

MACEDONIAN CALL

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

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., 903 Congress Ave., Jan.-April, 1932.

HOPEFUL SIGNS.

Apostasy in General.--It seems to be a natural trait in human beings to drift soon from principles for which they have fought. There is not a religious body that I know of, which is a hundred years old, which holds in full the same principles with which it started out. Our own religious movement ran well for a generation, then many wished societies, instrumental music, one-man preacher-pastors, suppers to raise money, etc., and they caused division over them. Then, after another generation, the Bible college people arose, and divided the Church again. Now it is about time for another apostasy, and the evidence is that "the western movement" is that apostasy. I have been trying hard for half a dozen years to show the brethren that, and I have endured much persecution for my efforts; but the Hopeful Signs to me are that many are now seeing it.

The Morris Apostasy.--Bro. Morris has become the recognized leader of this western movement, and in his People's Bible Advocate of Dec. 1, 1931, he tries to defend himself by showing that there have been differences among some opposed to him. He says:

"Another matter deserves notice. Three men in one family have had turns in editing the Review, and they differ among themselves. The present incumbent and his immediate predecessor, brothers in the flesh and in the Lord, edit rival papers. 'Appeal for Unity' and a 'Call to Vital Things' should make good home reading. It strikes me as inconsistent for them to be urging the theory of unity and peace and practising division. If they would omit their severe criticisms of churches, elders and evangelists, for a time, and give us a concrete example of unity and peace, they would then have more influence for 'loyalty' and 'unity' which they urge upon others so vehemently. As it is, one claims one thing constitutes 'loyalty', the other claims something else, and bewilder the brethren."

Differences Among Bible Advocate Writers.--It seems "inconsistent" to me for Bro. Morris to talk about differences among his opposers, when the same applies to his own group. One regular contributor to his paper told me that he expected to see two of the other contributors to go to the Bible college people. Another of his contributors told me about the jealousy of another one, and that he himself did not endorse two others that he named. Kepple still writes for Morris' paper, yet he divided the church at Van Brunt, K. C., practically casting the elder out. Morris continues to endorse him after that notable example of 'Evangelist Assumption' which is such a bugbear to Morris. Is Morris sincere?

Differences in the Sommer Family.--There have been some differences between Daniel and D. A. Sommer, but it has been because the former had much more confidence in some men than the latter did; but now that those men have gone to their own place, I know of no doctrinal difference between us.

There have been some big differences between D. A. and C. W., and it has been nearly altogether for the same reason--C. W. had much more confidence in some men than D. A. did. The chief one of those men is A. M. MORRIS. Bro. Morris baptized C. W. and myself on the same occasion; but I was baptized unto Christ, not Morris. When Morris left the Word of God and his own teachings, he looked to me just like any other errorist; but C. W. still had confidence in him. One reason that I would not take the publishing of the Review, though it was legally made over to me, was because I saw that I would have to have a continual personal conflict with this loose spirit advanced by Morris and re-echoed by C. W. and others at the Review office. After giving the western movement with its looseness a good trial, even to the extent of persecuting us who opposed it, C. W. has finally gotten his eyes open, and says in the Review, of December 8, 1931:

"OPEN CONFESSION.--Finish it yourself--" is good for the soul. I have come to the conclusion that P. A. Sommer is right, after all, and--I am wrong. I've tried to defend some of the preachers in face of opposition to what he believed; but--some of them are asking too much in the way of defending. When one writes and says: 'Even though a case is made out against a preacher, brethren will not stand for it,' I'm through apologizing, or believing in that preacher unless he helps to teach the brethren to 'stand for it,' even though it cost him a place to preach! When a 'case is made out,' it's made out, brethren or no brethren, and --right is right, and it's always right to defend it! And when a preacher fails to defend it, that shows him for what he is. . ."

