

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Thy Word is a
lamp unto my
feet, and a light
unto my path.
Ps. 119:105

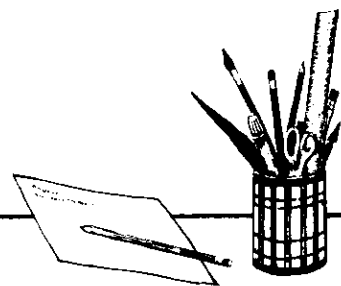
The testimony
of the Lord is
sure, making
wise the simple.
Ps. 19:7

“The Harvest Is Past, the Summer Is Ended, and . . .”?

NEWSLINE 1900, . . . Part II

Looking Ahead . . .

EDITORIAL



Looking Ahead . . .

Trouble in Iran. Trouble in Iraq. Trouble in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. Trouble in Afghanistan, Turkey and Poland. Trouble in North and South Korea, Laos, and Thailand. Trouble in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Trouble in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Liberia, and Uganda. Trouble in Argentina, Chile, and Honduras. All during the past twelve months, and the list is by no means complete.

What lies ahead for the present cosmos? Who knows?

These are times that try men's souls. These are times that try men's faith. It is not pleasant to hear day after day that nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and what gives more quaking than to see our own nation lapsing into something worse than savagery, to see the hard-won gains of centuries being trampled by those who choose to live on the level of beasts? So many who hoped for and worked for and believed in a better world are silent; the question of the moment becomes not progress but survival, in the moral realm. And what next? Some wonder if the world can be saved; others if it is worth saving.

If ever poor, stumbling humanity needed a word of comfort and hope, it is now; but what mortal can speak that word? To thinking men and women the outlook is bleak. The past is dead, the present is doubtful, and the future—?

Yes there is hope. All is not lost, and things will yet be made right. Is this a dream? or a vision of the night? It is *not*. The present distress is but one phase of the darkness before the dawn of a better Day. God has not forsaken this earthly creation, though the masses have forsaken Him. He alone can and does speak the Word of hope. He alone knew in advance that "men's hearts" would be "failing them for fear" as they saw the "sea and the waves," men's corrupt systems and governments, "roaring." He alone spoke the sure and unalterable word of promise.

When things are at their darkest, there will be a change, a momentous change for the better. For "He shall send Jesus Christ," earth's rightful King, preceded by His messenger Elijah (Mal. 4:5), and all nations will be called to transfer their allegiance to the New Government. The result: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:1-2).

The swift judgments of God will follow, cleansing the earth of its undesirables and incorrigibles, all who refuse to submit to the new order; and so the present systems of misgovernment will be forced to make way for the new and infinitely better, the universal and everlasting Kingdom of God (Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Zech. 14:9). The triumph of the new is predetermined, for "the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one."

A thousand years of this righteous rule, a millennium of reconstruction and progress, of education and genuine civilization-building, uninterrupted by war, crime, oppression, plague, selfishness, poverty, or pain, and the earth will be totally transformed, filled with happy immortal inhabitants. And our planet will be ready to take its place in God's heavenly family of glorified worlds.

The picture is bright as we look ahead, for soon all this will be reality. It is even possible that the present generation will see the consummation of the Eternal's plan. The Bible is filled with so many heartening prophecies, and those who believe and love it can look upon the present wreck without fear or foreboding. Trouble, trouble, trouble, but not for long.

With such a prospect in view,
the future is not dark;

it is surpassingly glorious!••

Megiddo means

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

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

Other Publications of the Megiddo Mission Church

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION/ THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH/ WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?/ GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION/ THE KINGDOM OF GOD/ THE GREAT APOSTASY/ HELL AND THE DEVIL/ AFTER DEATH, WHAT?/ TRINITY OR UNITY?/ THE HOLY SPIRIT/ THE ATONEMENT/ THE SABBATH/ ALL for \$3.00, Postpaid.

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“The Harvest Is Past, The Summer Is Ended, and . . .”?

WERE WE NOT familiar with the original context of these words, we might place them in a variety of settings. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended” could be taken as a simple statement of fact. “On wings of time relentless, swift the seasons come and go,” and the transition from summer to autumn is one of those changes. Or Jeremiah’s statement of the end of the harvest season might be taken as a fitting introduction to the variety of beauties that adorn the countryside during the autumn—the brilliant hues of mountain and forest, the carefully planted vineyards now laden with their thick triangular clusters of grapes; heavy branches of apples red, yellow or green. All come when the summer has ended.

Or we might suspect the phrase as belonging to a song of happy harvesters as they gather in the precious fruits of the earth, fruits that will keep them alive until another harvest rolls round. Or it might be a joyful exclamation of laborers whose work is once again complete.

But none of this joy was on the mind of the prophet who composed this line! It was a lament: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” There was no joy, because his people were deep in sin, sin from which there was no healing or cure, since they refused to amend their ways. And sin does not bring joy. The prophet’s image is vivid—it marks the end of a doubly extended opportunity—which has been spurned. Both “harvest” and “summer” are gone. The difference is not obvious to us who live in a country where the fruits of the season all ripen at about the same time. But figs and grapes in Palestine ripen as late as September and October; while other crops, particularly the grains, mature early. This makes the passage especially meaningful. The “harvest,” as Jeremiah

thought of it, lasted from April to June; it was the time of the gathering of grain, which ended with the harvest festival of Pentecost. Then followed the “summer” months, with the harvest of maturing fruits. If the harvest of the early season failed, there was still hope that the people might be able to live on the summer fruit crops; but if the fruit failed also, famine stared them in the face.

Jeremiah recognized that God had been gracious to His people. He had given them not one but *two* generous opportunities to turn from their evil ways. But all too soon, both are gone and the harvest to life eternal that could have been theirs will never be. It will never be because they have spurned their opportunity to plant and cultivate a good crop, and “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

From Spiritual Peaks . . . to Depths

The prophet Jeremiah lived at a very singular time in Israel’s history. The nation was just about at the end of a long and ignoble career. In the words of a modern writer, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” For Jeremiah, it was both. The prophet had begun his career in what might be called “the best of times.” Moving chronologically it went from the best to the worst. Jeremiah was called during the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah. In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah found the book of the law and went about cleaning up the house of the Lord, removing every vestige of idolatry from Jerusalem, deposing all the idolatrous priests, and then, in obedience to the law of God, keeping the Passover. Jeremiah was around when all this was going on. The record of Josiah is summarized in these words: “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all of his heart and with all of his soul and with all of his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him” (II Kings 23:25).

Jeremiah saw about thirteen years of Josiah’s active reforms; it was indeed a “planting” season

Note: “The Harvest Is Past, the Summer Is Ended, and . . .” is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

which could have borne much good fruit for a good harvest, if the good work had been continued.

But unfortunately, the good did not last. After Josiah was killed in battle, Jehoahaz his son mounted the throne and for three months did "that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." Then Jehoiakim replaced him. He reigned for eleven years, and did still worse. Then Jehoiachin reigned for three months, and he, too, did evil. Finally, Zedekiah reigned for the final eleven years before the fall of Jerusalem; and he, too, did what was "evil in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 24:19).

So Jeremiah watched Israel plummet from the great peak of spiritual revival into the depths of the worst conceivable sin.

Warning . . .

Jeremiah was sent to announce to them their sin, and the judgment that would come if they continued in it. There would be judgment, for God had promised "to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow." Much of Jeremiah's ministry was given to delivering this message. And it did not make him popular. Nor did the people even wish to listen. There was sin that needed to be dealt with and put away, but who wanted to listen to such talk?

Is it not so in every age? Even we ourselves find that the true gospel is not all plush velvet; sometimes it feels more like sandpaper. But perhaps sandpaper is what we need to remove the rough spots from our characters. Sandpaper is what the people of Jeremiah's day needed—but did not want.

. . . and More Warning

The time arrived when God's mercy had reached its limit, and the people were still adamant. For more than twenty years Jeremiah had been preaching, but it was all in vain, so far as the nation was concerned. His words in chapter 8 reflect the heart-sorrow he felt for their stubborn, unrepentant wilfulness. "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country. Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities? The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (vs. 18-20). The days when they might have turned to God and found His favor are gone.

What a retrospect! Summertime should be a season of prime fruitfulness and great activity. But it is a season soon spent, and easily passes unim-

The true gospel is not all plush velvet; sometimes it feels more like sandpaper.

proved. Again the lesson is written for our learning, so that we may not face the harvest season with nothing of eternal value to harvest. "Behold *now* is the day of salvation." It is now—or never.

Against Procrastination

It is a solemn message against procrastination that comes ringing to each of us through the Scriptures. Opportunity is not forever. Doors *do* close; and when they close, what power in heaven or earth can open them? The harvest season *does* slip away; and when it is gone, what can bring it back? Oh! Let us take seriously this matter of dealing with God's time. All our moments come from Him; they are sacred; they are to be used *only* under His direction and in accordance with His will. When we go our own way, what can we hope to reap?

Jeremiah is warning us that it is possible to delay too long. Like a fresh, fuzzy-green melon we discover just set in early August—can we expect to harvest the fully ripened fruit? It may appear healthy and good, but we know it is too late. So Jeremiah looked upon his procrastinating people. They had had opportunity upon opportunity, but how much had they changed their ways?

It is the old story of by-gone opportunity, lost, and found when too late. So much has been said about this destructive habit that it would seem little could be added. The trouble is, so little has ever been *done* about it. Like the people of Jeremiah's day, we find ourselves still inclined to procrastinate; and strangely, it is often in matters pertaining to our eternal welfare. It may seem the perfect moment to drop a sharp, irritating remark. We know we should not, but—just this once, it seems so necessary. Just this once we will *say* it. *Another* time it will be easier to keep silent. And so we procrastinate.

Or it may be a hurt feeling that possesses us in an instant when we imagine someone has designed some ill against us. We know we have *no* reason to feel hurt, that "great peace have they who love" God's law and "*nothing* shall offend them," but still, we *are* hurt; and we stop to sulk about it. Just this once. Another time we will take better hold of our feelings. And so we procrastinate.

Or it may be a touch of jealousy when we see what someone else can do, or the advantages that just seem to fall into his basket. Again, we tell ourselves it is wrong, that we should not notice such, that God

is at the helm and we will get what we need also; but still, there it is, that bit of jealousy. Well, just this once. Another time we will be able to fend it off.

And so we procrastinate. We forget that the upright life is developed gradually by practicing to do good, that a perfect performance is not the product of one moment's strong resolve however strong that resolve may be. We have to practice doing the right things over and over again, thinking right, and feeling right. We have to do it "by little and little." It is not one sudden leap to perfection. And so the time that we procrastinate is time worse than wasted—we are doing more than *not* practicing the good we know we should—we are, at the very moment we give in to our worse selves, *practicing the wrong*. We are making it harder and harder for ourselves. Would the people of Jeremiah's day find it any easier to change from their idolatry to the worship of the true God after they had practiced the worship of idols for fifty or one hundred years? And do we think that the disciplines we know we ought to exercise, or the cautions we ought to observe in the presence of evil, will be any easier after we have indulged our own way a little longer? Will the

unpleasant tasks become any more pleasant by waiting for that illusive "more convenient" season—that never comes?

