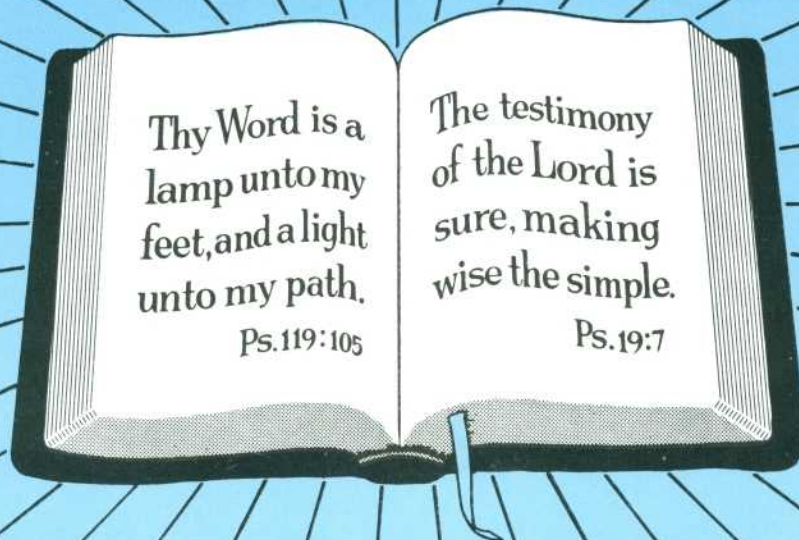


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



I Cannot Come Down

Example and Influence
Baptism: Literal and Spiritual
The Power of Personal Choice

Whose Opinion Really Counts?

Are you a people-pleaser?

A 15-year old girl once said, "I want to look just like my friends. I would shave my head if all my friends were doing it." This is probably a rather typical viewpoint as far as the majority of young people in the world are concerned.

But people-pleasing affects more than young people. All of us are people-pleasers to some extent. We are conscious of the way others respond to us and are offended if we sense some negative reaction to what we have said or done.

There are so many ways that we are affected by the attitudes of others toward us. In a certain sense, this is healthful and good. For instance, I really like a nicely mowed lawn, but why? At least part of the reason is my awareness of what the neighbors think. When they keep their grass neatly trimmed, they appreciate seeing ours well-groomed too.

But somewhere along the line people-pleasing becomes something less noble than a normal desire to avoid being offensive to others. When pleasing other people becomes our basic motivation, when our whole consciousness is what they will think—without regard to what is right or wrong or expedient or needful—it is sin. When pleasing other people becomes more important than pleasing the Lord, it is sin.

Strangely enough, even in doing the Lord's work we may become so conscious of other people's opinions that we do perfectly good things for the wrong reasons. Worse yet, we sometimes equate other people's opinions with God's and so go directly against the Word of God.

It may be a question of which responsibilities and activities ought to have first priority in our life. How much time should I set aside for personal enrichment, meditation and spiritual devotion? How much time should I give to my family? my work? my church? What should be the criteria by which I decide? Because I am partly responsible to several individuals, it is my duty to try to please them,

insofar as I can do it without violating any law of God. But it is humanly impossible to please everyone all the time, and there is the ever-present need to nourish my own inner life.

There is no way to avoid it: In the present social structure of our lives, people must be pleased. To try *not* to please people would be to make life unnecessarily unpleasant and unenjoyable—and un-Christlike. But in pleasing others, I must keep certain objectives in mind. I must not do it simply to try to impress them with my abilities, or my knowledge, or my skills. When I serve, I must serve out of love—first for God and then for others.

Again there is the question of priorities. It is not always a matter of what should be done first. All too often something I really ought to do will not get done at all! And inevitably, the result of my decision will leave someone else disappointed or inconvenienced.

Perhaps the apostle Paul can offer some guidelines that will prove helpful. He writes of our duty to one another: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Rom. 15:2). And, "Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine hatred for evil and a real devotion to good. Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit. Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work and let us keep the fires of the spirit burning, as we do our work for the Lord" (Rom. 12:9-11, Phillips Translation). And then there is the inescapable duty to ourselves, which will also benefit others: "Make these matters your business and your absorbing interest, so that your progress may be plain to all. Persevere in them, keeping close watch on yourself and your teaching; by doing so you will further the salvation of yourself and your hearers" (I Tim. 4:15-16, NEB).

I am here for one primary reason: to prepare a character acceptable to God. This means pleasing the Lord, seeking His approval upon everything I do.

(Continued on page 10)

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.

Bible quotations

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

- NEB**—*New English Bible*
- NIV**—*New International Version*
- NAS**—*New American Standard*
- RSV**—*Revised Standard Version*
- TLB**—*The Living Bible*
- TEV**—*Today's English Version*
- JB**—*The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition*
- Phillips**—*The New Testament in Modern English*
- Berkeley**—*The Modern Language New Testament*
- Weymouth**—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*
- Moffatt**—*The Bible, A New Translation*
- Williams**—*The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People*
- Rotherham**—*The Emphasized Old Testament*

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

Megiddo Message

Vol. 70, No. 11

December, 1983

Editorial	
WHOSE OPINION REALLY COUNTS?	2
Sermon	
I CANNOT COME DOWN	4
Achievement comes with effort	
Sermonettes	
... AND STILL SHE SPEAKS	11
Article	
EXAMPLE AND INFLUENCE	12
Let our entire Christian influence be a lifting power to others	
Special Book Feature	
AN HONEST MAN	16
The Life and Work of Rev. L. T. Nichols	
Chapter Two: <i>Laying the Foundation</i>	
Chapter Three: <i>Searching</i>	
Questions and Answers	22
Concerning: Baptism: Literal and Spiritual When Was Christ Born? John the Baptist or Elijah?	
Letters	26
Finally, Brethren	
THE POWER OF PERSONAL CHOICE	27

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, *Founder*; Kenneth E. Flowerday, *President and Editor*.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

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

I Cannot Come Down

Scripture Reading: Psalm 101

UPON THE annals of sacred history are recorded the experiences of some men and women of God which are of special interest to us today.

One such man was Nehemiah, who, some twenty-four centuries ago, lived for God in a situation not unlike that in which we find ourselves today. Here was a man who, so far as we know, had never been outside of Persia. Financially comfortable, in high honor as the great king's cupbearer, his was an easy, luxurious life, if he cared for it, with the horizon unclouded. He was a Jew, but Palestine and Jerusalem were merely names to most Jews of his generation. Some one hundred sixty years separated them from the sacred land that Babylon had ravaged. To Nehemiah, and all the Jewish people he had ever seen or known, the foreign land was home.

Had he been an average man, he would no doubt have been only too glad to vegetate securely in his comfortable surroundings and die amid luxury, pompously honored and promptly forgotten. This was doubtless the pattern among the many nobles of the Persian court of that period of whom we know nothing. But we do know Nehemiah, for Nehemiah was no ordinary man. Nor was Jerusalem an ordinary name to him. Greater to him than his wealth and position was the faith of his fathers, and Jerusalem and the land of Israel were inseparable from that faith.

The Jewish Captivity had ended some ninety years before, when the kindly King Cyrus had given opportunity to those Jews who wished to return to their homeland, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Lord. The return, however, had not been popular. The great mass of Jews preferred to remain in their Babylonian homes, which they had always known and where they were

quite comfortable. Less than fifty thousand pioneers had gone back to inhabit and reclaim a land which had once sent forth its armies of a million and more fighting men. The original leaders and the prophets who inspired the rebuilding of the Temple had passed away, and the Jewish community was having a miserable time of it. Surrounded by enemies who were determined to prevent their growth or success, low on finances and short on leadership, and honeycombed by jealous enemies who resented their presence with intrigue and defeatism, the returned captives were existing precariously and dejectedly in a ruined city, waiting for they knew not what. The situation called for Nehemiah, though at the time Nehemiah knew it not.

Not until one day when a man came to the Persian court who had recently returned from Jerusalem. "How did you find the city?" Nehemiah asked. "What of the country, its people, its land?" The friend reported the very sad situation. Jerusalem's great walls were broken down, her gates destroyed, and the once-glorious temple lay in ruin. As for the people, they were utterly discouraged and disorganized. And the situation was not likely to improve, because their enemies were watching them closely and forbidding them to do anything about rebuilding either the walls or the gates.

The report made Nehemiah sick at heart. He had but one thought: What could he do for the city and people he loved?

Reaction and Response

Nehemiah was a vigorous, yet tender sort of man—quick-actioned, decisive, of deep feeling and deep emotion. He could not see the need without reacting deeply.

Even the king noticed Nehemiah's changed countenance, and insisted on finding out the nature of his problem. "What is it, Nehemiah, that has made you so

Note: *I Cannot Come Down* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

downcast?" Nehemiah told the king. He told him because he thought there might be a possibility that he could gain a sympathetic ear and be sent by the King to Jerusalem. He asked the king if he could go back to the city and see what he could do to rally the people, organize them and get them started once again. The king graciously favored Nehemiah with consent to go and survey the ruins of his beloved Jerusalem, a military bodyguard to see him safely through, and even a twelve year appointment to the Judean governorship. He even gave Nehemiah a document granting him the necessary materials for the rebuilding project.

Back to Jerusalem Nehemiah went. A few nightly inspections, and he knew that all he had heard about Jerusalem—and worse—was true. Enemies round about attacking, the people discouraged, nobody believing anything that could be done, and nobody doing anything. They were too poor, too disorganized. Worst of all, they lacked motivation.

Nehemiah immediately set himself to the task of devising ways and means to correct this. In a matter of days, he had organized the people, brought them together, and given them new hope and courage. Was this the city of the Lord? Was this the place where Jehovah had promised to place His name? Should it not be rebuilt? And so he gave this group this job to do, another group this, another that, and things began to move. They began to work. Suddenly there was life, activity, ambition and hope. After ninety years the wall was not yet built. They had needed a wall badly; they knew they needed a wall; and they had sat down and wished for it, and wept because they had no wall. Nehemiah came, and within a few weeks—fifty-two days to be exact—they *had* a wall. Only one man, but what a man!

He even devised a plan so that the work could proceed in the face of constant enemy threat: every workman was armed, prepared. Each held a fighting weapon in one hand and a tool in the other. The plan worked—because God was on their side.

But the mischief-makers would not give up. They insisted upon executing an ill-conceived plan they had designed, and desired that Nehemiah come down and consult with them, threatening that if he would not they would send word back to the king that he was subversive, that he was not loyal, that he had ambitions to take the place of the king.

Nehemiah was unmoved. In response he sent these memorable words that form our topic for this morning: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down" (Neh. 6:3).

Whenever someone is doing a great good work, there are always strong gravity-like forces pulling downward.

Standing Firm: "I Cannot . . ."

We have in this historical episode not only an example of the greatness of Nehemiah in standing firmly on God's side and not being intimidated by the enemy's schemes, but also a theme prevalent in the Bible, that whenever someone attains great character and whenever someone is doing a great good work, there are always strong gravity-like forces seeking to pull downward. The downward call was first heard by Adam and Eve, to descend from the loftiness of God's level, and it has been heard ever since. It is the basic moral struggle of man.

Through the ages the majority have succumbed. But not all. Nehemiah was not alone in his noble answer, "I cannot come down." Centuries earlier a young man named Joseph had stood as firmly against the immoral wife of Potiphar. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" His firm convictions would not be even slightly compromised for her seductiveness. So high had he set his standards above what would have tempted most young men that he did not give even a single thought to compliance. "I cannot," he said simply, and he meant it. "I cannot come down."

Nor should we forget Jesus' firm answer to the tempter who desired Him to compromise. "It is written" was His immediate reply to the various offers of wealth, power and honor. Each refusal was accompanied by a firm statement which let His tempter know in no uncertain terms that He could not and would not come down.

