A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE TEXAS CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE 1849-1949

A Thesis

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the Faculty of the Graduate School

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of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

John Daniel Barron

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Faculty, have
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A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE TEXAS CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE 1849-1949

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and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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Mr. Turner resourcefully exhausted all effort to secure micro-filmed copies of various volumes and issues of The Texas Christian Advocate unavailable at Southern Methodist University.

In addition to providing unlimited facilities for research at the Bridwell Library, he generously transferred temporarily some 30 volumes of the publication to the General Library at the University of Missouri thereby making possible the conduct of research in Columbia. He also entrusted extremely old and irreplaceable issues of the paper to the care of the writer for study elsewhere.

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Chapter I

Introduction to the Study

Before Tchaikovsky wrote his Fifth symphony and the year Wordsworth died, preachers with guns and an old hand press were publishing a newspaper on the Texas frontier.

The preachers were Methodists and they called their paper The Texas Wesleyan Banner. Later, the name was changed to The Texas Christian Advocate and still later it became The Southwestern Advocate. But the auspices, the purposes, the characteristics and the methods of the publication remained the same for almost a century.

Purpose of the Study. To reconstruct the history of this journal which for so long was an active force in the religious growth, and to a lesser extent, the secular development of Texas is the purpose of this study.

Such a study must emphasize the primarily journalistic aspects of the subject. But since it is a study of a publication whose nature was greatly determined by the political and sociological conditions of its time, it cannot ignore these. And since it is a study of a religious publication whose significance hinges largely upon the influence it exerted among its readers, it cannot escape ^x it cannot escape evaluation of this influence and reaction if it is to be fully accurate and meaningful.

Discovery of these conditions and judgment of the Advocate's affect upon Texas Methodism, thus, is also an aim of this study.

Importance of the Study. The writing of the history of The Texas Christian Advocate is a project whose accomplishment is long overdue.

Much of the history of the paper has been obscure even to Methodist Church leaders who have spent most of their careers in Texas. Some questions concerning the Advocate's past have become issues in segments of the Church, issues which could be resolved relatively easily if the past were known. But the two published works which make even tangential mention of the Advocate do so only briefly and do not begin to answer these questions. No attempt at a comprehensive history of the publication ever has been undertaken.

At the time of this writing, there is a desire among Methodists in the Southwest who recognize the need for an official Church organ with wide circulation and appeal to establish again a counterpart of the Advocate under exclusive jurisdiction of the Church in Texas. A history of the publication that fulfilled this need with varying success for a century would be of value to them in their efforts to conceive an organ designed to meet it again.

On the basis of purely journalistic considerations, the study also is a needed one.

For a time, the Advocate had the largest circulation of any daily or weekly newspaper in Texas. At times, its religious, and on some issues, political, influence was unsurpassed. During certain periods of its history, it was recognized in ecclesiastical circles as one of the foremost religious journals in the South. It thus occupied a prominent, though now almost forgotten, position in early Texas journalism.

The reasons for its successes, its decline and ultimate demise, while perhaps not universally appropriate to the understanding of all church newspapers, might at least be of interest to students of early and contemporary religious journalism.

Throughout most of its history, the Advocate led a romantic and precarious life, one which brought both journalistic honor and disgrace to the Church it represented and one which left an imprint upon its times. Surely the story of its life merits telling.

Organization of the Study. In the hope of telling this story in the most meaningful and effective manner possible, and still promulgating an understanding of the conditions and events which shaped it, the history is divided into detailing the stages progressively in the life of the publication. Most of these stages correspond exactly with a period of time during which a particular man directed the paper. Therefore, most of the chapters concern directly the editorship of successive editors. However, because

of the lengthy tenure of some editors which transcended any single stage in the life of the paper, it has been necessary to devote more than one chapter to the editorship of some of the men who guided the Advocate in order that various phases of its development might be presented more or less chronologically and clearly.

Review of Previous Studies. There are only two published works which contain any sustained reference to the Texas Christian Advocate. These are Thrall's A Brief History of Methodism in Texas¹ and Phelan's A History of Early Methodism in Texas.²

¹Thrall, Homer S., A Brief History of Methodism in Texas, Nashville, Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1889.

²Phelan, Macum, A History of Early Methodism in Texas, Nashville, Cokesbury Press, 1924.

Both Thrall and Phelan were Methodist ministers who spent most of their lives in Texas. Thrall was an important figure in the beginning of the Advocate, and for many years served as a member of the Joint Board of Publication charged with overseeing it. His writing obviously could have been invaluable concerning the history of the paper. But he devotes only a brief chapter to the development of the Advocate which at the time of his writing had been in operation for 40 years.

Too, Thrall apparently wrote much of his history from memory which evidently did not always serve him perfectly. Several

discrepancies exist between his account of the history of the paper and the history revealed by issues of the paper itself.

Phelan's writing contains still less immediately pertinent to the history of the Advocate. His references occur incidental to other topics and are clearly based on the information set forth in Thrall's book.

Thus, no comprehensive study of the Advocate's history ever has been undertaken.

Statement of Sources and Methods of Procedure. This dearth of published material concerning the subject leaves virtually no reliable and fruitful source except the volumes of the publication itself. These, of course, represent an indispensable source.

Fortunately, volumes of the Advocate are on file at the libraries of Emory University, Garret Biblical Institute, Duke University, Drew University, Southern Methodist University, Southwestern University and the University of Texas. The Congregational Library at Boston, the New York Public Library and the Texas State Library at Austin all have some volumes and isolated issues of the paper.

None of these libraries has a complete file of the paper. By far the most complete one exists at the Bridwell Theological Library at Southern Methodist University.

It is from these volumes of the publication that the great majority of material upon which this research is based has come.

However, invaluable information concerning the early history of the paper has been derived from the personal notes and correspondence of the late Louis C. Blaylock, Sr. who was associated with the Advocate for 56 years, most of the time as its publisher. Further data concerning the publication during the last century has been furnished by Dr. Robert Goodloe, professor of religious history at Southern Methodist University, who is now engaged in the writing of a history of Methodism in Texas. Material concerning the more recent history of the Advocate has been supplied by the Rev. J. Daniel Barron, a former editor.

Barron and Dr. Harrison Baker of Dallas, both of whom have long been acquainted professionally with the Advocate, orally contributed information which provided a background for research.

The writer also drew upon his own experiences and acquaintances gained while he was a member of the Advocate staff in 1948 for material concerning the recent history of the publication.

All available issues of the Advocate have been studied.

Whenever there has been any conflict in material, that secured ~~secured~~ from the paper itself has been accepted as the most valid except when it concerned editors' and publishers' circulation claims.

CHAPTER II

PRELUDE ON THE FRONTIER

In the early morning of April 14, 1849, a tall, dark-eyed Texan with a slight mustache stepped out of a small printing shop into the rain and started down a muddy street of Houston, Texas toward the nearby post office. His arms were heavily loaded with newspapers which were covered with a gunny cloth to protect them from the wet.

The newspapers were the first issues of the Texas Wesleyan Banner. The man was its editor, a Methodist preacher named Chauncey Richardson.

To all but the few preachers who conceived it, the fate of the paper Richardson gave birth to that morning must have seemed more than doubtful.

For in 1849 Texas was still a frontier. On the prairies, pitched battles were fought to the death between isolated families and raiding Comanches. Barbaric warfare erupted sporadically when roving bands of Apaches caught painfully moving wagon trains coming out of the northeast down across the Red river.

It had been less than two decades since Moses Austin led his first contingent of American colonists into the territory, and Texas had been part of the Union less than four years. Communications ranged from the nonexistent to the haphazard. Mail was distributed by private companies whose drivers often jettisoned packets of letters

in favor of sacks of potatoes.

Small boats sailed the bayous and people owned slaves. And life hinged heavily upon the weekly arrival at Galveston of ship from New Orleans which brought flour, molasses, sugar, coffee, tobacco and news---all scarce commodities in early Texas.

The people who populated this frontier were a diverse group of malcontents, adventurers, criminals, honest and hopeful farmers and small Anglo-Saxon merchants. Among them there was none more colorful than the Methodist circuit rider.

Few causes could possess more zealously devoted disciples than these preachers on horseback who rode alone into the wilderness. They had little to sustain them except missionary idealism and fiery faith in the rightness of what they were doing. Hostility beset them from every quarter; from the Indians, the land, the officials and even the people to whom they sought to minister. There is little mystery in the fact that most of them died young.

Under the rule of Catholic Mexico from which Texas was not free until 1836, the religion they promulgated was outlawed. Authoritative opposition, though, tended to romanticize it with the appeal of the forbidden. And ultimately, some Mexican officials in Texas came to tolerate, if not openly welcome, its practice.

But Stephen F. Austin, who was one of the chief leaders in the early colonization and who was determined to adhere to his contracts for land with the Mexican government, frowned upon the spread of

Methodism in his colonies. He is reported to have said, "One Methodist preacher would do more mischief in my colony than a dozen horsethieves."³

³Phelan, op. cit., p. 73

But passive and sometimes active opposition from the people themselves constituted the most effective deterrent to its growth. Some had been criminals, others looked with disfavor upon the social control introduction of organized religion would impose upon the frontier, and others thought themselves too embattled in the struggle for physical life to bother. The circuit rider often was maligned, and sometimes threatened.

One who attempted to preach in an early settlement was told: "You must come back to preach no more and if you do, we'll nail you up in a barrel and throw you into the river."⁴

⁴Ibid., p. 84.

But most of the preachers who had crossed winter streams in unexplored territory and survived prairie summers were tough physically and tougher spiritually. Figuratively, they came back; literally, they stayed.

The reminiscences of an early preacher about the first organized

Protestant services held in one of the leading towns of the time, Washington, illustrates the means the circuit riders sometimes found necessary to promote their beliefs.

"This was the first meeting ever held in the town, and it was more than the fiends and mockers could willingly submit to. The house in which they proposed to hold the meeting was a vacated billiard-room on Main Street, with a long gallery in front. On the second night of the meeting there was a general attendance of the citizens, loafers and gamblers of the place. We soon discovered that the disturbers of our peace on former occasions were present, with the purpose of interfering with the worship of the congregation, without fear of God or man before their eyes. A man was stationed outside the house, just behind where the preacher stood, with a hen in his arms. While the preacher was lining out his hymns, he would hold the chicken by the neck. When the congregation would sing, he would make it squall. A large copper-colored slave was stationed on the gallery in front, with some 20 or more of these lewd fellows around him, partly intoxicated. When the congregation sang and the hen squalled, the slave, acting under orders, would put his head in at the window and shout at the top of his voice, 'Glory to God!' The response from outside was given, 'Amen and Amen!' I was sitting near the window whence the disturbance came. My wife and daughter were near me. I arose and stood by the window, with the walking cane in my hand that I had brought from Tennessee, made of hickory, with a buck-horn head. My bosom heaved with holy indignation, and as the negro put his head into the window the second time, and as the congregation sang and the hen squalled, I struck him just above the left eye, making a scar that he carried to his grave. After the stroke with the cane they were preemptorily ordered away, with the statement that there were more dangerous weapons behind. It had been our custom since the Indians killed two of our men during religious services the year before, to take our weapons with us to church, as well as to other places. Some usually stood guard while other worshipped. There was no further disturbance of consequence until the service ended."⁵

⁵ Ibid. pp. 121-22.

The preacher who closed that service was a giant man almost seven feet tall weighing 250 pound named Robert Alexander. And it was he who was to become perhaps the key man in the beginning of the first Methodist Church publication in Texas.

In the fall of 1847, Robert B. Wells, a Methodist minister, had issued several editions of a paper he called The Texas Christian Advocate and Brenham Advertiser. Wells' paper, which he published at Brenham, was not recognized by the Church and was solely a private enterprise. No copies of it are known to exist, but it appeared only irregularly and after a few months, Wells gave up the undertaking.

His father-in-law, the Rev. Orceneath Fisher bought Wells' equipment and transferred it to Houston. There, in the spring of 1848 he began circulating a publication he called The Texas Christian Advocate. But the paper failed to survive the summer.

These two abortive attempts at establishment of a newspaper allied with Methodism had not escaped the notice nor sympathy of other Methodist preachers in Texas.

Alexander had become especially interested. And during his travels through eastern Texas in August, he began discussing establishment of a Methodist newspaper with both laymen and ministers. He succeeded in enlisting the ardent support of H.S. Thrall, a prominent minister, whose furtherence of the undertaking was later to equal his own.

Thrall and Alexander clearly conceived of the proposed enterprise as much more than the establishment of a newspaper. They thought of it as the creation of a great new weapon to aid them in their crusades on the frontier. They viewed it as the acquisition of a means of publicizing Methodism, or direct evangelism and of providing their people with a genuine secular service. Their enthusiasm indicates they were awed by its possibilities.

Both rode to Rutersville for a camp meeting held in a tent on a hot evening early in September 1848. The gathering was attended by preachers and influential laymen of the area. Led by Alexander and Thrall, the group appointed a committee, of which they were the chief members, to start a newspaper on behalf of the Methodist Church.

Because so many of the leading Methodists in the state participated in the Rutersville conference, its decision was tantamount to official church action, and virtually assured the plan of eventual endorsement by the Church.

Thrall and Alexander hurried ahead with arrangements.

In Houston, after several weeks of investigation both personally and by correspondence, Thrall and Alexander finally entered into a contract on behalf of the Church with the printing firm of Cruger and Moore. The agreement called for weekly publication by the firm of 1,000 copies of a four page paper of imperial size. The printers were to bear all expenses of publication except the salary of the

editor. In return, the Church was to pay them \$2,500 a year. Annual compensation of \$800 for the editor was to come from the general funds of the two Methodist Annual Conferences in the state.

Perhaps the most important problem confronting the publication committee was the selection of an editor. The exact considerations that motivated their choice are unknown. It is evident, though, that no little deliberation was involved. And the final choice was a propitious one.

For the man appointed editor was an eminent minister named Chauncey Richardson. His successful ministry in Texas had won him prestige both in the Church and state. He had something of an academic background, having been president of Rutgersville College, and had been a contributor to religious journals in the South. He therefore possessed to a degree the two most fundamental requisites for an editor of a church paper in the last century: stature within the Church and ability as a writer.

Richardson met with the publication committee in Houston the first week in April. Thrall and Alexander, with characteristically wild optimism, anticipated immediate success. They set the annual subscription price at two dollars if it was paid in advance and three dollars if it was not. All Methodist preachers in Texas were appointed agents of the paper and authorized to solicit and collect money for subscriptions.

It was hoped that a quick revenue of \$2,000 could be secured

from sale of 1,000 subscriptions. Advertising was counted upon to supply the remainder of money needed. A rather hazy policy regarding exclusion of objectional advertising copy was agreed upon and it was decided that the preachers would encourage their more prosperous laymen to advertise through the columns of the paper.

Richardson told the committee the paper would be called the Texas Wesleyan Banner and they told him that was a worthy name. A final notice heralding the coming of Texas' newest newspaper was inserted in the Houston Telegraph. And Richardson began preparing copy for the first edition of a paper Texans were to swear by and at for a century to come.

CHAPTER III

RICHARDSON'S BANNER

There was little intentionally dramatic in Richardson's personally braving the rain to carry copies of the Banner from the press to the post office. His action was a prosaic necessity as he constituted the entire staff of the newspaper.

But the paper Richardson carried along the muddy main street of Houston that Thursday morning was one in which most editors in 1849 would justly have taken pride, regardless of how it got to the post office.

It consisted of four clearly printed pages slightly larger than those of the contemporary daily. The newsprint was of high quality and its content is easily legible today. There were four three inch columns with a quarter of an inch of white space between each.

In the first edition, Richardson proclaimed the purpose of the Banner to be "frank and fearless devotion to the promulgation and defense of Biblico-Wesleyan Methodism..." He added on the first page beneath this declaration, "In addition to its specific object, the Banner will furnish a brief but faithful record of the current history of the Christian and political world." And on the second page, he further informed readers that "The Texas Wesleyan Banner will be devoted to Religion, Morals, Literature, Science, Popular

Education and General Intelligence" and that "No obituary will be inserted unless it be sent within four months after the death of the person."

