

not participate in any discussion, except when invited so to do.

(3) We are not concerned particularly with the objection raised by Bishop Hoss that the "Forward Movement, as we termed it, for the expression of the current creed of the world-wide Methodism, had its birth in a 'closet.' The thought has been 'in the air' of Methodism on both sides of the sea for years. Have not the members of a General Conference the right to take an initiative as well as to heed the voice and instructions of their constituency at home?

(4) The Bishop avows his conviction that the advocates of the restatement project really intend, perhaps unconsciously, a "revision" of Methodist doctrine. Over against the impression which he has allowed to take hold of his mind, we set the words of the committee of the General Conference appointed by that body to answer the protest which had been made by a few brethren who had vainly opposed the movement. That committee reported, dealing fully with the misapprehensions of their brethren, and beginning with these comments on the document which had been recorded as a protest:

"This paper charges in its caption and in its first paragraph that this Conference has taken affirmative action on the 'revision of our faith,' and the 'revision of our Articles of Religion.' We respectfully reply that this charge utterly misunderstands and misrepresents the action of the Conference, and the purpose of the movers of the original paper. It has at no time been suggested by any representative of the majority that there should be, or that there was needed, a revision of the faith of Methodism. . . . What the majority desires is a simple statement of the faith always held, and everywhere held, by all loyal Methodists."

We do not care to enter into the controversy as between two parties in our sister denomination, but we aver our conviction that the considerate and deliberate utterances of this committee, now forming a part of the published proceedings of the General Conference, furnish an adequate answer to what we must, in all candor, conceive to be the inadequate impressions of Bishop Hoss in regard to the aims of the movement.

(5) We have failed to find in the published account of the debate referred to—one of the strongest and most notable among all that have occurred for many years in the Southern General Conference—anything to justify the averment of Bishop Hoss that it was pleaded that "a definite theory of the atonement," for example, was to find place in the new statement of Methodist belief. His description of what is sought for would not be taken as accurate by "the other side" in this case, we are sure. But as to the right and duty of believers in our time to recast, and re-verify, and formulate afresh, the vital truths of their faith—of this right and duty we have a witness whose words should be convincing, without question, to Bishop Hoss. We find in a volume to be cited later the following utterances, which state our views so clearly that we quote them here verbatim, and make them our own thereby, in dealing with this case:

"The church in every age is bound by all considerations to do its own thinking. To go on indefinitely accepting and repeating the formulae of the fathers, as if they possessed some magical virtue, and were too sacred to be touched and modified in any way, is to commit an act of supreme folly. Everybody who has an outlook upon the course of history is aware of that inevitable process by which words that originally incarnate and represent a living truth have a natural tendency to harden and crystallize into the expression of a dead dogma. I have sometimes thought that if Mr. Wesley could only know the extent to which many of his followers have fallen into the habit of repeating the *ipsissima verba* of his teachings, as if they were a final and conclusive statement of the truth, he would turn over in his grave and groan; for he himself, far from being the slave of traditions, was the freest and boldest mind of his generation. He made diligent use of all material, from every source; but he called no man master, and played the parrot to no school of critics or theologians. Holding fast the form of sound words does not mean the abdication of one's personal right to consider, to weigh, to sift, to reconstruct, or to reject. The ultimate problems of religion are eternal. They are always emerging with fresh aspects, and calling for a new hearing. . . . Is it too harsh a judgment to affirm that the greatest enemies of a conservative orthodoxy are those belated dogmatists who still cling with devout stupidity to the very letter of the creeds and symbols of other days? The Methodist who insists on measuring everything in heaven and earth by Watson's Institutes or Wesley's Sermons is a pestilent breeder of heresy."

Surely we can in all honesty ask Bishop Hoss to accept with us the doctrine embodied in the

utterances which we have cited—for they are his own words, and were spoken with his accustomed earnestness and vim to a great audience in London, at the Ecumenical Conference in 1901. The "Forward Movement," as we have styled it, is an attempt to do for current Methodist belief, for the essential and fundamental doctrines of world-wide Methodism, exactly what, as he urged, in his address from which we have cited a rousing and trenchant paragraph, the Church has a right, and indeed an obligation, to do. If we are to choose between the utterances of Dr. Hoss, the editor and essayist, in 1901, and in 1906, we take our stand by his former utterances, and not by those which he utters in his contribution.

Editorial

DISTRICT CONFERENCES.

(Editorial Correspondence.)

Washington District—En Route.

Elm City is a beautiful little town of about one thousand people, and is on the Atlantic Coast Line, seven miles north of Wilson. This was our objective point on last Wednesday morning as we boarded the Southern at Raleigh. The morning was bright and beautiful, and all nature seemed exulting, especially the ranks of waving corn and the green fields of cotton and tobacco. Rev. G. W. Starling, pastor of Brooklyn Church, was our traveling companion. He was full of hopes and plans for the beautiful Jenkins Memorial Church, whose claims he intended to present to the District Conference, due to assemble at Elm City at 9 o'clock. Brother Starling is intensely interested in his cause. He contemplates no failure. He is going to succeed in building this church, and this fact may as well be assumed.

