

WHY I LEFT THE METHODIST CHURCH

By Claude B. Holcomb

This sermon was delivered by Claude B. Holcomb in a lectureship program at Vickery Boulevard Church of Christ, Fort Worth, Texas, in 1949. He was one of nine speakers during this series of sermons. Each one had left a denominational church and his assignment in the lesson was to tell the audience *Why I Left*.

These sermons were put into a book by that title and has enjoyed favorable comment and wide distribution over these intervening years.

Many of our students and national preachers in Third World countries have asked for such material to be used in their work of evangelizing their countries. They seem more sensitive to the need of refuting false doctrine than brethren have in this country the last few years. In fact, their correspondence indicates an urgency that most of us do not feel.

It is believed that the distinctiveness of the Lord's church pictured in the New Testament requires that differences between truth and error be clearly delineated. The thousands of national preachers and Christians in other nations have told me that one of the most pressing needs confronting them is to be able to reply to false teachers with Bible truth. With that task they ask for help Where such Biblical information has been furnished I them they have converted thousands of their people to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is hoped that such tools as this written sermon will prove to be a useful instrument to assist them in evangelizing their countries.

-Guy Caskey
Arlington, Texas

WHY I LEFT THE METHODIST CHURCH

Only The Truth Will Save

I do not know anything very colorful, or particularly interesting to you with respect to my leaving the Methodist Church; nevertheless, I am glad to have the opportunity to engage in this service with you. We are interested in the truth only. I am quite certain, as I am sure you are, that this series of lectures has been designed not merely to gratify any lust for excitement or sensationalism, nor to provide an occasion to carry on a tirade of vilification toward any person or group of persons. It has been designed to bring to light the truth of God. That is why we are here. We are interested in the truth.

Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Not only will the truth free men and women from the bondage laid upon them by reason of ungodliness, but it will free them from the shackles of error, into which so many have fallen through the devices of Satan.

The only field in which the devil has to work is the minds of men. It is through men, therefore, that Satan has advanced his cause upon the earth. As a result, the religious world is plagued with a maze of confusing doctrines, commandments of men and myriad's of traditions. This is the devil's work.

God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. It is supremely important that we be made free from the traditions of men and the shackles of error, for I remember that Jesus said in His day that there was a certain class of people that had made void the word of God by their traditions

He said concerning them, " . . . you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.... These people draw near to Me with the mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:6-9). We want to avoid that, therefore, for certainly we want to worship God in an acceptable way. So we are here in the interest of truth.

God would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Christians have an innate desire to see the will of God done upon the earth and, therefore, we too would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth. All spiritual truth is derived from the word of God. Jesus said, "Thy word is truth." To the word of God, therefore, we must go, because "it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Realizing that our welfare upon the earth and the destiny of our souls when we come to die are contingent upon conforming our lives to the truth of God, we ought to desire the truth in religion above all else. David said, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23).

I am persuaded to believe that thousands of people now engrossed in error are honest and sincere in heart. I am persuaded to believe also that as soon as they are convinced of their erroneous position that they will renounce it and accept the truth. It takes an honest and a good heart to do this. The narrow-minded person is the one who rejects the truth when he sees it. The broad-minded is the one who gladly receives the truth and cherishes it in his heart. There are still multitudes of good and honest people if we can only reach them.

It must be remembered, however, that the truth has no inherent power by which it can advance itself. Truth will prevail in our world only so long as it has champions to advance its cause, and to defend it against error. That is our work as Christians. Christians are the light of the world, holding forth the word of truth. Not only through exemplary lives according to its principles, but also through teaching that truth constantly "in season and out of season." And so we are here to advance the cause of truth by exposing one of the systems of error that stands in the way of its progress. We trust that God may be pleased with such an effort as we strive for His glory.

PROPHECY FULFILLMENT REPEATS ITSELF

The prophet Isaiah said, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity" (Isaiah 59:1-3).

Now if the reader were not aware of the fact that the prophet in this place, and the following verses, had in mind primarily the condition of Israel at the time he lived, I believe that if he knew the conditions which exist in certain religious groups, that he could well be persuaded that the writer of these words was describing such groups. The reader might think that he was describing conditions such as prevail in that organization about which I am to speak.

