

# Spiritual Call

A Continuance of "Macedonian Call"

*To be carnally minded is death, but to be  
SPIRITUALLY minded is life and peace.  
—Romans 8:6*

*Walk worthy of the vocation (calling)  
wherewith ye are CALLED.  
—Ephesians 4:1*

Volume 22

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., JANUARY, 1948

Number 1

## This Year Let's Read and Teach the Bible Aright

This is a time of the year when people often make New Year's Resolutions. By the time this reaches your eyes, many of the resolutions will have been broken, probably. Perhaps you say concerning the Resolution I am proposing—"I thought we were reading the Bible aright." Well, there certainly is something wrong. Let's investigate a little. Is it not true that often, very often, we read the Bible and teach it merely for the facts it contains, historical statements, divisions, etc.? Even an infidel may do that, and will he be saved? There must be something different for us, the professed true children of God. We must study for the lesson of right and wrong which we may obtain, that we may live by it and be saved by it.

I WISH TO MAKE A CONFESSION. Not concerning principle, but concerning degree of principle. Those who have read our writings through forty years, know that we have tried to impress the spiritual side of the Christian Life, as well as the doctrinal side. In the Guide Through Bible History, we have "Lessons" for all the characters and incidents there, so far as we were able to draw them. For three or more decades we had Bible drills in our "protracted meetings," fifteen or twenty minutes before the sermon, bringing out many lessons now in the Guide. Our book on our travels in Bible Lands, was named "Meditations in Bible Lands," to bring out spiritual thoughts at the Biblical places we visited. In 1946, we spent about half the year visiting among churches, spending most of the time on the Life of Paul and his journeys, to try to infuse the spirit of Paul into the mind of the attendants. We printed Nuggets of Gold, which consists of references to about 2500 choice, devotional, inspirational passages of Scripture, to try to make better Christians; and we have now added them to the Simplified New Testament.

The thought we have had in mind all the time has been that it is not enough that we know facts and divisions of the Bible. We must be stirred to imitate the good portrayed and shun the evil, and often times the Lesson learned we have made longer than the story itself. The confession we wish to make is that we have not done that as much as we should have done. In fact, all this Bible information will do us no good at all, but will appear against us, unless we do the things we know. Men and women must be convicted not merely informed. Too many professed Christians are not seeking earnestly to obtain the lesson of right and wrong from the reading and listening to the Word of God, and that lack of conversion is the cause of most of the trouble among Christians.

Paul tells us that the things written beforehand were written for our admonition, and for our hope. Has that

been the main point in the "Bible Readings" of ten or twelve weeks which have been conducted among us through several decades? Some teachers have their students learn the names of all the patriarchs from Adam to Christ. What is the special benefit from that? The memorizing of Ages and Periods of the Old Testament, is mainly for the purpose of holding together the stories of right and wrong found there. But why memorize the names of all the wicked Kings of Israel and Judah? That same intellectual effort put forth strongly on the lesson for us, with reverence enforced for God, would accomplish far more real spiritual good. Too much effort has been put forth to hit doctrinal error, and not enough to rectify moral error. Several years ago I mentioned this in my writings, and a young preacher who was doing much teaching in Bible Readings, admitted that he had not emphasized the spiritual side of it as he should have done. Is there any wonder that privately he is "full of jokes" as a brother expressed it, so contrary to Paul's admonition to avoid foolish talking and jesting? He admitted to me also that when he went to bed at night, he and his wife told the funny things they had heard that day, etc. I wonder if that was before or after their prayers!! Is there any wonder that he is now helping lead people away from the spirituality of the gospel, though at times he makes great professions otherwise? All of us have enough foolishness in us, and we should try to curb it rather than foster it.

When we read the Bible or Bible stories to our children, is the great aim to bring out the moral lesson?

But do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that everything in the Bible has a spiritual meaning. That method of interpretation has in ages been adopted, to the extent that Bible stories simply became allegories. That is entirely wrong. But I am saying that most of the Bible stories have some moral lesson which we can draw from them.

I feel confident that many, possibly most, preachers study the Bible for the benefit of others rather than themselves. They wish to put forth a "big" sermon which will make a big impression. If we would study it for our own benefit first, is it not probable that we could bring others into the spiritual frame of mind which we have obtained from our private meditation on the Word?

When an old preaching brother was approached after a sermon by some one who said, "Brother Blank, I enjoyed your sermon so much," he often said, "I did not preach that for your enjoyment, but for your benefit." Of course, that was somewhat of a play upon words, but nevertheless it brought the lesson to the mind.

Some people listen to a sermon for the benefit of the

other fellow and sometimes say, "Didn't that hit Sister So-and-So, or Brother So-and-So?" Maybe all of us have been guilty of this at times, when there was truth presented which applied to US that we conveniently overlooked.

I used to exhort people to read the Bible through every year, at least, but I don't do that any more. Of course, that is better than not reading it at all, but too many get into the habit of merely reading so many chapters a day, saying to themselves, "I must get at my Bible reading, and hurry through this, so as to get at something else I have in mind." That will do us little good. Better is it that we quietly devote a certain time each day to the study of the Word—say fifteen minutes at least. And we should have it in mind, that we will try to get some moral or spiritual benefit out of the lesson even though we take only a verse or two, that we can consider through the day. Get INTO the thought. And when we do that we shall often become intensely interested and read for an hour or two. Apply the truth to ourselves, and then we shall see how it too will apply to others through us. David says that happy is the man who "meditates" on the Word day and night.

When we pick up the Word it should be with reverence, and we should say to ourselves, "This is God talking to me, and I shall try to find out what he wants me to do." At his conversion Paul cried, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? At the same time, it is well that we offer a prayer to God for help in understanding his Word. Thus he will be talking to us, and we will be talking to him; and there will come to pass the song we sometimes sing. "He walks with me and he talks with me." And our hearts and lives will be made better.

