

THE METHODISTS

BY JAMES D. BERNARD

THE Methodist Church in America is now facing a crisis which, though much less serious, nevertheless greatly resembles the one it faced in 1844, when it split over the issue of slavery. As a result of that split it divided into the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and it is the former branch that must bear the brunt of the new conflict. The cause of dissension, in brief, is the gradual encroachment of modern (and often highly worldly) ideas upon the old harsh Methodist discipline. The Northern Methodists have been growing rich, and as they have grown rich they have begun to chafe under the theological and ethical bonds laid upon them by their fathers. Seventy years ago, and even fifty years ago, the most austere variety of Puritanism still had the church in its grip. It not only frowned upon dancing, theatre-going and all other such diversions of the wicked; it was also extremely averse to ritualism. The Methodists, going to church, wanted simply to hear preaching and to roar their rollicking hymns. Many of their churches were without organs. They were so suspicious of the Roman Harlot and its idolatries that they even refused to celebrate Christmas.

Now all that is changing—that is, in the Northern Church. The General Conference, after a long and bitter battle, reluctantly decided, on May 27, 1924, to lift the old ban on dancing and the theatre: the alternative was the loss of hundreds of thousands of the younger members, who were crowding out of the Epworth League into the jazz palaces and the show houses. True enough, the Conference specifically

excepted “those diversions which cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus,” thus quoting John Wesley, but the words were obviously meaningless. Today a young Methodist, in the North, is free to shake his leg as he lists, and to spend all the time he wants to spend in the theatres and movie parlors. Worse, his pastor seems free to imitate Rome, even in the sanctuary. There are Methodist churches today which burn candles, and permit their choirs to sing parts of Roman masses. There are others which hold early morning services in imitation of the mass. And in practically all of them there are pipe-organs, and in most of them there are also cornets and fiddles.

Against this yielding to Satan the Southern Methodists hold out. They have let in organ music, but they still bar dancing, the theatre, and the symbols and ornaments of the mass. More, they are faithful in theology as well as in ritual. They are Fundamentalists, at least in large majority, and regard science with great suspicion. This difference, I believe, was largely responsible for the failure of the late attempt to unite the two Churches. The Northern Church voted for union almost unanimously, but the Southern Church, though it mustered a majority of ayes,—4528, to 4108 nays—, failed to show the necessary three-fourths vote. The Southerners feared to come into the combination for two reasons. First, they were afraid that coming in might complicate the Negro problem, and make it harder for them to keep the colored brother in his place. But secondly, they were in grave doubt about the orthodoxy of their Northern brethren.

The more ardent Fundamentalists among the Southern bishops were all against unification, and they managed to carry their conferences with them.

But Fundamentalism, of course, also exists in the North, and it is there that it seems likely to cause most trouble. The more enlightened Northern Methodists are obviously ashamed of its extravagances, and try to keep them within bounds. But the Fundamentalists are pugnacious and hard to reason with, and already they show signs of a revolt against the Church's increasing liberalism. If this revolt ever reaches the stage of open battle, it may be fatal to the Northern Church. The more extreme liberals, in large numbers, are already going over to the Protestant Episcopal Church, which has the additional charm of being fashionable, and the more extreme Fundamentalists are falling into the ranks of the Baptists, among whom liberalism is very rare. Thus the Church faces losses at both ends, and if the matter ever comes to a knock-'em-down-and-drag-'em-out struggle it will be very badly damaged. Even Prohibition no longer serves to unite the factions. The liberals, observing its colossal failure, tend to be increasingly sniffish of it. Some day a Northern Methodist pastor will begin to preach against it, and the fat will be in the fire.

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The church of which the Hon. Hiram Wesley Evans, D.D.S., Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, is an ornament, was set up in this country, curiously enough, by two Irish immigrants, Philip Embury and Robert Strawbridge by name. It had been founded in England, as everyone knows, by the brothers John and Charles Wesley. While at Oxford they formed a club for the purpose of acquiring regular habits of religious study and works. In Wesley's own words, "they resolved to live by rule and method." This earned for them the derisive designation of Methodists. In time the club became wholly religious in character

and the term is now applied to the church that was the outcome of its meetings.

The first Methodist church in America was built in 1768 by Philip Embury in John street, New York City. Strawbridge was in the meantime spreading the Word in Maryland and the surrounding territory. In 1779 there arose a controversy as to the administration of the sacraments, and Wesley, to settle the matter, sent over Thomas Coke to act as superintendent of the Church in America. At the first conference of the American Church (December, 1784) Francis Asbury was ordained by Coke as bishop, and Wesley's prayer book, psalm-book and liturgy, and his abridged form of the Thirty-nine Articles were presented and adopted as standards. The first General Conference was held in 1792 and since then one has been held every four years. The Church now has about 8,000,000 members—5,000,000 in the North, and 3,000,000 (including 1,000,000 Negroes) in the South.

