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The Historical Background of Religion in South Carolina

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The Historical Background of Religion in South Carolina.

In the brief space of an evening's address we cannot hope to do more than point out the principal influences that have given our religious development its own peculiar character and to glean some lessons not without value perhaps for the future.

Practically from the settlement of the province there were strong Episcopalian and Presbyterian bodies and a small Baptist organization. About the time of the Revolution the Methodists entered in a humble, but earnest way. The broad currents of our religious history have accordingly been determined by these four groups. In seeking to trace the relative growth and the respective contributions of these groups and understand the reason of their fluctuating fortunes, I shall speak primarily as a student of South Carolina history, rather than as a member of any one denomination.

THE EPISCOPAL ESTABLISHMENT

Though two-thirds of the first settlers of South Carolina were dissenters from the Church of England,[1] the Proprietors ordered the Episcopal Church to be supported by law in the province. The evils of a union of church and state immediately appeared in bitter conflicts, culminating in an act which lasted for a few years excluding from office all who could not swear that they had not taken communion with any dissenting denomination within a year, though it did not require them to swear to having taken it in an Episcopal Church, and as a matter of fact many of them never took it at all. Dalcho quotes an Episcopal minister of the period as saying that eleven of the twenty lay commissioners for trying and ejecting ministers never communed.

Churches were built and ministers paid for the Episco-

[1]Howe, I, 68, 71; Rivers, 462.

pal party out of the public treasury, and the wealthy and zealous Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, incorporated in London in 1701, supported missionaries and schools in the province. As late as 1710 the Presbyterians numbered 45 per cent., the Episcopalians 42 1-2 per cent., the Baptists 10 per cent., and the Quakers 2 1-2 per cent.[1] The material, social, and political advantages of the establishment told in its favor, so that the Presbyterian Dr. Hewatt wrote of the decade 1730 to 1740:

"By this time the Episcopalian form of divine worship had gained ground in Carolina, and was more countenanced by the people than any other. The zeal for the right of private judgment had much abated, and those prejudices against the hierarchy, which the first emigrants carried from England with them, were now almost entirely worn off from the succeeding generation. To bring about this change, no doubt the well-timed zeal and extensive bounty of the Society, incorporated for the propagation of the gospel, had greatly contributed. At this time the corporation had no less than twelve missionaries in Carolina, each of whom shared of their bounty. Indeed, a mild church-government, together with able, virtuous, and prudent teachers, in time commonly give the establishment in every country a superiority over all sectaries. Spacious churches had been erected in the province, which were pretty well supplied with clergymen, who were paid from the public treasury and countenanced by the civil authority, all which favored the established church. The dissenters of Carolina were not only obliged to erect and uphold their churches, and maintain their clergy by private contributions, but also to contribute their share in the way of taxes, in proportion to their ability, equally with their neighbors towards the maintenance of the poor, and the support of the establishment. This indeed many of them considered as a grievance, but having but few friends in the provincial assembly, no redress could be obtained for them. Besides, the establishment gave its adherents many advantageous privileges in point of power and authority over persons of other denominations. It gave them the best chance of

[1]Carroll, II, 260.

being elected members of the legislature, and of course of being appointed to offices, both civil and military, in their respective districts. Over youthful minds, fond of power, pomp and military parade, such advantages have great weight."[1]

If the Presbyterians could have held their fellow-religionists, many congregations of whom settled in the province from France, Switzerland, and Germany, they would have maintained their original numerical superiority; but these had no grievance against the Church of England for persecutions in the old country. Moreover the South Carolina Presbyterians sought to force upon them a definite set of articles which lacked for the Frenchman and German the precious blood-bought sentimental and historical associations which endeared them to the Presbyterians of England and Scotland. The whole thing seemed too exclusively Scotchy; and nobody has ever been able to look on the Scotch in just the same way that they look upon themselves. Individually and by congregations, ministers included, the foreign Presbyterians generally embraced the Episcopal faith with its material, social, and political perquisites. A notable exception is the little Huguenot church in Charleston, which still maintains a native French Protestant minister and adheres to its Calvinistic creed—the only remaining congregation of its denomination in the United States.

Thus the Episcopalians came during the first fifty years of South Carolina history to occupy a position of social, economic, and political prestige before which even the rich, respectable, and numerous Presbyterians of colonial days were overshadowed. The socially and politically ambitious, in addition to the merely religious, flocked into their ranks and established a tradition of connection with government of which echoes are occasionally heard even to this day. In 1797, the Episcopal Convention of South Carolina resolved that its delegates to the National Convention of the church should be Rev. P. M. Parker and also the members of Congress from South Carolina or such of them as should be in Philadelphia at the time; and in 1787 the Convention had to ad-

[1]Howe I, 219, 220.

journ for several days, as every lay delegate was absent "in consequence of their indispensable attendance in the legislature."

The tone of such a church was naturally quite aristocratic. About 1772 Lieutenant-Governor Bull reported to the British government that in the Episcopal Church the disgusting spectacle of the plate passed for contributions is never seen as among the dissenters. An interesting illustration of class distinction is given by Dalcho. "Stephen Bull," he says, "who lived in (the) vicinity (of the Sheldon Church) usually invited as his guests on the Sabbath, the more respectable part of the congregation who attended the divine service; while his overseer, by his direction, and at his expense, likewise entertained the rest."[1] What an idyllic scene, never to return to us, in whose days it is impossible to get the laboring class even to attend the same church with professional and business men, and when the mere fact that a man can with any savor of credibility be called "an aristocrat" is the heaviest handicap that he can carry in politics.

