichols was well before my time, I bask in the legacy of his leadership in establishing the Megiddo Church. I became acquainted with the Megiddo Church in the late 1970's, when I answered an ad offering a free booklet titled, "The Coming Of Elijah and Jesus."

This man, L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Church, is as visible today as he was yesterday in the literature that is sent all over the world, proclaiming the same message of salvation taught by Jesus and His Apostles: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

Because Brother Nichols lived well before my time, what I know about this devoted Christian is from tributes I've heard spoken about him by siblings of Church members from his past as well as from what I have read about him. But he is as real to me as if I had known the man in person as he searched for Bible truths and led his little flock of followers toward the great goal of eternal life, which still attracts us today.

If we were to turn to the eulogies of men and women today, we could find person after person who has been blessed by his effective, godly ministry. But I prefer to apply the Lord's evaluation in Malachi. Though written of another messenger of another era, the words are fitting to our founder:

"The purpose of my covenant with the Levites was to bring life and peace, and this is what I gave them. This called for reverence from them, and they greatly revered me and stood in awe of my name. They passed on to the people all the truth they received from me. They did not lie or cheat; they walked with me, living good and righteous lives, and they turned many from lives of sin. The priests' lips should guard knowledge, and people should go to them for instruction, for the priests are the messengers of the Lord Almighty" (Malachi 2:5-7).

Brother Nichols' Christian witness was characterized by patience, love, sacrifice, dedication, concern, discipline, faithfulness, and unselfishness.

Like **Abraham**, he went where he was called, and was faithful in all things.

Like **Moses**, he led the people of God from doubts and fears to confidence in the face of difficulties.

Like **Jonathan**, he met many a discouraged brother and cheered them by giving them strength and wisdom from God.

Like **David**, he sang the Church to victory and shouted on the battlefield of triumph.

Like **Isaiah**, he constantly pointed the Church to brighter days and better things God has promised for the future.

Like **Daniel**, he was resolute and true even in the face of serious opposition.

Like **John the Baptist**, he preached the gospel of repentance; he also delighted in defending the Bible.

Like **John**, he believed with all his being that Jesus was the Son of God.

Like **Peter**, he honored Christ by being His willing instrument.

Like **Paul**, he rejoiced that Jesus died and rose from the tomb, and invited others to copy him as he copied Christ's

noble example of purity and holiness. In this way he pointed others to the promise-keeping of God; and he did his best to let the world know this blessed truth with pen and sermon. He pleaded for the Church to send the gospel to all. Like Jesus, whom he daily followed, "he went about doing good."

Like **Enoch**, he "walked with God."

Brother Nichols was a consecrated Christian and minister of the Word, true to his God, his Church, his family, and his fellowmen. The world is richer because he lived, served, and died in the faith. And someday soon, he will live again with all the servants of God from ages past. Then you and I may have the opportunity of meeting in person the one who inspired us to follow Christ, and see him receive his crown of life!

Servant of God, well done.

Rest from thy loved employ;

The battle fought, the victory won,

Enter thy Master's joy.

Servant of God, well done.

Thy glorious warfare past;

The battle's fought, the race is won,

Thou shalt be crowned at last.

—Author Unknown ♦

Editor's Note:

Brother Nichols lived during a time when, to many people, to disagree was to invite insult and even open attack. Even in free America, people often were hotly opposed to differing religious ideas. The result: persecution.

Today the general attitude has turned to the opposite extreme, where a modern society is non-discriminating, and almost any idea, however inane or insane, must be somehow viewed as on a par with one's own beliefs. This new attitude of tolerance is really the outright enemy of faith. But isn't it fulfilling the prophecy of our Lord: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).



Just one hundred years ago the steamship *Megiddo* was plying the waters of the Mississippi. Its purpose: a home for the members and a new missionary effort.

October being the month of our founder's birth, we are using a major portion of this issue to recall his great-

"IN GOD WE TRUST"
"UNITED WE STAND"

est missionary venture, project "*Megiddo*," which traversed the Mississippi and its tributaries for more than two years (November 1901–January 1904). The entire project was conceived, designed, and financed by "Captain" Nichols, and the vessel was constructed under his direct supervision. To admirers who stood by, the *Megiddo* looked like great adventure. But those on the inside knew it as everyday serious—hazardous—business. Kenneth Flowerday (pastor of the *Megiddo* Church, 1958–1985), was an on-the-scene observer as an active lad of eleven and twelve years of age, and he recalled witnessing some stressful times, as when the boat was trapped in ice at the sudden onset of winter; or when it became marooned on a sandbar by the "skill" of an incompetent (hired) pilot. There was also the continual concern of finding enough employment to sup-

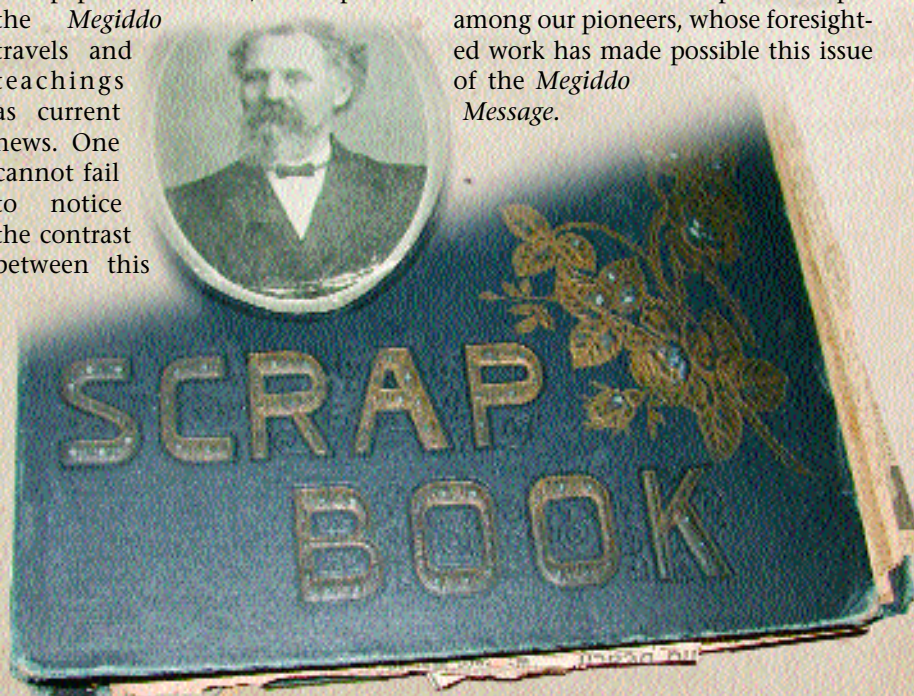
port the ninety persons on board while the boat docked briefly at various cities along the river. Was the venture a success? Yes! Not in terms of the missionary effort, for no new members were added during this time. And financially it was a total loss—the vessel sank only months after being sold, and the purchaser went bankrupt. Its success lay in the fact that it welded a diverse group of believers into a solid fellowship of committed ones—committed to living the Christ-life every day of the week. At the same time, it made a way to spread the Gospel.

The following articles are extracted from accounts published by daily newspapers at the time, who reported the *Megiddo* travels and teachings as current news. One cannot fail to notice the contrast between this

type of material and the level of much that news editors select to fill their papers today.

You will notice that the group is identified chiefly as "Christian Brethren." The name "*Megiddo*" was just then beginning to be associated with the group, as the name the founder had appropriately chosen for the steamship. "*Megiddo*" means, literally, "place of troops, band of soldiers"—which they were, in a spiritual sense, as they attacked long-loved strongholds of error and evil.

For all of the material in this section we are indebted to numerous unnamed writers and publishers, and to the careful scrapbook-keeper among our pioneers, whose foresighted work has made possible this issue of the *Megiddo* Message.



