TRAVELING PREACHER AND SETTLED FARMER

by Joseph Mitchell

On Saturday, June 1, 1844, 51 men gathered in the lecture room of the Green Street Methodist Church, New York City. For one month they had been engaged in a verbal battle whose repercussions would resound for more than a hundred years. Their soft, slurring voices had become strident with indignation and anger. A crushing blow had just fallen upon their heads: one of their leaders had been virtually read out of the church to which all of them had given years of loyal service, and the first item of business before them was the appointment of a committee to draft a resolution expressing their sympathy for Bishop James Osgood Andrew of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The men who met in that lecture room were the delegates from the slaveholding states to the 1844 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A few minutes earlier the conference had adopted by a vote of 110 to 68 a motion by James B. Finley and Joseph M. Trimble of the Ohio Annual Conference which called upon Bishop Andrew to "desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment [slave-holding] remains." [1]

The story of the 1844 General Conference has been told and retold, but recent extensive research in United States census reports, court records, memoirs, conference journals, and biographies suggests that too much attention has been paid to the debates and too little to the debaters. It seems clear that the men who gathered in the Green Street Church lecture room were southerners first, farmers with families to support second, and theologically-untrained ministers third.

When the General Conference convened in May, 1844, the states which would make up the Confederacy and the border states of Kentucky and Missouri were represented by 52 men. One of these delegates, John Clark of Texas, had been in the South for only three years; he not only voted against the South in this historic conference, he did not return to the South after the conference adjourned.[2] Of the remaining 51 delegates, at least 42 were born in the South and they, along with most of the nine who were outsiders, spent their formative years in the South.[3] Since only six of them

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[1] *Journal of the General Conference* 1844, pp. 65-66.

[2] See Clark's Memoir in *Minutes of the Rock River Conference, 1854*. Clark was one of the men instrumental in establishing Garrett Biblical Institute.

[3] The nine "outsiders" with their Conferences and places of birth were: Jefferson Hamilton, Alabama, Massachusetts; Andrew Hunter, Arkansas, Ireland; Henry B. Bascom, Kentucky, New York; Benjamin T. Crouch, Kentucky, Delaware; William Winans, Mississippi, Pennsylvania; W. W. Redman, Missouri, Indiana; Samuel Dunwody, South Carolina, Pennsylvania; Hugh A. C. Walker, South Carolina, Ireland; Thomas Maddin, Tenn., Pa.

were born prior to 1790, the years in which they came to maturity were the very years in which the South became a self-conscious minority.[4] Recall that the Missouri Compromise was adopted in 1820 while the Nullification Controversy filled the air in 1823-33. These were the debates which had educated them. Undoubtedly the trip to New York for the conference of 1844 was, for many of them, the first prolonged exposure to another section of the country, and they were far too engrossed in conference affairs to learn much from that visit. If these southerners had experienced the advantage of extensive formal education, the narrowness of their viewpoint might have been expanded, but only four of the 51 had had any college training, and only one of them, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, a graduate of Yale, had gone outside the South for his higher education.[5] Forty-seven of these men had received only a rudimentary formal education, capped by exposure to a two-year course of study which the General Conference of 1816 had instructed the bishops to provide for the Annual Conferences. But, as William R. Cannon has pointed out in the recently published *History of American Methodism,* there was a wide gap between this disciplinary provision and its enforcement; quite often the men appointed to examine the new candidates on their studies had not themselves read the assigned books, and no one failed.[6] Even if a minister had been serious about his studies, and certainly some of them were, the assigned books would not have led them to question the foundations of the society which had given them birth; the aim of the volumes was to help them preach better sermons on spiritual subjects. The men who spoke for the Methodists of the South, then, were native southerners with little if any more education than the thousands for whom they spoke.

