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A NON-PARTISAN MAGAZINE OF FREE DISCUSSION.
IT AIMS TO INTERPRET THE NEW AMERICA THAT
IS ATTAINING CONSCIOUSNESS IN THIS DECADE.
THE FORUM GIVES BOTH SIDES. WHATEVER IS
ATTACKED BY CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH MAY
BE PRAISED IN LATER ISSUES

THE TEMPORAL POWER OF EVANGELISM

The Methodists in National Politics

WASHINGTON PEZET

THE Temporal Power of Evangelism, — the very phrase is absurd. Every American of average education knows that, historically, temporal power means the authority of the Roman Catholic Church exerted outside of the religious sphere, in the secular field of politics and government. He knows, too, that the Evangelical Protestant sects are those which, in theory at least, have traveled farthest from the Catholic ideal and policy of authority. He knows that his ancestors came to this virgin continent in search of religious freedom.

Thomas Jefferson wrote into the "Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom" the principle that Church and State should be forever separate, each inviolate in its separate sphere. And subsequently this principle was embodied in the Federal Constitution, that this nation should never fall a prey to the temporal power of any church. The average Protestant American firmly believes that this principle of separation and mutual non-interference of Church and State is not only of the essence of Ameri-

canism, but of the essence of Protestantism. He regards Protestantism as the religion that sets the private mind free from all external authority, and America as the land of lands for the free exercise of private minds.

Yet if we read history dispassionately, we see that the exercise of temporal power has not been confined to any one religious sect. While Protestantism is philosophically a repudiation of temporal power, Protestant sects have, time and again, repudiated their own philosophy. The Calvinists in Geneva and the Puritans in New England are conspicuous examples out of the past.

After the overthrow of the Puritan Theocracy in Massachusetts, temporal power was banished from this land. Its return has been gradual and almost imperceptible. The New England Abolitionists, Puritans by descent and temperament, were the first to inject religion into our national politics. By laying emphasis upon the moral aspects of a problem which would eventually have been solved on economic grounds, they plunged the nation into a disastrous civil war.

More than fifty years ago, in the troubled period following that national calamity, President Ulysses S. Grant said: "In the United States there are three political parties, the Republican, Democratic, and the Methodist Church."

To-day we may quote him without doing injury to the truth. For, under the political leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Evangelical Protestants in general, the spiritual heirs of Puritan and Calvinists, are once more making moral issues of social problems, participating in politics, and exercising temporal power.

This is no mere opinion; it is a demonstrable fact. Such a conviction will come unfailingly to one who, like the writer, has spent weeks in Washington, on and about Capitol Hill, talking with Senators and Representatives, with the active heads of Protestant organizations, with lobbyists and newspaper men; reading the Congressional Record, the newspapers, the tracts and clip-sheets released by the Protestant organizations, the private correspondence made available through the courtesies of many persons. My report is of facts rather than opinions. And this I know, that no Jesuit has whispered into my ear any item of the record.

It was early spring, and Washington was soft and mellow. The air was caressing, and sweet with the scent of magnolia blossoms. I stood upon Capitol Hill, on the terrace of the great domed edifice that houses the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the United States Supreme Court.

Springtime fancy held me in its magic spell, and as I turned I imagined that George Washington himself stood there beside me on the terrace, — the courtly gentleman with the stern but kindly face. He was like one returned, from a far journey, to his native land, eager to know what had happened since his time.

Leaving the terrace and passing to the east side of the Capitol, we descended broad steps. Looking across a park we saw a building as exquisite in line and contour as any in the world. It is the repository of all the knowledge of the ages — The Library of Congress — appropriately placed within easy access of the nation's law-makers. To the right and left in the middle distance were two dazzling white buildings gleaming in the sun, — the Senate and House office buildings. Within their walls each member of the legislature has his office, and there are spacious rooms set aside for the use of those committees which perform the actual legislative business of the nation.

So far there was nothing for Washington to marvel at but the size and splendor of it all. But, looking toward the northeast corner of the hill, through the trees we caught glimpses of another white building, as beautiful as the Senate and House buildings, which it resembles, but smaller. Washington asked if it was also a government building.

