Preachers in Politics
By Jacob Simpson Payton

It is frequently charged that if one wishes to see politics operating at the very height of smoothness and efficiency, he has only to elbow his way into the inner circles of The Methodist Church. Indeed, across nearly a score of years certain members of Congress have told me that the earliest and best training that they ever received in the school of politics was when they served as delegates to annual, jurisdictional and general conferences of The Methodist Church.

Of course while Methodism, past and present, may contain instances of ambitious men compounding piety with politics for what they consider to be the greater glory of God, the number is relatively few. And we may dismiss as facetious the remarks about our conferences being so many West Points for the training of either party or ecclesiastical politicians, although they may help.

However, there is a field which has been quite neglected by the historians of our Church. An interesting study might be made and presented under the title, "The Debt of Methodism to Early American Politicians." While we cannot here pursue that subject, a few hints may not be amiss.

Take for example the case of the Honorable Richard Bassett receiving as his guests, upon their arrival, the emissaries sent out by John Wesley in 1784. He furnished Bishop Coke with a horse on which to make the first rounds of his American appointments. He took into his home during his last illness, Richard Whatcoat, one of our earliest Bishops, cared for him, buried him from his manor and paid the funeral bill.

Bassett was a distinguished Methodist who was born in Cecil County, Maryland, on April 2, 1745, and the grandfather of Richard Henry Bayard and James Asheton, Jr. He practiced law in Delaware, where he was judge of the U.S. Circuit Court, chief justice of the court of common pleas, presidential elector, governor of Delaware, member of the state constitutional convention, state senator, and member of the United States Senate. He was the first man to vote to locate the national capital on the Potomac River.

Bassett paid one-half the cost of the First Methodist Church at Dover. He and his wife once drove 30 miles to meet his life-long friend, Bishop Asbury, and accompany him to a camp meeting. He

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was a man of wealth and owned homes at Dover, Wilmington, and the famous Bohemia Manor in Maryland. He died at the last named place on September 15, 1815.

Asbury and Politicians

No other Methodist Bishop ever accepted more hospitality and hobnobbed more often with leading officeholders than did Bishop Asbury. It was doubtful a case of hating the sin of politics but of loving the sinner. Nothing so depressed the Bishop as to learn that one of his preachers had gone in for marriage or for politics. His antipathy to the latter, even in the case of men in accepting positions of spiritual oversight to legislative bodies, he expressed when en route to a session of the South Carolina Conference. His misgivings he jotted down in his Journal in these words: "Hilliard Judge is chosen chaplain to the legislature of South Carolina, and Snethen is Chaplain to Congress; so we begin to partake of the honor that cometh from man; now is our time of danger. O Lord keep us pure; keep us correct; keep us holy!" Had he foreseen that Nicholas Snethen himself would later run for Congress, it might have put the aging Bishop to bed. And later in a community far beyond the boundaries of the District of Columbia he jotted down in his Journal with a wry face and a shrug of his shoulders: "Methodist preachers politicians! What a curse!"

Touching politics as in all things else, Bishop Asbury did keep himself unspotted from the world. Maybe it was the bitter memory of Tory partisanship that had exacted from him a fine of five pounds for preaching in Maryland and of being driven into the silences and seclusion of the Delaware woods where Judge White's home offered sanctuary that caused his distrust of any of his preachers entering upon a political career.

This proclivity of Methodist preachers to dabble in politics dates from their spiritual father, John Wesley, who sounded off with his "Calm Address to the American Colonies." This, you will remember, caused Bishop Asbury to observe: "I am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America." However, to follow his itinerary from entries in his Journal, the Bishop was frequently arriving at the big houses of influential party leaders who were even then dipping arm's length into American politics—local, state, and national.