The means which Richardson chose to attain these rather diversified aims fell into a rigidly patterned form with the first and immediately subsequent editions.

The first page included a column of religious poetry contributed by readers, ministers or copied from other journals. It ranged from the sentimental to the recondite, but never achieved any literary worth except when Richardson was hardpressed for original material and ran excerpts from Shelly or Tennyson.

The remainder of the front page was consumed by letters from voluntary correspondents detailing the commonplace and exciting of the frontier, containing factual narratives of hazardous journeys through Indian territory and descriptive travelogues. In view of the relatively unexplored nature of much of Texas at the time, these may have been of practical as well as romantic interest to some readers. When letters were few, Richardson filled space with religious essays lifted from other periodicals, for which he always gave credit.

The editorials that dominated the second page were often a column long. More than half of them concerned religious topics and current undertakings of the Church. Along with them appeared notices of runaway slaves, revivals and meetings, stories of murders

and other crimes. Obituaries were sometimes run on page two. They were glowingly eulogistic, rarely factual to any extent. Apparently, any obituary received within the specified time limit was used sooner or later.

Under the heading "General Intelligence" Richardson ran each week two to three columns of national and international news on page three. This section contained market reports on the sale of cotton, grain, money, corn, coffee and tobacco in Liverpool, New York and Galveston, together with a general description of the tempo of trade in those cities. Ordinarily, half of a column was set aside for "Religious Intelligence" which contained news of other denominations in the state and nation. There was always a full column of advertising on page three.

Advertising predominated on the fourth page, but Richardson usually reserved sufficient space to reprint an anecdotal article from another publication. These were without moral, religious or social import. They obviously were designed purely for entertainment, and in a way were crude forerunners of contemporary newspaper feature articles. Sometimes, Richardson ran short articles for children and simple accounts of a bizarre occurrence in some far off place which was calculated to mystify the whole frontier family.

The headlines above this material were never more than a column wide. They were small, one line labels which more often than not little indication of the subject of the story below.

There were no pictures nor art work.

The overall content of the paper represented a shrewd proportioning of material intended not only to implement the program of the Church, but to appeal to the secular interests of its members and non-partisans as well by gratifying their need and yearning for information about the territory in which they lives and the areas from which they had come.

Of all the content, Richardson's editorials and state and national news contributed the most to the quick prestige the Banner gained under him.

After the first dozen or so issues under Richardson, the editorial policy of the Banner became clearly delineated. Aside from its unstinting support of any and every Church activity and its constant echoing of Methodist doctrine, its significant facets were: bridled, but unmistakable opposition to Roman Catholicism, defense of slavery and friendly encouragement of other Protestant denominations in Texas. On these subjects, Richardson reflected the attitudes of the Church of which he was an eminent member.

Editorial comment was never confined to the editorial page. Richardson often interposed instructions in a news story advising readers of the proper reaction to the happening he was reporting.

The Banner's early antagonism toward the Catholic Church was primarily expressed, in fact, through its news columns where the editor was fond of printing stories about priests involved in crimes

usually taking place in Mexico or Italy, reports of demonstrations by Italians against Catholic rule and attempts of priests to suppress unauthorized Catholic versions of the Bible in Texas. Periodically, Richardson would go to great lengths to point out editorially the ecclesiastical shortcomings (or what he considered to be the shortcomings) of the Catholic Church. But the Banner's attacks upon Catholicism never grew vituperative under Richardson ~~was~~ they were to under succeeding editors.

However, the Banner's position on slavery was less temperate. Northern Church leaders considered Richardson one of southern Methodism's foremost proponents of slavery. And this was an accolade or epithet evidently deserved. When a rival local sect accused him and his Church of abolitionist sentiment, Richardson replied editorially:

"The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, an abolition Church! Wherefore then it separates from the North? Wherefore its denouncement by the leading organs of the Northern Church, as a pro-slavery Church? This charge of Abolutionism against our Church is chimerical in the extreme, and cannot be believed, even by those who make and circulate it. On this subject, the M.E. Church, South, is like Caesar's wife: above suspicion. Having proved herself true to her position, and identified with Southern institutions in times of severe trial, she justly commands the unwavering confidence and affection of the whole South."⁶

⁶Texas Wesleyan Banner, Houston, November 10, 1850, p. 2.

The issue of slavery in Richardson's time was only slightly an

internal one in the southern Church. It was incendiary all right, but was primarily between the northern and southern divisions. The advocacy of eradication of slavery in 1850 by a responsible Methodist would have been professional suicide. Richardson advocated just the opposite. And the policy toward Negroes he established for the Banner in 1849-50 had not changed too radically 70 years later!

In both the editorial and news columns, Richardson evinced a warm attitude of comradeship toward the other Protestant groups in the state. He listed their gains in membership almost as if they were accomplishments by Methodists, and an amicable interchange of correspondence between the ministers of divergent denominations took place through the Banner.

However, Richardson always sought mild and joking controversy with other religious editors over unimportant topics. The response of those toward whom his jibes were directed was not always in the same vein he clearly intended, though (the editor of the South Western Baptist became so angered with Richardson that in June 1851 he stopped sending his paper to the Banner office). But the differences were largely personal ones, and never degenerated into the denominational feuds religious editors of the century sometimes were guilty of.

A capricious tangent of the Banner's editorial promotions, typical of those its editor sometimes was addicted to, appeared in the summer of 1850. An assorted gang of adventurers and thugs began assembling

in New Orleans to organize a filibustering expedition to Cuba with the avowed purpose of overthrowing the Spanish regime there. The United States government frantically tried to prevent departure of the renegades and a presidential proclamation urged capture of them.

But the Banner gleefully reported the success of the filibusterers in eluding capture by the government. It boasted they were fully armed, had taken measures to escape the United States Navy on the Gulf, and would soon start a revolution in Cuba.

Richardson concluded an editorial on the subject, saying:

"...It is quite probable that most of all the revolutionary forces will be landed in Cuba before the American fleet reaches the coast. But if from some untoward event only part of the troops should be landed, and the others kept away by our vessels of war, we may expect to hear of another massacre like that of the Alamo or Goliad. The Spaniards are so much accustomed to butchering revolutionary troops that we have little to expect of their clemency, if they should overpower and capture the first detachments of the revolutionary troops that are landed. If by the unnecessary interference of President Taylor, the vanguard of the revolutionary army should be captured and massacred to appease Spanish vengeance, he will acquire a notoriety not unlike that which attaches to the Autocrat of Russia or the butcher of Hanau."⁷

⁷Ibid., June 5, 1850, p. 2.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that bands such as Richardson was supporting editorially had fought conspicuously under Texas colors against Mexico, and the smouldering antipathy in Texas against Mexico and Spain, which had scarcely diminished since the Alamo, had been further inflamed by the war with Mexico the year before.

By April 1850 when the Banner entered its second year of publication, it was one of the most respected newspapers, secular or religious, in Texas.

Richardson had achieved this reputation for the Banner by making it truly a paper of news, as well as a voice of the Church.

He never had access to nor organized any regularized means of gathering news. But he energetically utilized haphazard methods to obtain what he could.

Most of the foreign news was gleaned from other newspapers, mostly those in New Orleans. Whenever he could, Richardson talked to travelers from recently arrived ships at Galveston, questioning them about conditions and events abroad. The quantity and quality of information he gained through such means was surprisingly high.

It told of Austrian dukes and Russian princesses, British men-of-war and Italian riots, historic senate debates and Calhoun speeches, wagon trains and war parties.

Foreign news usually appeared in the Banner six to eight weeks after it had appeared in European newspapers or ten to 14 days after it had been run in New York papers. Still, most of this information was news to Banner readers in 1850. For many of them did not have access to other newspapers, and the Galveston News and Houston Telegraph were probably the only two papers in the state that offered more current or comprehensive foreign coverage. And for the most part, they gained their foreign news from the same sources that Richardson did.

Richardson's lack of assistants and the location in Houston tended to overbalance the paper with news emanating in the immediate locality, even though the publication was intended to be statewide in readership and coverage. It was easier to gather news from local papers and local people. With all his other duties, it was difficult for Richardson to gather it elsewhere. Nevertheless, he did succeed in including a considerable quantity of state news in the Banner each week. Such items as those below were typical of it.

"The train (wagon train) for El Paso will start from Bexar, Tex. in a week or two, and all persons who may desire to emigrate to the upper valley of the Rio Grande will thus be furnished with an opportunity of traversing the Indian country in safety. The number of persons attached to the El Paso train will probably exceed 300: a force sufficient to prevent it from being molested by any war party the Comanches can concentrate in that sector."⁸

⁸Ibid., June 21, 1851, p. 2.

"Parker H.F. French, the notorious swindler, who at the latest intelligence before the present, was in prison in the province of Durango, Mexico, under the sentence of death, is now Governor of that province.

"He was released from prison on the proposition, to raise a company and drive away the Indians, and by his prowess made himself very popular, and thereby attained the highest office in the gift of the people. The freaks and changes of fortune with him are manifold."⁹

⁹Ibid., November 10, 1851, p. 2.

"Mr. Rollins (an Indian agent) found a number of Mexican prisoners among the Indians who prefer remaining with their captors to returning to Mexico. They state that in Mexico they

were peons and were treated worse than they are now treated in their captivity. Indian captivity preferable to Mexican citizenship! What a fearful comment upon the social and civil condition of Mexico."¹⁰

¹⁰Ibid., June 6, 1851, p. 3.

Such items were derived in part from other papers in the state which Richardson read assiduously. But a great many, he secured through conversation with travelers passing through Houston, talks with officials and correspondence with friends and preachers. All Methodists were encouraged to send the Banner reports of conditions in their area and news of their churches. Few did so consistently, but enough did so occasionally to provide the Banner with news which made it valuable to its readers.

CHAPTER IV

TRADITIONAL TROUBLES

Despite the favorable reception Richardson secured for the Banner among readers and the Church during the first months of its publication, the paper soon encountered financial troubles, a difficulty associated with it throughout most of its history.

By the middle of November 1849, the Banner was more than \$500 in debt. When it embarked upon its second year of publication, it was almost \$1,500 in debt and its printers had not been paid a cent for six months.

This plight had its origin in several causes.

First, although the Banner had obtained almost 900 subscriptions shortly after it started publication, it collected for less than half of them. Beginning in April 1850, scarcely an issue passed in which Richardson did not exhort and admonish readers to pay what they owed on their subscriptions. Apparently though, readers paid the Church paper as they did their preacher as they did their preacher---not at all or when the crops came in. Certainly there was no hurry about paying anything. And certainly, Richardson did not consider taking anyone's name off the subscription list. For there was always hope that the delinquent would pay up. The majority didn't, and the Banner suffered.

Second, the postal system in Texas was farcial as far as

efficiency was concerned. It made circulation of the Banner a desultory sort of an affair. Richardson's editorial comment indicates the difficulties he faced pertaining to it:

"Most bitter complaints of the irregularity of the mails reach us from various sections of the state. We learn that there were some 1,500 weight of papers now laying at Montgomery. Who is to blame? When will all the evils, the same, evils, the shameful evils complained of be remedied? Will the new contractors be better? We shall see."¹¹

¹¹Ibid., June 6, 1850, p. 2.

"The Gordian knot would furnish the fittest type of the mail arrangements for Texas, as they present confusion confounded. The New Orleans mail reaches Galveston on Tuesday, at 9 o'clock, a.m., and remains there under treatment for sea-sickness until 3 p.m. on Thursday, arriving at Houston at 3 a.m. Friday. The same day, the Richmond mail, the Washington and Montgomery mails arrive, and remain quietly until the next Tuesday, at 3 p.m., when they gently move on to Galveston, and there take breath until Sunday. Such recklessness of the commercial, social and religious interests of Texas as is clearly evinced in the snarled mail arrangements, is a sin that ought to be punished by the elders of the land. Similar confusion prevails throughout Texas."¹²

¹²Ibid., July 10, 1850, p. 2.

"How can we do otherwise than praise our admirable mail facilities when we have so many proofs of them. It is but a few days since we heard of a driver east---we think between Nacogdoches and Shreveport---throwing off a couple bags of mail matter to make room for that much more important article, a barrel of potatoes! If any of our Eastern exchanges doubt the assertion, we refer them to Judge Sterne, who is the gentleman to whom the driver boasted of his shrewdness."¹³

¹³Ibid., March 29, 1851 p. 2.

Subscribers who failed to receive the Banner perhaps justly decided they were under no obligation to pay for what they had not gotten. It was difficult for procure subscribers in areas distant from Houston for people could be certain only that they would receive the paper according to the whims of irresponsible mail officials and drivers.

The inefficiency of the postal system continued to operate severely against the publication until after the Civil War.

A third source of the Banner's monetary ills lay in its advertising policy. Space was sold on a yearly basis almost exclusively and all advertising revenue was exhausted two or three months after it was received. What the rates were cannot be ascertained. But they almost certainly were low.

Advertising was obtained principally from merchants in and around Houston, stage and steamship companies, lawyers, book distributors and insurance agents. Little of the patent medicine advertising for which the paper was to become rather noted found its way into Banner columns under Richardson. What did was mild compared to what the paper was later to come up with. Most of the advertising was simple and informative. In general, it was the kind defenders of advertising like to cite.

But its contribution to the financial stability of the paper was insufficient. And by July 1850, the Banner's financial condition was so serious that its existence was threatened.

Richardson made a series of personal appeals to leading ministers and more affluent laymen in the area for support. The finances of the publication continued to deteriorate through the summer. By September the paper was \$2,000 in debt. Richardson claimed it was owed \$3,000 in unpaid subscriptions.

The future of the Banner appeared increasingly doubtful until, largely through the personal impetus of Alexander, Thrall and some members of the committee of publication, the Texas Conference meeting in late September authorized a solicitation campaign to buy a printing press and arrange for office space for the paper in Houston. The preachers of the Conference were instructed to discuss with their leading laymen the possibilities of gifts to liquidate the debts of the paper.

Richardson, at once, began the plea for funds. Through the efforts of ministers over the state and his editorial cries for help, a steady dribble of donations began to flow into the Banner offices. Each gift and its donor was noted in the paper.

By March 1851, it had announced a total of \$1931.35 in donations toward purchase of a press, and on March 29 one was ordered, along with a fresh supply of newsprint, from New York.¹⁴

¹⁴Thrall's account of this campaign, contained in A Brief History of Methodism in Texas, op. cit., p. 279, differs slightly. He writes that "About January 1, 1852, some liberal friends, principally in Houston, furnished the committee \$1,000 with which to purchase printing materials and a hand press." However, the

Banner each week printed lists of numerous contributors from all over the state. No contribution listed was more than \$100. The fund rose ultimately to well over \$2,000 and the press had been ordered and paid for almost nine months before the date he cites. Probably, Thrall refers in this passage to the liquidation of Banner debts by Methodists in Houston, and their assumption of the paper's financial responsibilities. However, this occurred in the early summer of 1851.

Richardson at the time claimed the Banner was reaching several thousand people. He must have been referring to the number who read rather than those who subscribed to it. For it is almost certain that the Banner never attained a circulation of more than 1,500

Two editions of the paper were published in April, then with the contract with Cruger and Moore at an end, publication was suspended pending arrival of the new press. None of the money solicited in the fund raising campaign was used to pay the debt owed them. At the time equipment was ordered, efforts were being made to persuade several wealthy merchants in Galveston and Houston to pay the sum.

These efforts were successful and the printers were paid, though the names of the laymen who were the Banner's benefactors are unknown. These same laymen also agreed to underwrite the expense of publication for a year. In doing so, they doubtless were unaware of the extent of their generosity.