Gen. McCrady asserts that no other cemetery in America contains so many distinguished dead as St. Philip's Church yard in Charleston. Certainly few churches could afford at one time such a list of distinguished names as were signed to the farewell letter of this congregation on the retirement of their aged minister, Dr. Alexander Garden: Henry Laurens, David Deas, Governor James Glen, Hector Berenger, de Beaufain, Wm. Wragg, Robert Brewton, Rawlins Lowndes, David Graeme, Christopher Gadsden, John Moultrie, Gabriel Manigualt, Isaac Holmes, Robert Pringle, Charles Pinckney, Andrew Rutledge, John Paul Grimke, Miles Brewton, Thomas Shubrick, Henry Middleton; besides a large number of rich and eminent merchants and others whose names are not familiar to us today because they were not in public life.[2]

THE SPREAD OF PRESBYTERIANISM

The Episcopalians did not spread into the back country, but very early the numerous and zealous Presbyterians did. As the Scotch and Scotch-Irish pushed into the strip of

[1]Dalcho, 383-4.
[2]Dalcho, 173-4.

country between tide water and the fall line, they carried their religion very near the front. The case of the North Ireland Presbyterians who settled Williamsburg is typical. In 1732 they made their way through the trackless forest to the point where Kingstree stands and built their cabins amid howling wolves and dangerous Indians. Mr. Gavin Witherspoon, "meeting his neighbors one day, this conversation is reported to have taken place: Witherspoon, 'Wull, we must have a minister.' 'Wull, Mr. Wotherspoon, wha wull ye get to be your minister?' 'Wull, wha but Mr. Wulluson (Willison) o' Dundee?' 'But the minister must have a muckle sight o' money for his living.' 'An' that ye must gie him,' says Mr. Witherspoon. 'An' how much, Mr. Wotherspoon, will ye gie?' 'Ten pounds,' was the ready reply. 'But Mr. Wotherspoon, whar'll ye git the ten pounds?' 'Wull, if wus comes to wus, I e'en can sell my cou,' says he." And so they called their first minister four years after their settlement.

Twenty years later Braddock's defeat sent a great stream of settlers, largely Presbyterians, from Pennsylvania and western Virginia down across South Carolina. From Lancaster and York counties they spread southwestwardly across the province in a veritable blue streak, if we are to believe the story about the color of their stockings.

The friends at home did not forget them, and for many years ministers from the British Isles and ministers and missionaries from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia covered the up-country with their fruitful labors, so that in a few decades Presbyterian missionaries were being sent from that region into other parts of the province and westward far beyond its bounds.[1] Though the college bred and perhaps overly constrained Northern Presbyterian missionaries failed sometimes to understand the Southern backwoodsman's tastes and openings for approach so well as the native uneducated Baptist preacher with his "holy whine," described by Dr. Broadus with such a fine combination of humor and sympathy, yet he did a good and lasting work.[2]

[1]Howe, I, 338-9.

[2]The "holy whine" was not confined to the backwoods Baptist preacher. Dr. Broadus' entertaining and philosophical account of it (Sermons, 245-6) is as follows: "When men spoke to crowds

The blue streak of Presbyterian migration cut just below the later Spartanburg and Greenville court houses; and though it early threw out feeble branches north of these points, it was almost a hundred years before these two villages had a Presbyterian meeting house—Spartanburg in 1843 with eight members, and Greenville in 1849 with only eighteen members a year later.[1]

The thoroughness with which both the Presbyterians and Baptists, particularly the former, had permeated the back country in 1775 is indicated by the fact that when the Revolutionary Council of Safety wished to rouse that section to unite with the coast in resistance to Great Britain, they sent along with that fiery son of liberty, William Henry Drayton, the most eminent Presbyterian and the most eminent Baptist minister in Charleston. The readiest access to the backswoodsmen was through the meeting houses of these denominations, and in them these powerful preachers proclaimed the gospel of liberty, true to the great traditions of their denominations interpreting Scriptural freedom as being both spiritual and civil.

The coming of these determined, quiet, Psalm-singing, theology-chopping, educating, liberty-loving, tyrant hating Presbyterians was one of the determining factors in the making of the up-country. They established Mt. Zion College at Winnsboro in 1785; they contributed large sums to Princeton Theological Seminary and soon founded their own in

in the open air, on a high key, with great excitement for a long time, the overstrained voice would relieve itself by rising and falling, as a person tired of standing will frequently change positions. This soon became a habit with such men, and they would be imitated by others, being regarded as the appropriate expression of excited feeling. The same causes produce the same sing-song tone in the loud cries of street venders in our cities. But the whine of the preacher, associated for many ignorant hearers with seasons of impassioned appeal from the pulpit, and of deep feeling on their part, has become a musical accompaniment which gratfies and impresses them, and like a tune we remember from childhood, revives the memories of 'joys that are passed, pleasant and mournful.' Why should we wonder at all this? Extremes meet. What is the **intoning,** which modern ritualist in this country so much admire, but just another species of holy whine, originating long centuries ago in very similar natural causes to those just stated, and impressive to some people now by reason of its association with what is old and venerable in devotion?"

[1]Howe, II, 747, 756.

Columbia. Little Bethesda Church in York county in the fifty years following 1804 with an average membership of one hundred and sixty, produced eight ministers, thirty physicians, and thirty lawyers.[1] They supplied so many presidents and professors to the South Carolina College and to colleges in the North and West as seriously to cripple their evangelical labors; and from the first they wrote down their history so fully and systematically that I halfway suspect that the recording angel served his apprenticeship as stated clerk of a Presbyterian General Assembly. Remembering Calvin's interpretation of the fourth commandment that the injunction, "Six days shalt thou labor," is as binding as the clause forbidding labor on the seventh, the expression "a rich Presbyterian" has become a proverb.

THE REVOLUTION AND DISESTABLISHMENT.

Moving forward to the time of the Revolution we are in the presence of an event which stirred society too deeply for its effects to be confined to politics and government. Its liberal and humanizing principles derived largely from contemporary French philosophy, came also tinctured with French deism.

The upper classes particularly were strongly perated with such ideas for several decades, until the great revival of religion in the early nineteenth century began to turn the tide. The puritanical Presbyterians naturally withstood the strain better than their more wealthy, easy-going, and politically affiliated Episcopalian brethren, and the Baptists and Methodists then lived so little in the intellectual currents of the times as to be less in danger. The most dramatic incident in connection with the history of deism in our State was the case of Dr. Thomas Cooper, the president of the South Carolina College in about 1830. A large part of the ruling class in the legislature stood staunchly by him in the face of the attack led by the learned and influential Presbyterian clergy earnestly seconded by the Baptists and Methodists, until the dwindling numbers of the students led to his being transferred to the duty of codifying the laws of

[1]Howe, II, 681-2.

the State since the earliest times—a task performed with such ability and scholarly fidelity as to put the historian and the lawyer forever in his debt.

But to return to the period of the Revolution. The dissenters' dissatisfaction with the established church was inflamed by the revolutionary ideas set free by the conflict between the colonies and England, and the liberalism in the air brought them many recruits from the Episcopal Church itself. The leader was William Tennent, the Presbyterian pastor who had been sent to enlist the backwoodsmen for liberty. It is fortunate that the movement for disestablishment in South Carolina was led by this earnest minister in the interest of true religion and justice instead of as in Virginia at the same time by the deistical Thomas Jefferson as the disbeliever in Christianity and church altogether and the implacable foe of what he and his school termed "a hireling clergy."