In 1828 a dispute arose over the question of lay representation to the General Conference, and it led to the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church (1830). This church differs radically in polity from the other Methodist bodies in that it has no bishops or presiding elders and no life officers of any kind. It has conferences like the Methodist Episcopal Church; at these meetings a president is elected who appoints the preachers to their charges. At the General Conference of 1844, Bishop Andrew, a Southerner and an owner of slaves, was asked to desist from exercising the functions of his office. The Southern delegates held a protest conference in 1845 and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In doctrine and in government it is precisely like the Northern Church, but it has its own conferences, publishing house, missionary boards, and so forth. The Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America was formed in 1843 at Utica by a number of uncompromising Abolitionists who also desired a non-episcopal church. The Free Methodist

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Church was started in 1850 in Genesee by those desiring to return to earlier and more primitive standards of faith. In doctrine, it is like the Northern and Southern Churches, but it differs from them on two points: sanctification, it believes, is wrought instantaneously on believing souls, and in the matter of future rewards and punishments it deviates slightly from the orthodox view. It elects general superintendents in place of bishops, and it pays special attention to unworldliness of conduct.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in Philadelphia in 1816, when colored Methodists, who previously worshipped in white churches, withdrew and formed their own church under the leadership of Richard Allen. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded by colored Methodists in New York City in the same year. The Methodist Episcopal Church Colored was organized in 1870 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as a separate body. The Ku Klux spirit, apparently, had already begun to do its work.

These are the more important branches of the Methodist faith in America. Among the others are the following: the Primitive Methodist Church, which came over from England; the Independent Methodist Church, which has organizations in Maryland, Tennessee and the District of Columbia; the Evangelist Missionary Church, which was founded by a group of ministers and laymen in Ohio who left the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1866; the Congregational Methodist Church, which disagrees with the orthodox Methodists over the form of church government; the New Congregational Methodist Church, which was established by Georgia Methodists who withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1881; the African Union Methodist Protestant Church, which differs from the African Methodist Episcopal Church in opposing a paid clergy, the episcopacy and itineracy; and the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church, which is very like the one immediately preceding.

In theology, the orthodox Methodists are Arminians. Their doctrines are set forth in Wesley's Twenty-Five Articles of Religion, which are based upon the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. A summary of the more important of them, as officially stated, follows:

1. Jesus arose with His body from the grave and He lives forever.
2. The Holy Spirit is a divine person.
3. The Bible contains all we need to know to be saved and is our only sacred rule of faith and life.
4. We are saved by faith and faith only. No one can be saved merely by his good works.
5. The Roman Catholic view of purgatory, the pardon of sins, and the worship of imagery, relics and shrines is contrary to the word of God.
6. In public worship only a language the people understand should be used.
7. There are only two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper.
8. Baptism is the symbol of the new birth, or the symbol of the beginning of the Christian life.
9. The Lord's Supper is a symbol of Christ's suffering for us. The bread and wine are not changed into Christ's body.
10. The Mass is unscriptural and utterly wrong.
11. Christians have a right to own private property if they use it in a Christian way.

Contrary to the Baptist doctrine, the Methodists believe that pouring, sprinkling and immersion are all equally scriptural and proper modes of baptism, and that the baptism of infants is in perfect accord with Christian doctrine. They also believe that Christ now exists in a glorified human body and that "we shall be like Him when he shall appear, for we shall see Him as He is. The righteous after death will have a spiritual body. Just what that body will be we do not know."

The Methodist form of Church government is episcopal. Its administrative work is done by conferences and boards. There are, in both the Northern and the Southern Churches, five conferences: 1. The General Conference. This is composed of ministers and lay delegates who are elected by the annual conferences. The number of clerical members and lay members is the same. The General Conference elects bish-

ops, revises laws of discipline and performs other such general administrative and legislative functions. It meets once every four years and is presided over by the bishops, each one in turn a day at a time, beginning with the senior bishop. 2. The Annual Conferences. These are composed of all the traveling preachers and of eight lay district representatives, who are elected by the District Conferences. These Annual Conferences examine into the life and administration of each preacher and admit new candidates. 3. The District Conferences. These are held annually in each district. They issue licenses to preachers. 4. The Quarterly Conferences. These are very much like the District Conferences, but they cover a smaller area. 5. The Church Conferences. These are held in each pastoral charge once a month or so. They deal only with a single church. The character of the boards is implied by their names: the General Board of Missions, the Board of Church Extension, the Board of Education, the Sunday-school Board, and so on.

Bishops are constituted by the election of the General Conference and the laying on of the hands of three bishops or of at least one bishop and two elders. Bishops are "elders as to ministerial order and episcopal as to the high office of general superintendency." They hold office for life, subject to good behavior. So far in the history of the Methodist Church they have all been behaving themselves very well, and it has not been found necessary to depose any of them. The Methodists take great pride in this unblemished record, and apparently see in it a confirmation of their belief that God is continually smiling on them. After the bishops come the presiding elders, who are appointed by them. They have full charge of their districts, which contain no more than forty pastoral charges, and they have full power to change, suspend or discipline the preachers. They are thus very important personages and occupy positions equivalent to those of political bosses in the political world. Every poor preacher is careful to be polite to them.

Licentiates are brethren who have been granted authority to preach by the District Conferences. They have the full power of preachers, but they cannot perform the baptismal or marriage ceremonies. Their licenses must be renewed yearly. Most of them, as I will show later, have not had so much as a high-school education, but most of them, after many years of renewing their licenses, graduate finally into the class of full pastors. Anyone who has preached for two years and can pass a very mild examination in reading, writing, geography, church organization and morals is made a deacon. He can then perform all the offices of the ministry with the exception of the Lord's Supper. Anyone can be an elder who has been a deacon for not less than two years and has won his way into the graces of those higher up.