In the meantime, the committee of publication directed by Thrall rented abundant space for the offices and shop of the Banner above a hardware store two doors from the post office in Houston. The press which arrived early in June was set up and the newsprint stored in a nearby warehouse.

The first issue after the arrival of the new press came out June 28. Its typographical appearance, clarity of printing and quality of paper ~~were~~ equal to that of any New York daily issued during the same period.

Appearance of the Banner elicited favorable comment from the secular press such as that contained in the editorial below by the Houston Telegraph and Texas Reporter which was reproduced in the Banner.

"We are much gratified to see the Texas Wesleyan Banner again displayed and diffusing around the bright beams of religious intelligence. The publication of this admirable journal has been resumed in this city, under very flattering auspices. A new press and new type have been procured, and the paper will bear favorable comparison in its typographical appearance with the best paper in the Union. We may say as much also, of its editorial department. The Reverend Chauncey Richardson is regarded as the most eminent scholar and divine of his denomination in the state. His great literary attainments, and his unwearied industry and zeal, cannot fail to render the Banner a most efficient auxiliary in the cause of religion and true morality."¹⁵

¹⁵Texas Wesleyan Banner, op. cit., July 12, 1851, p. 2.

At the persuasion of the laymen who had taken over the Banner's financial affairs, Charles Shearn, a successful Methodist businessman in Houston became business manager of the paper the first week in July. Readers were instructed to address all matters of business to him.

Shearn was given complete control of all business aspects of publication, though he received no salary and performed his duties

as an adjunct to his private business. One of his first acts was to attempt to secure job printing contracts for the Banner, in an effort to supplement its revenue and fully utilize its new facilities.

The July 5 issue of the Banner solicited job printing "...of every description..." and promised to "...execute it with dispatch, elegance and at reasonable rates."¹⁷

¹⁷Ibid., July 5, 1851, p. 1.

In a further effort to stimulate circulation promotion by preachers in the field, which was inspired by Shearn, ministers were allowed to retain ten per cent of all money collected for the Banner.

This activity was matched by Richardson through renewed efforts to better the content of the paper. Coverage of both state and international news was widened. The editor sought to exchange issues with all other publications he could contact through his columns. Each edition contained appeals to preachers to report events in their area and activity in their churches.

Richardson sometimes criticized the material he did receive from readers. He once advised a young contributor:

"Miss M.E.M.'s poetic effusion on 'Gratitude' we judge to be her first effort at versification, and as such it is not a bad one. But as some of our readers are shrewd critics and tolerate no poetry that falls below their standard, we are obliged to be rather particular in our selections for the poet's corner. We would not discourage our fair friend, but would say to her, try again. Submit the piece to some literary friend,

and when it is pronounced good, send it to us."¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid., August 20, 1851, p. 2.

The result of Shearn's measures, Richardson's increasingly competent editorship and the Banner's growing prestige was steadily rising circulation. In November, Richardson boasted that the Banner was the largest newspaper in Texas with a paid circulation of 1,500. In view of the quality of the paper and the favor it enjoyed among Methodist preachers, whose support determined the extent of its circulation, this figure does not seem unreasonable. And considering the embryonic nature of the press in general in Texas and the sparse population, his claim of the largest circulation was probably close to correct.¹⁹

¹⁹Texas editors of the day, including those of the secular press, were prone to exaggerate the size of their circulations. There is no authoritative source of verification of circulation claims made during this period. Richardson inferred in the August 20, 1851 issue on page two that he had made a survey and found the Banner's circulation to be the greatest.

With circulation increasing, business affairs in capable hands and the popularity of the publication, and its editor, soaring, the future of the Banner appeared promising. And Richardson's position with it seemed secure.

But it was not.

There is no record of complaint concerning Richardson's editorial conduct of the paper from any quarter. But there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with its business aspects among the affluent Methodist businessmen who were called upon to support it financially.

Undoubtedly there was some basis for dissatisfaction.

Richardson was not a businessman. He was first of all a preacher. He had become an editor and an excellent one. The latter task alone, when performed with the competency Richardson attained, was more than sufficient to occupy the efforts of one man.

Too, as has been mentioned, much of the Banner's financial difficulty stemmed from the inefficiency of the postal system over which he could not possibly have any control.

Nevertheless, the discontent which had prompted the installation of Shearn became manifested when the laymen financially responsible for the paper began in the fall to exert pressure upon the committee of publication to reduce Richardson's salary.

The desired reduction, however, did not arise solely from this dissatisfaction. Richardson was receiving \$800 annually, a sum which for the day was good and for a minister almost unheard of.

With the resumption of publication in July, the businessmen, not the Church, were responsible for paying his salary. Reduction of it seemed to them a more than justifiable economy.

The committee of publication and other influential preachers, with whom Richardson was popular, were thus confronted with a dilemma. To refuse the wishes of the businessmen would jeopardize

the support that guaranteed the ongoing of the paper. To cut Richardson's salary would seem to reproach an editor for a job which everyone conceded to be one well done.

When the Texas Conference met in November, the committee still had reached no decision. The Conference solved the problem by authorizing the businessmen to reduce Richardson's salary to \$300 annually. At the same time, his fellow ministers and members of the committee pleaded with him to remain as editor.

Richardson would have none of it. He resigned immediately, though he did agree to act as editor until a suitable successor could be obtained.

After some deliberation, the Rev. George Rottenstein was selected. Richardson left January 10, 1852. Except for a brief announcement about the new editor, and a statement that he had resigned to return to the active ministry, Richardson said nothing in the Banner about his departure.

In the two years and ten months of his editorship, Richardson made the Banner one of the foremost newspapers in Texas. To an extent, he did so with the force of his personality expressed through the editorial page. But to a greater degree, he did so by supplying Methodists in an isolated region with information they wanted and needed about the secular world.

The value of the publication in furthering the various programs of the Church and in serving as a medium of the ministry is attested to by the almost unanimous desire among key clergy to sustain it.

Its prestige is reflected in the printed respect repeatedly afforded it by other papers, and the support given it by preachers in their churches. Finally, the fact that Richardson made it a good newspaper can be seen in the obvious fact that it survived in its initial stages in the face of sometimes seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Admittedly, it could not have been continued without the financial assistance of the businessmen and people who came to its aid. But the fact that these Methodists were willing to make possible its continuance, at a cost to themselves, is further evidence of its quality.

It is with regard to this point that Richardson made his greatest contribution. He demonstrated, for all to see, the need and feasibility of a Methodist publication in the area.

He made other contributions.

He established an editorial pattern for succeeding editors to follow. The Banner under Richardson never was a religious paper exclusively. It was a secular one, too, competing with the secular press. Its position on every issue was the Methodist one. But it reported news of the state, nation and world, and Richardson probably would have reported more if he had had the means to do so. The publication, thus, had a dual value for Methodist readers. For not only did it attempt to minister to their spiritual needs, but it provided them with information which, except on a local level, was equal to that available in most of the other papers in the state.

Richardson also made the editorial page the voice of the Church. He never consulted anyone concerning it. But there was little need for him to. For on broad issues, he thought as all Methodist clergy thought. He wrote on what he wished. And just as the honest preacher in the country pulpit, he was unmoved by any consideration except what he thought morally right. The Banner became a respected voice, one which was listened to.

But Richardson thought he had failed. He had dreamed of making the Banner the greatest newspaper in the South. Despite assurances to the contrary, he interpreted the Conference decision to slash his salary as belief on the part of his colleagues that he had fallen miserably short of this. When he talked to Thrall about his resignation, he broke into tears. At 50, he felt his career a failure.

Two months after he left the Banner, Chauncey Richardson died of pneumonia on April 14, 1852.

But his contributions to the cause he served were far greater than his depression allowed him to think or anybody else realized. A lesser editorial performance in the beginning probably would have meant death for the Banner in infancy or shortly thereafter. And the improvident reduction in Richardson's salary could have meant the same thing.

But it did not.

CHAPTER V

PROSPERITY AND DISASTER

Basic differences in the Banner resulting from a change in editors were not radical.

Rottenstein had been a Methodist preacher in Texas for many years, was thoroughly acquainted with conditions in the state and had held pastorates which at the time were considered important ones. However, there was little else in his background upon which he could draw for guidance in editing a religious newspaper.

He, therefore, patterned it throughout after the kind of publication his predecessor had started.

The most noticeable change during his editorship was the decline in the force of the editorial page. He confined it almost solely to religious subjects, and for the most part abstract ones. His editorials often were nothing more than long, dusty theological tracts.

However, the content of news during his editorship increased. On the second page, the Banner became a mediocre religious journal. On the third, it remained a first rate weekly newspaper.

Rottenstein sometimes ran the entire text of notable speeches in congress by leading orators of the day on the front page. And occasionally, an unusually newsworthy item was run on the front page also. State news continued to include stories of murders and rapes, fires, runaway slaves, conditions of crops, floods, accidents

at sea, epidemics, and Indian and troop movements. Rottenstein tried especially to keep readers informed of the most recently known location of hostile Indian bands. Arrivals and departures of ships at Galveston were announced weekly.

The section of commercial news was expanded to include weekly market reports on the sale and price of cotton, sugar, molasses, flour, whiskey, lard, salt, coffee and money in both Houston and Galveston. This information was taken primarily from the Galveston Journal, but sometimes it was compiled for the Banner by Methodist businessmen in Houston.

Stories were never revised after they had once been set in type. Copy evidently was set as soon as received. If more material on a particular story came in, it simply was set beneath the first. Very often, the reader interested in learning the latest developments first, found it necessary to start at the end of the story.

Shearn, who remained in control of the Banner's business affairs, managed to increase the proportion of advertising to about 35 per cent of the publication's content. He did this largely through his own business and personal contacts in Houston and Galveston.

Under his hardheaded business direction, the publication had become a solvent enterprise by the end of 1852, and some small sums were even turned over to the Texas and East Texas Conferences. Shearn accomplished this minor miracle by upping advertising rates and unsentimentally stopping the subscriptions of those who had not paid for them.

With the financial condition of the paper in such relatively excellent shape, Shearn considered his obligation to the friends who had originally persuaded him to assume management fulfilled, and in April 1853 he relinquished his work to E.D. John of Houston.

Rottenstein continued as editor until July, when, for unknown reasons, he was replaced by the Rev. S.B. Cameron, a retired preacher who had come to Texas from Kentucky two years before.

Rottenstein's editorship, while decidedly inferior to Richardson's, was fairly competent. Though the editorial page deteriorated decisively in quality, the rest of the content remained as good as it had been before. And by the end of his tenure, the support among the Methodist hierarchy in Texas was sufficiently solidified and widespread to maintain the circulation of the paper. Too, the population was increasing, thus enlarging the number of potential subscribers, and making them easier to obtain.

Cameron became afflicted with yellow fever almost immediately after beginning as editor, and died October 2, 1853. The Rev. J.A. Hancock was selected to succeed him. At the same time, David Ayers, a leading layman in Houston, replaced John as business manager.

On the basis of the evidence available, little can be said about Cameron's or Hancock's direction of the paper. No issues edited by either of them exist. But it seems clear that the Banner continued to prosper financially and that its circulation rose to about 1,800.

During Hancock's editorship, sentiment developed among Church leaders to transfer the site of publication from Houston to Galveston. Hancock apparently favored the latter location on the basis that it would place the paper closer to its sources of national and international news since Galveston continued to be the transport key to Texas and a point of immigration.

The transfer was accomplished in the summer of 1854. Ayers purchases a building for the paper and the Rev. C.C. Gillespie became editor.

With the beginning of publication in Galveston, Gillespie changed the name of the paper to the Texas Christian Advocate, a title it was to bear for 78 years.

At the time of the move, the General Conference of the M.E. Church, South authorized an agency of the Church organization in Nashville (the Book Agents) to grant the Advocate \$5,000 from the Church's general funds for the purpose of buying new equipment. The agents did advance the paper \$1,024, but the rest of the money authorized was never forthcoming.

But so far as the Advocate was concerned, it really didn't matter. For under Gillespie, it embarked upon a period of financial prosperity which for it was almost fantastic.

Circulation rose at the rate of more than 500 subscribers a year, until in 1858 it had reached 4,200.

By Ayer's own admission, the paper had more offers of advertising than it could conveniently handle. Its job printing business under

his direction grew so successful that the revenue from it alone was sufficient to defray almost half of the costs of publication.

In addition, the popularity of the paper was such that Methodists over the state periodically contributed large sums of money and even tracts of land to it, even though it had little need for these gifts.

Gillespie's editorship obviously was an overwhelming success. Though no copies of issues he edited exist, it is evident from the popular support he won that he restored some of the publication's former force on the editorial page. Indications are, too, that the Advocate became influential in politics, particularly with regard to the slavery issue on which it upheld the Southern position.

By January 1858, the Advocate had developed into such a financially rewarding enterprise that Ayers decided to expand its operations to include the publication of books and church literature. In May, he bought a three story building in Galveston to house the paper's offices and equipment. Though there is no record of them, Thrall states that Ayers published several books on the Advocate press.²⁰

²⁰Thrall, op. cit., pp. 282-83.

In November, Gillespie returned to the ministry and was succeeded by the Rev. John Carnes. Somewhat eccentric, Carnes was regarded as one of the most brilliant men in the southern ministry.

He was anything but a conformist. His intelligence and the unrestrained expression of it upon any subject that happened to interest him frequently led him into trouble with less gifted congregations.

At the same time he was assigned to the editorship, the Rev. J.W. Shipman was appointed fiscal agent of the Advocate and the new Book Depository. This marked the first time that a minister had been assigned to full time, salaried duty with the paper as business manager. The assignment was significant because it revealed recognition by the Church of the relatively large scale on which the Advocate then was operating.

Shipman immediately launched a campaign to raise more than \$10,000 to purchase a power press and other new equipment for the paper. The sum was easily raised through voluntary contributions. In April 1859, John Babb, a wealthy Methodist, further increased it by giving the paper 600 acres of land.

However, it was a full year before Shipman took any further action toward purchasing the equipment for which the money had been solicited.

The reasons for his delay are not clear. The Advocate intended to add to the donations with money from its own surplus, and possibly Shipman waited until he considered this large enough to allow comfortable subtraction. It is possible, too, that the ominously widening political rift between the North and South motivated the delay. Regardless, it was April 1860 before Shipman visited New

York and ordered the equipment. Thrall mentions that while in New York, Shipman, who apparently was something of a genius persuading people to part with their money, prevailed upon some Methodists in the area to donate more than a thousand dollars to the Advocate.²¹

²¹Thrall, op. cit., p. 285.

In view of the prevailing separation and antipathy between the northern and southern elements of the Church caused by their antithetical attitudes toward slavery, this feat was no small one.

The power press and "Ericson" engine arrived and were set up in the latter part of September.

While Shipman rather energetically was overseeing the business aspects of the Advocate, Carnes won new success for it editorially. Again, first hand evaluation of the paper and his work while he was editor is impossible because of the complete lack of issues for the period.

But there is strong evidence that he was held in higher esteem as an editor by both secular and religious colleagues and readers than any of his predecessors, including Richardson and Gillespie. Ministers associated with the Advocate in later years referred to him as "brilliant" as did the Galveston News and Houston papers. While he was editor of the Advocate, several secular papers tried to persuade him to join their staffs²² and one unknown publication even offered him its editorship.

²¹One of which he did join later.

In view of the acclaim he later won as an editorial writer for the secular press, it is likely that the editorial page of the Advocate attained new excellence under him. It is probable, too, that he used this page to defend slavery and echo Southern threats against the North since he scarcely could have maintained such popularity for the paper by adopting any other position.

This, of course, must be recognized as speculation. But there can be little doubt that Carnes' editorship was the most successful one up to his time. And, as the year 1861 began there seemed no limit to the paper's future and the achievements awaiting it.

But Southern cannons in South Carolina soon imposed drastic limits.

By July, Federal warships had made travel on the Gulf virtually impossible. The siege of Galveston was imminent, and its fall scarcely more remote.

