

MACEDONIAN CALL

"Come Over Into Macedonia and Help Us." (Acts 16: 9.)

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., 918 Congress Ave., OCTOBER 4 1929.

THE CHURCH "WITH HER BACK TO THE WALL".

Several weeks ago Billy Sunday said that the movie people had offered him a million dollars to become a movie actor for them; but he replied that he could not do it "while the church had her back to the wall". Dean Inge, one of the most prominent preachers of England, said some time ago when speaking of moral and religious conditions, "I see no hope for either England or America, unless somehow new moral and religious life is injected into them."

Those standing on the firing line trying to get men and women to live better, will say that both of these men are speaking the truth. There is no use in trying to get away from the facts in the case, as disheartening as they may appear, for we shall have to meet them some time. Those who draw such a picture of darkness, are ridiculed, (Dean Inge is called "the gloomy dean"), yet ridicule does not change the true situation one whit. I believe that the moral and religious world is up against one of the biggest problems it has had to contend against in the Christian age.

In material advantages there are more people in America living in ease than among the same number of people since the beginning of time. In some respects, such as slavery and working conditions, the world is better, but what are the people in their personal morals? Our schools teach little morality any more, but rather fun and indecency. They teach that man came up from the lower animals, and they thus destroy confidence in the only book of morals we have--the Bible. In the higher institutions of learning, the professors would laugh at you if you said that you believe that the Bible is the word of God. Our divorce laws have become a laughing stock throughout the world. Our great cities are largely in the hands of thugs. The relation between the sexes is becoming more and more like the morality between dogs and cats. Our evolution is downward rather than upward. Lawyers will resort to almost anything to make a name to themselves by freeing criminals who they know are guilty, and many judges it seems are influenced by money or votes to render unjust decisions. A prominent writer in a recent number of a big popular magazine made fun of the past generation for its use of chaperons to try to keep their daughters pure in their lives. And very little moral training, and practically no religious training, is given the young people by their parents. These are conditions which confront us, and shutting our eyes does not cause them to disappear.

The so-called "Federated Churches of Christ", which consists of most of the prominent Protestant denominations, tries to keep the real facts from the people about the condition of the Christian world. In their census they report additions but not dismissals. A few years ago, however, they made a slip, and their figures showed that when they had counted off their bookbinders, they had lost half a million members in the United States. A writer in a recent number of a popular magazine has taken from a report of a Men's Religious League, statements which show that the denominations are losing in real membership all the time. And a deplorable thing is that most of the members which they now have are worldly. A member in a Christian Church in a county seat, told me recently that the Sunday before the officials of his church, and of the Presbyterian Church and of the Congregational Church, had all left their religious services and gone to Kansas City to a Sunday base ball game. A minister in a Colorado town recently investigated and found that not one man in nine attended church.

The spirit of evangelism is rapidly waning among them. On Sunday nights, it is hardly possible in most churches to get

"corporal's guard" for their meeting. In fact, some churches disband it altogether in the summer, and in some places they have union meetings then to have enough to preach to. The Federated Churches of Christ has actually taken a stand against Evangelism, and because of that one of the smaller denominations has withdrawn from the organization. The insane evangelism of many preachers, and the mourner's bench system of getting religion, and the infidelity to the Scriptures in the head of the Federation, are probably responsible for their decree. The Federation will make more social clubs out of the churches, if they will permit it.

Has the Church of Christ her back against the wall, too? The facts indicate that she, too, is fighting for her life. There are quite a good many additions reported just as there are in the denominational census, but nothing is said about the backsliders nor the worldly-minded people in our ranks. Some city churches are gaining in numbers, by that is nearly altogether by transfer of membership from churches in the country and smaller towns. Children of members are about the only ones being converted, and we are not holding very many of them. Some brethren in the city seem to think that progress is being made throughout the brotherhood because they are growing by this transfer of membership. Because of these removals, the small places are suffering much.