Calls to Compromise

Today in our modern world the call of "Come on down" is heard again and again. It is the call of the television which pipes scenes of lust, cruelty, crime into nearly every home. It is the call of the theater that stages plays aimed at mass audiences who desire not to think but only to be entertained.

"Come on down" is the siren call of porno shops that openly degrade, debase, and enslave the human body, mind and spirit and pull into the muck. It is the call that comes loudly to the child who instinctively seeks grati-

fication rather than growth. Always from below comes the insistent message, as if rising from swamps and bogs. It is the call of the lowlands. The seducement has not quit from the day it was passed up to Nehemiah on Jerusalem's wall until the present day. "Come on down, don't be so high and mighty."

We can never in our mortal state escape completely the pull of the earth. Always there is some force that works upon us as a gravitational pull. We may not be tempted by the lowest of the lowness that surrounds us, but can we truthfully say we have never compromised, that we have never come down from the high

standard Christ set for us? We know that we have.

Our coming down may be in small matters, so small that we may hardly perceive them. But in the balances of God even little things weigh. It has been said that the balances of God are so delicate that even a single thought can tip the scale. So let us be careful.

In matters of human relationship, compromise has often proved an effective tool to end a controversy. More than once in history a compromise has pacified a wearisome conflict and proved a golden means by which to resolve differences peaceably.

Men have ever tried to use this same tool in dealing

Let Us Pray . . .

Eternal God, high above our imaginations, whose judgments are a great deep, we worship Thee. We seek Thee that we may be saved from ourselves. Small creatures are we, too easily absorbed by trivial nothings, too easily missing the blessings of Thy greatness for our own pettiness. Today in this place of worship, in awe before Thine eternity and grandeur, we would gain altitude and horizon in the greatness of the faith Thou hast entrusted to us.

Lord, we are unspeakably grateful for calling us out of the darkness that surrounds us to prospects that reach beyond the bounds of time and touch the borders of eternity. May we never forget our great deliverance, and the hands—human and divine—that have helped us.

We pray Thee to save us from our weak self-pity. Our complaints are too many; our praises too few. Thou seest our need; Thou knowest our frame, and rememberest that we are dust. But save us, we pray, from self-pity. Give us deep resources of inner strength that we may face life with adequacy and confidence because our strength is in Thee; that we may rise above the difficulties that confront us and carry off a victory in spite of them; that life may grow strong from within and that we may ultimately feel in our own bodies the triumph of, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" Teach us to make the most of whatever life may bring to us in spiritual possibilities; so shall we rejoice and be glad all our days,

knowing that Thou art working all things together for our eternal good.

Father, we pray Thee to save us from any compromising of our sacred obligations. Thou hast called us *upward*, and we cannot come down. May our standards be Thine, our ways Thine, and all our thoughts be such as are worthy of Thy scrutiny. Impel us to live on the highest level of which we are capable, and always to keep forcing ourselves higher and yet higher, knowing that Thou wilt choose for Thine eternal associates only the highest and best.

Save us, we pray, from weak excuses, from pardoning ourselves when we are far from Thy pardon. Give us the honesty to face our sins. Grant that in this place of honest prayer before Thee from whom no life is hid, we may see the evils that hinder us. Let there be such sincere and moving penitence among this people that lives may be redirected, that sins may be cast aside, that we may make every effort to speed ourselves and others toward Thy Kingdom.

Save us from our narrow interests and cares. Help us to live with humility, love and concern for one another, knowing that we are members of one brotherhood, servants of one Lord. Help us to remember always our duty to one another, as our Master taught us to pray—"our" Father, our debts, our trespasses, our daily bread. Remind us that we cannot live unto ourselves alone, that we are part of Thy body and Thy true church or we are not truly Thine.

O God, in the quiet of prayer may we feel Thy presence and the watchful care of Thine angel upon Thy people everywhere. Lay upon each stricken heart a healing, cooling hand, and bless each as Thou seest best. And may the serenity, steadiness, joy and peace of Thy abiding go with us today and tomorrow, and through all coming tomorrows, world without end. Amen.

with God; but without success. The law of God cannot be compromised. God lays the law before us, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Whether it conflicts with our thinking to a greater or lesser extent, there can be no reconciliation except by our submission. We cannot steer a middle course or strike a balance in dealing with God. Appeasement can come only by our exchanging our ways for His.

Jesus taught that we must take the law of God wholeheartedly into our lives, or it cannot profit. He Himself called men to a giant undertaking, even the complete renunciation of self. How natural that men would try to intellectualize away the plain, simple doctrine of Christ, into complicated theories of their own devisings, in their effort to make the way easier and the demands less exacting.

We can readily see the folly of this in matters of doctrine and worship; but our concern must come closer to our own restless hearts, to the unspiritual areas in our own soul. Our old pagan nature is constantly at odds with that which we aspire to be. Although we know that peace can come only by obedience, experience teaches us that half a command lived out and the other half shut out can bring only half a peace. And can half a peace ever satisfy when it is fused with conflict?

We all know from our own experience that there is nothing more frustrating than indecision. It accomplishes nothing, and holds us back from whatever we might have had, had we only decided. It may be that with one hand we reach out for the things of God, and with the other are still grasping some of the lesser things of this world. We recognize the truth of the living God to be the Way to Life, but we want the Life without the Way. By observing the lives of others we realize that it is better to go all the way than part—and infinitely more rewarding—yet we still try to meet God at some halfway house. If not careful we will be like the fool, who waits until the market has gone by and then decides to buy. We know that God holds vast treasures in store in exchange for our very little, but we postpone our sale as though waiting for some easy-payment plan. By our postponing the price does not change but only our ability to meet that price. We are, in effect, injuring ourselves.

Oh, the dangers of compromise, of being satisfied with less than the high standard we set for ourselves.

Come Down vs. Come Up Higher

"Come on down" is directly opposite to the call of God, which is to higher and ever higher levels of achievement. "Come up hither" was the word of the angel to John, and it is the call of God in all ages. God

The balances of God are so delicate that even a single thought can tip the scale.

never asks us to stoop but always to rise, higher and yet higher. The depths for wickedness; the heights for God.

What, then, should be our counter to "I cannot come down"? It is this: "I must go up." Higher, higher is the watchword of God's saints in all ages.

Back in the early days of aviation there was a pioneer flyer by the name of Hanley Paige. On one of his long flights in which he was testing an airplane, he came down on a field near a city in India. He had to take some rest. When he came back and took off, he had only been flying a short time when he heard a gnawing sound back of him. He knew at once what had happened. A rat had gotten on board his plane while he was grounded and was gnawing. That rat could easily gnaw through something that could keep him from controlling his flight, and could destroy him. It was a bad moment.

Suddenly a thought came to him. He remembered that rats live in low altitudes. So he headed the nose of his plane upward and climbed as high as he could climb, until the air became so thin he could hardly breathe. He knew he couldn't go any higher or he would black out, so he leveled off and continued to fly at that altitude. After awhile he didn't hear the gnawing, but he didn't take any chances. He continued to fly at that high altitude for a long time. And when he came down at his next stop, he looked in the back, and there was the dead rat.

There is a lesson in this for us. Keep high. The best defense is a strong offence. Higher! is the call of God.

One of the most prevalent images in the Bible is the mountaintop. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Jesus imparted His highest ideals in the Sermon on the Mount. On several memorable occasions He ascended alone or with His disciples the hills and mountains of Galilee. It is a God-like image, for it depicts highness, nobility, character, value, and moral truth in its rightful, lofty realm.

It takes time and effort to climb. Just as it took Nehemiah time to build his wall. But be watchful; be firm. Many would like to be where you are, if it were not for the effort required. And your position is not guaranteed; it is a position more easily lost than won.

***Beware of the danger of
compromise, being satisfied with
less than the high standard we set
for ourselves.***

There is a packing slip an envelope manufacturer places in every box of his envelopes. It states: "Every precaution has been used in the manufacture of these envelopes to assure you perfect satisfaction. Quality, like a good name, is won by *many* acts—and lost by *one*." So, too, the quality of our lives. Many steps are required to climb the heights, but only one to step off the precipice, should we go too near.

Character cannot be hunted. It cannot be purchased. It is never for sale. It cannot be fabricated out of any material purchasable on earth. It is the result of inner growth, and a diligent application of the high and holy principles of the law of God. It is the result of climbing higher, of saying firmly and meaning, "I cannot come down."

Higher, Higher

God's call is high, and ever higher. In it is the challenge for our highest endeavors. He has, as it were, surrounded us with colossal heights, challenging our spirits to climb. But the rare, sweet joys to be found on the sunlit peaks are not for the heedless or headstrong, not for the selfish and greedy, nor yet for the proud and haughty, but for the meek, lowly and self-disciplined. There is but one gateway to Life and that gateway lies on the summit of the mountain of moral perfection. There is no way to attain but to climb. Higher.

Everything about God and His law is high, ennobling, elevating, so contrasting to the call of that which would tempt us to lower levels of thought and life. God calls; and as we approach step by step unto Him and ponder the eternity He has set before us, there rises before our mind's eye a vision of the glory, the beauty, the perfection of His holiness so glorious that words cannot adequately describe it. This was the experience of the Psalmist, which he could convey only with an exclamation: "Oh!" "O how I love thy law," or "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth"; or, "O taste and see that the Lord is good"; or, "O Lord, thou knowest."

We need this awe, this feeling of greatness, this over-

whelming sense of the Infinite. We need to be put to silence in the presence of Divinity. We need to be confounded by the magnitude of His goodness to us and the enormity of the reward He has offered us. We need to project our thoughts into the sublime and fit our life for eternity. Only hearts knit together with the divine can be sure of the associations He has promised—membership in His celestial family, with all the privileges and blessings of immortality. How can we ever be cold, detached, indifferent? He has opened to our view some of the great things of His law, and He wants us to respond, to come up higher, to His level of thought. He wants His truth, His law, His promises to touch and move our hearts. For He must have, above all else, that perfect and complete obedience which comes only from the depths of a dedicated heart. And this means climbing.

We may feel ourselves safely above the basest temptations, but may still have plenty of climbing to do. Are we ever tempted to imagine evil about a brother or sister, on the basis of scant information or assumption? Do we ever find ourselves becoming bitter rather than better in the midst of an aggravating situation? Are we ever too easily satisfied with what we are, instead of constantly thinking about ways and means to increase our spiritual growth rate? Do we ever find ourselves displacing a great thought with a lesser?

Do we ever find satisfaction in the observation that what we did (or thought, or said) was not so bad after all—compared with what someone else did? Do we ever compare ourselves with one another, instead of looking to the perfect law of liberty for our standard?

Do we ever compromise the high ideals and goals we set for ourselves with lesser attainments, telling ourselves that God just can't expect so much from mortals like us? All this is "coming down," and as life-seekers serving God we cannot do it.

We all know what it is to come short of the expectations we set for our own spiritual growth. We look back and say we should have done better—much better—than we did. We were too hasty in our judgment; we were blue and dispirited when we should have been radiant with hope. Instead of encouraging another, our remarks were disparaging until our comrade, too, lost heart. And all because of our poor example. Or we were light and foolish when we should have been meditating. Or we answered a matter before we thought it through. We are, to say the least, disappointed at ourselves and wonder what is the reason for our failure.

Yes, we tell ourselves, we were just expecting too much. We had aimed too high. A whole day without

"Higher" is the watchword of God's people in all ages. Higher! is the call of God.

tripping is just too much to ask at this point. Or the test was more difficult than we were prepared to handle. Or we were not feeling well; or things were simply against us—no one could have held together under such a test.