There are many, very many, hard things in the Bible, yet the way we should live to please God is plain. The uneducated man, yet converted man, will read it thus: "The Book says that I must be kind, and courteous, and I must do that to please God. It says that I must be just, have mercy, be cheerful, and to love my neighbor as myself, and I must strive to do those things in order to be saved." Etc. And this uneducated man who will thus read the Book, and try to live it, is a greater Bible scholar and Christian than the best Bible teacher in a Bible Reading, or college, or religious meeting Lord's Day, who does not have that spirit of humility. He is reading God's Word aright, and not merely as an intellectual pastime or a proselyting effort.

With all our "Bible Readings," and study of the Word, we have not learned the one great lesson essential—HUMILITY. Four times in that chapter, Roman 12, Paul exhorts to humility. "Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think."—V. 3. "In honor preferring one another."—V. 10. "Mind not high things but condescend to men of low estate."—V. 16. "Be not wise in your own conceits."—V. 16.

He says to preachers: "O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, MEEKNESS." (1 Tim. 6: 11.)

And to elders he says, "Neither as being Lord's over God's heritage, but ensamples EXAMPLES to the flock." "Yea ALL of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with HUMILITY." (1 Peter 5: 3, 5.) With all our Bible reading, we have not learned the lesson of HUMILITY, but men wish to put themselves over their brethren and dictate to them what they shall do rather than what God tells them to do; AND CAST THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH if they obey them not. We may even

obtain political control of the machinery of the Church of God, like the scribes and Pharisees, and yet rest under condemnation just as much as they.

And so, brethren, as we take a general survey, we see that there is something more to the real Christian life than merely learning the Bible. If we don't live it, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgment than for us. We may even preach truth and contend for it in an intellectual way, or to build a sect for ourselves, and thus fall under condemnation of those whom Paul says, "Hold the truth in unrighteousness." (Rom. 1.)

Brethren, we can see that the outward form of Christianity will profit us nothing, unless we are into the spirit of it. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." And this brings us to the heading of our essay—"This Year Let's Read and Teach the Bible ARIGHT. What do you say?"

### If I Could Understand

If I could only see the road you came,  
With all the jagged rocks and crooked ways,  
I might more kindly think of your missteps,  
And only praise.

If I could know the heartaches you have felt,  
The longing for the things that never came:  
I would not misconstrue your erring then  
Nor even blame.

—Carry Joy in The Christian Magazine.

### A RENDEZVOUS OF A FATHER WITH HIS DEAD SOLDIER SON.

### A RENDEZVOUS OF A CHRISTIAN WITH HIS DEAD-ALIVE SAVIOUR.

I like the French word "rendezvous", (pronounced ran-de-voov), for there seems to be no English word which conveys the idea. It means: "a place appointed for a meeting; a meeting by appointment." With this meaning in mind, let us read the little Armistice Day story of columnist Wayne Guthrie in the Indianapolis News, with a lesson for us:

"Just the other night I listened intently to E. R. Lawrence, 1325 N. Arlington Ave., as he fought back the tears and retraced to me his journey all alone to the very spot in France where his only son, James W., was killed in action July 4, 1944.

"Jimmy always took an active interest in church work. For some time he sang in the Cadle Tabernacle quartet and choir. He also did relief work for the Volunteers of America.

"Jimmy went into service in September, 1942. Overseas he went in April, 1944, and was reported missing the succeeding July 4 near Carenton, France. Jimmy's lieutenant was directed to select three men for an advance detail along a hedge row. Jimmy was one of the three. The mission of the four started at 4 a. m.

"Jimmy and another were killed at 5:30 a. m. by Germans who shot from over the matted hedge as the party approached in the swampy grass. The lieutenant was wounded, but the fourth person escaped injury. He hid in the grass, but was captured en route back to the American lines that night and held prisoner by the Germans for 9½ months until liberated.

"The lieutenant, a resident of Kokomo, got back to his own forces, wounded, but no trace ever has been found of the bodies of Jimmy and his pal. Mr. Lawrence feels

they may still be lost in that ghastly swamp. A year and a day later they were pronounced killed.

"Came the war's end. Boys returning home only stirred the anguish in the heart of Jimmy's loved ones. To ease the mother's grief Mr. Lawrence made plans to take her to her native Scotland to visit relatives, with the understanding that while she visited there he would proceed on alone to France to visit the scene of Jimmy's supreme sacrifice.

"But she never realized that. Sorrow from war only aggravated her weakened condition and she died January 31, this year.

"At first Mr. Lawrence dropped all plans for the trip, but ultimately he decided it was her wish he go. He flew to Europe alone, visiting some of her relatives in the British Isles. Then he made that lonesome trek to Carenton. On the morning of September 5, refusing any guide, he walked all alone the last 7 miles through a heavy fog to the grassy swamp near the hedge row. There he had his rendezvous with his only son, in spirit.

• • •

"Then he was ready to come home—back to Jimmy's beloved Indianapolis."

What father and mother who are in the same circumstances of Jimmie's, do not feel much as they did. Jimmie made the supreme sacrifice to try to save the rest of us, from the hand of tyranny; and the father loved him for it, and so would other brothers if he had had any.

And then our minds go to another Father, who gave his only Son to die for the salvation of men and women, in all ages. That Father loved his Son, and the Son loved the Father. This Son became an elder brother to all those for whom he died.