The Advocate's news sources were reduced to blockade runners and second hand information from telegraph lines overburdened with military messages; its property was threatened, its life endangered.

Carnes struggled through the spring with the paper. But after several Union demonstrations against the city, its plight grew more precarious. In July, its supply of newsprint was nearly exhausted. The next month it started printing as a half-sheet, eliminating all

content except the most important war news. By the end of November, there was not even enough newsprint remaining for this.

Church authorities had been recommending since the summer that publication be ceased. But so long as any hope of sustaining the paper seemed in the least justifiable, Carnes argued against this.

When the supply of newsprint was gone completely, he issued two editions on wallpaper which he bought from local merchants. But by mid-December, it was clear that further publication was impossible. The committee of publication ordered Carnes to stop publication. He was instructed to dismantle the press and all other equipment and ship it overland to Houston for storage. This was done. And for the first time in 20 years, no Methodist received a Christmas edition of his Church paper.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADVOCATE AFTER 1863

In the fall of 1863, the remnants of Southern power and wealth were dying with the barefooted armies in the snows of Virginia. On the heights at Vicksburg and the fields near Gettysburg, the war had been decided. Grant's regiments had isolated Texas from the South. Union mastery of the Mississippi and the sea was almost complete. The only communications with the rest of the world were through Mexico, blockade runners and small bands of men who by night drove horses and supplies eastward.

But save for the death of its sons in Tennessee and along the Potomac, Texas had not yet suffered as its sister Southern states were beginning to. Its territory remained almost free of enemy troops. Only Galveston had fallen after prolonged siege, and a trickle of trade with the outside world was possible through Mexico.

With these conditions prevailing, a conference of church leaders meeting at Columbus in November recommended that publication of the Advocate be resumed. War and the Confederate government had sapped most of the negotiable currency from the populace, leaving it only its perennial possession, cotton. The scarcity of cotton in Europe resulting from the blockade had raised the price of it to \$100 a bale. But in Texas it was worthless. Nevertheless, it was cotton that the Methodists donated to begin again the Advocate. General

J.B. Magruder, a Confederate commander who was present at the Columbus meeting, authorized the export of Advocate cotton to Mexico. Considering the vital need of the Confederate treasury for money from abroad and the difficulties of selling government cotton through Mexico, permission to divert this potential source of government revenue to the Advocate represented a generous gesture. It also was a tribute to the reputation the paper had achieved before the war.

However, the Advocate apparently succeeded in exporting and marketing few of the more than 200 bales given it. For it did not start publication until December 1864, and then it had almost no funds.

Carnes returned to the editorship and Shearn again became business manager. Galveston had been retaken by Federal forces, so Houston was a mandatory site of publication.

Immediate difficulties were encountered by Carnes and Shearn. Rain and improper storage at Houston had ruined most of the type. The press was not in much better condition. There was so much trouble with it that weekly appearance of the paper was never a certainty. Shearn found advertising almost impossible to secure. Of the more than 6,000 subscribers on the Advocate's mailing lists in 1861, many were in the Confederate Army, and many more could not afford the two dollar subscription price. Even the full support of the annual conferences mustered less than 500 subscribers. Newsprint could not be imported and almost none existed in the state. Carnes managed to secure small supplies left by papers that had

stopped publication during the war. But sometimes, of necessity, he printed on tissue paper, and the Advocate was always issued as a halfsheet.

It is doubtful that Carnes was paid during the war period. By summer, following Lee's surrender, conditions had grown even more chaotic, publishing more impossible. One element of the Northern church was determined to fill Southern pulpits with yankee preachers. The United States Secretary of War authorized Union troops in the South to install them forcibly if necessary. This was the first of many acts which in the years immediately ahead were to ignite flaming bitterness among Texas Methodists against their fellow churchmen in the North. Actually, few attempts were made to enforce this ruling in Texas. The Northern preachers who did appear in Texas pulpits were received by congregations with something less than friendliness, and soon left.

But, occupation, the editorial limitations it imposed, and the general turbulence resulting from defeat became too much even for Carnes. He became so discouraged he resigned in September, quit the ministry and joined the editorial staff of the Galveston News where he distinguished himself for five years.

In November, the Rev. J.B. Philpott replaced him.

Newsprint was then available and the Advocate reverted to four pages. But Philpott was unable to raise the circulation above 500 during the first months. After four months, he concluded the undertaking as hopeless. He resigned in March 1866.

The next month, the General Conference which met at New Orleans elected Dr. I.G. John editor. John had been a preacher in Texas since 1847 and was well known throughout the state.

The Church and Advocate were so afflicted with a lack of money that John was not only elected editor, but awarded the financial responsibility of underwriting the costs of publication. He evidently possessed a small private fortune gained through prudent investment and minor inheritance before the war. Indications are that he succeeded in retaining most of it despite the fall of the Confederacy. This unusual status doubtless was an influential consideration in the decision to make him editor.

However, church leaders recognized the probability that at best he would do well to break even on the venture. They decided that in fairness he should be assigned a church in conjunction with his editorial duties. Throughout his editorship, he was appointed to pastorates in and around Galveston in the hope he might receive some steady income.

John accepted the editorship much in the spirit of a passenger who suddenly has been awarded both captaincy and ownership of a sinking ship.²⁴ But with the hope characteristic of his profession,

²⁴ Years later, John confided to friends that the job then seemed so futile that he decided not to worry about it and to have as much fun as possible doing it while praying for its weekly existence.

he began amid the privation and humiliation of reconstruction efforts to restore the paper to its former stature.

CHAPTER VII

BANKRUPT PUBLISHERS

John's first efforts as editor were directed toward transferring the Advocate from Houston to Galveston. He sold the three story building which had housed the paper before the war and bought a cheaper one. And by October 1866, the paper was again being issued in Galveston.

A little more than a month later, on November 30, a rather slight, 17 year old boy knocked on John's door in Galveston. The boy's name was Louis Blaylock. He had had some experience in printing shops and was applying for a job as typesetter with the Advocate.

Printers with any experience were scarce after the war, the Advocate needed one and Blaylock was hired.

John's decision to employ Blaylock was the most important he ever made as editor. For the boy he hired as a typesetter that morning was to be with the Advocate for 56 years, the majority of them as publisher, and was to be heavily responsible for its most brilliant years.

Shortly after Blaylock began work for the Advocate, a Confederate veteran called Captain Cain called upon John. The two had been neighbors and friends at Bastrop before the war. Cain had published a weekly called the Bastrop Advertiser. He had been so successful that, in his mind, the publishing field in Bastrop had become too small. He was now looking for wider journalistic

opportunity and he proposed to buy half interest in the Advocate from John.

The proposal was a welcome one. John liked Cain and looked forward to association with him. He doubtless was glad, too, to be relieved of part of the financial and publishing responsibility of the paper. So the deal was made.

Cain's enthusiasm was boundless. He was determined to make the Advocate the greatest and most profitable newspaper in the state. Furthermore, he expected to achieve this end rather quickly.

But his expectations ended quickly.

Circulation failed to rise even to 1,000. Advertising contracts were as elusive as they had been for Shearn during the war.

By November of 1867, the Advocate was losing money so heavily and steadily that Cain found it financially impossible to maintain his interest in its publication. And as Blaylock later said, he "left the Advocate with considerably more experience in publishing a religious paper and considerably less money than he had before."²⁵

²⁵Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, September 24, 1916, p. 10.

A few weeks after Cain's departure, John persuaded another friend, the Rev. R.G. Veal, to enter into publishing partnership. Veal, in addition to being a minister, was a member of a prosperous Galveston cotton firm and like John had some money of his own.

While all the negotiations which led to Cain's leaving and Veal's joining the Advocate were taking place, Blaylock together with another

young man, William A. Shaw, had established a small job printing plant in Galveston.

Blaylock, who had become a favorite of John, prevailed upon the publishers to allow him and Shaw to print the Advocate. This arrangement continued until the end of 1868 when Shaw, who like Blaylock was not yet 20, decided to return to school and withdrew his interest in the printing shop.

John and Veal who had continued to lose money bought the shop from Blaylock and Shaw. By this time though, their cash was dwindling and they were forced to give their personal notes for \$1,500 of the price.

But this expenditure, together with increasingly deficit operations, had sapped away all their capital by May 1869.

John's devotion to the Advocate not only cost him all his personal funds, but had deprived him of opportunity to serve in the most rewarding pastorates of the Church when he was at the height of his ministerial powers. Veal had suffered similarly. Both were attached sentimentally to the Advocate. They considered borrowing money to sustain it. Finally, though, in view of the \$1,500 they already owed and their record of consistent loss, they informed Church leaders that publication must cease.

This information caused a minor uproar. Bishop John Marvin, who was in charge of both Texas Conferences, summoned key preachers from over the state to an emergency meeting in Galveston. Marvin who had been in the North before the war, had been impressed with

the reputation of the paper which reached him as far away as New York. He emphasized the necessity of maintaining the Advocate, and at once instigated a solicitation campaign among Galveston merchants for funds. More than \$1,000 cash was raised the first two days.

John and Veal watched the proceedings almost in disbelief. After recovering from their astonishment at the concern in such high circles over the enterprise they were so fond of, they became frankly gleeful.

They devised a plan to create a joint stock company and sell shares in the company. This was accomplished so successfully that the resources available to the Advocate appeared equal to those of any paper in the state.

C.W. Hurley, a wealthy Galveston shipping merchant who was elected president of the company advised John that he had \$85,000 in the bank and was willing to spend every cent of it to make the Advocate a success.

The company assumed the notes Veal and John had given Shaw and Blaylock. The latter was again hired as printer. And with a fresh bankroll, the two publishers were off again.

Under the stimulus of appeals by ministers throughout Texas, almost 700 new subscriptions were obtained raising circulation to slightly more than 1,6000. However, the Advocate received payment for less than half of these and by September 1872 circulation again was below 1,000 and still dwindling. Expenditures continued to ex-

ceed revenue, and John began to draw more and more heavily upon the company's financial reservoir.

As Blaylock later said, "the months passed rapidly and so did the money."²⁶ Finally by May 1874, Hurley came to Blaylock and

²⁶
Ibid.

said: "The last issue of the Advocate has gone to press. You are authorized to sell the material. If you find no purchaser, store the entire plant."²⁷

²⁷
Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ADVOCATE UNDER JOHN

The publication which financially singed everyone who touched it was not as fully atrocious editorially as its losses would indicate.

But under John, it began to degenerate from a virulent newspaper published by Methodists who interpreted news for laymen from a religious point of view to a cluttered and often boring journal designed more and more for the minister alone.

The dignified competency of Richardson, the methodical excellence of Gillespie and the sheer brilliancy of Carnes were gone, and with their passing the authoritative voice of the Church to which Methodists had respectfully listened was scarcely audible.

One of John's first acts as editor was to enlarge the size of the paper to eight pages. In doing so, he incorporated a lot of verbiage and editorial dead weight whose omission would have caused less hardship to the readers.

Half of the front page ordinarily was devoted to a parable or historical incident whose telling was supposed to illustrate a homely moral. John picked up this material from other religious journals which for the most part were probably worse than his own. The remainder of the first page was consumed by musty information about missionaries and their work in remote countries. This "news" often was more than a year old when it appeared in the Advocate.

Articles on various phases of Sunday School regularly occupied between two and three columns of the second page. The substance of them all was that the Sunday School was a good thing. These were written by contributors, mostly feminine ones, and one can guess elderly feminine ones. The rest of the page two content consisted of highly didactic essays for children, also appropriated from other publications.

On the third page, articles dealing with what John considered moral issues predominated. They concerned such subjects as atheism, filial devotion, temperance, prayer, tobacco, and the Bible. These also were practically all taken from other periodicals. A column of eulogistic obituaries also appeared on the third page, often containing notices of death six to nine months after they had occurred.

Editorials, summaries of national and international secular news and abstract religious tracts occupied the fourth page.

Page five was the only real news page in the paper. It contained news of churches in Texas and two to three columns of summarized secular news taken from other papers in the state.

By 1870, advertising dominated the sixth and seventh pages, and some appeared on the eighth page together with the Galveston market reports which gave the preceding week's prices on 50 to 60 commodities.

The majority of editorial content was taken from other religious papers. In copying this material, John evidently followed no

specific plan intended to accomplish a definite aim. Each week, he took what he needed to fill up space. The result frequently was a hodgepodge of boredom.

John made the Advocate's position on all issues with which it dealt editorially clear enough. The Advocate was opposed to Catholicism. It considered consumption of alcohol a sin ranking with adultery, both of which were alluded to in deprecating inferences. The Advocate took a dim view of anything connected with the stge. The attitude of the paper toward the Negro had not changed appreciatively since its beginning. It jeered at the Northern Church for its inability to establish a workable policy toward Negro members which was compatible with its professions that such members were equal as Christians. An editorial written by John under the heading, "Will Pride Sustain Them," reveals much concerning Advocate and Methodist thinking in the South of 1870.

"It is a little amusing to see the editors of Northern Methodist Church papers getting one another by the ears over the question of the Negro. With the Church, South, the case is different. As soon as it met in its legislative capacity, after the relations of the races were changed, (emancipation) it deferred its policy with regard to this race, and at its later General Conference, it carried out the line of policy it had first adopted. It found no difficulty with the question, nor difference of opinion among its people. Having devoted its best energies in providing for the wants of the Negro when slaves, and having left its record in the graves of its missionaries who had died amid the rice plantations of South Carolina, of the sugar plantations of the Southwest, and in the hundreds of thousands of members it had enrolled from among the sons of Ham, it felt no need of an extraordinary display of zeal, nor had it any political ends to make out of the question. It had only to deal with the facts and wants of the

case. The supply of these poor, with the gospel was the question, and their true interests demanded that every disturbing element of outside and vexed question should be carefully eliminated, and it should look alone to the great interests at stake. A distinct race was to be provided with the gospel. The instincts of each race would keep them apart. The law of repulsion was as strong in the black as in the white which no artificial bonds control. Better, then, to adopt a policy when these laws lose their spirit, and while accomplishing the great work to which a common savior has called us, each one could walk his own way, avoiding all complication which might end in conflict. Our race was strong, and its duty was to help the infirmities of the weak. This it has done. The initiatory step taken by the General Conference in 1866 is followed by another in the 1870, which will end in the organization of a Southern colored Church claiming the sympathy of the whites because it is the offspring of a sincere effort to supply their people with the gospel, and not the spawn of a political organization. Here we stand by the Negro as his brother in Christ, ready to help him in his hour of weakness.

The North committed the blunder of assuming, amid all their protestations of equality, that they were a great deal better than the Negro; that the Negro knew it, and would be overwhelmed by this act of condescension on their part, and would rush with eagerness into their embrace. The Negro has no such thought. He has no appreciation of such an act of condescension. Having been assiduously courted by his friend of the North, he places no slight estimate on his own importance, and has no idea whatever of being absorbed. All this is very natural. The resistance to all efforts which look to the extinction of the black race by pouring it into the broader stream of the whites, will be as repugnant to the Negro as any plan for their obliteration. Gradually the eyes of a portion of the North are opening these facts."²⁸

²⁸ Texas Christian Advocate, Houston, July 21, 1870 p. 4

This inspiring manifesto of Southern Christianity so tersely stated was typical of John's writings upon the subject, and except for the style of expression, is characteristic of the views of succeeding Advocate editors.