Oh, the excuses we make for our failures.

Excuses are abundant; real reasons are harder to come by. Much harder. The real reasons are the less flattering facts we prefer to overlook—that we just didn't try hard enough; that we didn't utilize all the possibilities within us; that we—God forbid!—forgot our high calling; or—we were just plain lazy. We lacked the resolution of Nehemiah to say to ourselves, in no uncertain terms, "I will not come down."

Deadly Excuses

Nothing is more deadly to spiritual initiative than to make excuses for our failure to measure up. And the problem so quickly compounds itself. One compromise calls for two, and two for four, and so the descent accelerates. That is the real issue with all compromise, with all descent, that once you start coming down, at what point do you stop? Once we settle for less than our best spiritual possibilities, how much less shall we tolerate? Once we fail to meet the standard we had set, what shall determine by how much we may come short? History shows us, and Nehemiah found it true in his day, that once you start to come down, you may not stop until you hit ground. The tobaggan ride down is no halfway trip.

Compromise is bad; justifying it to ourselves is even worse. It stifles the incentive to improve, because we do not feel condemned for what we allowed ourselves to do. We had such a good "reason"! We *had* to compromise, we tell ourselves, because of natural forces beyond our control. We weren't really to blame; it was our lack of ability. Or talent. Or potential. Or circumstances. Or—

Which is only another way of saying that we were not to blame—that God was, that He allowed something we couldn't handle, that He went back on His promise not to test us beyond our strength, that it was just more than we were able to take, and so we failed.

In our more candid moments we know that nothing could be further from the truth. There are reasons aplenty for our compromising, but not one of them is any failure on God's part. Nor are we lacking in capability. The real reasons are our own deficiencies—what we failed to put forth in effort, willpower, and spiritual exertion. We failed to lay down the law to ourselves in firm and unfaltering terms: "I cannot, I will not come down."

Achievement—With Effort

There is no substitute for genuine effort. There is no simple, automatic way to subdue the natural laziness within us. There is no way but to talk up plainly to ourselves and say, "I will not come down, and nothing and no one on earth is going to make me."

Is there not, however, some possibility that we may expect more of ourselves than we may be able to achieve? There is no question but that this is *possible*, but it is not *probable*, our human nature being what it is and human inclinations being what they are. By far the greater danger lies in not requiring enough of ourselves, in being so easily self-satisfied and contented with ourselves and the too-low goals we set that we fall short of our possibilities. While we may become discouraged by requiring more spiritual attainment from ourselves in a short time than we can humanly achieve, far greater is the danger of being too easily satisfied, in

We need this awe, this feeling of greatness, this overwhelming sense of the Infinite.

not requiring enough. For if we do fail to meet expectations that we have set too high, what have we lost? We can always try again, and perhaps with greater determination—and greater success!

It is an ancient truism that we never strike higher than we aim. What, then, can be the possible advantage of aiming too low? It may lessen the possibility of coming down, because we hardly lifted ourselves off the ground! Where is the gain? There is none.

In view of the shortness of time in this present age, and the urgent need to accomplish as much as possible in the time remaining, we want to set our standard high, very high. And if we fail to meet it, let us not be discouraged but simply try again. The extra measure of effort may well make the difference, and we may find

ourselves achieving far more than we thought possible.

Can we imagine Paul saying to himself, "This is just too hard for me, Lord. I set my goal too high, I can't do it"?

Someone has said that we should not complain about our limitations until we have exhausted our possibilities. Let's try it. On such a formula, we cannot lose.

When we stand before the Judge of all the earth, we shall not worry then that we did too much, that we strove too hard, that we fought the evils of our nature too intensely, that we gave up too much, that we aimed—and struck—too high. No, a thousand times No.

Oh, let us not come down for anything, but be constantly forcing ourselves to live better and yet better lives—for God—that we may be ready to welcome His King when He appears and live with Him forever. MM

Whose Opinion Really Counts?

(Continued from page 2)

Every decision I make about every part of my life must ultimately relate to that fact. I am not primarily responsible for what other people think about me; it is God I must please.

The danger lies in losing sight of this objective and living to please men. Jesus warned sternly against this when He said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44).

It is important to add, however, that there is a wonderful principle involved in pleasing God: When we set out to do what would bring the Lord pleasure, it also affects our relationships with other people. Proverbs 16:7 says: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

In short, there's nothing to lose—and everything to gain—by pleasing the Lord! MM

*Every morning, lean thine arms awhile
Upon the window-sill of heaven
And gaze upon the Lord . . .
Then, with that vision in thy heart,
Turn strong to meet the day.*

First Things First

WE HAVE been made free moral agents to choose whom we will serve and obey. When we agreed to serve the living God, we agreed to observe and carry out all His commands. Seeking first the Kingdom of God is one of the foremost of these commands, involving all our mind, all our strength, our devotion. It is a time-consuming effort which cannot be divided with other lesser loyalties.

But think what our God is offering us—an unending eternity with pleasures beyond our mortal conception. If any ordinary kind of service were acceptable with Him, He would not be persistently alerting us through the apostles, the prophets and Jesus to give Him our first and best worship.

We are free moral agents. We can do as we please, if we so desire, follow whatever whim or notion strikes our fancy according to the impulse of the moment. But we can be sure that immediate satisfactions and physical enjoyments will sabotage our best interests, and these so-called "pleasures" will become our worst enemies.

By nature, by habit, and by practice, we were sinners. But the time past of our lives should suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. With fervent love for our Maker and the transforming power of His Word, we must ceaselessly be presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service.

In this struggle against self many times we would have succumbed to discouragement and despair, even to the all-wrong attitude of "what's the use," were it not for His steadying hand over us. Kind and forgiving is our Father, far more than we take in or give Him credit for. He has provided a throne of grace unto which we may boldly approach, trustfully leaving all at His feet. He is doing for us all that we cannot do for ourselves to smooth out our difficulties and convert our disadvantages into spiritual advantages, provided that we do not let go of His upholding hand.

We should be on our guard against becoming overbusy and overworked, for then the first—and most important—thing slips out of our daily lives, the seeking first the Kingdom of God. We must take time to be holy; there is no other way.

—Contributed

And Still She Speaks

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



There is a testing time right down in these last days, a tarrying time that will test us. God is going to try His people's faith.

If we thought the Lord would come tomorrow, we would be very zealous to see where we were, what we were doing.

What does the Lord weigh in the balance of truth? Actions alone. Words do not amount to anything. You might say, "Lord, Lord, have mercy," but that would not amount to anything. God wants actions to correspond with our words. In the balances of the Almighty, nothing but actions weighs.

If you think it is a little thing to get angry or impatient or let pride govern you, you are on the road to destruction.

As long as you look upon your besetments as little things, you will never conquer them. If you let your temper blaze up here and there, or you have dishonesty in your doings, you ought to be ashamed of it. When you become really ashamed of sin, you will cease doing evil, cease getting angry or being dishonest, or whatever it may be.

We must be fully ashamed of these things or death will be our end. When we get ashamed of it, then the Word of God is having an influence over us.

It is easy enough to see someone else's pride and foolishness, but the first thing to do is to see ourselves. If, having seen self and realizing that in the natural man dwells no good thing, we strive to put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will move toward holiness at a rapid pace.

God will lead us if we are willing to be led. The trouble is, our old natural disposition stands in the way. He offers us a wonderful, wonderful reward if we will only do as He directs, but the great difficulty is we are not willing to follow. It is easy to linger by the way.

What a comfort truth is! If we do not fully believe, search the Scriptures; and, if we fully believe, search the Scriptures to keep our minds impressed, for we are leaky vessels. We may know a thing today and in a week or so forget it. Keep the mind renewed in these wonderful truths.

When told of our besetting sins, we should respond with a feeling of joy that we have the opportunity of overcoming them. What a growth toward holiness we have made when our heart swells with gratitude because of the help we receive.

If adversity should come, I wonder if we would consider it a blessing, especially if we needed it to realize the vanity of earthly things. Are we prepared to take it patiently? It would be for our good if we are exercised by it, to teach us the vanity of building on material things and the necessity of becoming worthy of living in that time when God will bestow His eternal blessings.

If not keeping the commandments, if not doing justly and loving mercy, our religion is only a form of godliness. God's warning is for us as well as for anybody else. Only by doing justly will we become acceptable to God, for He will judge by fruits and fruits alone.

Having our own way, doing as we please gives only a few fleeting pleasures that are soon over and gone. How much greater to overcome and lay up good thoughts for a future day.

Example and Influence

(A Progressive Letter written in 1941 by Kenneth E. Flowerday)

I FEEL it a privilege to be able to impart to you some of the hope and encouragement which is my own heart's wealth, to stir up your minds on the things that hold a great future for each life-seeker.

We, who live in the northern hemisphere find ourselves in the throes of winter again, but with the many blessings that accompany the high standard of living that we enjoy—thanks to scientific research, mass production, modern transportation and distribution—our discomforts during the winter months are far fewer than those endured by our forefathers. And we should do well to count and recount our many blessings.

I trust that you are well, and that you who are still in your productive years are gainfully employed. But I especially desire that your hope of a future life is a joy to you, and that your prospect of winning the prize that God offers seems as certain to you as the weekly pay check of the wage earner.

Indeed, God's promises are the most assured assurances that we could contemplate. Indeed, they are guaranteed rewards. God exists. He always has existed. He has never failed to fulfill His contract, and never can fail. God is not a man that He should lie, or the son of man that He should change His mind. He has promised to fill the earth with His glory, and that promise *will* be fulfilled. He has promised the earth to the children of men, and the worthy among us shall surely receive this promise. "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and judgment in the earth." One day "officers of peace and exactors of righteousness" shall administer human affairs, and God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven above. One day the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,

and this bright prospect is open to you and to me, and to every one who will make the effort to fit himself for it.

We should always be conscious of the impact that our lives have on other lives. We each must be a brother's keeper. "None of us liveth unto himself," therefore we should be exceedingly careful of the life that we lead. It has been said that our Christian example is the only Bible that some people ever read; hence we should be very careful about what we indicate upon our pages.

In the words of the familiar poem: "Thou must thyself be true, if thou the truth would teach. Thy soul must overflow, if thou another soul would reach." In this sense we each are Christian teachers, by our own lives teaching others how to live. But to do this we must first teach ourselves. The apostle Paul framed this thought into meaningful words in Rom. 2:21, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Religious instruction to be forceful must be endorsed by the life experience of the instructor.

Let us consider the power of a godly example. The common law of influence rarely fails to operate. Men are imitative, and in nothing so much as in religious observance. Moreover, they insist upon identifying a moral teacher with what he teaches, that Christians shall incarnate the truth which they urge upon others, and shall become the personal embodiment of it with all its predicted results. They will not suffer a limping man to propose an effective cure for lameness.

Jesus expressly taught that His followers should be illustrations and exemplifications of the gospel. The force of one sentence of the Sermon on the

Mount turns upon the insignificant word "so." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" In like manner the apostles taught, "Ye are living epistles, known and read of all men." Hence, there can be no inconsistency so utter as an inconsistent Christian teacher presents. There can be no failure more ridiculous in the eyes of a corrupt world than that of a man who urges truth upon others but who lives a lie. But, on the other hand, whenever fully possessed of the power of the gospel, pervaded with its spirit, and radiant with its light, a grand life goes about doing good: that life has a majestic driving force almost unlimited.

Men bend subdued to an influence which they cannot comprehend, but which they know is safe and which they feel they can trust implicitly. In the whole Bible there is not a finer picture of human greatness than that of Simon Peter when the multitude brought out the sick on couches, that they might lay them where at least His shadow could fall on them. There is no one thing that the better element among men loves more than to abide under a good man's shadow—the only shadow on this planet that renders it more luminous, except the shadow of the Almighty wing.