No Time To Procrastinate

Procrastination, that moral flabbiness, that weak-willed laziness that afflicts us all at some time and to some degree—especially when we lose the impelling power of our long-range goals. It is something we must come to grips with *soon*. It is something we cannot afford to parley with. In little things, in great things, in all things it is deadly. It is the enemy of all good resolution, the destroyer of all good intent. It is the chain around the neck of the chronic "putter-offer" who has a moral weakness somewhere that he wants very much to tame somehow, someday—any day, except today.

There is a fable which tells of three apprentice "devils" who were coming to this earth to finish their apprenticeship. They were talking to "Satan," the chief of the devils, about their plans to tempt and ruin men. The first said, "I will tell men that there is no God." Satan answered, "That will not delude many, for they know that there is a God."

Let Us Pray...

O God, we thank Thee for the world in which Thou hast placed us, for the universe whose vastness is revealed in the blue depth of the sky, whose immensities are lit by shining stars, the multiplicity and the immense distances of which are beyond the capabilities of our small minds to contemplate.

We thank Thee for every sacrament of beauty provided us: for the sweetness of flowers, the sound of swelling seas, the awe-inspiring view of mighty mountains, the dawn and the evening. We are thankful for the opportunity to make this world for a little while our home as mortal beings, and for the promise of an endless life upon the earth made over new, upon the condition that we now make ourselves worthy of that life.

We thank Thee for our mortal life and the opportunities it presents us to prepare for an unending life in Thy better Tomorrow. Give us the wisdom to hold the things of the fleeting present with a loose hand, to be aware that this is not our rest; it is for us now

to struggle to remake ourselves, to put away the evil tendencies of our carnal natures and form ourselves into that new creature to whom it will be Thy good pleasure to give the Kingdom.

Help us to be aware of the value of the time given us. We journey this way but once, and must make the very most of the days as they pass. Before we are aware, the harvest will be past, the summer ended; and unless we have made use of the growing days provided us ours will be the sad lament—"and we are not saved."

We realize that summertime in the spiritual life should be a time of prime fruitfulness and great activity. But it is a season soon spent, and easily passes unimproved. May we each take the lesson to ourselves, so that we may not have to face the harvest season with nothing of eternal value to harvest. Now is our accepted time, now is our day of salvation; it is now or never.

Help us to keep up a perpetual guard against hurt feelings, against moral flabbiness, against weak-willed laziness, against procrastination, against putting off till some more convenient time the important things that must be done at once if we would merit eternal salvation.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The second had another idea. "I will tell men that there is no hope." Satan answered in the negative again: "You will deceive no one that way; men know that they must live by hope, and where they have none they will make-believe." The third said, "I will tell men that there is no *hurry*." "Go," said Satan to the third, "and you will succeed."

"Plenty of time" is the most dangerous of all delusions, especially when we realize that the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." It has been said that the most dangerous day in a man's life is when he learns that there is such a word as "*tomorrow*." This is especially true in our spiritual lives, for when we put off until tomorrow what we could and *should* be doing today, are we not jeopardizing our chances of even *seeing* a tomorrow? Is not tomorrow promised on condition that we improve today? And who knows if tomorrow might not be the Day of the Lord, the great Day when the King shall arrive!

Time for us may indeed end with shattering suddenness; and there is danger, great danger, that that great Day will find us not fully prepared, our harvest not fully matured, our full allotment of work not yet completed because we have not *used* the time granted us. Harvest work requires planning, effort, and diligent attention to every opportunity. Procrastination requires nothing but a relaxed and gentle attitude that what doesn't get done today will still be there tomorrow. It goes hand in hand with the philosophy that "all things continue as they were from the beginning." But it does not require a great amount of eyesight or insight today to realize that all things do *not* continue as they always have, and that the great Day of the Lord is hastening apace. The sky may appear fair, but fair weather days *can* be days of great accomplishment; they may also be days of letting things slide while a multitude of lesser interests crowd in to sap our strength. Procrastination is our ever-present enemy. It is the attitude of, "Why bother about the leaky roof as long as the sun is shining?"

Inaction vs. Action

But this was not *Noah's* philosophy when God told him to prepare an ark against the coming flood. Nor was he slow in setting to work. There may not have been a trace of logic in the command, building an ark in a dry desert area; and there was no one around who could confirm that he was making the right decision to go ahead and build. Had he waited to discuss the matter with faithless friends, he might have been talked out of it. But Noah did not give such negative thinking a chance, nor do we read

Do we feel a sense of urgency in our work, "in season and out of season," or are we procrastinating?

of his consulting with any but the Lord. He heard the divine command, and we find no indication that he waited for anything. He went right ahead and "prepared an ark, to the saving of his household." He heard, and he responded. There was no procrastination.

Abraham was another man of action. He heard the call of God, but—? There were so many unanswered questions in his mind. He did not know *where* he was going. He did not know *why* he was going. He had no idea what lay ahead. But did he wait? Did he reply, like a certain man when pressed for a decision, "I'm giving you a very definite '*Maybe*'!"? No. Indeed not! He *believed* God, it is written to his everlasting credit, and he acted at once on his belief. This is how he became the father of all the faithful believers. Had he delayed, had he waited until he had talked the matter over with those he knew in the pagan city, he might never have acted. But Abraham did not wait.

Isaiah was another non-procrastinator. Standing in the temple one day, he saw a vision of the Lord. He heard the voice of the Lord calling him. It was a great moment. What was his reply? Did he question whether he might be better off to wait and see how things worked out in his life? Did he tell the Lord he would have to go home and think about it for awhile and discuss it with his family to see what they all thought before he could give the Lord an answer? No. His answer was spontaneous. "Here am I, send me."

Or consider the apostle *Paul*. Struck blind on the Damascus Road, what did he do? Did he say, "Let's wait, Lord. I'll think about it and let you know"? No! His own words tell his story: "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." He did not wait for anything—he did not even consult his own flesh and blood, the second thoughts of his own heart. The decision came instantly, "*immediately*." There was no waiting for father, mother, brother, sister; there was no consulting high priest, scribe or magistrate. Had he procrastinated, had he put off the critical decision until he had had time to think it through, we might not have known Paul the apostle to us Gentiles. At least he would not have been the Paul that we know.

Felix Wanted to Wait

See the difference between the apostle Paul and a man like *Felix*. When we meet Felix, Paul is there.

The harvest is passing, the summer is ending, and whatever we have to do must be done now.

Paul had been called to appear before Felix, the Procurator of Judea. Felix had kept Paul in prison for two years even though there was no valid charge against him. But at last Paul's opportunity came, and Felix, "sending for Paul, let him talk to him about faith in Christ Jesus. But when the discourse turned to questions of morals, self-control and the coming judgment, Felix became alarmed and exclaimed, 'That will do for the present; when I find it convenient, I will send for you again'" (Acts 24:24-25). It was not that Felix had never heard these things before. He had heard, but he had procrastinated. He did not relish that which might have made him wise unto salvation. He did not want to make any decision too suddenly, and meanwhile he was spending his life in the service of Rome. Felix had considerable knowledge of Christianity—Luke recorded that he had "rather accurate knowledge of the Way." He could listen to Paul concerning the faith; it sounded good. But when Paul came to reasoning about how that faith should be *applied*, when he came to matters of morality and self-control and judgment, Felix became uncomfortable. Confronted by the personal challenge, he put it off. "That will do for the present; when I have a more convenient season, I will send for you again."

Felix wanted to wait.

It is easy to pass judgment on Felix; it is easy to see the contrast between him and a man like Paul. And yet, is there not something of Felix in us occasionally, something which clings to that which is seen and puts off that which relates to the *unseen*? It is second nature in us, too, to put off what requires effort, sacrifice, or pain. Something in us says, "Go ahead, get it done!" but something else says, "No. Wait; it may be easier later." It is the inner struggle. "I am at war 'twixt will and will not!" It is the inner tension, the conflict within our own hearts.

Oh! Do we realize as we contemplate these things that they are matters of life and death for us? We have entered a race for eternal life. Are we moving in highest gear, or is something in us holding down our speed? Can we make some seemingly important piece of temporal work wait, if an opportunity comes for brotherly fellowship, to sit at the feet of Jesus, to help a brother or a sister along the way to life? What waits for the convenient season in our hearts—the spiritual or the temporal? The answer to

this question may be revealing, for Jesus warned against letting the cares of this life assume more than their proper place in our lives.

In our homes, or when we casually meet together, do we leave behind good influence by word or example? Are we continually dropping something to encourage a brother to higher planes of living? Are we building up ourselves in our most holy faith and spreading that influence around us so that in time of trial or temptation we are strong, and perhaps have helped to strengthen others? Can they who are younger feel the force of our godly example in our conduct, an example befitting our years of service in the vineyard of our Lord? Are these things vital to us? Do we feel, as the apostle Paul told Timothy, an "urgency in this work, in season and out of season," or are we procrastinating?

A certain man, afflicted with the procrastinating spirit, apparently kept it his whole life through, for he had this distinctive epitaph placed on his tombstone:

*He slept beneath the moon,
He basked beneath the sun;
He lived a life of going-to-do
And died with nothing done.*

A tragedy, to be sure, and how much more so for those who have heard the high call of God! Suppose that Jeremiah, or Haggai, or Zechariah, or Malachi had waited for everything to be "just right" before they went ahead with their moral work for God? These men were all sent to cry against the evils of their times, and their lives had to be circumspect if they were to be God's representatives before their people; their lives had to be flawless and above reproach. They could not condemn their people for evils which they harbored, and their words leave no room for *any* unholiness. They themselves had to be workers for God in their own lives—no procrastinating.

Suppose that Jesus had waited for everything to be just right before He set about to obey fully the will of His Father. Suppose that He had spent His life waiting for the ideal circumstances. The summer would have passed all too quickly, for He was only 33 years of age when the first phase of His career ended. What would He have accomplished if He had waited?

A Lesson from Hebrews

This is the lesson which the author of the book of Hebrews presents in Hebrews 3. There is a day set forth, a definite time declared, when we are to hear

and hearken. And we are not to delay. "*Today* if ye will hear his voice" (Heb. 3:7). Not yesterday, for yesterday is gone. We may dwell on the mistakes, the defects, the failures of yesterday as if they were final, as if we have no recourse, but in so doing we are wasting today. *Today* is our day. "Today, if ye will hear." Not "Yesterday, if ye will hear."

Nor did he say "tomorrow." Tomorrow has not dawned for us, and how may we be sure that it will? Yet how much we live in the future. We put off until some later time, as though tomorrow were sure. This is why the message comes: "Today." There is a time, a day set forth in which we are to *do* the things we know; and that time is "Today."