The prophet goes on to say, "No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a viper breaks out. Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths."

"The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace ... In transgression and lying against the Lord, and departing from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice" (Isaiah 59:4-15).

A METHODIST FOR TWENTY-NINE YEARS

I was a Methodist for twenty-nine years. I suppose I would have been recognized during most of that time as a full-fledged Methodist and all of that time an acceptable member of the Methodist Church.

I have in my hand a church certificate made out to me: "The bearer hereof, Claude B. Holcomb, has been an acceptable member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Denton charge, North Texas Conference." This is dated June 15, 1936, and signed by D.E.

Hawk, pastor in charge. I was recognized up to this time as an acceptable member of the Methodist Church.

I think that after I have told you a few things with respect to my own experience, that you will see that I was by any body's standard a *good Methodist*. Now this certificate is good for only twelve months after it is made. So you very well can see that I am no longer a member of the Methodist Church. This is not a demit either.

I suppose that you are aware of the fact that every child born into a Methodist family becomes a member of that institution when he is a baby-in a sense, at least. I was sprinkled three times that I know of, including the time when I was a baby. Two of these I asked for myself. Being just a lad and calling upon no one to guide me in the matter and having no one to restrain me, after I heard the appeals of certain preachers, and when they *opened the doors of the church*, I decided that meant me and I walked forward, answered all the questions and was sprinkled as a boy about six years old.

Then after a few years I sat in another revival meeting, I heard the appeal of the preacher and was moved by it. So I thought maybe I had better do that again and I went forward and they went through the whole process again. In this process I committed myself to support the Discipline and all Methodist institutions-as all who join that organization do.

ZEAL FOR METHODISM

Throughout all my younger days I attended the services of the Methodist Church regularly. When I came to be of high school age, I spent five hours every Sunday in services at that church. There was the Bible school on Sunday morning, then the morning service. In the afternoon around 3:00 o'clock there was the Intermediate League. Then one hour before the evening service, the Senior Epworth League, then the evening service. I was always there; I never missed. This was in addition to the meetings through the week. Not only that, but in both of these Epworth Leagues that I attended on Sundays, I played the piano for their song services. I did that for a number of years.

DARK HOURS BEFORE THE DAWN

After graduating from high school I went to a Methodist University and here was the beginning of the dark hours before the dawn. In 1924 I enrolled as a freshman in Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas. There the faith I held up to that time was undermined through the influence of evolutionary and modernistic teachers in that institution.

I made mention of this fact not so many months ago to a friend of mine and he expressed surprise at that, because he said that he thought that Southwestern University was the stronghold of Methodist orthodoxy in Texas. That may be true to a certain extent, particularly when compared with that institution's big sister in Dallas, Texas (Southern Methodist University). It may be the bulwark of faith as far as Methodists are concerned, or a stronghold of Methodist orthodoxy, but the modernistic influence was there at that time just the same.

That was back, remember, in 1924. It was there, maybe not to the extent that you will find it in many places, but it was there nevertheless. It was not long until I learned that the head of the

Science department of that institution was an out-and-out evolutionist. He was not at all reluctant to preach the evolutionary theory to all that came to his class.

I had a number of arguments with some of my friends concerning these things. We had sessions in the dormitory, one of which I remember lasted all night long. We left the room and went to the breakfast table the next morning. All night long we argued upon this very point-evolution.

I remember another occasion that I sat in another room of that dormitory and discussed these things with a number of boys until 4:00 o'clock in the morning. There were numbers of other sessions.

You can understand some of the thinking that went on in my mind at that time. But that was not all. I learned, too, that the head of the Government and Economics Department (they were combined at that time) was what we call a modernist. He denied the Virgin Birth and the miracles of Christ and other fundamental facts of the Bible. At the end of the school year, after having had so many discussions concerning these things and after having learned that so many greats among the Methodists held to such ideas as these that I had heard in that institution, I returned to Denton. I was downcast and downhearted with respect to spiritual things.