Then consider the means by which God's truth is distributed from heart to heart. It is propagated, not by transmission through mere symbols, but by radiation through actual contact.

The lens of a burning-glass will not only suffer the free passage of the sun's rays, but will concentrate them, until the surface they fall upon bursts into flame; meanwhile the lens itself will remain perfectly cool. Experiments of this sort have been performed with even a lens of ice, which kindled a fire, and continued unmelted. You can find nothing, however, in righteous living to which this phenomenon would answer. The torch, not the burning-glass, is the emblem of the spiritual life; it flames while it illumines, and is warmed as it sets on fire. He influences others most who has been nearest in contact with Christ. Let us be torches, not burning-glasses.

Thus God's saving truth becomes an indweller. This is the meaning of the word spirituality; it signifies the presence of the spirit of Christ. And there can be no accomplishment in the spiritual life unless His life pattern is re-created in our lives. "Without me ye can do nothing," said Jesus. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

No person can give more than he gets, nor communicate more than he possesses. But this is the duty of everyone of us: to communicate to others, especially by example. This is the responsibility which the apostle Paul enjoins upon all: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6). The spirit of truth sometimes works immediately upon the human heart. Quite often it works upon another heart through ours, and it does this by entering abidingly into ours. And not uncommonly God influences the conscience next to the teacher's by moving the conscience of the teacher.

When a plague was raging in Ireland many years ago, certain priests said that if any man would take from his own fire a piece of burning peat and light his neighbor's fire with it, he would deliver the family from an attack of the disease. The whole region was instantly alive with brands passing to and fro. If superstition could do this much, should not the love of truth do more? But the kindling must come from one's own hearthstone. Ours must be a heart on fire, and our legend to God. Ours must be the full commitment of a dedicated heart. "I give thee all, I keep back nothing."

What we need above every other earthly need is that our influence be for good, that our entire Christian experience be lifted and a lifting power to others. Then our lives will show a pattern of good works for others to emulate, and the holy fragrance which we diffuse will be the sweet fragrance of the Christlike life wherever we are. MM

Never Say Fail

Keep pushing—'tis wiser than sitting aside
And dreaming and sighing and waiting the tide,
In life's earnest battle they only prevail
Who daily march onward, and never say fail.

With an eye ever open, a tongue that's not dumb,
And a heart that will never to sorrow succumb,
You'll battle—and conquer, though thousands assail;
How strong and how mighty, who never say fail.

In life's rosy morning, in manhood's firm stride,
Let this be the motto your footsteps to guide:
In storm and in sunshine, whatever assail,
We'll onward and conquer, and never say fail.



Giver of All

O LORD of heaven and earth and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be:
How shall we show our love to Thee,
Giver of all?

The golden sunshine, vernal air,
Sweet flowers and fruits, Thy love declare;
Where harvests ripen, Thou art there,
Giver of all.

For peaceful homes and healthful days,
For all the blessings earth displays,
We owe Thee thankfulness and praise,
Giver of all.

We lose what on ourselves we spend;
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend,
Who givest all.

Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Giver of all.

To Thee, from whom we all derive
Our life, our gifts, our power to give,
O may we ever with Thee live,
Giver of all!

—Selected

O Young and Fearless Prophet

O YOUNG and fearless Prophet
Of ancient Galilee;
Thy life is still a summons
To flawless honesty
To make our thoughts and actions
Less prone to please the crowd,
To stand with humble courage
For truth with hearts uncowed.

We marvel at the purpose
That held Thee to Thy course,
While ever on the hilltop
Before Thee loomed the cross;
Thy steadfast face set forward
Where love and duty shone,
While we betray so quickly
And leave Thee there alone.

O help us stand unswerving
Against sin's bloody way,
Where hate and lust and falsehood
Hold back Christ's holy sway;
Forbid that love of country
Should blind us to His call
Who lifts above the nation
The brotherhood of all.

Create in us the splendor
That dawns when hearts are kind,
That knows not race nor station
As boundaries of the mind;
That learns to value beauty,
In heart, or brain, or soul,
And longs to bind God's children
Into one perfect whole.

O young and fearless Prophet,
We need Thy presence here,
Above all pride and glory
To see Thy face appear;
Once more to hear Thy challenge
Above our noisy day,
Triumphantly to lead us
Along God's holy way.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE INDEX 1983

Key to Index:

A	Article
Dr	Drama
Ed	Editorial
F	Filler
FB	Finally, Brethren
Ill	Illustration
L	Letters
Med	Meditating on the Word
Po	Poem
QA	Question answered in article
Q	Questions and Answers
S	Sermon

A

An Honest Man

- Introduction*, Oct, p4
- Chapter One: *The Early Years*, Nov, p16
- Chapter Two: *Laying the Foundation*, Dec, p16
- Chapter Three: *Searching*, Dec, p19
- And Still She Speaks*, by Rev. M. Hembree, Jan-Dec
- Ants . . . and Ants* (A), Jan, p13
- Art of Getting Into Trouble, The* (Ed), J/A, p2
- Asa* (A), Oct, p12
- Atonement* (A), by NHP, Mar, p14

B

- Baptism: Literal and Spiritual* (QA), Dec, p22
- Be What You Profess To Be* (F), Jun, p23
- Bible, evidence of reliability (S), May, p4
- Blessings, How They Come!* (Po), by LLS, Jun, p9
- Bloom Where You're Planted* (Po), Apr, p14
- Building to Endure* (Ed), Mar, p2
- "*By Thy Words*" (F), May, p12

C

- Calendar, Hebrew (A), by NHP, Apr, p16
- Can I Take It?* (A), by DK, May, p18
- Can't* (Po), Oct, p16
- Captive Heroes* (Dr)
 - Scene Four: *Time for Change*, Jan, p18
 - Final Scene: *Visions of the Future*, Feb, p16
- Cheap or Costly?* (A), J/A, p19
- Church, This Is Our* (A), Jan, p14
- Clothing* (QA), J/A, p12
- Concerning the High Cost of Living* (A), Nov, p25
- Contentment* (A), Mar, p18

D

- Danger from Within* (A), by SBB, J/A, p9
- Dangerously Faithful* (S), J/A, p4
- David* (A), Jun, p18
- Dealing with Doubts* (Ed), Sep, p2
- Did God Forsake Jesus?* (S), Mar, p7

E

Editorial:

- Art of Getting into Trouble, The*, J/A, p2
- Building to Endure*, Mar, p2
- Dealing with Doubts*, Sep, p2
- "*I Did It—My Way!*" Nov, p2
- Look Up!* Oct, p2
- "*Morning Cometh, The,*" Apr, p2
- There Will Be Turbulence on This Flight*, Jun, p2
- Thy Will Be Done*, Feb, p2
- Wanted: Strong Convictions*, Jan, p2
- When Hatred Isn't Enough*, May, p2
- Whose Opinion Really Counts?* Dec, p2
- Enthusiastic Evangelist*, Philip (A), Mar, p20
- Example and Influence* (A), by KEF, Dec, p12
- Eyes* (A), by WP, Sep, p11

F

- Facing Reality—with God* (A), by JEM, Apr, p7
- Faith and Obedience* (A), Jan, p10

Finally, Brethren:

- It's Never Time to Quit*, Nov, p27
- Power of Personal Choice, The*, Dec, p27
- Staying On Course*, Jan, p27
- What Shall I Answer Him?* Oct, p27
- First Things First* (Dr), Oct, p17
- First Things First* (A), Dec, p10
- For Safer Traveling* (A), Sep, p16
- Free to Obey* (A), Apr, p10

G

- Gambling* (A), Feb, p11
- Gem of Truth, The* (Po), by LTN, Nov, p19
- Get Ahead of Yourself!* (F) Dec, p19
- Giants, Giants* (F), Mar, p11
- Give Us Men* (Po), Dec, p15
- God the Architect* (Po), May, p7
- Gospel: God's Good News, The* (A), by LBS, J/A, p16
- Grace or Obedience?* (A), by NHP, Mar, p14

MEGIDDO MESSAGE INDEX 1983

H

Habakkuk (S), J/A, p4
He Is Coming—Soon! (L), Feb, p14
Hebrew Calendar (Chart), Apr, p18
Help Wanted (A), Sep, p27
High Cost of Living, The (A), Nov, p25
High Price of Stubbornness, The, (A), Feb, p26
Hold Fast (Po), Oct, p14
Holy Spirit today? (A), May, p16
How About that Luggage, Traveler? (A), Apr, p6
How Are Your Eyes? (A), Feb, p12
"How To" Gain Peace of Mind (F), Sep, p20

I

I Am Ready (A), by EH, Jun, p15
I Cannot Come Down (S), Dec, p4
"I Did It—My Way!" (Ed), Nov, p2
If Ye Be Constant (S), Jan, p5
If the Outlook Is Bad, Try the Uplook! (S), Feb, p4

Illustrations:

Ants, by MAT, Jan, p13
 Milky Way Comparison drawing, Oct, p9
 Photographs of Church, Jan, pp1, 14, 15
 Photograph of galaxy, Oct, p1
In Proper Order (F), by EH, J/A, p23
In the Thick of It (A), Jun, p10
It Does Not Pay (F), Sep, p15
It's Never Time to Quit (FB), Nov, p27
It's Nothing but a Grind (F), Sep, p21

J

Jesus Changes Lives (Dr), Apr, p8; May, p8
Journey Toward Life (S), Jun, p4
Joy of a New Face, The (A), by FHP, J/A, p10

L

Life Is . . . (Po), Jun, p11
Living by Faith (S), J/A, p6
Look Up! (Ed), Oct, p2
Looking Further . . . (A), Oct, p8
Love Never Ends (F), J/A, p23

M

May We Not (F), Jan, p12

Meditating on the Word:

Psalm 50:23, *Seeing His Salvation*, Feb, p23
 Psalm 119:15-16, *"I Will Meditate,"* Jun, p22
 Col. 3:17, 23, *Whatsoever Ye Do*, Sep p22
 Heb. 10:24-25, *"And So Much the More,"* Jan, p17
 Heb. 12:14-15, *Those Roots of Bitterness*, Oct, p22
 Heb. 12:22-23, *Preview of Triumph*, May, p21
 James 1:22, *Not Only Hear but Do!*, Mar, p22
 II Pet. 3:18, *Growing in Grace*, J/A, p22
Miracles Today? (A), by John Phillips, May, p16
Morning Cometh, The, (Ed), Apr, p2
Morning Prayer (Po), Dec, p13
Moving Up (Po), Feb, p10

N

Neglected Gardens (Po), J/A, p15
Never Alone (S), Mar, p4
Never Look Back (Po), by LLS, Jun, p23
Never Say Fail (Po), Dec, p13
"Never to Sink Below My Best" (A), Nov, p14
New Year's Resolutions (Po), Apr, p15
Newscast from Jerusalem (A), Apr, p3
Not All Who Begin Well End Well (A), by Tom Lewis, Oct, p12
Not Too Many Chips Falling (Po), Sep, p14
Not Yet the Promised Calm (Po), May, p12

O

Obituaries:

Barber, Clarence W., Oct, p23
 Gizen, John, J/A, p27
 Manktelow, Anna C., May, p23
 Meier, Lila F., Feb, p15
 Walck, Hilda A., Feb, p21
On Love and I Corinthians 13 (A), by EH, Jun, p21
On Measuring Time (A), by NHP, Apr, p16
On the Popularity Scale (A), Mar, p10
One Life (Po), May, p14
Order, Certainty and Hope (S), May, p4
Our Wonderful Eyes (A), by WP, Sep, p11