Did you ever stop to think that we have very few preachers who have devoted all their time to gospel work? Nearly all the preachers have made part of their living at something else. Some of the monthly preachers may be doing well in a financial way. Some make from thirty to sixty dollars a week teaching school, working in a factory, store, etc., and then are remunerated five to twenty-five or thirty dollars on Lord's days. A few all-time preachers may shun the weaker places, preach smoother things, and may do well; but the ones who hew to the line and go anywhere they are called, must use strict economy to get by. Unless there is a change, and if the interest in religion continues to decline, I believe it will be necessary very soon for the faithful all-time evangelist who has much of a family, will have to make part of his living at some secular calling. Paul did that and we can do the same. I believe that every young man who expects to reach should learn some profession or occupation by which he can make his living, or part of it--but an occupation which, if possible, will give him a chance to engage in local preaching and teaching.

A few days ago I received this in a letter from a brother who has given a good deal of time in the past twenty years in building churches in new and weak places, "I am somewhat worn. This makes five meetings for me since July 5, and only one of them where the church claimed to be in order. The other four are real mission fields or where the church had run down. I have received about half support. Brother, it seems to me to be the hardest time to stir any interest among members to speak of, or to reach the world, that I ever did see. I wonder if it going to come to where we will have to go home like old father Noah while he built the ark--just go to work and preach around what little we can."

Many brethren do not appreciate the sacrifice the evangelist, and especially his family, makes. Some brethren in the country think that since they can live in the country and do well, if they could received fifteen or twenty dollars a week, the preacher with a good sized family can do the same in town. They forget that the farmer raises much of his living. Many don't figure carfare, and many think three Lord's days are the same as two weeks, when they are practically three weeks with the preacher, considering time going and returning, and a couple of days with his family. A preacher visits his family a couple of weeks after being away for two or three months, and he practically gets nothing as he pushes himself in (perhaps unwanted and uninvited) between the monthly visits of a preacher who makes his living at secular work. If he should receive thirty-five dollars while away from home, by the time all those things are considered, his remuneration has dwindled to less than twenty-five dollars a week. If some one could devise some way by which an evangelist when out preaching could make part of his living, they would convey a favor on him and the church. I am sure that all preachers would rather stay closer home, and it is possible for a preacher to do a great work in a given locality.

If a preacher is willing to compromise somewhat, he may be able to make it all right in a financial way. If he will settle down and preach all the time at one place, he may thrive for a while. If he will put on the soft pedal and touch very lightly, if at all, the picture show, dance and card party, the big churches may call him several times. But what preachers are there who show that the use of tobacco by a Christian hurts his influence very much? How many are coming out strongly against Christians' going to the Lord's Supper in the morning and a ball game in the afternoon--the ball game with its swearing, revelling, betting crowd? How many preachers are showing that Christians are living at ease in Zion when they spend a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars for a year when one almost at half that price would do the work just as well and they are not concerned that sick are neglected and preachers are leaving the field for lack of support and the world and church too sinks deeper and deeper in sin? How many show that Christians are not doing things to the glory of God when they spend big sums for a radio and spend many hours listening to a lot of foolishness on the air? How many show that when women cut their dresses off at the arm holes and up to their knees, or above, they are disobeying the command of an inspired man to dress in modest apparel? "Oh, some cowardly soul says, "I don't believe in making a hobby of anything." Is it a hobby to preach the word of God, and reprove and rebuke as God commands? Already we have too much preaching against the Jews and Papists, and not enough to the sinners in the front row. All this can and should be done in the spirit of meekness; but--it should be done. But I believe that the preacher who preaches that way will have to make part of his living, at least, at some secular calling, if he has much of a family to support. My advice to every young man is that he prepare first to make a living for himself and those depending on him.

There are many causes for this condition in the world and Church. High-powered evangelism, neglect of discipline, entering to the world by church members, and to the members by preachers--are some of the causes. But the evil which lies at the bottom of most of it is neglect of reading the Bible and prayer. There are so many things to draw the attention of people today that Christians have fallen in line with the worldlings about them, and have not taken time for the daily study of the word of God and prayer. No Christian is going to be much of a Christian without this. "Watch and pray lest ye fall into temptation"--said the Savior himself, and if we neglect that we shall not only not save the world but we shall not even save ourselves.

