

MACEDONIAN CALL

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

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., JULY, 1927.

ISN'T THE DEVIL LAUGHING AT THE WAY HE'S "ROPING" US IN?

By deception and not by openness, the devil accomplishes his evil purposes of leading souls astray and hindering the spread of the gospel. He never comes out and tells what his ultimate plans are. By good words and fair speeches he deceives the hearts of the simple. He is a liar and the father of lies. No wonder Paul speaks of the "wiles of the devil", and warns Christians against them. "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers be transformed as ministers of righteousness." Many good people are deceived. We must be on our guard.

In this day of ease and indulgence he is gradually throwing his ropes around many members of the Church of Christ, and binding them fast. He is doing that on our preaching system. He wants to keep us from reaching out into new fields. God's plan is to put men to work in the Church; and we know that members of the church who do not work soon become as useless as members of the human body that are not exercised. God ordained that evangelists develop teachers in the churches, for Paul said to Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2: 2.) While 1 Cor. 14: 26 refers primarily to inspired men, yet it shows that they did not have a one-man system back there, "How is it, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." Paul says to the Ephesian elders, "Feed the church of God." (Acts 20: 28.) In several places Paul says, "Edify one another." This shows a system of mutual teaching among the brethren. Elders were the leaders, for they are the "overseers", and Paul says also they should be "apt to teach", (1 Tim. 3), and "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," (Titus 1: 9.) By this system the men would be kept more interested, and preachers then could be used in their scriptural work of going out and building up the new and weak places.

The devil knows the power of the divine system, and so he is trying to get God's people to modify it. He is not saying that he wishes to adopt the modern pastor system, but that is his ultimate aim. He is getting some to say that we must make a good impression on our neighbors and therefore we should have more preaching and less developing of the home talent. One of the smoothest things he is now putting over on us is this: "We are going to support Evangelist Blank and use him in mission fields; and then when he is not engaged there, he can be with us at home." That sounds very nice, but how does it work? I do not know of a single place where they have so used a man long. The preacher locates with a church. He preaches around a little near home. Weather or hardness of the mission points keeps him at home very often. Brethren begin to say they need him there anyway. The elders like to be relieved, the members like to sit inactive, the preacher is anxious to be at home, and his wife is delighted. These are four strong arguments for his becoming a "settled minister". And the devil laughs! He has accomplished his purpose little by little, and by deception.

I believe that the practice of having preaching all the time by an imported preacher is unscriptural and is the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. God ordained that elders "feed the church of God", and if elders can transfer that duty to some one imported and hired for that purpose, then we can have substitution all along the line. Probably nine-tenths of the public feeding of the flock is done Lord's day morning and evening. Very few are at the prayer-meetings, where possibly an elder takes part some. Besides, this preacher does practically all the private feeding of the flock

As he visits among the members, for are not the elders "too busy" to do that, and besides don't they hire the preacher to do that? A shepherd is one who leads a flock or leads it so that it can feed itself, and a shepherd is a pastor, for the word "pastor" is only the Latin for shepherd, and comes from the word "pascere" which means "to feed". Now I contend that an imported preacher (or preachers) who does all the public feeding Sunday mornings and evenings, and looks after the lambs and sheep privately--is a pastor. Elders may be doing some bossing, but they are not scriptural shepherds.

I am exceedingly sorry that Bro. A. M. Morris has permitted himself to be deceived by this error, if indeed he is deceived. He has permitted himself to cater to the indifference of lazy elders and entertainment-loving members. The Long Beach church trouble had this apostasy at its foundation, says Bro. Morris himself. On the front of the church house at Long Beach was the sign, "PREACHING EACH LORD'S DAY, W. P. Reedy, Minister." Some opposed that system and a division resulted. I did not go to Long Beach to uphold certain men in all their ways, but to oppose the unscriptural system of having "Preach/Each Lord's Day." If some of those men have since proven themselves traitors, that is a different question. I uphold no one in evil ways.

This L. B. church tried to establish elsewhere this system of "Preaching Each Lord's Day". They had J. J. Hogan put in his membership with them, and then to go to Santa Cruz, where he preached practically every Lord's day and night for five years, and took charge of the prayer meetings about half of that time, though there were members of the church who had been elders elsewhere. They proposed to do the same thing at still other places.