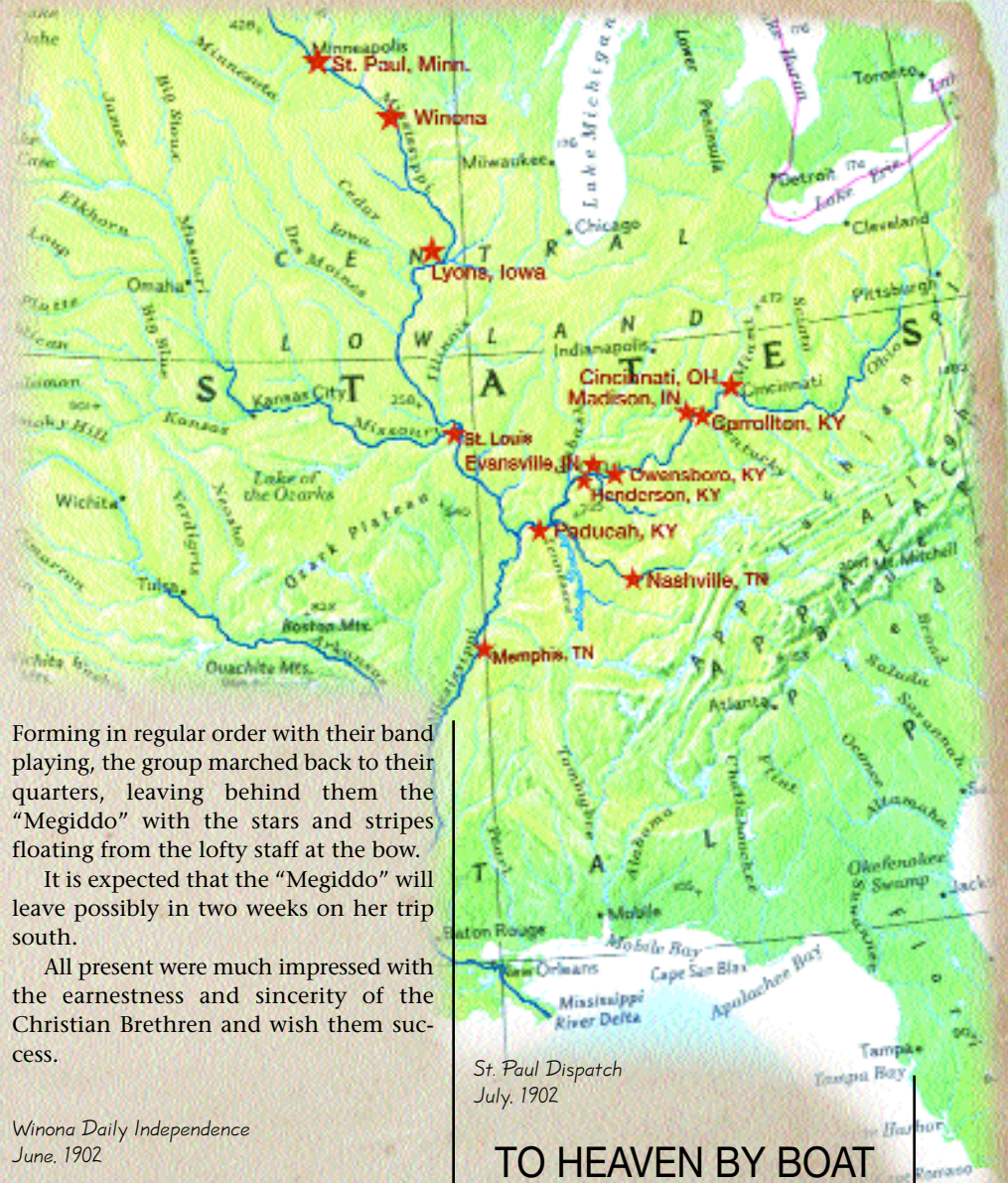
THE BIG STEAMER PUT AFLOAT WITH RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES YESTERDAY

REV. L. T. NICHOLS
ADDRESSES THE CROWD

YESTERDAY afternoon at the Godfrey Marine Ways was witnessed a strange and unusual sight, attendant upon the launching of the mission boat "Megiddo," which for several months has been under construction. Long before the time arrived for the launching, crowds began to assemble.

Several hundred people of all classes, including the pastors of many of the churches, were included. It was an ideal October day. About 4:45, music was heard; and headed by the Rev. L. T. Nichols and led by a brass band of fifteen pieces, seven men and eight women, a large number of the Christian Brethren marched on to the levee and alternately played and sang a missionary hymn. A brief prayer followed, and then "Nearer My God to Thee" was beautifully rendered by the band and the members of the organization. Then after a brief prayer, Rev. L. T. Nichols delivered an address upon the proposed work of the Christian Brethren. He said in part that the chief aim of the organization would be the turning of men and women from the way of iniquity to higher, nobler Christian lives. He said they had started out, Bible in hand, to do good and to explain and make clearer to all its Divine truths, as far as it lay in their power so to do. He paused in his remarks to say, "Praise the Lord!" as the last stay was knocked away and the great steamer glided smoothly down the ways and out upon the water.

Rev. Nichols said that although he had been preaching a lifetime, he had never yet received \$1 as salary, that they had not engaged in this work with any hope of financial gain or from any mercenary motive, but only with a resolve to do good. He spoke of their plans to head south, and thanking the hearers for their attention he closed his remarks. The hymn "There's Sunshine in My Soul Today" was rendered by the band and members. Then in the gathering twilight the gray haired leader, after a brief prayer, pronounced a heartfelt benediction upon the silent crowd before him.



Forming in regular order with their band playing, the group marched back to their quarters, leaving behind them the "Megiddo" with the stars and stripes floating from the lofty staff at the bow.

It is expected that the "Megiddo" will leave possibly in two weeks on her trip south.

All present were much impressed with the earnestness and sincerity of the Christian Brethren and wish them success.

Winona Daily Independence
June, 1902

"MEGIDDO" ARRIVES

BIG STEAMER OF CHRISTIAN
BRETHREN IS HERE

THE big steamer "Megiddo," of which so much has been said during the past year, arrived in the city this morning. The boat belongs to a Christian organization known as the "Christian Brethren." It was built in Lyons, Iowa, last fall leaving for Memphis on November 16. The boat is 205 feet long and forty feet wide, and cost over \$25,000.

It has fifty-two cabins, 9 by 12 feet in size with 8-foot ceilings. It has also a large chapel and dining room and kitchen. There are at present thirty-three families living on the boat, in all making over ninety people.

It is proposed to hold religious services here for about three weeks, provided a suitable place can be found where their large tent can be pitched.

St. Paul Dispatch
July, 1902

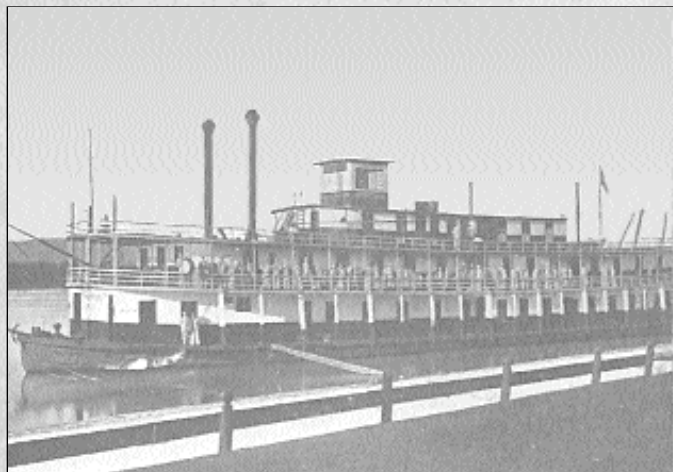
TO HEAVEN BY BOAT

EVANGELIST NICHOLS AND FOLLOWERS
TAKE UNIQUE WAY OF SPREADING
THE GOSPEL

ENEMIES of Satan at various times have used horsepower, steam cars and electricity in putting the king of evil to flight, but it has remained for Mr. L. T. Nichols to attack him with a navy. That he has done so has been given tangible proof by the appearance in the river opposite Third Street of a steamboat bearing on its pilot house the legend, "Megiddo Mission Ship."

One of the faithful will explain it by saying that it is a Hebrew word meaning "God is in this place with a body of troops." Mr. Nichols selected it because he thought it appropriate. Before the visitor is done looking over the boat, he must acknowledge that it is not inappropriate.

