On the eve of the trial of John T. Scopes, William Jennings Bryan is said to have sought assistance—perhaps in the form of expert testimony—from Warren Akin Candler, a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Candler turned Bryan down. As the story goes, Bryan then asked, "But, Bishop, aren't you opposed to all these new-fangled ideas?"
"Some of them," was the Bishop's response. Bryan pursued, "Then why won't you join me in this fight?"
"Because," answered Candler, "in that case we both would be wasting our time." ¹

This incident, while probably apocryphal, remains quite representative of Candler's attitude toward Bryan's efforts at Dayton. He belittled the encounter between Bryan and Darrow as much as he could. The issues were far too grave to rely upon such a spectacle. When fighting to preserve essential institutions, it was clearly foolish to stake everything on a trial court which lacked the authority and ability to rule on the veracity of the theory of evolution, yet, when reported in the press, might convey to readers the impression that it could reach such a determination. In articles written for both the secular and ecclesiastical press, Candler stressed the limited nature of the Scopes case. Only two points were involved: "(1) the validity of the law passed by the Legislature of Tennessee, and (2) whether the defendant has violated the statute." Neither the validity of the theory of evolution nor "even the wisdom of the law" were in question.²

Candler offered the conservative analysis. To him and those of like mind the Scopes trial merely exemplified a rather ill conceived episode in the continuing battle against evolution and modernism, science and materialism; a battle undertaken by well-meaning Christians with perhaps too much aridity and insufficient tactical judgment. To individuals of a liberal bent, the "monkey trial" took on a far deeper meaning. It came to signify a grotesque caricature of the fundamentalist mentality—rural, illiterate, southern, blindly literalist in religion and doggedly opposed to the findings of modern science and learning. Scopes' attorneys had been highly successful in what they had

¹. "Bishop Candler; Church and College Leader Dies at 84," Atlanta Constitution, September 26, 1941.
attempted: "awakening the country to what was going on." As Clarence Darrow put it in his autobiography, "Everyone had been informed that a body of men and women were seeking to make the schools the servants of the church, and to place bigotry and ignorance on the throne." 3

Study of a representative individual, Warren Akin Candler, suggests that the conservatives had their own image of the liberal of the 1920s and that they believed the crime and subsequent trial of Leopold and Loeb brought the evils of the modernist persuasion into bold relief.

Warren A. Candler (1857-1941) was a conservative bishop of the southern Methodist church. In theology he followed certain fundamentals, or first principles which were not subject to rational analysis. Rather, they were to be accepted literally by faith. He considered the Scriptures inerrant and ardently defended the divinity of Christ. During the 1920s he wrote constantly on the necessity of maintaining unadulterated creeds and railed against the liberal modernists whom, in their support of biblical criticism and evolution, he felt were attacking his religion. Those who would place the Bible under the scientist's microscope he deemed misleading and misled. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, the bishop assured his readers that the findings of science ultimately would confirm the Bible. In 1921, Candler presented the Quillian Lectures and six years later the Jarrell Lectures at Emory University, a school he had founded and served as first chancellor.4 Both sets of lectures can be read as manuals of Christian faith in opposition to modernism. When Charles Stelzle requested a selection for a volume entitled _If I Had Only One Sermon to Preach_, Candler submitted evidences for what he considered the most essential miracle, Christ's resurrection.5 His Sunday school magazine articles written periodically through the decade, his weekly articles for the Atlanta _Journal_, and pieces offered to the church press testify to the bishop's conservative theological assumptions.6 Here was a man who taught and believed in individual salvation, personal morality

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4. Reprinted as _The Christ and the Creed_ (Nashville: 1927) and _The Kingdom of God's Dear Son_ (Nashville, Dallas and Richmond: 1921), respectively.


6. _Sunday School Magazine_, April 1924 to April 1926.
and revealed religion. He felt that he was fighting to preserve traditional Methodism, a Methodism he saw rapidly dying with the passing generation of bishops. Stringent conservative on the defensive, only the flexibility of Methodist theology and his own modern attitude against hunting heretics removed him from the camp of outright Fundamentalists.