The total immersion of these men in the southern way of life is seen even more clearly when one studies the kind of dual vocational roles which most of them played. In the early years of American Methodism, Asbury's circuit riders were single men who wore themselves out carrying the gospel to the remote corners of the United States; they had only one master—Asbury, and one responsibility—to preach the gospel. If they married, they located and returned to the agricultural society from which they had come. But during the years just before and after Asbury's death in 1816 there was a radical change in the Methodist ministry. There were new "masters"

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[4] The oldest southern delegate, Samuel Dunwody, was born in 1780; other delegates born before 1790 were: Lovick Pierce, Georgia, 1785; William McMahon, Memphis, 1785; William Winans, Mississippi, 1788; John Lane, Mississippi, 1789; and John Early, Virginia, 1786.

[5] William Capers had gone to South Carolina College, George Foster Pierce was a graduate of Franklin College (University of Georgia), and William Murrah had attended Franklin College.

[6] William R. Cannon, "Education, Publication, Benevolent Work, and Missions," in *The History of American Methodism,* Abingdon Press, 1964, Vol. I, pp. 567-568.

—and they wore skirts, and there were new responsibilities—children. But this change from a young, rootless, single clergy to an older, married, and settled ministry was not accompanied by a marked increase in ministerial stipend. As late as 1840 only $200 per year, plus certain traveling expenses and small allowances for children, was the disciplinary allowance for married preachers, and often this pittance was not paid. The man who was called to preach, and to marry, had to find additional income in order to support his family. And the men who represented the South in the 1844 General Conference were of this new generation of American Methodist ministers. All save one were married. Most of them had large families, and many, if not all, of them spent most of their time and energy in non-ministerial activities. In a word, most of them were farmer-preachers.

This claim that these men were farmer-preachers raises immediately the question: How could they serve as pastors, presiding elders, college presidents, editors, and even bishops and still have time for farming? Our answer to this question must be framed in the light of the demands placed upon the holders of these offices in the nineteenth, not the twentieth, century. The pastor of even the largest Methodist congregation in the South in 1844, and fourteen of the southern delegates had such appointments,[7] did not have to devote as much time to his work as the pastor of one of our smaller congregations today. There was almost no program of Christian education to direct. There were no Woman's Societies or men's clubs. There was no formal pastoral counseling. There were no conference programs to push and no larger building campaigns to plan. Of course, the nineteenth-century pastor had to conduct funerals and weddings, but even those functions were not as time-consuming as they are today. There were sermons to prepare but they were rarely the product of sustained periods of study and writing. The pastor visited the people, but that could be done between farm chores. If the preacher was a presiding elder, and twenty-seven of the southerners at the 1844 General Conference held that office,[8] he arranged his tours of the district and quarterly meetings according to an agri-

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[7] Jefferson Hamilton, Alabama; William Murrah, Alabama; George Foster Pierce, Georgia; William J. Parks, Georgia; John Evans, Georgia; Hibbard H. Kavanaugh, Kentucky; George W. Brush, Kentucky; Samuel S. Moody, Memphis; John Lane, Mississippi; William Patton, Missouri; Bennett T. Blake, North Carolina; Samuel Dunwody, South Carolina; Thomas Crowder, Virginia; and William A. Smith, Virginia.

[8] Jesse Boring and Greenbury Garrett, Alabama; John C. Parker, William P. Ratcliffe, and Andrew Hunter, Arkansas; John W. Glenn, Georgia; Elbert F. Sevier, Samuel Patton, and Thomas Stringfield, Holston; William Gunn, Edward Stevenson, and Benjamin T. Crouch, Kentucky; George W. D. Harris, William McMahon, and Thomas Joyner, Memphis; William Winans and Benjamin M. Drake, Mississippi; W. W. Redman and James M. Jameson, Missouri; James Jamieson and Peter Doub, North Carolina; Charles Betts and Hugh A. C. Walker, South Carolina; A. L. P. Green, and Thomas Maddin, Tennessee; Littleton Fowler, Texas; and John Early, Virginia.