Racial problems in Texas during the seventies were not limited

to those involving Negroes, however. Importation of Chinese to alleviate the acute labor shortage was creating increasing controversy. John summed up the Advocate's views of the issue in this way:

"The Chinese question is awakening an increasing interest throughout the country. The supply of labor nowhere meets the demand and the eyes of enterprising men are being turned to every point of the compass, and measuring the muscle of every race who are even remotely accessible from our land. While capital is on the lookout, labor is alarmed, and workmen in different sections are prepared to resist an importation which will reduce their wages. This is simply the old conflict between labor and capital. One point is clear; unless the demand is supplied from somewhere, the Chinese will supply it. People will not let their lands lie idle if they can obtain Chinamen to work them on fair terms. We saw one on our streets the other day with his queer looking shoes and pig tail of some three feet long, and, on inquiry learned that he was a member of a strong house in California, which is engaged in largely importation of laborers. A number are already in our state, and others are coming. But few reflecting men would not prefer the introduction of the Celtic or Teutonic in preference to the Mongolian. While the German brings us labor, he also will make a citizen. He cultivates our fields for a few years, then buys one for himself, and a new farm is opened, pouring its tribute of production into the aggregate of prosperity. We can hardly expect such a result with the Chinaman. The State is taking steps to encourage German immigration, and every citizen should organize at once. If we cannot obtain Germans, and the freedmen will not work, take the Chinaman. Labor is what the land needs, and the supply from any source which is available should be accepted."²⁹

29

Texas Christian Advocate, Houston, July 28, 1871 p. 4

But most of the Advocate editorials during the first years of John's editorship dealt with such subjects as "Time", "Sunshine", and "Pride", which, to say the least, were not the most incendiary ones of the day, nor the ones in which hard working Methodists were

most interested. The result of preponderance of such subjects along with John's laboriously encumbered writing was editorial impotence.

The Advocate suffered from this just as it did from the decline in the quality of news coverage of activity in the Church in Texas and events in the nation and elsewhere.

Too, war had decimated the Texas economy and business of any kind was difficult.

In view of the Advocate's editorial shortcomings, these conditions, and the large sums of money that had been lost on the paper after the war, it appeared for a few days that Hurley was correct when he said the last issue had gone to press.

CHAPTER IX

BLAYLOCK AND SHAW

When Hurley ordered all Advocate equipment sold, Louis Blaylock was scarcely 21. But already he was an experienced printer with growing financial acumin. And he was a devout Methodist.

Blaylock, too, had become afflicted with the fondness of the Advocate common to everyone ever associated with it. So out of sentiment as well as devotion to the Church he was reluctant to see the Advocate end.

The paper still owed him and his former partner, Shaw, \$1,500. After several days of consultation with John, Blaylock concluded that the only way the Advocate could be continued and the only way he could gain the money owed him was to publish the paper himself.

The latter consideration obviously was a minor one, since Blaylock was thoroughly acquainted with the Advocate's financial past and was shrewd enough to recognize the chances of making money from it to be dim. But his attachment to the paper and his belief in the importance of the paper for the church were major ones.

He sent a telegram to Shaw, who was then in St. Louis, informing him of the condition of the paper and inviting him to join in publishing it. Shaw wired back enthusiastic agreement and left immediately for Texas. The two gave their notes to the company represented by Hurley for an unstipulated amount above the \$1,500

owed them and took over all equipment previously used by the paper.

They informed Church authorities that they would like to have John as editor and he was reappointed as such, still in conjunction with his regular work as a pastor in the Galveston area.

But under the new regime, his duties and authority were limited. Blaylock and Shaw arranged to handle all advertising, circulation, promotion, and distribution. They were entirely responsible for the enterprise financially and it was tactily understood that they would receive any profits it made, though at the time few doubted they would lose money. John's compensation was to be paid by the Church he served.

With this setup, Blaylock and Shaw assumed control in the latter part of June 1874. Improvement in the paper came almost at once.

Column width was reduced to two inches and the number of columns increased from six to seven. Black faced heads were installed ranging from 12 to 24 point type. They were all single column heads, but the relief they afforded page appearance was refreshing in contrast to the unbroken grayness that had characterized it before.

The greatest single typographical improvement, however, stemmed from the use of pictures. They always were of parsonages, preachers, or Church edifices and were never reproduced very well. Blaylock and Shaw tried to arrange for one or two almost every issue. The paper looked better.

The new publishers also exerted an immediate influence upon

the editorial content of the Advocate. It became again, a newspaper first of all. But now the emphasis was upon news of Texas, its people and places. Each issue was filled with homely items and gossip about churches, their pastors and people.

Both Blaylock and Shaw were young, energetic and devout. They made themselves well known and highly popular among ministers and prominent laymen throughout the state. They utilized this social facility to obtain news themselves, but most of all to encourage preachers to send it to them voluntarily.

The result was that in each issue they could fill three to four columns under the heading, "Postal Cards," with notes about people, crops, rains, and picnics throughout the state.

Another column on the front page under the heading "News Miscellany" contained the latest and most important national and international news. Still another column was devoted to announcements of Church meetings, quarterly conferences, and revivals throughout the state. One column on the front page was reserved for advertising, which the two obtained in increasing quantities.

Half of the second page usually was occupied also with advertising. The rest was filled with longer correspondence from ministers telling of the work in their area.

A column of notices announcing marriages by youth of Methodist families over Texas was run on the third page. Four columns were devoted to advertising, and the remainder of the page, to an article taken from another magazine. These were considerably more dis-

criminally selected that they had been.

The fourth page was set aside for editorials and one or two article copied from secular magazines such as Puck.

The fifth page was reserved for advertising, as was most of the sixth page. Ordinarily a column of editorial brevities, some original and some borrowed, was also run on this page as well as occasional correspondence from readers.

Obituaries, fables for children, and further Church announcements occupied page seven along with two to four columns of advertising.

Under the heading, "Telegraphic Summary" three or four columns of national and international news were printed on the last page. The news was separated into brief, well edited paragraphs summarizing a particular happening.

Two columns contained religious news which was a continuation of the same type appearing on the first page. The final column was for advertising.

The publishers, and primarily Blaylock, were largely responsible for these changes in content and emphasis. John, however, must be credited for some of the improvement. Relieved of the tasks of publishing and benefitting from the news sources his young friends assiduously cultivated, he was free to direct more of his attention to his remaining duties which now consisted mostly of writing editorials and selecting material from other publications.

But Shaw and Blaylock were responsible for editing and selecting a great deal of the content. Few letters received were not printed.

Blaylock picked out the news from secular papers which was run on the first and last pages. And Blaylock and John together selected the religious news appearing in the paper.

Relations between the three were always amicable. John welcomed the revitalizing affects of his youthful colleagues and was never known to show any resentment over the increasingly extensive control they exercised in the conduct of the paper.

However, though editorial improvement was immediately forthcoming under Shaw and Blaylock, the financial improvement was not immediately commensurate, and the future of the Advocate remained in doubt.

CHAPTER X

BLAYLOCK, SHAW AND JOHN

When Blaylock and Shaw purchased the Advocate, its circulation was hovering around 500. Advertising still was sold primarily on a yearly basis. They found themselves under obligation to print almost two pages of advertising for six months, the money for which had already been used.³⁰

³⁰The Advocate apparently never encountered the difficulty common to many of its contemporaries of collecting from its advertisers. Most of them paid in advance. This may be attributed largely to the fact that for many years most of the advertising was secured from Methodists who wished the paper well and who were heavy contributors to the Church in other ways.

The severity of these conditions was heightened by the fact that neither of the publishers had any money.

They attempted to solve these difficulties partially by doing literally all of the work connected with publication outside that performed by John. They worked 10 to 12 hours a day six days a week. On Sunday, they went to church and talked to Methodists. They carried the papers to the post office on their backs rather than pay the one or two dollars transporting them by wagon would have cost. For all their effort, they allowed themselves \$10 each as their weekly salary. Either could have easily earned \$40 a week elsewhere for half the effort.

Evidently a large proportion of the lengthy hours they worked was spent soliciting advertising. By June 1875, the advertising content of the paper sometimes ran as high as 33 columns, and an average issue carried between 22 and 25 columns.

Insurance agents, bookstores, academies and college, lawyers, doctors, and druggists continued to furnish the Advocate with much of its advertising. Their ads were little more than announcing information.

But the sudden increase was accounted for principally by patent medicine advertising which had been largely absent in previous years. The ethics of Blaylock and Shaw with regard to this type of advertising were less than idealistic. Some of the patent medicine speels promised to cure everything from bad memory through "hesitancy in answering question" to impotency! And frequently the publisher's written endorsement accompanied these kinds of ads.

So far as the Advocate was concerned, these were indeed the days of the wonder drug.

In the mid-seventies, it began to enlighten its readers with regard to a concoction called "Koskoo" which claimed to be "No Quack Remedy" but "The Greatest and Most Popular Medicine Ever Invented!" Through the columns of the official paper of the Methodist Church of Texas, Koskoo guaranteed Texans it would cure them of "bad dreams, confusion, failing of the memory, mental depression, confusion of ideas, noises in the ears, hesitation in answering questions, twitching of the face, insanity, impotency,

apoplexy, etc., etc." And in case any affliction lingered (or any had been missed in the first list), Koskoo promised that a second dosage would take care of them, too.

"Rosadalis," "The Great Southern remedy", assured readers it would relieve them of "Scrofuly, scrofulous taint, rheumatism, White Swelling, Gout, Consumption, Bronchitis, Nerverous Debility, Malaria, and all diseases arising from an impure condition of the blood, skin or scalp."

The manufactures of "DeBing's Pile Remedy" offered a reward of \$1,000 to any reader who was not cured of "...any case of itching, blind, bleeding, ulcerated, or protruding piles" by their product.

"Prickly Ash Bitter" was advertised as curing "All diseases of the Liver, kidneys, stomach and bowels, as well as general debility, constipation, dyspepsia, piles, etc."

Promoters of "Tutt's Pills" guaranteed readers their product would cure "Chills, fever, dyspepsia, sick headache, bilious colic, constipation, rheumatism, piles, palpitation of the heart, pain in the side, back and loins, and female irregularities."

Medical science was making gigantic strides.

Beginning in 1876, advertising rates were increased to seven dollars per column or \$330 a column for a year. Circulation had risen to almost 2,000.

Blaylock and Shaw continued to allot themselves their \$10 a week salaries , and saved what money they could. With it, and

some more they borrowed, they established a job printing plant which for the day was one of the largest in the state. They entered a bid for the contract for the state's printing, and to the surprise of almost everyone, including themselves, were awarded it.

By the summer, Blaylock and Shaw were making money from their allied enterprise and there were indications that the Advocate might be put once and for all on a self-supporting basis.

CHAPTER XI

Either Blaylock or Shaw always attended every meeting of the Annual Conferences in Texas. At such they were excellent ambassadors for the Advocate which still was supposedly responsible to the Church. Actually, aside from appointing the editor and in later years paying his salary, the Church for many decades exercised little direct control over the paper.

Really, there was little need for it, except for elimination of the paper's reprehensible advertising practices against which little protest was raised during the century.

Blaylock and Shaw were providing Texas Methodism with an increasingly satisfactory journal which cost the Church nothing except the services of one of its ministers. The publishers themselves were ardent Methodists whose thinking rarely was more than a reflection of the Sunday sermons being preached each week over the state. The Advocate's columns were always open to any pastor who had anything to say and all were constantly encouraged to avail themselves of their use.

The most realistically compelling reason, however, for the freedom granted Blaylock and Shaw by the Church was that among its professional ranks there was no one who knew anything about editing or publishing. No one was competent to criticize it from a journalistic standpoint. The paper doubtless could have been a

better one editorially. But there was no minister possessing visible qualifications to make it so. And certainly, no one was sufficiently qualified to publish it nearly so well as the two young men were doing.

But the publishers' freedom was not complete.

In the fall of 1876, Shaw, who was an energetic prohibitionist, persuaded Blaylock to enlist the Advocate more vehemently in that cause. An unknown, free-lance writer was engaged to do a series of articles on saloons and gambling in Galveston and Houston. He visited some in each city and wrote three stories whose content resembled that of "Ten Nights in a Barroom." He spared no details in picturing life, including crime and prostitution, associated with some of the saloons of the period.

The response was immediate.

Some of the ministers were appalled that Methodists should be exposed to such sordid material. A resolution was hastily drawn up and dispatched to the Advocate by ministers of the Texas Conference demanding cessation of the articles. Blaylock and Shaw stopped the particular series. But they were popularly approved over the state and from then on the Advocate became more and more militantly prohibitionist.

Thus, the arrangement with Blaylock and Shaw on the whole was entirely satisfactory from the viewpoint of most of the Church hierarchy.

Circulation of the paper in 1876 began to rise at the rate of 1,000 a year. The subscription price was still two dollars, the

same it had been in the beginning except that, now, retired ministers or widows of ministers were given the paper for half price. By 1880, Blaylock's sworn statement claimed 6,000 subscribers.

Much of this success was due to sound business practices by the publishers and their popularity among ministers who promoted the paper from their pulpits.

But the primary cause of the Advocate's rising popularity must be ascribed to its growing militancy, and most of all, to the dozens upon dozens of small news items filling its pages each week. Typical examples of these can be found in any issue from 1875 to 1890. Some from the February 26, 1881 issue suffice to indicate their nature and its appeal to readers of the time:

"Commanche, Commanche county, February 8---Had one of the hardest rains Saturday we have had for years. Had some deep wading to get to my appointments. The rain was the life of wheat and farmers are encouraged. I have just started with a petition to the Senate to kill out that direful king (alcohol) which is destroying the peace of thousands, and bringing our people to insolvency by the heavy tax. How many will aid us in this work? Hope Bro. Gaskil is having success. Oh, that we could eradicate this great evil.---J.D. Crockett"

"Boerne, Kendall Co., February 10---Rev. A.J. Smith, a worthy local preacher in our Church, was killed at Sabinal Canyon recently by Jack Kelley. I have not learned the particulars. I have been anxiously expecting some one from that region would furnish the Advocate an account of the sad affair. Bro. Smith was a old Texan, and his untimely death will cause many hearts to feel sad. A.J. Pottier"

"Sipe Springs, February 8---I am just recovering from a neuralgic affliction of the eyes; have been in doors for two weeks. I wish to express my sincere thanks to bretherend and friends, for wood and water for the use of my family during my confinement. The Savior said "they shall not lose their reward." One of my ponies died a few nights ago of epizootic. I do not think the stewards will let me remain without conveyance long. We have a grand board of stewards.

Several little children have died recently in this part of the country. G.F. Fair"

"St. Joe, Montague Co., December 27----Health of community good. Weather damp and cold. Cotton crops being counted up; the yield was much better than was expected by many. The two gins in St. Joe have ginned out seven hundred bales and are not done yet.----J.O.Shanks"

"Millsap, Parker Co., February 8----Drury Davis, postmaster at this place was taken down with pneumonia on the 1st instant, and died on the 5th. Mr. D. had ingratiated himself into the goodwill and wishes of the entire community by his upright course and cleverness, and although not a professor of religion, was a good moral character. Mr. D. came to this neighborhood about fifteen months ago from Missouri; therefore has no relatives or connections in Texas. A brother has been telegraphed to take charge of the business.----Tom"

"Mission Valley, Victoria Co., December 16----The long continued rains have ruined completely all the sweet potatoes that were not gathered before the rain. Many families that raised hundreds of bushels of very fine potatoes have now not a bushel for the table. Hogs are generally fat; cattle doing well, and horses are dying from some disease. Sheep have suffered considerably, but are doing better now. Roads are drying considerably, but are still bad. All the farmers ought to be plowing; they are all waiting for the holidays to pass first. Perhaps they will wish they had done differently.----G. Onderdenk"³¹

³¹Texas Christian Advocate, Houston, February 26, 1881 p. 1

On the editorial page, John was after Sara Bernhardt and the Catholic Church. He wrote:

"The telegrams tell us that Sara Bernhardt left Montreal in triumph. Her engagement there was successful and a large company of friends accompanied her to the depot. It was a triumph of open, undisguised sensuality over the moral sentiment of the best people of the land. Every husband and wife, every father and mother who give to this unblushing votary of free love the countenance of their patronage have helped to break down one of the most important safeguards by which the honor of man and the purity of woman are shielded.