He died on a hill in far-away Palestine. But we can not tell at this distance in time just where that hill is. But that does not matter. We need not make a pilgrimage to try to find that hill. That Son gave a commemorative institution by which we all are to celebrate his death for us. That institution is the Lord's Supper. The bread represents to us the broken body of our Savior, and the fruit of the vine, his blood. This points us backward to his death, and forward to the time when he shall come again. Come again to receive his faithful brethren to himself. The early disciples came together on the first day of the week to remind themselves of this Supreme Sacrifice for them and for the sins of the whole world. He looks down at us and sees our devotion to his work, or our neglect of it. "This do in remembrance of me."

No, we can not go to far-away Calvary to see the place of the death of our Savior, but He expects us to have our "rendezvous" with Him in spirit, in the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day.

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face,  
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;  
Here grasp with firmer hand th' eternal grace,  
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,  
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven;  
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,  
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear.  
The feast, though not the love, is passed and gone;

The bread and wine remove, but Thou are here—  
Nearer than ever—still my Shield and Sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,  
Yet, passing, points to the glad feast above—  
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,  
The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.

This is the Christian's rendezvous with his once dead but now living Lord.

## Your Garden

There's a little patch of Soil within each human frame:  
You received it earlier than your name;  
And you're the little gardener chosen from above,  
To cultivate, irrigate the soil with love.  
That little patch of soil was clean and free of pests,  
To keep it so, you must resist all evil guests,  
For once they enter there, they'll multiply their forces  
And then defy your right to use your own resources.  
Your choicest flowers are rich, and dyed with deepest shades.

Of crimson, purple, gold and violets seen in glades:  
How rare! how beautiful! every flower a gem,  
Surpassing nature's beauty in yonder sunny glen.  
A little paradise, with trees of blossom rare  
The skill of labour, love and earnest care.  
An angel from heaven gently sprayed them with dew,  
The sunshine descended as darkness withdrew.  
In the midst of your garden a fountain there flows  
And at your own bidding it withers or grows  
Its waters are sweetened by virtue and grace;  
What's nursed in your heart will show in your face.  
Go where you will, your garden goes with you,  
Your eyes are the windows by which we look through.  
Your cheeks are the roses which perfume the wayside,  
And your actions the fruits which always abide.  
What Adam lost in Eden for listening to a lie,  
Has been restored to you again by one who came to die,  
And if that wily serpent should whisper in your ear,  
Just raise your eyes to heaven and your guardian will appear;

His two-edged sword like a sheet of flaming fire,  
Will defend your soul from danger ere he will retire.  
For Christ passed through Gethsemane a garden full of sorrow,

That you might walk in God's garden of tomorrow.  
—By William Ferguson, Craig Dhu, Kilbirnie, Scotland  
For Spiritual Call

## Turning The Clock-Back 28 Years

### A Good New Year Meditation

This article was written nearly three decades ago. The sister was conducting a Bible study through the columns of the Review, giving teaching, and questions to look up, and verses to memorize. Not every student did all the work, but all of them did some of it, and possibly many did about all of it. In the article you will see that there were more than 500 enrolled in the study. I think that later the enrollment increased several hundred more. (Do you know any of the students named at the conclusion? The teacher was Sister Emily Baker, who now lives at 2722 Ohio St., Topeka, Kans. Sister Baker is now past 80 years of age, and if any of our readers were once in her class, I am sure she would appreciate a word from you concerning yourself and your atti-

# SPIRITUAL CALL

Published Monthly by  
D. A. SOMMER  
918 Congress Avenue  
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

Subscription Rate  
New, \$1.00 a year—Old, \$1.25 a year.  
Clubs of 5 or more, new or old, \$1.00 each  
25 copies to one address, a year, \$12.50

Entered as second class matter May 1, 1936, at the post office at Indianapolis, Indiana, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

tude toward the Church, even though she might not be able to answer your letter. This New Year article is good for us grown people as well as the younger.

—Editor Spiritual Call.

Dear Students:—Before you read these lines the year A. D. 1919 will be numbered with the past, and we will have started in with a new year. No doubt many of you have tried to make the best of your opportunities during the year that has so quickly slipped away; others, by being watchful and making diligent effort, may be able to improve over their experiences of the past year, starting in with the determination to keep a close watch over self as the days come and go.

If we look back and see that we have been reckless, or thoughtless or careless, or rude, deceitful or selfish, let us light in on the task of overcoming all such evil tendencies, seeking to improve, every day! If any have been wayward, and have not been careful about the kind of company they keep, but have been influenced to go to places or do things which bring sorrow to the hearts of parents or guardians, let all such remember that they have made a serious mistake, and much harm may result unless they change their ways.

I realize, dear children, that there are many evils which may lure the young or thoughtless into forbidden paths, all of which merge into the Broad Road that leads to destruction. These may have an appearance of bringing present happiness, and thus lead one along, step by step, until a point is reached where you find yourself far away from that Good Way which leads to joys forevermore. May we learn early in life, in the days of youth, to resist evil and choose the right way whenever we may meet with temptations.

No doubt the desire of our Students is that their lives may be spared until the coming of another new year; yes, many more! And as these years come and go you hope to develop into honorable men and women, and perhaps some of you would like to be possessors of riches. But let us all seek for the true and enduring riches! "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver: nor he that loveth abundance with increase." (Ecc. 5: 10.) But we are sure that "godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Tim. 6: 6; 4: 8, 10.) Let us see what we can learn about a "reward" which will be valuable to all who will seek to obtain it; but we must each do our part, if we would share in the reward; that is, as the days come and go, let us learn to be humble, and let us learn to keep the fear of the Lord ever before us.