Very Little Discipline Any More.--Discipline is as important to the health and growth of a church as the cutting off of dead or diseased limbs to trees and vines. It is easy for elders to let everything slip along, and for soft-pedal preachers to shun--to tell elders of their neglect, saying, "Oh, I never mix in church matters; I leave that to the elders." I have heard preachers flatter elders publicly, yet did not encourage them to clean up the church, even though it needed it. Such preachers have unconsciously become hirelings, seeking for flocks to fleece. Morris has helped them along by decrying this purifying work as "Evangelistic Assumption." The result is that spiritual stagnation and corruption is growing more in the churches. One difference between C. W. and myself has been that he has been following along with Morris in this looseness, and I have not been. I shall consider that C. W.'s Confession includes that, and so we are together on that now, even though it will take him years to counteract the help he has given to it. I recently held a two weeks' Bible reading and drill at a place in southern Indiana, and helped start them in disciplinary work which ought to have been done years ago, and for which the church has suffered much; but the past years they have not had the courage to do it, for their preachers in turn have lacked courage to stir them. Unless many elders wake up and get rid of soft-pedal preachers, and get some one who will arouse them to clean up, they will find some day their church a mere shell with a dried-up kernel.

Obey Elders Right or Wrong.--Bro. Morris may deny that this is his doctrine, but there has been brought some pretty some good evidence from some in his Bible reading at Riverside that he taught it. When half a church stands behind charges against elders, and the elders utterly refuse to help choose a mutual tribunal, as was true in Long Beach--when Morris demands that half a church obey elders under such circumstances, he teaches that we must obey elders right or wrong. In one letter for settlement, written to the elders at Long Beach in their trouble there, the accusers said, "We insist that a mutually chosen tribunal, to consist of at least three evangelists who are not connected with the case, be permitted to investigate your case, and we hereby agree to abide by their decision." (A Review of Long Beach Trouble, by Roberts, Burcher, etc., page 48.) This proposal was signed by ten members of the church; but for their effort to get a mutually chosen tribunal, they were excluded by the elders, with a chance denied them to speak for themselves. And Morris backed this, and the evidence is that he engineered it. At other times in this trouble did members try to have a mutually chosen tribunal, but in every instance they were rebuffed. If this does not show that Morris teaches, Obey elders right or wrong, then I do not understand in a small degree the communication of ideas.

The point in this controversy is this: When elders refuse to be tried by a so-called partial tribunal, and refuse to help select an IMPARTIAL tribunal, how are they to be tried? I have never seen anything from Morris' pen in this affair which would show the brethren how. He tries to camouflage the Long Beach affair by saying that the accusers of the elders were a "faction". George Washington, too, and his continental soldiers, were a faction in the eyes of the British. Tyrannical rule is wrong, either in politics or religion. Those who are supporting this western movement are endorsing such unreasonable and unscriptural doctrine. I hope all these brethren get out of this spottate movement and get back to what they used to teach, which can be supported by the Bible. There have been some differences between C. W. and myself as to whether evangelists should be called in when charges are against elders,

when the elders can not settle it among themselves; but I rejoice that he is leaving Morris' position and going back to what the Review taught fifteen years ago. But I am glad that he has not endorsed the western practice of throwing people out of the church without a chance to speak for themselves.

Big Churches.—Another spirit of apostasy is growing among us in the form of a desire for big churches. In apostolic times, many in the cities were converted; but as no details are given as to number of local churches in a city, after the fervor of evangelism wore off, we can not make any definite decisions. Jerusalem had possibly the biggest church of all; yet the Lord saw fit to break that up by persecution, and the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word. Though David Lipscomb was a Bible college man, he had a broad experience in establishing churches in the South where he was probably the most influential preacher for many years. In speaking of a certain active, little church in Nashville, which had no other pastor, but where every male member could speak publicly, and which had established other churches, he said, "Such a little band of earnest, working Christians is much more effective for converting the world than a rich church with a thousand wealthy, fashionable members, supporting one of the most learned and eloquent preachers in the land to study, pray, exhort and admonish for them, while they live at ease and support him. . . . The danger with such churches is, when they grow in numbers and increase in wealth, they employ others to do the work for them, and they grow cold, lukewarm, indifferent to the services of God and the salvation of their fellow-men, and hire others to worship God for them."—The Christian Church, about a generation ago, began their insane evangelism for big churches, but now there is a movement among them to put spiritual life into their carcasses. For these and other reasons, I have advocated that when a church gets many more than a hundred members, it would do well to start up in some other part of the city or in another community where some of the members live, thereby giving them more convenience and better opportunity to develop themselves, and giving the people of the community a chance to hear the gospel. I have also said that when a church has two elements in it which can not get along well together, when no doctrine is involved it is better to separate peaceably and work in different places, much as Paul and Barnabas did in their work for the Lord.