It is a craft of goodly size—205 feet
continued on page 17



—By a Staff Photographer (from newspaper printed 1901)

Brother Nichols' Room

THE MISSION SHIP MEGIDDO

The picture in the upper left corner shows the ship* as it was launched. Beside it is the general assembly room on the vessel. The picture in the lower left corner shows the dining room, and the lower right corner is one of the state rooms.

MISSION SHIP MEGIDDO

A 3 deck steamer, 40 ft. wide x 205 ft. long

EQUIPMENT:

- ◆ 2 – 250 HP engines, steam heated
- ◆ 2 dining rooms
- ◆ 1 kitchen 16 x 36 ft, with large woodburning stove and brick oven, where 30 women prepared meals for their families
- ◆ 50 – 9 x 12 staterooms
- ◆ Flour mill
- ◆ Blacksmith shop
- ◆ Shoemaker shop
- ◆ Machine shop (for making articles to sell)
- ◆ Carpenter shop (for making articles to sell)
- ◆ Schoolroom
- ◆ Large chapel on second deck, equipped with 2 organs, piano, and bass viol.
- ◆ Barge towed alongside carried band wagon, and relied on generosity of friends to furnish a team.

When the boat docked, the men on board would find work as tailors, clerks, paper hangers, painters, sign painters, masons, machinists, carpenters, brick layers, teamsters, landscape gardeners, plasterers.

Women did plain and fancy needlework for sale.

ORIGIN OF THE BAND

A few weeks before launching Mr. Nichols purchased a number of instruments and asked for volunteers to play them. Having only one person who had been instructed in music (piano), he proceeded to teach them the rudiments of music from a blackboard chart. This accomplished, he wrote the music to "Home Sweet Home" on the blackboard, and served notice that they must play it before the lesson was ended. Dawn was breaking when they left. This was the beginning of the Megiddo Band.

*The ship Megiddo had to be launched before it was completed, due to the advancing cold weather. Their plan was to be in warmer, southern waters by winter. Notice the Megiddo's appearance was very different when completed (see photo on page 14).

overall, and of beam 40 feet eight inches. The boat has three decks and fifty-four staterooms. Two engines of 250 horsepower propel it on its trips. It is fitted with sanitary plumbing, lighted by acetylene gas and fitted in every way for ease and comfort. Even a touch of luxury is seen here and there.

From the outside, its appearance is imposing. Its red and white sides, its black pretentious smokestacks, its lettered pilot house, all testify to its importance.

The genesis of the boat is highly interesting. For forty-four years Mr. Nichols had been trying to convince his fellow beings that the Bible contained no fairy tales, no contradictions, no impossibilities. Like many others, he found it slow work. The world was indifferent. But one of the great troubles was in getting a hearing from a sufficient number of persons. Mr. Nichols decided that he must get his people together by some means.

Of Inventive Turn

Being of an inventive turn of mind, he hit upon this boat, and no sooner had he hit upon it than it was an accomplished fact. The boat was launched before it was hardly finished, the fitting up being done at St. Louis and Memphis.

This fitting was no light task. Each room was made like a home in miniature. It was carpeted. Lace curtains were put upon the windows. Beds, chairs, sofas, bookcases, pictures were put in place and the home was complete.

Only thin partitions separate these little homes, yet each is perfectly distinct and private. The furniture in each is different, the carpets, the hangings, the pictures. There is no more sameness than in the residences on Summit Avenue, except in the architecture.

Service Every Evening

In the center of the boat on the main deck is an assembly room, running quite across, bright, airy and cheerful. It is capable of seating 120 persons. In this room services are held every evening. There are chairs for an orchestra, there is a piano, and there are cabinet organs. It is a musical community with a band of eighteen members and its own orchestra.

On the walls are mottoes and pictures dealing with biblical times.

On the upper deck is the washroom with its long row of stationary tubs and its numerous neat laundry utensils. On the lower deck forward is the boiler

room. There are a few staterooms, then the community dining room with its immaculate linen and its scriptural mottoes. A separate table is provided for each family. Each has a cupboard. A section of the refrigerator is assigned to each. Each family has just what it pleases and eats when it pleases, within certain limits. All of its individuality is retained, but it must constantly keep up its society behavior.

Thirty Women Cook Together

Just beyond is the kitchen. A great brick range stretches away for twenty feet or more. Kitchen implements cover the walls. There is a flour bin and there are sections of drawers for each family. Each housewife has the privileges of the kitchen to cook her meals.

At the stern of the boat is the engine room and workshop. There is a machine shop and lathe. It is really a manufacturing plant where the mechanics of the community make windmills, acetylene lighting plants and other articles invented by Mr. Nichols. Close by is a carpenter shop.

In connection with the machine shop is a gristmill for grinding whole wheat; also the gas plant and the pumping engine.

This is the vessel they have prepared for a naval attack upon Satan.

"Our mission is trying to bring about a better understanding of the Scriptures," said the woman lieutenant of the ship, a cheerful, serene-faced matron of middle age. She still retains her youthful beauty, and there is still a glitter in her brown eyes. "We feel that if we are to get much out of the Bible we must give it diligent application, just as we give a science or any other field of knowledge.

"It is one of our doctrines that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. We believe in the infallibility of the Bible, and we feel that unless this idea is restored to its full strength the Bible will be studied less and the truth will be less known.

They Put Away Wrath

"The Bible teaches us to put away wrath and live in harmony. We have put the precept into practice in our community. It is commonly thought that one roof is too small to cover more than one family peaceably. Thirty women work here in the same kitchen, and there is always peace. We have seventeen children on board, and no quarreling, or bickering or

angry words are ever heard.

"We expect the second coming of Christ. We know not the day nor the hour, but we do know the season. Those who are looking for Him can tell when the time is at hand, although not the date. I expect this earth to become part of heaven, inhabited by a race of immortals.

"We do not believe in hell-fire, where souls frizzle and fry and burn and roast for all eternity. That is incompatible with



Maggie Milliken (left) and Maud Hembree (right) lived together as sisters in Christ for twenty-three years, Maud looking after the needs of Maggie, who was blind. Both were on the *Megiddo* and were lifelong followers of Mr. Nichols.

the idea of destruction, which the Bible promises for the wicked.

"There is no personal devil, either, according to our belief. Devil means an opposer, an adversary. It is merely evil opposed to good.

"There are reasonable explanations in the Scriptures, and it is false interpretations that have driven so many away from the truth. We want to bring people back to the Scriptures. We are Christian Brethren," said she (Mrs. Hembree) when asked to what denomination the community belonged. "No denomination can claim us. We work in harmony with all and try to have them work in harmony with us."

Mr. Nichols is a bearded man with a strong face. Whether his naval attack on the evil one will be successful in the end, or whether it will pave the way for the expected millennium, he has succeeded in establishing a community apparently as contented and happy as it is unique. Like Dowie, he is an organizer and man of affairs, as well as a preacher of the Gospel.

Nashville, Tennessee
June, 1903

TOBACCO IS A BAR

TO SALVATION SAYS REV. L. T. NICHOLS

PREACHES TO A GOOD CROWD ON THE
PUBLIC SQUARE

The members of the Megiddo Mission Band conducted service on the Public Square Sunday. Rev. Nichols said he was pleased to be able to direct the attention of his hearers to the noble and grand things of the future. If there was offered