They have said that the most open and flagrant violation of the laws of virtue do not place the offender under the ban of modern society. This tells a bad story of the moral degeneracy of American life. It reveals the influence which the loose Parisian estimate of female virtue is exerting on those who affect the leadership of society on this western continent. The Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian pulpits of Montreal whose remonstrances failed to prevent the crowd from flocking to the shrine of a woman who does not attempt to hide that fact that she is a mother, but not a wife have placed on record the fact, that Christianity makes no compromise with sin. These pulpits deserve the thanks of all men and women who realize the fact that marriage relation underlies our modern civilization, and that the purity of the home circle is the chief safe-guard of the virtue and happiness of our sons and daughters. ³²

³²

Texas Christian Advocate, Houston, January 1, 1881 p. 4

"The papers report that last month in Hattomango, Mexico, a Roman Catholic mob attacked a house in which a Protestant Minister and a company of worshippers were engaged in their religious devotions. For a time the life of the preacher and people were endangered. The reports of this event in the secular papers were confined to brief telegraphic recital of fact. No comment nor condemnation accompanied this exhibition of religious intolerance. Such comment would be unwelcome to their Catholic readers, and the secular press by its silence in the presence of intolerance and outrage reveals how strong is the grasp the Catholic Church has on the American press. Had a Protestant mob assailed a Catholic congregation, and had the priest been compelled to conceal himself from their fury, what a racket these secular papers would have made over the outrage! It would have called forth denunciations by the column, and Webster's unabridged would have been exhausted of adjectives needed to express the abhorrence of the press for religious bigotry. Is Rome dominant in the United States? Have not the Protestants in America equal rights with the followers of Rome?" ³³

³³

Ibid.

Texans apparently agreed with these and other Advocate attitudes, for they subscribed to the paper in increasing numbers. By the summer of 1884 when John retired its circulation had risen to 10,500 and was soaring still. It had again become the dominant religious paper in the state, and its editorial guns were being readied for crusades which were to make it famous.

CHAPTER XII

THE ADVOCATE FINDS ITS ENEMY

John left the Advocate in April, 1884, and was not replaced by the Rev. George W. Briggs until late in June.

In the interim, Shaw and Blaylock published a special edition of the Advocate which was the largest any newspaper ever had issued in Texas. Edited by H.S. Thrall, 100,000 copies of it were printed. It appeared May 17, 1884. It contained 16 finely printed pages devoted to the history of Texas and the development of Methodism in the Southwest. However, most of this dealt with individual churches, nothing concerned the Advocate itself, and virtually all of it was poorly written. But because of its sheer enormity, it further enhanced the prestige of the paper in the state.

By now, the Advocate also was enjoying financial favor. The year before, all of the Annual Conferences in Texas, of which there now were five, had granted permanent recognition to the Advocate as their official organ. A Joint Board Publication composed of three representatives of each Conference was formed to act for the Church with regard to the paper. This superceded the committee of publication made up of members of the Texas and East Texas Conferences.

The first act of the new Board of Publication was to sign a contract with Shaw and Blaylock awarding them the right to publish

the Advocate for the next ten years. Under terms of the agreement, the publishers were to pay the editor appointed by the Board a salary of \$1,500 annually. The Board was allowed the right to ban from the paper any advertising it considered undesirable.

The length of the contract was a sure sign of the popularity enjoyed by the publishers among the Methodist ministers in Texas. Part of this, of course, stemmed from the fact that Shaw and Blaylock were performing a large service for the Church. But most of it arose from the adroit diplomacy used by the two, and especially by Shaw, in dealing with the preachers. His annual addresses to the meetings of the Conferences became an event anticipated with pleasure by the ministers. He told them one joke after another and made them feel they were responsible for whatever successes the Advocate achieved, which was partially true.

Fortified by this favor and their contract, Shaw and Blaylock determined to make the Advocate even more militant than it had been under John. For the target of their truculence, they chose whiskey and the saloon. This, of course, received the eager endorsement of the new editor, Briggs.

Authorized to raise as much hell with the saloons and their product as he could, he wasted little time in starting. In the summer of 1884, the Advocate began to campaign for statewide prohibition and to demand that an election on the issue be held immediately. The paper under John consistently had denounced alcohol. But it had never gone this far.

News stories detailing crimes, seductions, and social chaos in general supposedly resulting from drinking filled the paper's columns. Briggs wrote blistering editorials, heavily sprinkled with Biblical quotations, portraying the plight of widows and orphans whose husbands and fathers had been brought to a no good end through the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

This drew abusive response from liquor interests and politicians who charged that Briggs and the Advocate didn't know what they were shouting about and that they should mind their own business.

Briggs heatedly replied that prohibition was his business, and in December 1885, he hurled a challenge through the Advocate to all his critics to meet him in open debate. Some of his opponents accepted and in the spring of 1886, Briggs toured the state arguing prohibition with anyone who would debate it. His eloquence and the fact that Methodist preachers wherever he appeared invariably dispatched fanatics from their congregations to cheer him on with loud huzzas and "Amens" left him with few platform adversaries by the end of the year, and Briggs was forced to confine his attacks to the columns of the Advocate. But he partially achieved his purpose, for in 1887 a popular election was called on the question of outlawing the sale of whiskey in the state. The people voted overwhelmingly against prohibition.

But the mere fact that politicians were sufficiently concerned to debate the issue with Briggs and that it could be brought to a vote, was a tribute to the Advocate's influence, and so far as the

paper was concerned, the first election was only the beginning.

In the fall of 1887, after the election, Shaw and Blaylock took action which the Board of Publication had recommended and which they themselves realized desirable. They moved the Advocate from Galveston to Dallas.

The penetration of railroads to the interior of the state, and the growing development of the rich agricultural lands in the northern and eastern part of Texas made the transfer a logical one. Dallas was becoming more and more the transportation and commercial center of the state, and it was nearer the large rural populations among which the Advocate now was finding most of its circulation.

Under the stimulus of Briggs' controversial campaign for prohibition, this circulation had reached a new high of 18,000 at the time of the move. The Advocate was in sound shape financially, and its editorial prestige continued to soar.

Briggs, whose zeal had contributed heavily to the Advocate's growing power, resigned in September 1888. The Board of Publication appointed Dr. J.W. Hill as his successor.

CHAPTER XIII

A DECADE OF SUCCESSES

So few copies of editions of the Advocate edited by Hill and his successor, Dr. T.R. Pierce, exist that study of the paper as it appeared from 1888 until 1898 is extremely difficult. Statements concerning it must be limited to those based upon the personal recollections of Louis Blaylock, Sr., its publisher at the time. There are still Methodists in Texas who recall the Advocate of the period in question. But these recollections cannot be accepted as fact, and those of the people the writer has been able to contact, have been in themselves limited and hazy.

But it is certain that the Advocate under Hill continued to be an ardent organ of prohibition. But on the basis of the examples of his writing available, it appears that Hill was a far less articulate advocate than Briggs.

His writing on non-controversial and religious subjects, though, was popular, and he wrote whimsical essays on current topics that further pleased readers.

He continued, with the watchful assistance of Blaylock and Shaw, to print secular news, and ran weekly summaries of the most important national and international news which he and the publishers had gleaned from the secular press.

The size of the paper was increased in 1889 to 12 pages, and again in 1892 to 16 pages. The size of the individual page remained

the same as it had been throughout the paper's history except during and immediately after the Civil War.

Patent medicine ads became increasingly dominant in the advertising columns, but they were only a portent of what was to come.

Circulation rose during Hill's editorship and by December 1883 when Shaw's and Blaylock's publishing contract was renewed by the Joint Board of Publication for another ten years had reached 22,000. The contract was the same as the previous one, calling for payment of a \$1,500 annual salary to the editor.

Hill resigned in November, 1884 primarily because he thought this salary too low.

Dr. T.R. Pierce, who replaced him, evidently in ability and temperament resembled Carnes. He was outspoken and had difficulty in dealing with people. But Blaylock, who liked him, regarded him as the most gifted editor he had known.

Pierce wrote prohibition editorials which were much less ranting, but much more cutting than those of previous editors. The whole tone of the paper appears to have been considerably more elevated under Pierce than Advocate readers were accustomed to. Blaylock thought that some of his religious essays were superior to those in any church publication in the country, and Blaylock was something of a student of religious journals.

The Advocate maintained its circulation at around 22,000 throughout Pierce's editorship, as well as its position of eminence among the Texas press.

For the paper, the period from 1888 until 1898 was a successful one. But it was to be far overshadowed by the one upon which the Advocate entered with the resignation of Pierce November 17, 1898 and the appointment of the Rev. George C. Rankin as editor.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FINEST YEARS

When the Rev. George C. Rankin assumed editorship, the Advocate embarked upon its most notable years.

During his reign, it was to become one of the most influential religious journals in the country. Few papers, even among the secular press, exceeded its prestige in Texas.

It became an uncompromising, ceaseless, blatant foe of liquor, gambling, prostitution. It loudly supported or fiercely fought political candidates solely on the basis of their attitudes toward these issues.

Politicians cursed it and old time Methodists swore by it. Rankin feared nothing and dogmatically shouted for what he thought right. Under him, the Advocate's views never changed on any subject, including dancing, baseball, football, all of which it opposed in one way or another. Leading newspapers in Texas and national magazines lambasted it and Rankin returned their fire with uninhibited fury.

The Advocate in 1898 had a circulation of 20,350. It consisted of 16 tabloid size pages. Shortly after he took over, Rankin established the form and nature of content of these pages according to a pattern which he varied only to a minor extent throughout his 17 years as editor. Readers were educated to expect a certain kind of paper. They always received what they expected.

The first page was devoted to lengthy, incenderary editorials dealing with what Rankin considered the most important contemporary social, moral, and religious problems. Scarcely an issue passed in which one of these did not concern saloons or liquor.

Articles in the form of letters from correspondents occupied the second and third pages. These sometimes were violently anti-Catholic, but more often dealt with travel, church issues or temperance.

All of page four was filled with brief, well-edited summaries of state, national, and foreign secular news set in small type without heads.

Page five was similarly occupied with news items about churches and Methodists throughout the state.

Essays with moral themes and anecdotes taken from other papers appeared on pages six and seven.

Short editorials treating the same subjects as those on the front page were run on page eight along with a column of gossip about Texas ministers, and frequently a column of notes about current books of interest to churchmen.

Articles contributed by ministers on divorce, crime, alcohol and allied subjects occupied the ninth page along with advertisements. These articles were little more than condensed sermons and varied in quality according to the abilities of the pastors.

Sunday School lessons similar to those circulated in other church literature appeared on pages ten and eleven with advertisements.

News of women active in churches over the state, letters from readers and advertising occupied page twelve.

Reviews of books "bought and paid for" by the Advocate and advertisements filled page thirteen. Obituaries and advertisements were on page fourteen along with notices and announcements of forthcoming church meetings and activity and advertising. The last page was reserved for travel accounts from readers abroad or travelogues from other papers and advertising.

Of all this content, by far the most important and that which most contributed to the paper's power and influence were the editorials.

The most vehement and numerous of these, of course, dealt with prohibition. Their form never changed under Rankin. They pounded incessantly on the same points, all calculated to bring about the outlawing of sale of intoxicating beverages and the abolishment of the saloon. Those below, selected at random from hundreds, are illustrative of their scathing content and unvaried organization.

"The Diabolism of the Barroom"

"Dallas has more than two hundred barrooms, and their chief business is to corrupt politics, debauch citizenship, produce widowhood and orphanage, and fill hundreds of our homes with poverty and vice and degradation. There is nothing known to the calendar of criminal jurisprudence that does not find encouragement in some form of these disreputable dens whose modes of egress are shielded by blinded doors. But even the barroom, on a Sunday night before the holidays startled this entire community and the State by a species of diabolism somewhat unique and original in a few of its aspects. A man by the name of Bane, living near Garland, came to the city to have a good time, and after carousing around till night, he went to a barroom near the Union Depot, with considerable money

on his person, and took a few drinks of red liquor. And suffice it to say that this barroom is not one of the so-called dives in the city, but it is a large, well-equipped brick building, located in one of the most prominent places on Elm Street. Directly terrific screams were heard in this resort. A policeman ran in and found the man in flames from head to foot, suffering from almost untold agony. The officer called for a blanket or with which to extinguish the fire that was rapidly consuming Bane's body, but one of the wretches standing there quietly remarked: 'Let him burn up; he is not good.' Finally the fire was extinguished, but the man was literally cooked alive. His flesh was burned to the bone and his eyes scorched almost out of their sockets. He was carried to the City Hospital, but soon expired.

An investigation showed that the fellow had been taken into a back room in maudlin condition, and the saloon keeper, aided by two or three others, poured alcohol and turpentine over their victim and set him on fire! Then they entertained themselves by watching his agony until the officer came and put an end to the performance. These men were immediately arrested and there was strong talk of a lynching, but the Sheriff hurried the fiends out of the city and placed them in jail in Fort Worth. What is it that a barroom will not perpetrate? Here in Dallas they are not content to pour red liquor down human throats by the dime's worth and gradually burn them up, but by this new method they pour combustibles over the outside of a man, stick fire to him and watch the flames consume him. The latter method had one advantage over the former in that it makes quick work of the job, while the former requires a little more time. But they both accomplish the same result in the end. It is just a question of whether a man would rather be burned up instantly or take the fire by installments. It is our fault, for we deliberately license these dens of iniquity and even protect them in their work of destruction. When, then, should we be startled when they empty a little turpentine and alcohol on poor Bane, and for the pleasure and pastime watch him burn to a cinder? The barroom is capable of anything devilish, debasing, low-flung, and despicable."⁴²

⁴²Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, January 3, 1901 p. 1

Even Rankin was surprised when Carrie Nation first began her escapades, but soon began to support her activities fully.

"A Woman Crazy By the Liquor Fiend"

"Several weeks ago Mrs. Carrie Nation, of Wichita, Kan., became unbalanced in mind on account of the sorrow brought to her through the agency of the liquor business. In a fit of aberration she went to two or three of the leading barrooms in the town and smashed in their windows, broke up jugs, and tore the pictures from the walls. As a result she was arrested and placed in jail. She remained there several days, but the Grand Jury refused to find a true bill against her on account of her mental condition. She was, consequently, released, but in a few days she made another attack upon the barrooms and injured them to the amount of several thousand dollars. She was again arrested, but the authorities promptly released her. In these last attacks upon the saloons several other ladies joined in the crusade. As a matter of fact, the law does not justify this sort of procedure upon the part of the women, and they lay themselves liable because of the unlawful acts.

But public sympathy all over this country will be with these unfortunate ladies. The barrooms of this country have devastated the home and ruined the manhood of these lands to such an extent that women are suffering untold misfortune and agonies on account of their existence. Poverty, want, hunger, widowhood, and orphanages are being multiplied by these dens of wickedness as the years go by, and the women of this country are the real victims. They are forced to bear in silence the results of injury wrought by the liquor business. These things are enough to craze the brain and break the heart of the motherhood of this nation. No wonder that now and then some poor soul bearing the burden of grief and shame thus imposed upon her poor heart loses her self-control and invades these places of iniquity and empties bottles and jugs and smashes plate-glass without the sanction of law or authority. It is a pity that any such woman has to go to jail for such an outbreak of righteous instinct against iniquity. She is only following the most basic instinct of her nature in fighting the most devilish enemy that ever arrayed itself against the wifehood and motherhood of this government. And we hope the time may soon come when public sentiment will do for these cesspools of destruction that which this poor crazed woman is doing single-handed and alone in Kansas."⁴³

⁴³Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, January 31, 1901 p. 1

But before another week had passed, Rankin's evaluation of Mrs. Nation's sanity had been revised.