cultural cycle which was just as important to him as to his fellow farmers. There were few or no committees for the presiding elder to chair or to consult with; there were few conference apportionments to be raised, and certainly there was no jangling telephone to call him to a meeting with the bishop or a group of complaining laymen. If the preacher was a college president, an editor, or a connectional man, as ten of these southerners were,[9] his time was his own. Student bodies and faculties were small, buildings were few, and the necessity for raising money was less of a grind than it is today. The editor filled his paper with announcements of camp meetings, clippings from other papers, and advertisements. Occasionally he would enter into an extended controversy with a Baptist or Presbyterian brother over an obscure point of doctrine, but most of his work was routine and allowed him plenty of time for other jobs. Certainly the bishops of the church, and seven of the southern delegates to the 1844 Conference would be elected to that office,[10] were not the busy executives that bishops are today. A tour of their Annual Conferences in the late fall and early winter occupied only a few months of the year. Their correspondence was limited. Once a year they might write an article for one of the *Advocates*. They probably preached every Sunday but a different church each time so they could use the same sermon repeatedly. They participated in certain ceremonial occasions which were dignified by their presence. The rest of their time could be devoted to farming.

This picture of the part-time ministry of the Southern Methodist Church in anti-bellum days is not the creation of an over active imagination; it is drawn from a careful examination of census records, county court records, *Advocates*, memoirs, conference journals, and biographies. Consider first Bishop James O. Andrew and three of his most ardent supporters at the 1844 Conference—Lovick Pierce, George Foster Pierce, and Robert Paine.

After his election to the episcopacy in 1832, the thirty-eight-year old Andrew and his first wife, Amelia MacFarlane, moved into a $3,000-home provided for them by the people of Augusta, Georgia. Evidently this arrangement did not prove completely satisfactory, for in 1836 they moved to Newton County in order to be near the Bishop's aging mother; within four years they had moved into a new house in Oxford, Georgia, the site of Emory College.[11] The

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[9] Lovick Pierce and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Georgia; Henry B. Bascom, Kentucky; Green M. Rogers, Mississippi; Jerome C. Berryman, Missouri; William Capers and William M. Wightman, South Carolina; Robert Paine and John B. McFerrin, Tennessee; and Leroy M. Lee, Virginia.

[10] Robert Paine, Tennessee; William Capers, South Carolina; Henry B. Bascom, Kentucky; George Foster Pierce, Georgia; John Early, Virginia; Hibbard H. Kavanaugh, Kentucky; and William M. Wightman, South Carolina.

[11] George G. Smith, *The Life and Letters of James Osgood Andrew*, Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1882, pp. 238, 288, 305.

census record for 1840 shows that the Andrew household consisted of three adults, seven children, and four slaves.[12] In 1841, Andrew's first wife died and he was left with additional domestic responsibilities; these proved to be too great for him and were one of the reasons for his marriage in early 1844 to Leonora Greenwood, a 45-year-old widow of Greensborough, Georgia. She owned 14 or 15 slaves, and this was the immediate occasion for the inquiry in the 1844 General Conference about Andrew's position with regard to slaveholding.[13] Either shortly before or after his second marriage, Bishop Andrew purchased a 550-acre farm in Newton County, Georgia, which, in 1850, was worked by 24 slaves. The size of his farm and the number of slaves in his household made Andrew a "Small Planter."[14] After the death of his second wife in 1854, Andrew deeded the remaining slaves to his and her children, and married another widow, Emily Sims Woolsey Childers; shortly after their marriage, they moved to a farm near Summerfield in Dallas County, Alabama. That farm, called Tranquila, was worked by 11 slaves in 1860.[15] Andrew's biographer says that the Bishop was neither a good master, meaning he did not know how to discipline his slaves, nor a successful farmer,[16] but the fact of the matter is that for most of his years in the episcopacy Andrew farmed, and he would not have been able to rear his large family had he not been somewhat successful in that vocation. Andrew, then, was clearly a farmer-bishop and his views were often no more enlightened than his fellow farmers; he was a slaveholding bishop whose financial security depended in no small degree on this "peculiar institution."