The Methodists, like the Baptists and all the other evangelical sects, are hot for spreading the Kingdom into heathen lands. But of late it has dawned upon them that perhaps the most heathen country in the world is the United States. The foreign missionary movement of the Church was started in a very characteristic way in 1806. Five college students had taken refuge from a shower in a haystack at Williamstown, Mass. They spent their time praying, but before an hour had passed their minds began to wonder to distant countries and they began to discuss the heathen in China and the other parts of the Orient. They prayed again and it was not long before four of them were on their way to make Christians out of the coolies. What the fifth one did I don't know. The records do not say.

There are twenty-one Methodist publications in English in the United States. All of them are weeklies save the *Methodist Review*, which is a bi-monthly, and the *Methodist Herald*, of Tobaccoville, N. C., which is a monthly. Many of them are called the *Christian Advocate*. There is a headquarters *Christian Advocate* in New York, and others at strategical points in the hinterland; the latter have qualifying

adjectives before their titles, such as Western, Central, Southwestern, Michigan, Pacific, Washington, Pittsburgh and so on. Each has its own editor, but the Rev. Halford E. Luccock, A.B., D.D., is attached to most of them as contributing editor. Dr. Luccock is registrar of Drew Theological Seminary, and a facile writer. His editorials appear in nearly all the *Christian Advocates*. They also print much other matter in common, but each has its local news. They are well printed, and their usual size is that of the *New Republic*.

You will find in them, at times, silly pronunciamientos on the Prohibition question by the Hon. Deets Pickett, press agent of the Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals at Washington, but you will also find excellent editorials on such subjects as the state of affairs in China, the Karolyi episode, the Locarno conference, the coal strike, and the French debt, enlightened and liberal in tone. What they say, in the main, is at least as intelligent as what the *New Republic* says. The Northern Methodist papers also discuss books—and they are not the books of William Jennings Bryan or Dr. Howard A. Kelly. Such defenders of the old voodooism are scarcely mentioned; the editors apparently regard their doctrines as too idiotic to be worth any space. I must mention the *Methodist Review*, of New York. It is without doubt one of the most intelligent religious periodicals in the country. Its theological and metaphysical discussions are on a very high level of scholarship. Its contributors are not Methodists of the circuit-rider type. I am a frequent reader of it and I can honestly say that I find it more interesting than nine-tenths of the reviews of genuine circulation. Two or three years ago it caused an uproar by printing a very heterodox article on the Virgin Birth.

It is a different story, however, with the papers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Most of them are on the low level of the Baptist papers. They are printed on cheap paper and show poor editing. What

is more important, their reading matter is usually idiotic. They carry a good deal of shady advertising: Mrs. Winslow's Syrup, Stray-Moll Wonder Pile Ointment, Miller's Antiseptic Snake Oil For Chest Colds, Cardui, the Woman's Tonic, and so on. One of them, the *Alabama Christian Advocate*, also carries a comic strip, called "Pesky Peanut And His Playmates," the principle characters of which are peanuts, dogs, spools and rocks.

IV

The Methodists have a large number of theological schools, and they also control many institutions of secular learning. Some of the latter are on a relatively high level, as witness Ohio Wesleyan University, Boston University, and Southwestern Methodist University. But these schools seem to have little influence upon the clergy, who, save in the large cities, remain a very ignorant lot. As I have said before, many of them are no more than licentiates who keep on renewing their licenses until either a good God relieves them of their earthly labors or they are made full pastors by a kind-hearted examining board. The more intelligent of the Methodists realize that these spiritual leaders are incompetent—and they resent it. Here, for example, is a letter of protest, sent in by Sister Marion Brookfield to the *Northwestern Christian Advocate* of Chicago:

It does not seem a very serious matter that a number of devoted men with inadequate preparation entered the Methodist ministry thirty-five or more years ago, but that the situation is unchanged in this day of widespread education is something to think about.

During the last three years the various Methodist conferences received on trial practically as high a percentage of men who never finished high-school as are to be found among the full conference members. In the one case it is 21.2 per cent and the other 21.9 per cent. An average of eight men out of every one hundred had never gone beyond the eighth grade. Thirty-five per cent of the men never spent a day in college, and most of them never will.

A high-school education is the minimum standard for reception on trial. How could twenty-one men out of every one hundred be received who were below this requirement? Because two-

thirds of the preachers in their conferences voted them in, as special cases. It would not be such a distressing matter if all these men were young and able to go ahead with their preparation, but they were received at the average age of thirty-four, approximately. Practically all are married and handicapped by obligations that will make further training difficult, if not impossible.

Some of the pastors themselves seem to realize that they are insufficiently prepared for their work: the denominational papers, especially in the South, are full of evidence of it. Here, for example, is a letter from Pastor W. McD. Howell, of Springfield, Ala., in the *Alabama Christian Advocate*:

What the thirty-nine years of my ministry would have been had I been thoroughly prepared God only knows. My conversion was genuine and clear and so was my call to the ministry; but being uneducated and not knowing the Scriptures as I should have known them, I have been woefully handicapped all these years.

This lack of equipment seems to be especially serious among the Negro Methodists. A special study of the Negro churches, made by W. A. Daniel, contains the following:

The number of Negro churches is usually estimated at between 40,000 and 45,000. The number of vacancies occurring annually through death, old age, change of occupation, and other causes, is estimated at from 1,500 to 2,000. If all the men graduating from Negro theological seminaries this year go directly into the ministry, as is usually the case, less than three per cent of these vacancies can be filled by men whose combined literary and theological training would be equivalent to three years above high-school. Of the 1,011 students for the ministry in 1923-24, there are only 219 high-school graduates, of whom thirty-eight are college graduates.