"Not Crazy, But Carrie is in Her Right Mind"

"It now turns out that Mrs. Carrie Nation, the iconoclast of the liquor shops of Topeka, Kansas, is not crazy, but in her right mind. When she was at first arrested and placed in prison and the Commonwealth's Attorney refused to prosecute her on account of her mental condition, it was all a miserable subterfuge. She ad in reality infracted no law on the statute books in Kansas. True, she had invaded the barrooms, torn down their vulgar pictures, smashed their plate glasses and burst up jugs; but there is no law up there for the protection of the liquor interests. The shole business is absolutely prohibited by the Constitution of that state. If the Grand Jury had been forced to take cognizance of this woman's acts, the men in the liquor business would have become the victims of the law, not Mrs. Nation. For this reason, no indictment was found; and for this reason, she and other women are still engaged in smashing up barrooms, their furniture and contents. Liquor ruined the home of Mrs. Nation, and her righteous indignation overleaped all bounds and she assumed the responsibility to do that which the sworn officers of the law refused to do in her behalf. And now what is the result? Why, the motherhood of Kansas, finding a leader in Mrs. Nation, is thoroughly aroused, and that state is in a ferment. The women in different localities where liquor joints are runnings are banding themselves together, and with hammer and hatchets they are demolishing barrooms withoutlet or hinderance. In some instance the outraged husbands of some of the women have foined in the crusade and are protecting their wives as the work of destruction proceeds. Kansas, that state accustomed to things strange and novel, is now treated to the liveliest sensation in its history. Some of the towns where these joints have been permitted by the authorities have taken fright and ordered the officers to close out instantly all these law-defying places. The whole state is in a blaze of frenzy and the women are carrying things their own way. Good for the women! If the men are too cowardly to do their duty, we are glad, as unseenly as the thing looks, that the women have the courage to lay the liquor business low with hatchets and hammers in Kansas. The Governor and the state officers are looking on in dismay, and the Sheriffs are startled. They cannot manage the thousands of women engaged in this mighty movement. We venture the assertion that the women of Kansas will drive the joints out of that Commonwealth before this cursade is ended: and there are fathers and husbands sufficiently sympathetic with them to see to it that now woman suffers violence at the hands of a liquor fiend."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, February 7, 1901 p. 1

Through the years, Rankin never ceased the bombardment. In 1907, he wrote:

"The Fierceness of the Whiskey Demon"

"There is nothing more heartless in its feelings and more desperate in its lawlessness than the whiskey fiend. It hates everything sacred and opposes everything that restrains. It lifts its hand against infancy, childhood, womanhood, manhood, and the entire human race. It degrades, it impoverishes, it wounds, it murders. The individual, the family, the community, the commonwealth and the nation hold nothing that it respects or reverences. It is cruel as the angel of death and as insatiable as the yawning grave. The venom of malice fills its heart and the inspiration of hell incites its deeds. Its victims, if called from their sleeping dust would constitute an army more numerous than ever followed Bonaparte through Europe.

They would be even more numerous than the allied forces that finally overthrew the Corsican and forced him into exile in the midst of the sea. Their wails, if gathered into one awful chorus, would startle the world and send a rasping shudder through the nerve centers of humanity.

We have recently had another concrete example of the awfulness of this whiskey fiend as the enemy of law and the murderer of men. In one of our Texas towns, not a hundred miles from where we write, the people voted out the saloon by a good majority. They had to close, but the infernal spirit remained to menace the peace of the community and to defy the laws of the land. It assumed the form of the bottlegger and the joint. There it entrenched itself and carried on its nefarious trade. Two peace officers, sworn to enforce the law and preserve the order of the community, put themselves in the way of this whiskey demon, and it made up its mind to slave them. So the two forces met on the public streets and when the smoke cleared away four men were either dead or mortally wounded and died afterward; three women were left in the weeds of widowhood and more than a dozen children were made fatherless. Rangers had to be sent by the Governor of the State to restore order and prevent further bloodshed. As a further result, the whole community is in gloom, the good citizens feel humiliated and the sanctity of human life outraged and soiled with blood. This is the work of the whiskey devil one afternoon and in one little community! Yet there are those still among us who defend this fiend and contend that the people ought to protect it by law. Yet its soul is steeped in iniquity and its hands are dripping with blood. No wonder that the people of this State have just about made up their minds that this lawless fiend, known as the whiskey devil, has about seen its day in Texas.

Its impending doom will not be many years withheld. On with the battle."⁴⁵

⁴⁵Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, February 21, 1907 p. 1

These editorials are typical of all Rankin ever wrote regarding alcohol. They began with a hundred words or more of blunt, wildly caustic condemnation. An example of death or crime in which alcohol was supposedly a factor followed. Then Rankin presented a melodramatic depiction of the plight of resultant widow or orphans. Then came a righteous swelling of fury, and his slogan, "On With the Battle."

Liquor and saloons were not the only targets of Rankin's wrathful ire. Dancing, though not quite as heinous a transgression as drinking in his estimation, wasn't far behind.

Typical of his comment on the practice was an editorial written in 1908.

"Not far from the Advocate building there is a public dance hall and it is very common for the young people to meet here in the afternoon for dancing purpose. The other day we happened near a window and for a few minutes witnessed the round dance. We had heard of it, but never saw it before. We do not care to witness it again. Young men had young women in their arms pressed close to the bosoms in the most familiar manner, while the arms of the young women were locked around the necks of the young men; and in this style they were keeping time to music with their feet, while their thoughts and sensations are easier imagined than expressed. A more disgusting sight we have never beheld. No good to the morals of young people can come of such bodily contact, and mothers who will permit their daughter to thus repose within the embrace of young men are in no sense fit to be mothers of girls. Under such circumstances voluptuousness takes the place of modesty; and the proper relation

that ought to obtain between the sexes is obliterated."⁴⁶ (91)

⁴⁶ Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, April 2, 1908 p. 1

As early as 1900, Rankin took a dim view of college football, an attitude he never changed editorially. What it was can be seen in the editorial below:

"The Barbarous Football Game"

"Last Saturday the football team of the Vanderbilt met the team of the State University at the Fair ground for a great contest. For an hour and a half they were messed up in a rough and tumble set to in the presence of about two thousand spectators. Preparation had been made for the emergencies of the occasion, as though a bloody battle was impending. Surgeons, bandages, a negro porter with an ample supply of water were in evidence; and as the game proceeded the wisdom of this arrangement was demonstrated. A number of the boys were dashed to the ground and run over and trampled under with bleeding noses and cut flesh. Several minutes were required to pump wind into the fallen and get them on their feet again. Heads were skinned, ankles were sprained, and collar bones suffered. One Vanderbilt boy was knocked senseless for quite a while. His ribs were fractured, chest severely cut, and his spine injured. The water, the negro, and bandages, and the surgeon, were kept busy as the affair progressed. A more brutal performance was never seen on the Fair grounds. It was more like a prize fight than anything else. Yet it was carried on under the auspices of the great University of Texas and our central Church school at Nashville! Football games conducted on humane principles might be all right, but when they assume the barbarous role of savage strength, exerted in the direction of skinning heads, breaking bones, dislocating limbs, and injuring spines, it is time to put on the brakes. If our great schools have time to devote to such bloody performances as the one under discussion, then the course of study prescribed for the students by the faculties must be exceedingly limited. There is by nature enough of savagery in the average boy without sending him to a university to develop and acquire additional quantities of it. Such was the battered condition of the Vanderbilt boys at the end of the struggle that the humane Texan spectator did not feel like indulging in demonstrations of

of enthusiasm over the success of our own University team."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, October, 18, 1900 p. 1

Baseball was denounced with even more vehemence because it was something played upon Sunday and people frequently bet upon it. Rankin advocated its regulation by the Church.

He let few opportunities to jab at the Catholic Church pass, either in the news columns or on the editorial page. His editorials on this subject relied upon scorn rather than theological logic for the effectiveness in the reader's mind. Characteristic of them was one written in 1910:

"The Roman Cardinals recently elected Benedictus XV Pope, and when they had seated him on the papal throne they all filed by and kissed his feet! Such taste! When Christ was about to leave his disciples he took a basin of water and a towel and washed and wiped their feet. Had he been a pope he would have changed the method and had his followers kiss his feet. But Christ was the servant of all and did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister. Think of fifty or sixty grave men dressed in crimson touching their dainty lips to the pedal extremities of one of their fellow men. But these men worshippers are liable to do anything unexpected. All we have to say is that they were badly pressed for something to kiss. But we presume the new Pope had the forethought to give his feet a thorough washing before his menials pressed their mouths to them, or if not, it is to be hoped that he kept on his silk hose."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, September 10, 1914 p. 8

Of all Rankin's editorials, perhaps those concerning the Negro revealed the most.

As late as 1920, barbaric lynchings of the most hideous nature continued to write disgusting pages in Texas history. In the early part of the century, George Rankin more than any single man spoke for Methodism in the state. What he said with regard to this merderously uncivilized bigotry and the way he said it, bears the anomolous position of the Church and the utter inability of the majority of its leaders and members to revise significantly the basic attitudes toward the Negro Texans had held since the beginning of the Civil War.

Rankin's editorials dealing with lynchings, as all his writing, was rigidly stereotyped. He described the crime of "inhuman black brute". (Invariably the crime consisted of an alleged sexual attack upon a white woman. The Negro never received a trial, so there was never any legal way of determining whether or not he actually did commit the crime.)

Then he told how the righteous mob gather to the cry "burn him" and how "a pile of wood was thrown upon the ground, the negro was fastened to it, coal oil was poured upon him, and the flames soon began their work of destruction" How "the horrible black beast"... "writhed in misery indescribable, but uttered no outcry, but died like a stolid brute as the flames gradually devoured him."⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Texas Christian Advocate, Dallas, August 13, 1908 p. 1

Rankin then reasoned that this was bad because the "brute" ought at least to have been given a trial before he was slaughtered. Usually the editorial was concluded with a word of commendation to the populace from which the mob arose for not lynching "innocent negroes." And sometimes, he recorded that that the Negro population of the area had joined in condemning the Negro who had been lynched.

But in Rankin's time, Texas nor the South had no patent upon mob murder and Rankin never let his readers forget it. Every time he heard or read of lynchings, crime or any disturbance involving racial conflict, the story was certain to appear in the Advocate.

Right or wrong on this or any other issue, Rankin represented the sentiments of the majority of Methodist leaders in Texas. In doing so, he provided them with able and articulate expression.

Most of the time, he told his readers what they wanted to hear. Always, he told them what he thought they should hear. And his courage and truculence won support among rural Methodists who liked a fighter and who recognized him as a chief partisan of the Church to which they were loyal. Thus, in his editorial campaigns, he always had a powerful ally---the feeling engendered among readers by their religious ties and Rankin's prestige that the course of behavior or political action he defined was the one Methodism and Christianity dictated.

Rankin attempted to make the Advocate a moral and political guide for the entire state. He often told readers: "If you want to know what Texas Methodism ought to do and just how nearly it is

doing it, just read and Advocate and you will get the information."⁵⁰

⁵⁰Texas Christian Advocate, September 3, 1914, p. 8.

Rankin instructed reader explicitly and dogmatically how to vote. He admonished readers to write to legislators and tell them what he told them to tell them.

His editorial diatribes against alcohol, gambling, prostitution together with the editorial dogmatism with which he dealt with any subject created bitter antagonism toward him among many politicians and some journalists in the state.

Deprecating caricatures of him appeared in Texas bars and newspapers. Politicians criticized him for participating in politics. Newspapers criticized him for not devoting the Advocate exclusively to religious news. The Houston Post and Fort Worth Record were his greatest enemies. Such attacks only precipitated new torrents of fury in the next edition of the Advocate. Throughout his editorship, Rankin haggled with secular papers over their coverage of crime and what he considered irreverent references to the Church and its ministers.

But whatever their attitude toward him, all politicians and newspapers at least respected him and the Advocate, and most journalists who knew him liked him personally.

In 1907, newspapers in Texas declared editorially that Rankin must be reckoned with as a candidate in the coming gubernatorial

elections. The Saint Louis Advocate proposed that he head the Prohibitionist Party as its candidate for president. Rankin disavowed all personal political ambitions, but always took an active interest in the no-hold-barred politics of early Texas when any moral issue was involved.

CHAPTER XV

THE ADVOCATE'S WONDER DRUGS

Louis Blaylock was a highly successful businessman when Rankin became editor of the Advocate in 1898. He heatedly denied, as did his family later, that this success arose from profits made in publishing the Advocate. This denial is probably largely correct.

Regardless, Blaylock more than fulfilled his agreement with the Church regarding publication of the paper. In addition to the sizeable donations he made personally to various Methodist causes, each year he contributed between \$500 and \$1,000 from Advocate funds to the Church for the support of its retired ministers. And his efforts in the interest of the Advocate were untiring, far exceeding those which could have been expected from even the most generous business contract.

He and Rankin idolized each other. Never was there the slightest hint of conflict between them throughout their friendship and business association. If Rankin wanted to run a 20 or 24 page special edition in connection with some Church campaign or to commemorate some Methodist anniversary, Blaylock did not hesitate to do so though it usually involved financial loss for him.

In 1900, Blaylock on his own initiative conducted a campaign through the Advocate's columns to raise money for relief of Galveston storm victims. Contributions totaling more than \$9,000 were received,

some from as far away as Maine and New York.

But Blaylock continued to fill the paper with the odious patent medicine advertising that had become a frequent occupant of its columns shortly after he began publishing it. Ordinarily, between 20 and 24 columns of the 80 available were devoted to advertising, but sometimes there were as many as 40. Fully a third of this was patent medicine advertising of one kind or another.

In these advertisements, cures were promised for virtually every affliction then known to mankind. And according to the ads, most of them could be had for a remarkably low price, usually 25 cents or so.

One old time customer of the Advocate, "Radway's Pills", guaranteed to cure:

"...Inward piles, fullness of the blood in the head, acidity of the stomach, nausea, sinking or fluttering of the heart, choking or suffocating sensations when in a lying posture, dimness of vision, dizziness on rising suddenly, dots or webs before the sight, fever and dull pain in the head, deviciency of perspirations, yellowness of the skin, and eyes, pain in the side, chest, limbs and sudden flushes of heat, burning in the side."

The advertisement concluded by informing readers that:

"...A few doses of Radway's Pills will free the system of all the above disorders. Price 25 cents per box."⁵¹

⁵¹Ibid., August 20, 1900

For years, the Gallstone Remedy Company of Chicago admonished Advocate readers to use its product and hinted at the dangers of

surgery. Its advertisement said:

"Wonderful success in treating gallstones, liver and stomach trouble is reported from the use of Gall-Tone. Gall Tone is used and recommended by the world's highest medical authorities; the treatment embodied and used in it. It would be a bad mistake, and often a sad mistake not to give this remedy a trial before submitting to the expense and dangers of an operation.

"If you have a bad stomach, Gaseous Pains, Colic, belching, Bloating, Indigestion, Biliousness, Constipation, Sick Headaches, Torpid Liver, Bad Color, Distress, burning, biting, boring, eruption, or pain in the stomach, Right Side, Left Side, Back or under the Shoulders, Appendicitus or Gallstones, write today to the Gallstone Remedy Co., Dept. 917, 219 South Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill."⁵²

⁵²Ibid., August 26, 1915, p. 15.

In smaller, more modest ads, the same company said its product would cure "Dizzy spells, Nervousness, Bad color, Blues, Costiveness, Yellow Jaundice, etc., etc."⁵³

⁵³Ibid., p. 13.

A Dr. Rupert Wells of St. Louis announced that he could cure cancer without the knife. Dr. H.H. Green's Sons, Hood's Sarsaparilla, Pyriamid Pile Cure, the Paris Medicine Company, Cuticura and Dr. Marshall's Catarrh snuff advertised sure cures for catarrh, eczema, piles, bad breath, bed wetting, impure blood, spring humors, rheumatism, dropsy, colds in the head, deafness, ringing in the ears, loss of smell, lagrippe and hay fever, as well as mumps,

bad memory, running sores and bad sores.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Ibid., August 29, 1907, pp. 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16.

