

10-1-1935

Methodism Faces Forward

M. P. Howell

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.wofford.edu/histaddresses>



Part of the [Church History Commons](#), and the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Howell, M. P., "Methodism Faces Forward" (1935). *Historical Society Addresses*. Paper 35.
<http://digitalcommons.wofford.edu/histaddresses/35>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Methodist Collection at Digital Commons @ Wofford. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Society Addresses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Wofford. For more information, please contact stonerp@wofford.edu.

Methodism Faces Forward

M. P. HOWELL

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED
TO THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE
AND THE
UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

1935

METHODISM FACES FORWARD

*Reprinted from The Index-Journal, Greenwood, S. C., October 31, 1935.

The purpose of this Historical Society as defined in its original Constitution, adopted in 1856, was "to collect and preserve information in connection with the rise and progress of Methodism." The same Constitution provided for annual meetings of the Society, during Conference sessions, for the purpose, among other things, "of hearing a lecture." The present Constitutional provision is for hearing "lectures and sermons."

The Repository or Museum established by the Society at Wofford college contains many invaluable relics, books, manuscripts, and other treasured articles of interest pertaining to early Methodism. This museum alone justifies the establishment and continuation of the Society.

It is my privilege to deliver the "lecture" of 1935. Others may preach the "sermons." The records of the Society indicate that fifty-nine annual lectures have thus far been delivered, but none so far by a lawyer. Prior to 1898 the lectures were not printed and this one will not be as no full manuscript of it will ever be written. Your experience this year in hearing a layman speak to the Society is unusual, as most of the fifty-nine lectures have been delivered by preachers, and the experience of hearing a lawyer is quite unique. A lawyer lecturing preachers! Truly the wolf has come to dwell with the lamb, the lion to lie down with the kid!

Subject Not Suggested

The Constitution does not attempt to suggest the subject of the annual lecture nor to limit its scope. Surely some lawyer must have had a hand in that! Literally, the word "lecture" involves the idea of "reading," and it is probable that the Society in the past has been wearied with much reading. The lecture this year will be unique in the further fact that it will not be read. It will extend, no doubt over a wide territory, but will be entirely ex-tempore. I am able fairly well to remember afterward what I said but I cannot ever write it down in advance. I am now setting down a few introductory thoughts merely to have something in my hand which will look like a manuscript. So tonight nothing

Address To Historical Societies

will be added to the historical records of the Society. I only hope that those present will find some food for reflection in my remarks, and be in some degree stimulated to continue to final conclusion the thoughts imperfectly suggested. I cannot feel quite remiss in my failure to write and read a lecture when I recall that the common complaint against the priesthood of Wesley's time was their invariable reading of their sermons. The early Methodist preacher was "heard gladly" because he did not read.

Being a lawyer I shall not presume to discuss technical theology, and being a very busy lawyer I have had no time to make special research into the scattered records of Methodist history. My own profession requires me to spend some time "delving into the musty records of dead quarrels" in search of precedents, but most of my time is spent in active conflict with living men and in the solution of current problems. And I prefer tonight to consider modern Methodism rather than Methodism of former generations. Too much significance is given even in theology to the glory of that past, and too little thought and consideration are the glory of the past, and too little thought and consideration given o living mten and current problems. When preachers dwell on creeds and doctrines, they, like lawyesr, are, in a sense, delving into the musty records of dead quarrels, once the subject of bitter theological controversy, and the for practically every "belief" incorporated in our creeds was ultimate faith we now profess represents the final result of a victorious conflict hotly fought by our ancestors.