Notice how important *today* is in God's time. "Today if ye will hear his voice" (Heb. 3:7). "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today" (3:13). "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (3:15). There is an urgency about it. Whenever God confronts the human heart, it is always an urgent moment. It is always for now, not tomorrow, not next week, or next year, but *today*. The future is not in my command. The future is not my problem, or my solution. My time is *now*.

Today is God's time; "now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). God is eternally in the present tense, and He wants us to live in the present tense also. He has acted in the past. He will act in the future; but He always acts in the now. Now is the time God commands. He speaks to get our response *now*. And there is a note of urgency about it. There is a note of intensity about it. Do it now. Do not wait until another time. *Today* if you will hear God's voice.

Not only is there a day declared in which to hearken, but there is a duty to be performed. "If ye will hear his voice." It has two meanings for us. First, it involves our hearing. But the emphasis is not upon our hearing the voice of God. The emphasis is upon *if we* will hear. Let us translate it so we might be able to understand it better: "If God, in his grace, should allow us the privilege of hearing his voice again, do not miss the opportunity."

The message is clear: If God speaks to us today, we had better act on it, because He may not speak again. That is the emphasis. There is an intensity placed upon the condition involved. We are to hear, we are to respond—if God will speak and give us another opportunity.

We so easily get the idea that time is an endless chain of opportunity, a chain that goes on and on and on forever. That is not true. If today we would hear His voice, whatever we do, let us not harden our hearts. We need to be reminded that God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man"

(Gen. 6:3). We need to be reminded that we are to seek the Lord "*while he may be found*"; we are to call upon Him "*while He is near*" (Isa. 55:6). The time is coming when He will not be near, and when He will not be found. "Give glory to the Lord your God, . . . before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains." There is a limit to opportunity.

God grants the opportunities; He sends the message. Oh! Let us not let it slip by or treat it carelessly, when God has done all this for us.

What is the reason we should respond today? Because He may not call another day. But the author of Hebrews gives yet another reason: "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (3:7-8). If we turn away from God again and again, can we expect our hearts to remain soft and impressionable? Will they not become hard and calloused and our response be made thus the more difficult?

This is the danger of procrastinating. The word "harden" refers to something that dries up and becomes parched, cracked, hardened. When a tree is very small, we can bend branches and the trunk to the ground. But when the tree is grown and becomes strong, we cannot bend it. It is no longer flexible. It is set. That is what may happen to our hearts. Our hearts may be hardened "through the deceitfulness of sin." Let us beware. Sin is deceitful. Our own hearts are deceitful. Sin tells us that if we just hang to our own way a little longer, things will change; the way will be easier. But sin has hardening power and hardens our hearts in our own deceitful ways.

Oh! Let us take heed to our ways. Let us walk deeper into the days ahead with this in mind, that the harvest is passing, the summer is ending, and whatever we are to do must be done *now*. Now is the time to face up to the sins that are holding us back, to the procrastinating spirit that is dogging our footsteps, before God's mercy has expired. We need to face right now any tendency in our hearts to put off the self-sacrifice and self-discipline that we know we need. "Now is the accepted time." It is now or never. So let us pray God to grant us each the opportunities we still need; and may we seize those opportunities eagerly, "*while it is called Today,*" that the end of our probation time may find us safe in His eternal favor with harvest days forever past and a long, long eternity ahead of us in which we shall share all the joys of the immortals. Then we shall be able to shout with joy, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and . . . we are saved!"♦♦



Our greatest victory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

“Here I Raise Mine Ebenezer”

WE ALL know that the Jewish people in Old Testament times would have had a far easier time had it not been for the persistent Philistines. The Philistines were long-time residents of that tiny country which they themselves called Palestine. They migrated from the area now known as Yugoslavia about 1200 years before the time of Christ. The Philistines settled for a time on the Island of Crete and then tried unsuccessfully to get into Egypt. They were turned back by the forces of Rameses III and settled just outside Egypt on that narrow coastal area known today as the Gaza Strip, an attractive, fertile, maritime plain which Egypt and Israel are still quarreling over.

Physically, the Philistines were big people. When Moses sent Joshua and a small band into Palestine on an exploratory mission, the “giants” the ten spies reported to be inhabiting the land were the Philistines. Goliath was a Philistine in the time of King Saul.

The Philistines were not only big, they were brutal. They had a barbarian energy. They also had an advantage over other nations in that they were the first to use iron in military weaponry. In our own lifetime, archaeologists have unearthed in Philistia the remnants of a sword factory and an iron smeltery. The Bible mentions the Philistine iron chariots that terrified Israel in the time of David, and you recall that in the fight between David and Goliath, the giant wore armor made of iron.

When the Israelites first entered Palestine, the Philistines were among the major opponents; in fact, from the moment the Jews crossed the Jordan to occupy the land, the Philistines were their chief rivals and many were the battles between the two peoples.

One of the more notable battles occurred about three thousand years ago just west of Jerusalem. It is recorded in the book of First Samuel. The Philistines scored an overwhelming victory. First Samuel 4 summarizes the results of the battle:

“So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home; and

there was a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. And the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain” (I Sam. 4:10-11).

A crushing defeat! Thirty thousand men were dead. And some very important men, too, even the sons of the high priest Eli. In addition to all this, the ark of God, that chest which the Israelites carried with them and which symbolized the presence of God among them, was captured by the Philistines.

Twenty years after that crushing defeat, the Israelites met the Philistines in battle again. This time Israel won. It was one of Israel’s first and greatest victories over the giant Philistines with all their iron weaponry. And after that great, long-awaited victory, Israel rejoiced.

It was at this time that the prophet Samuel did something very significant. He set up a stone to celebrate the triumph. He set this special stone on a dry and sandy hillside and called it “Ebenezer,” meaning “the stone of help.” Travelers on the road from Mizpah to Shen would see that stone memorial for years to come, that stone which Samuel had erected as an act of gratitude to God.

Centuries later the hymn writer, Robert Robinson, caught the idea when he wrote these words: “Here I raise mine Ebenezer; Hither by thy help I’m come; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.”

Ebenezers! Are there any in your life, or mine? Are there not some moments we can recall, some moments of victory that we want to remember with a special sense of gratitude to God?

We come to a place in our lives where we must fight. We must fight with all that is in us. With all the help that God has given and all the inner strength that we can muster, we must fight. And so we fight—and we win! Is it not worth it? And can we not, in that supreme moment of triumph, raise *our* Ebenezer, our stone of thanksgiving to God who has been *our* source of help?

Our Ebenezers may vary in size and shape, but they are what we may call unique expressions of gratitude. They are whatever we may erect to remind us of those special moments when, in view of some great blessing—a deliverance, an act of mercy, a fresh opportunity, an act of mastery—the feelings of our heart welled up in praise and thankfulness to Him who made it possible.

Does not each one of us have some special cause to erect *our* Ebenezer, some remembrancer in profound appreciation of *our* blessings? Have we not had *special* favors from the hand of God, we who have been called to be His own sons and daughters? Have we not had blessings beyond measure? Have we not in our possession this very moment the most priceless treasure upon earth, the key to *eternal life*? And have we not ample reason to erect even here our Ebenezer to the God who has brought us safely thus far and who has promised to go with us till the end?

While thousands flee their homes and perish in the black waters of a hostile sea; while thousands more exist without even the basic necessities of life; while thousands more fear to flee from lives that are worse than useless; and while all the world, however high or low their station, grope in the darkness of the superstitions and false hopes of men, is not ours a tremendous blessing—even now? Can we not stop this very night and say, “Here I raise mine Ebenezer; hither by Thy help I’m come”?

An Ebenezer arises only out of profound, deep Thanksgiving, out of the depths of real gratitude. That Thanksgiving hymn we sing, “Now Thank We All Our God,” do you know the circumstances behind it? It was written by a pastor after the village in which he served had been almost totally destroyed by a plague which was followed by a famine. In that one year over 8,000 persons perished. It almost destroyed a heroic people, but a few survived, and among them was the man who wrote this hymn. He wrote it first to use as a prayer for his own family at mealtime. Later it was put to music. The hymn is an Ebenezer type of thanksgiving:

*Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices.*

*Who from our mother’s arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.”*

In other words, “Here I raise mine Ebenezer; hither by Thy help I’m come.”

We are all bound to face some giants in our daily battles, some sins hard to conquer, some inclinations that seem so very much a part of us that they will never give way; some tendencies to depression, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, weakness or weariness that we seem almost unable to overpower; some physical set-back, sorrow, or woe that brings us almost to the point of uttering a complaint. When we take each struggle to God in prayer and find His strength to overcome, when we find that through Him we are able to conquer *any* foe, when victory arises out of apparent defeat, as it did for the Israelites three thousand years ago, then let us stop to erect our Ebenezer stone and sing:

*Here I raise mine Ebenezer;
Hither by Thy help I’m come.
And I hope, as I continue
Safely to arrive at home.*



“Abounding Therein with Thanksgiving”

REGARDLESS of how the day begins or ends, our lives must abound with thanksgiving and praise to God. Who in this wide world has more cause for giving thanks than we? Haven’t we been liberated from grossest darkness and superstition? The Word of God is so true and pure, it is our staff and daily shield, to guide and lead us in the paths of righteousness all the days of our probationary journey here. Besides, wonderfully blessed are we to be living in this country of the free, with every comfort and advantage and in the very closing hours of the day of salvation. We should grow by leaps and bounds.

We marvel at the great apostle Paul, how he could abound so much with thanksgiving and praise to God. His life wasn’t what we would call rosy and free of pricks. He had much more to endure than we ever will have. In his mind the things of the present mattered not. He realized all these earthly afflictions were but for a fleeting moment. Was not God fashioning him to become a vessel of the finest quality, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use in that day when all earthly trials and woes will be forgotten? The joy of the future spurred him on and on. We should all want to be like Paul, counting everything as a means to gain that future glory, and praise the Lord daily by a life well lived.♦♦

NEWSLINE 1900 *Part II*

Newsline 1900 began last month with a collection of newspaper articles current at the time our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, was embarking upon his largest single missionary endeavor, the Mission Ship Megiddo.

After two hazardous and eventful years on the river, the group decided to sell the steamer and locate permanently in the East. Rochester, New York, was the location chosen.

The early days in Rochester were almost as eventful as the days on the river, as the group combined the tasks of settling and building with new efforts to spread "the gospel." In this issue we are publishing more articles drawn verbatim from various Rochester and other local newspapers, whose editors apparently considered the group's activities "newsworthy."

Paducah, Kentucky
December 23, 1903

UNIQUE CRAFT HERE

The Megiddo Returns from Its Up-River Wanderings

The Owner May Sell It

The most remarkable steamer on the Ohio—as for that matter, on any river in the wide world—is now tied up at the Paducah landing just below the Fowler wharfbots. It is a large, three-decked steamer, the "Megiddo," commanded by Capt. L. T. Nichols, who has with him a large band of Christian workers who make their home on the boat. They number in all, men, women and children, about eighty-five, including a brass band of twenty pieces, and it is their

ideal to live together in this way without ever an angry look or a cross word being exchanged.