For twenty years I have thought that one way to get people to study the Bible is to show them how and get them at it. That is one reason I have spent so much time in Bible drills, and have tried to get others to take it up. However, I never hold the drills with the children, but with the whole church; for if we can get grown-ups interested, they may continue it after the preacher is gone, but if only the children are interested the interest will soon die. But now I am wondering, what is the use of trying to show people how to read the Bible when they don't wish to read it? There must be created first the desire. If all of us will preach strong on the WRATH of God as well as his love, we may do a little. The Church needs conversion.

And who is there today who is giving any serious attention to the religious training of his children? The denominational world has given much attention to Sunday-schools, and clubs and societies for young people, (and even some in the Church of Christ have taken this up), and yet they are making very little impression on the young. God's plan is for fathers and mothers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and if parents are not sufficiently interested in their children to try their best to save them, there is not much hope for the rising generation. One reason the Church has its back to the wall is because so many members of the Church are just like we are!

I see very little hope for the denominational world. In times past when the Church became corrupted, she still believed the Bible and it was that which led to a reformation; but the evolution and higher criticism have destroyed belief in the Bible, the only instrument which can work a reformation. When the world and Church be-

come so morally rotten that people will have to look for something for their self-preservation, then perhaps they will sweep aside the philosophies of the schools and go back to the Bible. But that may be a long time yet.

It may be that we are near the end of time. Paul says that in the last days, they professed Christians will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and it is sure that ungodly church members today will have only those who will please them. ~~John~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ A sister once said to me when I had spoken on The Second Coming of Jesus that she drew back with fear when she thought of death and of the second coming and of the end of the world. Brother, sister, do you feel that way about it? If you do, there must be something wrong. Paul spoke of that event, and said, "Therefore, comfort one another with these words." If the contemplation of the glorious second advent of Jesus does not fill us with joy, we are not fighting the battles of the Lord as we should. We are not making the sacrifices we should make. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, and such disciples will be glad when the day is done, when the battles are over, and when the Lord is come to reward his servants. Brethren, if we are not looking forward to the second coming with joy, there must be something wrong.

And when he comes, the Church--the true people of God--will not have its back to the wall. No longer will they be fighting for their existence, for the Lord himself will then take a personal hand in their defense. He will reign till he puts all enemies under his feet. "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall descend from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." But, "we that are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Oh, happy time! oh, glorious day, when Jesus comes again!

But in the meantime we must trim our lamps for his coming.

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Notes for the Brethren.

Catholic Church Against Immodest Dress.--A bishop in the Catholic Church in France has begun a crusade against immodest dress. He says, "The corruption of morals is due to the immodesty of feminine attire. The contagion is so universal that there is hardly any remedy except to influence the next generation." When this great, pretentious, religio-political machine can no longer control its women through the confessional and its parochial school, we can not hope to do much with fashion-crazed women with the simple teachings of the Bible.

The bishop proposes to organize Catholic girls all over the world and have them pledge decency in dress. He specifies the styles of dress NOT to be worn. "They include blouses which descend lower than two inches from the hollow of the throat; dresses whose sleeves do not reach the elbow; skirts which fail to conceal the knees; transparent stockings, and especially flesh-colored ones which gives the impression of nakedness. Many mothers, he bemoans, have thrown modesty to the winds." Many women in the Church of Christ have so little reverence for the word of God that they will laugh at this effort of this Catholic bishop, but I would rather take his chances of getting to heaven rather than those of such women, if he is as faithful in other things as he knows. Old Rome is putting the so-called "Church of Christ" to shame. The command to dress in modest apparel is as much of a command as to repent and be baptized.

Changes for the Better.--Several months ago a paper boasted that it was certainly all right because of the old tried writers it had. It did not tell how many articles of the tried writers it

Has been throwing out. But I rejoice that in the past few months some of those strong articles against sin are being printed. However, if the readers knew what terrible battles have been fought that some of these articles might be printed, they would see that there is not much room for self gratulation. Also, the evidence is that some who have been criticized for not coming out stronger against sin, and for turning down calls from weak and new places, seem to be changing some. I am sure all disciples rejoice at such advancement. However, those who do the criticizing received much blame. Abe Martin, the humorist, says, "The nearest man in all the earth is the one who will censure you for giving him advice, and then will sneak off and take it." And, I may add, especially is this true when they will try to make people believe they have always done as they are now doing. But let us all praise the Lord for all upward moves according to his word.