In New York he was the regular guest of Judge Robert R. Livingston or Governor Van Cortland, mighty politicians in their day. In Delaware he sojourned with the political bigwig, Governor Richard Bassett, or with Judge Thomas White, no mean politician. In Maryland, Perry Hall, presided over by Henry Dorsey Gough, influential in state party affairs, was a second home to him. When Bishop
Asbury rode south he stayed with those “given to hospitality,” including Green Hill, a Methodist preacher, a member of the first provincial Congress, and the perpetual officeholder; also with General Russell, whose wife was a sister of Patrick Henry. And upon his arrival in Ohio, he made a beeline for the homes of Governors Tiffin and Worthington, who subsisted long and bountifully on the plums of public office.

It is farthest from our intention to infer that Bishop Asbury ever kowtowed to men in high position. His chief glory is that he never neglected them, as we are inclined to neglect them now. Whatever their faults, he sought their correction, not by cutting the thread of his influence through public denunciation, but by strengthening the bonds of friendship in order that he might show them the more excellent way. Like Another, “he went about doing good,” and his paths of service led him to the homes of politicians, many of whom were transformed and affectionately revered him as their father in the Gospel.

Methodist Congressmen

During the first 150 years of our national existence, about 1,400 senators and 8,150 representatives have served in the Halls of Congress. W. P. Strickland, writing nearly a century ago, said that in 1804 there were only two Methodist congressmen. Then in the total membership of Senate and House there was but one Methodist to every 90. But today a religious census shows that 21 of the 96 senators and 85 of the 435 representatives are Methodists.

It is probable that among the 54 House members who merely designate themselves “Protestants” or do not care to identify themselves, are a number of Easter-morning Methodists. This advance, during the 159 years since Strickland numbered our Methodist Israel in both Houses of Congress from one out of 90 to one out of fewer than five, certainly does indicate that our church is becoming politically minded.

Because I receive numerous letters from persons who are alarmed over the growing political influence of the Roman Catholic Church, I made an investigation of the number of its priesthood who had served in Congress. Father Gabriel Richard, a delegate from Michigan Territory from 1823 to 1825, is the only Catholic priest ever elected to our Federal legislative body. And the long succession of Protestant chaplains of Congress has been broken but once when Father Constantine Pise, poet and scholar, was elected chaplain of the Senate in 1832. With 8 members in the Senate and 71 in the House, the Roman Catholic Church at present is 1 ½ times short of its share, while The Methodist Church is 1 ½ times in excess of its share based on quota representation of the two religious bodies.
While the preponderance of Catholic influence upon legislation often appears mystifying, it does not arise from numerical strength in Congress.

Some Characters

All types of persons have come to Congress. Traitors, ex-convicts, murderers, thieves, gamblers, keepers of saloons and brothels, and rogues in general from low and high society, plus a generous sprinkling of crackpots, have been among those entrusted to frame laws to safeguard our homes and direct America along paths of righteousness, sanity, and security. Over the long course of our national existence, however, it is amazing how few really evil men have come to Congress.

They have been so decidedly in the minority that their influence has availed little. Take for example Robert Potter who was elected to the House from North Carolina in 1829. This brilliant young attorney packed his notorious career with almost every crime in the catalogue. Upon his arrival in Washington he continued his gay and voluptuous life, posing as single, although married to a member of one of the most respectable families of North Carolina. During his second term he was obliged to resign from Congress under disgrace. Later he was expelled from the legislature of his State for inflicting gun wounds during drunken brawls.

In 1835 Potter fled the scenes of his high crimes and misdemeanors for Texas, where he became a member of the Convention that declared the independence of the Republic of Texas. There he became an outlaw and sank from sight in Lake Caddo into which he plunged when too hotly pursued by a posse. When he surfaced a burst of rifle fire from the shore sent him to the bottom. Once when I told Joseph R. Bryson, a member of the House from South Carolina, that his State had furnished North Carolina with at least one outlaw for Congress, he remarked that he probably was a Methodist. But when the congressman, himself an ardent Baptist, heard of the fugitive’s death by water, he concluded that he must have been a Baptist. Anyway, so passed “Bob” Potter, once the Honorable Robert Potter, from the floor of Congress to the floor of a Texas lake where his body found its final repose.