One of the reasons why the ministry attracts only low-grade men is to be found in the low salaries commonly paid to pastors. The Methodist Year Book for 1925 says that the average salary for the year 1924 was \$1630.86. This is less than \$32 a week. It is obvious that no educated man, however hot his passion for souls might be, would be strongly attracted by such a salary. Not all the pastors, of course, are lucky enough to get even \$32 a week. Brother Thomas Whiteside reports in *Zion's Herald* that in Kingman,

Maine, "there are two outpoints on the charge, Webster and Prentiss. The salary is \$900 and parsonage." From Kingman, Maine, this same brother brings the happy news that "the pastor's salary has been increased from \$300 to \$400."

I turn from Maine to Kentucky. According to the *Central Methodist* the average salary of the 180 pastors of the Louisville Conference is \$1,309 a year, and they have to serve 592 congregations and 64,731 members in order to get it. In other words, each pastor has an average of three and a third charges, each charge contributes an average of less than \$400 a year to his salary, and each member contributes less than \$4. No wonder the poor pastors, favored with a pounding or "storm party," gloat exceedingly, as does Pastor S. T. Miller in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*:

I take this method to thank the members and friends of St. James Methodist Episcopal Church, Clifton, Tenn., for the storm party, Monday night, which resulted in 126 pounds of the choicest groceries to the amount of \$26.80, and a nice cash purse; also a reception.

And Pastor and Mrs. M. L. Baldwin in the same paper:

We wish to thank the Kings' Daughters of St. Peter Methodist Episcopal Church, Donaldsonville, La., and all the members and friends for the surprise party given us on November 28. They came singing, "When the Saints Go Marching In," and laid on the table fifty pounds of select groceries, a chicken, and all that goes to make up a Thanksgiving dinner, and also a cash purse. Miss Anita Jackson made the presentation speech, and the pastor responded in well chosen words. The pastor and wife invited them to call again, and prayed God's blessings upon them.

The country Methodist preacher, then, like his Baptist brother, must cover three or four charges if he is to tarry long from the Methodist heaven. The solution to his difficulty, of course, lies in playing Conference politics and getting himself placed in a rich parish. But how many such gold mines are there? The following notice, which recently appeared in the *Nashville Christian Advocate*, speaks for itself:

Bishop W. N. Ainsworth requests that no further letters be written to him concerning transfers to the Florida Conference. He has received nearly

150 applications for such transfers and has already provided all the men that will be needed in that field.

Another happy hunting ground for Methodist pastors with pull enough to get into it is California, especially the Southern part. There is one pastor there, Dr. Merle N. Smith, who receives the stately sum of \$8,750 a year, and what is more, he actually gets it. Pastor Frank Roach does even better: he gets \$8,800. And Pastor E. E. Helms, probably the champion, gets \$9,000. Very few pastors in the big cities can match these emoluments. As for the country shepherds, they must, like their Baptist rivals, struggle along in their poor parsonages and try to rake up a few dollars by inducing the good ladies of their charges to raffle off turkeys or tube sets. But their hearts are sore, as witness this lament from Pastor H. Kenneth Smith, in *Zion's Herald*:

This detestable business of running sales, fairs, clambakes, and whatnots, in order to support the minister and the church, makes any sincere pastor feel as if he were about the most unnecessary and burdensome object of charity in the universe.

V

Whether it is due to the incompetence of this badly-paid clergy or to some other cause I do not know, but the fact is plain that the Methodist Church, both North and South, is losing its old hold upon the masses. In alliance with the Klan, it sometimes shows a renewal of its former evangelical vigor, and through the medium of the Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals it continues to get upon the first pages of the newspapers with dreadful blasts, but the number of incoming souls seems to be falling year by year. Turn to any issue of any Methodist paper, and you are pretty sure to find a note of pessimism. I extract the following, a fair example, from the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*, of Atlanta, in the diocese of the ferocious Bishop Warren A. Candler, brother to the coca-cola magnate:

It looks as if Georgia Methodism not only failed to make adequate advance among the many un-

evangelized beyond its borders in its own State, but that it also actually failed last year to hold those that were born into its own families. It is not only not an evangelizing agency, but it is actually increasing the number of the unevangelized. There were approximately—exact figures are not at hand—10,000 additions on profession of faith in the two Conferences last year. Since these figures are not certain we shall allow 11,000. In round numbers, it took fourteen Georgia Methodists twelve months to win just one soul to the Saviour. In the early days of missionary work in some fields that would not be a bad achievement. But these Methodists are set down in the midst of a civilization that is as nearly Christian as can be found anywhere on the planet. Back of us are the years of Christian living on the part of many who have toiled sacrificially for the coming of the kingdom; around us is the influence and training of Christian homes and of the instrumentalities which the Church supplies for the salvation of the young, which instrumentalities we are proud to believe are now functioning at the highest state of efficiency. Yet fourteen Methodists must work twelve months to win one soul!