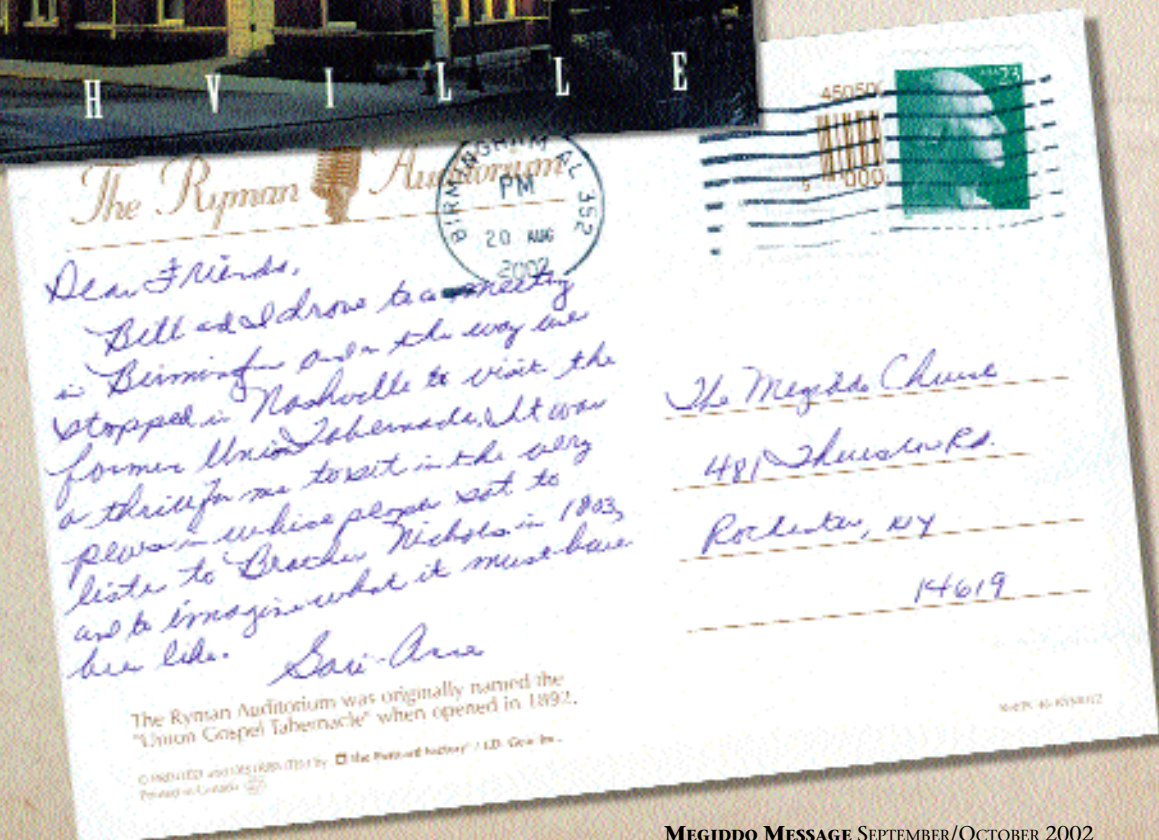
to those present the opportunity of acquiring the best and finest home in Nashville to be absolutely their own, how eager each individual would be to know the conditions on which it would be gained; but God offered an eternal home, full of pleasures forevermore, where no sickness or pain could ever enter. But this home would only be given on conditions and he would like to ask each one what preparation he was making to gain this eternal home?

"Paul declares to us," said the speaker, "that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that we may receive the things done in the body according to

what we have done, whether it be good or bad. But nowadays people are too busy to interest themselves in what God has said and that is one reason why true religion is on the decline. People are so wrapped up in their business, in making money, that they have no time left to read their Bibles. Take a tour round the business establishments of Nashville tomorrow, and see how many business men would be willing to stop half an hour and talk on Bible matters. A mad rush for the almighty dollar completely carries them away. I don't wonder the Wise Man said, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches, lest I be poor and steal.'

"The Bible says, 'Love not the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' If you have this love of the world, and the world's ways, you can never be saved. Look at the multitude of professing Christians loving the world's ways—smoking their cigars and cigarettes and using tobacco. Now the Bible commands us to put away all filthiness of the flesh, and if the use of tobacco is not a filthy habit, pray tell me what is?"

"A man who uses tobacco will never be saved. For we are commanded whether we eat or drink, to do all we do to the glory of God, and unless we do we cannot serve God right. True religion lets all tobacco alone."



DIVINE HEALING DISCUSSED

INTERESTING SERMON BY ELDER NICHOLS
IN GOSPEL TABERNACLE

THE Mission people again held forth at the Tabernacle Sunday afternoon. In contrast to the majority of religious people, they do not believe that faith comes by direct influence of the Holy Spirit, but that God sent holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit in the person of Jesus, Peter, Paul, James and Jude; that faith might come by hearing their words. The Mission preacher claimed it to be a false theory that we have light within to guide us in the way. The only light to guide and rule, according to his views of the Bible, is the Word of God, which, understood, believed and obeyed, causes the recipients to become children of light.

They deny that the Bible teaches that men and women are changed by the influence of the Holy Spirit in a moment of time from sinners to saints, but teach that Bible conversion is a work of time. Men and women must grow into a holy temple in the Lord, if they ever attain that state, not jump into it.

They claim that the Bible makes a difference between the Spirit of Truth which Jesus promised should abide forever, and the Holy Spirit or gifts of the Spirit possessed by the apostles and holy men through whom the Almighty revealed His will to man. Paul foretold that they should cease; in this time abides only the former, the Spirit of Truth, the faith, hope and charity. Jesus testified that His words were spirit and life. The Mission preacher handles the oft-quoted text, that men and women could do greater works than Jesus did, claiming that that wonderful day had not yet come; that it was not foretold of a Dowie or any of the so-called divine healers of this day. If it had been, then God had made a great mistake, for not one among them could restore the sight of the blind, raise the dead, or heal the sick of the world. But when Jesus returns to earth, claimed the preacher, the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the sick of the world will be cured. Then God shall wipe away tears from all faces, and there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow or death, but everlasting joy shall be the portion of all the faithful believers.

ELDER NICHOLS AND THE MEGIDDOITES ARE HERE

THE Buffaloes [baseball team] did not get all the crowd last night. Anyway, sufficient were left in town to completely fill the Megiddo gospel tent. The music and singing are a very attractive feature of their services; the instruments of the band shine in the light of the acetylene gas with which the large tent is illuminated, and present a delightfully clean appearance, in marked contrast to so many ragtime bands we hear. The whole group of Megiddoites seem so well conducted, so orderly, so bent on the avowed object of their work, that it is quite an event to have such an organization among us.

As a preacher, Elder Nichols is great. Nothing is involved with him; he goes right to the heart of the matter and the incomprehensible subtleties of the theologians are completely knocked out. On Sunday night the blood of Jesus was talked of in a way which, if true, relieves

the subject of much of the mystery which has always surrounded it to us.

Christ, according to the Mission preacher, was no "sacrifice" in the way commonly understood. He did not die to "appease the wrath of God" at all. God never had any wrath which such a substitution could possibly have appeased. Christ died to complete His own obedience as an example of perfect submission—and thus being perfected, became fit to be the author of eternal salvation to all who would do the same.

Whatever view we may take of this explanation, and Rev. Mr. Nichols holds himself prepared to answer any and every objection—in fact, he courts investigation from any quarter—it certainly suggests itself as more reasonable and humane than the old blood-and-knife theory. Like the late Lord Beaconsfield said (and he was a man of very acute mind), "that that religion which demanded Jesus Christ for a victim, ought to make Judas Iscariot its chief saint."

Henderson, Kentucky
June, 1903

"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES"

HE HAS NO FAITH IN CONVERSIONS
BROUGHT ON BY EXCITEMENT
AND FANATICISM

HE SAYS, "READ THE BIBLE"

THE Rev. L. T. Nichols, of the Megiddo Mission, spoke to a large gathering last night. His subject was "Coming to Jesus." He very much astonished some of his hearers by telling them that the idea of a penitent bench and having people profess to come to Jesus in the midst of the excitement of a religious revival, all in a minute, was an entire delusion, altogether contrary to what the Bible taught. The preacher said he did not want to deceive anyone and that they must pay no attention to him as a man, for he would know no more than anyone else, but when he read what Jesus, Paul, John and the rest of those inspired of God said, notice should be taken, for Christ commanded, "Search the Scriptures."

"Now how are men converted? Let God answer the question. In Psalm 19 He declares unto us: 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' That, then, is the converting power. Not excitement

in a religious revival, but searching the Scriptures—the law of the Lord. Did not Jesus command His disciples to go forth into all the world teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded? That was the very first thing to teach people, and that is just what people expect to do for everything else, for every profession. They expect to study and to learn. Whoever heard of anyone expecting to teach school, taking up a grammar book and saying, 'Oh, I can't bother to learn all about verbs and nouns and sentences simple and compound.' No, they go right to work a little at a time until they have mastered the entire book.