That this big-church idea is one of the chief things of the western movement, can be seen from the fact that practically every writer of the Bible Advocate has preached, or is preaching, for one church all the time, or has endorsed that one-men system, in order to make big churches. C. W. S. had confidence in Morris, and thus was encouraged to hold to this big-church idea, but I am glad he is not ridiculing my position any more. That brings us closer together. But even Morris himself seems to see they are drifting on that subject, for in his Advocate, Sept. 1, 1931, he says:

"Why is it that disciples get along peaceably when they are few in number; but as soon as a congregation becomes numerically strong, they drift into such pitiable strife and confusion? One of the first signs of carnality is the desire to become a BIG church. The emphasis on BIG is by Morris.—C. A. S.] The evangelist who can draw the biggest crowd, enlist the largest number of outsiders, is the most popular. Along with this carnal desire to be a big church, is the ambition to beat others in vain rivalry in music, and in raising money, and in every outward evidence of success. Then, as envy and strife take the reins, confusion and every evil work follows. If men are truly converted, the more the better; but when a church makes a bid for popularity rather than for wholehearted conversion to God, carnality sweeps the field." [I don't know of any church among us of several hundred members that is not making a bid for popularity.—D. A. S.]

Well said, Bro. Morris, well said. That has your old-time ring to it, before you changed. But if that big-church idea had not been one of the central ideas of your western movement, then it is very dull. Three years ago Bro. Peppercine invited me into his private office of the Western Auto Supply Co., in Los Angeles, and there among other things we talked of the big-church idea. He was strong for it, and disapproved of my idea, which was like Morris' in the clipping above. But, Bro. Morris, you helped start that along that big-church idea, and you need not think that one little note will stop it. Long after you are dead, the big-church movement with its pastor system, which you helped start, along with

its carnality and strife, as you call it, will continue its course, farther and farther from the truth. In the meantime I shall keep on crying against the big-church, the fine meeting house, the one-man preacher-pastor system, etc., and the spirit of worldliness fostering and fostered by such. Of course the big churches will try to restrain themselves while this matter is under fire, but soon they will break loose, as some are now doing, and will go the way of all apostasies.

Soft-pedaling.--The western movement has been softening-up movement, toward discipline, the Bible colleges, the world, and other things, and one difference between C. W. and myself has been that he sympathized with it somewhat, and has even ridiculed my use of the word "soft-pedal"; but I am glad to see that even he is now defending the word and its present use, and defending those who are using it. But I have suffered much opposition. I expect to see these soft-pedal preachers in the East fall in with the western movement, for the evidence is that that is where their hearts are. That is, they will fall in with it, if they think it will be more popular. But they should be regarded as with it, unless they take their stand against it. They are among the worst enemies the Church has. If it were not for them, the true gospel preacher could develop pure churches, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ but they come along with their good words and fair speeches (affirmative only and general only) and instill satisfaction into leaders and other members who ought to be stirred.

The One-Man Preacher Pastor.--Yes, Bro. Morris, C. W. and I have differed somewhat on Mutual Teaching, and one reason is that you set the pace on this preaching question. Your position is this: Preaching every Sunday morning and night, in a church with elders, by preachers brought in for that purpose, is scriptural. I have not been able to find a preacher of reputation writing for Morris' paper who will affirm their practice as expressed in these words. They are too cowardly. They are bold on some sectarian doctrines, but rather timid regarding this troublesome question among us. But Morris had to turn a flip-flop from what he taught thirty years ago, to endorse it. I have shown you again and again how Paul taught that several took part when the whole church was gathered together, how Alexander Campbell believed and taught what Paul did, how Benjamin Franklin, the noted preacher and founder of the Review, before he died, said he was sorry he had not seen the matter clearer so that he could have used his influence for it. David Lipscomb and J. A. Harding, the most prominent preachers in the South the past half century, taught it. All of these have taught in almost every detail just what I have been advocating on this subject of Mutual Teaching. But this united front by these brethren in separated districts or periods, means nothing to those today who are determined to do only what will exalt and benefit themselves.