As the Methodists increase in worldly goods and worldly wisdom they gradually lose their fire. Even Prohibition ceases to interest them, for Prohibition, as everyone knows, is unfashionable: it is difficult to advocate it and still remain in good standing in any sound country-club. Christian Science and the Protestant Episcopal Church hold out fascinating lures: the former is quiet and elegant, and the latter is romantic and swagger. The clergy tend to fall with the laity. According to the *Churchman*, no less than 30 of the 332 men admitted to holy orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church during the triennium, 1922-25, were former Methodists. This is nearly ten per cent. The Most Rev. John Gardner Murray, D.D., primate of the Episcopal Church in America, is another former Methodist, though he doesn't mention it in "Who's Who in America." He graduated from the Drew Theological Seminary, a Methodist stronghold, in 1881, and did not enter the Episcopal ministry until 1893. The loss of such men is obviously very damaging to Methodism. There is little if any movement in the other direction.

This fading of the old fire reveals itself in lessening collections. The pastors who go about the land heating up the faithful

for such things as foreign missions find their jobs increasingly difficult. Even the local clergy have grown indifferent, as this report from the *Western Christian Advocate* shows:

I am duty-bound to say that I have been shocked and saddened by the frequent disclosures of what seemed a palpable neglect on the part of the pastors in preaching on the subject of missions, and an alarming indifference on the part of the people to the supreme duty of the Church to evangelize the whole world—the second, no doubt, is a natural sequence of the first. One of the presiding elders remarked that he had doubted if there were preached in the bounds of his district last year as many as half a dozen sermons on the subject.

The receipts for the last fiscal year of the Board of Foreign Missions and the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Northern Church totaled \$7,630,595.21, as compared with \$8,701,027.01 for the year preceding. The Church has 1187 missionaries in the field, and the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society has 738 more. There are 1744 native pastors. The chief field of labor is India, with China following. In Latin America there are now 18,408 Methodists. The Church long ago sought a lodgment in Rome, and now has a mission under the very shadow of the Vatican. But with a diminishing income all these enterprises are headed for trouble. At home there is more trouble, as witness this account, by the secretary of the North Georgia Conference, of the effort to raise a Centenary Fund:

We have pushed the work as diligently and as thoroughly as we know how; but I regret to report that only about \$39,000 had been collected up to November 1. Since then over \$4,500 has been received. This is less than half the amount we confidently expected to raise. . . . Only 230 churches have made remittances to the Conference treasurer this year, leaving over 500 that have made no remittance.

The denominational papers, though the number of them has been reduced by consolidations and they are well written and interesting, seem to be very badly supported. The *Christian Advocate* lately said that it had but 740 subscribers among the 22,000 Methodists in the New York Dis-

trict of the New York Conference. In the domain of the Louisville Conference, the *Advocate* has 309 subscribers, and the *Central Methodist* 4733 among 64,731 members. In the Detroit area, which the *Advocate* calls "the best reading area in American Methodism," 175,929 members show but 20,288 subscribers to church papers, "an average of one paper to eight and one-half members."

VI

The Southern Methodists, as I have said, are far more orthodox than their Northern brethren. Even in the Northern Church those leaders who come from the southern portion of its territory seem to be hotter for the true faith than their more northerly brethren. For example, consider Bishop Luther B. Wilson, a Baltimorean and formerly president of the Anti-Saloon League. Some time ago he was invited to preach in the new Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, and seized the chance to deliver an old-time Methodist harangue. Thus:

Atheism is not only folly, but to the state a traitor. It does not deserve a place and should not be defended by any specious claim for immunity under the constitutional guaranties of the right of free speech.

One can find multitudes of such utterances in the papers of the Southern Church. The Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are, of course, believed in completely down there, and the sublime principles of the Klan are generally supported. Here is a typical utterance by the Rev. Dr. J. M. Glenn, in the *Alabama Christian Advocate*:

The Methodist preacher who does not get the weekly Dearborn *Independent*, Dearborn, Mich., \$1.50 a year, is certainly missing a great deal of valuable matter. While not a church paper, it contains four articles, on the Scopes case, the ten commandments as a means of healing, the desecration of Sunday and the rottenness of the New York stage, which might grace any religious periodical.

All the denominational schools in the South are now undergoing examination as to their orthodoxy on the matter of evolu-

tion. The elders and deacons are busy rum-maging through all the textbooks and tearing out every page on which the slightest hint is given of the existence of an hypothesis of evolution or on which the names of such infidels as Darwin, Huxley or Haeckel are mentioned. A resolution was recently adopted by the West Texas Conference calling upon Bishop James E. Dickey to appoint a committee of five to investigate the doctrinal teachings at the Southwestern University at Georgetown and the Southern Methodist University at Dallas. At this same conference the Rev. S. J. Johnston declared that he "had rather a boy of his was killed than he should come back from college filled with doubts as to the fundamentals of the Christian faith."

The Southern Church has a Commission on Temperance and Social Service which performs the same work down there in the Hookworm Belt that the better known Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals does in the Northern States. It is aided by a so-called National Temperance and Prohibition League. The league believes in what might be called preventive Prohibition, as the following news item, widely printed in the Southern Methodist press, shows:

The National Temperance and Prohibition League offers a prize of one thousand dollars to that person who will submit to it the best practical plan for shackling the Moonshiner, the Bootlegger, the Rum Runner, the Liquor Anarchist, the Booze Rooter, the Wet Propagandist, the Dope Fiend, the Drunkard and the Pistol Bully, in a contest governed by certain rules and conditions. For particulars write to the National Temperance and Prohibition League, care J. B. Albritton, Bellwood, Alabama.