Two of Bishop Andrew's closest friends and strongest supporters

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[12] United States Census, 1840, Newton County, Georgia. Microfilm copies of the original census schedules from 1840 to 1880 are available in the Library of the University of North Carolina. The census for 1840 gives the name of the head of each family, arranged according to location in the census district, and the number of free white males and females, and slaves (male and female) by age groups.

[13] Charles Elliott, *History of the Great Secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Year 1845, Eventuating in the Organization of the New Church, Entitled the "Methodist Episcopal Church, South,"* Swormstedt and Poe, 1855, pp. 1030-31. William Warren Sweet has incorrectly stated that Mrs. Greenwood had inherited five slaves from her first husband's estate. (See *Virginia Methodism: A History*, Whittet & Shepperson, 1955, p. 219). He has evidently confused Andrew's case with the case of Francis Harding of the Baltimore Conference which was heard just prior to the debate on the bishop's slaveholding. That the larger number is correct is substantiated by a careful comparison of the census records of Bishop Andrew for 1840 and 1850. See United States Census, 1840, Newton County, Georgia; and United States Census, 1850, Schedules I, II, and IV for Newton County, Georgia. Schedule I includes the names of all the householders and their families; Schedule II lists the slaveholders with their slaves designated by age, sex, and color. Schedule IV includes information about size, value, and products of farms.

[14] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I, II, and IV, Newton County, Georgia. The word "planter" has no precise meaning; some scholars would designate any slaveholder who had less than 20 "adult" slaves as a "farmer" and all above that number "planter."

[15] Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 337, 440. United States Census, 1860, Schedules I and II, Dallas County, Alabama.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 474.

in the 1844 General Conference were his protegé, George Foster Pierce, and George's father, Lovick Pierce, the longtime leader of Georgia Methodism. A native of Georgia, the senior Pierce was a member of 12 General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A study of his pastoral appointments suggests that they were often minimal assignments which permitted him to retain his standing in the Annual Conference and, at the same time, supervise the work of his farm in Muscogee County, Georgia, an operation which was worked by eight slaves in 1850.[17] It was Lovick Pierce, a farmer-preacher, who gave such eloquent voice to the southern argument that slavery was a civil matter, not to be interfered with by the church: "Could you uncap hell, and expose the misery of the damned, you would this moment hear the groans of those who were driven from the M. E. Church, and consequently lost their souls in consequence of an attempt to enforce an anti-slavery *Discipline*. It is a civil matter; and to attempt to make it a subject of discipline, is to interfere with civil affairs." [18] The son's dual role as farmer and preacher is even clearer than the father's. As early as 1840 George Foster Pierce owned four slaves; [19] by 1850, when he was in his second year as president of Emory College, he was the owner of 10 slaves, and it is certain that some of them were engaged in farm labor.[20] But it was following his election to the episcopacy in 1854 that Pierce came into his own as a farmer. Shortly after that event he bought a 900-acre plantation, which he called "Sunshine," in Hancock County, Georgia. That this $9,000-farm, with its 18 slaves, was not simply a showpiece but a working plantation, is clearly indicated by the 1860 agricultural census. In addition to providing grazing land for livestock valued at $4,900, the farm produced 40 bushels of wheat, 1,000 bushels of corn, 20 bales of ginned cotton, 300 bushels of sweet potatoes, 100 bushels of peas and beans, eight tons of hay, three gallons of wine, and lesser amounts of wool, Irish potatoes, and butter.[21] The bishop's farming prowess was described by George Frederick Mellen in *The Methodist Review* for April, 1921. It was the farmer-preacher Pierce, when he was the thirty-three-year-old

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[17] Pierce, from 1839 to 1860, served appointments as presiding elder of the Columbus District, agent for the American Bible Society, agent for Sunday schools, conference missionary, and mission pastor. See *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1839-1844,* and *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1845-1860.* United States Census, 1850, Schedules II and IV, Muscogee County, Georgia.

