

## Editorial

It is not the policy of the Business Manager to make, as a rule, his appeals through the columns of the paper. As Conference, however, is only a few weeks off he feels it necessary to call attention to the fact that there are several strong reasons why we should collect from every delinquent by December 1st. Every preacher is exhorted to do his very best on collecting from every delinquent on his charge and securing every renewal. Every subscriber is earnestly exhorted to hand in to the preacher before Conference the amount due from him or her.

The Raleigh Christian Advocate is one of the best of our religious weeklies, both in dress, matter, and character. In making this statement our modesty may be criticised, but there is nothing to take back. No apology is needed for the Advocate, and none is solicited. It is one of the best religious weeklies in Southern Methodism. It hopes to be better. Everything going into the paper, especially labor and printing material, is advancing in price. The subscription price remains the same. In order for it to remain the same, there must be prompt and close collections.

To carry a considerable number of delinquents would be either to suspend or raise the subscription price. We do not intend to do either. We believe that there is in our reading constituency such a sense of business equity and such an appreciation of the merits of the Advocate as will relieve us of again making this call soon. Brethren, look at your label, look up your preacher, hand him what is due the Advocate, and you will greatly help us.

Brethren of the pastorate, carry up to Conference this year the very finest Advocate report possible.

BUSINESS MANAGER.

### OUR TWO MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS.

Everything with which human agency is concerned has its problems. Methodism has its problems. Some of them are more serious than others. It is difficult sometimes to determine which are the most serious.

If we were called upon to name the two most serious problems of Methodism, we would say Lay Inactivity and Decay of the Evangelical Spirit.

Take our average congregation, study it closely, and you will be impressed with the fact that the greatest waste apparent in that congregation is in the non-utilization of its members. There is a Sunday-school superintendent who is generally an active Christian. There is the Board of Stewards. A few of this Board seem to realize the gravity of their official relation and duties. Others seem to hold their position as a post of honor. How many pastors are there who are unacquainted with the steward who is a "wet log" and yet for some reason or other must be retained on the Board? When it comes to finding men who will lead in prayer there is disappointment. When the preach-

er is absent, the prayer-meeting often goes by default because there is no laymen who will lead. The spectacle of a layman holding some kind of church service on the Sabbath day is a rarity in Methodism. A few Sundays ago the pulpit of a sister denomination was vacant. No preacher could be secured. Did that congregation flock off to other churches or take a holiday at home? Nay, verily. They assembled as usual in their church and joined in religious service held by one of their laymen. Is it customary for this to be seen in Methodist churches? We are sorry to say that it is not.

The truth of the matter is, the vast resources of our Methodism are running to waste through lay inactivity. This is not to say that our laymen cannot compare in piety, intelligence, and loyalty with those of any other church. It is to say that among our laymen is a lack of the sense of responsibility, of evangelical zeal, and ecclesiastical activity not so evident in other evangelical bodies.

It is not our purpose here to analyze the situation and outline the influences which bring about lay inactivity. It is sufficient to say that these influences do not spring from the doctrines and genius of Methodism. We have departed from the faith of our fathers. John Wesley had a large picture of lay activity in his mind when he projected Methodism. He mightily used the layman. The lay-preacher was an important factor in the early life of Methodism. Just think of it! Today, of the 28,000 sermons preached in the Wesleyan pulpits of England every Sunday fully 20,000 of them are preached by 18,000 lay preachers. And they are laymen. Appropriately does Bishop Hendrix call the layman the "forgotten asset of the church."

There is need of an awakening on this subject. When we see American citizens giving a new definition to liberty and flinging around that goddess the tinselled lurid robe of unbridled license, we find ourselves wishing that our citizenship could live for a short while under some king or queen so as to be able to learn what liberty really is. So when we see thousands upon thousands of Methodist laymen sitting year after year, with folded hands, in the shadow of the greatest Church that was ever founded and indifferently looking upon the vast whitening harvest fields that call for laborers, we could wish that every charge in Southern Methodism would find itself for awhile without a preacher and unable to secure a "supply." Such an experience would force on our laymen a sense of their responsibility, and make them feel the depth of the water into which they had fallen and the extreme necessity of learning how to swim.