In social and intellectual views, too, Warren Candler provided a conservative rallying point. He believed in a natural organic order to society. Each person and group held a place within this order which could not be tampered with lightly. Whites were above blacks, Anglo-Saxons above Latins and Orientals, men above women, employers above employees. This is not to say that one was superior to another in terms of rights, but rather that they had different abilities and, therefore, different responsibilities. In the genteel ethos espoused by Candler, those above aided those below and directed their efforts while those below acted harmoniously as they strove to fulfill their more limited capabilities.

In accord with his philosophy, Candler rejected union of northern and southern Methodism at least partly because black bishops would have been involved in the supervision of white ministers at the same time as he opposed the Ku Klux Klan and lynching and supported the founding of a college with a liberal arts curriculum to train black teachers and leaders. He organized foreign missions to Christianize other nations and races but often placed native leaders in charge. He placed women on a pedestal as he rejected their entrance into politics, church organization, and the professions. Deriding strikes, Candler also castigated the wealthy for conspicuous consumption and a lack of social conscience. In each of these relationships harmony and order, responsibility and prerogative were clearly defined and had to be maintained.

Candler executed his position throughout life. As befitted his place, he worked hard to rise through the ranks of the Methodist hierarchy. Local minister in rural then urban charges, youngest presiding elder of the era, assistant editor of the denominational Nashville Christian Advocate, president of Emory College and finally bishop of his church by the age of forty-one, Candler fulfilled his responsibilities and gained a wide audience. He became perhaps the most powerful individual in southern Methodism, and a force to be reckoned with. Through his ability, writings and position, and through his family, political and

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7. Many of Candler's closest friends in the episcopacy died between 1915 and 1922, Elijah Embree Hoss (d. 1919), Joseph S. Key (d. 1920), John Carlyle Kilgo (d. 1922), Walter Lambuth (d. 1921), and Henry Clay Morrison (d. 1921). Candler himself was 63 in 1920.

8. For this and the following paragraph see Mark K. Bauman, "Warren Akin Candler: Conservative Amidst Change," (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1975); and Bauman, "A Famous Atlantan Speaks Out Against Lynching: Bishop Warren Akin Candler and Social Justice," Atlanta Historical Bulletin, XX (Spring 1976), 24-32, for the particular black-white example of reciprocal relationships.
personal contacts, he wielded tremendous influence far beyond ecclesiastical circles. He was outspoken; he was heard, and he was followed. As a representative and important figure, Warren Candler offers the historian an excellent opportunity to essay the conservative image of the 1920s. 

At the turn of the century Candler's heart overflowed with optimism. All around him he witnessed prosperity. Material well-being meant opportunity for greater missionary efforts and improved education. His strong South would lead a world-wide revival of religion ushering in a new age. Improvements in transportation and communications would facilitate the church's work. The South finally had the chance to achieve parity with the North and thereby end sectional animosity. Revival in America would alter men's hearts bringing true harmony and benevolence. Exportation of the revival overseas would result in international brotherhood and peace. Candler did not fear modernist encroachments because Methodism, unlike other Protestant denominations and Romanism, was free of extraneous doctrine. His Methodism would direct the good work. America had completed a century of unequalled progress, and religion was its "most conspicuous feature." With fin de siecle exuberance, Candler beheld "a vista of infinite hope."

Events precipitated by the First World War were to cool the bishop's enthusiasm. After the war the orders of society were radically undermined and the three institutions basic to civilization—the church, the state and the family—rapidly deteriorated, or so it seemed. Expectation had been high that the war would result in a revival of religion such as that which had arisen with the Civil War. But no revival was forthcoming. In fact some generals, particularly Frederick Funston who commanded the troops along the Mexican border, actually forbade the promulgation of an awakening among their men.