In Proverbs 22: 4, 5 we learn that "the reward of humility and the fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life. Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse: he that keepeth his soul shall be far from them." Let us not place too high an estimate upon material wealth, the kind of "riches that are not forever." (Prov. 27: 24.) We learn that the Church of Christ in a certain place

made that kind of a mistake, and the Lord was sore displeased with them. In giving too much time and attention to accumulating worldly goods those erring Christians neglected to do their part toward advancing the Lord's work, and became cold and indifferent about it! Do you think there are any members of the Church of Christ now who are making a like mistake? Read in Rev. 3: 14, 22, and learn what the Lord says about them, and how he says they should do to correct their error and set themselves right in his sight.

Let us not neglect the Great Salvation while seeking for earthly gain. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings, like an eagle that flieth toward heaven." (Prov. 23: 5.) "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. 28: 13.)

It is not so difficult to steer clear of evil if we think about it, and always try to please the Lord in all we do. Vain is the life, and fleeting and unending the pleasures, of those who neglect to deny themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts which war against the soul! Read 1 Peter 2: 11, 12; Rom. 13: 12, 14; Gala. 5: 16, 25.

A goodly number of our New Testament Studies class have "obeyed the gospel" as it has been made known to us in the New Testament scriptures. I trust these thoughts, and the scriptures herein referred to, may prove helpful to them and others, as we launch forth in this glad some new year! And now would each member of the Class desire that I suggest an appropriate and helpful motto to attend you throughout this year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twenty, if you be permitted to live that long! Do you desire wisdom, do you seek understanding? Here then is your motto:

"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and TO DEPART FROM EVIL is understanding." (Job 28: 28.) That is what the Lord said about it; it comes from the right source.

And then you will want some good helpful verses with which to start in the new year, some verses you can memorize now, and repeat them over to yourselves day after day, observing them to the end of the year! Meditate upon their meaning, and let them influence your life and your conduct every day! If you do this you cannot fail to be greatly benefited; and when this year is ready to balance up its accounts, close up its records and give way for the year 1921 to be ushered in, you can rejoice that you have kept these verses in mind and profited by their teaching. You will find them recorded in Prov. 4: 23-27.

When you send in your report on this lesson tell, first, what is your understanding of what is said in Prov. 4: 23. Second, do you know of other scriptures that help to explain it? Third, what do you understand by the 24th verse? Fourth, explain the 25th verse. What did Jesus say, as recorded in Luke 11: 34-36? Fifth, what can you say of Prov. 4: 26, 27?

Study these verses well, and send me your answers, so they can be published with your letter for the Budget.

• • •

It has afforded us pleasure to receive several new members into our Class recently; all of the names received have now been transferred into our Roll Book,—540 names in all. Can't this number be greatly increased during 1920? We will be glad to hear from all who desire to join us in these New Testament Studies. Of those names

recently enrolled I will now give the numbers of those who have asked for them: Cornelia Allen 514, Dorothy Butler 515, Leonard Beidel 516, Rachel Branson 517, Dale Brady 520, Maude Daniel 522, Eula Embry 523, Mary Ferguson 524, Joe Ferguson 525, Glynn Payne 534, Victoria Solomon 537, Inola Holland 539.

Wishing each and every one a Happy New Year, and that Heaven's richest blessings may be your final reward, is the desire of your Loving Teacher and Constant Friend  
—Emily Baker.

## The Bane of Sunday Visiting

Hospitality is a very pleasing grace, but when it is made compulsory, and when it involves some very serious privations and interferes with some very important duties, it is not always pleasing to the ones who are driven into exercising it. When the members of a family are compelled to stay away from their weekly church services, to get up a dinner for a group of friends who find it convenient to drive out from the city for a nice little entertainment, it is not always pleasant, nor does it always seem right.

Frequently a preacher sees a family pew vacant, and wonders whether some illness or other distressing providence has befallen those who usually occupy it, and finds out, afterwards, that either some people have come visiting or that the family has gone visiting. Thus irregularity of church attendance is promoted. Thus the spiritual work of the church is interfered with. Thus the secular calls to merely social life break down the life of the church and Christ's invitations to the services of his house are made to be second in importance to the calls of the world.

Christian people, members of the church, should have such insistent habits of church attendance that ordinary things shall not be permitted to interfere, and ordinary friends will never persuade to do so. There should be an understanding that for this hour of religious worship the claims of Christ and his church are supreme, and that there must be no thought of laying them aside. Those whose lives are marked by unwavering steadfastness in this duty are respected by others, and there is a clear understanding by people generally that there must be no tampering with the regular customs of these devout and faithful Christian people. It is well to have such a reputation. But even in such cases there are occasionally those who try to interfere with their devotions for the sake of a dinner.

Christ has his chosen hour. The sanctuary is the place of holy tryst. Nothing should interfere. Let the dinner wait, for a later hour or for another day. Let the visit not clash with the divine appointment. Christ still chides and grieves: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" The pleasures of merely social life should give way before God's invitation to his house for prayer and worship.  
—Selected.

### THE MARKSMAN

He never aimed at sparrows  
Or any kind of birds;  
He didn't shoot at buffaloes  
Or other beasts in herds.  
Yet in the art of marksmanship  
He stood alone, apart:  
His ammunition—kindly words;  
His prey—some lonesome heart.  
—Fae A. Jarvis.

## Have We God's Plan of Spreading the Gospel?

In these days of missionary societies, and "missionary" work in many ways, is it not strange that the very word "missionary" is not in the Bible, and the very idea is not there as we use it today?

In New Testament times they had no missionary societies which people today think are so essential to advance work. Even "missionary" work as churches was not done as now. When brethren at Antioch huddled up, God told them to separate Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto he had called them. At times churches, or brethren, helped the workers on their way, which evidently means that they used horses or donkeys and carts, etc., to help them get to their desired places; but there is no evidence that they gave them means of support while there. The men were probably mostly unmarried and their expenses were few. However, the Philippian church sent again and again to Paul's needs, and he commended them for it; and we should do the same today. Most of the advance work among the unsaved was done by individual effort of practically **EVERY** Christian.