P

Peculiar? (A), Jan, p8
Perfect Coupling, The (A), Jan, p10
Perfection's Hill (Po), Mar, p27
Philip, the Enthusiastic Evangelist (A), Mar, p20
Philosophers—men vs. God (S), Jun, p4
Pilate Remembers (Po), Apr, p27

Poetry (by first line):

A little less impatient with those we deem too slow, Apr, p15
 A traveler through a dusty road strewed acorns on the lea,
 Oct, p15
 Above earth's hills and mountains, Mar, p27
 Blessings, blessings, Lord, Thou givest, by LLS, Jun, p9
 Can't is a word to be used with great caution, Oct, p16
 Diamonds are only chunks of coal, Jun, p13
 Eternal Source of every joy, May, p15
 Farewell? Oh, no! It may not be, Mar, p23
 Father, let me dedicate, Apr, p15
 God, make me brave for life, Dec, p15
 God of our life! Thy various praise, Apr, p14
 Have the thunders ceased to hurtle though the dim and lurid
 sky? May, p12
 Have you ever watched a tulip, Apr, p14
 Help me, O God, to do Thy will, Jun, p11
 Hold fast to truth, Oct, p14
 I am list'ning, Lord, for Thee, J/A, p21
 I am waiting, I am longing, for the dawning of the day, Sep,
 p15
 I never see a tree bud into leaf, Oct, p11
 I wonder why that scene comes back tonight, Apr, p27
 I'd rather see a sermon, than hear one any day, Sep, p15 15

MEGIDDO MESSAGE INDEX 1983

If all that we say in a single day, Oct, p15
 Isn't it strange that princes and kings, Oct, p15
 It would have been no task at all, J/A, p15
 It's hard to miss those boulders, Feb, p10
 Jesus, lead me up the mountain, May, p15
 Keep pushing—'tis wiser than sitting aside, Dec, p13
 Life is a matter of moments, Jun, p11
 Lift me, O God, above myself, J/A, p14
 Looking upward every day, J/A, p15
 Lord, speak to me that I may speak, Jun, p11
 Lord, the newness of this day, May, p15
 Lord, when I am tempted to give, Sep, p14
 My dear Redeemer and my Lord, May, p14
 My God, I thank Thee, who hast made, Nov, p15
 Now sing we a song for the harvest, Nov, p14
 O God, who didst Thy will unfold, Mar, p13
 O Lord of heaven and earth and sea, Dec, p14
 O young and fearless Prophet, Dec, p14
 One life and one alone we have, May, p14
 Praise, O praise, our God and king, Nov, p15
 Precious Lord, look in my heart, J/A, p14
 Sing to the Great Jehovah's praise! Apr, p25
 Sweet is the solace of Thy love, Nov, p10
 The end of the day is approaching, J/A, p14
 The Lord of earth and sky, Apr, p15
 The tapestry of life is woven, day by day, May, p21
 There may be some who say, Sep, p22
 There Sodom and Gomorrah stood, by LLS, Jun, p23
 These are the twelve apostles, Dec, p14
 Time moves on relentlessly, changeless, Oct, p14
 To talk with God, May, p18
 Truth is the gem for which we seek, Nov, p19
 We are looking for Christ's coming, Jun, p11
 What's my score, Lord? Jan, p10
 When in silent contemplation, Oct, p14
 Who Thou art I know not, May, p7
Power of Personal Choice, The (FB), Dec, p27
Prayer for Courage, A (Po), Dec, p15
Proper Preparation (F), Apr, p25

Q

Questions and Answers concerning:

A spirit in a body called Elijah? J/A, p25
 Armageddon in Isa. 13? Sep, p24
 Baptism Required? Mar, p24
 Baptism and Acts 2:38-39, Oct, p24
 Baptism: Literal and Spiritual, Dec, p23
 Cause of suffering is sin? Sep, p25
 Celebrating Christ's birth, Feb, p25
 Christ Is God? Jun, p25
 Christ's Birth Spring or Fall? Dec, p24
 Christ's glory "before the world was," Feb, p25
 Does God forgive those who apostatize? J/A, p24
 Earth burned up? Feb, p24
 Elijah and the Two Witnesses, J/A, p25
 God's Love for Sinners, Apr, p24, Jun, p24
 Healing by Divine Power today?, Mar, p25
 Islam in the future? Jun, p25
 Israel "gathered"? Feb, p23

Jesus three days and nights in the heart of the earth?
 May, p24

John the Baptist or Elijah? Dec, p25
 Pray to Jesus or the Father?, Mar, p25
 Proper clothing, J/A, p25
 Rewards vs. salvation, Sep, p25
 Satan and sin? May, p25
 State of the Dead, Mar, p24
 Ten Tribes and literal Jews, Feb, p25
 The dumb ass speaking, Sep, p24
 The "Evil One" of II Thess. 2:7-8, May, p24
 The law and everlasting covenant, Feb, p24
 The political heavens, Oct, p25
 The voice of the archangel, Oct, p24
 What happened to Elijah? J/A, p24
 When Was Christ Born? Dec, p24
 Where will Elijah come? Oct, p24
 Who are the "strangers"? Jun, p25
 Who is Anti-christ? Sep, p25
 Who shall remain after Judgment? Feb, p23

R

Rx for a Full and Happy Life (A), Mar, p21
Repair the Roof! (A), Mar, p12
Ruth to Naomi (Po), Mar, p23

S

Saints (F), Mar, p11
Security of Insecurity, The (A), Jan, p11

Sermons:

Dangerously Faithful, J/A, p4
I Cannot Come Down, Dec, p4
If Ye Be Constant, Jan, p4
If the Outlook Is Bad, Try the Uplook! Feb, p4
Journey Toward Life, Jun, p4
Never Alone, Mar, p4
Order, Certainty and Hope, May, p4
There Is a God! Oct, p7
Who Did It? Nov, p4
Work with Eternal Worth, Sep, p4

Shadow of the Great Rock, The (Po), Nov, p10
Should You Love Yourself? (A), Jun, p12
Signs of Spiritual Cancer (F), Dec, p21
Slave-master relationship (S), Sep, p8, p9

So What Do You Know?

Bible Facts, by MAT, Sep, p13
Bible Quotation or . . . ? by MAT, Apr, p23
Detect the Errors: Abraham and Isaac, Mar, p11
Detect the Errors: Joseph in Egypt, Feb, p27
Detect the Errors: Peter Raises Dorcas, May, p27
How Many? by MAT, Oct, p25
Of Whom Was It Said? by MAT, Jan, p25
Virtues to Emulate, by MAT, Jun, p21

Special Bulletin: Jerusalem (A), Apr, p3
Staying On Course (FB), Jan, p27
Staying Power (A), Nov, p25
Stubbornness, High Price of, (A), Feb, p26
Study . . . Learn (A), by GP, Feb, p20

MEGIDDO MESSAGE INDEX 1983

T

Tapestry of Life, The (Po), May, p21
Temptation to Gamble, The (A), Feb, p11
There IS A God! (S), by LTN, Oct, p7
There Will Be Turbulence on This Flight (Ed), Jun, p2
This Is Our Church (A), Jan, p14
"Thou Art . . . Thou Shalt Be" (A), by EEB, Apr, p12
Three Beatitudes (A), by EH, May, p21
Thy Will Be Done (Ed), Feb, p2
To Be Accepted (A), by GP, May, p20
Touch Me, Lord (Po), J/A, p14
Tribulation Worketh Patience (A), Jun, p18
True Blue? (A), Dec, p21
Twelve Apostles, The (Po), Dec, p15

What Shall I Wear? (QA), J/A, p12
What Is Your Life? (A), Nov, p24
What's my score? (Po), Jan, p10
When Christ Comes Again (A), by W. Herschel Ford, Sep, p18
When Christ Is Lifted Up (QA), by KEF, Jun, p16
When God Heareth (Po), Mar, p13
When Hatred Isn't Enough (Ed), May, p2
When the Day Dawns (Po), Sep, p15
Who Did It? (S), Nov, p4
Whose Opinion Really Counts? (Ed), Dec, p2
Why We Need Thanksgiving (A), Nov, p12
Wise Men Still Seek Him (A), Apr, p4
Work with Eternal Worth (S), Sep, p4
Working Wheels Keep Clean (A), May, p13

W

Wanted: Strong Convictions (Ed), Jan, p2
What Shall I Answer Him? (FB), Oct, p27

Y

You . . . an Advertisement (F), May, p7

Bible Texts Discussed:

Gen. 3:19 (S), Sep, p5
 Deut. 22:5 (Q), J/A p25
 I Chron. 28:7-9 (S), Jan, p4
 Job 18:6 (Q), Feb, p22
 Isa. 13:6, 9, 11, 17-19 (Q), Sep, p 24
 Isa. 24:5-6 (Q), Feb, p24
 Isa. 40:3 (Q), Dec, p25
 Ezek. 28:24-26 (Q), Feb, p23
 Hab. 2:1-3 (S), J/A, p4
 Matt. 3:15 (Q), Mar, p24
 Matt. 12:40 (Q), May, p24

Matt. 27:46 (S), Mar, p7
 Mark 12:31 (A), Jun, p12
 Luke 1:33 (Q), Feb, p25
 Luke 6:27-38 (Q), Jun, p24
 Luke 22:31 (Q), May, p25
 John 3:5 (Q), Dec, p23
 John 9:3 (Q), Sep, p25
 John 12:32-33 (QA), by KEF, Jun, p16
 John 16:23-26 (Q), Mar, p25
 John 17:5 (Q), Feb, p25
 Acts 2:38-39 (Q) Oct, p24

Acts 9:17-18 (Q), Dec, p23
 Acts 16:15 (Q), Dec, p23
 Acts 16:33 (Q), Dec, p23
 II Thess. 2:7-8 (Q), May, p24
 Titus 2:14 (A), Jan, p8
 Heb. 1:8 (Q), Jun, p25
 I Pet. 1:1 (Q), Jun, p25
 I Peter 2:9 (A), Jan, p8
 II Pet. 2:16 (Q), Sep, p24
 II Pet. 3:10-13 (Q), Feb, p24

Give Us Men!

Give us men!
Men of Christian rank
Fresh and free and frank;
Men of light and leading;
Men of loyal breeding;
Men the gospel heeding;
God's great business ever speeding;
Men whose lives with right are ample
Men who serve with good example;
Men of faith and not of fiction;
Men of lofty aim in action;
Give us men—I say again
Give us men!

Give us men!
Men whom highest hope inspires;
Men whom purest honor fires;
Men who trample sin beneath them;
Men who crave their God to lead them;
Strong and stalwart ones;
Noble, faithful sons
Pressing ever higher;
Men who to the need arise;
Men who know no compromise
Men of steadfast will, and wise.
Give us men — I say again
Give us men!

Give us men!
Men who when the tempest gathers,
Emulate their Christian fathers,
In the thickest of the fight.
Who've left boyhood and playthings
Scorning foolishness and gay things.
God's men are men of might,
Strong their purpose is and holy;
Strong with strength that's meek and lowly;
Men who tread where saints have trod;
Marching, fighting men of God.
Give us men! We say again
Give us men!

Our best friend is one who can be trusted to
care for our reputation in our absence.



The Twelve Apostles

THESE are the twelve Apostles' names:
Peter and Andrew, John and James,
Two pair of brothers who lived by the sea,
When Jesus told them, "Follow me."
Then James the Less and Jude were called, too,
Philip, and also Bartholomew,
Matthew, and Thomas who doubted His word,
Simon, and Judas who sold his Lord.
—Author Unknown.