The next year I enrolled at the Texas State College at Denton and did the rest of my college work there, but during that time I did not go to the services of the church much. I did not go much when I was in Georgetown. I just drifted along, and for several years it was only on rare occasions that I went to church services at all. After a few years I moved to Wichita Falls, and went to work there. I placed my membership, or certificate, with the Floral Heights Methodist Church of that city. I did not go there very much-just on rare occasions. A few years later I moved back to Denton, and moved my certificate back to the church there.

Then, in the course of a few years, it so happened that the work in which I was engaged at that time led me to do the proofreading on a number of religious publications-most of which were for the Fundamental Baptists. We printed John R. Rice's weekly paper for a number of years. We printed all the literature for Sam Morris and other men. We did a great deal of printing for J. Frank Norris. I read all these things and knew that I did not believe all of them, but at the same time it revived a spark down deep in my heart, a spark of religious feeling that had been there all the time. I had done my best to smother it. Then I began to study a little bit.

Then it was I met a young lady that had the most fascinating smile I ever saw! I kept company with the young lady regularly for quite a while and became acquainted with her family. Through their insistence, I attended a gospel meeting that was conducted at the Pearl Street congregation at Denton, in which J. Early Arceneaux did the preaching. I heard the truth. It made a rather deep impression on me, but I did not accept it at that time.

This set me to thinking. I would go to work and read the articles that the Fundamental Baptists printed; then I would go to the home of this young lady I told you about and I would argue with her father on these things. Sometimes I would think I had some good arguments, too.

STUDIES TO DEFEND METHODISM

Then I decided to study Methodism to see what I could learn about that. As a matter of fact, I set out to defend Methodism. So I began to study. That was fatal to the cause. I did my very best to defend the Methodist Church and its teachings and that led me to do some earnest, sincere, hard study-not only from some books that I had procured from my friends, but of the Bible. Here is where I spent most of my time. I was trying to show that the Bible would support the Methodist Church in principle.

I studied earnestly. I learned the truth, but I did not obey it at once. I was beginning to see that there was no way for an individual who was sincere and honest, as I believed I was deep down in my heart, to escape these truths that were plainly revealed in the New Testament. I began to attend Bible classes. I studied and continued to study. I talked to some of my Methodist friends. I argued with them concerning some of these tenets of Methodism. I went on, and more and more I could see that the longer I studied the more I was losing with respect to my Methodist faith.

OBEYS THE GOSPEL

Then one Sunday afternoon, after I had been to the worship of the church of Christ that morning, I was sitting out on the running board of my automobile and thinking these things over. I was deeply impressed; I was concerned; I was in dead earnest. I wanted to go to heaven when I came to the end of the way. I believed in God and I believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of men. I believed that with all my heart, but I couldn't believe that my sins were forgiven.

I began to think those things over and the thought came to me all at once: *You do not have a single thing to which you can cling, not one.* I went in and told my wife: "Get a change of clothing ready. I am going to be baptized." That made her very happy, of course. That evening I asked the preacher, "Is the baptistery ready?" "No," he said, "but we can get it ready mighty quick." I said, "That's fine; let's do so. I want to be a Christian, just a Christian and a Christian only." And so it was in the month of June 1936, the same date as this certificate that I was baptized into Christ.

JOHN WESLEY - NOT CHRIST - FOUNDER OF METHODISM

Now with respect to the Methodist Church, you know already that I learned that John Wesley was its founder and nearly every Methodist will agree with that. I have found only one person in all of my experience that argued with me that the Methodist Church is the church of Christ and that Jesus himself built that church. I found only one, but her argument did not last very long.

In McTyeire's *History of Methodism*, page 14, we have this statement: "The history of Methodism cannot be given without a biography of John Wesley. To him belongs the distinction of Founder. Great men by a natural law come forward in groups; but to insure the success and unity of a movement, there must be a solitary preeminence." Notice that. There must be a solitary preeminence to insure the success and unity of that movement; I believe that. "While Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Thomas Coke and John Fletcher were

mighty auxiliaries, it is around John Wesley that the religious movement of the eighteenth century called Methodism, centers."