The aristocratic Episcopalians who had inaugurated the Revolution in South Carolina on political principles in employing the leading Presbyterian and the leading Baptist minister of the province to enlist the dissenting back-countrymen had incurred a debt which they were now called upon to pay. Mr. Tennent had sent a petition throughout the State, securing thousands of signatures for disestablishment. Christopher Gadsden, Episcopalian, but radical revolutionist, introduced the petition in the legislature, and on January 11, 1777, Tennent, says Gov. McCrady, "made an exceedingly eloquent and able speech" in its behalf which is notable in the annals of religious liberty in South Carolina.

Laws, said Tennent, "which make odious distinctions between subjects equally good ought not to be tolerated. The law acknowledges the society of the one as a Christian Church —it does not know the others at all. Under a reputedly free government, licenses for marriage were refused to any but the established clergy. The law builds superb churches for the one—it leaves the others to build their own. * * * * *. The sums advanced by the public treasury for the support of the Church of England for the ten years preceding the 31st of December, 1775, amount to 164,027 pounds, 16 shillings, 3 pence.

The expense for the year 1772 was 18,031 pounds, 11 shillings, 1 penny. The religious estate, drawn more or less from the purses of all denominations by law, would probably sell for 330,000 pounds.[1] If the dissenters have always made more than half of this government, the sums taken from their pockets * * * * * must amount to more than 82,013 pounds within the ten years aforesaid; and the very large sum of their property in glebes, parsonages, and churches, lies in the possession and improvement of the Church of England. Meanwhile the established churches are but twenty in number, many of them very small, while the number of dissenting congregations are seventy-nine, and much larger, and would pay 40,000 pounds annually could they be furnished with a clergy * * * * Would it content our brethren of the Church of England to be *barely tolerated,* that is *not punished,* for presuming to think for themselves? * * * *. It was not the *three pence on the pound of tea* that roused all the virtue of America. It is our birth-right that we prize. * * * * * With the new constitution, let the day of justice dawn on every rank and order of men in this state. Let us bury what is past forever. (Let the Episcopal Church, he says, keep all the splendid endowment of lands and buildings that it has.) * * * * * * * * * By some it is said to be dangerous to grant this request at the present time. But are we reduced to that situation that it is dangerous to do common justice? Will the danger arise from the dissenting denominations? No; it answers the prayer of their petitions. Will the danger arise from the Church of England? I have the pleasure of knowing too many of them to think so. Many of them have signed the petition. Many more have declared their sentiments in the most liberal terms. * * * * * * Yield to the mighty current of American freedom and glory, and let our State be inferior to none on this wide continent in the liberality of its laws and in the happiness of its people.''[2]

Tennent's principle triumphed by a small majority, and the constitution of 1778 abolished every vestige of favor to any one denomination.

[1]He says, spelling it out below, three hundred eighty thousand pounds.
[2]Howe, I, 370-1.

A few words must be given to the further Revolutionary activity of the Presbyterians, already doubtless the most numerous denomination in the State, and save for the coast country aristocracy, much the most influential. Says Johnson of a certain man in his Traditions of the Revolution, he was "a Presbyterian, and like all of that faith, his religion placed him on the side of freedom." This is a slight exaggeration, for some members joined the Tories, though after the war they usually found it so unpleasant in their old church that they went off to the Baptists and Methodists, hoping perhaps to find more religion and less Whig politics.

Presbyterian elders seemed to have been almost ex-officio lieutenants and captains in the Whig militia, and to be a prominent ruling elder well nigh amounted to a major's, a colonel's, or even a brigadier's commission. "Elder McJunkin" soon rolled from the tongue no more naturally than "Major McJunkin," and Elder Andrew Pickens was soon more familiar as General Pickens. Patriotism was mingled with prayer, as when Scotch-Irish John Miller preferred his petition in these words, "Good Lord, our God that art in heaven, we have great reason to thank thee for the many favors we have received from thy hands, the many battles we have won. There is the great and glorious battle of King's Mountain, where we *kilt* the great *Gineral* Ferguson and took his whole army; and the great battle of Ramsour's and Williamson's and the *ever memorable* and glorious battle of the *Coopens,* where we made the proud *Gineral Tarleton* run *doon* the road *helter-skelter;* and, good Lord, if ye had na suffered the cruel Tories to burn *Belly Hell's* (Billy Hill's) iron works, we would na have asked *ony mair* favors at thy hands. Amen."[1]

Doubtless Elder Miller's Bible was well thumbed at the Song of Deborah, and well it might be, for the Revolution supplied many a Deborah among our noble women. Such was the wife of John Simpson, pastor of Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church who took his gun and fought with the troops. He was sought one bright Sunday morning by a band of British soldiers. His wife fled with her four children to

[1]Howe, I, 512, n.

the orchard, while the men burned the house and the study in the yard. Rushing into the latter after the soldiers' departure, Mrs. Simpson, at the cost of painful burns, saved two apronfuls of her husband's books. Going to a neighbor's house for her confinement four weeks later, she remained there for a few days, when she boldly returned to her destroyed home and took up her residence in a small outhouse that had escaped destruction. One day a band of Tories, some wearing her husband's clothes, came to the place and strutted up and down before her, asking if they were not better looking men than her husband, whose scalp they promised soon to bring her. But Mr. Simpson finally brought his scalp home himself, and for years after the Revolution continued to preach to the congregation to whom his and his family's heroic conduct had endeared him.[1] Rev. John Harris, a Presbyterian preacher in the upcountry, used to preach during the Revolution with a rifle standing beside him in the pulpit, and his ammunition pouch hanging from his neck.[2] So active were these men that "the enemy had sworn vengeance against the Presbyterian clergy." (Ib. 511.)

EARLY BAPTIST HISTORY

One of the most striking features in the religious history of the State is the supercession, in numbers at least, of the unrivaled primacy of the Episcopal and Presbyterian bodies in the 18th century by the Baptists and Methodists in the 19th. Entering the province in about 1683, the low-country Baptists were until after the Revolution weak in numbers and torn by factionalism and heresy. (Furman 5, 6, and 7, n., Howe I, 124, 199.) By about 1735, says Furman, the church was nearly extinct; but in consequence of Mr. Whitfield's preaching, a revival took place and many joined it. At this opportune time there arrived from Philadelphia Rev. Oliver Hart, a man of consecrated character and statemanlike ability. Realizing from his northern experience the benefits of co-operation, he formed in 1751 the Charleston Baptist Association,

[1]Howe, I, 511, passim.
[2]Howe, I, 441, passim.

consisting of four churches.[1] Every forward movement was almost surely his in suggestion or execution. He was in effect a veritable bishop of the Baptists; and so great was his work, says Furman, that the South Carolina Baptists of the time considered his advent as a special interposition of Providence."[2]

About 1755 Separate Baptist organized in the back-country and for many years refused all association with the regulars except on complete surrender by the latter,[3] though the regulars ultimately prevailed.