Conception of Lawyer

It would be idle and boring for me to recount the oft told details of Methodist history, for there isn't a preacher present who does not know more about early Methodism than I do. My only hope of interesting you is to express my lawyer's conception of religion, particularly as it is portrayed and represented by our modern Methodism—the viewpoint of an outsider, you might say. It might be of interest, if not beneficial to you, to see yourselves as others see you. As you listen I shall expect you to recall your intimate knowledge of the glorious record of our past, and to bear in mind, in connection with my remarks, "the rise and progress of Methodism" from its beginnings to the present time. Truly it has been "the power of God unto salvation." In 1735 John

Methodism Faces Forward

Wesley landed at Savannah, Georgia, and brought Methodism to America. Since then its benign, civilizing influence has covered our beloved land "as the waters cover the sea" and it is still America's most potent influence for good and for God. The glorious record of Methodism constitutes the most inspiring episode in American history, and as we consider it we become proud that we are Methodists. It is true, as Bishop William Capers said, that early Methodism in America, as a denomination, was exceedingly humble. Everything about the denomination partook of the cast of poverty. "The preachers generally wore very common clothing, mostly of homespun, cut in the style of a clown of a century past. But its homespun was esteemed by them better than the broadcloth of other suits." As Bishop Capers further remarked: "It seemed to be admitted on all hands that Methodists were on the whole a good sort of enthusiasts, and their religion very well suited to the lower classes, who needed to be kept constantly in terror of hell-fire. For as it was looked upon as substituting passion for principle, and feeling for the law of God, yet so as to make its passion a religious one, and its feeling a matter of conscience, and both to be in a ferment of zeal against all manner of sin, it was thought exactly to suit those whose passions were the strongest and their understanding the weakest." Yet the biographies of the men and women who were instrumental in laying the foundations of Methodism in America are records of heroism and fidelity to high ideals unsurpassed in history. The Methodist preacher in the Eighteenth Century America typified the finest manhood, the most unselfish heroism, the most God-like influence the world has ever known. The story of his life was like a heavenly romance. He spent his life practically on horseback, some riding as much as 5,000 miles. He often served more than two dozen widely scattered churches, making the rounds every 4 or 5 weeks and traveling over 300 miles. While not actually riding to church or preaching he spent his time searching out the sick, the poor and impotent. He had no home and generally could not marry, no support being given for a wife. His friends were among the poor only, being despised by the wealthy and cultured, who listened, if at all, from afar. It was said, however, that if all who were converted in those days at Methodist meetings and thereafter joined

Address To Historical Societies

other churches, had joined the church where they met their God Methodism would not have been so destitute of support! Our early preacher rode his vast circuit with only a blanket, a great coat, an umbrella, and saddle bags, in which he carried sugar, coffee, a pot and a tin cup. John Wesley once remarked that if he should die owning more than 10 pounds the world would consider him a thief and a robber. The hardships endured by these early men of God are incredible, and yet they gloried in their suffering. They were indifferent to their poverty. They valued everything only at the price it would bear in eternity. Their great controversy was not with the creeds of men, but with sin and satan. It was not uncommon for the Methodist Circuit Rider to fall on his knees and continue all night in prayer, or to hitch his horse by the side of the road and pray all day long in the woods.

Old Congregations

The congregations of those days responded to preaching in strange manifestations. It is said that the deep, soulful amens would sweep over the congregation like some strange mighty wind, and that the inspiration of it was indescribable and irresistible. If there has been a marked change in the type of Methodist preaching since the early days, we should note also the equally marked change in the attitude and response of the congregations. The reaction of a congregation affects incalculably the effectiveness of the preacher. It is true that the preacher must impress the congregation that he speaks "with authority," but it is equally true that the hearer must listen with authority too, that is "experience" must respond to "experience." The changed attitude of the modern congregation is worthy of much thought and much prayer. It is very certain that monetary response is not the answer that God expects to his wooings, nor is ritualistic response sufficient. No amount of technical perfection, in form of worship or in behavior, can take the place of spiritualistic communion. True Methodism is not intellectual assent to formal creed, but is based wholly on personal experience with God. That individual spiritual experience ought to be the only test necessary to join our church, and one is not a Methodist without it. Essentially as well as historically this alone constitutes Methodism. Perhaps the absence of this experimental contact with God

Methodism Faces Forward

explains the frequent ineffectiveness of the preacher and the unresponsiveness of the congregation to the Gospel. We may maintain the form and machinery of the church without it, and valuable service may be rendered to society, but without the possession of experience we are not Methodists, and our church activities do not constitute Methodism.