The Megiddo visited Paducah about a year ago, and since then has been up and down the Cumberland and the Ohio rivers. The boat had a narrow escape from damage by floating ice last week and was stranded on the bar at Caseyville. She will remain here some days and then, unless she is sold, will go up the Tennessee river. Services will be held in the city during the stay. The travelers preach a unique doctrine of their own.

The boat was built from the specifications of Capt. Nichols, who superintended the building of it, the members of the crew doing nearly all the work. The exterior of the steamer is decorated in a very attractive manner, ornamental railings surrounding the main and upper decks and scroll work embellishing the appearance of the boiler deck. Surmounting all on the top of the pilot house is a replica of a large Bible opened at the middle chapter verses of the Bible, Psalm 117. Right at the front of the upper deck arranged in a semi-circle is the motto "In God We Trust," and between the pretentious smoke stacks, "United We Stand" in large letters, can be read from a long distance. The exterior of the boat, however, striking though it is, is entirely eclipsed by the wonderful arrangement displayed in the interior. Looking down the long corridor on the second deck, one gets the idea of a mammoth hotel. There are over fifty staterooms, all kept spotlessly clean, carpeted throughout, the walls decorated with Bible texts, the whole exhibiting an ingenuity of design and elaborateness of finish seldom approached.

Captain Nichols is a preacher of considerable distinction. He has traveled extensively in Europe and America and his views on Bible teaching and exegesis demand attention.

When the boat was visited by a *News-Democrat* reporter this morn-

ing, it was learned that the owners of the vessel are thinking of selling her. She has been over two weeks getting from Evansville having been stuck on a sand bar above Shawneetown through the incompetency of an Evansville pilot. The Megiddoites had a hard time. Their boat was broadside against all the floating ice which was coming down upon it in vast sheets, ten acres in extent, and would surely cut them to pieces. This would not be, according to the captain's ideas, and believing in the old maxim about trusting in the Lord and keeping one's powder dry he set about preventing disaster. After securing hotel accommodations for the women and children, the men barricaded the ship as best they could under the guidance of Capt. L. T. Nichols, and soon had a great mass of ice on their upper side which effectually protected their craft from the masses still coming.

After four days and nights of continued work the steamer was floated on Saturday morning only to be stuck by the same pilot on another bar about one-half mile from the first. Captain Nichols then gave the pilot sixty seconds in which to get off the boat and telephoned Captain Fowler of Paducah for help. Captain Fowler sent Captain Crouse, and the Megiddo was brought safely to Caseyville. On the bar at Caseyville was thirty inches of water and the Megiddo draws twenty-eight, but that was enough for Pilot Crouse, and the Megiddo safely reached Paducah, where Captain Nichols hopes to find a buyer for his splendid craft.

Since leaving Paducah last year, thousands upon thousands have listened to the preaching of the mission people and have been captivated by the sweet strains of their fine brass band.♦♦

Within a month from this time a buyer was found and the boat was sold.

Rochester, New York
January 25, 1904

Rochester, New York
January 30, 1904

Christian Brethren

Coming to Make Rochester Their Home

Will Preach the Coming of the Lord and Truth of Bible

Somewhere between Paducah, Kentucky and this city there is a train bearing sixty followers of the Christian brethren faith who are coming to Rochester to establish headquarters and conduct a gospel campaign throughout New York and nearby states. One member of the body arrived in Rochester Monday and has already leased a block at 55 East Avenue for the temporary future of the group.

Making Rochester the headquarters, the members will visit different places in the state next summer in specially constructed automobiles or special cars. A large tent will be carried and a brass band will accompany the expeditions to furnish music.

These Christian Brethren are a queer people and, from all reports, a sincere people. They preach the coming of the Lord, which they believe is near at hand, urging people to prepare themselves and live better lives. After a convert is made, he is advised to join the church of his choice and go his way in peace.

They also believe in the absolute truth of the Bible and teach this doctrine. Concerning this, Captain Nichols says: "After years of careful, earnest study I rejoice with joy unspeakable to know that I have found the gem for which I sought, and hold in my hands the blessed Bible, knowing that between its covers there are no impossibilities, contradictions or absurdities."••

CITY IS INVADED

Christian Brethren Settle Down in Rochester

The invasion of Rochester by the Christian Brethren is a reality. A small army of 71 men, women and children is now located in a large, old fashioned residence at 55 East Avenue. Captain L. T. Nichols, the leader and originator of the Christian Brethren faith, arrived in Rochester Wednesday evening with the main army of his followers and since then the temporary headquarters of the army have been filled with busy sounds of moving furniture, tack hammers, and carpenter work.

When the society sold its steamboat on the Mississippi a few weeks ago, it sold also a large part of the furniture that was used on the boat. Four carloads of furniture not sold are expected to arrive here today.

Captain Nichols was about the city all day yesterday looking for a large flat that the band might buy for its permanent quarters. He examined a great many places but the buildings did not suit him. As a result, he says that the band will probably remain in its present quarters until spring when a large plot of ground will be purchased and all the carpenters, masons, brick layers and other workers in the band will turn in and erect a fine large flat that will be exactly suited to the purposes of the organization.

Captain Nichols has picked out Rochester as the permanent home and headquarters of the Christian Brethren. He says the organization is a working Christian organization for the uplifting of men. It has no religious doctrines to exploit, no Christian creeds that it opposes; but is simply an organization of sincere Christian men and women who believe that by working together and living together more can be accomplished for the establishment of the

kingdom on earth than would result from individual efforts if the same number lived apart from one another.

The society is not organized upon the communistic principle. There is nothing communistic about them except ideas and Christian work. Each man has his own property, earns his own living and is obliged to rely upon himself for a livelihood. Each family has living quarters entirely to itself and, as far as possible, each family also has a cook stove and complete housekeeping establishment of its own also.

Captain Nichols has been all over the United States and Europe, and his followers are men and women from far and near. The women do needlework at home and the men go out and labor as painters, paper-hangers, masons, carpenters, and plumbers. Captain Nichols is just the leader for such a band of religious workers as this. He has a strong, bearded face, a forceful and direct style of address and the air of a man whose life has been given to much meditation.♦♦

A group of Union soldiers were marching during the Civil War. They were tired and thirsty, so when they came to a spring, they all stacked their guns while they took a drink. They did not know it, but a Confederate horseman had been watching them, keeping out of sight. When they stopped to drink, the horseman saw his chance. He rode up and took them all prisoners, and marched them into the rebel camp.

Never stack your gun, but hold it in your hand, for the enemy is unknown. If you stack your gun, you will surely be marched into the enemy's camp. (Our enemy is our own sinful nature; our weapon is the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.")

—L.T.N.

We cannot earn the great prize our Master has promised to give. Even a hundred years of what He promises would more than repay us for anything we could do now. —L.T.N.

February 20, 1904

Rochester's New Citizens

The Christian Brethren Have Purchased Land

A great deal of interest is being centered in the Christian Brethren, who have located in Rochester with temporary headquarters at 55 East Avenue. The sect differs from some religious bodies for the fact that it does not ask for money to support its votaries. L. T. Nichols, who is captain of the community, and his wife, are people of culture and refinement and possess abundant means to carry on the propagation of what they consider religious truth.

For some years the followers of Capt. Nichols have lived on a beautiful steamer, and journeyed from place to place along the Mississippi. The steamer was recently sold and the group has decided to settle here.

One of the theories of the Christian Brethren is that the bright planets owe their luminosity to the fact that they are inhabited by immortalized beings. Capt. Nichols holds that a literal interpretation of the Bible Story of the creation of the earth in six days is insupportable. He thinks it unreasonable to suppose that a God who has existed through all eternity can have done nothing until within the past 6,000 years. He declares that the universe has been in existence and inhabited for vast ages.

Most of the conversations had were with Capt. and Mrs. Nichols and also Rev. Mrs. Maud Hembree, a gifted lecturer and of a scholarly nature, showing them to be highly educated people.

The Christian Brethren have abandoned the steamboat feature of their missionary work and have chosen Rochester as the place where they will found a community of people having their own religious belief. They have bought about 5 acres of land on the Thurston Road and there

is no doubt that soon a thriving village of Christian Brethren will be established on the West Side which will be a credit to that section of the city and perhaps be the means of doing a vast amount of good from the moral point of view. The Christian Brethren are most assuredly a very desirable class of citizens, as far as can be judged by their manners and appearance. They are thrifty and kind-hearted and imbued with strong religious convictions which, however, are of a very cheerful character, the doctrine of eternal punishment in hell not being accepted by the brethren.**

March 27, 1904

How Members of the Megiddo Mission Band Live

Not since the Megiddo Mission band, composed of more than three score of persons, started out four years ago to save a wicked world, has one single follower of Captain L. T. Nichols ever spoken an unkind word to another.* Truly the little Christian band lives like one big, happy, contented family.

Hardly would one expect to find in so many human beings such rare consideration for each other. Go through a single street in Rochester and you will find at least one family willing and ready to expose a neighbor's faults. And there is not a single apartment house nor flat in Rochester where the tongues of gossips do not wag. Somebody stands at the spigot ready to turn on the troubled waters.

At the settlement founded by the Megiddo Mission band out Thurston Road, just inside the city limits, peace reigns supreme. It would be

like committing a felony to say just one disrespectful or sarcastic word that might injure the tender feelings of another. There is no person out there to make trouble. And none are wanted. Nothing but a feeling of brotherly love is tolerated. And it is of the real, sympathetic, sincere kind.

"When we started out four years ago," explained one member, "we agreed among ourselves that we would live happily together. We made a solemn vow not to offend each other by a single unkind word. All of us have kept our promise.* A man's word here is taken in all sincerity. Once he violates a promise he is liable to expulsion. God never put people in this world to live a life of strife and discord."

The aim of the little settlement is to live out the golden rule in its entirety. One family helps another. Not a single member is poor, and some have savings tucked away for a rainy day. They never buy anything on credit since it is against the rules. Because of this they have no financial cares.

When night overtakes the members of the Megiddo band they go to sleep with a clear conscience, feeling they have not caused a single heart to ache through any cruel act or unkind word.**

**Our Editor questions the all-inclusiveness of this statement. This rule, always a principle among the group, was made firm by each individual's promise at the time the group was preparing to take up residence on the Mission Ship, by the wise foresight of the leader of the group, L. T. Nichols. Without such a regulation, the project could never have succeeded. And it is a Bible command, to "be at peace among yourselves" and "cease from anger." But this was the ideal, not always the achieved reality.*

We can never have peace in the future unless we have it now. When we are at peace with God, it will be easy enough to be at peace among ourselves.
—M.H.