Today professed Christians wish to do things only in groups,—as societies, organized committees, classes, mass-meetings, young peoples' groups, rallies, revivals, protracted meetings, women's groups (leaving their children to shift for themselves, perhaps), men's special groups, etc., etc. Some of these methods may not be contrary to the Scriptures, but we have no example for most of them. But Christians are neglecting the scriptural way—teaching Christ by our lives to our families, our neighbors, our enemies; teaching Christ by our words to our children and our friends or acquaintances—in other words, **doing Christian work as INDIVIDUALS rather than as groups.**

Here is what Hase says, a great German church historian of the University of Jena, Germany:

"Near the middle of the second century, the gospel had, in the East, passed beyond the limits of the Roman Empire. In Odessa, in Mesopotamia near the Euphrates River especially it gained possession of the throne, and a few churches were collected in Parthia, Persia, and India. Proceeding from Rome, it obtained an established position in Carthage and in the western provinces of Africa. In Western Europe it pressed onward to Spain and even gained some possession in Britain. Flourishing churches from Asia Minor were planted in Lyons, Vienna, and Paris, from which Christianity was extended to barbarous nations whose language had never been reduced to writing. Near the close of the third century, churches were established in Armenia, and a few bishoprics were found on the Rhine and in Britain. The manner in which religion was propagated was, commencing generally with the large cities, it was carried forward not so much by organized missions as **BY ORDINARY SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.** It had become powerful as a popular element, prevailing among the lower classes, but by means of slaves and women it had penetrated, as early as near the end of the second century, every order of society."

Archibald McLean was president of the Missionary Society of the Christian Church for perhaps forty years or more, and had studied the subject thoroughly, and had to admit that the great work of the first century

was not done through societies like his, but through individual work. Ponder well his words:

"Those early triumphs were not brought about by preachers alone. Truly there were preachers in those days, men who could hold the attention of multitudes, some of them—if they were here now—would draw hearers from the River to the end of the earth, but even great preachers could no more do the work than they can now. It was not the work of any one class. Real New Testament missionary work did not contradict itself by calling men and women into the service of the King and then tying their hands and prohibiting them from serving. Though no effort was made by them to give a complete list of the workers, a very respectable register could be compiled in which we would read the names of Zebedee's sons of thunder, James and John; Barnabas, the son of exhortation; the eloquent Apollos; the stalwart Simon Peter; Andrew and Philip who each brought a brother to Jesus; and there would be Stachys, Timothy, Titus, Silas, Clement and many more "whose names are in the book of life."

"Nor would it be a golden galaxy of men only, for we would find there Priscilla who taught the Alexandrian orator; Tryphena and Tryphosa who labored in the Lord, the beloved sister, Persis, who labored much in the Lord; Mary who bestowed much labor on the saints at Rome; with Euodia and Syntyche who labored . . . in the gospel with Paul, and still others. In fact, all were to be teachers (Heb. 5:12).

"Churches were born of missionary activity and manifested the characteristics by sending the message on. The faith of Rome was proclaimed throughout the whole world; from the Thessalonians the word of the Lord was sounded forth in Macedonia, in Greece, and elsewhere; and the church at Philippi early took up missionary work and persisted in it. The remarkable accomplishments of those days were not brought about by a few.

"Not only apostles and evangelists and teachers, but merchants, and miners, and sailors, and soldiers, and craftsmen, voluntarily made it one of their chief objects, whether at home or abroad, in private and public life, to extend the gospel message. . . . Garrisons along the borders of the Empire . . . became outposts of Christian civilization . . . centers from which Christianity spread outside the civilized world, and these isolated spots . . . became oases of the faith. Women as well as men were active agents. . . . Then, as in no period since, every individual Christian was a missionary, and **IT WAS TO THIS INDIVIDUALISTIC EVANGELISM THAT THE MARVELOUS EXTENSION OF THAT TIME WAS DUE.**"—McLean.

In the year of our Lord, 1947, the Christian world has reached a condition of lethargy which I doubt has been experienced in centuries. "Revival meetings" which used to stir the Protestant world, seem now to have little influence over the people. "Protracted meetings" which some seemed to think were handed down from the apostles in that form, attract little attention. Maybe this ominous indifference will arouse people to come back to the individual, personal evangelism which put the first century far above any that has succeeded, in advancement.

In apostolic days they had no missionary societies to push work as in these days. Even churches did little at first. The Philippian church sent "once and again" to Paul's necessities, and Paul commended them for it; but

he said that when he departed from Macedonia "no church" communicated with him concerning giving and receiving but it. (See Phil. 4.) The advancement then was made by the now long-forgotten, **INDIVIDUAL, missionary zeal of the Christian.** Why not try that in these days of indifference?

The churches at Antioch, Rome, Ephesus (at first), and other places were not established by organized missionary work of churches, nor work even of apostles or other **PREACHERS**, so far as we can learn, but by common Christians who were scattered and went "everywhere preaching the Word," (Acts 8:4; 11:19-30.)