[18] Luther Lee and E. Smith, *The Debates of the General Conference of the M.E. Church, May 1844, To Which is Added a Review of the Proceedings of Said Conference, Published* by O. Scott, for the Wesleyan Connection of America, 1845, p. 119.

[19] United States Census, 1840, Bibb County, Georgia.

[20] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I and II, Newton County, Georgia.

[21] United States Census, 1860, Schedules I, II and IV, Hancock County, Georgia.

head of the Georgia delegation to the 1844 General Conference, who angered many of his opponents in that conference with his emotional outburst: "Let New England secede: I would to God she would secede rather than let that resolution pass, and the whole South be ruined! Let them all go! What is New England that she should demand so much at our hands? She has been a thorn in the flesh for the last twenty years—the messenger of Satan to buffet us." [22] During the Civil War, Pierce gave almost no attention to his episcopal duties but spent his time and energy in making his farm as productive as possible. Thus it appears that he was at least a "small planter" and his views on southern institutions were those of his fellow planters.

One of the leading delegates to the 1844 General Conference, later also a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was not merely a "small planter" but one of the thousand leading planters in the State of Mississippi. Robert Paine was born in Person County, North Carolina; shortly after his birth his family moved to Giles County, Tennessee, where his father became the proud owner of a fine plantation. Paine's conversion and admission into the Tennessee Annual Conference did not end his now budding career as a farmer; in fact, the traveling which he did as a minister of the gospel probably gave him additional opportunities to survey possible locations for a plantation he would like one day to own. At the time of the 1844 General Conference, the 45-year old Paine was president of La-Grange College in north Alabama, and was also the leading member of the Tennessee Conference. He already owned 24 slaves and extensive property in Davidson County, Tennessee and Franklin County, Alabama.[23] In 1846, the year he was elected a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at its first General Conference in Petersburg, Virginia, Paine bought some land near Aberdeen in Monroe County, Mississippi. Soon thereafter he and his family moved to that rich country where the plantations were large, the slaves numerous, and the prospects of wealth great. Within a few years Paine had moved into a magnificent mansion in Aberdeen, which he called "Mingo," the Indian word for chief. The mansion, one of the loveliest homes in the region, is still owned by one of the bishop's descendants.[24] The bishop and his family lived in Aberdeen, but he

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[22] Lee and Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[23] United States Census, 1840, Franklin County, Alabama. See the Land Deed Books for Davidson County, Tennessee in the Courthouse, Nashville, Tennessee for the records of Paine's property.

[24] The source of this information is Miss Lucille Peacock, Librarian, Evans Memorial Library, Aberdeen, Mississippi. In a letter to the writer, February 1, 1966, she quotes from Eugene Lanier Sykes, Sr., "Historic Aberdeen Homes," "The home and 25-acre place of Bishop Robert Paine of the Southern Methodist Church was built in 1847 by Mrs. Paine's uncle, the Rev. Turner Saunders. The property was purchased by him from Chief James of the Chickasaw Indians." The home is presently owned by the Bishop's grandson, Thomas Fite Paine; it is located near the intersection of Matubba and Jefferson Streets in Aberdeen, Mississippi.