"But to gain an endless home in glory people think of doing nothing, no study, no application is necessary. Too much trouble. Like the boy who wished to be good and told his mother so, and asked what he should do. He was told to say his prayers every night. The first night he did it, but it was up in Minnesota in winter time and it was cold, and the boy didn't like staying out in the cold to say his prayers. So the next day he wrote his prayer on a piece of paper and when bedtime came, he popped out his piece of paper and said, 'Lord, here's my prayer,' and jumped into bed. Too much trouble.

"And so you say it's too much trouble to read and study the Bible. Too much

trouble to find out what God has said and you go to work and make an easier way, but you will never be saved that way.

"There is no use making yourself believe it is an easy way to the glorious home of the blessed. It won't make it so for you to believe it. Jesus said it was a



Sisters Tirzah (center) and Margaret Smith (right), joined the group soon after emigrating from England, and became lifelong loyal supporters. Both were on the Megiddo and located with the group in Rochester, New York in 1904.

strait gate and narrow road. Don't you think He knew? Not straight like a bee-line, but strait, difficult. More than that, He said that few, few would find it. Don't blame me for these things. They read just the same in your Bible as they do in mine, and if you don't begin to do something about them you will be lost. What claim have you on God anyway? What have you done for God that He should save you? Nothing.

"Oh, my friends," the preacher continued with intense earnestness, "Oh, be roused up for your own salvation's sake, not for my benefit, but so that that grand home in glory may be yours, otherwise your end will be death.

"I would like to tell you that you were all right, and that you did not need to do much in order to be saved; but I should only be a deceiver and that would not alter the case any. You must work to be saved, work out your own salvation as the Scriptures say, otherwise death stares you in the face."

The splendid music and singing by the band was much enjoyed. At the next meeting of the group, this evening, Mrs. Hembree, the lady preacher of the Mission boat, will speak. Mrs. Hembree is a fine speaker and wonderfully well read in the Bible.

*Henderson, Kentucky
June, 1903*

HELL—WHAT IS IT? WHERE IS IT?

A TREMENDOUS CONGREGATION OUT TO
HEAR REV. L. T. NICHOLS GIVE HIS
VIEWS

TO an overflowing crowd Elder Nichols took up the subject of Hell last night, and, as usual, made short work of some time-honored creeds. He declared that there was absolutely no foundation for the idea that a pit of burning fire and lava awaited the impenitent human being. No words could express the horror that such an idea provoked.

A God capable of inventing such a thing as the usual conception of hell, to which the vast masses of His creatures were to be consigned, was worse than an arch fiend. Of all the awful, horrible imaginations of which the human mind was capable, surely this idea of a burning, boiling hell, where throughout an endless eternity of thousands, millions, billions, quadrillions, octillions, and duodecillions of years human beings were to be tormented in burning, unspeakable agony, was the masterpiece and climax. How people could ever have invented and believed such a thing of an all-wise, kind, loving and considerate God was a marvel, for there was absolutely no foundation whatever for it in the book of all books, the Bible.

The word hell in the Old Testament came from the word "sheol." Now, he would gladly give anyone a hundred dollars to point out to him in Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon, the standard authority, one definition to "sheol" of eternal torture, eternal misery, or anything like it. The definitions of "sheol" were "the pit," the idea of the word being a covering, a place for the dead. Nothing more whatever was meant by it. In the Greek, gehenna, tartarus and hades are the words from which hell come. Not one of them have a single definition of eternal misery or eternal torment. The definitions are the grave, death, the nether world, destruction, annihilation. For such a definition as eternal torment, or anything like it to any one of the words translated "hell" in Scripture, the speaker said he would gladly give a thousand dollars, for it would be worth it to him. But no such definition could be found in Liddell & Scott or any other standard Lexicon. Many Bible texts usually relied upon to substantiate the doctrine of

eternal torment for the wicked were examined and shown to mean the very opposite to what is usually understood from them.

In conclusion, to show the absurdity of the whole idea, the Elder told a story spoken by a minister at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in which God saved an old woman out of hell because she had once given an old beggar a carrot.

*Henderson, Kentucky
June, 1903*

ELDER NICHOLS SPEAKS AN ABLE DISCOURSE

THE Megiddo Gospel Band again held service at the Gospel Tent last night and Elder Nichols spoke on God's wonderful plan of salvation. He told how God had foreordained His people to walk in good works, not foreordained them to be saved whether they obey Him or not. God's foreordination was to walk in good works.

"We are here," said the mission preacher, "to show you there is wonderful unity and harmony in the Divine Word." On the subject of good works and grace, he said, "people triumphantly bring forth the text, 'Ye are saved by grace, not of works,' as though that settled the whole matter, nothing to do. How foolish! If we were only instructed what grace was, there would be no problem. The grace of God that brings salvation—the right grace—is that which 'hath appeared to all men, teaching us' to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and 'live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.'"

One lady today told one of the members of the mission that she did not believe people could live together and never get angry or impatient with one another, for she tried hard but still her temper got the better of her. "The trouble is," replied Mr. Nichols, "you don't half try. I was once lecturing in Quincy, Illinois, and a man by the name of Goodapple, who was at the lecture stood up and said, 'Mr. Nichols, it is all very well for you, when you're preaching all the time; I expect you can keep in good temper all the time. But I am a blacksmith, and if you had the ugly mules to shoe that I have, you would get mad sometimes.' I replied, 'Mr. Goodapple, if I were to deposit in the First National Bank one thousand dollars for you on condition that you shoe tomorrow some of the worst mules we can find in town and keep at it all day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and never get mad once, do you think you could do it for the \$1,000?' He stood right up and said,

'I'm beat! I certainly would do it for the thousand dollars. You couldn't get me mad.' And that's the point. We don't believe in the wonderful pay which God offers to give, else we would soon put away our wrath, and anger, and impatience, and evil speaking. And oh, the example to your children. They see you getting cross and snarling one at another, and being creatures of imitation, they grow up just doing the same thing."

*Evansville, Indiana
July, 1903*

GETTING ANGRY IS ALL A HABIT

CHRISTIANS DO NOT LOSE
THEIR TEMPER

REV. MR. NICHOLS MAKES A TALK

To a large crowd at the gospel tent, corner of Seventh and Walnut Street, Rev. Mr. Nichols preached last night on the subject of the duty of a Christian. He said he would not ask them to believe one thing they could not find written in the Bible. But the lesson read, Hebrews 2, declared plainly that there is no escape, if we neglect so great salvation, and we know nothing of this salvation except by the written Word.

It was written "for our learning"—not just to fill up a book to lie upon the shelf till we could write our names in the accumulated dust, for Jesus commanded "Search the Scriptures."

"Now here we are," continued the mission preacher with great force, "to stir you up to study your Bibles as never before. After He had gone to heaven, Jesus sent back a revelation and He declared, 'Blessed are they that hear and understand and keep the sayings of this book'—three steps necessary: read, understand, keep."

The preacher said he wouldn't give a single red cent for an ocean full of excitement. "Your faith must be founded on reason to be really valuable and enduring. And in order to reason we must have not only understanding but good understanding."

"Look how people will study to gain wealth—the educator, the law student will study and study and sit up night after night in order to gain the coveted post. But to gain an endless home in glory how little we are prepared to do. Even reading the Bible is too much for many church mem-

bers. Like a lady my wife and I met on the train one time; the lady noticed my wife reading the Bible and said, 'Is that the Bible you are reading all this time? Oh, I couldn't read the Bible like that, it's such dry stuff,' and she told us afterwards that she went to church every Sunday. And there are so many more like her. Why, ten minutes' Bible reading would put most professed Christians to sleep!

"Jesus says, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' There is the God-given test. Come up to it and test yourself. Are you keeping every one of God's commandments? Then and only then can you claim to be a Christian, a friend of Jesus.

"We are commanded to put away all anger. Anger is of the devil, not of God. And look at the people who go to church and get angry every day and week of their lives, parents snarling and quarreling at the breakfast table. Do you wonder why the children are not kind and gentle? If you are getting angry, you lack that much of being a Christian."