But here is another noted writer. John Milton was one of the most learned men in his day, and was what we might call secretary of state in Cromwell's government in England when Protestantism was trying to find itself. Milton's Poems, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained, will probably live as long as the English language is spoken. Milton had much influence in leading Campbell to the light. One religious work Milton wrote is titled, "A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, To all the Churches of Christ." He wrote another one on How to Remove Hirelings out of the Church. On Mutual Edification, Milton said, "The custom of holding assemblies is to be maintained; not according to the present mode, but according to the apostolic institution, which did not ordain that an individual, and he a stipendary [hireling] should have the sole right of speaking from a higher place, but that each believer in turn should be authorized to speak, or prophesy, or teach, or exhort, according to his gifts. Inasmuch that even the weakest among the brethren had the privilege of asking questions, and consulting the elders and more experienced members of the congregation."--John Milton, in Reason of Church Government, Vol. II, p. 303, quoted by Channing.

It is a great satisfaction to me to stand with such an array of Bible scholars as well as with the Apostle Paul. This one-man system has been tried through the ages and has been found wanting. For a little while churches adopting it may make an outward show of success, then they lapse into mental and spiritual lethargy. The progressive

Christian churches all have it, and they are now starting a movement among them to stimulate Bible study and spirituality. The W. Indianapolis church of Christ practices mutual teaching as near like that in the New Testament as they can. I was there a few days ago, and they had a very interesting meeting, eight or ten brethren taking part for about five minutes, speaking on the regular chapter under consideration. Many times have I visited this church, but very seldom have I preached Lord's day morning. I take part along with the rest. They have interesting mutual edification meetings because they believe in them. Some elders and churches say they have tried them and say they have proven a failure, when the real reason for failure was because the leaders did not believe in them strong enough to show their scripturalness and urge them as they urge ~~and that~~ false scriptural. When all the monthly preachers do the work mentioned here by C. G. Parsons, we can look for strong developed churches; "Alta, O.--Meetings with congregation at Lovers Pt., began Sept. 18 27, closed Oct. 14, with 14 precious souls added to the church by primary obedience. Interest good from the beginning to the close. I have visited these brethren monthly the past summer, going on Tuesday and giving Bible lessons till Friday night, then preaching over Lord's day. . . . C. G. Parsons." I believe the work of an evangelist is so to develop a church that it will need him less, and can then use him in heeding the Macedonian cry to preach in new and weak fields. I have received much misrepresentation because I have contended for a scripturally-developed church. There are many preachers today who are school teachers, doctors, mechanics, farmers, etc., who make a living at their secular calling, and hunt for the best churches they can find, not the weak ones, and run out and drain them, and never do anything to develop those churches so that they can use their preacher and money in new and weak places. We can never establish many new churches while we tolerate such a system as we are. It is a Hopeful Sign that C. W. is getting his eyes open to the drift of things, and I endorse his efforts to get public speakers to do more teaching instead of merely sermonizing. But he will have to be patient in trying to unteach people he has been encouraging on these broader lines.

Something Yet Undone.--While C. W. is retracing his steps on some of his teachings, Truth expects him to finish the job and retract what he said in the Review of Sept. 15, 1931, about an article I sent to the paper, of which he changed the heading and name at end. I have space for only a few of his words: "We feel capable of writing our own articles. . . He says we have put him in a false position by signing his name instead of ours. . . There's something besides 'COURAGE' needed--Truth and less underhand work are needed as well. And we are in position to prove that a little of each has been lacking in the above incident. Even Reformers must tell the truth and be above-board." I wrote a reply to this and sent it to the Review office two or three weeks after C. W. printed these statements, but it has never been published. His "Open Confession", however, has appeared, after months, but that does not cover these charges of underhand work and untruthfulness charged against me before his thousands of readers. A brother writes me, "It appeared to us as a very great injustice before the brotherhood." Here is part of my defense after the elimination of what was covered by his "Confession", which was never published:

"Yes, when the Review publisher made the cry that it would have to suspend publication if it did not receive more money, I had a desire to help save it. I knew from personal touch with hundreds of brethren that not only the depression but the unsound position of the publisher was one of the causes that some had quit taking the paper, and that many had quit working for it. I believed that if the publisher would come out clearly and state where he now stood on the all-time preaching question, and on the western movement, greater confidence would be raised in the paper. The title of the article was 'Plans and Principles of the Review,' and the name 'Review Managers' was typed at the bottom. My idea was that if he would come out clearly on these and other points, without any judgement except love of truth, I would then write for the paper and endorse their stand and work for it as I did before

its slipping. But I did not tell them my purposes, for the reason, as I said, that I did not wish them to take a position because of any help they might think they would get. . . I was willing to forget all his past opposition to the truth on the questions mentioned and others, if he would with only love of truth before him state what he was going to do in the future. But . . . he changed the heading of the article, and added my name without my knowledge or consent, and thus misrepresented me before the brotherhood by having me endorse the paper and encourage others to work for it, when he had never made a clear statement where he stood and intended to stand in the future. This misrepresentation caused possibly a dozen to ask me why then I didn't write for the paper, and I told them these things in self-defense. . . I welcome a revelation of any untruthfulness and underhandedness in my work with a chance to defend myself in the same paper. The fact is that I have been too frank for my own good."

Now if C. W. wishes to fight himself with me, and I think with the Lord, he will retract his false statements with the same publicity he gave them. In fact, if he wishes to undo some of the harm he has done, he will print this entire H. C. in the Review. Many people have never seen his "Open Confession"; and one brother whose attention was called to it, said it ought to have been on the first page, and in more than one issue, in view of the many, many issues he printed the things it deals with. . . I am thankful Chester has gone as far as he has, and hope he will finish the work he has begun, so that he may strengthen the things which remain.

Conclusion.--Yes, Bro. Morris, the differences between C. W. and D. A. have tended to "bewilder the brethren," but they are cleared up except the one mentioned, and it, too, was indirectly based on your apostasy. But the basic bewilderment starts with the difference between A. M. Morris of years ago and the A. L. Morris of today. I thank God, however, that there are Hopeful Signs that you are losing your influence for apostasy. I hope you, too, will retrace your steps before it is too late.

MISCELLANEOUS.--Last fall I held a meeting of three weeks at Wauneta, Neb., with several heads of families baptized; and since I felt that a dozen have come from the Terry faction, and there is a good prospect of more. When a worldly man says a preacher can tell more dirty stories than any man he knows, it is surely time for something to be done. I hope the preachers who helped this faction will make things right before the judgment, especially as they admit privately that they were hasty.--This winter I held a two weeks' Bible reading and drill at Palmyra, Ind., with average attendance of about 70. All seemed well pleased. Am to do the same Bible work at West Indianapolis in April. Held many meetings last year and feel that I did much good. Opposition from the two papers and the pastor-inclined preachers has curtailed my work somewhat, but I rejoice there are "Hopeful Signs" of turning back by some.--Brethren, in these hard times, out but more luxuries and not the work of the Lord.--In this issue of the H. C. I'm using up some mimeograph paper on hand.

.. preaching brother writes: "I regret very much that selfishness dominates the minds of too many of us; and that, too, affects the churches. They will be worn and empty the treasury and do scarcely any work in the field. We are doing that very thing at --- \$20 a month, and Bro. --- gives nearly his entire time to his secular work. He is a fine gentleman, but what does that do for the cause of Christ? I'll not say I have been absolutely clear of that, yet I have figured more or less in a lot of mission work; and I'm mighty glad of it, and I'm glad for the company of such men as D. A. Sommer. I am quite sure you have helped me to be stronger in the work of the Master. . . I surely believe that every man that qualifies to preach . . . should get the word before as many minds as possible, and not prey upon the treasury for the growth of his bank account. . . but use what the Church gives him for the advancement of the kingdom. . . I am glad you have written and made the talks you have. . . and I assure you, you have my sympathy. . . I am a little more wavy than you are, but I have stood where you do more or less ever since I came into the Church. Always since I was a young man, I wanted to see the church developed; and urged on different ones to take part." (I am sorry I must stop this good letter for want of space.)