Here is the difference between this and the New Testament Church: in the church of Christ, preeminence is given unto Christ and unto Him only (Colossians 1:18). In the Methodist Church it is admitted here that preeminence is ascribed to John Wesley. Not only that, but in this paragraph we see that "to John Wesley belongs the distinction of being the founder of the Methodist Church."

The New Testament church was built by Christ himself (Matthew 16:18). This He did on the first Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead, through His holy apostles unto whom He had given the keys of the kingdom. Now this is one reason why I left the Methodist Church. I learned these things. I found out that the Methodist Church did not have the scriptural founder. It was the only safe thing to do, to be in a church that had a scriptural founder.

METHODIST CHURCH 1700 YEARS TOO LATE

I learned, too, that the Methodist Church began 1700 years too late to be the church of the New Testament. I read from Nathan Bang's *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Volume I, pages 39 and 40: "In 1729 Wesley attended the meeting of a small society which had been formed at Oxford, in which were included his brother Charles, and Mr. Morgan, for the purpose of assisting each other in their studies and consulting how they might employ their time to best advantage.

"It was about this time, that the society above named, having attracted some attention from the regularity of their lives, and their efforts to do good to others, that some of the wits at Oxford applied to the members the name of Methodists, a name by which John Wesley and his followers have ever since been distinguished." From a study of the New Testament, I came to realize that this is an unscriptural name, but this is the name that has been ascribed to John Wesley and his followers ever since 1729.

METHODIST NAME ANTI-SCRIPTURAL

God gave unto his people through His Son Jesus Christ the name Christian and that name glorifies the name of Christ every time it is spoken. We learn from I Peter 4:16 that, "If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name." Give glory unto Christ by the name that you wear. I came to realize I could not do that by wearing the name Methodist, thus another reason why I left the Methodist Church.

Brother Claud McClung was conducting a meeting in a certain place one time and he met a lady in one of the stores there at the time of the meeting. During the course of the conversation the lady said to Brother McClung, "I am a Methodist." Brother McClung said, "You are?" "Yes." "Well, I am a Christian," said Brother McClung. "Oh, but I'm a Christian, too," said the lady. "Well," he said, "why did you tell me you were a Methodist?" That set the lady to thinking.

He told me that he baptized that lady during the course of that meeting. People just need to stop and think about these things.

If we could just reach them and get them to thinking and studying as I studied and hundreds of others have studied.

I learned that the Methodist Church began at an unscriptural time-seventeen hundred years too late. You know, if the time and the place had not been designated by the Lord, that possibly would not have made so much difference. This is an argument that Methodists make, "It doesn't make any difference when the church started." But the prophet said, "The mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains." When? "In the last days ... when the law goes forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3).

All of you who know your Bibles know that according to the promise of Jesus Christ, He sent the power of the Holy Spirit upon His apostles on the first Pentecost after His resurrection from the dead and the church was established upon that day through them, "and the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved." The time has been designated A.D. 33. The Methodist Church began in 1729. That is too late.

WHOLE SYSTEM UNSCRIPTURAL

So we have found that the Methodist Church has an unscriptural founder, an unscriptural name, began at an unscriptural time, and an unscriptural place. The very groundwork, the whole system, is unscriptural. It is wrong. But that is not all. Its whole structure is also unscriptural, if it may be said that it has any structure. The Methodist Church has an ecclesiastical system of organization that is second only to that of the Roman Catholic Church.

From the book known as the *Methodist Discipline*, I learned that the highest authority in the Methodist Church inheres in their College of Bishops. That is their high court. These are the ones who have the last word. On page 264 of this book, we find the beginning of a series of articles that are known as the Decisions of the Bishops-Bishops' Decisions. On page 287 I read, "The church cannot appeal from the decision of its own court." That's the Bishops. There are 118 of these articles up to this time, Bishop's Decisions, imposed upon the Methodist Church. The Bishops are assigned, each one, to his own district. They look after the affairs of the church in that district and preside over the district conferences and quarterly conferences. He is the one who has the rule, and he rules as he pleases in his assigned district. Duties assigned to a bishop as well as those of the presiding elders are described in the discipline. There are duties assigned to preachers-in-charge, traveling deacons, traveling elders, exhorters, local preachers, supernumeraries, superannuates, stewards, trustees and so on ad infinitum.