spent much of his time supervising the 52 slaves who worked his 3,100-acre plantation just a few miles outside the village.[25] By 1860 the Bishop had sold or traded some of his land, but the 1,157 acres which he still owned were valued at $52,000, more than three times the value placed on the larger farm by the census enumerator in 1850. In 1860 Paine's plantation yielded 5,000 bushels of corn, 310 bales of cotton, 800 bushels of sweet potatoes, and smaller amounts of wheat, rye, oats, and Irish potatoes. Eighty slaves provided the labor necessary for such an operation, making Paine's slaveholdings greater than all but about one thousand of his fellow Mississippi planters.[26] The bishop was no absentee owner; a careful study of his biography, which is, in part at least, based on Paine's own diary, reveals that he normally left on his episcopal rounds late in September and returned early in February; this meant that he was at home during the seven or eight months when his direct oversight of his farming interests was essential.[27] During the time he was at home, Paine probably devoted few hours to episcopal labor but many to the task of running his large plantation. Throughout the years of the Civil War Bishop Paine rarely left Mississippi. On one of his trips he carried a request from his fellow planters to President Jefferson Davis for increased protection against the invading Federal forces; his plea, though it went unheeded, probably carried more weight with the president of the Confederate States because of his position as an important planter whose crops were a necessity for the Confederacy's continued existence than because of his office as a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.[28] It was not until after the Civil War, when Paine was left practically penniless, that he began to give anything like a major portion of his time to his episcopal responsibilities. Without doubt, Paine was a planter-preacher, and his views even before the 1844 General Conference were those of the "Southern Aristocracy."

While Andrew, the two Pierces, and Paine were not altogether typical of the southerners at the 1844 General Conference, the stories of the other delegates follow much the same general pattern. They, too, gave much, if not most, of their time to farming and other business interests. Consider briefly seven other members of that historic General Conference. Alexander L. P. Green, a close friend of Robert Paine, was presiding elder of the Nashville District in 1844. In fact, most of his years in the ministry were spent presiding over the districts around Nashville; and most of his time was given to the 250-

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[25] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I, II, and IV, Western District, Monroe County, Mississippi. See also the Deed Books, Monroe County Courthouse, Aberdeen, Mississippi.

[26] United States Census, 1860, Schedules, I, II, and IV, Western District, Monroe County, Mississippi.

[27] R. H. Rivers, *The Life of Robert Paine*, Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1916, *passim*.

[28] *War of the Rebellion. Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Vol. 52, Part II, pp. 461-463.

acre farm which he owned in Davidson County, and which, in 1850, was worked by 14 slaves.[29] Green was not only a farmer and a preacher, but also a dealer in real estate, as deeds recorded in the Davidson County Courthouse clearly reveal.[30] That he was a successful businessman is demonstrated by the fact that just before his death in 1874, he disposed of property, to various members of his family, worth in excess of $85,000.[31] His home had long been one of the showplaces of Nashville to which both poor preachers and leading citizens of the city and state were equally welcome.

One of the few really large slaveholders at the 1844 General Conference who did not make a speech was William Murrah of Alabama. As early as 1850, Murrah, the father of Bishop Willam B. Murrah of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was the proud father of four girls (the future bishop was not born until 1852), and the owner of 34 slaves who worked his large farm in Pickens County, in western Alabama.[32] A study of Murrah's ministerial appointments reveals that most of them were arranged so that he could spend much of his time at home.

In contrast to Murrah's silence at the 1844 General Conference was the outspokenness of William Winans of the Mississippi Conference. Winans was, without doubt, one of the most ardent advocates of the southern cause, even though he was a native of Pennsylvania. He was a successful planter, whose farm in Wilkinson County was worth more than $8,000 in 1850 and was worked by 35 slaves.[33] Winans campaigned as early as 1832 for a slaveholding bishop; on several occasions he expressed the conviction that ministers ought to be slaveholders in order to be in a position to set examples of kindness in the treatment of the Negroes.[34]

Two other delegates from Mississippi were not quite as outspoken in their support of slavery as Winans, but even so they were as deeply involved in the institution as he. By 1840, William McMahon, a native of Virginia, serving in the Memphis Conference, was the father of six children and the owner of 30 slaves;[35] ten years later, he had two more children and a total of 44 slaves working a farm valued at $15,000.[36] At the Louisville Convention of 1845, McMahon declared that he had labored specially to promote the salvation of

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[29] See Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the M.E. Church, South, 1845-1860, *passim*. United States Census, 1850, Schedules I, II, Davidson County, Tennessee. See also, William M. Green, *Life and Letters of A. L. P. Green*.

[30] Davidson County Land Books from 1835 to 1874, Davidson County Courthouse, Nashville, Tennessee.