Friendship, the oldest church in the old Broad River Baptist Association, was founded in 1765.[4] From the first the Baptists grew more rapidly in the upper country; though they made no phenomenal gains until after the Revolution, while on the coast they still languished. In 1773, the Charleston Association counted only eight churches and three hundred ninety members.[5] The Association in 1793 lamented "the declension of religion" and appointed a day of fasting and prayer "for a genuine reformation among the people;"[6] and so on, until a happy change occurring, we read in the circular letter of 1803 that "within a few years past, after a long wintry season, God has, in a wonderful manner revived religion among us." (Ib., 161.) This was the beginning of the great revival over a large part of the United States among many denominations which was to start the churches on their great mid-century career of transforming, elevating, and refining American life and character.

EARLY METHODISM IN SOUTH CAROLINA

We come now to the entrance of our own denomination into the history of South Carolina It is not implied that there was no zeal or religion in other churches previous to the advent of the Methodists; but it is indisputable that their entrance inaugurated, by example, inspiration, and leadership, an era of unprecedented evangelical activity and purifying which

[1]Logan, 3.
[2]Furman, 7-8.
[3]Furman, 13-14.
[4]Logan, 107.
[5]Furman, 14.
[6]Furman, 24.

extended quickly to the Presbyterian and Baptist bodies, and ultimately to others. Hence their coming is one of the cardinal events in the history of the State, as of the nation.

Whitefield preached in St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Charleston in 1738, but two years later was out of favor with the establishment for neglecting ritualistic forms. After a mournfully ridiculous trial in his absence for doing the same thing in Charleston in the 18th century that Christ and the Apostles did in Palestine in the first, Rev. Alexander Garden, commissary of the bishop of London, condemned Whitefield in his ecclesiastical court and even preached against him from the text, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hitherto also," overlooking in his heat the fact that those against whom this charge was made were Paul and Silas, and the coiners of the phrase are said by the sacred writer to have been "the Jews which believed not, moved with envy," and "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort." Perhaps Whitefield's text in reply was no more legitimately applicable, but at least they were the words used by the apostle to the neglected of his day in describing the opposition which he encountered: "Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works." At all events both Paul and Whitefield diligently continued to turn the world upside down and the opposition of the coppersmiths and commissaries hindered them little.

Joseph Pilmoor in 1773, like Whitefield, left no organization, and so the fruits of their labors were reaped by the Baptists and Congregationalists, whose pulpits were furnished them with great liberality. Asbury founded a church and left a preacher in charge in Charleston in 1785, and in 1787 the South Carolina Conference was created. Just as a long blue steak of Presbyterianism was flung across the State from York and Lancaster southwesterly by the coming of the Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania and Virginia, so the constant journeyings of Asbury, Coke, and their helpers along the road from the North painted the Pee Dee country a beautiful Methodist drab, which it is still proud to retain.

There is no surer test of the spirituality of a church than

its power to supply its own ministers. At a time when other denominations were almost entirely dependent upon ministers from the outside, South Carolina was beginning to swarm with native Methodist preachers. While others were carefully guarding against "deluded mechanics and ignorant enthusiasts creeping into the pulpit," Methodism was calling George Dougherty from river raft and farm to become almost immediately one of the lights of the American pulpit, preceded and followed by a yet unbroken line of splendid workers.

The Methodist preacher introduced a new emphasis, a new viewpoint, a new ideal, a new experience—new to the cold, skeptical eighteenth century, but in fact the oldest thing in the Christian religion. "Jacob Bar, once a Continental officer," says Dr. Chreitzberg, "heard (James Jenkins); half atheist as he was, he said, 'He must be a god himself, or a servant of God.' " Verily an apostolic succession of the valid sort, or better, straight from the great Ordainer himself by the laying on of the spirit rather than of the hands. The atheistic officer became a local Methodist preacher and left a succession of good Methodists to this day. (Chreitzberg, 75.)

The peculiar strength of the Methodist organization, as Dr. Chreitzberg puts it, lay in the fact that it "never waited for the people to call the preachers, but quite the reverse—for the preacher to call the people." (Ib. 106.) It penetrated uninvited localities containing no embodied Baptist or Presbyterian group. A tribute to this system was the practice of the Presbyterian Synod of appointing some strong preacher "to itinerate," as they put it, for a certain number of months in certain sections, but the lack of workers led to its abandonment about 1810.

An interesting testimonial to the influence of Wesley's followers is the comment of a visitor to this country shortly before the year 1800 that the Presbyterian preachers were "quite Methodistical." The new spirit injected by Methodism is illustrated by the fact that ten persons were converted at an Annual Conference in 1792, at a time when the Episcopal Convention in South Carolina was still accustomed to go through all its business without religious exercises.

We converted men at Conference then; now we have historical addresses to tell about it.—We had no history to tell then; have we no unconverted men left to convert now?

Ramsay in his History of South Carolina, writing in 1809, testifies: "That great good has resulted from the labors of the Methodists, is evident to all who are acquainted with the state of the country before and since they began their evangelism in Carolina. Drunkards have become sober and orderly; bruisers, bullies, and blackguards meek, inoffensive and peaceable, and profane swearers decent in their conversation."