The elder in conclusion begged his hearers to study their Bibles. He wanted more Bible reading in Evansville the next two weeks than there had been the last ten years.

*Henderson, Kentucky
June, 1903*

HOW YOU MAY BE CLEANSED FROM SIN

The gospel tent was crowded to its utmost capacity last night, with quite a number unable to have seats.

We have never seen tent meetings arouse such an interest in Henderson before. This unique band of missionaries certainly have a remarkably attractive and interesting ensemble. The leader of the band, Rev. L. T. Nichols, is a man of striking personality and his manner and delivery is so intense and forceful that it is impossible not to be impressed by it.

His subject last night was, "How Are We Cleansed From Sin?" He took an entirely different line of thought from anything we ever heard before, and whether we agree with him or not we are bound to concede that his knowledge of the Bible is something wonderful, and his view of the matter presented so logically and emphasized with such a number of passages from the Bible, all bearing on that particular subject, that we are led to wonder how it is we have never investigated these things before.

Elder Nichols began his sermon by say-

ing that the old idea that we were cleansed from sin in some mysterious, altogether incomprehensible way by the literal death and blood of Jesus could not be sustained from the Bible. From the earliest time we were taught to sing, "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins." What a lie! Never was there such a fountain. The Bible commands us to sing with the spirit and with the understanding, but we never had any spirit or understanding in singing that one.

What, then, is the blood of Jesus that will cleanse us? "All I know about it I have learned from that Blessed Book. Paul tells us, 'Whereby when ye read ye may understand,' and if you cannot read your faith in the Bible throw it away. Ten thousand Christs might die and it would never put away your sin. Many of the disciples said it was a hard saying. Peter the apostle knew and explained it to us. He said, Seeing 'ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold,...but with the precious blood of Jesus' (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Now which is the more corruptible, gold or literal blood? He can't refer to literal blood, then.



Ella Skeels, youngest sister of L. T. Nichols, with her husband, Henry Skeels. Mr. Nichols and Mr. Skeels worked together on the design and manufacturing of a number of inventions, prior to the Megiddo. He and his wife were lifelong followers and supporters of Mr. Nichols.

Well, he tells us just what he means in verse 22: 'Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.' Also, Jesus in John 15:3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.'

"All the blood in the world would do you no good unless, as the Bible commands, you wash and become clean, 'put away the evil of your doings,...cease to do

evil' and 'learn to do well.' All the blood in the world will not cleanse a man who is getting angry. The only possible way is to stop getting angry. The only possible way for a thief to become an honest man is to stop stealing.

"What an awful idea to think that God would damn all the human family because



L. T. Nichols with his wife Hattie, his lifelong companion and supporter.

one man went wrong, and then go and kill an innocent, unoffending, righteous man in the other's place! How did Christ die? For an example to us, so that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature should be able to separate us from the love of God—which is the keeping of His holy commandments."

*Henderson, Kentucky
July, 1903*

IS IT HONEST TO GO ON BELIEVING WHAT WE CANNOT FIND IN THE BIBLE?

The Mission boat people again conducted services at the Gospel tent last evening. Elder Nichols said someone told him a lady went bouncing out of the meeting the previous evening saying, "If the thief wasn't going to be saved she wouldn't come to meeting any more." Well, said the speaker, what a strange idea to want to associate with thieves! For his part, he didn't want to associate with the worthless sector of humanity, and he knew that God was only going to have the very best as associates for Jesus during the long ages to come.

He said he had nothing to do with what the Bible taught; of himself he would know nothing, and long ago he came to the conclusion that the world was all astray as to what the Bible taught. So he dumped

everything he had been taught and everything he had believed and started right in to read the Bible for himself.

"Look at the world believing that every individual has within him an immortal soul, the real man, which 'at death doth immediately go to glory.' Now is this true? Does the Bible* teach it? Let me tell you the word immortality occurs only five times in the whole Bible. In Romans 2:7 it is something to be sought for. In 1 Cor. 15:53, 'This mortal'—note that it is THIS MORTAL—'shall put on immortality,' at the resurrection; the next verse is almost a repetition. That's three times. Now in First Timothy 6:16 we are told Christ is the only one of the Kings who has immortality, and 2 Tim. 1:10 tells us that Christ 'brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' Those are the only five times the word is used in the entire Bible.

"Now my dear friends," impressively continued the elder, "why will you go on believing something never once mentioned in God's revelation to man? You must know, as well as I, that when you were born, your spirit did not know a single thing. When you were born, you did not know a mouse from a rhinoceros. You would have as easily put your hand into the fire as into the sugar bowl, as soon have taken hold of a rattlesnake as a lamb. All you know you know through the five senses and you know nothing apart from them; and can you think that when these senses are cold and still in death that you will know more than when you were alive? Such nonsense! If there was no resurrection, death would end all and that is just what God tells you. If there be no resurrection of the dead, then even they which are asleep in Christ are perished, for the dead, as we are most distinctly told, 'know not anything.' Not a thing. Now here is reason, and sense, and science, and above all, the Bible. In your ignorance you sing, 'With thee we'll reign, with thee we'll rise, And kingdoms gain beyond the skies.'

"Never. Never such a promise between the two lids of the Bible. You get your ideas from the hymnbook, not from the Bible. Such hymns as, 'Beyond the bounds of time and space, the saints secure abode,' are where you get your ideas. Never from the Bible. What an idea anyway, "beyond the bounds of time and space." No space to stay in, no time to stay there. Well, that goes well with your immortal soul theory, for it is said that ten thousand can dance on the point of a cambric needle and still there is room for more.

"Oh, my friends, throw away such folly. Believe only what this blessed book

declares. It will do you no good to believe what isn't true, how ever many believe it with you."

*Evansville, Indiana
July, 1903*

WE'RE NOT WASHED IN BLOOD OF LAMB

REV. NICHOLS SAYS NOT A DROP DRAWN
FROM IMMANUEL'S VEINS HAS EVER
TOUCHED US

AT the mission tent last night there was again a large crowd assembled to hear the mission preacher, who had much to say with regard to the darkness people are in as to the true teaching of the Bible.

Mr. Nichols said that right from his mother's knee he had been taught that the atoning blood of Jesus cleansed him from sin. There was no such thing as the atoning blood of Jesus. There is possible an at-one-ment with God as the result of obedience to His Word. The Word of God was his only source of knowledge—some claimed to have visions and other means of information from God. He did not. The old song, "there is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins," was the greatest lie ever sung.

Stop! Reason! Every one knew as well as he did that there was never a bucketful of blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, and nobody had ever had a drop of it near them. What, what was the matter? We read in Revelation that John saw a great company whose robes were washed in the blood of the lamb. Robes! Washed in literal blood? No, for it said "she," the bride, the Lamb's wife, was "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," which is "the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7-8). Now if the robes were acts, a righteous character, an imaginary robe, then they could not be washed in literal blood. The trouble was, people never stopped to think. Like young robins, they just opened their mouths and took down just whatever the preachers dropped into their mouths and called it good. The lesson read, "No man can come to Me [Christ], except the Father, which hath sent Me draw him." How did God draw him? As "it is written in the prophets, they shall be all taught of God."

Lack of space forbids more than touching on Mr. Nichols' wonderful sermon.

(continued next issue)

*see note on page 25

Coming On Apace

Sometimes we say
That the time seems long to us who watch and wait
For that "great Day,"
As if the time loitered and the great Day came late.

Did you ever stay
A moment, to think how the time is hasting away
And we cannot hinder a moment as it flies;
But one week dies
And another comes, straight, straight on
And is partly gone
While we are pausing to think it has begun?

Time pauses never,
The day of grace is shortening ever,
At one unfaltering pace;
And the day of decision
Is traveling onward, with unswerving precision,
And suddenly, or ever we are aware—
That Day will be!

Blessed are they,
Who with steadfast hope and faith can say
With every rising sun,
"Lord Jesus, come!"

—Selected

*"Do not cast away
your confidence...for
yet a little while and
He who is coming
will come and will
not tarry."*

—Hebrews 10:35, 37

ELSIE E. SWITZER

On September 5 we met to pay our last respects to our friend and Sister Elsie E. Switzer, who died suddenly at the age of 92. She was a native of Wisconsin until, in 1982, she moved to join our Rochester Congregation.