Remembering the traditions of his truthfulness, I replied: "Yes and no, sir. You see, it is the Methodist Building." And then, quickly, to allay his bewilderment, I drew a printed circular from my pocket and read the following:

"The Methodist Building occupies a site which cannot be duplicated in Washington. It sustains the same relation to the Capitol that is sustained by the Senate Office Building, the House Office Building, the Library of Congress. . . . There is no other spot of ground in the Capital so well located as this. . . . The Methodist Building cost \$750,000. . . . The Methodist Building is the first Protestant headquarter building to be erected in the

National Capital, and this has been through the efforts of our Board.’”

“What Board?” asked Washington.

“The Methodist Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals. With your permission, sir, I shall read on from these circulars issued by the Board explaining their activities and soliciting donations for their work.

“... It (lack of funds) prevents the application of the income to the vital and necessary extensions called for by *Protestant Statesmanship* in this year of our Lord — extensions that cannot be deferred and cannot be missed. . . . This is the time of a moral crisis involving law enforcement, temperance education, international prohibition, and the making of a dry world as these issues have never been involved before. . . .

“The Church at large could not forgive the Board of Temperance if it failed to exercise statesman-like wisdom at this period in the history and development of Washington.

“... We are very anxious that information concerning the work of the Board and the great effect on the work our building has already had as a centre of Protestantism and equipment for Methodism should be in the hands of *key men* in the various strategic centres. . . .

“It is from this centre directly across the street from the Capitol Building that we are directing and promoting the cause of temperance, prohibition, and public morals on a National and International scale.”

“But the members of this Board,” Washington insisted. “Who are they? Whom do they represent?”

I answered him in the official language of Dr. Clarence True Wilson, General Secretary of the Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to the Subcommittee of the Committee on Judiciary of the United States Senate: “This Board is an official agency of the Church.”

The Board assumes that it speaks officially for over fifteen million people. Its personnel consists of a Methodist Bishop, the Chairman; five ministers, one of whom is also a judge and the Board’s very able General Secretary and real executive; four United States Senators; four Members of the House of Representatives; one major-general in the United States Army;

another judge; and seven other gentlemen among whom are several lawyers. In its very make-up a perfect liaison between the Church and State.

Had George Washington entered the Methodist Building with me that sunny afternoon, I am sure he would have been charmed, as I was, with the quiet dignity and restful beauty of its cool interior. He would have been charmed, too, as I was, with the personality of the kindly, cordial gentleman with whom I spent several pleasant hours exchanging our widely different views upon these matters, in a tolerant and civilized manner.

Dr. Clarence True Wilson is no mere fanatic, no intolerant bigot. His language is moderate and restrained. He breathes an atmosphere of earnestness. He is unimpugnably sincere. It is, indeed, just this element of sincerity, of convinced righteousness, that gives the movement which he directs its undoubted popular power and makes it menacing to the national well-being. Charlatans are not difficult to dispose of. Matthew Page Andrews, the historian, in a recent article made this point clear with a quotation from Woodrow Wilson: "It is not the bad men we fear so much as the good man who thinks wrong."

The existence of the Methodist Board has, so far, excited no great comment and aroused no general indignation, simply because Americans do not associate temporalism with Protestantism. To appreciate the real significance of the Board, however, we have only to imagine the hue and cry, the alarums and discursions, the gathering of Klansmen, the deluge of hysterical pamphlets, the intemperate "save-the-country" editorials and speeches that would be let loose in the land were there a Catholic Building in Washington, housing a Catholic Board with a Catholic bishop at its head, an able Jesuit as its General Secretary, and four United States Senators and four Members of the House of Representatives as its political advisers. But is not temporal power temporal power no matter by whom exercised?

As some readers may argue that the mere existence of such a Board, provided it be a Protestant Board, does not necessarily imply an exercise of temporal power, let us look in detail at its activities.