Methodism Defined

The finest definition of Methodism I have read is that given by our early Bishop William Capers, (1818):

"Methodism was never poverty and rags, nor a clown's coat and blundering speech, nor an unfurnished, half-provisioned house, or no house at all, for the preacher; but it was the gospel simply believed, and faithfully followed; and earnestly (even vehemently) insisted on. It was powerful, not because it was poor, but because it was the living, breathing, active, urgent testimony of the gospel of the Son of God. It apprehended Christ's presence, and took hold of his authority to perform its work. Its every utterance was a 'Thus saith the Lord.' The Bible, the Bible was ever on its lips. Nothing but the Bible, and just as the Bible holds it, was its testimony of truth. It was all spiritual, experimental, practical, not speculative, abstracted, or metaphysical. When it preached, it was to testify of 'repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and to both, and to every degree of both, for the time then present. When it exhorted, it was to enforce its preaching, as it ever saw sinners sporting on the brink of a precipice, and believers in danger of being seduced from their safety. And preaching or exhorting, its inexhaustible argument was, eternity—eternity at hand—an eternity of heaven or hell for every soul of man. Its great element was spirituality—a spirituality not to be reached by a sublimating mental process, but by a hearty entertaining of the truths of the gospel as they challenged the conscience and appealed to the heart of credence in the name of Christ crucified, whenever and wherever the gospel was preached: And this, together with a moral discipline answering to it, I understand to be Methodism still, and God forbid there should come any other in its name."

There can be no doubt that Methodism more than any

Address To Historical Societies

other influence in American history purified and saved both the American church and the American State. May we ask ourselves whether Methodism as now professed and practiced is still a saving and purifying influence in American life? Is Methodism the religion which if universally embraced and practiced will result in establishing on earth the Kingdom of God? Is Methodism the religion men have been looking for, or must the world look for another? The answer of Jesus to John the Baptist, when asked a similar question was neither direct nor categorical, nor was it based on any theological or historical evidence. Jesus simply called John's attention to the results apparent from his life and teaching, "that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Christ was performing his mission on earth, and his divinity was proved not by resort to argument or citation of prophecies, but by results. Is modern Methodism able to make like answer to the same question truthfully? Do we honestly believe that Methodism will endure unto the end, or is it but a passing phase of man's effort to find and reveal God? Is it but the "enthusiasm" of a generation or two? In the words of wise Gamaliel, "if this work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

Understanding of History

The study of history is something more than fixing in the mind facts and occurrences. It involves also a correct understanding of the meaning of the facts learned, a correct interpretation of them, so that there may be a clear understanding of underlying principles. Every fact or event in history has a distinct meaning, and there is always a basic reason or cause for every eventuality. It is more important to understand the meaning, tendencies, and effect of the facts of history than to become intellectually familiar with the facts themselves. What then constitutes the underlying oasis, the active principle, the divine life-germ of Methodism? What is the real meaning of the facts and events which make up Methodist history? What motive force made possible its early accomplishments?

Our church was not originally a denomination, nor was it in the beginning ever intended to be. One of Wesley's

Methodism Faces Forward

early missionaries to America (Pilmoor, 1769) emphatically and publicly declared that the Methodist Society "was and still is intended for the benefit of all those of every denomination who, being truly convinced of sin, earnestly desire to flee from the wrath to come."

It was not until the conference of Methodist preachers was held in Baltimore in December, 1874, that the Methodist Episcopal church was formed. There were then only about 15,000 Methodists in America, one of the smallest religious groups in the country. They lacked educated leadership such as the Congregationalists and Presbyterians had. There was not a college graduate among them nor a single Methodist institution of learning. The first Methodist conference in America was held just a few years prior to the Revolutionary war, and the Methodist societies in America had never constituted a real church. Nor was there a single ordained minister among the Methodist itinerants, and even their places of worship were called meeting houses. They were still nominally under the control and direction of John Wesley. Because of his anti-American activity during the Revolutionary war Wesley lost much of his influence with his American brethren, and this, along with the difficulty of administering the ordinances of the church rendered it necessary for something to be done. It was at the Baltimore conference in December, 1784, under the leadership of Thomas Coke, sent over by Wesley at the request of Francis Asbury, that the Methodist societies of America were transformed into the Methodist Episcopal church. This conference followed the suggestions sent over by Mr. Wesley through Thomas Coke. The Methodists were pleased with the plan and the newly formed church proved effective to meet the deficient problem of the rapidly expanding young republic.