Sister Elsie is survived by two daughters, Beverly Reneau of Texas, and Susan Dolata, of North Carolina, also seven grandchildren and seventeen great-grandchildren.

Sister Elsie was of a bright, sunny disposition, consistently kind, gentle, and amiable. Her home was always open to welcome visitors to the Church. Blessed with a large measure of uncommon common sense, she was straightforward, hard working and matter of fact. If a job had to be done, her attitude was: let's just get busy and do it!

Sister Elsie lived by plan, not happenstance. She was also very determined and strongly disciplined. A diabetic for many years, she spared herself many of its ill effects by carefully following the prescribed diet. When she suffered her first heart attack about 1977, she was told that she should walk every day. She did—precisely, by measured mile, by plan.

Some people let their work drive them. Sister Elsie drove the work. Her daughter Sue reports that when she was young, her mother would every day plan exactly what they were going to do the following day. They did it, and then, that evening, she planned the next day, and so on. She believed the simple motto, Plan your work, then work your plan. It was a great way to live. Her family marveled at her steadiness. "She was just always there for us," says her daughter Susan, always working, always doing something useful for someone else. She was the epitome of unselfishness.

Sister Elsie's acquaintance with the Megiddo Church came through her brother John Trende, who obtained the Church literature when he was still in his teens, and who in mid-life made a serious effort to live his religion. Through observing him, she realized his faith was something out of the ordinary and was drawn to learn more about the Church. In 1965 she subscribed to the *Message*, and began corresponding with some of the members.

When her brother became afflicted with Parkinson's disease and needed help, she cared for him as long as it was humanly possible, about 3 years, and after his death, she relocated to Rochester. It was a move she never regretted.

Sister Elsie was always a willing helper. When it was time for dramas in the Church, she was ready to iron curtains and costumes—and adjust costumes as well, as she was handy

with needle and thread. In fact, she spent many hours sewing for a number of people. On *Message* mailing day she was always a right hand helper. Within 5 days of her death she was helping prepare the *Megiddo Message* for mailing to foreign subscribers. She was one you could always depend on to be there.

The Legacy

We are missing something Sister Elsie left us if we do not take some lessons from her life.

♦ First lesson: *Be too big for bitterness*. The family situation in which she found herself—through no fault of her own—would have made almost anyone bitter—anyone but Sister Elsie. She knew how

to put her problems in God's hands and live in peace.

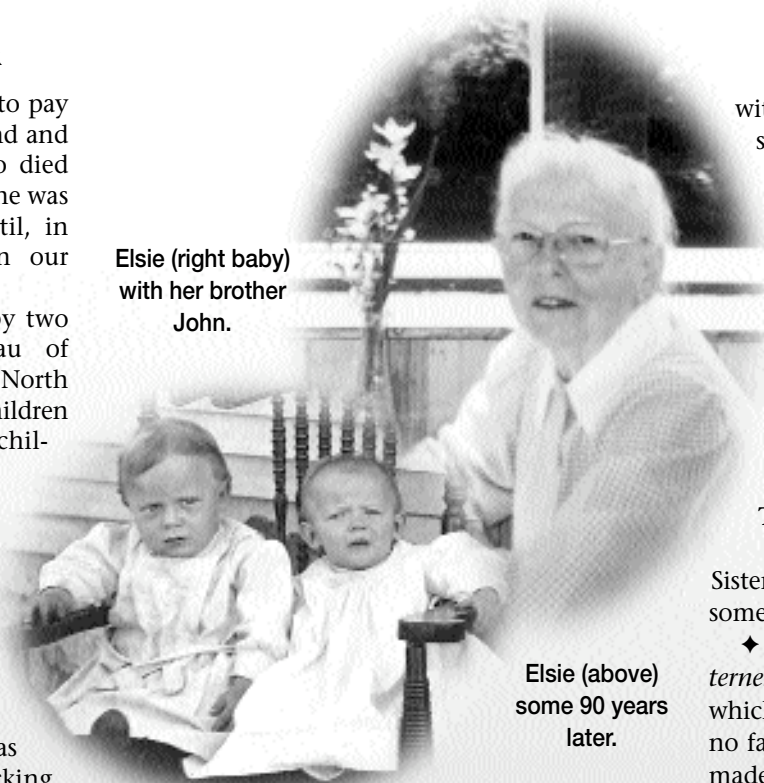
♦ Second lesson: *Be too big to complain*. Sister Elsie had her share of physical problems. But nothing put her down in spirit because she had a mindset to make the best of anything—her daughter Susan called her "Morning Glory!" She knew how to keep life in perspective—her favorite saying, "this too will pass." This buoyant spirit repaid her abundantly. She was a joy to be around.

♦ Third lesson: *Take responsibility for the quality of your life*. Sister Elsie did everything in her power to maintain an optimum quality of life. If some surgery would make it better, she was ready to go through it. In this way she extended her usefulness, both to herself and others.

♦ Fourth lesson: *Keep busy*. Sister Elsie was often heard to say, "Idle hands are the devil's plaything." And hers were not idle. Right to the end she kept her hands and mind occupied. She was also a diligent reader—not of fiction or the newspaper but of the Bible, and wholesome, inspiring books. Her *New Living Translation*, published only a few years ago, is obviously worn from use. And as her eyesight failed, she spent more and more time enjoying her religious tapes.

Among her treasures was found a letter written to Brother Newton Payne by her brother, John Trende. The letter is dated December 23, 1964. Her family asked that it be shared with her friends:

"In faith we look forward to the day when death will be swallowed up 'in victory: and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it'" (Isa. 25:8). ♦



Elsie (right baby) with her brother John.

Elsie (above) some 90 years later.



Is God Able?

(Running Through the Rain)

She had been shopping with her Mom in Wal-Mart. She must have been 6 years old, this beautiful red-haired, freckled-faced little girl.

It was pouring outside, the kind of rain that gushes over the top of rain gutters, so much in a hurry to hit the earth that it has no time to flow down the spout.

We all stood there under the awning and just inside the door of the Wal-Mart store. We waited, some patiently, others irritated because nature messed up their hurried day. I am always mesmerized by rainfall. I get lost in the sound and sight of the heavens washing away the dirt and dust of the world.

The child's voice was sweet as it broke the hypnotic trance.

"Mom, let's run through the rain," she said.

"What?" Mom asked.

"Let's run through the rain!" she repeated.

"No, Honey. We'll wait until it slows down a bit," Mom replied.

This young child waited about another minute and repeated: "Mom, let's run through the rain."

"We'll get soaked if we do," replied Mom.

The youngster tugged at her Mom's arm. "No, we won't, Mom. That's not what you said this morning."

"This morning? When did I say we could run through the rain and not get wet?"

"Don't you remember? When you were talking to Daddy about his cancer, you said, 'If God can get us through this, He can get us through anything!'"

The entire crowd stopped dead silent. There was only the sound of the rain.

Mom paused and thought for a moment about what she would say. Some would laugh it off and scold her for being silly. Some might even ignore what was said. But this was a moment of affirmation in a young child's life, time when innocent trust can be nurtured so that it will bloom into faith.

"Honey, you are absolutely right. Let's run. If God let's us get wet, well—maybe we just needed washing," Mom said.

Then off they ran. We stood watching, smiling and laughing as they darted past the cars and yes, through the puddles. They held their shopping bags over their heads, but they still got soaked. Soon they were followed by a few who screamed and laughed like children all the way to their cars.

And yes, I too ran. I got wet. I needed washing.

Circumstances or people can take away our material possessions, our money, our health. We may get wet and washed, but we can still trust God to give us what we need. For He has promised, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Heb. 13:5), and not one of His promises will fail. ♦

—Contributed

*NOTE (from page 22):

The two Greek words, used in the references mentioned, *aphtharsia* (Strong's 861) and *athanasia* (Strong's 110), are translated immortality in the KJV only five times as stated. However, the first of these Greek words is also found in four other places in the New Testament, where it is translated by other words. In 1 Cor. 15:42 and 1 Cor. 15:50 it is translated "incorruption." In Eph. 6:24 it is translated "sincerity" in the KJV: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." Other

translations read incorruptible love, or love that never ends, or undying love. In Titus 2:7 it is also translated "sincerity" in the KJV: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity." Other translators use the words dignified, seriousness, irreproachable, or incorruptibility. None of these additional passages negate/contradict the fact that immortality is a state bestowed only by Christ after He returns.