Or, take John Morrissey, who served in the House from 1867 to 1871. This Irish immigrant on the way up from the gutter to the Halls of Congress had attained the dubious honor of being the world’s champion heavyweight boxer in 1858. While entrusted with framing the Nation’s laws on Capitol Hill, he continued to operate his chain of gambling houses in New York and the Saratoga race course in which he held a controlling interest.

To come down to more recent times, I, myself, have seen an ex-
convict take the oath as a congressman "to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same. . . . So help me God." And I have seen also, a member of that body indicted for fraudulent use of the mails, subsequently liberated from prison to resume his position as the mayor of Boston.

These exceptional cases are not cited in order to detract from congressmen, among whom there have always been, and still are, many worthies. Rather the purpose has been to show that the few who have disgraced the many have exercised little influence upon national affairs, and also by way of introduction to indicate that Congress always has offered a rather promising missionary field for Methodist preachers who have felt called of the Lord and the voices of the people to legislative labors.

**Governor Tiffin**

The first and certainly among the best of Methodist preachers to come to Congress was Edward Tiffin, who was a senator from Ohio from 1807 to 1809. Under the preaching of Thomas Scott, English-born Tiffin was converted at the age of 18 at Charlestown, West Virginia, in the year 1790. Immediately he began to preach, but not until two years later was he ordained by Bishop Asbury. For almost a decade he served as an itinerant. When in 1796 he moved to Chillicothe, Ohio, Thomas Scott was there, weary from hardships undergone as a circuit rider on the Kentucky frontiers.

The record of Scott and Tiffin forms the engaging story of a friendship. In the hearts of both during their youth the evangelistic flame, which never dimmed, was kindled. Both played conspicuous parts in launching Ohio upon statehood, and in directing it along a course of physical and moral greatness. Both rose to political eminence and together grew old and honored.

The quality worthy of remembrance about Edward Tiffin was that he never became so entangled with secular affairs as to neglect his first love, The Methodist Church. Having studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, he prescribed religion with medicine at the bedside of his patients. Later on weekdays as a surveyor he ran straight lines, and on Sundays from the pulpit directed his hearers to the straight and narrow way which was heavenward.

Edward Tiffin must have been rather an adroit politician to remain in public office for 30 years. He was a member and speaker of the Ohio Territorial legislature; President of the convention that formed its constitution; Governor of Ohio; United States Senator; first commissioner of the General Land Office in Washington; and for 15 years, until President Jackson ousted him, he was surveyor general of the Northwest Territory. In 1811, the year following Ed-
ward Tiffin's resignation from the Senate, Bishop Asbury, still dubious about politics, jotted down in his Journal: "Put up with our old friend, Doctor Tiffin. I was happy to find him no longer in public life." Could the Bishop have foreseen the future, it would have revealed that the Doctor had still before him nearly a score of years in political office.

In 1811 charges were preferred against Edward Tiffin and other members of the Tammany Society belonging to The Methodist Church in Chillicothe. The charge against the former senator, who as the Grand Sachem of the political organization had led the annual parade in which his fellow-Democrats had marched, was "Idolatry," and the sole specification was, "In being members of a society designated by the name of a heathen, and celebrating the anniversary of an Indian chief, Tammany, on the 13th day of May last."

A church committee, packed with Federalists who were anti-Tammanyites, suspended Tiffin, a local preacher, of all ministerial functions and expelled his alleged heathen tribesmen. The case was carried up to the annual conference where Joseph S. Collins, editor of the Scioto Gazette and a local preacher, acted as counsel for Dr. Tiffin. Under his eloquence the verdict was reversed and Dr. Tiffin was restored to his standing and privileges in the church.