Now where in the Bible can you find anything about such a system as that? There is nothing. Therefore, the whole system is unscriptural, non-scriptural and anti-scriptural.

Have you ever stopped to think that under God's arrangement the church of the Lord Jesus Christ grew faster in thirty years time than any religious movement that has been known before or since? Jeff D. Ray, a scholarly man, an aged Baptist preacher and a writer of religious articles for the Fort Worth Star Telegram Newspaper, wrote an article concerning this very thing in which he said that the church of Christ is growing faster than any religious group of our time. He gives as the reason the fact that we are not at all reluctant to teach

what we believe and we constantly teach it. We believe in indoctrinating the members. We believe in bringing the truth to light.

" WHAT IS METHODISM? "

"What Is Methodism?" That is the title of a little article that is printed in this paper known as the *Methodist Messenger*. This is the official organ of the Methodist Church. Here is a little notice that is printed in it. "Two groups in the church within the last week have asked the pastor to talk to them on the Methodist Church. Some people are wanting to know the rules of the church. [They don't know anything about it.] Methodists as a rule do not talk much about Methodism, as little, perhaps as any, does it indoctrinate." This is wise. It is better not to indoctrinate when the doctrine is weak.

The strength of the New Testament church lies in the fact that it indoctrinates its members. That is because the doctrine comes from the right source and therefore it is right. This simply means that God's plan will accomplish the ends that God has designed for it, if God's people will work the plan.

METHODIST CREED CONTRARY TO NEW TESTAMENT

Now then, as we look further into the Methodist creed, we find that it is in itself anti-scriptural in many points. It is also inconsistent with itself, as are all humanly devised creeds. Human creeds are objectionable for many reasons. They are written by men and therefore, are not infallible. God's word is. Human creeds do not meet humanities needs and they are insufficient. They are constantly in need of amendment and the same authority that makes them amends them at will.

The gospel contains the mind of God and is not subject to amendment. Human creeds are constantly in need of amendment and are therefore imperfect. "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). Human creeds disagree with one another and therefore they cannot all be right. Not only that, but all human creeds at some point conflict with the plain teaching of Christ and therefore they are all wrong and that includes this one (*Methodist Discipline*). Yet, it is the very constitution of Methodism. Most of the members do not know what is in it. Yet, they have all vowed to support it, as I did when I became a member of the Methodist Church.

There are some members of the Methodist Church who have told me that they do not believe the things that are printed in the Discipline and yet they took an oath when they became a member of that body to support the Discipline. Here it is on page 371. When they come to join the church, to submit themselves for sprinkling, the question is asked by the preacher: "Will you be subject to the Discipline of the Church, attending upon it's ordinances, and support its institutions?" Here is the answer: "I will endeavor so to do, by the help of God." Some do not realize this. There are others who have taken the vow and they realize that they have taken such a vow, but it doesn't mean much to them and they do not profess to keep it.

LACK OF CONVICTION AMONG METHODISTS

A few years ago, I went up to the radio station for a broadcast and there was a man there who was a Methodist minister. He was the father of the announcer of the radio station. After

we had been introduced, this man said to me, "My son got me out early this morning just to come up here and hear you." I said "Well, that's fine. I am glad you are here. However, I do not want you to think that this is a frame-up, because it just so happens that my lesson this morning is directly opposed to Methodist doctrine." He smiled and said, "That's quite all right; I will hear you."

So I went into the studio and gave my lesson on the subject of "Salvation By Faith Only," a scriptural study. After the lesson was completed I went back into the other room and this man said, "You know, my son and I were trying to decide where you might think that you and I would be at odds on what you had to say this morning." I said, "Well, you heard the lesson, didn't you? 'Salvation By Faith Only' is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Methodist Church and you are a Methodist minister." He said, "Yes, but I believe just as you do about it." I said, "Well, you know you read in your Discipline that 'the doctrine of salvation by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort'?" "Yes," he said, "I know that's there, but you know all Methodists do not believe alike."