The Southern Methodists are still hot against dancing and the theatre, and frown upon the cigarette, the lipstick, rolled stockings, necking, and all other such works of the devil. Recently a hot debate was held in the South Georgia Conference on the question, Is it legal immorality for a preacher five years in the Conference to use tobacco? During the discussion Bishop William N. Ainsworth, of Macon, a cele-

brated heretic-hunter, said that "the General Conference of 1914 required preachers who were admitted to the conference on trial and later into full connection to take a pledge that they would abstain from the use of tobacco. The pledge still holds. If the preacher doesn't abstain from the use of tobacco, he violates his pledge, his solemn pact with God. It is a serious matter." It appears, however, that there are many preachers who do not fear violating their solemn pact with God, for the very same news item which quoted Bishop Ainsworth adds: "Delegates at the conference expressed the belief that this was in the nature of a warning to those pastors who smoke on the sly."

The Southern Methodists, to Northerners, look very ignorant and bigoted, but in the South they are commonly regarded as somewhat liberal, and even loose. This is simply because the Baptists and Cumberland Presbyterians of the region are so very much worse. At Dayton, Tenn., during the Scopes trial, a local Methodist pastor invited a visiting Unitarian to preach from his pulpit. The local Baptists made such an uproar that the Methodists were also set off, and so the poor pastor was chased out of town. There are, however, two prominent liberals in the South, and both are bishops. I refer to Bishop John M. Moore, of Dallas, and Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon, of Nashville. The first has had the courage to say that "evolution is progress; fundamentalism is fixity." The latter, in "Fundamentals of Methodism," one of the sanest books on Methodism I have ever encountered, says:

I express a grave fear that if the present unfortunate agitation concerning orthodoxy and heresy continues, in which laymen often try to settle theological questions that have troubled the scholars for centuries, and preachers think to silence the sciences while themselves knowing nothing about the matter they discuss, and scientists who know little about the Bible and nothing about philosophy join in and add confusion to disorder—I say I am greatly afraid that if something is not done to stop this agitation, multitudes will be driven into the camp of extreme liberals and some may be driven into actual infidelity. . . . Unfortunately, in recent years, a

false note has been sounded in Methodism, a note which called attention to things to be believed rather than a life of Christ to be lived. . . . There is immense peril in this position. It may lead one to conclude that his own life is a Christian life, because, forsooth, his creed is in perfect harmony with orthodox standards. Then the farther step may be taken which leads the poor misguided man to believe that his brother is a bad man for the good and sufficient reason that his brother does not agree with him in all his theological tenets.

A sensible position this, but how many Methodists are there in the South like Bishop Mouzon? I know of about seven or eight, but, then, I have been digging into hundreds of Methodist papers, magazines and books.

VII

Things are somewhat different in the North. Fundamentalism, of course, exists there, but it is not very bellicose, and the great majority of city pastors seem to be suspicious of it. The Northern Methodists, when they retain the primitive fire at all, show it in moral endeavor. A formidable minority, as I have said, begins to be skeptical even here, but the majority of the faithful are still eager to put down sin, especially in the other fellow. Every witch-hunt in the North is run by Methodists, whether it be directed against race-track gamblers, bootleggers, college neckers, or street-walkers. The Comstock Society is an almost purely Methodist organization, and so are such societies as the Anti-Saloon League and the Lord's Day Alliance. But the chief moral organ of the Northern Methodists is the notorious Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, which has a gaudy home in Washington, supports a large staff of professional devil-chasers, and is heavily subsidized by such opulent laymen as Sebastian S. Kresge, the ten-cent store magnate. It is an official body of the Church, has a monthly organ called the *Voice*, and issues stacks of pamphlets and a weekly clip-sheet of propaganda for the secular press of the country. If you would see the uplift mixed with religious ferocity and raised to a science, I invite you to take a look at some of

this literature. The editors of these publications employ all of Hearst's well-known devices of scientific journalism: short, snappy paragraphs, capitalization for emphasis, the apt marshaling of pertinent and impertinent statistics, and so on.

There is apparently no human activity into which the Board does not poke its nose. And wherever it goes it carries the blazing banner of a Puritanism as inhuman as the Puritanism of Jonathan Edwards. Prohibition, of course, is its chief pet. Says the Rev. Dr. Clarence True Wilson, general secretary of the Board: "Prohibition has been the greatest moral triumph that our generation has seen in the round world. . . . It has wrought some of the moral miracles of the Twentieth Century. Prosperity is greater, health is higher, education more accessible, homes more happy, wealth more abundant, poverty decreased, industry stimulated." The clip-sheets are full of "scientific" data, buttressed with tons of figures and fancy charts, showing that Prohibition has been the main cause of the increased sale of radio sets and Dr. Frank Crane's books, the large attendance at night schools, the increase in the price of farm land in Wyoming and Utah, the rise in the value of real estate in New Jersey, and so on.

The Board, like Bishop Thomas Nicholson, of Chicago, president of the Anti-Saloon League, seems to favor butchering bootleggers. A year or so ago it issued a solemn bull to that effect. When the newspapers denounced its ferocity, it tried to wriggle out of the situation, but could not manage it. Scofflaws are also under its ban; they are, it appears, "blood guilty," whatever that may mean. Says the Hon. Deets Pickett, "research secretary" to the Board:

If there is a good bootlegger who is not a dead bootlegger I have not met him.