We endorse any reasonable project or method that looks to a larger utilization of our laymen.

We bid Godspeed to Mr. C. H. Ireland in his noble endeavor to promote lay activity in the Western North Carolina Conference. Rev. L. E. Sawyer, of the Waccamaw Circuit, reported in a recent Advocate a great movement among his laymen looking to the same end. One of the greatest things done by the Epworth League is to train our young people into a life of loyal activity. If the League did nothing else than this it would be worthy of the sympathy and active support of every Methodist preacher.

We have written only of one problem of Methodism. We mentioned in the outset another—the Decay of the Evangelical Spirit. This subject is of such importance as to call for separate treatment at another time. But do not forget the problem of Lay Inactivity. Its solution is largely in the hands of the pastor.

The popular song, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," has been revised by Rev. C. C. Brothers, and set to music by Florence M. Cullom, and is proving very popular. It is used by the Cullom School of Music and will no doubt find a very large place in our sacred song. The poem, our readers will remember, was published in the Advocate a few months ago.

### LET US HAVE IT.

The following communication from Rev. J. E. Underwood, a man who generally thinks much before speaking and speaks strongly after thinking, came only a little while after our remarks on "Our Two Most Serious Problems" were written out for the printer. The communication comes as such a timely and forcible exhortation that we give it a place on our editorial page, trusting that the plan advocated may be adopted at our approaching Conference. The organization of a Layman's Movement for the purposes outlined in the communication would go far in solving one of the "Problems." But here is what Brother Underwood says:

"Shall we have an organized movement among our laymen of the North Carolina Conference? In propounding this question we expect nothing but an affirmative answer. In the strong body of laymen within our bounds there are untold possibilities. Knowing them as we do, we believe them to be the equals of the laymen of any Conference in Southern Methodism. Let some layman call for a meeting during our Annual Conference, and we believe that many will gladly fall in line, thankful for something definite to do for their Lord whom they love and whose they are. Let this movement contemplate the taking of the management of the finances of the Church out of the hands of the preachers and placing it in the hands of the laymen where it rightly belongs. Of course it will take time to accomplish this, but when accomplished it will, in many ways, bring blessings to the church. It will be a blessing to the laymen, bringing them into intelligent touch with all phases of church work. They will begin to study the great question of missions as never before, and the study of missions necessarily begets a missionary spirit. The same is true of education, church extension, etc. And then it will take a great burden from the preachers, many of whom are over-worked and sadly handicapped in their efforts to save souls and to build up the church spiritually by having to 'serve tables.' John R. Pepper, 'whose praise is in all the churches,' in a ringing article on this movement, calls for ten thousand emergency men; men upon whom the church may call in the hour of emergency for service and sacrifice.

"Shall not North Carolina furnish her quota of men who will respond to the calls of the church in the hour of need?"

### WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THANKSGIVING DAY?

Of course you desire to make it a day of special thanksgiving to Almighty God. But have you ever been really impressed with the truth that the thanksgiving which finds some concrete expression is the kind that steals up to God as a sweet odor? We trust that you have read seriously and prayerfully the exhortation of Rev. J. N. Cole, Superintendent of the Methodist Orphanage. He desires every preacher-in-charge in the North Carolina Conference to hold a special religious service on Thanksgiving Day and take up a collection for the orphans at Raleigh. In what better way could we express our thanksgiving? Then what a financial boon to the Orphanage would result! The money is needed, and needed sorely. Surely our preachers will begin to arrange at once for this matter.

### NOTICE TO THE PRESIDING ELDERS.

Bishop Galloway requests the Presiding Elders to meet at his rooms Tuesday night, December 3rd, for the usual preliminary business of our Annual Session.

W. H. MOORE.

The Tennessee Conference at its recent session passed strong resolutions on the Vanderbilt University situation. The point of the paper was that if the General Conference does not assume unequivocal control of the University and exercise "the right to elect trustees" the transfer made of the property by the Tennessee Conference "shall be null and void."