March 27, 1904
The Rochester Herald

The Christian Brethren Colony

About the middle of January of this year a small religious colony arrived in Rochester and took up temporary quarters on East Avenue. The colony called itself the Christian Brethren and its arrival was quite unostentatious. Captain Nichols, head of the colony, told the newspaper men when he arrived that he was going to settle his people in Rochester in a home of their own. He is now taking the first steps toward making good his statement.

Early last week the Herald told of the purchase of a large property at the corner of Sawyer Street and

Thurston Road by the Brethren, where the headquarters of the colony will be located in the future. Later in the week a Herald representative had a long talk with the Captain about his work and the manner in which they live and labor.

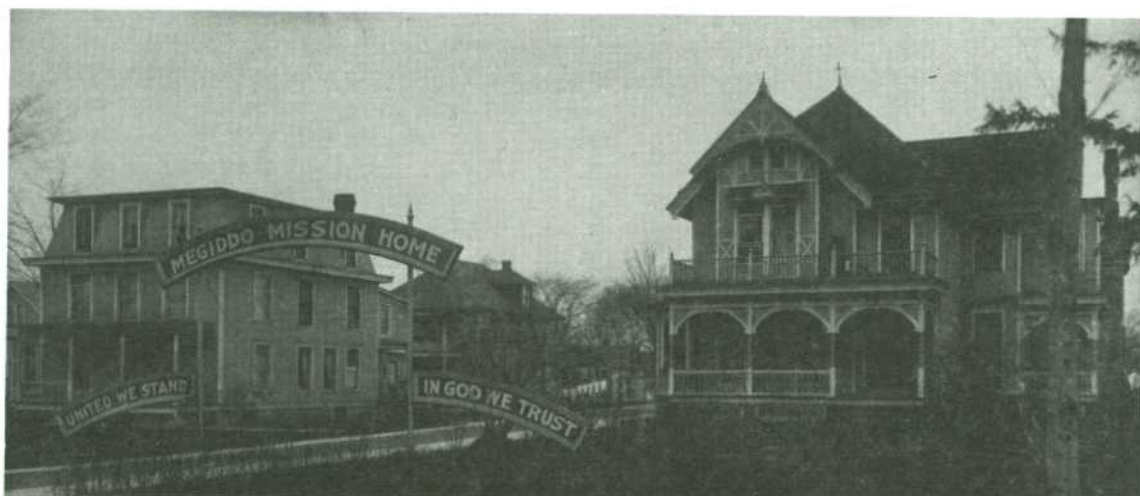
The word "colony" is used rather than community for there is little of the community life about the Brethren. Individual property rights are closely guarded. Those who own personal or real property have it in their own name and no other in the colony has any claim on it whatsoever. Some of the brethren are well supplied with this world's good and have no need to work. But all labor every day, for drones are not encouraged in this busy little world. Neither are the workmen required to work for the colony. They seek their natural employment in the city and are not bound by any tie to any class of work. Among the brethren are men of all trades—in fact it is hard to find any kind of skilled labor in which some of them is not expert. So it matters little to the colony where it locates. Their means of liveli-

hood—hard work—is always within their power. The motto "To labor is to pray" might well be tacked up over their doors. The only benefits they receive from living together are the stimulus and encouragement of mutual aim in religious work and the economy that comes from catering to the wants of the household in a wholesale way. Members of the colony claim that they live much better for less money than other people in similar circumstances of life.

There is no secrecy about the colony. Captain Nichols met the Herald representative cordially, showed him through the new house and spoke of the improvements that were to be made and of the work that the brethren hoped to do during the coming summer. The leader of the Brethren is an interesting character, bearing all the earmarks of a Westerner who has lived with real men for a lifetime. He is tall and serious in aspect; his voice is soft but its tones leave no doubt that it can command attention when he wishes to catch the ears of a congregation or audience. His manner is direct,



A group of the "Christian Brethren" shortly after they located in Rochester.



An early photo of the original residence (right) and the first houses built (left) on the property fronting on Thurston Road.

though not brusque, and altogether there is something of sincerity about the man that convinces his listener of the genuineness of his convictions and the sincerity of his purpose. Among the co-workers of his colony he is more of the brother than the captain. He calls them by name and they answer as if they were fond of him and look up to him as one who has their best interests at heart.

When a boy of 14, Mr. Nichols became persuaded that there was a life work for him to do, preaching the gospel in ways that varied from other and more orthodox sects. He is now forty years older and his faith in his mission is no less strong. Gradually he has surrounded himself with the little band that now has taken up its home in Rochester.

"But this is no Zion City," said Captain Nichols, "and everyone's private rights are carefully safeguarded.... The property we have purchased has been allowed to go to seed a good deal and during the spring and summer we will endeavor to make it look a little more beautiful than it is at present. In another month we will be in better shape to receive visitors."

At the rear of the house, when The Herald man made his visit, about a dozen men were at work making frames for the new building and preparing to begin work on it. The ground in the front was being cleared, and while the men were at work in the

open the women of the colony were busy indoors cleaning up the new acquisition and making it more suitable to their needs. There was an air of great cheerfulness about their proceedings. They sang at their work and seemed to live in great harmony. All ages and classes were represented. Little children were playing while their parents worked, and of austerity and puritanism there was no sign. In this sect religion is not synonymous with the long face and downcast countenance.♦♦



Maud Hembree (right) and Maggie Miliken (left), a blind member of the Megiddo group. They lived together for 47 years—without a single cross word or argument.

Saturday Globe
August 20, 1904

The Megiddo Mission

A Band of Zealous Christian Workers in Rochester

Many of our readers will, no doubt, remember the Megiddo Mission Band that came to Rochester from the south last January. The band resided for a short time in the city, then purchased five acres on Thurston Avenue. Since then the place has been a perfect beehive of industry, proving that the members are a class of missionaries who believe that labor is honorable. There were already on the grounds a handsome residence and two cottages. To these have been added a large three-story building containing 21 rooms and another cot-

tage of nine rooms which will soon be completed. The progress they have made proves that they will soon have one of the finest mission homes in the country and one that will greatly add to the beauty of that portion of the city.

The originator of the band, Rev. L. T. Nichols, is noted as being one of the best-versed men on Bible themes in the world. He has spent a lifetime in its study—from childhood the Bible being his constant companion. At the age of 14 he was fittingly termed "The boy preacher." For forty-four years Mr. Nichols has devoted his life to religious work and has never accepted a dollar's salary. He is a preacher of considerable fame and has traveled many thousands of miles in the United States and Europe to aid his fellow men in leading holy and pure lives. He is not only a preacher, but he is also an inventor and able mechanic and draughtsman and builder of the ship he commanded for over two years; also of the new mission home. He is an able business man and man of affairs, who, besides all his religious work, has accumulated sufficient means to enable him to devote his life to the cause he so firmly believes in. His wife, to whom he has been united nearly 40 years, is a charming lady who looks the picture of health and contentment.

This mission band has a peculiarity all its own. It has not started out to increase its numbers. It does not expect to take one member out of any of the churches; it does not come as messengers of a special revelation to them, but comes with the Bible in one hand and history in the other, pointing to facts foretold in the one, verified on the pages of history to prove the divine authorship of the Bible.

The mission people are not so much concerned about points of doctrine, if they can only get people to throw away their creeds—take the Bible as their sole rule of faith and practice and lead pure, holy lives. It does not matter whether people are Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists or Presbyterians, if they will only become a "peculiar people zealous of

good works—looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ," they will be accepted in the day of His coming.

They declare that it is impossible for human instrumentality to bring about the dawn of universal peace and good will among men. The world is nearly 6,000 years old in the experiment of human good and as far off as ever from the condition of things desired. They point to the golden empire of Babylon; to the silver empire of the Medes and Persians; to the brazen dominion of the Greeks; to the iron power of imperial Rome, as represented in Daniel's vision, and to the fact that mortal man has never succeeded in placing a world-wide dominion in their stead, because it was foretold that upon their ruins the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and stand forever. They believe that the vision of Daniel has been surely working itself out in the affairs of men; and now we stand in the era of Christ's appearing to destroy all human rule, authority and power of man, and establish on this earth a world-wide dominion. Under the rule of this heaven-sent King, earth's troubles will be hushed in the calm of universal peace. The stroke of divine judgment will alone break up the tangle of evil in which human affairs are involved. They teach that the condition of human society cannot be broken up in judgment and reorganized in righteousness until that Day. Christ will first come to earth and judge his servants, living and dead, then call upon all nations to lay down their arms. The governments of earth will struggle with desperation to preserve the human regime from threatened destruction. They will fight to the end and refuse to beat their spears into pruninghooks until expiring hope goes out in the complete triumph of the Lamb.♦♦

It is decidedly unsafe to put any confidence in ourselves, our own ideas of right and wrong. We cannot, and expect to be saved.

The Ten Commandments

**Rev. L. T. Nichols Says
That Most People Keep
Only One or Two**

"The Commandments of Christ" was the subject of the sermon delivered last night by Rev. L. T. Nichols in the large tent of the Christian Brethren. The tent was again well filled and the audience was respectful and attentive.

"It is not sufficient that we keep one of the ten commandments of Christ but we must keep the whole ten," was the burden of the thought of the speaker. "Some people think it is sufficient to select one of them and live up to it day after day, forgetting entirely that there are nine others which ought to be obeyed as well. So one leaves out one command, another leaves out another, and no one keeps them all as they should.

"If we get angry we have broken one of the commandments the same as we have if we commit a murder. The churches make a mistake in not enforcing the commandments in the way they should be enforced. The pastor sees his churchgoer violating one of the commands. He does not chastise him but allows him to do it repeatedly. All ministers should come out straightforwardly and tell their people what the Lord wants of them. The Bible says that 'Anger rests in the bosom of fools' and there was never a truer saying. This is God's statement and one we should all heed."

One of the statements made by Rev. Mr. Nichols in regard to the present day ministers did not quite suit the ideas of one of the hearers in the back of the tent and he immedi-

ately voiced his expostulation. He avowed that the speaker did not quote his scriptures correctly and that he was giving a one-sided view of conditions.

"Every word I utter can be backed up by statements in this Holy Book," answered Mr. Nichols, placing his hand on the Bible lying on the table behind him. "If any of you doubt the accuracy of my quotations, come right forward and I will show you that I have spoken correctly." Needless to say, no one came.♦♦

August 23, 1904
Rochester Herald

KNOW THE BIBLE

Foundation of Teaching of the
Christian Brethren

The LAST DAYS ARE NEAR

So Declared Rev. L. T. Nichols at
Megiddo Mission Tent
Last Evening

The large tent of the Christian Brethren at the corner of Genesee Street and Bronson was again well filled last evening.