When the following year Dr. Tiffin came to Washington as Commissioner of the General Land Office he brought with him as his chief clerk this same Joseph S. Collins, where he remained for 27 years. This should be of interest not only because Joseph S. Collins, who died in his 96th year, was long one of the most revered and versatile Methodists in this region, but because his son, John A. Collins, became perhaps the most eloquent and influential leader of the Baltimore Conference of his day.

Daniel Burrows

The next Methodist preacher to serve in Congress was Daniel Burrows who came as a representative from Connecticut in 1821. Our first glimpse of him is when, still under 30 years of age, he invited the Methodist Conference to hold its session in his home at New London, Connecticut, July 15, 1795. Among the little band of fewer than 20 were Bishop Asbury, George Pickering, Nicholas Snethen, and Jesse Lee. The last mentioned had for six years brought a warm breath of the South, not only to Yankee Methodism but of evangelism to the rigors of the New England doctrinal climate.

In May 1806, Bishop Asbury preached at Kelsom, Connecticut, and ordained Daniel Burrows. Fifteen years later when he arrived in the Halls of Congress, Burrows was without ministerial or political training. Previously he had served two terms in the Connecticut legislature; he had been a delegate to the State consti-
tuitional convention and a commissioner to establish the boundary between Connecticut and Massachusetts. Declining to become a candidate for reelection in 1823, he became a resident of Middletown where for 24 years he was inspector of customs for the port.

John Brodhead

We now come to the name of John Brodhead. Unlike those already mentioned, here was a Methodist preacher whom neither the honors nor emolument of public office could lure for long from his holy calling. Born in 1770 in Lower Smithfield, Pennsylvania, and educated at Stroudsburg Academy, he was received into the itinerancy in 1794 in a class of 40 in which were Henry Smith, William Beauchamp, William Kavanaugh, Lewis Garrett, and Nicholas Snethen.

Brodhead swung into the saddle and remained there during 44 years when itinerating was itinerating. He traveled circuits from Delaware to Nova Scotia, covering every New England State with Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York thrown in for good measure. He took the initiative in establishing one of the earliest Methodist educational institutions in America which later became Wilbraham Academy. He served four Districts as Presiding Elder and four times went to General Conference, which may or may not have been only a coincidence.

After 35 years in the ministry his ability, integrity, and public services had so elevated him in the esteem of the electorate of New Hampshire that he was voluntarily elected to Congress. Brodhead was a superior man. His contemporaries comment on his impressive physique, his distinguished appearance, and his sound judgment.

When he arrived in the House of Representatives in 1829, he already had served for a decade in the New Hampshire Senate and had acted repeatedly as chaplain at the State House. After two terms as congressman on Capitol Hill, he declined renomination, stating that he preferred to return to the ministry. When Judge Bell nominated him for Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and when a popular demand was made that he run for Governor, he likewise turned a deaf ear.

His daughter, who died in 1922 at the age of 107 years and eight months, had returned to Washington in 1855 as Mrs. James Pike, wife of another Methodist preacher elected to Congress.

Colquitt of Georgia

If we have made no omissions, the next Methodist preacher to come to Congress was Walter Terry Colquitt of Georgia. He was far better equipped intellectually than were his Methodist predecessors, having been graduated from Princeton University and a law school. Colquitt was never ordained, but after receiving a local preacher’s
license in 1827 at the age of 28, became famed throughout Georgia as a camp-meeting preacher. While judge of a circuit court, he never failed to open each session with prayer, and during his residence in Washington he frequently preached, the announcement of which always attracted capacity congregations.

Perhaps no other Methodist preacher was ever cast amid such turbulent legislative surroundings as was Colquitt when he entered the House in 1839. There dogged John Quincy Adams continued to throw the sessions into nothing short of violence by insisting on presenting his right of petition on slavery, and there Colquitt, an uncompromising states' rights man, usually offered objection.