Bro. Morris endorsed this system and fought for it, admitting that the Long Beach church was divided over an effort for mutual edification. He said concerning those opposed to him, "They were not amenable to gospel restraints, but were continually milling with the Mutual Edification program, imperatively demanding its adoption. There was absolutely not a hint of immorality against the elders. It was WHOLLY and SOLELY the HERESY of D. A. Sommer's tract [on mutual Edification] adopted by these folks, coupled, of course, with their ardent attachment to Harpor and the mutual interests they held in this controversy." In other words, Bro. Morris denounced as "heresy" the doctrine of D. A. S.'s tract that elders "are to feed the church" and that they can not transfer that constantly to preachers imported for that purpose.

In one of his tracts on this affair, Bro. Morris said in his defense of "Preaching Each Lord's Day", "This is no attempt to say that all churches have to have regular preaching either all his time, three-fourths, half or one-fourth. That question is not determined in the Scriptures. Each congregation must decide that for itself; but in no case for others. If we are awake to the needs of Zion, we will use the GIFTED ones who are BEST able to instruct us, WHENEVER we can do so." Here Bro. Morris showed again that he considered it scriptural for elders to shift their "feeding" to preachers and thus have "preaching each Lord's day". And this doctrine that we should use the "gifted ones who are BEST able to instruct us, WHENEVER" would lead us to get the "best" preachers we can. Then why not have the "best" churches govern the weak ones, (which system L. B. actually tried to build up), and then we have started good and proper toward Rome? And the devil will laugh louder?

In his paper, Bro. Morris has continued to advocate this doctrine of "Preaching Each Lord's Day". In his issue of May 15, 1927, he tried to pull to his side Benjamin Franklin, the founder of the Review, saying: "This distinction is clear. Nevertheless, some scribes denounce every faithful preacher, who preaches regularly for a congregation once a month, as one-fourth pastor; twice a month, as one-half pastor; and each Lord's day, as full-fledged pastors. They thus denounce not only this princely teacher and great editor, but multiplied thousands of the soundest, purest, ablest men who ever lived. It distresses one to see such work. They fail to distinguish between things which

differ. The word 'pastor' comes from the original word meaning shepherd, and elders are the shepherds, rulers, and feeders and guardians of the flock of God, or church." Yes, Bro. Morris, and now is an elder an "feeder" when he turns about nine-tenths of the public and private feeding over to the preacher when they have preaching "each Lord's day"? If Bro. Morris had quoted the full text from Franklin, it would have ruined his argument, but he garbled Franklin. Send for my tract on Mutual Edification, for it contains it all. My contention is that the elders should "feed" the church, as God commands, and that the preachers should go into the new and weak fields. ~~Not~~ until this is done will the Macedonian call be heard as it should be.

But there are others who talk and write in favor of the unscriptural system that elders can shift their feeding to preachers imported for that purpose. One prominent writer says: "Now I'm going to say something that maybe some will not understand me as I mean it. You may say that if there's danger of being misunderstood, I'd better not say it at all. That's true, and yet I feel that we need a lesson just at this point so badly that I'll take the risk. I'll make this statement to begin with: We've allowed ourselves to become so mad at the 'pastor system' of the Christian Church that we've gone to the other extreme and done ourselves and the community in which we live a wrong so great that we ought to repent of it in sackcloth and ashes. Each church of Christ should support a preacher to work, having the church that supports him a center from which to work. Not to build up a strong church to rule the little congregations that may be established, but to make believers and worshipers. The preacher does not have to preach for the church that has undertaken to support him regularly. But if he scouts around the community, and stirs up interest to such an extent that numbers are present every Lord's day and every week-day meeting at his invitation to hear the Word, who's going to say that some young man, or old man for that matter, who is not able to rightly divide the Word, ought to take the place of the preacher? Of course, such an occasion as this rarely exists, but--why doesn't it exist? Just because we've allowed ourselves to become so mad at the 'pastor system' that we condemn the good features of it as well as the bad."

Here is something new. 1. In other words, such men as Daniel Somner, A. J. Nance and G. B. Hancock were not intelligent nor scriptural in their denunciation of the pastor system, but were simply "mad", and that the writer who never held a protracted meeting in his life, never mixed among the churches in general, probably never read a hundred pages of church history which show how apostasies begin, with one swathe of the pen is going to rectify their mistakes. Surely a Goliath is arisen among us! 2. If those are the principles of his publication, he will have to quit his boasting that it has not changed. 3. And "if the preacher scouts around and gets numbers to come Lord's days to hear the Word, he shows that he endorses using him to preach on Lord's days, which would mean every Lord's day, as the minister is now "located". Surely the devil is smiling again, for that is exactly the way the pastor system of the Christian Church became fully established.