New Life Sought

It was not new doctrine, but new life the first Methodists sought for themselves and others. Methodism was based only on personal experience of the individual with his God. Wesley was not a theologian. He was a spiritual discoverer. He had first hand knowledge of the living Lord. Religion to him was not merely truth, but life. Someone has said Wesley's "emphasis on the relative values of life and doctrine was one of his most important contributions to

Address To Historical Societies

sound theological reasoning." As life is more than biology so vital Christianity is more than theology. It can only be understood by experiment. There can be no true religion without valid experience of God. The "quickenng ray" which strangely warmed John Wesley's heart at Aldersgate Street was the life germ of Methodism, and the true meaning of Methodism was and is and always will be that it recovers by experience and sets forth by preaching and behavior the supremacy of the love of God. A Methodist "is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him." Methodism is "inspired conduct." It is primarily life; never merely creed, doctrine, ritual. It is not a church of machinery, even though mechanically it is the most perfect church. If Methodism could produce nothing except what money can buy, or organize only that which money can operate, it would inevitably be doomed to failure. Methodism is worth preserving only insofar as it retains its vital experience of God and witnesses to it.

Modern Methodism

If this is modern Methodism, then it is of God, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, nor need we "look for another." But does modern Methodism measure up to Bishop Capers' definition, and is its life germ still personal experience with God? The world today is not seeking intellectual assurance nor a revival of ancient creeds and doctrines, but men wish to realize in their hearts and conduct the true ideals of Christianity. They wish to establish direct contact with God. The modern world is not atheistic nor agnostic. It is crying out for vital experience, for evidence that is more expressive and more understandable than mere words, for the witness of God's Spirit with the spirit of man. It must be evident that the world cannot be satisfied by the verbal presentation of the sublime faith and mighty works of great, good men of the past. They accomplished maximum results in their generation, but that does not excuse us from accomplishing maximum results in our own. Even the preaching of a Wesley or a Whitefield might not be effective in our day. The life principle underlying the work and accomplishments of these men is the same, but the tools and methods change with chang-

Methodism Faces Forward

ing times. The law, economics, science and every other branch of human learning or endeavor are progressive. I am not content to believe that religion alone is static. The modern preacher can no more rely wholly on the doctrine, beliefs, and practices of Wesley's day in solving modern spiritual problems than the man of science can rely wholly on a scientific text book of the 18th century. By this I do not mean that the truths of religion are variable nor that in God there is "shadow of turning." Truth and God are eternal, but man's interpretation of truth and his conceptions of God vary with the changing conditions of man, and the degree of truth in these interpretations and concepts depends largely on the degree of light with which humanity is blessed from age to age. The ideal was expressed by John Wesley, writing to his brother Charles in reference to the seeming fanaticism or "enthusiasm" of the early Methodist. "Oh, for light and heat united."

Principle of Evolution

It is my simple faith that in religion there abides the principle of evolution, and I devoutly believe that every succeeding generation of man should have a clearer, purer, higher, nobler conception of God. I further believe that the true conception of God always has been and always will be given directly by God to man, not through the speculative, abstract, metaphysical, intellectual conceptions of so-called theology, but through direct contact and personal experience. I believe that these personal contacts and experiences should, as light from age to age is shed upon man and the universe in which he lives, become more vital and more vivid. I believe that Methodism is "the gospel simply believed and faithfully followed," a faith based upon direct and personal contact and experience between the individual and his God, and finally, I believe that Methodism truly experienced and conceived and truly practiced is of God, and cannot be overthrown, and that pursued to its inevitable, final conclusion it will establish on earth the Kingdom of God, and save our souls. I have no other creed.