The thirty years following the year 1800 saw phenomenal growth in the young Methodist giant. The South Carolina Conference increased 394 per cent. in preachers, 819 per cent. in charges and 740 per cent. in white members, and almost 1500 per cent. in negroes.[1] In 1825 it was already the most numerous denomination in the State.[2]

CIVILIZING AND CHRISTIANIZING

Having sketched the progress of the four great historic denominations of the State, past and present, into the beginning of the 19th century, we may glance at the work of civilizing the still quite barbarous frontier. Romancers have so possessed our imagination that we have little conception of the coarseness, and often gross wickedness, of large masses of the American people a century and a quarter ago. Frontier conditions were general from the fall line of the rivers to the mountains, and spots of revolting heathenism and corruption in the older sections were abundant enough. Incidents of inhumanity are frequent in the journals of our early preachers, such as countrymen slamming their doors in the faces of itinerants and leaving them to freeze in the snows of winter nights; and Charleston mobs almost pumped George Dougherty to death, misused other preachers, and repeatedly stoned Methodist churches in the city, even during the sessions of Conference.[3] Rev. Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian missionary, relates that in 1755 he preached forty-five miles west of Waxhaws "to a number of those poor

[1]Chreitzberg, 306.
[2]Mills' Statistics.
[3]Did latter in 1788.

baptized infidels, many of whom I was told had never heard a sermon in all their lives before, and yet several of them had families!'' He relates ''an anecdote told him here by an old gentleman, who said to the Governor of South Carolina, when he was in those parts, in treaty with the Cherokee Indians, that 'he had never seen a shirt, been in a fair, heard a sermon, or seen a minister in all his life.' Upon which the governor promised to send him up a minister that he might hear one sermon before he died. The minister came and preached; and this was all the preaching that had been heard in the upper part of South Carolina before Mr. McAden's visit, at least according to his account.[1]

Illustrations might be multiplied of the picturesque, devil-may-care, illiterate heathenism scattered all over the State at a much later date than this. Bishop Capers, for instance, relates organizing the nucleus of the Cooper River Circuit in 1811, within ten or twelve miles of Charleston, where, he says, the people had not heard a sermon by any minister of ''any denomination for many years before.''[2]

With coarseness and much immorality and drunkenness went an almost African superstition. When the following incident could occur among the Presbyterians of Waxhaw Church in 1772, what must have been conditions in less favored communities? The pastor, an unbalanced ascetic, was found dead in his house with a bridle around his neck. To save the church from scandal, the leaders suppressed the indisputable fact of the suicide. The beautiful widow whose heart had doubtless been sufficiently starved by union with her mournful companion, remarried in a year, and the story of the violent death also leaked out. Mediaeval superstition and Puritanical indignation at the devout and excellent lady's early and happy remarriage combined to exact a horrible test of her innocency. The body of her first husband was exhumed from its repose of more than a year beneath the earth and she was forced to touch the unrecognizable corpse, to prove her guilt of his death by its bleeding or her innocence by the contrary.[3] Witches were believed to abound

[1]Howe, I, 187.
[2]Life of Capers, 141.
[3]Howe, I, 416, et seq.

in Fairfield County in 1792; and as late as 1813 or 1814, a case actually was tried in which an old woman living in Chesterfield was accused of mistreating a girl in Lancaster County by diabolical arts and riding her from town to town as a horse.[1] Bishop Capers in 1810 amazed a Methodist congregation in Darlington County by braving the powers of darkness in excluding from class meeting an old woman believed to be a witch.[2]

The condition of the poor in neglected corners of the State shortly after the War of Secession is vividly portrayed by Father O'Connell, a Catholic missionary, in the following description of a community in Oconee County, though due allowance must be made for his rather unsympathetic attitude. Horned cattle, he says, are the chief form of wealth. They range the hills and mountains in great numbers, and early in the fall the drovers arrive from the low country and make extensive purchases at about ten dollars a head, and drive them to Augusta or Charleston.

"The inhabitants are improvident, inclined to indolence, and consequently in need of the necessaries of life in many instances; the possession of a rifle, a peck of meal, and a dog for the chase seems to limit their ambition.

"Sadly deficient in morals, the Civil Rights Bill was for them a superfluous legislation, and the divorce law a post-factum attempt at legalizing a pre-existing condition commonly prevailing, and popular by general observance. Woe to him who attempted to become an informer! A speedy departure for quarters unknown was his only safety. Some preachers claim two calls, one for the pulpit, and the next to save some particular congregation for which the particular individual is alone fitted; to this benighted region none received the second call."

Father O'Connell relates that on a visit to this region in 1870 he preached to an interested congregation of simple folk from breakfast time till noon. There was in the audience, "A young man who wore a new pair of boots. He was insensible to any other object, and, by stretching himself and all

[1]McCrady, I, 451. See Statutes at Large, S. C., II, 739-43.
[2]Life of Capers, 117.

imaginable twistings, riveted the attention of the invidious mountaineers, who were chiefly shod in Adam's leather.

"Noticing with no small degree of curiosity that about a third of the audience leant on crutches, or limped on walking canes, I enquired the cause and found it to be rheumatism. It is the prevailing complaint, confining some to bed for years, and keeping numbers on the rack during the decline of life. The causes are very obvious; their houses are extremely primitive, with rickety doors and stoppages, constructed of rough logs, loosely covered overhead with boards, and searched by every passing gale. The enormous pile of wood burning and crackling on the unlimited hearth, while it scorches the front, leaves the shoulders and rear to shiver in the surrounding snow and rain."[1]

The jerks, the barks, the jumps, and other emotional extravagances which accompanied the great revivals of the early part of the nineteenth century can be better understood in the light of the conditions of grossness, violence, fanaticism, superstition, emotionalism, and illiteracy among which they arose.

MISUNDERSTANDING AND OPPOSITION

It was among these rough masses that the Methodists first did by far the greater part of their work, and among them that the Baptists likewise chiefly labored. The old established church left them almost untouched; the Presbyterians to a greater extent than any other denomination cut through all the strata of society, retaining a strong hold among the wealthy, conservative, and well-born of the coast and the poor men of the backwoods. The Methodists early attracted a small contingent of the upper classes. In fact the first to join in Charleston was a substantial merchant. Bishop Capers was decidely well-born and aristocratically connected, and relates that his three step-aunts of the distinguished Wragg family were "Methodists of the very first model." Capers, says Samuel Leard, "was the orator *par excellence* of our Conference, and did more than any other man to give his beloved Methodism caste and power among the wealthy and

[1]O'Connell, Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia, 335 passim.

refined classes of South Carolina.''[1] Many another man and woman of high position was converted by Methodist preachers whose family associations took them into other churches, as is interestingly illustrated in the case of Chancellor Job Johnstone. His friend, Dr. O. B. Mayor, Sr., relates this of the Chancellor in one of the long talks that marked their intimacy:

''It has been comparatively but a short time since I had any regard for religion,'' said the Chancellor. ''The change in my views took place in the course of one night. It was while I and my family were residing near to the Methodist Church. One evening, * * * * * * attracted by the singing in the church, I agreed to a proposition of my wife to attend the services. It was not long after we took our seats before the preacher began his sermon. He was one of those uneducated men, so common at that time in that denomination, and certainly one who was little calculated to make an impression upon me. But, strange to say! while I considered his discourse as an unmeaning rant, I became possessed by a feeling which I cannot describe. It was an emotion that held possession of me with increasing tenacity, until, in the depth of the night, my sighs awoke my wife. 'What is the matter?' she asked me. I tried to explain to her my state of mind, but could not do so fully. 'Oh, my dear husband!' she exclaimed. 'I know what it is. It is the Holy Spirit! Thank God! Thank God!' ''

And so the Presbyterians got a valuable member by the Methodist route.