Each week the secretaries of the Board issue a clip-sheet which goes to newspaper and magazine editors, to State legislators,

Senators, and Members of the House, and to many other persons interested in public morality, including twenty thousand ministers. Through the weekly clipsheet these ministers are kept apprised of the trend of moral affairs at the Capitol. It conveys to them the first-hand views of the secretaries and the official views of the Board, regarding pending or proposed legislation involving moral issues. It furnishes them with material for sermons; inevitably it influences, — often it must actually mould, — their views on many subjects about which they would otherwise be forced to form opinions as all ordinary citizens do, — from the newspapers, the opinions of associates, and personal prejudice.

Through these twenty thousand ministers, speaking with authority from their pulpits, the opinions of the Board and its secretaries are passed on to fifteen million church-goers. From its strategically placed key men throughout the country, the Board receives confidential information regarding the state of public opinion on these moral matters. It thus creates public opinion, and then acts as the legislative lobby for the opinion its own propaganda has created. And it does this as an official agency of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Last year, in an open letter to a Southern Senator, Judge William H. Lamar, — former assistant Attorney General of the United States, grandson of a noted Methodist Minister, and himself a Methodist, — publicly accused the Methodists of exercising temporal power. (Judge Lamar, by the way, is not a professional “wet”. His interest is in the restoration of representative democracy in America which lobbyism has all but destroyed.) Replying to Judge Lamar’s charge, the Methodist Clipsheet of July 6, 1925, contained the following statement:

“So far as the Board of Temperance of the Methodist Episcopal Church is concerned, we wish to correct Mr. Lamar. The Board has no influence whatever in regard to any legislation except legislation bearing upon matters of public morals and it has no influence in regard to such legislation except such influence as may arise from the presentation of facts and the expression of opinion in accord with the opinion of a vast majority of the people of this country.”

The mere presence on the Board of important members of the

Federal Government is a denial of this statement. The Senators and Representatives, members of the Board, when on the floor of Congress are in a position to sponsor the point of view of the Board as if it were their own; to urge it upon any Committees of the Senate and House of which they may be members; and to influence their colleagues in Congress by personal appeals and by those methods of back-scratching which are common features of present-day legislative technique.

The Board admits that it exercises influence with regard to legislation bearing upon public morals. Within this category we find the Board active and interested in Prohibition in all its aspects and endless ramifications; in Sunday closing laws; in censorship of moving pictures, theatres, books, and periodicals; in the drug traffic; in gambling; in education; in child labor; in white slave traffic; in marriage and divorce. In all such matters its point of view is the Methodist point of view, and the opinions it expresses are the opinions of Methodists, shared only by Presbyterians, Baptists, and some other Evangelical sects. Furthermore, it is well to point out that although probably a majority of Methodists share these opinions, there are many who do not. Judge Lamar is a Methodist, and so is the legal adviser of the Association against Prohibition.

The total adult population of the United States is 60,886,520. Of these sixty millions, only 26,077,091 are members of Protestant Churches. There are 18,260,793 Roman Catholics, 20,170,294 who belong to no church, and a scattering of Unitarians, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Hebrews, and others. Certainly the Board cannot presume to speak for Catholics, whose point of view on many subjects is so diametrically opposite. Neither can it speak for the nominal Christians, the agnostics and atheists who number twenty millions. Nor can it claim to speak for all Protestants, for there are several million Episcopalians and Lutherans who do not share its views. At most it speaks for twenty-two million Evangelists. I am not aware that twenty-two is a "vast majority" of sixty.

But let us get at this claim from another angle. Is there any unanimity of opinion regarding the moral issues I have enumerated above? Is there a majority that adheres to any one point of view, and is that majority point of view the Methodist point of view?

No one knows whether or not a majority of the American people to-day favors Prohibition, and short of an official national referendum on the subject no one can prove it. The fact that "dry" sentiment controls Congress would seem to prove that there is a majority for Prohibition. The fact that millions of people break the law and that it is virtually unenforceable would seem to prove the contrary. Both facts furnish only circumstantial evidence. To claim a majority one way or the other is mere guess work.

It would be hard to prove that the Methodists' ideas on censorship are shared by a majority; or their views on education, or anti-gambling laws, or marriage and divorce. The eighteen million Catholics don't; the millions of Jews don't; and the millions of agnostics, atheists, and non-church-going deists don't. It is more than probable that the Methodists have an actual majority behind them only in the matter of the drug and white slave traffics. And as far as the latter is concerned, there are many persons who regard the Mann Act, with its endless opportunities for blackmail, as a thoroughly bad law.

