

## The Organized Adult Bible Class and Christian Service

BY J. A. JACKSON, B.A., TORONTO, ONT.

Gradually are the followers of Jesus Christ awakening to the fact that Christianity consists more in doing than in believing. As this consciousness impresses itself upon believers, varied indeed are the forms of service which have been introduced in recent times. Moreover, these multiplied activities appear to be necessary in order that the energies of the whole church may be utilized, because that which one believes to be fundamental to the well-being if a community possesses no attraction for another equally earnest in seeking the best interests of his fellows. The Organized Adult Bible Class movement provides for great variety of service, though it aims specifically at interesting all persons over sixteen years of age in the study of God's word.

class might, as many are now doing, support its own missionary and by its enthusiasm rouse the whole school to greater efforts along this line. Another class in the same school might, however, think its opportunity for service lay in developing higher ideals of citizenship among its members. It might, therefore, resolve itself into some form of legislative body, and by holding debates, preparing papers on social and moral topics, and hearing addresses by leaders in commercial, professional, and political life, do just as earnest and active Christian service as the other by thus producing a higher type of manhood.

From such examples it will be seen that the methods of operating the class, outside of the Bible study hour, are in-



Rev T. W. Neal. THE BEREANS OF NEWMARKET, ONT.

The organization does not aim at independent existence. It is, therefore, very simple and easily adapts itself to becoming a working part of the larger institution, the main school. Every other society introduced into the church for the purpose of enlisting adults in active Christian service aims at operating independently of the Sunday School. On this account, we believe that the first suggestion to leave the school often comes when some earnest worker approaches the older scholars with an invitation to join an outside organization, thereby implying that another sphere must be sought in which to engage in missionary or other forms of Christian service. The sad part of it is that in scores of cases the transplanting of one organization to another is not effected satisfactorily, and the young person's allegiance to either is, therefore, soon severed, with disastrous results. On the other hand, in the school properly graded, promotion to the organized class results naturally, at the proper age, without any dangerous transition or a wrench which dislocates the scholar for a time.

In a school large enough to have a number of classes, these may work together on a federated basis, or each class may pursue some distinctive line of operation. Thus a dozen organized classes might co-operate in one school or on a circuit, to support a missionary; or one

finite in their scope. Assuredly though, whatever form of effort the class may adopt as its specific field of operations, the foremost aim should be, so far as possible, to win the non-Christian members to accept Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour.

The possibilities here are enormous. One young men's class, with only fifteen on its roll, formed a prayer-circle to pray specifically for the conversion of those who thus far had not consecrated themselves to Christ. Prayer naturally produced effort to bring this about, and soon the entire membership was included in the prayer-circle. In a short time one of the fifteen offered himself for the foreign mission field and for more than a year and a half has been telling the story of the cross in the Congo country, supported, not only by the prayers of his former classmates in an Ontario town, but also by their gifts.

A large men's class decided to observe the first anniversary of its organization by a decision day campaign amongst its own membership. The teacher so managed the lesson as to actively co-operate by teaching so as to emphasize the obligation to make such a decision. The services of the pastor were also enlisted, and for a number of Sundays before the public reception into church membership, opportunity was given to meet him for conference on the subject. By such means

thirty-four mature men were won to Christ, and during the next six months twelve more were added to this number.

A large mixed class, after studying the "Life of Christ" for a period, concluded to give a practical application to their work by ascertaining what portion of the class had accepted Christ, and then to make an effort to win the others to do about this matter." After thought and prayer another young lady would say: "I do not know her very well, but I notice that she sometimes goes to the same skating rink as I do and on Tuesday night I'll arrange to call for her, which will enable me to skate with her, and as we enjoy ourselves thus I'll tell her the old, old story and try to win her." Thus the work went forward on skating rinks, in business places where they worked together, at restaurants while they took lunch, in short, wherever an opportunity could be found or made, decisions for Christ were sought and won. Small wonder therefore, that at its next reception service the church in which this class has its home had the largest number on record coming into membership, at one time, forty-seven of whom belonged to this class.

From a knowledge of facts like these, some who have observed them are quite ready to say this organized adult Bible class movement is one of the strongest evangelistic forces the church possesses to-day. If all the thousands of classes now organized, were engaged in such work what could not be accomplished? Then, with an aroused and re-consecrated manhood and womanhood, much would be done to remove the forces of evil from our communities and to give our growing boys and girls a fair chance to grow up into a noble manhood and a chaste womanhood.

Such work can only be undertaken, however, with reasonable hope of success, under wise leadership. The pastor and the teacher may do much to aid in their respective places, but it is the specific duty of the devotional committee to seek out such methods as may be applicable in its own class and operate these energetically. On the members of this committee, but more especially on its chairmen, must therefore rest the responsibility of making the class what it ought to be, an active soul-winning agency.

### Berean Bible Class, Newmarket, Ont.

BY STEWART H. QUICK.

A class which has since organization, three years ago, made rapid progress in all its committees, is the Berean Bible Class, of Newmarket, Ont.

From the first this class has been a great help to the young men of the town.

The story of the class is the story of many other classes, that is, increasing vitality and usefulness.

The credit of the organization is principally due to the present teacher, Mrs. Atkinson; the pastor, Rev. T. W. Neal, and a few enterprising young men of the Methodist Church.

The class started out with but few members, but within a very short time the membership was increased to fifty.

It has been said that lady teachers cannot, to any great degree, successfully manage a class of young men, but that is certainly not so in this case. Mrs. Atkinson, from the beginning, as teacher, has been an unqualified success, and