Colquitt was not stubborn, but he was unusually independent. Therefore when he could not support Harrison for President, he resigned, ran on the Van Buren ticket and was reelected to the House. In 1843 when he became a senator, he entered a body where tempers already were beginning to flare over the slavery issue and partisan feeling was to run rife over the admission of Texas and the questionable justice and conduct of the War with Mexico.

For some reason, not quite clear, save that certainly it was not a dishonorable one, Senator Colquitt resigned from the Upper House in 1848. During almost a decade in Congress his record as a Christian gentleman remained untarnished. Methodists who knew the Senator almost idolized him, particularly preachers who accepted him as one of the fraternity, laughed at his wit, admired his ability, and believed in his devotion to the cause which was also theirs. When in 1855 after a display of Christian resignation seldom ever witnessed during a long and painful illness, he died at Macon, Georgia, the great statesman who remained a local preacher to the last was mourned as have been few other Georgians.

William H. Hammett

While Walter Terry Colquitt was in Congress there came to the House a former Methodist preacher whose latter career might well be omitted. He was William H. Hammett, an Irishman, whose name first appears in the Minutes when he transferred from the Tennessee to the Virginia Conference in 1822. From William W. Bennett, who knew Hammett well, I quote from Memorials of Methodism in Virginia. Of Hammett he says: "Nature had made him an orator—she lavished her gifts upon him. His person, his voice, his manner, all conspired to make him a favorite. . . . Ten years of eminently successful service, he gave to the work in Virginia. He planned and built churches, conducted revivals, and begged money for every good cause with untiring energy and merited success."

Then Bennett's description of Hammett turns to gloom. He continues: "It is sad to chronicle the fall of such a man from the high
office of an ambassador of Christ. A cloud rests on the latter life of this man, which reflects scarcely a ray of light.” What that cloud was he does not say other than that “he became a spoiled child,” and that after a few years’ visit to Ireland, he returned, studied medicine, moved to Mississippi “where he married a lady of position and fortune.” There he leaves him, save to add that “he quaffed the full chalice of worldly pleasure as if he had never tasted the cup of salvation.”

The fact that from 1832 to 1834 Hammett was Chaplain of the University of Virginia and of the State House of Delegates, and that he served as Chaplain of the House of Representatives during the second session of the Twenty-second Congress, and that 10 years later he was elected to Congress, causes one to wonder if the historians deal charitably enough with this gifted Methodist preacher. There is a story that during the final service in Old Trinity Church, Richmond, which had been built during Hammett’s ministry, a saintly man arose and suggested that prayer be offered for the restoration to grace of the beloved builder. A stranger sat unobserved, far in the rear beside a door. He was William H. Hammett, the object of the fervent prayers offered during the melancholy scene. Observing the lighted church from a hotel where he was stopping while en route from Washington to Mississippi, the former pastor, now a congressman, had dropped in out of curiosity. A beautiful sequel to the story is that so impressed was he with the supplications in his behalf that upon his arrival at his home he united with the church.

Senter of Tennessee

It is pleasing to turn now to William Tandy Senter, a Tennessean, and a member of the Holston Conference who was a member of the House during the same period Hammett was there, 1843-1845, as a congressman. For wherever William Senter dwelt, whether within or without the Halls of Congress, there was a sphere of integrity, wholesomeness, and Christian influence. During the three years following his admission into the Holston Conference in 1824 following his marriage to the daughter of a well-known and highly respected local preacher, George White, the tall, eloquent, and persuasive preacher made such a reputation in addressing congregations that when the Whigs were in search of a candidate who could beat the opposition in the First Congressional District, they turned to William Senter. Asked why he did not stand for reelection, he is said to have replied that Congress was no place for a Methodist preacher. But the virus or fever of politics ran in the veins of his son, DeWitt Clinton Senter, who was elected Governor of Tennessee, even as it also did in those of the son of Walter T. Colquitt who became Governor Alfred Holt Colquitt of Georgia.
Samuel Brenton, born in Kentucky in 1810, arrived on Capitol Hill about forty years later as a Whig member from Indiana. He was ordained in 1830 and served as an itinerant preacher for a dozen years, being compelled to locate twice owing to ill health. He was a member of the Indiana State Legislature for three years and for an equal length of time the register of the Land Office at Fort Wayne. Before coming to Congress he was President of Fort Wayne College, a Methodist institution. He was a man of frail health who died soon after entering upon his third term in Congress.