A Prayer For Courage

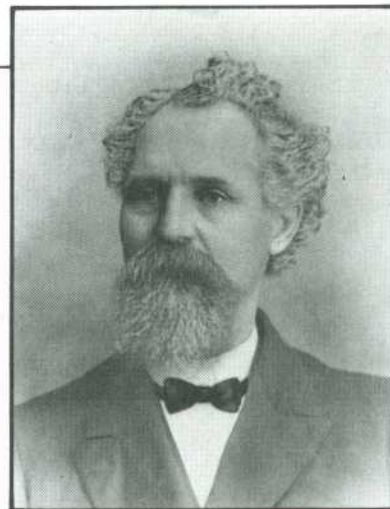
GOD, make me brave for life;
O, braver than this!
Let me straighten after pain,
As a tree straightens after the rain,
Shining and lovely again.

God, make me brave for life;
Much braver than this!
As the blown grass lifts, let me rise
From sorrow with quiet eyes,
Knowing Thy way is wise.

God, make me brave—Life brings
Such blinding things.
Help me to keep my sight,
Help me to see aright
That out of the dark comes light.

*The Life and Work of
Rev. L. T. Nichols*

An Honest Man



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

Chapter Two

Laying the Foundation

WHEN the cry of "Here comes Elder Nichols!" rang from the schoolhouse yard, one of those who flung the taunt was a dark-haired girl about five months his senior. Harriet Griffis had come with her parents from the green hills of Allegany County, New York, about the same time the Nichols family had emigrated to the Wisconsin country. Gay and pleasure-loving, she found the serious, studious L. T. amusing. But as she sat with him in the schoolroom, as she observed the uprightness of his conduct in his community and his unflinching courage in the storms which raged about him in the schoolhouse meetings, ridicule gave way to admiration.

So complete was her change of attitude that on October 15, 1864, Harriet Griffis became the wife of her childhood schoolmate, beginning nearly half a century of God-fearing companionship, happiness and labor in the vineyard of the Master. Poor in this world's goods they were, for in that day it was accepted that a boy's time belonged to his father until he was of age, to repay the parent in part for his childhood care. L. T. Nichols was only twenty, so his small savings went to his father as a cash settlement for the remaining year of his minority. This left him where, as he used to say, it took his last dollar "to tie the knot." Yet he had his two hands, and they were good hands, directed by a keen brain; both had youth and health, and L. T. and his bride faced the future without fear.

Not long, however, were they undisturbed in their happiness. A dark cloud, much larger than a man's hand, was rolling up from the horizon as the Civil War battlefronts demanded more and more young men for the holocaust. Two weeks after their marriage, L. T. Nichols was inducted into the armed forces of the United States. Unwillingly he went, not from reasons of cowardice but of high moral courage. Had he been convinced that war was sanctioned by the Almighty, he was the type of man whom nothing could have kept at home. But when he found a commandment of God blocking his way—

"Do violence to no man," was the counsel of John the Baptist to the soldiers, men whose lives were dedicated to violence.

"They that take the sword shall perish with the sword," said the Saviour, in the hour of His own personal danger.

The whole tenor of the Scriptures was that Christians must be separate from the world in all its social, ecclesiastical and political ramifications, and this principle forbade him, as one of the "strangers and pilgrims," to take part in its wars, be the cause ever so just by the world's standards. It is impossible to imagine Jesus taking up arms in any of the multitudinous wars of the Roman Empire. Nor would young L.T., though he stood alone.

In the days of the Civil War, this decision demanded courage of a higher order than that required to advance into murderous gunfire or defend a position to the death. In the 1860's, the much-despised conscientious objector had not the standing he now enjoys. The only large non-resistant religious body was the Friends or Quakers. There was no 4-E classification, no National Service Board for Religious Objectors to help him secure his rights; there were no alternate-service camps under civilian direction for such as he. L. T. Nichols stood alone, yet not alone, for at his side walked the unseen, all-powerful angel of the Lord. The law permitted the draftee in certain cases to secure exemption by a cash payment of three hundred dollars. This sum L. T. offered to raise, but his offer was refused, for he was a choice physical specimen. Local prejudice may or may not have played a part in the draft board's action. To the barracks in Madison, Wisconsin, he must go.

Once in the Army, he immediately became a major problem to his

superiors. He let it be known that, as a matter of principle, he had no intention of being a fighting man, and he stuck to his story. He was no slacker; he would work, he would obey any order which did not controvert his faith; but he positively would not bear arms or take life. Ordered to take a rifle and stand sentry duty, he replied,

"I will take the gun, but I will not use it. If I am approached by someone who will not stop when challenged, I will not shoot him."

For several months, persecutions, threats and abuse were his daily lot.

In the days of the Civil War, refusing to bear arms demanded courage. For several months, persecutions, threats and abuse were his daily lot.

More than once he looked into the muzzle of a rifle as petty tyrants tried to break down his resistance. When his company entrained for the South, he gained time by failing to appear and arguing it out with his officers later. When things became too bad, he was defended by a Major Brown, whom he always remembered with gratitude.

In the end it was the Army which tired of the struggle with this determined twenty year old. He was no use to them as he was, they could not discharge him without losing face, and they could not kill him, for God stood in the way. At length, as a result of an appeal to President Lincoln, he was given a post in the military hospital, and he

plunged into the work with alacrity, quickly rising to the superintendency by sheer ability. This position he filled with honor until his discharge at the close of the war. In all that time never a flaw was found in his accounts. The sick and wounded soldiers entrusted their money and valuables to him for safe keeping, having learned that many of their own officers were not to be trusted. Though not a medical man, he even devised improved methods of treatment for the sick, so that in a virulent and fatal epidemic of measles he was able to effect a change in treatment which saved the life of every patient under his care.

While in barracks he lost no opportunity to let his light shine, but gathering his comrades around him he taught them from the Bible, urging them to turn to God and prepare to meet Him. Many a rousing meeting was held on the parade ground or in Barrack 54, and some lively discussions arose when "orthodox" chaplains disapproved of this strange gospel.

The close of hostilities found him temporally where he was at the beginning, with nothing but his hands and brain. In spite of the handicap of poverty, with the nation unsettled, depressed, and in the grip of inflation, he lived, by his own statement, better than anyone around him, because he never wanted things he could not have. He managed to acquire a yoke of oxen, and for a bit of recreation he would sometimes take his wife and have a good ride—on a stone boat! Their hearts were young; a stone boat and oxen of their own were better than a carriage and horses owned by a creditor! God was good, and life was a thrilling adventure. From his boyhood, L. T. Nichols had an abiding horror of debt, a principle which did not change with the years, and which has paid hand-



L. T. Nichols at the age of 20. Taken during his service in the Civil War.

At age 25.



At age 34, during the time of his many public discussions.

In his forties, near the time of the Great Infidel Debate.



some dividends in security and peace of mind to all who followed his counsel.

Such a man could not be held in poverty for long. He could save, as could Harriet; both could work and manage, and slowly but surely financial independence began to dawn. Yet for all his thrift, no man was ever a freer spender in a good cause. When a call came for spiritual help, work and earnings took a lower place and the appeal was answered, regardless of expense. On one occasion he had accumulated \$1500, when a request came from a distant part of the country for more light. Without hesitation he set out, accompanied as always by his wife, and the "nest egg" was soon dissipated: but in after years he used to say that he would not take ten million dollars for the good that was done with that fifteen hundred.

At the age of twenty-four we find him on a farm of his own near Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, spending all the time he could spare from his work in preaching. He had many interested at this time and made a circuit of several towns: Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, Green Bay, Ripon and Berlin, with occasional trips to other districts and distant States. Every week-end, instead of resting from the toils of the week, he would hitch up his team—he always kept a spirited team—and, with his wife, spend a day or two or three "feeding the hungry."

Recognizing the fact that the Bible was not given to man in its present translations, he saw that he must familiarize himself with the original languages. By home study he acquired a working knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, which stood him in good stead in later years of study, and without which he could not have succeeded.

His work was interrupted for

several months during this period when his wife's health began to fail. There being a history of tuberculosis in the Griffis family, swift action was deemed necessary. Piling the needful equipment into a covered wagon, the young couple took to the open road and headed for the limitless prairies of Kansas. Nights were spent by the roadside; rattlesnakes, coyotes and Indians were their neighbors, but the outdoor life was good medicine, and soon the roses began to bloom again in Harriet's cheeks. The "tour" came to an end, and he resumed the daily routine of hard work interspersed with proclaiming the "glad tidings."

A small work in a small district? Perhaps; but, then,

"Nazareth was just a little place,
And so was Galilee."

Get Ahead of Yourself!

We must learn to make our way forward without elbowing others aside. If we could get ahead by tramping on the weaker, it is too high a price for advancement. The one who wins the truest success is never in such a hurry to reach his goal that he cannot hold out a helping hand to those whose steps are faltering.

We talk so much about getting ahead. We should desire to get ahead of no one but ourselves. By repeated correction of desires, and by the cultivation of always more intelligent and more noble purposes, we lift ourselves above our lower nature.

Chapter Three Searching

THESE early years of development were important in that they laid the foundation for the work of his manhood, the real task which lay ahead. The rediscovery of the buried Truth was not a sudden "strike," but a gradual process. A ferment, a very momentous ferment, was working in this small corner of the world, and a new chapter in the Divine plan was soon to be opened. This was merely the preliminary phase. Not in a dazzling burst of light was the new to come; not by the dictation of an angelic visitant, not in the thunders of Sinai nor the still small voice that spake to Elijah in Horeb would the hidden truth again project itself upon the scene; but by the travail of a mind wrestling with problems which seemed overwhelming, by sleepless nights and days of study, analysis and research, by the single-minded efforts of an honest man groping and praying for the light, and accepting it as it came.

From his youth, L. T. Nichols was convinced that the Eternal had selected him to do a great work in the world; but many years of preparation must pass before he should be driven to the wall by the growing mass of evidence and caused to see, even against his will, the magnitude of the task laid upon him.

In the Wisconsin days the pattern was hidden. He did not dream that sooner or later he would have to stand alone, one man against all Christendom. Surely there was in this wide world with its thousand and more sects and denominations an organization which had the whole truth, and some day, somehow, he would find it. He did not crave leader-

ship, even though a natural leader, but only to be a good follower, if God might be glorified by his work. Several times he thought he had found the church with which he could unite and labor without sacrificing his intellectual honesty, only to discover the feet of clay when given the acid test of careful comparison with the Word. At length he discovered one which really looked good to him. In the year of his birth, one Dr. Thomas, an Englishman, had come to America and studied under Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples. However, Thomas soon veered away from Campbell's "orthodoxy" and founded a movement which for some years was nameless, although it spread moderately in both England and the United States. During the Civil War, for the sake of gaining official recognition, it adopted the name of the Christadelphian Church.

The writings of Dr. Thomas were liberally sprinkled with Scriptural references, and his theories seemed sound and plausible. Man was mortal by nature, the Kingdom of God was to come on earth at the return of Jesus, there was no burning hell or literal devil. The young Wisconsin farmer was baptized into this faith and became one of its most zealous apostles. Yet not for long did he remain an orthodox Christadelphian. L. T. Nichols was not a man to swallow any theory "hook, line and sinker," especially in so vital a matter as his soul's salvation. He was not long in discovering that the movement lacked vitality, and that some of its doctrines were "questionable," to say the least. Hair-splitting argument took precedence

over practical Christianity in most ecclesias.

When it came to variations that necessitated a choice between Thomas's *Eureka* and the Bible, there was never a second's hesitation with young Nichols. And there were such variations, more than he at first realized. Adhering to his early principles of honesty he began to leave Christadelphianism behind. The best of it he still preached, together with such other truths as he found in the Bible.