One of the most remarkable things about this sect is their familiarity with the Bible from cover to cover. Whatever else they may accomplish they have certainly made a systematic study of the Scriptures. Both speakers were very scriptural in their preaching and were constantly quoting passages, giving the exact chapter and number of the verse in each instance. In connection with this, Mr. Nichols gave the following incident:

"I remember when I was a boy we had an old minister who always used to bring his sermon into the pulpit

carefully written out word for word. He would place it between the leaves of the large Bible and then pray to the Holy Spirit to send him words to say 'for he knew not what to utter.' Then he would declare earnestly that the Holy Spirit would put the words in his mouth. To test this one Sunday one of the boys slipped behind him and pulled the sermon out while he was praying. The minister opened his Bible at the proper place to speak. He looked under the desk, through the Bible again, on the floor, and finally was forced to admit that he could not preach as he could not find his sermon.

"So it is with every minister who pretends to receive his utterances direct from the Holy Spirit. All we can know about holy things is contained in the Bible."

Following along the same line of thought, Mrs. Hembree said that the Bible is all yea and amen, not yea and nay. She said that she had often wondered at the many different religious beliefs in the world, but that she now thought such a condition to be due to the fact that the world had been turned away from the Bible to fables. She said that the Bible itself is all true, that no one can ever take away its truth.♦♦

Stop, and seriously consider: Who are making the greatest progress in their onward march to the Kingdom of God? Is it not those who every night take a retrospective view of their actions of the past day and compare them with the plain commandments, and seek and study to better them in the day to come? Indeed, apart from our reconsidering our acts, thoughts and words, we shall never be enabled to "purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh," and thus "perfect holiness in the fear of God."

—L.T.N.

If we could only realize the wonderful knowledge God has granted us in His Word, it seems as though every heart would be filled with loving gratitude, filled with deep desire to serve such a Mighty Being.—L.T.N.

NONE BORN OF THE SPIRIT

At Second Birth Bodies Will Be
Incorruptible, Says
Rev. L. T. Nichols

Rev. L. T. Nichols and Mrs. Maud Hembree spoke last night at the services in the Megiddo Mission tent. Mr. Nichols made calculations to show the duration of the joys of the saved. He said:

"How impossible it is for us to conceive of the vastness of the future! To think of a trillion is beyond us. If a man had begun when Adam was created to count a trillion, counting one a second, sixty a minute, 3,600 every hour, 86,400 every day and never had stopped to eat, drink or sleep, he would still have to have more than 25,000 years to count the trillion.

"To gain the wonderful future," said the speaker, "it is necessary to be born of the spirit, but not one man or woman on the face of the earth at the present time has been born of the spirit. Every child of God is begotten of the word of truth, as James testified, but the spirit birth must come later.

"Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' We have here two distinct things; and when Christians get the birth of the spirit, they will be able to come and go with the freedom of the wind, being equal to the angels, made like Christ. These corruptible bodies will have been changed into the same image as that of Christ's. Only then will we be born of the spirit."♦♦

August 29, 1904 AM
Rochester Herald

CHRIST'S RETURN

**Rev. L. T. Nichols
Says the
Time Is at Hand**

Wickedness Will Suffer

**Believes the Earth Itself will
Never Be Destroyed**

The Christian Brothers of the Megiddo Mission Band held its last tent meetings in this city yesterday afternoon and evening, and the tent at the corner of Genesee Street and Bronson Avenue was well filled at both services. In the afternoon Mr. Nichols spoke on the Theme of the

return of Christ to earth and gave Bible proof to show that it is not far distant.

"Indeed," said Captain Nichols, "it may come at any time, and I warn all of you to be in readiness. For the reason that there have been changes in the calendar several times since the earth was first created, I am not able to state any specific time for the coming of the Saviour to take possession of the earth, nor will I attempt the apparent impossibility of fixing any date.

"But I sincerely believe that He is coming, for there is every proof of it in the Bible. I presume you are now saying to yourselves, 'Oh, but we have heard that a long time, and can no longer believe it. Years ago, in Miller's time, he fixed an exact date for the destruction of the earth and many people believed him. The same thing happened when Thurman predicted the millennium. It did not occur, and we are still living the same as ever.'

"But I tell you, my friends, just as truly as I stand here the Lord is coming again. It is all these foolish predictions of men who have believed truly, but who have made the fatal error of fixing an exact time, either by some chronological event or by

astronomy and which have not been fulfilled.

"The Bible says no man will know when the second coming is to be. It predicts it and by certain prophecies we are allowed to make an approximate guess, but to ask any man to fix an exact date is simply absurd, and the doing of it has put the idea in disrepute.

"We must let God take his own time. He says that in the last days the scoffers shall arise. Some of these scoffers have been made by men who have attempted to do more than was in their power, like Miller and Thurman. At that time I also preached it, but soon my eyes were opened and I began telling people I was wrong and that so also were those who were led by a false understanding of the matter.

"But that the Lord is coming I have never had a doubt, and it is a very grand thought to me to know our blessed Redeemer is coming back to us once more.

"You all know that the world was once destroyed, but what are we to understand by that? Robert Ingersoll, the great infidel, once questioned me in regard to that and I will answer you as I answered him. It was the world of the wicked which was



All ready for Abib Day, 1924.

destroyed, and not a world centered about the Himalayas, the Rockies or the Sierra Nevadas. Literally speaking, the world will never be destroyed, but will go on forever. "The earth abideth forever." At the coming of Christ it will be only the wicked which will perish.

"It will be the political heavens and earth which will be destroyed. The righteous will be given the crown of glory which they have earned."••

August 29, 1904
Rochester Evening Times

AN INNOVATION IN TENT MEETINGS

Megiddo Missioners Claim the Churches Today Are Devoid of Holy Spirit.

Something quite out of the ordinary in the way of tent meetings has been going on for the last week or ten days at Bronson Avenue and Genesee Street. The Christian Brethren of the Megiddo Mission Band have been telling the large crowds startling things in the way of Bible explanation, and the members of the brass band furnish very pleasing entertainment with their playing and singing.

The meetings were brought to a conclusion last night, when an overflowing tent full of people listened to L.T. Nichols, captain of the band, explain the subject of the "Holy Spirit." According to Captain Nichols, the Holy Spirit is no longer in the possession of Christian people, and great evil results, he says, from people believing they possess it. Dozens of different sects and denominations, he declared, all speaking and believing different things and yet all claiming to be moved by the same Holy Spirit, show how false the claim is. In every case where people had the

gift of the Spirit, signs and wonders followed. Those who received it healed the blind, raised the dead, spoke with tongues, etc., etc. How is it, the speaker asked, that these signs and wonders do not follow now? Simply because the idea that men have the gift of the Spirit is a delusion. Not one man on the face of the earth has a particle.

A great many passages of Scripture bearing on the subject were gone over and explained and questions were answered to the evident satisfaction of a large number of people in the audience.

Captain Nichols hasn't a particle of use for tobacco and liquor and says it will be left outside the gates of the glorious kingdom which Christ will establish on this earth.

At the conclusion of the service the speaker asked how many would join with him in a determined effort to henceforth lead better lives, to put away all wrath and anger, to be kind and gentle especially at home, husband to wife, wife to husband, to never let their children see them quarrel, but set a better example to their children. Nearly 100 entered into this agreement and quite a joyful impromptu reception was held at the close of the service, at which Captain Nichols and Mrs. Hembree were heartily thanked by many present for the good things they had said and the encouragement they had given.••

If faithful, we shall someday be clad with wonderful blessings, as with a garment enshrouding our entire being, causing us to thrill with ecstatic joy as the mighty and wonderful volumes of celestial glory halo around us. We shall be made like unto the angels when the mighty "seven thunders" begin to peal, one after the other, in all their untold, majestic sweetness. Who does not want to become a participant in its endless reality!

—L.T.N.

I would rather a man would steal all I have than to steal away my hope of eternal life.

—L.T.N.

IS NOT AFTER MONEY

Leader of Band Tells of Its Aims

Megiddo Tent Pitched At Charlotte

The captain of the Mission Band, Rev. L. T. Nichols, told last night of the work the band has done since it started out, and explained its objects and aims. To do good was its only object and to make people better its only aim, he said. If he could get a dozen persons in Charlotte to put away anger and impatience and evil speaking, he should be better paid than if all the wealth of the Klondike were given to him.

The company wanted to make Christians of those who were in the church, said Mr. Nichols. To be a Christian meant a great deal more than just attending church on Sunday. Referring to the Bible illustration of Christ being over His people as a refiner of silver straining off the scum, which rose to the top till the refiner saw his own image reflected in it, he said a man must reflect the image of Christ before he was a Christian.

"I would give a thousand dollars—and a great deal more," Mr. Nichols, declared, "for a photograph of Jesus Christ. It is a vastly greater thing, though, to have Christ's likeness shining out through our life in every action than it would be to carry Christ's picture in our pocket. And to be a Christian means to be like Christ, and Jesus lived by every word of God, His Father. The Megiddo people have come to stir up more interest in the Bible, that blessed volume which contains no contradictions, absurdities or impossibilities on its pages.

"The Bible declares that Christ is

the same yesterday, today and forever, and, were He to descend, His command would be to 'search the Scriptures,' for 'man should not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' The indwelling of God's Word is absolutely necessary for a man or a woman to be a true Christian, full of good fruits.

"It is wrong to murder, it is wrong to steal, but to get angry will just as surely shut us out of God's kingdom as to murder or steal. 'Without holiness,' says the Bible, 'no man'—not one—'shall see God'; and I should be a false teacher if I said anything different from what the Bible says."••

CAPTAIN NICHOLS SCORES SALOON

The Genesee Baptist Church was well filled last evening when the second meeting of the course arranged by the Prohibition Alliance was held, with Captain L. T. Nichols of the Megiddo Mission Band as speaker. Captain Nichols is very radical in his views and denounces the liquor traffic and all its supporters unsparingly.

He said that with all the prohibition and temperance movements in existence the drink traffic was increasing still and at a fearful rate, and this he attributed to the half-hearted and weak-kneed support given to the temperance cause by professedly Christian people who were not Christian at all. To be Christian means, said the Captain, to follow in Christ's footsteps, to do as Christ did. Fancy, he continued, Jesus Christ opening a Subway Tavern and asking God's blessing on the "beer tub"—such a man was not a Christian, no Christianity about him. He was a child of the devil and doing the works of his father.

He arraigned the Christian ministers for their lukewarm attitude toward the prohibition movement and declared that if they did their duty there would soon be a mighty onward move. It was a gigantic evil that called for greater devotion and greater patriotism than our fathers displayed at Bunker Hill.

Once, at a political meeting in his youth, Captain Nichols said a speaker had told the Democrats that they were such silly fools they did not know what their own name meant. He told them their name came from two Latin words, *demo* and *crati*; and *demo* meant Devil and *crati* meant crazy, and they were crazy devils. That was all right for politicians to get something on one another, but the awful fact stared us in the face that both Republicans and Democrats were bound up in this awful traffic which, if licensed, would license men to sell that which made of their fellowmen crazy devils by the hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands.