You know, friends, all honest religion is based upon conviction. If there is no conviction in it, then it cannot be honest religion. I was talking to a friend of mine who was a Methodist. He wanted to ask me a question concerning the church and I was glad to hear it. After I had answered the question to his satisfaction, I said, "Now, I would like to ask you a question. Why are you a Methodist?" I have known him for a long time and we are good friends. He reflected a moment. He did not answer at once, but directly he threw out his chin and stepped out and said, "Because my mother and daddy were Methodists. That is all the reason I can give you." I said, "Well, that's a fair, frank and honest answer." In the course of that conversation I told that man that I had been a Methodist. I think he knew that already. But I said, "I studied long enough to find out that I was not a Methodist and truly had never been." He shook his head and said, "I am not either." Yet, he holds membership in a Methodist Church.

A young Methodist lady said, "You know Methodists do not care what you believe." No conviction! Another woman said, "I don't read my Bible very much, because I know what I believe without reading it." She was right about that.

There are many things that we could point out in this book (*Discipline*) if we had the time, that would show you the inconsistencies, the weaknesses, the unscriptural positions taken in so many places by the leaders of the Methodist Church. As far as I was concerned, there was the matter of baptism. First of all, as to the necessity of it, I had always been taught that you did not have to be baptized-not even sprinkled, if you did not want to be. You could be saved anyway.

After studying my New Testament, of course, I learned otherwise (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 8:38; 9:6; 10:48; 16:31-33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27; I Peter 3:21). I learned that it was a commandment of the Lord. I could not disobey any commandment of the Lord without being disobedient in the heart. As long as I refused to be baptized in the scriptural manner and for the scriptural purpose, that meant that my heart was filled with all the rebellion that it could hold. Therefore, I changed. I left the Methodist Church.

FALSITY OF METHODIST BAPTISM

Then there was the matter of what baptism is. We can turn to page 369 of this little book (*Methodist Creed*) and there we read that "the minister shall take each person to be baptized by the right hand, and placing him conveniently by the font according to his discretion shall ask the name, and then shall sprinkle or pour water upon him, or if he shall desire it, shall immerse him in water." You know, I began to study that one time, and I saw that they had that thing just in reverse. In one instance they take the element and place it upon the subject and in the other instance they may take the subject and place him in the element. Something wrong somewhere. I noticed that in my study. That was one of the things that I began to think about in regard to baptism before I left the Methodist Church.

Then I came to the matter of the sprinkling of infants. I had always thought that it was all right. I talked to a lady one time that told me this experience: She had been a Methodist all her life, until she was married and a baby was born to the family. She insisted on having the baby sprinkled, but her husband was a member of the church of the Lord and he would not agree to it. So this lady went to her pastor and said to him, "Brother Pastor, my husband is rather a peculiar fellow and he has to have scripture for everything that he believes and everything he does religiously. Now I want to have my baby sprinkled and I want you to give me the scripture, so that I can go and show it to him and we can have our baby baptized." Well, Brother Pastor said, "Now, Sister, there is no passage of scripture that I can give you for the sprinkling of babies. That is just one of our church ordinances. It is in the *Discipline*." The lady told me that she began to think about that and she said to herself, "Well, perhaps there are some other things which are not in the scriptures." She began to study, just like I did. It was not very long until she obeyed the gospel.

Babies are not subjects of baptism to begin with. They may be subjects of sprinkling according to some people's standards, but according to the scriptures only believers can be baptized, and babies do not have that capacity. So I am not willing to trust my soul's salvation upon a flimsy foundation like that. If it has nothing to do with the saving of the soul, then God has no use for it, and neither do I. What can the purpose be?

METHODISTS ARE TURNING MODERNIST

Now there are a number of reasons why I left the Methodist Church. But here are just a few things that I would like to call to your attention. There are many people in the Methodist Church who do not realize that such things as these are going on. There are fewer people in other religious bodies that know about these things. Of course, the preaching brethren know something about it.