But, you say, how can I experience the witness of the spirit and enjoy direct, experimental contact with God? "Seek and ye shall find," is the only answer I know. Those who seek and seem not immediately to find may have con-

Address To Historical Societies

solation in the experience of John Wesley himself. In February, 1738, he wrote in his Journal: "It is two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgia Indians the nature of Christianity, but what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I least of all suspected) that I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God?" It was not until May 24, 1738, that he felt his heart "strangely warmed." He had therefore been preaching "above ten years before he experienced the witness of the spirit with my spirit." So though many of us may stand tonight by the side of a well that is deep, with nothing to draw with, yet need we be discouraged or cease to labor? Our faith in God should sustain us to endure unto the end. Through Methodism, truly conceived and faithfully practiced, we shall find Him.

The Methodist church, composed of members who have had direct personal experience with God, and who maintain their personal communion with Him, constitutes the "rock" upon which Christ intended His church to be founded. It is the only church which can ever become universal and which will endure unto the end. No age of the human race can ever fully and finally state in creed or code of behavior the eternal principles of life and of God. The creed of today, expressive of man's present ultimate ability to conceive and idealize, will have to be discharged tomorrow, because tomorrow there will be more light and greater ability to conceive and idealize. History has proven this. A careful consideration of the Old Testament shows that essentially it is a record of the struggle of the human race to gain a true conception of God and to understand aright God's real relationship to the universe in which we live. The earliest primitive conception of Jehovah, disclosed in the Book of Genesis, is far different, and infinitely lower than the conception Christ had of "Our Father, who art in Heaven." The God revealed in the Bible is the same today, yesterday, and forever only in the sense that the acorn and the oak are the same, or that the immaturity of the child and the mature wisdom of the man are the same. The religion portrayed in the Bible is a flowing stream, broadening and deepening as it advances. The Bible is a panorama of religious progress. It deals with life, and is a record of

Methodism Faces Forward

growth. Life never stands still. It is the history of moral and religious development extending through almost countless generations. From polytheism man advanced to monotheism, thence from a tribal God, cruel and vengeful, to a universal Father, pure, lofty, spiritual-like Love. The early Hebrew conception of God was almost wholly anthropomorphic. He is represented as walking, talking, having bodily form, contending, often in vain, with other gods. He is portrayed as getting angry, being jealous, repenting, deceiving, sanctioning fraud, commanding shocking cruelties, and generally exhibiting almost every passion and imperfection of man. The suggestion of human sacrifice is apparent, and in the case of Jephthah's daughter is accomplished. The same upward progress may be observed concerning such conceptions as the immortality of the soul and moral behavior. In primitive Israel there was sanction for slavery, polygamy, war and indiscriminate slaughter of captives taken in war, for revenge, deceit, and many other things which are now clearly evils. Who could now condone Samuel's words to Saul as he went away to battle: "Spare no Amalekite, slay man and woman, infant and suckling?" It was a long hard struggle the human race had to reach the noble ethics of the prophets and Job and Ecclesiasticus, to say nothing of Jesus and Paul. It is hard to imagine the ethical journey from, "Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, etc." to "Love thine enemies, bless them that curse you," or "If thine enemy hunger feed him; overcome evil with good."

Religion of Bible

It is my belief that this moral and spiritual evaluation, so evident in history to date, will continue to the end of time, or until the reign of purity, peace and love is established on earth. In the life and teaching of Christ the religion of the Bible finds its finest culmination. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man is the climax of Israel's ethical and spiritual evolution of many centuries. But is this the end? Did even Christ say the last word or effect the last accomplishment? Was even His revelation of God final and exhaustive? I think not. The Bible of the human race is still being written, even by you and me.

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;

Address To Historical Societies

Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despairs or hope or joy or moan;
Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit."—Lowell.