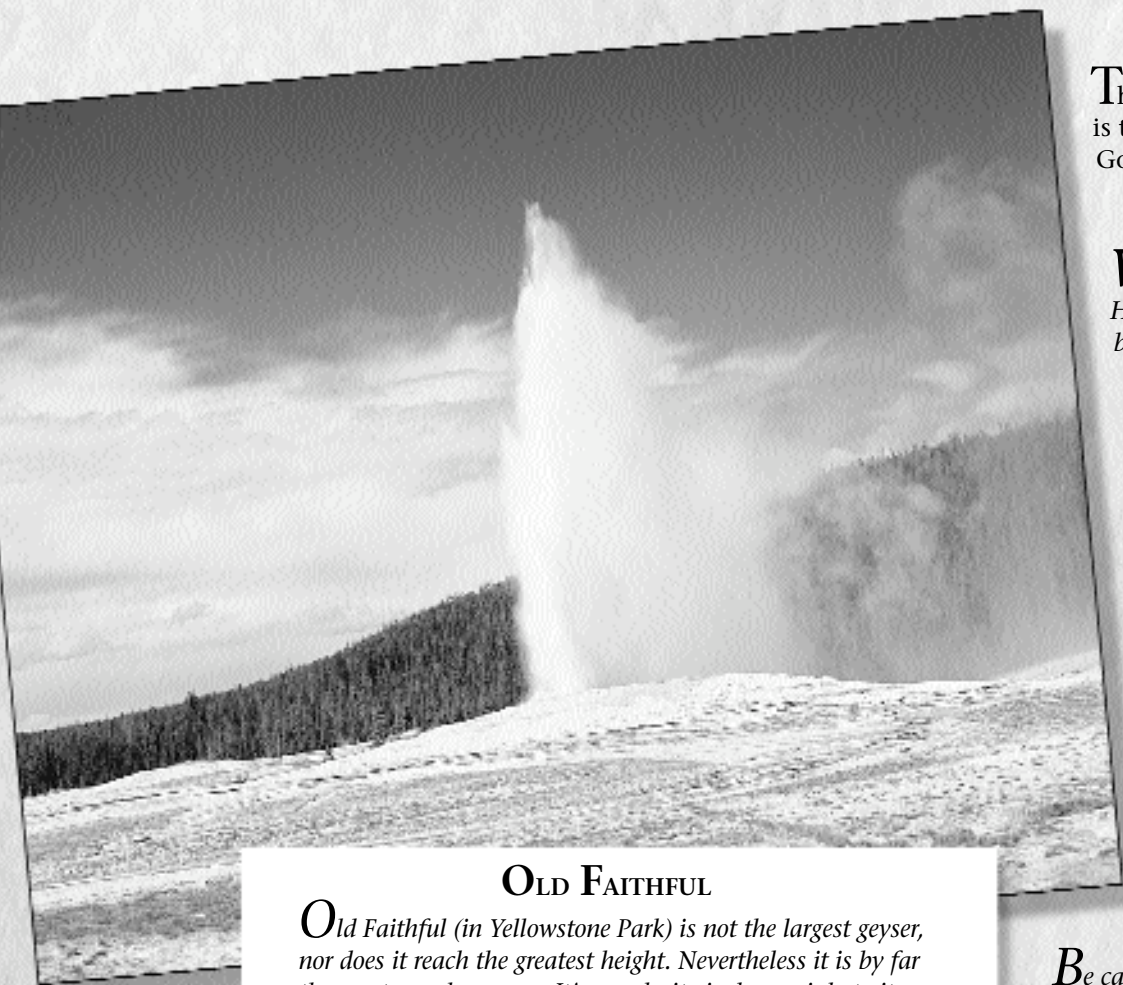
Why Is a River Crooked?

Did you ever see a straight river—not a canal but a river? Probably not very often. You will notice that most rivers are crooked. It is called meandering. When we travel through the mountains the roads often follow the riverbed and as a result they twist and turn and double back so you have to go 20 miles to get 5 if you could go as the crow flies. To shorten the distance means leaving the river and tunneling through the mountain, or building a bridge over the river, or blasting the road through the mountain at great labor and expense.

Why are rivers crooked? What made them crooked in the first place? The answer is simple: Rivers are just lazy! They are too lazy to go over an obstacle, so they go around it. They seek out the easiest way. When a river comes to a rock ledge, instead of pushing hard and moving it out of the way, it goes around it. When a river meets a mountain, it backtracks and takes another route. Submitting to gravity, it just follows the path of least resistance. It is the natural response to the downward pull.

Isn't that the way we naturally are? We are crooked because we choose the easy way. We respond to the downward pull of temptation and sin. It is so much easier to yield to the temptation than to conquer it. It is so much easier to take the lazy way than to climb the mountains or remove the boulder. It is so much easier to avoid the difficult task and become soft and useless. It is so much easier to watch television than to memorize a Bible verse, or go to a prayer meeting. It is so much easier to let others do the work while we excuse ourselves—because we don't feel like it, or we're tired, or we have something else we'd rather do. It's all a way of avoiding responsibility.

How can you go straight instead of crooked? Next time you come to a rock or hard place in your life, instead of going around that rock or falling over it, why not get out your *"It is written"* bulldozer as Jesus did when He was tempted and push the boulder of temptation out of the way? This will make for a straighter and deeper life! ♦



OLD FAITHFUL

Old Faithful (in Yellowstone Park) is not the largest geyser, nor does it reach the greatest height. Nevertheless it is by far the most popular geyser. It's popularity is due mainly to its regularity and dependability. Nothing in life can take the place of faithfulness and dependability. It is one of the greatest virtues a Christian can attain.

Criticism is as powerless to destroy the truths of God as a pocket magnet is to pull the stars from their courses.

Your religion will do more for you if you do more for it.

CHANGES

If you wanted to put a bend in a piece of wood—not a temporary bend but a permanent one—how would you go about it? Would you give it a few hard whacks or apply sudden, violent pressure? Not if you know anything about woodworking, you wouldn't. You would apply steady, gradually increasing pressure, and maintain it over a considerable period of time.

Putting a bend in people is the same. To break old habits and learn new ones is a slow process. If you expect too much too soon, it will not happen. It takes gradual pressure. It also takes time. If you slack off your efforts too soon, it is possible to quickly spring back into our old way of doing things.

The miracle of a transformed life is the best evidence of the Gospel's power.

When Jesus chose His disciples, He selected busy men, but not too busy to put first things first.

Religion is like a bank. It pays no dividends unless we make deposits.

Don't pray to escape trouble. Pray to do the will of God in every situation.

Your temper improves the more you don't use it.

Be careful how you spend your time. Financial mistakes can be corrected, but time once spent is gone forever.

To reproduce the beauty of Jesus upon the canvas of life with the brush of daily influence is the greatest creative art in all the world.

If so many people were not so glad to carry it, gossip would not travel nearly so far.

Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they would like to say something.

I have never seen a man who profited by being jealous of others, but I have seen hundreds cursed by it.

God chooses what we go through; we choose how we go through it.

Don't expect a thousand-dollar answer to a ten-cent prayer.



WINNING!

*It takes a lot of courage, and a lot of self-control,
And a grim determination if you want to reach your goal
It takes a deal of praying and a firm and stern set chin,
If you really want the Kingdom and are bound that you will win!*

*There's no lazy path to glory; there's no short cut to the top
Keep on climbing toward the summit tho' your weary feet would stop;
For the prize, it calls for climbing, for endurance and for grit,
For a rugged disposition and an "I will never quit."*

*You must take the path of Jesus, you must risk if you would climb,
So expect that in the struggle you will suffer for a time.
But you mustn't shrink nor falter when the climb you once begin.
At the top is LIFE and GLORY for the ones who climb and win.*

—Author Unknown