The Methodist Church has been taken over by *Modernists*. These are men who have denied the fundamental facts of the Bible. A young lady asked, "What is a Modernist?" I gave her a definition in my own words. But here is a good definition of a Modernist: "The Jesus of the Modernists is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament. Every cardinal doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is denied. Especially do they attack His virgin birth, His miracles, redemption by the blood of His cross and His bodily resurrection. Their evolutionary creed will not allow them to admit of any supernaturalism. So, therefore, the virgin birth is discarded as a biological impossibility. Jesus worked no miracles because a miracle is contrary to nature and natural laws and the resurrection of our Lord's body is flatly denied. The only resurrection they admit is that His spirit and influence live on. Comparable to the song we used to sing, 'John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave, but his soul goes

marching on.' The blood of Christ shocks their cultured sensibilities, so they do not preach salvation through His blood, but flatly deny the fact of his substitutionary atonement."

I found this statement to be true in the Methodist Church. The beginning of it was back in 1924 when I attended Southwestern University; but I have learned much more with respect to it since then.

PROMINENT METHODIST LEADERS DENY DIVINITY OF CHRIST

Let us quote a statement or two from the most prominent among them, and then we can see what some of the lesser lights think about it. Here is a statement from Bishop Francis J. McConnell, a statement that he made in an article, which he called *The Christlike God*. "Some ardent teachers would almost make Jesus the First Person, as did one celebrated Methodist theologian who once spoke of Jesus as God Almighty. Some students can hardly explain their resentment of the tendency to deify Jesus, since the tendencies seem to rob Him of His supreme value of a human ideal. Is not their tendency to deify Jesus more heathen than Christian? Are we not more truly Christian when we cut loose from a heathen propensity and take Jesus simply for the character that He was and the ideal that He is?"

Now listen to this: "Back in the early days of the church there were some, probably only a few, thinkers who taught that Satan had a claim on the souls of men which only the death of the Son of God could satisfy, and that God met the obligation by sending the Son to the Cross. As an intellectual construction this theory arouses only amused pity today."

Here is another statement from Dr. Ivan Lee Holt. This was contained in an address that he made before the Methodist young people's conference, January 7, 1936. This address was recorded in the *Christian Beacon*, August 15, 1940. Listen to this: "He defended the Soviet Union from attack. He declared that the aim of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia 'was the establishment of a better life.' The Russian Government does not purport to do this through exploiting someone else, but through raising the general level of all." Now here is the statement that I want you to get: "It is difficult to find youth anywhere in this world more devoted to the cause of Christ than you will find in the youth of Russia devoted to Stalin and his new Social Order." That is modernism. That is in the Methodist Church.

A Methodist pastor [preacher] speaks on the radio five days a week. We have taken quite a few notes with respect to some of the statements he has made on these radio broadcasts and I would like for you to know some of the things that are being taught in the Methodist Church.

This preacher opened the doors of the Methodist Church and at the conclusion of his sermon, he extended an invitation to come and join the church. In extending that invitation he had this to say: "Perhaps you do not find it in your heart to believe in Jesus as your Savior just now, but come on and join our church anyway, and perhaps the rest will come later."

This same radio preacher said, "Yes, I have heard that everything works together for good to them that love God and I know where it is. It is in the Bible; but that is not a pure statement. It is not a premise. Jesus made no statement that would uphold this and wherever Jesus and St. Paul conflict, go to Jesus. There is no sense to that statement. You can't make sense out of it. Give me a God where sense is." And further, "We are not concerned now with what the

will of God is, but *where* it is. What I believe might not help you immediately. Some other belief might be better for you." I listened to him again as he made this statement, "You say there is only one way. You would confine us to a single channel of religious thought-to a Book. Tell me, what kind of God do you serve?"

Many of you, I am sure, are informed of a Methodist young people's movement known as the *Wesley Foundation*. Mr. Lynn Landrum, in an issue of the official organ of the Methodist Church, has this to say concerning the *Wesley Foundation*: "The Wesley Foundation movement is as solid as the Methodist Church itself; and the Methodist Church is as solid as Christianity. The Methodist Church is sane, not fanatical; it is comprehensive, not tangent-like in its excitements; it deals with all areas of thought and deals with them sincerely, carefully and soundly."

Here is an address made by Dr. Ehrensperger before the Texas Methodist Students Conference in 1939.