Reports were circulated concerning the lack of religion among American forces overseas. The churches were castigated for not providing for the needs of the soldiers on one hand, and for failure to prevent the war on the other. Some commentators reported decreases in church membership

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9. On Candler's life see Ibid., and Alfred M. Pierce, Giant Against the Sky; The Life of Bishop Warren Akin Candler (New York and Nashville: 1948). Candler had ten brothers and sisters including Asa, the developer of Coca-Cola, John S., an attorney and state supreme court justice of Georgia, Ezekiel, a Mississippi legislator, Milton, a Georgia legislator, and William, a Villa Rica banker and businessman. His political contacts included Hoke Smith, Josephus Daniels, and Samuel Adams, Savannah lawyer and judge.


and decline in the number of men entering the ministry. Candler rejected the reports and denied guilt. Still no revival took place. Instead the bishop saw a growing rationalism in the churches and in the schools. Materialism reigned with excessive vigor. Disillusionment replaced optimism.\textsuperscript{12}

Bishop Candler had been fighting evolution since the 1880s. The central theme of his attack was three-fold. First of all, the theories of evolution degraded man by emphasizing the overwhelming influence of heredity and environment in man's development. If such determinism was true, then man lacked free will. If he did not have free will, he could not be held accountable for his actions. The second theme grew out of the first. If the environment determined man's actions and thoughts, and the environment was variable, then man's actions and thoughts, too, were bound to be variable. Man could possess no absolute values or eternal beliefs. The materialism of a Herbert Spencer would overshadow idealism and social concern. Finally Candler held that belief in the power of heredity and environment to determine so much would lead inevitably to fatalism and pessimism. Where man's free will could not determine his decisions, ideals and progress, hopelessness would prevail. Candler rejected these consequences of evolution with every argument he could muster. Yet persistently after World War I, he felt his values and, thus, in many ways, his personal identity, relegated to secondary importance by large segments of the American public. The evolutionist-rationalist-modernists (to Candler these terms were virtually synonymous) had had a generation in which to inculcate their values, or lack of such, in the state institutions of higher learning and in the wealthier private schools, most notably in the North. The fruits of their godless system had become all too apparent in the deterioration of the great American institutions and in the worldliness of all classes which Candler observed. Labor was perhaps the first group to provide visible witness to the deterioration of traditional mores.\textsuperscript{13}

In the era of prosperity following World War I, Candler found that although enjoying the best conditions ever, workers nonetheless united in violent strikes. Coal miners and railway employees appeared especially belligerent. Candler granted the workers the right to organize in order to present just needs, but cautioned "it is one thing to have increased power and another thing to wield that power wisely and righteously." The powers of capital and labor "must be exercised in the fear of God and the love of man, or it is \ldots wicked and dangerous power."

\textsuperscript{12} Atlanta Journal, September 4, 1927, March 24, 1918, June 30, 1918, November 5, 1922, April 9, 1922, December 9, 1923; "A Return to the First Principles of Religion," typescript in Candler Papers (Woodruff Library, Emory University); "Were there no members of the church in the army?" Texas Christian Advocate, May 6, 1920; Florida Christian Advocate, August 4, 1921.

\textsuperscript{13} "The Scientists on the Unity of the Human Species," Wesleyan Christian Advocate, June 11, 1884; "What About Evolution?" Atlanta Journal, June 10, 1923.
He offered church offices for mediation to bring the Christian partners together. Let neither succumb to the greed and covetousness of unreasonable demands or unfair treatment.\(^{14}\)

Though workers' demands seemed less reasonable than owners' intransigence, Candler perceived a far greater evil in the conspicuous luxury of new found wealth and huge inheritances. "Nothing, not even covetousness, so hardens the human heart as pleasure loving and seeking habits. And such do also tend to lower all moral standards and degrade to the basest levels all spiritual needs." The sins of self-indulgence prevailed among the rich more than among the poor. Rather than using their wealth for philanthropy, most of the leisure class ignored worthy causes. They spent their time and money on gambling on the stock market and on sports. Lavish parties were a disgrace. Resort to crime was but one step further. Other classes naturally followed this evil example of wasteful expenditure. They, too, clamored for more money to squander on movies, sports, and dancing. This was why unions went out on strike.\(^{15}\)

Family duties were neglected while parents indulged their appetites. Family worship was forgotten and children lost the parental authority essential to their development. The only values taught were those of the game-room. The misnamed "revolt of youth" of the 1920s was really a search for meaning outside of creedless households. Candler wrote:

Great wealth is a perilous possession to both the parents who have it and the children who are indulged by it.