It is true that in Christ's life and teaching we will find no error, nor may we excel His idealistic conceptions nor improve upon His behavior, but surely He intended that we should tend to perfect flowering and to fruitage the seed he sowed. The principles He taught are eternal, but it is for us and oncoming generations to apply these principles aright to the current age. Inspiration is not a thing of the past alone, confined to a score of men of ancient Palestine. It is as continuous and as universal as the influence of the "Infinite Spirit of Truth." Revelation is something living, growing with man's capacity to understand. God reveals the divine to man by awakening the divine in man, through deep experiences, through struggling from lower to higher and to attain ideals and accomplish aspirations above and beyond him.

"Out of the heart of Nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old:

* * * * *
The word of seers or prophets old
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold
Still floats upon the morning wind
Still whisper to the willing mind,
One accent of the Holy Ghost
This heedless world hath never lost."

That Christ did not purport to say the final word nor make the final revelation of God nor portray man in his ultimate capacity is manifest from His own words: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, * * * and he will show you things to come." (Matt. 16:12-13). Much was left by Christ for us to discover, for us to do, and it was never intended that after Christ all further revelation and all further understanding should cease. God expects each generation of men to know *Him more perfectly until we see Him face to face*. It was never intended that men should look always "through a glass darkly," nor live forever in dawn's half light. We should ever go onward and upward in pursuit of the Spirit of Truth and Light, "that shineth more and more unto the

perfect day."

The articulate creeds of former times are crystallized evidence of direct revelation to our sainted fathers, but these creeds are not direct revelations to us. We must receive from God our own revelation of Truth, and formulate from our own experiences our own creeds, expressive of the more perfect light in which we are privileged to live. If a single creed could have been formulated, suited to all men, and all ages and every degree of light the world would ever enjoy; if a single code of behavior could have been made, adaptable in details to every generation of men, Christ would have written that creed and enunciated that Code. He wrote nothing, and enunciated only the Truth revealed to Him by His Father which men were "able to bear." So, since Christ, great, good men of God have been in communion with God and have proclaimed to men the Truth vouchsafed unto them, and so we have continued to learn and will ever continue until the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

We lament the apparent indifference of the world to matters religious. We bemoan the House of God empty on the Sabbath day. We bewail the apparent lack of interest of our youth in the things of God. Yet no improvement will come from mere lamentation. There must be a reason, and the cause must be discovered and removed. Might it not be true that we are living spiritually too much on the patrimony of our fathers? Do we draw too heavily on the experiences of those who have gone on before, without any sustenance from experiences of our own? Do we not direct the attention of our youth only to ancient creeds and dogmas, and to the accomplishments of long ago? Do we ever point to experiences and revelations of today, had by you and me?

History teaches us that in every revival of religion the world has ever known the evangelists of the movement were themselves personally "endued with power from on high." Every true religious leader, like the prophets of old, or John Wesley, or others of later years, through whom new revelations have come, shedding new light on God, has been a man who was able to proclaim, "I myself have seen God, and am able to speak from a personal experience." That is why Christ was able to speak "as never

Address To Historical Societies

man spake." That is why He was "heard gladly," and with no less authority may we speak if we expect men to listen.

Men, particularly young men (and most of the prophets in Bible days, as well as our own early Methodist prophets were young) are inspired to interest and action, in religion as well as in secular affairs, not by the cold recitation of stories of heroism long past. They respond only to the appeal of a hero who is willing and able to lead them now to today's victories. The fabled strength of Samson does not stir the emotion of your boy, nor stimulate him to personal accomplishment. He rather doubts the applicability of such idealistic strength to modern possibilities. But how the hot blood will surge through his enthusiastic veins when he witnesses the spectacle of a powerful fullback crashing through the line or of a fleet quarterback circling far around left end! Don't think now that I'm suggesting that our preachers become football coaches or that our Sunday Schools should organize teams. Preachers and Sunday Schools have tried this disastrously. The church must ever be dedicated to religion and to God and kept holy. The excellence expected of us is not the excellence of the world, but of the ways of God. If we are helpless to present personal living experimental proof of the Truth we proclaim, and if we fail to inspire men with the limitless possibility of infinite accomplishment, our most fervid oratory will leave them cold and skeptical.