Personalities.--A brother recently wrote, "I enjoy Austen's fight against sin, but do not enjoy his personalities." Say, brother, is it only a ~~personality~~ general statement when you mention a man's name and say you don't enjoy his "personalities", or is that, too, a "personality"?-----But after all, is it mere personalities which are to be condemned? I have seen many writings which were not exactly personal, but they were of a contemptible digging nature, and I have seen writings where people's names were mentioned which I consider all right. When people are advocating rank principles which if carried out would overthrow the Church, the brethren ought to know who they are. I am not ashamed of my doctrine, and brethren may mention it as much as they please (so long as they state it just as it is); and I should think other brethren would feel the same about their doctrines.-----But I am sorry that I can not "enjoy" this fight like the brother says he does. If more brethren would get into it, possibly I could get some enjoyment out of it. I shall be glad when it's over. But I do enjoy Mr. Freeman Jones' fight against sin. He has the courage of his convictions, and unless we have more such men there is not much hope for the cause remaining pure. Very few preachers have the courage to oppose the immodesty of dress as he has done in his challenge in the Review.

"A One-Man Paper."--I have had much to say against the one-man preacher pastor system in the Church; and while it is in mind I mention that the one-man elder system is unscriptural too. And because I am the only one writing in the Macedonian Call, a writer thinks he has silenced me when he said that I wrote a "one-man paper." My silence was because the argument was so silly that I had no idea that it was an argument, but considered it merely a thrust, with no point, to which the writer has given himself so much. The difference is this: God has specifically shown that more than one man should feed and rule and watch and oversee a local church, but he has said nothing at all about how to print tracts and papers except that we are not to form another "body" through which to do any work.

Getting into Sectarian Meeting Houses.--As the denominations decline I am wondering whether there are not more opportunities to get into their meeting houses. Aren't we a little too careful on this matter? Paul went into the Jewish synagogues and began with their scriptures, and tried to lead them out of their error. Alexander Campbell went into sectarian meeting houses wherever he could and tried to show them how the religious world could be united. Why should not we try to get the ears of the people in the same way? About fifteen years ago there were a couple of disciples in a Christian Church who wished me to come and preach and try to get some others out of that body. I went and "lectured" several nights, but did not get to bring out what I wished before Sunday. So I stayed over Sunday. The pastor invited me to preach Sunday night, and I did. The pipe organ played, and then the pastor introduced me with great eulogies on me and my father, supposing it seems that I would not have the nerve to condemn their ways.

In as nice a way as I knew how, I gave a history of this reformation, in reality showing the difference between the Church of Christ and the Christian Church. Several left the house, but I went on. In a couple of days I tried to get a debate out of the pastor, but he would not. However, we got out of Babylon some fine men and women, and now there is a nice little congregation at Middletown, Ind. As nearly as possible we should adopt the princ-

ple of Jesus that "I have many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them now," and should try to educate them. Teaching the book of Acts would be a fine way to educate them on the apostolic church. When they shut the door of the house against us, possibly there will be a few who will listen to the truth.

Knocking against Paul's Doctrines.—A brother and sister write to a certain brother to come and hold them a meeting, saying their church was almost dead, though they had twenty members. The brother written to proceeds to knock Paul's doctrine that Christians are to edify themselves by his "wondering" if they "were just selfishly interested in 'edifying themselves' and just died? It'll do it--every time? If you'll just give it time." If this church is like many others which are "almost dead" it is not because they didn't have preaching but because they had mere preaching--because their preacher merely preached to them and did not make a serious effort to show those brethren how to edify themselves, nor get them at it. A. A. Morris expressed the truth clearly in the Review thirty years ago, "There is MANIFESTLY A FAULT in the preacher who does all the preaching, praying, reading of the Scriptures, talking at the Lord's table, baptizing, once a month in any given locality, and does not develop the church so that it can hold intensely interesting and profitable meetings on the following Lord's Days." If the preachers at this church had done what Morris taught, it probably would not be "almost dead" now. They could have been alive even if there were only two or three of them.