The Board officially advocates the deportation of aliens found guilty of violating the Volstead Act. It also advocates heavier and more severe jail sentences for citizens similarly convicted. In addition to these

benign proposals it makes the following bow to Liberty, presumably the patron goddess of the Republic:

Eventually, also, Congress should place under the provisions of the Prohibition Act all intoxicating liquors made and possessed before the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. At present wealthy owners of cellars, provided they can establish the fact that their liquors were obtained before Prohibition, are undisturbed by the Prohibition law.

Still unsatisfied, the Board urges a mass attack on all the newspapers which dare to express any doubt about, or make fun of, the Prohibitionists:

Newspapers which come into Christian homes should be called upon to cease sneering and jibing at the law, to cease giving moral aid and comfort to criminals, to cease printing revolting abuse of the Christian churches emanating from perverted minds.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, as I have said, took the ban off dancing in 1924, but the Board continues to denounce it. Among the leaflets that it circulates are "The Modern Dance Evil," by C. C. Rarick; "Dancing in Our Public Schools," by Dr. Wilson; and "Why the Methodist Episcopal Church Condemns Dancing," by the aforesaid Rarick. The last-named makes no mention of the fact that the ban has been taken off. The Board also carries on campaigns against the cigarette, Sunday amusements, gambling, horse racing, necking, the lip-stick, swearing and salacious books and magazines. In its drive against tobacco it has unearthed some curious facts. For example, it says officially, that "about half of the women in this country would just about as soon be in close company with a good healthy pole cat as a lighted cigarette or cigar." And here are some of its more scientific discoveries:

1. Tobacco deals the heart a deadly blow by clogging the passages, reducing the bodily eliminations and making normality impossible. This produces paralysis, insanity and other disorders.
2. The kidneys are damaged by the use of tobacco. . . . Tobacco contracts the passages of the kidneys, and in this manner impairs the general health.
3. That tobacco causes color blindness is well known. Dimness of vision and even blindness often result from excessive smoking. (From a leaflet by John Harvey Kellogg, M.D., published by the Board.)

The immense increase in smutty magazines on the news-stands has greatly exercised the Board, and it has launched a campaign to have them attacked in every town by the local clergy. In this benign work it has the aid of the Rev. J. Frank Chase, of the Boston Watch and Ward Society, a Methodist vice-hunter of long practice and great native talent. Chase contributes frequently to the clip-sheet, reminding his pupils of the happy fact that "the Postmaster General has the right to issue stop orders denying the use of the mails to indecent magazines. He does not need to wait for a prosecution. He can issue a stop order as soon as he is convinced that the matter printed is illegal. If his order is not obeyed, he can proceed to prosecute 'for depositing obscene matter in the mail.'"

All the Methodist papers, like the Baptist papers, are discreetly quiet about the Klan. But it is the quiet of shame. For who does not know that the Imperial Wizard, the patriotic dentist, Dr. Evans, is a faithful and eminent Methodist? And who does not also know that the Klan counts the rural Methodist pastors among its best friends?

VIII

The Methodists, though they have bishops, profess to be vastly opposed to priestcraft, and their clergy strive to appear as much as possible like laymen. They do not wear gowns in the pulpit and few, if any of them, reverse their collars. The average Methodist bishop is a go-getter and has the outward aspect of a prosperous Rotarian. Sometimes he is smooth-shaven or wears a full beard, but much more often he affects the toothbrush moustache of Mr. Babbitt. So with the lesser clergy. They are frequent speakers before Kiwanis, take a hand in all so-called civic movements, and strive to appear as Regular Fellows.

Nevertheless, as I have said, a certain insidious ritualism has shown itself among the Methodists in late years. Many of their more fashionable churches begin to wor-

ship the harsh Methodist God in a manner which greatly resembles that of a somewhat High Church Episcopalian congregation. In the course of my inquiries I have encountered Methodist churches with vested choirs, and some of these choirs frequently sing such Romish things as Rossini's "Stabat Mater." I know of one Methodist church in which choir and pastor engage in a responsive service that very forcibly suggests the mass. Such evidences of a leaning toward Babylon are not often discussed in the Methodist press. Nevertheless the subject sometimes crops up, and the way in which it is handled, I believe, would greatly astonish old Francis Asbury, imagining him returned from the grave. I turn, for example, to an article by the Rev. James A. Beebe, D.D., dean of the school of theology at Boston University, a Methodist institution. It is in the *Western Christian Advocate*. Dr. Beebe says:

My Catholic playmates had better instruction [in getting access to God] than I. They were thoroughly indoctrinated with the view that "the fruit of the Spirit" is not a sporadic growth, but is produced by very definite methods of spiritual culture as well understood as the methods of rose culture. *Particular things* must be done, at *particular times* and in *particular ways*! Their priests were trained to help them face frankly the unpleasant facts of life in the confessional at least once a year, giving counsel and prescribing penances that were designed to renovate their souls. (No such individual attention as this was given us. Our Protestant souls were cured in the mass, if cured at all!) Moreover, their church put into their hands certain mechanical aids to devotion which we generally despised, among them an old device called the "rosary," utilized in many religions.