The busy years bustled past, and

Personal investigation on the spot, however, convinced him that Stroud was just another imposter—the old story of healing through magnetism, mental suggestion and excitement. The hysteria had taken bizarre forms. One woman burned her false teeth, but her faith in the “miracle man's” best works failed to grow a new set. As a definite test, Brother Nichols brought forward old Brother Seymour, hopelessly blind; if he could be healed, there would be no doubt or question. The result of Mr. Stroud's prayers and anointings

edge [by Divine power or inspiration] it shall vanish away. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three.” This agreed with the evidence: the special gifts and powers *had* ceased. Not until the time of the Second Advent of Christ will God pour out His “spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. . . . And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28-29). In that Day, “he that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do” (John 14:12).

With the same honesty which marked his career from the earliest awakening of his mind to the day of his death, he instantly repudiated his former position and took his stand on the Word of the Lord. But the mischief had been done, even though the excitement had subsided. The flock was henceforth torn by contentions, and conditions grew hopeless. Considering such people unworthy of the Gospel, he resolved to find a new field of labor. Like his example, St. Paul, who, when the Jews proved contentious, turned to the Gentiles, he would seek another people in another province. Those who were like-minded might follow him hither.

Truth had not yet emerged from its “seeming tomb” into the full sunlight, but it was surely on its way.

(To be continued) MM

The same honesty marked his career from the earliest awakening of his mind to the day of his death.

the Wisconsin circuit gained a sizeable band of adherents. Suddenly, however, “grievous wolves” entered in and made sad havoc of the flock. A minister named Stroud, temporarily associated with him, asserted that the promise of miraculous powers given by Jesus to His followers was “for all time” instead of “to the end of the age.” Brother Nichols believed him to be correct in his position and awaited an outpouring of the Holy Spirit such as came on Pentecost. At length Stroud boldly claimed such an outpouring in his own person and was reported to be healing the sick, the lame, the halt and the blind. Excitement was running high. Brother Nichols was greatly agitated by the news from a distant town. A man who had not walked for six months had been cured instantly! With great anxiety he started for the place. Could this be it? He hoped, yet was on his guard against deception.

was, of course, a dismal failure, and a second challenge met with no better success. Brother Nichols promptly denounced Stroud's claims as fraudulent, although the latter still claimed to “have the power.”

Applying himself diligently to a study of the subject, Brother Nichols found that he had been wrong even in expecting such an event in this era, this being the dry time between the “former rain” and the “latter rain” of the Holy Spirit, as foretold by Joel and confirmed by Peter. The promise of “signs following” to confirm the Word was given to the Apostles only, and limited to the Jewish Age—*eis ton aion*, “the consummation of the Age.” And since the fall of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, there has been neither miracle nor vision nor angelic visitation.

“Whether there be tongues,” wrote St. Paul, “they shall cease; whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be knowl-

Christ is preparing us for a place in His spiritual house if we will allow ourselves to be worked upon, so that we may be one of the stones to go into the temple of the Lord.

True Blue?

THE moral guidelines so vividly portrayed in the Word of the Lord are not to our natural liking, therefore are not as readily accepted as smooth, pacifying teachings, and they will never be accepted until mankind are forced to open their blind eyes to see and understand that God means what He says. The commands of the Bible are not the whims of an Almighty dictator, to addle the brain or make living hard for us. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden light." Sin is the burden. Discard it, and the yoke becomes easy.

Cleansing self from every spiritual malady is a process of no small proportions. It requires the whole of the man to undergo a most severe overhauling, even from head to foot. Outwardly, we may be pleasing, likeable. However, God beholds not only the outer covering but the inside as well. He knows man is capable of masquerading under all sorts of disguises to fit the occasion. But pretending is a serious offense and one which God will never tolerate in His presence.

The question to ask ourselves is: What image do we portray, you and I? Are we genuine, all for God, or are we pretenders? Are we more and more com-

ing up to the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Or are we masquerading as good people and within are full of extortion and excess of every kind, smoldering with resentments and bitterness, envyings and jealousies? These are evil, even as pride and haughtiness, which keep us from being humble, meek and lowly. All such, we may be certain, will never have part in that great gathering of the faithful in the not too far distant future.

What a gathering that will be of the most select of every nation and tongue who worked and fought against fearful odds—and won the victory!

Let us each stand by and for the gospel of God in our respective places. God has placed us as lights in the world. If we would be true-blue Christians we have no time for pretense. We must give off a true light; we must keep the faith and never grow weary in well doing. —Contributed

Keep a mental and spiritual wastebasket near so you can throw into it outworn habits, outworn thoughts, outworn ideas. Throw away the bad to get the good, throw away the good to get the better and throw away the better to get God's best.

Signs Of Spiritual Cancer

1. An unusual preoccupation with self, overemphasis upon "I, me, we, us, mine, ours" in conversation.
2. A swelling of interest in one's own thoughts, ideas, projects, without regard to the interests of others.
3. A sore feeling of anger and resentment that persists and does not heal.
4. A change in prayer life and attendance to study and worship from regular to irregular.
5. A feeling of hoarseness and uneasiness when matters relating to God, Christ, the church, or personal responsibility are mentioned.
6. Indigestion, or difficulty in swallowing Christian thoughts or references to "commitment," "discipline," or "self-denial."
7. A change in size, color, or complexion when asked: "Are you one of His?"

• Concerning Literal and Spiritual Baptism

"It is wholly wonderful to hear of a group of people who believe similar to me and a few of my brother/sister acquaintances. However, I fear that one (perhaps very major) doctrinal error has not been fathomed by your people.

"Your views on baptism as being dispensational and synonymous with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit gifts of miracles appear to be unbiased (with all due respect), in view of such references as Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 7:12; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 19:5; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12-13; I Pet. 3:21; Rom. 8:1. 'In Christ' can only be attained by baptism into his death and being raised in his likeness (Rom. 6). This results in 'no condemnation' (Gal. 3:27, Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5). The 'washing of water and word' . . . true, the word is the living water of life, and we are cleansed by being washed by the word, but this is an inward conviction of which baptism is the outward show, and is the first act of obedience of submitting ourselves to God as a clean vessel. Jesus says, 'Except a man be born of water and of Spirit (outward and inward respectively), he cannot enter the kingdom of God' (John 3:5). See also I Cor. 6:13, 19, 20; I Cor. 3:17; I Thess. 4:3-4; II Cor. 7:1; 6:16, which are references that point out that we become new creatures in a new mystical body in Christ, as a cleansed, sanctified, washed temple of which Christ is cornerstone (John 2:19; I Pet. 2:1-9).

"Please let me know how these references can be reconciled with your views. None of these references support a parallel with the bestowing of the Holy Spirit gifts that I could see, and most mentioned nothing of the Holy Spirit gifts on the occasion of a newly baptized individual."

If we understand you correctly, you are stating disagreement with two aspects of our view of baptism:

1) *that water baptism was dispensational (that is, belonging only to people in a particular age or dispensation)*

2) *that water baptism was always accompanied by the Holy Spirit power.*

There is no command whatever in the Old Testament to perform any rite of baptism. It was not practiced until John the Immerser came preaching and baptizing, and there is no recorded command concerning it until Jesus' Apostolic Commission. This commission is recorded in Matthew 28:19 and reads, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The parallel passage is recorded in Mark 16:15-18, "He said unto them [the Eleven], Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

There are several points to observe about this commission. First, it was given to the Eleven apostles only (it was not even given to Paul the twelfth apostle, as he himself testified "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel"—I Cor. 1:17). Second, it was to be miraculously supported by Jesus Himself for a specified time: "even unto the end of the world." The word translated "world" in this passage is *aion* and has for its definition, "age," "a space of time clearly marked out." That space of time was the Jewish age, which ended A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. Third, it was to be supported by visible "signs" that should "follow them that believe." No one on earth today can come close to performing the "signs" that Jesus promised in this commission.

The association between baptism and the Holy Spirit is confirmed by the Biblical record of several instances where baptism was practiced. (See

Acts 8:15-16; 9:17-18; 10:46-48).

There is one further point we might observe about the practice of baptism and the Holy Spirit. It appears that each baptism recorded in the Scriptures was performed by a person who had Holy Spirit power. This is not specifically stated as a requirement, but those who baptized often bestowed the power.

Not having Holy Spirit power today, we do not believe that we are bound by any command to observe the literal rite of baptism. Were we to baptize, the rite would be without effect, as there would be no "signs following." Nor are we today under the apostolic commission. The apostles fulfilled that commission, as stated at the end of Mark's Gospel: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

What about the passages that mention baptism but which make no mention of the Holy Spirit power?

There is one point which I believe you are overlooking: The term "baptism" is used in Scripture with two separate meanings:

- 1) It is used of the literal rite of immersing in water, as when Jesus was baptized by John in the River Jordan, or the apostle Paul was baptized following his conversion.
- 2) It is used of the "One" Baptism, a term applied to the spiritual cleansing of the heart and mind from all sin, the inner cleansing which the literal rite of water baptism signified. This spiritual cleansing is a washing not limited in application to any particular age or dispensation. All of God's people in every age have had to cleanse themselves from sin—what the apostle Paul called "baptism into death"—before they could be acceptable to Him.

Your statement about being "In Christ" is comprehensive and true when applied to the one spiritual baptism. As you say, "In Christ" can only be attained by baptism into His death (putting to death our old uncivilized nature) and being raised in His likeness (to walk in "newness of life"). Also your statement that we are "cleansed by being washed by the word"—this defines the spiritual baptism, and it is "an inward conviction of which [water] baptism was only the outward show." It is truly "the first act of obedience of submitting ourselves to God as a clean vessel." And as you say, this is also the only

means to a "no condemnation" standing in the sight of God (Rom. 8:1).

Some of the passages you cite refer to literal water baptism. Let us review them briefly.

Acts 9:17-18, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Again, baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit are coupled.

Acts 16:15, "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us." In this instance, there is no reference to the Holy Spirit, nor is there any command that the rite should be continued forever.

Acts 16:33, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." This baptism was preceded by a dramatic demonstration of the power of God, a great earthquake which opened the doors of the prison and loosened all the prisoners' bands.

Acts 19:5-6, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

It seems that the weight of the argument is definitely on the side of the fact that literal water baptism was usually accompanied by a dramatic demonstration of the Holy Spirit, and was performed under the commission given by Jesus. Furthermore, we do not find an example of anyone in Scripture baptizing who did not possess the Holy Spirit power. This seems very significant, and a very definite reason why baptism cannot be practiced with efficacy today.

The balance of the texts you cite all refer to the deeper cleansing of the heart, what the apostle Paul calls the "one baptism," and not to literal water baptism.

Romans 6:3-4, Colossians 2:12-13, I Peter 3:21 and Romans 8:1 are all excellent examples of the "one" spiritual baptism, not literal water baptism.

John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." When Jesus spoke of the necessity of being born of

both the "water and the Spirit" to see the inside of the Kingdom of God, He surely intended more than literal baptism, for no one who is literally baptized has the power which Jesus said would belong to those "born of the spirit." We quote: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." This ability to come and go with the freedom of the wind suggests much more than the result of mere water baptism. It is baptism with the spirit, a baptism into immortal life, without which no one can inherit a place in God's heavenly Kingdom.

I Corinthians 6:19-20, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This text makes no mention of baptism.

I Corinthians 3:17, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

I Thessalonians 4:4, 3, "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; for this is the will of God, even your sanctification. . . ." This passage makes no mention of baptism.