This writer has appealed entirely to his imagination by his "wondering", in trying to jab Paul's doctrine that elders are to "feed" the church, and that Christians are to edify one another. He has used many columns opposing Paul's doctrine and the doctrine of Morris on the latter years ago in the same paper, and I do not remember seeing half a dozen sentences from him encouraging those practices. He teaches the unscriptural doctrine that elders are feeding the flock when they ~~hire a preacher to do it~~. Adopt such reasoning and a flood-gate is opened. It is just such teaching as this which is helping to kill small congregations and to bring inactivity to many members in big ones--hire a preacher to do work they should learn to do themselves.

Swinging onto the Rear Coach of the Bible College Train.—Some brethren after being satisfied to glorify God in the Church, as Paul commands, are now disposed to compromise with these human organizations which rival the Church. They forget that the Bible College train is headed toward Rome. A brother who lives in the South recently told me that one of these churches had a Santa Claus performance last Christmas. He also admitted that many of the young people in those Bible college churches in that city danced, and that the preachers did not say anything against it. Brethren, is that what you wish to land in? The Bible college churches in the South are about two-thirds of the way to the Christian Church. They have the pastor system, generally, organized Sunday-schools with literature, several different kinds of organizations to do work of the Church, etc. I have tried again and again to get one of their big men to affirm this proposition: "The human organization of a Bible College, such as the David Lipscomb College, established by Christians to teach the Bible in the curriculum along with secular branches, is scriptural." They will not affirm this clear proposition, yet I challenge them to show a single point in it which is not their position in practice. I have a good letter from a brother in Texas who preaches, and he shows that the Bible college people there are getting closer and closer to the Christian Church. Brethren, stay off the Bible College train if you don't wish to land in the ditch.

Miscellaneous.—I need about twenty-five dollars yet to send the last L. C. on "How the Pope God Started", to the 3000 preachers on the year-book. Who wishes to do that missionary work? Send to D. A. Sommer, 918 Congress Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. It is as much missionary work to keep brethren from drifting as it is to convert out and out sinners. I am printing this L. C. with the mimeograph to put the difference between it and a type printed paper into stamps---"The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us what shall the end be of them who obey not the gospel of God?"

SCHOOL OF RELIGION
Butler University
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

LIBRARY

January 6, 1944

Mr. D. A. Sommer
918 Congress Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Brother Sommer:

We have been making a complete check of all the periodicals of the Churches of Christ in our archives at the School of Religion. Our file of the MACEDONIAN CALL, a great many of which we secured from you some time ago, is complete for a number of years. We need the issue of May 1942 to complete the recent years. Could you supply this issue for us? This will complete our file from 1934 to 1943.

For the years previous to 1934 we have the following issues:

- 1929 - January, July.
- 1930 - January, April, July, October.
- 1931 - January, April, July, October.
- 1932 - October.
- 1933 - January, October, November.

Were these all the issues published? If not would it be possible for us to secure the other issues? We are in a position to carefully preserve this valuable periodical and appreciate having it along with others of like interest. We sincerely appreciate the fact that you have included us on your mailing list for the past several years, and hope that you may be able to continue this courtesy to us.

With every good wish for you and your work, I am,

Truly yours,

Enos E. Dowling
Enos E. Dowling, Bibliographer
School of Religion Library

Dear Bro. Dowling:

I am enclosing you May, 1942, which is not very handy for insertion with the others. You will notice that there was a mistake made regarding Vol. numbers. ~~ix~~ Between Feb. and March, 1942, the Vol. was shifted by the printers from Vol 16 to Vol 17, and then we had to have the next year Vol. 17 also, to correct it. For years the M. C. was only published as I found time, between my protracted meeting work, hence it was often only three or four times a year. Some of the issues were entirely used up, and you have as complete a series as I have. Our little paper is small but is working a revolution we think, in the way of stirring churches to DEVELOPING of talent. *Sincerely*