The fair start of the Methodists with the well-to-do was rudely arrested by the church's strong condemnation of slavery under Bishop Coke's leadership. Soon to the natural bating of poor and peculiar people were added fear, hatred, and violence against a supposed wide-spreading Abolitionist society. As late as 1807 a Methodist pastor was mobbed in his church in Charleston; and the same year the city guard fully armed and uniformed surrounded Bethel Church during service, the captain entered with drawn sword and ordered the congregation to disperse.[2] The propertied classes fell rapidly

[1]Chreitzberg, 315.
[2]Chreitzberg, 97.

away and the work continued among the lowly. With time we regained the confidence of the former; and though now we have our rich and distinguished, yet to this day most Methodists, personally and individually considered, have more faith in the future than pride in the past. Well that it is so; for the future is inevitable and the past is irrevocable.

THE RUIN AND RESURRECTION OF THE EPISCOPALIANS

Face to face with the open road of the 19th century, we are confronted with the problem of why one denomination forged ahead and another fell relatively behind. Let us examine the forces which have brought about such extensive changes.

The Episcopal establishment at the outbreak of the Revolution appeared to be flourishing. Of the twenty clergymen then in office, only five took sides against the colonists;[1] but as the war ravaged the country, many of the churches were ruined and the pastors departed. Her endowments destroyed, her membership in many instances impoverished, the class to which she had been accustomed to minister permeated with Jeffersonian deism, or at the least worldly difference, the two crutches snatched away on which she had been accustomed to lean, the public treasury and a foreign ministry, she lay prostrated for years and well-nigh perishing. At the convention of 1785 only eight churches were represented, only three by a minister, which is typical for the next twenty-three years. After five years without a convention following 1798, a special effort to assemble the clergy to elect a Bishop and transact other important business brought clerical representatives from only four parishes and laymen from seven others---eleven churches out of twenty-six.[2] In 1810 reports could be obtained from only ten churches out of the twenty-six, giving only 738 communicants, over a fourth of them being negroes, and three-quarters of the total living in the city of Charleston.

Beginning in 1806 the clergy appeared to have begun to

[1]Dalcho, 206.
[2]The Journal for 1810 names twenty-six churches composing the diocese.

awaken. In that year a religious character was given to the body by a resolution that the convention should be opened daily with prayer and a sermon preached on the first day. Six years later the communion was added to the opening exercises, and from that time every few years saw some small forward step.[1] But even in 1818, when reports were obtained from twenty out of twenty-six churches, there were barely over eleven hundred white communicants.[2] Only two churches had been established outside the old pre-Revolutionary parishes, and the one in Columbia itself was receiving heavy aid as a mission. Passing strange it is that the most aristocratic of our churches should have so much more to be proud of in her present than in her past.

RELATIVE DECLINE OF THE PRESBYTERIANS

Passing now to the other three denominations in the early years of the nineteenth century, we find that they seem to have held about the same numerical strength in 1810; but since that time the two great popular denominations have grown so as to leave the Presbyterians equal to hardly a third of the Methodists or a fourth of the Baptists. The relative decline of this grand old church appears to have been due to the insistence on an educated ministry, the consequent impossibility of supplying ministers in sufficient numbers, congregational dissensions, dissipation of energy in theological controversies, and the failure of a rigid, enthusiasm-chilling, fatalistic predestinationism to appeal to the masses. Ramsay's testimony in 1808 regarding Orangeburg can be verified by instances from all over the State. "From the want of preachers of their own denomination," he says, "the descendents of the old stock are falling in either with the Baptists or the Methodists, according to the neighborhood in which they live.[3]

Howe's minute history of the Presbyterian church is full of passages like the following: "This church (the first of any denomination in Richland County) had occasional preaching, but became extinct as a Presbyterian church and the neighborhood became the seat of a Methodist church and congrega-

[1]Cf. Journals for 1806, 1807, and 1809, e. g.
[2]Journals in Dalcho.
[3]Howe credits this, I, 494. Statistical account of Orangeburg—Ramsay, Vol. II, Appendix.

tion." Of another near Winnsboro, he says: "The organization has long since passed away and been superceded by that of another denomination." So Aimwell, for years without a pastor, became extinct about 1820 and the building fell to the Baptists. After 1815, "Neither New Hope nor Mount Hope appear any more." A pathetic picture of disintegrating congregations and dying organization. The Presbytery of South Carolina, embracing about a third of this state, reported in 1799 twenty-eight congregations supplied with ministers and twenty-nine unsupplied.[1]

Serious as was the dearth of Presbyterian ministers, it was made severer by the considerable proportion of their leading men accepting positions in the South Carolina College and in classical schools and colleges all over the country at the very time when many of their churches were dying for the lack of ministers, thus earning a splendid tribute to their scholarship and ability, but draining the resources of the church as an evangelizing force. The Methodists then had few qualified for such positions; but they realized the peril of losing those few from the pulpit. When it was proposed in 1835 to take Dr. Capers into the faculty of the South Carolina College to counteract the influence Dr. Cooper had left (or rather, I have been led to think, to placate the public outcry), Bishop and Conference alike insisted that he could not be spared from the pulpit except to institute a thorough reform of the college in the interest of religion and morals as president.