It brings to parents distractions, if nothing worse, which cause them to neglect parental duties and to live in a self-indulgent manner that is a hurtful example for their off-spring.

Materialism, opined Candler, had ominous consequences.\(^{16}\)

In an environment in which man was debased, it was little wonder that crime should also be on the increase. One man would take the life of another without fear of retribution in the next world. As Candler put it:

The increase of crime has come from the decrease of the source of religion and morality in the country. The minds of the American People have been fixed on making more money and improving material conditions ... material prosperity may increase crime.

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15. Texas Christian Advocate, August 18, 1921; Atlanta Journal, January 14, 1923, July 16, 1922, September 12, 1920; Alabama Christian Advocate, July 24, 1924; "The Burden on All the People by Crime," undated typescript, Candler Papers (Woodruff Library, Emory University), "Crimes of Covetousness and Hate," undated typescript, Candler papers (Woodruff Library, Emory University); "Educational Essays," Current Comments on Timely Topics (Nashville; 1926), 280.
The bishop called attention to the rising incidence of suicide as another indication of creedless man’s sense of pessimism and despair.\footnote{Atlanta Journal, March 1, 1902, June 5, 1927, April 9, 1922; "The Burden on All the People by Crime," "The Cheapening of Human Life," "Crimes of Covetousness and Hate," "The Land is Full of Blood," all undated typescripts in Candler papers (Woodruff Library, Emory University); Texas Christian Advocate, August 18, 1921, March 19, 1922.}

Under the circumstances, Candler found socialism abroad and paternalism at home most ominous. During the war, people had become accustomed to reliance upon the government for assistance. Now they divested themselves of their responsibilities and subjected themselves to government supervision. This "restless generation . . . demands smooth roads over which to ride in shockless automobiles, and it runs to Congress for $350,000,000 annually to aid the States in making such highways. It calls for Federal supervision of maternity and child bearing accompanied with appropriation for the purpose of $1,240,000 a year." Candler showed greater concern over expanding paternalism during the first half dozen years of the Twenties than he had during the Progressive Era and than he would during the New Deal. He fought establishment of a federal department of education and opposed the Dyer bill which would have given the national government jurisdiction over lynching prosecution, even though he had denounced the crime since 1903. One more bulwark of civilization was being subverted. The bishop prayed that vicious Communism would not be imported into this fertile soil.\footnote{"A Return to First Principles Necessary," Nashville Christian Advocate, June 6, 1924; Atlanta Journal, January 5, 1919, November 23, 1919, May 7, 1922, February 27, 1921, March 25, 1923, May 4, 1924, March 25, 1926, July 16, 1922, December 9, 1923.}

In 1924 two young men, Nathan Leopold, Jr., and Richard Loeb, were tried and convicted for the murder of fourteen year old Bobby Franks. Here was the crime that epitomized all of the failures of modernism in church and state. Here was the outcome of the breakdown in family life and social order. Candler discussed the episode in six articles within a three month period. With the exception of the Lindbergh kidnapping which offered a similar message, this was more concentrated coverage than he devoted to any other single event not of a strictly religious nature in his thirty-one years of writing weekly columns for the Atlanta Journal.