Regardless of all the traditions of Roman Catholics, Paul wrote his letter to Rome before he had visited it, and there is no evidence that Peter was ever at Rome, much less the founder of that Church. But there were present on the day of Pentecost, "strangers of Rome," Jews and proselytes, and these and the others present from "every nation under heaven," evidently took the gospel back with them when they went. **What a pity today that even in the "Church of Christ" there is so much emphasis on group work and so little on the INDIVIDUAL work of the New Testament!**

#### CHURCH NEWS

**BROOKFIELD, MO.**—Bro. H. L. Carlton, of Vienna, Ill., closed a good meeting Nov. 30 of two weeks' duration. I must say that Bro. Carlton does not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. Neither does he try to heap unto himself those having itching ears, but rather continues in the doctrine that he may not only save himself but also them that hear him. We see so much about getting back to Jerusalem. My question is, Why didn't we stay there? Yours for the Jerusalem doctrine.—G. R. Blankinship.

AN ELDER in a Western state writes: "I am writing to let you know that according to I Peter, 5th chapter, I believe that elders should lead the members by setting a good example before them by living right and by teaching the members that are under them their duty toward the elders. Not as being lords over them. According to Heb. 13: 17, 'obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.' Second, I believe that if the elders will follow out the above teaching, those under them should obey them. But if elders do not follow the above teaching then those under them who know they are not following the above teaching given the elders—I do not believe they are required to obey them."

**WHAT SOME ARE THINKING**—I like the paper with the new name.—Colorado. (Sends \$21.) . . . I would like to see more articles on Christian Living.—Missouri . . . I pray that you may continue the good work you are doing—Kansas. (And she sends a list of 12 names, showing that she believes in working as well as praying.—Pub.) . . . Pray continue the good fight of faith, for many shall be called but few chosen. I appreciate this December issue of S. C., a lot. Send a few for distribution, also some of Christian Liberty . . . Send a few copies of November issue. As usual it contains so many good articles I am anxious for others to read. May you long be spared to bring such truths to the attention of all who will read them.—Ohio. . . The September Spiritual Call should awaken "Doctrinal Snoozers." That is my name for those who are so secure in the knowledge that they have the right doctrine to get to heaven, but forget about a godly life. They just lie back in their "truth hammocks" and watch the world go by.—Nebraska . . . Please send me a Simplified New Testament. My husband has worn out two of these in his teaching over a period of years. He finds them quite helpful.—Long Beach, Calif. (The publisher considers the present printing of this testament as the best printed and most beautiful he has yet put out. Though cloth it has the appearance of the best grade of leather; it stays open where you desire, and has references to about 2500 choice, devotional, inspirational verses.) . . . I truly hope and pray you and Sister Sommer are holding up under this strain. You have so much to rejoice over as true loyal members of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God will bless us in our efforts I am sure, though we may be

few in numbers as is expected always.—Missouri. . . Another sister sends \$10 to send the paper to others . . . Thank you for sending me the back numbers of the Spiritual Call. They were very good and certainly appreciated. You certainly are doing a fine work and I pray that God will assist you in the undertaking which is yours. There certainly seems to be a decided lack of the simplicity which is in Christ among the people who compose the Body of Christ today. Enclosed please find a money order for renewal of my subscription for your paper. You may continue to send it to my Canadian address.—Canada . . . If we could only bow our heads and humbly say, "Thy will, O Lord, and not mine," it seems to me there would be so much less pride and greed and false accusations in the church, and forces could unite for the good of the church instead of its destruction. While the burden may be hard upon you and your family, right will eventually prevail, and it will be better to be right and alone now, than wrong and alone in eternity.—Indiana. (Entirely unsolicited and accompanied by check for \$20, with promise of regular help to overcome present evils.) Some others are doing the same. It is only by such that we have or can continue. . . . A sister sends a donation and says that the church treasury is well filled, and nothing is being done with it to preach the gospel or help the poor, so why put much more in?—And she sends donation to us to send the gospel out. . . . Have received the December S. C., and read, and enjoyed the paper better than ever before. Also truly glad to hear from so many faithful brothers and sisters through this paper. It makes us feel that not all are converted to men.—Missouri.

LATER—One disciple sends \$50; another, \$40; another \$50; another, \$10. Some seem determined the devil shall not put this paper out of existence. Are you one of them, or only a bystander?

"OBEY AND SUBMIT"—RIGHT OR WRONG?

The greatest evil in the Christian world in 2000 years and even now, is the ambition of men for power over their brethren. For 30 or 40 years the editor of this paper has been opposing the one-man preacher-pastor system, because it was destroying God's doctrine of scriptural elders in the church to feed the flock. But now some leaders have gone to the other extreme and are teaching and practicing the heresy. Obey the elders, right or wrong. I know of but few who do that, but those few are prominent and are pushing their false doctrine throughout the brotherhood. One prominent elder puts it in these words: "Opposition to the authority of the elders is opposition to the Lord." They stress "authority" and "obedience" and say little or nothing about their own obligation before they can expect submission.

They quote Heb. 13: 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you," etc. It is interesting to note that the text does not state that these are elders. It is also interesting to note that, according to a brother who wrote me, the word "authority" is not used in the N. T. in connection with the elders (if the reader knows a passage, please write us), but the word "authority" IS used with evangelists; for writing to Titus, an evangelist, Paul said, "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority." Now what "authority" did Titus have? None at all, except as he taught the Word of God. And what authority has an elder? None at all, except as he teaches the Word of God. If he teachers differently from the Word of God, it is not as the elder quoted above says, that the elder will be responsible and the member will not have to answer; for if the elder leads the members astray, the members WILL have to answer for their own souls, and for not heeding God's command, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Much has hinged upon the Greek word *peitho* which is translated "obey" in Heb. 13: 17, as above. The active voice of the word shows what the elders are to do to try to get the members to "obey"—to "persuade" members by the Word, not by their mere authority. The Passive voice (which is the one used in the verse), shows what members are to do when elders do their part—"BE persuaded" by that Word.