II Corinthians 7:1 defines clearly the one, deeper, spiritual baptism of the heart: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

This one baptism which results in a cleansing away of all filthiness of flesh and spirit is the one baptism, and this baptism is not dispensational but is binding upon all of God's people in every age. This is the only baptism binding today, to be baptized "into Christ's death" (death to sin), as Paul explained in Rom. 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

In no event are we to substitute the outward act of immersion for the inward cleansing of the heart and life from sin. The apostle Peter said clearly that literal washing in water did not effect a cleansing from sin (I Pet. 3:20-21). Only the "answer of a good conscience" cleanses away "the filth of the flesh."

• When Was Christ Born?

"In an article in the Megiddo Message, (Vol. 69, No. 11) 'Concerning Christmas,' you state that your church has been observing 'the combined festival of the New Year (Abib 1st) and the birth of Christ in the spring (True Christmas) since 1904'.

"My question is this: The Jewish New Year, as you know, is Yom Kippur, which fell on Sept. 27 of our calendar for 1982. As you must also know, we are both (Israel and USA) situated in the Northern Hemisphere of our planet, so that our fall season and theirs are basically occurring simultaneously, though there is a difference as to the exact day their year begins.

"What I don't understand is why you ever celebrated this birth date of Christ in the spring as you plainly stated, "since 1904," when the Lord Jesus was born in autumn of both calendars, though they call their seasons by different names. I hope you see my point! Christ was born just before winter. If you call their first month spring, you mislead me to believe you are referring to the end of winter. Christ was born just before the cold season, not after it. Please explain yourselves in a more specific way!"

As you state in your letter, Yom Kippur or the Jewish civil year begins in the autumn. The Jews have celebrated the first of Tishri as the beginning of their civil year for many centuries. But this was not always the case. There is ample evidence in the Bible that the Lord instructed them to celebrate a spring new year on the first of Abib or Nisan, which falls in March or April of our calendar (see Ex. 12:2, Ex. 13:4, Deut. 16:1). At what time they changed from a spring new year to a fall new year or added the fall new year celebration no one can say accurately. The following is a quotation from *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*:

"The Passover was kept in the month Abib in commemoration of the rescue of the Israelites by Jehovah out of Egypt which took place in that month. In order to make the season more remarkable, it was ordained that henceforth the month in which it took place should be reckoned the first of the national religious year. From that time accordingly the year began in the month Abib or Nisan, (March-April) while the civil year continued to be reckoned from Tishri, (Sept.-Oct.)."

There is an interesting comment on the Jewish calendar in the Winston Dictionary:

"Before the Babylonian exile the autumn month Tishri when seedtime in Palestine renewed the agriculture year was the first month of the year. During the exile, under the influence of the more scientific Babylonian calendar the new year was observed in the spring month Nisan at the time of the Equinox. During this time the memory of the old year was preserved by an ecclesiastical new year observed in the autumn." This contradicts other scholars who say that the ecclesiastical year began in the spring and the civil year began in the fall. But then the dictionary goes on to say that "From the sixth to the first century B. C. the year began with Nisan. Then the old year was revived and the Mishna recognized both years. It names the first of Nisan as the beginning of the sacred year used for dating the reigns of kings, and the times of sacred feasts; and designated the first of Tishri as the beginning of the civil year, used for naming calendar years, Sabbatical years, years of Jubilee, and dates of vegetable and tree planting."

We are not told the exact date of Christ's birth. But from the evidence available, it seems most likely that Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem to celebrate the New Moon feast and the Passover at the time Jesus was born, and that Jesus was born at the time of the New Moon Feast.

For fuller explanation, see *Megiddo Message*, Vol. 60, No. 4, page 19, entitled, "Christ's Birth . . . Spring or Autumn?"

• John the Baptist or Elijah?

"Does Isaiah 40:3 refer to John the Baptist or to Elijah? 'The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make strait in the desert a highway for our God.'"

John the Baptist himself applies this prophecy to his own ministry, as recorded in the gospel of Matthew (3:3). We read: "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias [Isaiah] saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

Isaiah was referring to John the Baptist who was to be the forerunner of Christ's first coming. Malachi's prediction in chapter 4 refers to Elijah the prophet as forerunner of Christ's second coming.

Order Now!

The LEAFLET you will NEED
this holiday season

Give your family and friends

THE BIBLE ANSWER

to all the holiday frivolity

Price: \$1.00 per hundred copies

IS THIS (FOOLISHNESS)



for CHRISTIANS?

Put SELF to Flight!

The days are swiftly passing; our Lord will soon be returning to this earth to reign as King over the chosen people, those whom He has called through the ages knowing that they can do the work He has set for them. What an assuring promise is given that God calls only those to serve Him who will do the work. My thought is that we not only be so very thankful for this great privilege of being able to become a child of God, but that we really get down to the work to obtain this privilege.

It will be our own fault if we do not win this wonderful prize. We have been warned over and over again that we must employ our whole mind and thought to win the joy, peace, happiness, riches and honour in the New World of everlasting loveliness.

Having been told again and again what we must do to obtain that future happiness, why don't some progress as fast? After a little thought, I have come up with the word "SELF". We ourselves prevent our own growth and advancement. "SELF" is a very dangerous word. "SELF" is the one thing that can withhold from us the joy, happiness and comfort we desire. We are so easily deceived by our arch enemy—"SELF"—that we often fail to realize the contaminating influence of our own bad thoughts, be they ever so small. Though they may be small at first, if allowed to grow, they can become a destructive force which will take us to death and destruction instead of to the wonderful life that can be ours. Let our past experiences make us wiser and more careful.

Let us not delude ourselves that because we put "SELF" to flight over

and over again it won't slip back again. If we are off guard, that is the clue for a return, so we must always be alert and on guard.

The cry is going out for peace, but the strange thing is, when Christ returns the cry will be, "We do not want this man to rule over us." The people will not want His brand of peace. They love "SELF" too much.

Let us give sincere thanks to our bountiful Creator for our many blessings and really get rid of "SELF".

South Wales

M. S.

Coming Soon

We know that Elijah and Jesus will be here very soon for all signs point in that direction.

If we ever enter the Kingdom of God, we have to make our calling and election sure, giving up our own ways and running with patience the race that is set before us.

So help us to strive harder day by day to be an overcomer, keeping our minds and thoughts pure and holy and undefiled from the world.

Kansas

W. R.

Stirred

It is good to stir our slow minds up and make us realize we don't have a limitless supply of time to do the great work of cleaning old self up. But we know we can with God's help, if only we will do the work.

Let us all deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus' example all the way.

South Carolina

E. C.

Looking for a New Heavens

Sometimes it seems one doesn't do all the things waiting to be done. However we must look to do those things which will help us to gain the eternal worth and pleasures. After all is said and done, there will always be many earthly or temporal duties never fulfilled. But these we must keep secondary to being prepared and waiting, ready for the return of the Lord. We are told to "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). And as the apostle Peter warned, if we are looking for a new heavens and a new earth to be established in righteousness, we must be diligent to be found without spot and blameless and in peace when the Judge shall appear, to be able to be found worthy to share in the great transformation of this earth. Yes, that will be a grand and glorious time, when the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, no more sorrow, pain nor death.

Australia

A. & J. B.

Grateful

I will never be able to repay all the kindness shown to me. The only way I can is to obey God and do His will and be worthy of being a member of the family of God. How wonderful is the tie that binds us close in Christian fellowship.

Yes, the time is getting closer and closer to Elijah's return.

How I do appreciate the Messages and tapes. When playing the tapes, it seems I can close my eyes and be in church. How good God is to us. Everywhere we look, we can see His handiwork.

Ohio

M. W.

The Power of Personal Choice

THE power of choice is an awesome power given to us by our heavenly Father. To think that He is willing to put in our hands the power of decision, the possibility of molding our own lives in such a pattern as to be what He wants us to be.

Our basic point of choice is that set forth by Joshua to the people of Israel (Josh. 24:15): "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve." Yes, one word: "Choose."

God allows circumstances that will influence our choices, but He never forces our choice. If we are seeking what He has offered us, we will be sensitive to His will and willing to subject ourselves to His law, and we will be anxious to use each and every choice-point we encounter to bring us one step nearer to Him. We will be concerned lest a mis-choice cause a digression and detour which could lead us far from God.

Most of us must look back upon a path that has been shamefully erratic, with detours, sideturns, and bypaths all along. It is important to see where we went astray, where the wrong choice occurred, to determine how we can avoid these missteps in the future.

The point to remember is that these large and small choices which we freely make are the reason for who we are and what we are. Becoming what we are today was a long process of selecting from the available alternatives those which we felt would get us where we wanted to be. And by this process of selecting, we became a specific sort of person.

The next question is: Are you satisfied with what your choices have made you? Or do you feel you are caught in a web from which there is no escape? While heredity and environment play a large part in making you what you are, you are still the product of your own choices. From childhood you have been compelled to make decisions, some large, some small, some seemingly insignificant but all contrib-

uting to making you what you are. Some choices are clear, some hazy, some unconscious. Some choices have been highly active and some passive—some have been made by default. But all have added up to become you.

How careful, then, we should be in the choices we make, that we make each and every one in the fear of God and the love of future life. Let us ask ourselves again and again, What will give me the best spiritual advantage? What will set the best example to others? What would I really like to be found doing (thinking, saying), if Jesus were to walk into my presence this moment? What interests, thoughts, activities, pastimes, friendships would I be anxious to share with Him?

All are ours to choose, and the sum total will be we ourselves.

The encouraging word is that God does not reject us because of one poor choice, but gives us also an opportunity to alter our course and head straight up the hill of perfection.

If you look at yourself and do not like what you see, you can change what you see by exercising your awesome power of choice from this point on, and change, improve, grow toward God and righteousness.

This is our constant responsibility. This is why we have the power to choose. MM

If Not Careful . . .

We harden our viewpoints and refuse to look at anything beyond that viewpoint. We groove our thinking and acting, and the grooves get deeper and deeper until they become graves that bury us.

Megiddo Church
481 Thurston Road
Rochester, N. Y. 14619-1697

Second Class Postage Paid
(USPS 338-120)
Rochester, New York

**VITAL
Information**

READ for Your LIFE!

**THE SABBATH
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE ATONEMENT
TRINITY OR UNITY?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
THE GREAT APOSTASY
THESE THINGS SHALL BE
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?
HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION**

ALL for \$3.00, Postpaid

Church Services

In Your Home

CASSETTE - LOAN PLAN

2 Cassettes each month, only \$1 per month

Here's how it works. We mail you two cassettes—two church services complete with message, prayer and music. You play them as many times as you like for one month. Then you return them to us, and we send you two other cassettes.

Write for further information

Understand the Bible

ORDER YOUR COPIES NOW!

**A Series of Bible Studies
BY SUBJECT**

In the Beginning God	\$.40
The Bible: Light of Life .....	.50
Of Life, Death and Immortality .....	.40
Jesus Christ .....	.70
The Kingdom of God .....	.80
Apostasy and Restoration .....	.70
The Hell of the Bible .....	.40
The Devil of the Bible .....	.70
Baptism and Baptism .....	.40
The Trinity Mystery .....	.40
Did Christ Pre-exist? .....	.40
What About Original Sin? .....	.50
Atonement and Salvation .....	.60
The Sabbath of the Bible .....	.40
The Three Christs .....	.10
God's Spirit at Work .....	.90
Of Origins, Evolution and Order .....	.70
Three Classes of Humanity .....	.50
World Religions .....	.40
The Mosaic Law—Its Significance .....	.70
The Second Advent of Christ .....	.70
The Resurrection, Judgment and Eternity .....	.60
All of the above	\$10.00

Did You Get Your Copy ?

Millennium Superworld

It puts the reader on the pulse-point of tomorrow!



Send now.

Only \$2.00 postpaid

Megiddo Church, Dept. MS
481 Thurston Road
Rochester, New York 14619-1697