Another check to Presbyterian progress was their early abandonment of camp meetings. In the great revival of 1802 to 1804, they were active in using this wonderful new means of reaching the people, frequently took the lead, and co-operated cordially with the Methodists and Baptists. But even then the camp meeting was endorsed in the Presbytery of South Carolina by only a two-thirds vote; some congregagations and ministers refused to participate, and in a few years the denomination gave them up.[2]

The fact that from 1831 to 1835 eight ministers felt obliged to decline the calls of the Presbyterian Church in Co-

[1]Howe, I, 494; II, 282, 249, 252; I, 660.
[2]Howe, II, 146, quoting A. Giles.

lumbia, and the ninth man served only one year, suggests the waste of energy from factional quarrels. Following 1806, too, the denomination was vexed for many years by the heresies of an able and popular minister who drew off many individuals and a number of congregations.[1]

The case was even worse with the Associate Reformed Presbyterians, the Scotch mind seeming to take a mournful pleasure in making itself miserable in that way. Their historian, Dr. Lathan, asserts that it was a constant effort for the different varieties to keep up the distinction of their crochets of difference, and says that "no one can blame other denominations for cultivating the field which the Associates, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterians, in their divided state, could not cultivate."[2]

THE GREAT BAPTIST GROWTH

We come now to one of the most impressive facts in South Carolina religious history, the phenomenal growth of the Baptists in the last seventy-five years. America is individualistic; the South is more individualistic than the North; South Carolina has been the most individualistic even of Southern States. Our attachment to local self-government in all relations is extreme. A commonwealth that staked so much on the sovereignty of the individual State could not fail to be attracted by a system of church government based on that same principle. Though always insisting on the absolute separation of Church and State, yet the South Carolina Baptists appear to me to associate their church and non-church life very close by, as, e. g., in their well known emphasis upon the religious denomination of public school teachers. The violence of their revulsion from Rome purged them of every vestige of a sacrosanct tendency to withdraw the church to an other worldly pedastal. Logan's history of the Broad River and King's Mountain Associations takes one closer to the life of the people just as it is than any other religious history I know.

In fact congregationalism asserted itself in the formative period of our history in every church, proving how strong is

[1]Howe, II, 158.
[2]Lathan, 361; 299.

the tendency of South Carolinians in that direction. The Methodists had to contend with Hammett's secession in 1792, which set an example of congregational sovereignty that alarmed Bishop Asbury and was several times followed later. But for the strong personality of Asbury the Methodists in America might have become considerably congregational. The South Carolina Episcopal churches had for years before the Revolution exercised virtual congregational independence by electing ministers as temoprary supplies for ten or twenty years, so as to defeat the Governor's right of appointment; "and it is probably owing to this," lamented Governor Glen in 1748, "that the Governor is not prayed for in any parish, although the assembly is prayed for during its sittings, a state of things," he says, "unprecedented in America."[1]

Even the South Carolina Catholics had to be whipped severely into line; for they not only baffled their clergy, but defied one bishop (O'Connell, 144), and later even forbade the use of the church to their great Bishop England and reduced him to say mass in a neighboring shed.

Illustrations of the same extreme tenencies among Presbyterians are unnecessary, but they are numerous and significant and extend for practically a hundred years after the Revolution.

These considerations all help to explain why the Methodists are so much stronger in the North and the Baptists in the South. They brought the Baptist faith and practice into particularly close touch with the South Carolina way of doing things; and the church must keep in touch with the people, their interests, their views, even their prejudices and limitations, if it is to draw them. Dr. Lathan's pride and loyalty may be admirable in the fact that the Reformed and the Associate Reformed Presbyterians "have retained more of the Scotch type of Presbyterianism as it existed prior to the reign of Charles II, than any other branch of the Presbyterian Church in America, while every other denomination of Christians became, at an early period, Americanized."[2] But is necessarily suggests the query, Why is it any worse to

[1]Wallace's Laurens, 37.
[2]Lathan, 417.

Americanize the church than to Scotchicize, or, as we might say, scotch it?

We may observe that this problem of adjusting the church to the traditions, prejudices, ideals, and history of the people among whom it must work has a very important bearing upon the great question of unification which now confronts our own church.

Another powerful weapon in the great Baptist campaign has been their position on the mode of baptism; a formula easily grasped by the simplest mind; a spectacular ceremony powerfully appealing to the eye and imagination; a ritual readily complied with but not repeated to satiety; it satisfies at once the deep human craving for ritualism and a definite thing to hold to, and leaves its participants free to indulge their hostility to excessive ritualism. A readily understood slogan, an admirable organization for propaganda, close touch with the extreme democracy and individualism of our people, intense denominational loyalty,—these are the human qualities that will make any organization go; and the zeal and intelligence with which the Baptists have used them will repay attention.

HOMOGENEOUS PROTESTANTISM

With even this rapid review, we must be impressed with the homogeneous Protestantism of the Christian church in South Carolina. Father O'Connell testifies that in no diocese had Catholic bishop and clergy worked more faithfully, but that outside a few spots, it seemed labor lost. During the sixty-eight years preceding, he says, "only about fifty influential families have joined the church in the three States" of Georgia and the Carolinas. In "The New Century" (Catholic), of Washington, D. C., Rev. P. L. Duffy, of Charleston, warmly defends Catholicism in South Carolina against the reflection of the editor on its zeal; and right conclusively does he prove that the lack of Catholic growth has been on account of other causes than the lack of zeal in the clergy or liberality in the laity. "There is scarcely a civilized country in the universe," concludes Father O'Connell, "where there are so few Catholics and where the faith is less known than in the upper re-

gion of South Carolina." "In the absence of migration it will take ages to bring the inhabitants to the knowledge of the truth. Heresy has so hopelessly debauched the minds of its followers."[1]

THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY

A mass of Protestant Christians to homogeneous, inextricably intertwined in all the affairs of life among a more than usually homogeneous population, will inevitably conform in many particulars to the life of the population in ways that interfere with the purity of the Christian religion. It is an insidious danger to which the church has been exposed in all ages, from the time when she adopted images, Virgin worship and invocation of saints as suitable to the intelligence of vast barbarian accessions whom she hoped to Christianize after receiving, to the time when she reversed her traditions of a thousand years by giving her support of human slavery lest she lose the power of doing good in a slave-holding society. I have heard a Southern Methodist bishop praise the courage and moral perception of William Lloyd Garrison and grieve at the fact that ministers of the gospel brought themselves to justify human slavery from God's word; but it was long after others had solved this problem against our protest. Bishop Asbury records of his preacher Hammett: "He has gained a sufficiency of money to procure a plantation and stock it with slaves, though no one was more strenuous against slavery than he while destitute of the power to enslave."[2]

The whole heartbreaking history is contained in these few words. The more lukewarm or compromising a denomination in its defense of the institution, the less did it grow in numbers in the South. Governor J. H. Hammond wrote Calhoun in 1845 that he considered the Methodists so sound on slavery that he had had a station established at his home, supported it entirely, and was building them a church at a cost of $1,200.[3]

Dr. Lathan records with pride the strong opposition among the Associate Reformed Presbyterians of South Carolina to slavery and the fact that the "Synod of the South

[1]O'Connell, 295-6, 325, 329, 326.
[2]Shipp, 289.
[3]Calhoun's Letters, 1049.

never at any time made a deliverance on the subject of slavery."[1] We all know what happened to the Associate Reformed Presbyterians. In 1822 the great Dr. Furman, at the order of the South Carolina Baptist State Convention, addressed to the Governor a letter defending slavery and explaining the duty of Christians towards their slaves. And we all know what happened to the Baptists.