[31] Davidson County Deed Book No. 51, page 633. The transactions were recorded on September 26, 1874, two months after Green's death on July 25, 1874.

[32] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I and II, Pickens County, Alabama.

[33] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I and II, Wilkinson County, Miss.

[34] Lee and Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 116, 221.

[35] United States Census, 1840, DeSoto County, Mississippi.

[36] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I and II, DeSoto County, Mississippi.

the African race and he really thought the "negroes loved him as well as they loved Bishop Andrew." [37] Perhaps the fact that he owned more Negroes than Andrew had something to do with this statement. John Lane, another native of Virginia, had transferred to the Mississippi Conference from South Carolina in 1816. Shortly thereafter, he located, serving for 10 years as probate judge of Warren County; during his years on the bench, Lane accumulated enough money to return to the traveling ministry and to buy a farm near Vicksburg.[38] By 1850, his farm was worth at least $10,000 and was cultivated by a slave force of 25 men, women, and children.[39]

The unprofessional character of the ministry in 1844 was symbolized by the presence at the General Conference of a delegate from Georgia who had been a member of the Annual Conference for only six years. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet was well known throughout the United States as the author of *Georgia Scenes;* he was better known in his home state as a successful lawyer who had recently "gotten religion" and become one of the leading spokesmen of Georgia Methodism. Longstreet's ordination was not preceded by a long period of preparation, but it was followed by a rapid rise to the top of the Annual Conference; only one year after entering the conference, he was made president of Emory College, a position he held until he was elected to the presidency of the University of Mississippi in 1849.[40] But service as president of educational institutions, and membership in the Georgia Annual Conference, did not prevent Longstreet from dabbling in real estate and adding to the sizable fortune which he had accumulated as an author, lawyer, and husband of a wealthy wife. While he was president of the University of Mississippi, one man, hearing that he was threatening to resign the office, wrote to the governor of Mississippi that "old Longstreet is making money too fast for him to be induced to resign." [41] That there was some basis for that observation is suggested by a study of the court records in Oxford, Mississippi, which reveal Longstreet buying and selling property for a period of 20 years. Soon after he moved to Oxford to become president of the university, he was living in a $23,000-home which was cared for by 10 slaves.[42] Longstreet, then, was not simply giving free rein to his oratorical bent when he declared on the floor of the 1844 General Conference: "If slaveholding disqualifies him [Andrew] for the office of bishop,

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[37] Lee and Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

[38] William B. Sprague, ed. *Annals of the American Pulpit: Commemorative Notices of Distinguished Clergymen,* Vol. VII: *Methodists,* pp. 556-561.

[39] United States Census, 1850, Schedules I and II, Warren County, Mississippi.

[40] J. D. Wade, "Augustus Baldwin Longstreet," *Dictionary of American Biography,* Vol. XI.

[41] James Allen Cabaniss, *A History of the University of Mississippi,* Univ. of Miss., 1949, p. 32. See Deed Books, Lafayette County Courthouse, Oxford, Mississippi, 1849-1870.

[42] United States Census, 1850 Schedules I and II, Lafayette County, Miss.

it disqualifies him for a ministry; and if it disqualifies him it disqualifies us all and our constitutional rights must stand or fall with him: and can we expect to be silent and see him crushed knowing that we must be the victims of the next motion of the wheel." [43]

Unlike Longstreet in many ways, but with the same acute business sense, was John B. McFerrin of the Tennessee Annual Conference. A native of Tennessee, McFerrin was admitted on trial in 1825; after serving for a few years in the preaching ministry, he became editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* and its successor the *Nashville Christian Advocate*, a position he held until 1858 when he was made publishing agent of the church. Each of these last three positions enabled McFerrin to carry on other interests in and around Nashville, including the buying and selling of real estate and the managing of a 60-acre farm in the Edgefield section of Davidson County, a farm that was worth $12,000 in 1850 and was worked by 10 slaves.[44] That McFerrin's business judgment was good is suggested by the facts that his farm was worth $40,000 in 1870 and that, at his death in 1887, he owned stocks and bonds worth more than $13,000.[45] When McFerrin defended the southern way of life in the columns of the *Advocate* he was supporting institutions in which he had considerable personal interest.