Dr. Beebe then goes on:

The devotion is equally well designed for social and private prayers. Any thoughtful Catholic admits readily the objection that formal prayers recited mechanically constitute a superstitious practice. But he will maintain that the significant features of this exercise are *the meditations*—the images and ideas that enter the mind while the prayers are recited. The vocal petitions are only a kind of musical accompaniment to the thoughts of the worshiper, as his imagination plays around certain great religious themes. Doubtless many Catholics use this form of prayer carelessly and ignorantly. That is beside the mark. Employed as originally intended, it is all but a perfect technique for worship.

Obviously, this is strange stuff for a Methodist divine to be writing, even in Boston. Dr. Beebe, it should be added, does not go to the length of advocating the adoption of the actual rosary by Methodists. All he proposes is that they make a "Protestant rosary" of their own, composed, it would appear, of a series of prayers and other pious passages, some taken from the Psalms but others from the *Te Deum Laudamus*, the *Magnificat* and other such Romish favorites. He also speaks with approval of contemplating the crucifix, and of the stations of the cross. I wonder what impression this curious article has made upon the Methodists of the South, nearly all of them Klansmen and in deadly terror that the Catholics plan to put a wop in the White House!

With the growth of ritualism marches a growth in liberalism. Wherever education is general the hedge pastors find it increasingly difficult to hold their sheep to the pure Methodist doctrine. Worse, they are opposed by many men of their own cloth, including some of great influence. I have mentioned Dr. H. E. Luccock, contributing editor to most of the *Christian Advocates*. He argues boldly that "belief in evolution as a method of creation does not impair the validity of Christianity in the slightest degree." In the same way, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, of Pittsburgh, and the Rev. L. O. Hartman, editor of *Zion's Herald*, one of the best of the church papers, argue constantly that scientific knowledge and Christianity are not antagonistic, and that the essence of Methodism lies in living like Christ rather than in believing in Him. These divines, I believe, are followed by a large number of Methodist laymen, at least in the North, and that number tends to increase steadily. Soon or late it will be so large that it will have to be heeded. When that time comes there will be civil war in the Methodist Church, and the chances are that hundreds of thousands of the faithful will walk out.

AMERICANA

ALABAMA

BULLETIN for Alabama boosters, extracted from the *Journal of the American Medical Association*:

Hookworm infestation is one of the major public health problems of Alabama. Here the parasite has a wide distribution, for scarcely any county, town or village that has been studied has been found free of infestation. Among children of school age the incidence ranges from less than 5 per cent in some of the larger towns to 95 per cent in the heavily infested rural communities.

SPECIMEN epistle of a Southern university president, from the distinguished *Montgomery Journal*:

To the Editor:

I want to thank you for your generous policy in dealing with our game at Pasadena.

Some one has asked me to point out the outstanding sentiment expressed in the many letters that have come to us from the Pacific coast since the great New Year's game. Perhaps the public would expect me to put in the foreground the letters congratulating us on the wonderful victory or the letters commending the fine sportsmanship of the team.

But these, after all, are not the things that have most profoundly touched my heart. The sentiment that has gripped me most mightily is found in the many expressions of appreciation of the conduct of these Southern boys in far away California. For example, the Rev. Dr. John Marvin Dean, pastor of the leading Baptist church of Pasadena, before a great congregation, commended the refusal of these boys to violate the Sabbath day by engaging in practice, as the Western teams frequently do, or by doing any other unseemly thing. He pronounced a fine eulogy on the team's conduct as compared to that of other groups who have visited Pasadena. Our Southern people still "remember the Sabbath to keep it holy."

Far more important than the winning of the game is the fine ideal of conduct and living that these Alabama boys carried to the coast and exemplified there in plain view of all men. After all, I believe that this great fact will give to the fathers and mothers of Alabama the largest measure of satisfaction.

GEORGE H. DENNY,
President

University, Ala.

ARIZONA

CONTRIBUTION to polite American by the Wickenburg correspondent of the *Prescott Journal Miner*:

Mrs. Rosa Ellis, *née* Wilson, *née* Miller, proprietor of the Ellis Café, was a Phoenix visitor.

ARKANSAS

FROM the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*:

Questioned in Police Court as to whether he had been born in this country, J. W. McCluskey, 4201A Manchester avenue, a defendant in a peace disturbance case, responded, "No, sir, I was born in Arkansas."

CALIFORNIA

SERMON-SUBJECT of the Rev. Dr. Walter John Sherman, pastor of the Central Methodist Church, of San Francisco, as reported by the *Chronicle*:

When Do We Eat?

PROGRESS of religious toleration in Los Angeles, as brought to light by the *California Jewish Review*:

Miss Sally O'Neill . . . will give a public exhibition of the Charleston at the Gimel Dahled Dance.

WANT AD in the *Christian Science Monitor*:

SALESMAN WANTED

FOR THE MAN who possesses ideals, and is striving to live them each day; for the man who knows the falsity of limitation, who wants to do good for others and is willing to work to accomplish this good; for the man who is exacting in his measurement of his real self, we offer a place in the sales department of the Peerless Laundry of Los Angeles, an institution reflecting these same high standards they will require of him; he must be married, between the ages of 25 and 40, must have \$1,000 to \$2,000 to invest in Reo Speedwagon equipment; to this man we offer a permanent opportunity whereby it will be possible to build up commissions from \$75 to \$100 per week, on a laundry route with the best of workmanship and service in back of him. See or write Mr. L. E. SEYMOUR, Peerless Laundry, Slauson and Main Streets, Los Angeles, California.