Let it be understood that in presenting this mournful feature of the historical background of our religion, I am not presuming to condemn the good and great men who in 1844 and 1845 severed the organic connection of Southern Methodists and Baptists with their co-religionists in the North. They were all by that time very deep in the mire prepared for them by the greed of their ancestors, who, except for brief periods of prudential prohibition, welcomed every British and New England slave ship and sent out every one they could equip themselves, and by the common failure of the churches in general in the face of a self-interested property-owning class which none of them dared to offend. It is hard to see how Christ's injunction on paying taxes, which they quoted as "leaving unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and professed to obey, would have justified acquiescence in an evil institution because protected by law any better than it would have kept the church's hands off the liquor traffic because similarly protected by law. But when she flung to the winds any idea of leaving the matter to Caesar and lent her holy sanctions and became Caesar's servant to defend his ancient wrongs, against which even deistical philosophers were crying aloud, she sadly impaired her authority as the light bearer of the world. How often has the pure gospel put in motion forces that later must sweep out of their way the organized body of imperfect human beings calling itself the church which the world has captured and bound hand and foot!

HIGH STANDARDS AND INFLUENCE

After all this study, what of the church? Has she progressed or retrograded across this historical background? One of the surest tests is the capacity to produce a ministry. For the first hundred and twenty-five years, South Carolina was

[1]Lathan, 326, 359-62.

in a sense almost entirely missionary ground. The Episcopalians ordained their first native-born minister in 1795; in 1791 only 15 per cent. of the up-country Presbyterian preachers were native. The Baptists were still largely served by immigrants, and the Methodists at first, of course, entirely so. The Baptists, through their congregational right of ordination, early put forth a considerable uneducated ministry; the Methodists soon followed; and after 1800 the native Presbyterian and Episcopal pastors greatly increased, though the number of these from Great Britain and the North continued considerable until about 1845. The debt which South Carolina owes in her higher life to New England in particular can never be calculated.

Not only has the fruitfulness of the South Carolina church in bearing her own ministers greatly increased, but the moral character of the ministry, Protestant and Catholic alike, seems certainly to have improved in every denomination. Almost all our South Carolina church historians amaze us by the frequent record of the fall of ministers in the so-called "good old days." Then, as now, when the devil went fishing for a preacher he generally baited his hook with a woman or a bottle; and the splendid and noble gifts that have been led to ruin and disgrace by these enticements make the heart bleed. As a young church in the full tide of revival fervor with ministers practicing a ceaseless inquisitorial watchfulness over each other, it was natural that the early Methodist body should have been less afflicted with unfaithful pastors than other folds which had had longer time to collect black sheep. From 1792 through 1825 the expulsions from the whole American Methodist ministry averaged annually less than one in six hundred, a proportion which greatly improved after 1805, as a consequence doubtless of the great revival. Small as this proportion, the expulsions from our own Conference to the present day have been far smaller, and almost half of them were during the fifteen years beginning with the War of Secession and ending with Reconstruction, which suggests the reaction of war's disorganization and politics' corruption upon the character of even quiet ministers.

In the matter of temperance the church, and the world

following her, has made great progress. Before the Revolution ministers of all denominations except Methodists were condemned only for immoderate drinking. "It was objectingly said on the inauguration (of Arthur Starr) to the eldership of (Bethesda Presbyterian Church in York County in 1794) that he was not a substantial man; and the explanation was that he did not own a distillery." Poor Elder Starr! So poor that he had to buy his liquor instead of making it on his own place like a man of substance, as an elder ought always to be. Howe relates that the pastor of a poor church in Pendleton at this period received his salary in subscriptions ranging from 12 1-2 cents to five dollars, a bushel of corn, or a gallon of whiskey, and it is not stated what the parson did with the whiskey.[1]

By 1830 the churches in the up-country began to bestir themselves against intemperance. The Baptist Church on the borders of North and South Carolina had a most remarkable experience in its warfare against the great evil. The temperance element had been active for many years when the conflict came to a dramatic crisis in 1859. The King's Mountain Association adopted a resolution to withdraw from any church that "holds a member who buys, sells, or drinks as a common beverage any kind of intoxicating spirits." Says the historian of the Association, Rev. John R. Logan, "This proceeding on the subject of temperance proved like a very explosive bomb-shell or disrupting fire brand, almost causing the apparent destruction of the very life of the Association by the time of its next annual assemblage." The anti-temperance minority seceded and organized "The Constitutional King's Mountain Baptist Association," and in general, says Logan, "showed themselves unworthy of the name of Baptists." O Constitution! Constitution! what crimes are committed in thy name! Bankrupt indeed is the ancient wrong that does not seek to hide under thy broad shield.

In 1866 a reunion was established by the majority's voting that their resolution of 1859 was unconstitutional, and that the fight on liquor should in the future be conducted by the As-

[1]Howe, II, 379.

sociation by moral suasion only and otherwise left to the individual Churches.[1]

In Sabbath observance, moral standards, purity of life, whatever may be the alarming features of the times, the evidence is overwhelming that the church has wonderfully elevated, refined, and humanized the life of the people in addition to her primary mission of saving souls since the days of the Stamp Act, when obscene poems and vulgar jests entered the highest homes in South Carolina through the Charleston newspapers, filthiness of mouth was a gentleman's characteristic, and raising one family by Sarah in the big house and another by Hagar in the cabin, leaving one's own flesh and blood to be administered upon as part of the chattels of an estate, hardly received a frown. The more Puritan churches, while exerting this influence on the world, have modified their own strictness in some respects, illustrating again how close is the touch between the church and the people and what are its benefits and dangers.

The influence of the church on society at large is more powerful today than ever before. The disrespect with which she and her ministry were frequently treated a century ago by public men would today retire such men to private life. In some parts of our country she lacks unfortunately any strong hold upon the masses; but the question is, did she ever have it? And in our own South Carolina there are tens of thousands tacitly hostile or grossly indifferent who never place themselves voluntarily under her influence. But I am persuaded that her power for good is greater in South Carolina than in most States and greater in this one than it ever has been before. The vast issues, the difficult problems, and the immense populations of the present overwhelm the imagination with the herculean labors that face us; but a knowledge of the great work the church has accomplished in the past and an understanding of the way she did it teach that the same consecration and intelligence will make the future still more glorious.

[1]Logan 181, 202 passim.