The speaker concluded a very remarkable address by beseeching the audience never to vote for any man for office who would license a man to sell liquor; and to the young woman never to marry a man who touched liquor; and to mothers and fathers to daily instruct their children on the subject.♦♦

December 7, 1904

Believes in a Heaven on Earth

Finishing up his talk against Spiritualism at Colonial Hall last night, Rev. L. T. Nichols discoursed on the Bible with regard to the nature of man. He said that when he was young he greatly desired universal salvation to be true, but the Bible could not be made to teach it at all. Nevertheless God's plan was a thou-

sand times better, for he was going to fill the earth with happy immortal beings.

The idea that man was immortal now or had any immortal soul, he said, was nowhere taught in the Bible. The original words occurred some 1,686 times in the Sacred Book, but never in one solitary instance were they rendered immortal soul or never dying soul or anything suggesting it. It was really a wonderful blessing to find out such an idea was not true for it did away with the necessity of providing some place of everlasting torment for the unrighteous.

In the future life there would be nothing but unspeakable happiness, but every individual attaining to it must prepare themselves for it, for God was no respecter of persons and only the one who feared God and worked righteousness would be accepted.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," and Captain Nichols said as he had been asked to explain the devil, the devil was not some supernatural, immortal, horned, cloven-footed monster created by God to lead and coax and tempt poor, frail man to the infernal regions. Such a conception placed God in a fearful light. A Being, he said, who would create such a monster for such a purpose would be utterly unfit to be worshiped. He would be the greatest fiend of them all.

"My dear friends," said Captain Nichols, "never think of such a God as that again; there is no such God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, 'Our Father who art in heaven. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' and so the time will soon be here when this will be fulfilled; when Christ, returning to the earth, will establish that blessed, glorious kingdom which will spread from sea to sea till the whole earth is a heaven."

Mr. Nichols made an earnest appeal to the audience to live so as to be worthy of living with Jesus on his return. The Bible, he said, dealt the death blow to the lying pretensions of Spiritualism for there were no such things as "departed spirits" to come back.♦♦

May 8, 1905

THE ANGELS THAT FELL

**Maud Hembree
of Megiddo Mission**

Repudiates Milton's Idea

Maud Hembree of the Megiddo Mission Band spoke last evening at Plymouth Church on "The Angels That Fell from Heaven." She said in part:

"Milton, in his 'Paradise Lost' pictured a war in the high courts of heaven, where dwells the Almighty, and once, pure, bright angels were cast to earth, thence eternally to wage a mighty conflict against God and man. People have accepted this as emanating from the Bible. The Scriptures teach that it is the 'goodness of God' that leadeth men to repentance, and no man or woman of reason can believe in the supreme goodness of an all powerful Being who would create a fiend more powerful than Himself, to tempt through life and torment through eternity the work of His hands—the great mass of humanity who in Him live, move and have a being. We have the promise, if faithful, of being made equal to the angels, never more to taste of sorrow, disease or death; but if such a Being ever fell from His high estate, what assurance have we that a like fate may not be our portion? The God of the Bible is represented as 'full of mercy,' but could such an attribute belong to a being who could torment the work of his hands through an eternity? We do not wonder that there is not more love of God in the land so long as people believe such a doctrine.

"All power and dominion are clearly ascribed to Jehovah and to Him alone, and the only opposing force brought to light are the hosts of wicked men and women opposing His sovereign will. The word satan simply means an 'adversary,' an opposer; but false teaching has attached to the word ideas that it was never meant to convey.

"The first definition of angel is 'messenger,' and may mean either a mortal or immortal messenger. The connection shows what messengers they were. The apostle says, 'I will therefore put you in remembrance how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.' Jude wishes them to remember something that occurred when the Lord saved the people out of the land of Egypt. He was not calling their attention to something that happened on Jupiter or Mars. To find out who the messengers were we have to refer to the time when He saved the people out of the land of Egypt. After Moses had escaped from Egypt he chose twelve men—a ruler of every tribe—and sent them to spy out the promised land. They went on their mission and returned. Two brought a good report of the land, told of its

luscious fruits and milk and honey, while ten of the messengers fell from their high estate and by their rebellion caused the people to rise against Moses. Letting the Bible be its own interpreter, all is clear, and Milton's fallen angels prove to be the vain creation of his own fancy."••

July 17, 1905

THE LIFE ETERNAL

**Megiddo Leader Does Not
Translate Genesis in Literal
Sense**

Rev. L. T. Nichols continued at the Plymouth Church last evening his series of discourses on the subject of the Atonement. He said that of all things the question of how we might gain a home in the future is the most important. Jesus said to his disciples, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."



The rostrum area of the Church, just before the springtime observance of "Christmas" and New Year's day, 1908.



Interior of the Church after its first remodeling, about 1920.

Eternal life, said he, is the gift of God, not something in our present possession, and only to be given as the Bible declared, to those who made themselves worthy of it. To believe and understand the Bible is the first move in the direction of fitting ourselves to live forever with Jesus Christ. There are three Christs in the Bible, he contended. The personal Christ who lived for 33 years on this earth and then ascended to heaven, and Christ the truth, and the multitudinous Christ.

"When a dispute over the meaning of a word is taking place and one of the disputants asks, 'Have you Webster in the house?' everyone immediately knows what is meant. So when Paul said, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' every Bible student knows it was not the literal man Jesus Christ, but Christ the truth—the word of God.

"The idea that on account of Adam's sin the human race was plunged into an abyss and Christ had to die in order to appease God's wrath and get them out is unscriptural and unreasonable. The first three chapters of Genesis can only be understood by comparing what the Bible said in other places on this

same subject. The garden planted eastward in Eden had no more reference to a literal garden than it had to a pig pen. Never once in the whole Bible is it spoken of as a literal garden, but as the church—the vineyard of the Lord, into which every believer enters when he accepts Christ; and Christ the truth is the tree of life, that "bread, which came from heaven." "Wisdom is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." Everyone in the vineyard of the Lord must become a 'tree of righteousness' in order to be accepted in the day of judgment—a tree bearing the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, and longsuffering."

Mr. Nichols closed by appealing to all assembled to begin now to bear these good fruits and by a loving self denying godly life make themselves worthy of the eternal life which Jesus is to bestow at his second coming.♦♦

We need to write the Word upon the tables of our heart, so that these plain commands will be with us whether we lie down, or whether we rise up; sit in the house, or walk by the way.
—L.T.N.

February 4, 1906

MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE

Subject of Sermon Last Evening

At Plymouth Church last evening Captain L. T. Nichols of the Megiddo Mission preached on "The Death that Came by Sin and the Man Made in the Image of God."

Mr. Nichols said that the whole world is in darkness as to the man made in God's image and that it is not natural death that comes by sin at all. "Man is not put on probation to obtain natural life," said Captain Nichols, "and alike they go to the grave. Not a man on the face of the earth as yet has had the penalty of sin—the second or eternal death—passed upon him, and not one except Jesus Christ has been rewarded with eternal life."

Captain Nichols said that in the Civil War he knew a man who was

shot for sleeping on guard, but that it would be looked upon as an awful outrage to gather up the descendants of that man and shoot all of them for what that man did.

"It would be ten million times worse for God," said Captain Nichols, "to punish the whole human race for what Adam did and God has never done so. Every man dies for his own sin but not one man of the whole human family has died that death and will not until after he appears before the judgment seat of Christ. 'All dominions shall serve and obey him'—the new man, created in righteousness and true holiness. That is the man spoken of in Genesis. It is not the men and women living around us now of all shapes and sizes, but those of whom Christ is the head.

"Paul declared, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for our Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile bodies.' If we are now in the image of God there is no need to talk of changing our bodies."••

On the center back wall is displayed the central message of the Megiddo Church; "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21).



At church-time, during the Pastorate of Rev. Maud Hembree (center).

March 24, 1906

A UNIQUE CELEBRATION

Megiddo Band's Remarkable Christmas Observance

The captain of the Megiddo Mission Band continues his mission work among the churches, claiming that they are still holding to many things that are relics of paganism. The Captain is very energetic in the promulgation of his new ideas, and has now surprised the people of Rochester by declaring that the time commonly celebrated as Christmas

and New Year's is not Bible but pagan time. He also claims that both events should be celebrated in the spring of the year, this year March 25.

One remarkable coincidence that he refers to is that Dionysius, the learned monk who first began to compute our time, began the civil year March 25. Even St. Augustine said that "Christmas was neither derived from apostolic usage or sanctioned by any general council." In harmony with its belief the Megiddo band has been busily engaged for the past two months in preparing to properly celebrate the day. The band holds its regular services in Plymouth Avenue Church, one of the largest in the city; and already the walls and grand columns of the lofty church are adorned with 10,000 flowers which the women and children of the band have made.

As you enter the main entrance a picture of rare beauty meets the eye. Flowers everywhere, so perfect that it is difficult to realize that they are but imitations of nature's loveliness. Wreaths of carnations and lilies intermingled with various other decorations and festooned with delicate green adorn the main entrance. As you move up the aisle the scene becomes more lovely. Sprays—, wreaths and bouquets of roses, wreaths and sprays of lilies, etc., ornament both sides, and as you glance under the gallery eight brilliant stars are seen, bearing the words, "Sing and Rejoice," "Our God Is Love," "Our God Is Wisdom," "Our God Is Just," "Our God Is Merciful," "Our God Is Powerful," "Our God Will Save, When Jesus Comes." On each side of every star there is a pot of lovely tulips, looking as natural as though growing in your own garden at home. On an arch 30 feet above the platform embellished with lilies, carnations and roses, are inscribed the words, "Christmas Greeting to All." Below the arch is a miniature earth surrounded by glittering stars. On the earth we read the Bible quotation, "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with My glory."

The Megiddo band believes that at Christ's second coming this earth will

be made most beautiful. "The desert will blossom as the rose," and earth's troubles be hushed in the calm of universal peace, God's will be done on earth as in heaven, and thus the earth become a part of heaven. Wreaths of roses and lilies extend almost to the platform. Around the posts supporting the lofty chandeliers are twined climbing rose vines, with their clusters of delicate flowers.

Sunday, in this beautiful place, amid the flowers, with the triumphant tones of the grand organ and the band pealing through the lofty dome, the band will celebrate the birth of Jesus, who was greater than all earthly rulers and to them the coming King of all the earth. Sunday will be not only Christmas day but also New Year's, for Capt. Nichols holds that Christ's birth does not come a week before. It is in the spring that the Bible year begins, when all nature is aglow with life and freshness, as it is now in Palestine. The vernal sun lights up the landscape with a thousand forms of beauty. In all the glens, on all the plains are flowers blooming, daisies, hyacinths, tulips, lilies, roses, etc., growing in unbounded profusion, transforming the land into a garden

of flowers—a fitting season for the birth of Jesus and the beginning of the new year.