The Conference.

We reached Elm City on time, and found at the church quite a number of the brethren, both clerical and lay.

The Conference was opened promptly at 9 o'clock with religious service, conducted by the Presiding Elder, Rev. R. B. John. Mr. W. T. Deans, of Tarboro, was elected Secretary. The roll call revealed the presence of all the preachers except five and about twenty-seven laymen. There were present quite a number of visiting brethren with causes to present.

Rev. A. J. Parker presented the claims of Louisburg Female College and stressed the fact that Louisburg can afford to furnish high-class tuition for a low price on account of the fact that taxes, insurance, etc., are paid by Mr. Duke.

Rev. Raymond Browning, Principal of the Boys' School at Littleton, fully explained the aims and advantages of his institution, saying that the triple motto of the school is "Christian Integrity, Scholarship, and Respect for Honorable Labor."

Rev. W. M. Curtis, Financial Secretary, spoke enthusiastically of the outlook of Greensboro Female College. He said that the endowment fund now amounts to nearly \$2,800, which, with Mr. Carnegie's promised \$25,000, makes \$43,000 of the \$100,000 to be raised. Brother Curtis sees the goal only a short distance ahead. He predicts a large number of pupils for the next session.

The editor of the Advocate came next, and he was accorded full time and the most respectful attention. No District in the Conference is more loyal to the "Old Raleigh" than is the Washington.

Dr. J. R. Brooks and Rev. R. H. Willis were present. The latter showed by the maps on the wall that he was fully prepared for a missionary talk on the following day. We are sorry that we were not privileged to hear his address.

Dr. Brooks spoke a few words concerning his book, "Scriptural Sanctification," whose merit has been attested by a wonderful sale. About 11,000 copies have been sold. Dr. Brooks is not only a strong author, but is one of the best book-sellers in Southern Methodism. He does not consider it

beneath the dignity of a preacher to sell a book. He preached at 11 o'clock a strong sermon, emphasizing our absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit for the blessings in His work upon the soul. We were glad to see Dr. Brooks looking so well. He preaches with all the animation of his youthful days.

I must not neglect to mention the sermon preached by Rev. D. L. Earnhardt on the night before. According to reports, he left no standing ground for Calvinism. He is a strong doctrinal preacher, and has a highly developed logical faculty.

Rev. R. B. John is a very systematic man, and all his plans have wheels which fit one another exactly. So it was not surprising that he had for the Conference an admirable programme which, at least up to the time of our leaving Elm City, was carried out to the letter. The following was the programme for the afternoon session:

(1) Opening, (2) Preparation for a Revival, (3) Conduct of a Revival, (4) Conserving the Results of a Revival, (5) Fishers of Men.

The following brethren spoke on one or the other of the foregoing subjects: Revs. B. E. Stanfield, R. E. Hunt, Raymond Browning, D. L. Earnhardt, H. G. Stamey, and Messrs. G. D. Best and Wiley Brown. I wish that I had space for some of the good things said by these brethren. It was a good spiritual time, and I feel sure that the words said will bear fruit during the coming months.

The Reports.

The reports, in general, of the preachers did not indicate that spiritual prosperity of which we like to hear. The material prosperity of Eastern Carolina is something wonderful just now, and it is a sad reflection that there is not a corresponding spiritual prosperity. For instance, there is a little line of railroad running a distance of twenty-five miles from Tarboro to Farmville. Along this line there are several growing towns. In these towns there is a strong demand for Methodist churches, yet Methodism has hardly gotten a foothold. There is much work ahead for the Mission Board of the North Carolina Conference, and the responsibility is great.

A very pleasant feature of my visit to Elm City was the revival of associations with an old college mate who, as a physician, has built up a tremendous practice in Edgecombe County. I refer to Dr. E. G. Moore. He has one of the most elegant and capacious residences in the State. It is seldom that you see a finer one outside of the large cities. He also has the most modern and complete accommodations for a limited number of patients who desire sanitarium treatment. His success is deserved. He is an untiring worker and a man of the highest Christian character. It was a pleasure to spend a day with him and his accomplished wife and children.

Rev. J. L. Rumley is pastor of South Edgecombe circuit, and is doing good work.

Rockingham District—The A. & A. Railroad.

On Thursday afternoon, in company with Revs. G. W. Starling, J. M. Lowder, and R. H. Willis, I took the south-bound S. A. L. train for Aberdeen. When the shadows of night were falling we took the Asheboro and Aberdeen train for Troy the seat of the Rockingham District Conference. The A. & A. Railroad, owned and operated by the Page, has been developed from a little lumber road, which was built in 1887 by that lumber king and princely gentleman of revered memory, Mr. Frank Page. Through his enterprise and that of his gifted sons the road has been extended to Asheboro, in Randolph County, one branch of it extending to Mount Gilead, in Montgomery County. The road passes by Jackson Springs which is rapidly becoming one of the most noted health resorts in the State. One has only to look at the evidences of prosperity along the route to see how the road has put new life into Moore and the other Counties through which the road passes. Tracts which were once pine-barrens are covered with growing crops and flourishing orchards. Near Candor is a peach orchard of