Men admire in a distant, impersonal way the prowess of an Alexander or a Napoleon; they are responsive intellectually to the appeal of a leadership like that of the kindly soldierly Lee, but they recognize the impossibility now of enlisting in the armies of these heroes long dead. Men are warmed in a vicarious sort of way by the wonderful story of the perfect Man of Galilee, they are mildly interested in the heroic life of St. Paul, but they are roused to action and acclaim only by the living embodiment of principles exemplified by these ancient heroes on a scene of action made dim by time. What men most want is not only a present leader who, they believe, knows how to lead, but who is able to lift them up and take them from victory unto victory in fields new and as yet undiscovered. The strongest urge in the heart of youth has even been for pioneering and conquest in new uncharted territory. Youth hates

Methodism Faces Forward

monotony, the walking of beaten paths, the repetition of oft told stories. It responds with heat and vim to the new, the undiscovered, the marvelous, the infinite. And youth requires first hand, practical, experimental knowledge of the truth. Who but God is able to satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart for these things! Who but we who profess to commune with God are able to transmit His power to an eager world! God is the God of the living, not of the dead. Through living men He has always spoken to living men. So the Scriptures teach. Only modern Christians seem to try to put a new piece of cloth into an old garment, and new wine into old bottles! But we say, How can we do these things? If we had faith "as a grain of mustard seed" nothing would be impossible unto us. The last words of Christ to His disciples before His ascension were: "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues * * *"

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"

MINUTES OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Upper South Carolina Conference

The twenty-first session of the Historical Society of the Upper South Carolina Conference met in Main Street Church, Greenwood, October 31, 1935, with Rev. O. M. Abney in the chair.

After singing hymn 379, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord," Rev. J. M. Steadman led in prayer.

The Honorable M. P. Howell, of Walterboro, was introduced and delivered a most interesting and inspiring address on "Methodism, rightly conceived and faithfully followed constitutes the universal pathway from man to God."

The nominating committee, consisting of Brothers F. E. Dibble, J. W. Speake, and S. H. Booth, named the Honorable R. T. Jaynes, of Walhalla, as the speaker for 1936.

The following gifts were presented: the year book of the Woman's Missionary Society by Mrs. T. I. Charles; a watch charm made from a piece of bark from a tree under which John Wesley preached in Savannah, was presented by Brother W. S. Martin; The Doctrines and Discipline of the M. E. Church, South, of 1853 was given by Mrs. W. H. Keyzer, and presented by Brother H. A. Whitten.

The Society adjourned after the singing of the doxology and the pronouncing of the benediction.

O. M. Abney, President.

H. E. Bullington, Secretary.

MINUTES OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

South Carolina Conference

With the Rev. J. M. Rogers, president, in the chair, the 80th annual session of the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference opened on Wednesday evening, November 13, 1935, at 7:30 o'clock, in the Conway Methodist Church. Hymn No. 399 was sung, the Rev. J. W. Elkins led in prayer, and the scripture reading was led by the Rev. L. D. Hamer. The annual address to the society was delivered by M. P. Howell. A rising vote of thanks was extended the speaker. Hymn No. 162 was sung.

A business session of the society was held, with the second vice-president, the Rev. George W. Davis, presiding. The minutes of the 1934 annual session were approved without reading. The treasurer's report was read and ordered received as information.

The class received on trial into the South Carolina Annual Conference at its 1935 session was accepted as members of the society.

Gifts presented to the society included:

Section of limb from the Asbury-Flowers oak, presented by the Rev. J. P. Attaway.

Historical data on item before mentioned and on 150th anniversary of Methodism in Conway, presented by the Rev. J. P. Attaway.

Copy of "Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church," published in 1808, presented by the Rev. M. L. Banks.

Engraving of five of first bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, made in 1852, bearing autographs of said bishops, presented by the Rev. C. C. Herbert, D. D.

Historical data of Andrews Chapel Church, Orange Circuit, presented by the Rev. L. D. B. Williams, for O. B. Riley.

"History of the St. George Methodist Church," presented by the author the Rev. A. D. Betts.

The meeting adjourned with the benediction by the president.

J. M. Rogers, President.

L. D. Hamer, Secretary.