The Methodist Board, in defending itself against Judge Lamar, stated that it presented facts. Let us examine some of the "facts" contained in its publications.

In a pamphlet issued on February 1, 1923, we read in heavy faced type: "Alcohol is never a food but always a poison and the manufacture and sale of poisons for beverage purposes is never a business but always a crime."

The statement that "alcohol is always a poison" is not a fact. It is an ill-formed opinion. The diagnosis of poisons is the province of science, not religion. And science has rendered no such verdict against alcohol.

In its clipsheet of March 15, 1926, the Board, under the subtitle "'Long-Swing' Benefits of Prohibition", says: "In the last ten years which cover the period of the great prohibition wave . . . Sales of electrical washing machines have increased from 13,000 a year to 612,000. Bathtubs from 510,000 to 3,638,000 or 540 per cent. Our factories produce 60 per cent more goods with only 25 per cent more workers. Our railroads carry 12 per cent more freight with the same number of men. Our steel mills 86 per cent more tonnage with only 56 per cent more workers.

Our foreign trade is 30 per cent larger in volume. Instead of being \$3,000,000,000 in debt to other nations, our credit is \$9,000,000,000 and we hold 45 per cent of the world's monetary gold."

The obvious implication is that this great increase in national efficiency and well-being is at least indirectly due to Prohibition. In the face of the known economic consequences of the World War and its aftermath, to ascribe our present position as a creditor nation to Prohibition is absurd. For the official agency of a Church to ladle out such pap amounts to misinterpretation.

Obviously the Board does not *wilfully* misrepresent, and I do not wish to be interpreted as making any such accusation against it. Its misrepresentations are, however, an inevitable outcome of its misapplied zeal, of its passionate partisanship. Intoxicated with faith in their cause, its workers see truth through the distorting lens of prejudice and pre-judgment. Thus, the Board in numerous publications has denounced what it calls "the treason of the wets". It insists that every State and Federal officer involved in law enforcement shall be an avowed "dry", arguing that, since Prohibition is the law, it is treason for any one not in complete sympathy with the letter of the law to attempt to enforce it. By such reasoning it was treasonable of Newton D. Baker and William Jennings Bryan, avowed pacifists, to hold office, for the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State are obliged to discharge duties connected with war.

The Board's position in the matter of treason becomes even more confusing when we remember that it was another agency of the Methodist Episcopal Church that but recently voted 76 to 37 to give no official aid to the Government in a future war, but to stand upon a platform of passive resistance. What, one wonders, is the Methodist conception of treason?

It would take many issues of THE FORUM to tell the whole story of temporal usurpation. Enough has been said, I believe, to prove my main contention, that the Methodist Board is the political organization of a religious minority which, through its activities and propaganda, is striving to secure political action favorable to its special point of view, and that, in so doing, it exercises temporal power in the name of the Methodist Church.

It would be bad enough if the Board were the only organization of its kind in the country. But it is by no means unique. Situated

in the same relative position on the northwest of the Capitol as the Methodist Building occupies to the northeast is the Bliss Building, Washington home of the Anti-Saloon League.

This organization, in an official statement to the press on December 7, 1925, defined itself as follows: "The Anti-Saloon League is specifically the authorized interdenominational agency of numerous church bodies." In another statement it characterized itself as "The dry enforcement agency of the Protestant Churches". And in yet another official circular it has boasted that, "The Anti-Saloon League is the strongest political organization in the world." Out of its own mouth it is thus convicted of exercising political power in the name of the Protestant churches.

Furthermore, there is this difference between the Methodist Board and the Anti-Saloon League which renders the latter the more sinister; the Methodist Board's activities are pursued in the open. Neither Dr. Wilson nor any other official of the Board ever refused me any information. The Anti-Saloon League, on the contrary, has ever worked in camera. A letter of inquiry addressed to Mr. Wayne B. Wheeler, its General Counsel, was not even accorded the courtesy of a perfunctory reply. For six years this organization has defied the Federal Government and the government of the States. It has refused to conform to those laws enacted for the control of political organizations on the ground that it is a religious organization and, as such, above the laws. Only now, at last, as these words are being written, there seems some slight prospect that before they are in print Senator James Reed and the Committee of which he is the Chairman may have stripped the mask from this organization, which for many years has dictated its will to the American Government.