This writer may say we misunderstand him, but we know that he has ridiculed mutual edification almost every time that he has touched it. He writes every week, and yet in all his writings for the past few years I do not remember reading from his pen a word of encouragement in behalf of a church's developing its talent so that it can take care of itself better publicly and elders can better "feed the church of God". The church of which he is an elder, the past winter had preaching almost every Sunday for several months, though they have considerable talent. In meetings of the church he has several times praised a certain church in another city, where they have a settled preacher every Sunday except on rare occasions, and said that that church is doing more good than any other he knows of. So I do not think that we misunderstand him.

In the Review of May 3, Daniel Somner wrote the following from his fifty-five years or more of experience and study: "And now

I mention what is still a menace among disciples. Men that are disposed to settle down in one community and preach, have seldom or never sought one of these small congregations, and worked for their own living at some secular calling, and built up that kind of a congregation to strength and power. But they have, with one accord, waited till evangelists have visited such assemblies, often receiving little or no remuneration, and built them up into strength. Then those gentlemen of pastoring inclinations have gone to such places and wheedled the members into the conclusion that what they need is "a preacher all the time". Thus it has been; thus it is; and thus it will be. The desire of certain preachers to stay at home and the indolence of many church members have together founded the pastorate among disciples." I suppose D. S. is "mad" at pastoral!

A few weeks after this proposition for a new movement among us, the proposer received the following: "Just read your Notes concerning so-called 'pastor system', and pronounce them scriptural, practical and logical. I endorse your sentiments and wish to say those principles are those for which a lot of us fellows have been contending for months." Yes, Madon is one of those fellows, and he divided a church by forcing himself on it, and is now pastor of it, and has recently had a college preacher to hold a meeting. A few years ago the writer of the compliment above tried to bring to a realization this beautiful picture, and he had a certain church in Missouri build him a parsonage. He worked about half his time with that church, and with a couple of country churches the rest of the time; but the picture of the great missionary work soon faded from his mind, and he was rapidly becoming the pastor of these churches, but the country churches rebelled. Recently he held a meeting at a city church, and tried to ride over the heads of two of the elders and half of the congregation in trying to locate himself there, and "roust about and stir up an interest", and preach, etc. He nearly divided the church. Now he says he will leave the ministry and go to secular work.

On one occasion Paul said he would have visited certain brethren but "Satan hindered". So, many today would save souls but Satan hinders. One of his chief ways is to make Christians indifferent. Parents have become indifferent and are trying to throw the training of their children upon Sunday-school teachers and day school teachers. Christians in general wish some one else to do charity work for them. Elders and others wish to hire preachers to do their public and private work for the Lord. The watch word, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty"--applies to religion as well as politics. Every Christian should be on his guard, for--

Satan ever watches 'round him,
Seeks to find the weakest part;
And in moments lost unheeded,
Quickly throws his fiery dart.

Dear reader, if you are one of those who are determined not to be betrayed by the devil, send for a bundle of this number of the Unconquered Call and circulate them among those who need them, and thus help in the good work. Or, send us the names and addresses. It is only by being vigilant, awake, that we can save our liberties in Christ Jesus. Remember, too, that it takes money to buy stamps, envelopes, paper, etc. I am donating my time, which runs into days on each Number. If you wish this unconquered Call to visit you regularly, drop me a card, for I expect to revise my list, and I can not tell whether you have moved. Don't forget this. Send to D. A. Somner, 918 Congress Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.

WHAT SOME OF THEM THINK.--"Liked last No. very much." (Mo.)
"I certainly endorse every word of it." (Mo.)--"I think the N. C. articles are splendid." (Ill.)--"Just read No. 4 and like it fine. I find encouragement in it." (Mo.)--"I want to tell you that your last N. C. is, I believe, the best you have sent out, and will I am sure bring good results." (Ky. elder.)--"Brethren here have read your last 'Call', and pronounce it better."--"It expresses my sentiments better than I can do myself." (Iowa leader).--(But space has run out and I shall have to quit.)