The Megiddo band is a rather unique organization. The mission derived its name "Megiddo" from the name of their large ship, built in 1901. The word is from the Hebrew and literally translated means, "God is in this place." It has a settlement on the Thurston road just southwest of the city. While the members of the band hold ideas a little in advance of the time, and somewhat radical in their nature, yet they seem a cool headed, intelligent and quiet class of people, whom any community would welcome in their midst. Besides Capt. Nichols himself there are a number of active lieutenants.♦♦

It may be of interest to our readers to know that the Mission Ship Megiddo survived only about five months after it was sold. The ship struck another sandbar, was badly damaged, and sunk within a few hours. The crew of the ship and its cargo were saved, but the ship itself was a total loss.—Editor.

MEGIDDO MISSION HAS NEW CHURCH

Sanctuary Built Entirely by Members

Novel Mural Decorations

The new church building of the Megiddo Mission Band at Sawyer Street and Thurston Road will be dedicated on Sunday and for the first time in many years the members of this unique religious sect will worship in a sanctuary built entirely by themselves.

The new church is a frame building on a concrete foundation and while simple in its architectural design, is yet a pretty edifice, and well suited to the needs of the community. The main building is 76 feet long and an antechamber is 12 feet in length. The main building is 36 feet wide and there is seating capacity for 400 people. Pews of chestnut with excellent finish are fitted with comfortable cushions covered with dark red material. The seats were all the work of the pastor of the community, Captain L. T. Nichols, and the cushions and coverings were made by women of the settlement. The total cost of the building is about \$5,000 and every cent of it was in the bank before the first spadeful of earth was taken from the site.

The rostrum is covered with a handsome red carpet and the front of the church is also carpeted. Lighting the church are many electric bulbs, some of the best in the world, and heat is supplied by a furnace. Stained glass windows admit the daylight.

The distinctive feature of the Megiddo Mission Church, however, is the mural decorations. The church is finished inside with a hard and smooth plastering and on every available inch of space, excluding the ceilings, Bible texts, which form the



The traveling missionaries and their tent

foundation of the Megiddo faith, are painted in very artistic lettering, the sort of illuminated capitals that are found in old missals made by the monks. Red and gold are used a great deal, and the whole effect is one of much brightness.

Over the pulpit is painted in a semi-circular frame this text from the Scriptures: "As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Over the rear door is a ladder, on each round of which are words indicating steps in the ladder of salvation. The ladder is surrounded by these words: "Work out your own salvation by taking every step up this ladder of salvation." The steps beginning at the bottom are: "Righteousness," "Good Works," "Faith," "Hope," "Charity," "Patience," "Meekness," "Gentleness," "Sobriety," "Kind Words," "Mercy," and "Obedience in All Things."

At the left of this ladder is painted a picture of a river steamboat. Asked in regard to that, Mr. Nichols said for more than two years the Megiddo band had no home but the steamboat reproduced in this mural. It was this voyaging that got Mr. Nichols his name of "Captain," by which he is now called more often than he is by his title of "reverend."

Over the door leading to the rostrum is painted a view of the "Holy City." This is a painting of the ideas Mr. Nichols gleans from the Revelation of St. John. From the top of the picture flows the "crystal stream of the river of life," which springs from under the temple. The picture is painted with infinite care and the ideas embodied in it are very evidently those of a religious mind which has devoted much time to the study of Scripture.

The church is practically completed, except that carpenters yesterday were engaged in changing the doors, making them swing outward, as Captain Nichols wants no danger of a panic in the church.♦♦

Start today to walk in this way to life and glory; be kinder, more tender-hearted, more forgiving. —L.T.N.

March 22, 1908

Worshiped in New Building

Megiddo Mission Band Held Dedication Ceremonies

Services Very Simple

For the first time in its history in Rochester, the Megiddo Mission Band worshiped in a church of its own yesterday morning when the congregation gathered in the new building and with impressive ceremonies dedicated the edifice to the service of God.

Two hundred fifty people attended the service, which was led by Rev. L. T. Nichols, captain of the band. The dedication sermon was preached by Captain Nichols and instrumental music was furnished by the mission band of eighteen pieces. The feature of the service was the singing by the children, happy and healthy little boys and girls for whom life seems to hold nothing but smiles in a community where happiness marks the tenor of simple lives.

The original number of members of the mission, ninety in all, was present and took an active interest in the service, with the different classes taught by Captain Nichols and his assistants. Half an hour was taken in asking questions on the Bible, which were answered by the members.

Captain Nichols' sermon was simple, dealing with the three considerations why the congregation was called to worship in the church—that they might direct their lives so that they might live longer, live happier, and obtain the assurance of the great

future. He told how the mission people had already erected 42 houses in the area and intended to go on building more. It is his goal that each family own three houses—one to live in, and two to rent for income, and the Captain himself is willing to help them to that end. A certain sister of the band came to him two years ago and said, "I'd like to own a house myself but I have only \$30." "The money doesn't matter," replied the mission leader, "I'll put you up a house." He did so. She has it all paid for today, and has a savings account in a Rochester bank besides. Not a single member of the band is in debt. They are thrifty, industrious and pleasant people.

Captain Nichols told also what reasons had led to the erection of the church: first, the meeting room in the home was far too small for their own needs, and second, the community growing up around them needed a church. And no one outside the Megiddo Mission had been asked to subscribe one cent to help defray the expenses, and the church was all paid for.

He explained that the collection plate was passed at services only to give those present an opportunity to contribute if they wished. "Those in debt had better pay their debts before putting money into the contribution box," said Captain Nichols. "It is an abominable shame for people to be giving money for religious purposes if the grocer's bill is unpaid, and other people are clamoring for their money. We want no such money in the contribution box."

The object, Captain Nichols explained, that he had in life was to be the means of being a blessing to others. He did not want their money, but only wanted them to be nobler and better. That they might disagree in points of doctrine was possible, but if they lived godly lives every one should be contented.♦♦

The word of God should stir us, yes, should stir us to a greater determination to make everything subservient to the cause which alone can secure to us that great reward! —L.T.N.

THE MILLENNIUM

Megiddo Pastor Draws Spirited Picture of Earthly Conditions When Christ Shall Come Again

"Earth's Great Jubilee" was the subject of the discourse at the Megiddo Church last evening. Captain L. T. Nichols, the pastor, said in part:

"Men are continually seeking to look into the future, and the best of men endeavor by means of legislation and other ways to make provision for the betterment of mankind. Nevertheless, the only sure knowledge of what the future will disclose is overlooked. That knowledge is contained in the Bible. Mankind, however, is so befogged by the teaching of the various sects and creeds of Christendom, so bewildered by trying to read into the Bible the orthodox beliefs, that the wonderful revelations of that wonderful book on the subject of the future of this earth are almost entirely missed.

"Yet the Bible is most explicit in declaring that divine intervention is the sole and only remedy for the dreadful evils that everywhere exist. It declares that the great and eternal God will 'send Jesus Christ'; that Jesus Christ will return to this earth, armed with all power to break in pieces and destroy human society as at present constituted; to replace the conglomeration of incapable authorities who now misrule the earth, by the unerring righteous rule of Jesus Christ and His associates, His associates who through the long dark ages have fitted themselves for the task by obedience to His truth, and who are now sleeping in the dust, awaiting Christ's return."

Captain Nichols said the Bible evidences for these assertions were so numerous and so absolutely convincing that there was no man on earth who could refute it, or would come out against him and publicly show where he misread the Bible or misinterpreted it on this wonderfully important subject.

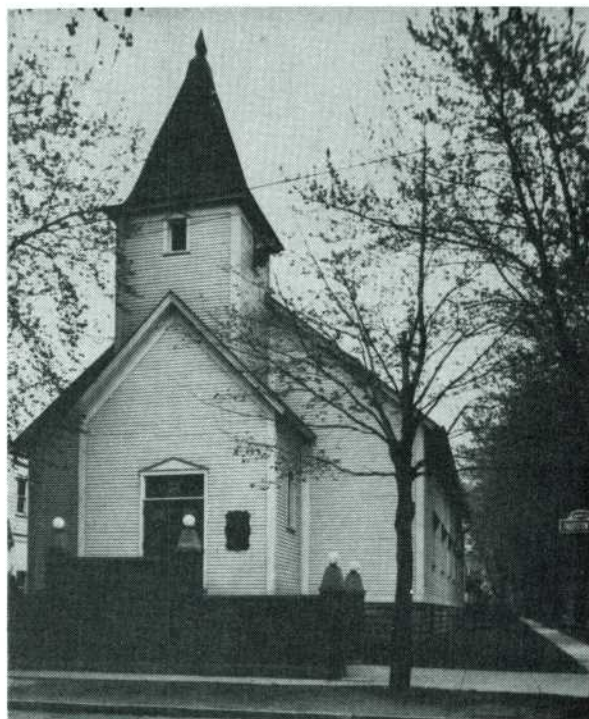
He drew a glowing picture of the glorious and lovely scene the earth would present when the all powerful rule of Christ and the saints had been fully established; how from childhood the population would be instructed in the science of correct living, so that in that age not one would die under 100 years old; how, under just laws rigorously enforced, a few hours' work per day might be sufficient to support a joyful and glad existence, and poverty and crime would be a thing unknown.

This, what might be called the "millennium idea," continued Captain Nichols, is not an isolated, detached hope; it is the very pith, and runs through the whole Bible teaching, permeating branch, trunk and root. Moses and the prophets

had declared how that the whole earth should be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." This would be brought about, not by Socialism, in fact was utterly impossible by any human schemes or agencies whatever, but by divine intervention.

All this and much more the Bible clearly revealed, and the evidence that we were within a short while of the beginning of this wonderful time was conclusive. The world would be startled out of its stupor of unbelief and indifference by the appearance of Christ upon the scene, not this time as the Lamb of God, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

This was the message of the Megiddo Church at the turn of the century, and it is still their message of hope today—a hope which is now seventy years nearer fruition. It is a hope that shines brighter and surer as the days go by, for as surely as God has promised it shall be fulfilled. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37).



The Megiddo Church

We Thank Thee

We Thank Thee, Lord,

for those whose encouragement has made us strong;
for those in whose company the frightening things were not
so alarming, and the hard things not so difficult;
for those whose strong arm has saved us from falling into
temptation, and who have helped us choose the
right.

Save us, Lord,

from making the same mistakes over and over again;
from doing things which we know annoy others;
from magnifying trifles into principles;
from failing to realize our own weaknesses and
refusing to see our own faults;
from persisting in courses of action which we learned
long ago lead to trouble.

Forgive us, Lord,

for the times we have been ungracious and ungrateful;
for the times we have discouraged others instead
of encouraging them;
for the times we have grumbled and complained,
or been cross, irritable, fault-finding, and
difficult to live with.

Help us daily

to grow stronger, purer, kinder,
to shed old faults and to gain new virtues;
to live as befits those who begin each day with Thee
and who go out to live every moment of it
in Thy presence.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