"The Christian goal of life is commonly called the Kingdom of God, which today I would like to call the Blessed Community ... Like all great attributes of human nature, imagination comes by long cultivation. It is a process of growth, of feeding and of cultivation that enables it to reach a state where it functions adequately in the process of living. It permeates all life and is fundamental to religion. If we are to understand the background of our Christian religion we must have this kind of imagination, for the poets wrote much concerning it."

Now I read all that to give you this: "Man was made in God's image. God imagined man. It will take imagination to get back to God. It is imagination that we need in the worship services of our church, in the observance of rituals and sacraments, in the celebration of the feast days, which often times have become so meaningless for us. Imagination should be the spur to make us seek the kingdom of heaven and to find God, for we must get to God if we are to be brothers in the blessed communion of Christian life."

Do you know what the Bible says concerning imaginations of men? We are to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring every thought into captivity unto obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). That's scriptural teaching.

They are teaching the young people this now: "In religious thought there is no blueprint for the Christian. There is no revelation with systematic description. Revelation is not knowledge about God, it is knowledge of God. It is not information; it is event. Theological students are constantly enrolling in a course on doctrine of God and expecting to find Him by way of terms, but God must be found through persons and experiences. The Bible is not revelation, but records of and comments on revelation."

SUMMARY

To sum things up the young people of the Methodist Church are having this constantly instilled in their minds:

"A Christian's attitude toward a pagan's religion should be one of interest in enlarging understanding about religion. Pagan religions should not be destroyed but merged with our religion. Since centers of power change, religions change; and there is no way of predicting future religions. The traditional attitude that there is only one God and that all religions must give way in place of this belief is inadequate and not necessarily true ... The best religion would be one, which could assimilate the good points of others rather than destroy older traditions. It will be one that can gather up areas of meaning value, goods from struggles in all the world, and yet be more sensitive and more flexible. The traditional attitude that there is only one God is inadequate and not necessarily true."

Verily, the devil has transformed himself into an angel of light. Infidelity has donned the garb of religion and taken its place in many pulpits of our land and has propagated these miasmatic doctrines over the radio, through the press and by every means available to man in this day and time. Who can fail to see the fulfillment of New Testament predictions that many false teachers have gone out and that the spirit of antichrist does work even now and prevails in our religious world? They are here, all around us and many of them are harbored by Methodism! These are the reasons why I left the Methodist Church.

Even if I were to concede that the members of the Methodist church were Christians, I still would not want to be a member of it. It is too far removed from the glorious church Jesus built and died for. Jesus loved the church " . . . and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is the bride of Christ, and that is a tremendous appeal for its purity. Christ loved the church infinitely more than any man can love his bride, because His capacity to love is so much greater. And He wants her to be holy and without blemish.

The frills and trappings conceived by men fall so far short of the beauty and simplicity of the New Testament pattern, that they are too cheap, much too cheap, to be dragged into it. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is resplendent by the effulgence of its own glory and anything added by men only mars its beauty, darkens its light and neutralizes its influence and its power to shed abroad the gospel of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. She must be kept holy and without blemish as the precious bride of Christ! And when this is done, she stands amidst the nations of the earth with a glory and a grandeur that transcends all the highest concepts of splendor that can occupy the thoughts or even the imaginations of humankind. May God bless her and keep her, and strengthen her through the love of Jesus Christ who dwells in the hearts of the saints who compose that body.

How happy I am to be free from the shackles of denominationalism and to be a member of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is His bride! This is where God dwells among his people. We are builded together for an holy temple in the Lord. Each several building is fitly framed together for an holy temple in the Lord. And you also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit. This is where God is-in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His body of the redeemed; purchased by the blood of Christ. It is the family of God, and God has no children outside His family.

I must be in it, friends, and you must be in it, if you want to be in that great company of the redeemed, who by the hands of ministering angels shall at last be ushered through the portals of glory into the presence of the Ancient of Days-there to behold the superior excellence of His glory and bask in the sunlight of His love throughout the ages of eternity.

You must be in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, the body which He purchased with His blood. That is what he shed His blood for-to redeem the church.

Let us be more solicitous of the purity of the church. Let us throw off all the shackles of error; let us renounce all error which we might have held throughout all our life, just to be a member of that glorious body, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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