Two other figures will suggest that the pictures which have been painted of these eleven men may be representative of most, if not all, of the southern delegates to the 1844 General Conference. According to the census records for 1850, 34 of the 47 delegates to the 1844 General Conference who were still living in the South, owned a total of 422 slaves. Included in this group were five men who owned 20 or more slaves,[46] 12 who owned between 10 and 19 slaves,[47] and 17 who owned less than 10.[48] At a conservative evaluation of $500 per

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[43] Lee and Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

[44] O. P. Fitzgerald, *John B. McFerrin*, Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1889, *passim*. United States Census, 1850, Schedules I and II, Edgefield, Davidson County, Tennessee.

[45] United States Census, 1870, Schedule IV, Davidson County, Tennessee. McFerrin's will is recorded in Book 29, Feb. 1886—Aug. 1888, pp. 364-67, of the Will Books of Davidson County, Tennessee; the Inventory is in Book 30, Aug. 24, 1888—March 27, 1891, pp. 243, 251.

[46] These figures come from a study of Schedules I and II of the United States Census for the home counties of the delegates; no records could be found for twelve of the remaining thirteen delegates and the other one, Andrew Hunter of Arkansas, was not listed as a slaveholder, the five men who owned twenty or more were: Paine, Tennessee, 52; McMahon, Memphis, 44; Winans, Mississippi, 35; Murrah, Alabama, 34; and Lane, Mississippi, 25.

[47] Drake, Mississippi, 18; Glenn, Georgia, 18; Early, Virginia, 16; Parker, Arkansas, 15; Joyner, Memphis, 13; Sevier, Holston, 11; Stringfield, Holston, 11; Blake, North Carolina, 11; Dunwody, South Carolina, 11; G. F. Pierce, Georgia, 10; Longstreet, Georgia, 10; and McFerrin, Tennessee, 10.

[48] Parks, Georgia, 9; L. Pierce, Georgia, 8; Capers, South Carolina, 8; Garrett, Alabama, 6; Smith, Virginia, 6; Betts, South Carolina, 6; Evans, Georgia, 5; Bascom, Kentucky, 4; Wightman, South Carolina, 4; Hamilton, Alabama, 3; Patton, Holston, 3; Rogers, Mississippi, 3; Jamieson, North Carolina, 3; Green, Tennessee, 3; Lee, Virginia, 3; Ratcliffe, Arkansas, 2; and Crowder, Virginia, 2.

slave, these preachers, who were paid by the church no more than $200 a year, owned slaves worth more than $200,000. Most of them, according to the same census records, owned farms on which they, their families, and these slaves worked. That it was necessary for these men to be farmers as well as ministers is understood when one notes that in the same year of 1850 each one had on the average to support a wife and four children, as well as to care for his own needs.[49]

The resolution of sympathy which the southern delegates to the 1844 General Conference adopted on behalf of Bishop Andrew also epitomized their own situation and it described the threat against them posed by the action of the majority of that body: "With him [Bishop Andrew], in these proceedings, we have had a common interest; and success, in his Suspension from office, on account of the matter alleged against him, would, in effect, be the disfranchisement of every Minister among us connected with Slavery. Hence, with him must fall, if he fall, the whole Southern Church. Nay with him must fall the *Discipline* of the Methodist E. Church. This cause, then, is the cause of the South, of the Church, of the *Discipline*." [50] It was no mere slip of the pen which placed "the South" at the head of the causes which were administered a blow by the action of the 1844 General Conference. These men understood clearly that they—southern farmer-preachers—no longer had a place in such a church.

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[49] Compiled from Census Records and Memoirs.

[50] The original copy of this resolution is in the Bishop Eugene R. Hendrix Manuscripts, Duke University.