A writer, whom we shall call word-critic for clarity, in a religious paper quotes Thayer's Greek lexicon on these words, as follows:

"The Greek word means, 'Persuasive power, persuasion: 1 Cor. 2: 4. (1) Active, to persuade; to cause belief in a thing. Acts 19: 8. Class. Gr., to make friends of, win one's favor, gain one's good will, Acts 12: 20; or to seek to win one, strive to please one, 2 Cor. 5: 11; Gal. 1: 10; to conciliate, Matt. 28: 14; to tranquilize, I John 3: 19; to persuade unto, i. e., move or induce by persuasion to do something, Acts 13: 43; 26: 28.

To be persuaded, to suffer one's self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe, Luke 16: 31; Acts 17: 4; to have faith, Heb. 11:13; to be persuaded a thing concerning a person, Heb. 6:9; To listen to, obey, YIELD TO, COMPLY WITH, Heb. 13: 17; James 3:6."

And he makes the following remarks among others:

"True, the Greek word has both the active and passive voices, but that does not allow the one being acted on the right to refuse the 'persuasive power' and leave the elders with their hands tied and powerless. I have always thought that the word 'ACTIVE' really meant to induce one by words to believe what was being taught, but let me say right here that the expression 'to induce one by words to believe' is NOT given by Thayer as a definition of any word, but it is only his comment, if you please. To give it as a definition of Thayer is to misrepresent the lexicographer and deceive the reader. Thayer is the best authority on definitions of Greek words we have, but his comments are worth no more than those of any other man. Sometimes one will copy and give comments as definitions. It isn't fair to the reader to do this, for it isn't true!"

Now this word-critic has failed to put the word "PASSIVE" just before the words "listen to, obey, yield, comply with," though the word is in Thayer. The definition shows clearly that elders can not stand off and command, dictate, etc., but they are commanded to "persuade" and the connection shows "with words"; and they have no right to substitute their word for the Word of God; and if they have not the Word of God for what they are trying to get members to do, they are false teachers. "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Note that this word-critic says, "to induce one by words to believe" is NOT given by Thayer as a definition of any word, but it is only his comment, if you please;" and the word-critic proceeds to make a point which will not stand. How does he know that it is not part of the definition? Does he say that the letters "i. e." which are from the Latin "id est" mean "that is" shows this? I reply that Thayer is simply expressing in simpler or detailed words what he had just said, and hence it IS part of the definition. The word-critic must admit that himself, for about a dozen lines down in the definition, as you will see by referring to his definition from Thayer which we have quoted from him above, we have this: "to persuade unto i. e. move or induce by persuading to do something." If the words "to induce one by words to believe" is ONLY a COMMENT of Thayer, as the word-critic says, then the words "move or induce by persuasion to do something" is ALSO mere COMMENT of Thayer and not part of the definition, though the word-critic has given them as part of the meaning. And the point still stands that elders are to reason with members by "words"—yes, the Word of God, to induce them to follow their scriptural instructions; and that if they don't use the word, they have no authority over members on such a question.

The English word "persuade" comes from the Latin "persuadeo" which the lexicon to my copy of Virgil has this as the first meaning, "To prevail upon by TALKING." And Andrew's gigantic Latin-English Lexicon, with 1651 Pages, gives the same meaning to the word "persuade," "To bring over by TALKING, to convince of the truth of anything, to persuade."

Returning to the Greek word "*peitho*" Robinson shows the same as Thayer, that *peitho* means "to persuade, pr. to move by KIND WORDS and MOTIVES." The abbreviation "pr." is defined at the beginning of the lexicon as "proprie, in the proper and literal sense, not figurative." That shows the attitude that elders must have if they wish to get members to "obey" them, for that is the meaning of the word in the ACTIVE voice.

Donnegan says practically the same thing: "to move a person by WORDS, or, ACTIONS, to any thing; to persuade; to induce; to move by persuasion." No "authority" intimated in this word, as dictatorial elders would have us believe.

Cremier, another of the best authorities, says the same in his Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek on *peitho*: "ACTIVE: to persuade, to win by WORDS, to influence." Thus again the lexicons show that elders are to use "words," not authority, to lead their flocks—not words of men but words of God; and if they have no Word of God for some important thing they inaugurate or try to impose, they are no more to be obeyed than any other false teacher is to be obeyed. "We ought to obey God rather than men."

And Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, which is the greatest classical lexicon there is, says on *peitho*: "ACTIVE: to prevail upon, win over by any FAIR means, esp. by WORDS; to TALK over, persuade; to soften, appease, propitiate: PASSIVE: to be

moved by FAIR means, esp. BY WORDS, to be won over, prevailed on, persuaded to comply; to listen to one, obey him."

If the reader wishes to read scriptures which confirm this definition of this word, where *peitho* is translated "persuade," let him turn to the following scriptures: Acts 13: 43; 18: 4; 19: 8; 26: 28; 28: 23; 2 Cor. 5: 11. God intended for elders to persuade their members in the same way these men persuaded the hearers; and not try to dictate to them as an autocratic king. "Neither as being LORDS, but as EXAMPLES." "We ought to obey God rather than men."

I am glad there are few elders who act in this dictatorial way; but the few who do are prominent and are spreading their unscriptural doctrine. One of them puts his heresy thus: "Opposition to the authority of the elders is opposition to the Lord." He says nothing about whether they are scriptural or not; and that was NOT an oversight—for he meant it that way—that members should obey the elders, right or wrong; and he practices it that way, and helps create a big disturbance with his heresy, which is Romanism in a nutshell. What a pity that our word-critic whom we are criticising taught strongly a generation ago in a far western state AGAINST that doctrine. Obey the elders right or wrong; but now he throws his influence with those who not only teach it but practice it.