Methodist Chaplains

Inasmuch as already reference has been made to William H. Hammett who served as chaplain of the House in 1832, and because later the career of another chaplain will be reviewed, it may be well to digress for a brief consideration of other occupants of this high office. While neither members of Congress nor officially of any political party, chaplains are supposed to be uncompromisingly partisan—they are always on the Lord's side.

Speculation over how much politics can or should be voiced in prayer lies beyond the scope of this paper. However, we have stories of two rather queer Methodists who were weighed in the balance of devotional discretion and found wanting. In a Baltimore church during the War of 1812, that eccentric Methodist preacher, Jacob Gruber, once prayed as follows: "O Lord, bless King George, convert him, and take him to heaven, as we want no more of him." And the Century Magazine of August, 1888, relates how Father Taylor, the Sailor Preacher of Bethel Chapel, Boston, finally capitulated to his prejudices in favor of a Whig candidate as in salty seaman's language he prayed: "O Lord, give us good men to rule over us, just men, temperance men, Christian men, men who... But O Lord, what's the use of veering, hauling and pointing all around the compass? Give us George N. Briggs for Governor!"

From Jesse Lee in 1815 to Frederick Brown Harris, 12 Methodist preachers have served as chaplains of the Senate. Two of these, Jesse Lee and William H. Milburn, the blind chaplain, also were chaplains of the House. Fifteen Methodists beginning with Thomas Lyell in 1800 to James Shera Montgomery, have acted as chaplains of the House of Representatives. Dr. Montgomery, who established a record of 27 years of active service in that office, was Chaplain Emeritus at the time of his death on June 30, 1952. Among these 27 Methodist chaplains to the Congress have been eloquent preachers like H. B. Bascom and Thomas H. Stockton, John N. Maffitt and George G. Cookman. And be it said to the credit of all, that while men may speak of "the lost prestige of the Congress" they make exception to those who have filled the high spiritual office of chaplain.
Although not a member of Congress in the strictest sense, it may be of interest to consider Henry Clay Dean, a foundling, who after being admitted to the Fayette County bar abandoned it for the pulpit. He became one of Virginia’s most eloquent preachers, but when the Church divided over the slavery issue, Dean, with his preaching ardor dampened, drifted into Iowa and settled on a one-thousand-acre farm. His vitriolic denunciation of Lincoln led to his being driven from Iowa to Putnam County, Missouri, where he named his large estate, “Rebel’s Cove,” and became one of the most notable criminal lawyers of that State.

As far as is known, Mr. Dean never gave his reason for leaving Pennsylvania but he did for leaving Iowa. These he summed up as follows: “The Black Republicans came into power in Iowa; they enacted the nefarious prohibition law, there was whisky gone; they abolished capital punishment, there was hanging gone; now they are drifting into Universalism, there is hell gone. I will not live in a State that does not believe in whisky, hanging, and hell.” And so Mr. Dean set out for Missouri in a huff.

Since the above was written, I have read not a little about Henry Clay Dean. One of the best character studies of this genius appeared in The Kansas City Times shortly after Dean’s death which occurred on February 6, 1887. It was written by John N. Edwards, himself a genius subject to the woes and vicissitudes that often befall such intellects. After reviewing the many gifts of this versatile man as preacher, lawyer, politician, lecturer, author, and farmer, he says, “Dean was mighty in invective, but it was the invective which came at an adversary with a club.” He attributed Dean’s failure as a politician to his inability to organize a fighting machine, explaining it thus: “Not a few have been the magnificent structures he has erected, only to burn them down, or blow them up in a moment of spleen, or disgust, or uncontrollable indignation.” But he adds of Dean, the warrior: “For a hot fight under a black flag, where for the wounded there was no surgeon and for the dead no sepulcher, he was incomparable.”