To Candler the incident illustrated how wealthy parents neglected their moral obligation to their children while wasting their money on pleasures for themselves, and how over-indulging one’s children in mere “things” led to insatiable appetites compelling the children to resort to murder for “the thrill of it.” These boys exemplified all others who “were indulged excessively until self-will supplanted all self-denial in their lives—and that meant self-destruction.” Here were the results of the theory of evolution and the devaluation of man. “Why should one put forth effort to be truthful and honest, or suffer any self-reproach for deceit
or dishonesty, if the whole matter of whether his telling the truth or telling lies, and being an honest man or a thief, was really determined before he was born by the inexplicable combination of matter and force with which he had nothing to do?" Why should one hesitate to commit murder if all of one's actions are conditioned? The victim's life had no meaning for the murderers, nor, for that matter, did their own. They had received no moral training in their homes. In this most important realm they had been neglected. The parents gave their authority and responsibility first to a governess and then to the schools. And these boys attended the University of Chicago, a school that bred "a spirit of insubordination to authority which has been nearly, or quite, lawless in its inspiration and results," a school, too, that emphasized the physical sciences to the detriment of any wholesome system of morality and religion. "When these two young scapegraces entered college their self-centered souls speedily embraced the self-deifying philosophy of Nietsche, without advice of parents or the counsel of instructors." This philosophy (and here as elsewhere Candler concurred with the boys' lawyer, Clarence Darrow), in the absence of "moral and religious truths," led to the derangement of their sense of right and wrong. The boys lost complete sight of God and, thus, of ethics. Once and for all, wrote Candler, people should realize that mere education was not a cure-all. Education and wealth were not barriers against corruption into crime. "Our schools and colleges should be cherished and supported, but they must give more attention to the moral and spiritual life of the children and youth committed to their care." Candler agreed with Sir Francis Bacon that "Knowledge is power." "But," he added, "the power which knowledge supplies will be good or bad according to the character of the man who wields it." In fact, wealth or education without religion induced crime especially in an urban environment like Chicago.

To cap off this travesty, as Candler saw it, Clarence Darrow pleaded that environmental factors mitigated the guilt of the two monsters, so that they should be spared the death penalty. Darrow asserted that they had not received moral guidance, and that they were emotionally unstable because of their backgrounds. These factors may have contributed to their derangement, Candler admitted, but, nevertheless, a person retained his free will. If one has a choice, he is morally culpable and should receive his due punishment. Leopold and Loeb's crime, Candler adjudged, warranted the death penalty.19

Less than a year after these articles were written, Darrow met Bryan at Dayton. On Bryan's death after the trial Candler surmised that "perhaps

19. The articles by Candler from which these paragraphs are based are in Atlanta Journal, July 13, 1924, August 31, 1924, September 7, 1924, September 14, 1924, September 28, 1924, October 19, 1924. Candler's and Darrow's reasoning coincided in relation to determinism with the final significant qualification that Candler believed that ultimately man retained his free will and Darrow was the complete mechanist.
Mr. Bryan would be living today if he had not become so absorbed in the trial at Dayton, Tennessee. And some will regard his death by reason of his efforts as being unnecessary." While Candler praised "the lustre of the Christian devotion" which motivated Bryan, he was willing to suppose that Bryan's plan of action "was a blunder."  

Biblical literalism and the defense of Genesis were quite important to the bishop's whole perspective. But he correctly saw the more significant battle as that between materialism and idealism. While the latter provided hope for the future and meaning to the present, the former could only offer despair. Writing on Darrow's death in 1938, Candler stressed the heartache of the great advocate's fatalistic evolutionary philosophy which rejected the existence of the soul and a life after death. Such a philosophy failed to provide meaning beyond material gain even in this world. In December 1928, Candler predicted the crash of the stock market. He predicated its fall upon the rampant greed and avarice of an America and of a world led astray by a materialistic philosophy looking only to the indulgence of immediate desires.

A number of trials in American history have appeared to mark significant contrasts within their milieu. Immediately the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Alger Hiss trial, and perhaps the trial of the Chicago Seven of our own day come to mind. Though much work needs to be done to determine if others perceived as Candler, the case of Leopold and Loeb, it would seem, should take its place in contrast to the Scopes trial as the salient point of conservative imagery of the 1920s.