Yes, yes, brother, Christians will "obey and submit" when scriptural elders teach the Word of God; but no, no, brother, Christians will NOT "obey and submit" to elders whether they are right or wrong, FOR, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

#### THE ERCILDOUN (PA.) CHURCH AND ITS NEW YEAR'S MEETING

More than 70 years ago, Daniel Sommer left Baltimore, Md., and moved to Kelton, Pa., a village in Chester County, Pa., about 60 miles west of Philadelphia. In this village, in 1878 was born the writer of this article, and the same year, was born also another baby to a family in that church, named Paul Mackey, who also became a preacher. Bro. Mackey and this writer probably played together though we do not remember it, for we moved away soon.

While working in that district, Daniel Sommer converted from denominationalism a colored man named Samuel Ruth, who had been a slave. Bro. Ruth became a preacher and elder of a group of colored disciples he gathered at Ercildoun, near there. The influence of this movement spread more and more, for Bro. Ruth was enthusiastic, and he baptized many hundreds of people himself; and from those of his converts who became preachers and workers, altogether, perhaps several thousand people were brought to Christ. Of course, not all these remained faithful just as it has always been. Through many years Bro. Mackey has worked some with these brethren; so has the writer a little, and many other white people. Bro. Wm. O. Jones, an elder with Bro. Ruth for many years, died last summer. Wm. C. Ruth, a son of Samuel Ruth, also preaches, as well as a number of others of the group there and of those who have moved away. Most of these make their living "making tents," and preach as they can. While in that community Bro. Mackey, and wife and two other sisters of Howard, Pa., and Bro. E. L. Keesling from Washington, with whom I came, made our stay in the hospitable home of Bro. Chas. Johnson.

The names of those who were called on to speak about 20 minutes at the New Year's meeting were: Paul Mackey—Albert Dennis—Geo. Myers—Ed. Shirey—Samuel Valentine—Wm. C. Ruth—E. L. Keesling—D. A. Sommer—Abram Minor—Wm. B. Combashner—Stanton—Chas. Johnson—Earl Johnson—Jackson—and others we failed to get. Brethren were present from 5 states, District of Columbia, and 11 Pennsylvania towns.

"Sister Combashner, wife of Wm. B. Combashner, evangelist at Darby, Pa., once studied music with and under Marian Anderson, internationally-known contralto. While Marian Anderson pursued a musical career, Sister Combashner decided to devote her talents to the Lord." She led most of the songs on this occasion, modestly sitting in a front side seat.

The meeting on New Year's Eve was supposed to begin at 8:30, but when we came at 8, we found them singing. The meeting lasted till about 1:30—6 hours! This was no "party." It was not a meeting for hilarity. There was no "drinking" here, like in thousands of places over the land—except the drinking deep into the Spirit. Some "doctrine" was taught, for the benefit of those present who were not members of the Church of the New Testament. The songs were spiritual, and the prayers uplifting, and the talks soul-stirring. The exhortations were mostly for a closer walk with God.

There was no fanaticism. Nor were there "refreshments" even for the body, as sometimes indulged in by some people on similar occasions. This was a feast of the soul not the body. It was more like the fast of the Savior in the wilderness. About midnight I nudged Bro. Keesling and said: "Notice that though there are a number of children from 8 years on, there is not a soul asleep that I can see." These brethren have human nature like all others, but an honest soul can not attend this meeting without feeling that he has been brought closer to God. They said they have been having these meetings for fifty years.

Since writing the above account, we received some statistics from Bro. Keesling in Washington, D. C., which have helped much in names and other details of the meeting which we incorporated above. One item he wrote was this: "A fine paper was read by Bro. Myers for a brother who could not get up before a crowd. Bro. Sommer closed his exhortation on Humility by reading the poem, What Then? There was immediate demand for copies of the poem."

THE SWEETEST TYPE OF HEAVEN IS "HOME"—nay, heaven is the home for whose acquisition we are to strive the most strongly. Home, in one form and another, is the great object of life. It stands at the end of every day's labor, and beckons us to its bosom; and life would be cheerless and meaningless, did we not discern across the river that divides us from the life beyond, glimpses of the pleasant mansions prepared for us.—J. G. Holland.

#### THE UNIQUE CHRIST

"Jesus Christ was born in the meanest of circumstances, but the air above was filled with the hallelujahs of the heavenly host. His lodging was a cattle pen, but a star drew distinguished visitants from afar to do Him homage.

"His birth was contrary to the laws of life. His death was contrary to the laws of death. No miracle is so inexplicable as His life and teaching.

"He had no cornfields or fisheries, but He could spread a table for five thousand and have bread and fish to spare. He walked on no beautiful carpets, but He walked on the waters and they supported Him.

"His crucifixion was the crime of crimes, but, on God's side, no lower price than His infinite agony could have made possible our redemption. When He died, few men mourned, but a black crepe was hung over the sun. Though men trembled not for their sins, the earth beneath shook under the load. All nature honored Him; sinners alone rejected Him.

"Sin never touched Him. Corruption could not get hold of His body. The soil that had been reddened with His blood could not claim his dust.

"Three years He preached His gospel. He wrote no book, built no cathedral, had no money back of Him. After nineteen hundred years, He is the one central character of human history, the perpetual theme of all preaching, the pivot around which the events of the ages revolve, the only regenerator of the human race."

#### ZIGZAGGING

A farmer drove in to town, and was blamed, at the store where he stopped, for tiring his dog all out by permitting him to follow him. The farmer said: "He is not tired out following me, but by his zigzagging. Not an open gate, or a hole in the fence that he didn't run in and explore. It was his zigzagging that tuckered him out." Judah, instead of following God, took an unsteady course, going into open gates of idolatry and gaps of idol worship. That was their undoing.—Source unknown.