Judge Lamar summarized the stupendous political power of the Anti-Saloon League when he wrote: "This country is now in the control of Protestant organizations as effectually as the Roman Catholic Church ever controlled any country . . . Wayne B. Wheeler, General Counsel of the Anti-Saloon League exercises to-day a greater power over the destinies of this nation than any Catholic cardinal assigned to a royal European court."

It may be argued by some that the exercise of temporal power by the Anti-Saloon League and the Methodist Board has been confined to Prohibition and such other matters as can with

reason be termed moral. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the third of the triumvirate of Protestant lobbies, can lay claim to no such mitigating unction.

This organization, composed of delegates from twenty-eight constituent bodies, — each of them a denominational Protestant church, — has in recent years disbursed large sums for political propaganda. It has not only interfered in politics in the interest of Prohibition, but it has gone so far as to intervene in the foreign policy of the United States. In domestic matters it has interfered with the military establishment, with the delicate economic problem of capital and labor. In all, there are fifty items upon which the Federal Council of Churches has sought to influence State legislatures and the Congress.

But this does not end the record. It leaves untold the story of the Lord's Day Alliance and its ceaseless efforts to establish a Puritan Sunday. It makes no mention of the half dozen other powerful religious lobbies that are established in Washington. Neither does it tell of the tyranny exercised by Protestant religious lobbies in certain of the Southern and Western States.

It was late afternoon of another bright spring day. I stood again upon Capitol Hill, my mission done, my investigation ended. I could no longer summon Washington to my side. How could I wish him, even in imagination, the shock of such revelations? Washington, Jefferson, all the Founders in fact, were at one on the necessity for a complete separation of Church and State. Men of background and vision, they knew that free government is impossible if any group arises within the State powerful enough to challenge its authority. They knew, too, that of all such groups none is more dangerous to liberty than the Church. Protected by its holy mission from salutary criticism, and sustained by the emotional power of the simple faith of good people, the Church becomes the instrument through which the people may become the destroyers of their own liberties.

It is our tragedy that we of to-day seem to have forgotten this most poignant of history's lessons.

*The Secretary of the Methodist Board of Public Morals
will present "the other side" in the November Forum*

MACHINE-MADE FREEDOM

An Authorized Interview with

THOMAS A. EDISON

Edward Marshall

"AWAY with the machines. Down with the tyranny of mechanical inventions which destroy the soul of the worker and have brought upon us the curse of modern civilization." Such is the cry of reformers and artists in many countries to-day. They are wrong, tragically wrong, replies the Master Mind of the Machine Age, the prince of inventors. Only by perfecting the machine can mankind escape from slavery. Not till we substitute motors for muscles will intellectual progress be possible.

IT has been charged abroad and occasionally at home that we of the United States have become a machine-ridden people, that we are developing upon lines too completely mechanical. The very reverse is the truth. We are not mechanical enough. The machine has been the human being's most effective means of escape from bondage. Too many people, even now, remain bond-slaves to laborious hand-processes. Not through fewer, but through more machines, not through simpler, but through more complex machines, will men find avenues that lead into lives of greater opportunity and happiness. Arthur Williams had charge during the war of moving the machinery upon some New York docks. One day he gave a lecture to a group of stevedores. I happened to be with him, and men recognized me and presently some one of them started a howl for me to make a speech. I don't know how to make a decent speech, but I told them that they would have been better off on a certain occasion if instead of striking for higher wages, as they had done and as is the custom, they had refused to strike but had formulated an entirely new kind of demand on the officials of the Dock Company.

"That demand," I suggested, "might be that you could give them one year in which to install on their docks complete outfits of automatic machinery of proved utility, for the purpose of relieving you from being used as beasts of burden, and that after interest and depreciation, repair-costs and taxes have been deducted, the saving should be divided, in proportion of one-quarter to you and three-quarters to the company." I suggested

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