Edwards also writes of Dean’s library of 10,000 volumes which was unequaled in Missouri. That the owner made good use of it is seen in this statement: Dean’s “reading was vast, his information almost superhuman, and if such a thing could be possible, or even half-way possible, he had, as it were, the whole recorded history of the world stowed in his mind, and ready to be summoned for any purpose at his bidding.”

When Henry Clay Dean came to Washington as chaplain of the Thirty-fourth Congress, his ministerial titles had been replaced by those of “Colonel” and “The Orator of Rebel’s Cove.” Across in the
House were four Methodist ministers turned lawmakers—Sidney Dean, Samuel Brenton, James Pike, and Mark Trafton. Among Methodist laymen who heard Chaplain Dean's prayers were Senators Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr., of Alabama, Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter of Virginia, and Robert Toombs of Georgia.

While prayer was offered, memories of other dear and distant supplications probably came to a gentleman present at each opening of the Senate. He was Asbury Dickins, Secretary of the Senate, who, from the lips of his father, the Reverend John Dickins, and from those of many another of the Founding Fathers, had heard morning prayers offered at many a throne of grace.

Only mention can be made here of Delazon Smith who in 1837 published "A History of Oberlin College, or New Lights of the West, embracing the Conduct and Character of the Officers and Students of the Institution." The sensitive conscience of the student author got him out of Oberlin for airing alleged scandals, and into the Methodist ministry. In 1859 he took the oath as a senator from Oregon.

William Gannoway Brownlow was once a North Carolina circuit rider. Eventually this horseman of the Lord changed steeds and rode into political office. In 1869 he dismounted in Washington a senator from Tennessee.

Homer Virgil Milton Miller, whose name should have detained him on Mount Olympus, came to Capitol Hill from Georgia in 1871. Because of the brevity of his senatorial course "The Demosthenes of the Mountains," as he was known to Georgians, was soon back home preaching to Methodist congregations.

And Thomas Warren Tilton ordained to the Methodist ministry in 1859 and elected to the Senate from Nebraska in 1867 left a trail of political and ecclesiastical wanderings.

These gentlemen were senators. Among those who have answered "Here" to roll calls in annual conferences and also in the House of Representatives are the following: William McComas of Virginia, William Anderson Pile of Missouri, Nathaniel Green Taylor and Leonidas Campbell Houk of Tennessee, Gilbert De Lamatyr of Indiana, Jesse Hale Moore of Illinois.

Some Conclusions

Perhaps from this incomplete review of the careers of Methodist preachers in politics these conclusions may be drawn:

First, no member of an annual conference who went to Congress stayed long or accomplished much. On Capitol Hill they were rather lonely and ineffective figures suspected of being out of place by their colleagues. Their presence in Congress has not noticeably
strengthened that body, nor their absences proved calamitous to their conferences.

Second, these preachers left Congress wiser but sadder men. In the preaching fraternity there are usually a few brethren with a propensity to fish in troubled waters. Those who have turned from the vocation of being "fishers of men" to letting down their nets on Capitol Hill constitute a company of disappointed gentlemen. A few who preferred the call of the electorate to the call of God came upon stark tragedy.

Even those motivated by the desire to serve their country were brought face to face with this fact—from the pulpit they had the high opportunity to establish moral righteousness through transformation of character, but from the floors of Congress they were obliged to seek controls not by changing character but by enacting laws. Of course Americans do outgrow their laws just as they do the use of candles and spinning wheels, buggy whips and bed warmers.