Most of these advertisements appeared with minor variations throughout Rankin's editorship.

As a result, the Advocate drew increasingly derisive criticism from the press and some quarters within the Church. By the fall of 1907, it had reached such proportions that Rankin was concerned.

He had often expressed the wish that the Advocate could be published devoid of any advertising, and indications are that he recognized the highly questionable nature of much of the advertising used by the paper. But he made it clear that the Advocate could not survive financially without advertising revenue. It is clear, too, that Rankin had little control over selection or rejection of ads. He wrote:

"...Therefore, the editor of the paper, who has his hands full, leaves this department (advertising) to Mr. Blaylock, just as the Board of Publication does from year to year.

"Mr. Blaylock is exceedingly careful to discard anything and all matter of a hurtful character. For more than forty years he has presided over the business department of the Advocate and no man has ever given more satisfaction to the patrons of the paper.

"Whenever his attention is called to objectionable matter that may sometimes creep into it unawares, he always eliminates it, without regard to financial loss. And every year he goes over these matters with the Board of Publication, and they have invariably left such things to his discretion and business judgment. And he has ruled out thousands of dollars worth of business, and is doing it, rather than put into the columns of the paper matter that is not in keeping with good morals and

cultivated taste."⁵⁵

⁵⁵Ibid., September 5, 1907.

In view of the advertising Mr. Blaylock did not rule out, it would be interesting to see that which he did. And certainly, everybody's attention was being called rather vehemently to much of the advertising being run by the paper, yet none of it was changed significantly nor was it eliminated.

The Joint Board of Publication, the instrument through which the Church was supposed to control the paper, was now a loosely organized group of ministers who knew nothing about publishing or editing. It met only once a year, and its deliberations always took place against a background of ecclesiastical politics. Blaylock's position and prestige were such that it had less and less to say about operation of the paper, particularly the selection of advertising.

But in 1907, the discontent among its members that was to lead to unhappy consequences for the paper and Blaylock began.

Attention further was focused upon the Advocate's advertising content in the summer of 1907 when Collier's Weekly, in connection with one of its muckraking campaigns, attacked both the Advocate and its editor.

An advertisement by the Postum Cereal Company which had appeared in several issues of the Advocate stated that regular consumption of

Grape-Nuts would aid greatly in the prevention or alleviation of appendicitus.

Rankin reproduced in the Advocate part of Collier's comment which said: "This is lying and potentially deadly lying."⁵⁶

⁵⁶Ibid., June 25, 1907, p. 8.

Collier's also referred to Rankin as a man of diminutive intellect. A Methodist paper in the South, the North Carolina Advocate, came to his defense. But Rankin soon began taking care of himself. He wrote:

"...we are still too large to be controlled or led by that monumental fraud known as Collier's Weekly. Of all the Northern journals coming into Texas, it is the least influential in its pompous pretensions among our people, and such a self-inflated piece of so called literature has hit its exact level when it began its wonderful effort to elevate and improve the American saloon.

"It is a bloated braggart, filled with conceit and actuated by meanness. It is not worthy of a place in our Texas homes...and all its pretended interest in the purity of the religious press is found in its stupendous desire to boost its subscription list..."⁵⁷

⁵⁷Ibid.

The Postum Company bought a full page advertisements in the Advocate scorning Collier's. Headed in heavy black type, "The Yell-Oh Man", (referring to the editor of the magazine) these were filled with the rankest vituperation and invective. Collier's

immediately filed a \$750,000 libel suit against the company and further denounced the religious press in general, and the Texas Christian Advocate in particular, for its patent medicine advertising. It ran a picture of Rankin, citing him as one of the chief perpetrators of the abuses it condemned. All of which stirred Rankin to new assaults.

Throughout the next year, he lambasted Collier's whenever he could find a pretext for an attack. What affect his editorials, which told Texans not to buy the magazine, had on its circulation in the state is not known. But the criticism by Collier's stimulated an increasing awareness among some ministers that the ethics of the Advocate's advertising policies were not all they might be, and in later years this affected the Advocate greatly.

CHAPTER XVI

THE END OF AN ERA

The February 4, 1915 edition of the Advocate appeared with heavy, half-inch black lines encircling its front page.

A banner head consisted of a quotation from Tennyson: "Yes; I have seen my pilot face to face." In equally large type at the bottom of the page, another head said; "Let his slogan still go onward; 'On With The Battle!'"

George Rankin had died February 2, 1915 of a heart attack.

His death caused statewide reaction. Both houses of the Texas legislature passed resolutions of regret. Telegrams of condolence poured into the Advocate office from over the nation, including four from Texas Congressmen and one from Senator Morris Sheppard in Washington.

Twenty-seven newspapers ran eulogistic editorials on his life and death. Of them all, the most significant appeared in the Fort Worth Record. Its brilliant editor, Hugh Nugent Fitzgerald, had been an inveterate enemy of Rankin and had fought him politically on issue after issue for more than a decade. Fitzgerald wrote:

"Rev. Dr. George Rankin is dead.

"His death removed a man who for a quarter of a century had been a forceful figure and zealous partisan and active participant in the religious advancement as well as the political history of Texas.

"For many years he had been the editor of the Christian Advocate and had made it a power among the Church newspapers

of the United States. He wielded a virile pen. He viewed the world through the eyes of a Churchman. He was a crusader as keen as the Crusaders of old who sought to wrest the Holy City from the defiling touch of the Crescent and the Koran. He was fearless and he was dogmatic. They called him 'the fighting Methodist of Texas.'

"He had a warm heart. When the combat was over he did not bear malice. While it was on he gave blow for blow and though his head might have been bloody he never winced or asked for quarter.

"He had wonderful ability, he was Scotch and Irish and had all the pugnacity of the fighting races. He could smash a political foe today and extend a helping hand tomorrow.

"He had enemies who hated him and followers who idolized him. In politics he was for years a potential force, and knew the game well. He was as much at home in a primary convention or on the floor of a State convention as in the editorial den of his newspaper or in the pulpit of the house of God.

"He never followed. He was born to lead.

"If he had not been called to the ministry and had invaded the field of politics he would have made his mark and would have become a national figure in the councils of the Democratic party.

"In Texas Methodism his name was a household word. In the field of politics, it was a household word.

"In the years gone by he was the Peter the Hermit of the Prohibition cause in Texas. He threw down the gauntlet to John Barleycorn almost a third of a century ago.

"Defeat did not dismay him. Reverses only made him fight the harder. He was a glutton for work, a human ox and ever tireless. He fought the saloon, he fought the reservation, he fought gambling, in the days when it required nerve to lead a forlorn cause in Texas.

"He is dead now and there will be flowers for this wonderful crusader who was the stormy petrel for so many years of Texas politics and whose white plume ever waved at the head of the advance guard of those who considered themselves consecrated to the work of giving battle to sin and eliminating the alleged causes in the land.

"When George C. Rankin trained his guns on his political foemen in Texas, prohibition wasn't even a white man's hope, all cities and towns of any size had their reservations where the daughters of Babylon and their male companions walked in the primrose paths of dalliance. Public gambling was prevalent everywhere.

"At all race tracks, pools were sold, and in the capital of our state, saloons never closed from January to January.

"He considered himself the David of the Prohibition cause

and men who had no sympathy with his plan of making the world moral by law must concede that his pen created a revolution in moral conditions throughout the state, and that his influence was as potential as that possessed by any man who has ever figured in the history of Texas since the close of the war between the states.

"When armour-clad, ready for the fray, his pen was scorching and his tongue was blisterin. In social life he was a lovable and companionable man. He loved a clever story. He could crack a good joke and he was a hail fellow well met with his craftsmen whether of the pen or pulpit.

"He fought for his Church and his convictions.

"He was battle scarred in the service of Methodism and the innumerable campaigns against John Barelycorn which he led since the prohibition wave began to sweep over this country.

"He was a power in the councils of the Prohibition party. He was a bold politician but not a resourceful one. He made his newspaper a terror to his enemies.

"He had one ambition, even greater than his other ambitions, to be a Bishop of the Church which he had served from youthful manhood.

"This was denied him. Then he realized that the men who do the rough fighting for the Church or party, men who are on the firing line giving blows and taking them, men who make the sacrifices and receive the wounds are not those who are remembered when the rich gifts and honors and emoluments are bestowed.

"These are for the sons of Mary.

"The sons of Martha are the men who blaze the trail, who fight the battles, who never know when they are whipped, and who die in harness, unrewarded but not forgotten.

"A giant has departed from one of the houses of Israel. He was a gladiator in his time. He was long on the road and never ran up the white flag. He never retreated. He never ran up the white flag, nor any flag but the flag of battle. He never called for a furlough. He never served in the sommissary department or in the camp of the sutler. He lived and fought according to his lights and was rugged and sturdy and masterful either in the hour of victory or the hour of defeat.

"When the bell ringer called he answered, 'Ready.' His eyes are closed, his hands are folded and his spirit at rest. 'Peace to his ashes and sweet repose for his soul' is the prayer of one who was his political foe."59

⁵⁹Quoted in the Texas Christian Advocate, op. cit., February 11, 1915, p. 1.

In the issue reporting Rankin's death, Blaylock wrote:

"God moves in mysterious ways. How inscrutable are his dealings! After all these many joyous years we sent out this week's Advocate draped in mourning. Little did we think that a prince in Israel would pass so soon. The rugged oak, strengthened by storm and tempest, has fallen. Dear, good Dr. Rankin is now among the saints in glory! It was quite high noon of Tuesday last when the Supreme Architect called this worthy brother from labor to refreshment.

"What a wave of sorrow will sweep over Texas Methodism and throughout the Church! We ourselves, so near him all the while, can scarcely realize that he is gone.

"He was in the bosom of his family. She who has walked with him all these years thought not the hour was night. None dreamed the chariot stood at the door. None heard the swish of the boatman's oar. Quietly as the baby slips off into dreamland, our dear old friend found his way beyond the shadows into the land where all our sainted spirits stray.

"We know our thousands of readers are not prepared to receive this shock---nor were we ourselves. Tears stain these pages as we write, and there are multiplied thousands now who weep over these words. While our readers stand dazed over this announcement we are placing upon his quiet resting place flowers that fade. But in the hearts of our readers, thank God, his memory is deathless and his life shall abide like the fragrance of the rose. O let us forget the pang of this moment! His passing is but the shadow of God as he steps to take our hand."⁶⁰

⁶⁰Texas Christian Advocate, op. cit., February 4, 1915, p. 1.

Rankin's editorship was the most significant in the history of the paper, and the most successful.

He made the Advocate not only a powerful instrument for the augmentation of Church policy, but, through the exercise of his own thought, an original force in the determination of such policy.

It is impossible to demonstrate factually that the Advocate under him was the most singularly important force in bringing about

prohibition, abolishment of prostitution and gambling in Texas.

But Rankin was the undisputed leader of the active elements journalistically promoting such acts. In 1898, the sale of alcoholic beverages, gambling and prostitution flourished throughout the state. Their abolishment seemed unthinkable. But at the time of Rankin's death, legislation outlawing their practice had been largely accomplished and their existence greatly diminished. For this, many of Rankin's well informed and non-partisan contemporaries held him responsible.

Few who study his writing could consider it brilliant or the outgrowth of unusually exceptional mental capacity. It was blindly dogmatic more often than not. Sometimes it was scurrilous. But it was based on sincere and unalterable faith in the moral rightness of what it said, and it was fiery. Therefore, it won rousing approval from Methodists whose religious training inclined them to agree with its content. And it won respect from those who did not agree.

All the time Rankin was attracting such attention with his flamboyant editorials, he also was providing readers with a good newspaper.

It is probable that during the first decade of the century, the Advocate constituted the major formal source of information for many of its isolated readers. Prior to Rankin's editorship, the Advocate had been, during much of its history, a newspaper reporting news

news above all else. It had thus developed at least a partial readership which looked to it for news.

Each week the Advocate supplied a full page summary of the preceding days' most important national and international news events. With the beginning of the first world war, this coverage was increased to four pages.

At the same time, the Advocate under Rankin furnished readers with abundant news about people and events relating to Methodism in Texas. This alone would have been sufficient to endear it to ministers and more ardent laymen.

The rest of the content Rankin was responsible for including the in Advocate is difficult to evaluate. The Sunday School lessons, the long articles by ministers, the news about women's activities in the Church, were poorly written, and seem trite and insignificant. But to some elderly Methodists of the day, nearing the end of their lives, in forgotten places, perhaps they were inspiring.

Thus, it seems that in some ways Rankin was a great religious editor, and in some ways the Advocate under him a great religious paper. Certainly, the days of Rankin were the Advocate's finest in terms of popularity and accomplishment.

CHAPTER XVII

A MISPLACED SCHOLAR

Dr. W.D. Bradfield was elected editor of the Advocate March 9, 1915 and began his duties immediately. Blaylock had edited the paper since Rankin's death.

Bradfield was then 49, and among colleagues was considered one of the more intellectual members of the ministry in Texas.

He conceived it the duty of the editor to lead and mold public opinion rather than to reflect it. He wrote: "The ideal of impersonal journalism has made the editorial columns among the 'skipped essentials' of the newspaper."⁶⁰ He promised that in

⁶⁰Ibid., March 18, 1915 p. 8.

his editing the Advocate he would try to follow in the journalistic tradition established by Dana, Pulitzer, Grady and Greely. He even mentioned that he had obtained biographies of these men for study.

But if Bradfield succeeded in following the journalistic steps of anybody they were more those of Raymond than anyone else. The pugnacious front page on which Rankin had written his and the Advocate's greatest achievements became a sedate one filled with scholarly treatises on theology and philosophy in general. Titles such as "The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and the European War"

and "The South's New School of Theological Liberalism" typify the nature of most of his editorials.

Blaylock preserved the character of the page appearance as it had been under Rankin. But Bradfield progressively deleted much of the content readers had been accustomed to for a decade and a half. The travelogues, women's articles, the long moral essays copied from other religious journals and the rambling letters from ministers were virtually eliminated. They were replaced by long, esoteric articles such as "The Place of Power in Prayer", "An Analysis of Unification", "A Sympathetic Study of the Plan for Unification", written by ministers with interests similar to Bradfield's. Almost none of the content was reproduced from other publications.

Bradfield continued to deal editorially with the issues traditional to the Advocate. But his editorials on prohibition, the Catholic Church, and such subjects as dancing were much less spectacular and perhaps more intelligent than those of Rankin.

On prohibition, he wrote in reply to the Houston Post:

"...The Post's philosophy of the whiskey business is that it should be subjected to little, if any, restraint. The Post's theology is that you can't make men good by law.

"Certainly not. But you can restrain men from murder and theft and other such things by law. You can protect the innocent by law. You can protect society as a whole.

"The Post would have the Church preach its high ideals, but remain indifferent to the crystallizing of these ideals into law. The Post would have the preachers save the Church, but remain indifferent to society.

"The real business of the Church, let it be understood, is not to save itself, exclusively, but to save society as well.

And if the Church saves society it must inspire the enactment of laws which will protect it from the vicious. Above all it must cudgel the saloon, society's greatest enemy, from the face of the earth."⁶¹

⁶¹Ibid., January 13, 1916 p. 8.

Like his predecessor, Bradfield opposed dancing, as the editorial below indicates.

"The Dallas Methodist pastors have arrived at the only conclusion it is possible for Methodism to take. They declared uncompromising war on the modern dance anywhere and at all times. They said it was their earnest desire to be instrumental in providing healthy recreations for the soldiers and that as individuals they stood ready to aid in the regulation of public dances which they are powerless to prevent.

"This is no time for toning down the historic position of the entire Christian Church on the modern dance. Every great Church through its highest councils has inveighed against the dance. The reasons for this position are too well known to need restatement here.

"Surely no one will assume that the Churches are indifferent to the welfare of our soldiers. Nothing is too good for the boys who are giving their lives in our behalf. Nothing save the sacrifice of moral and religious convictions. The dance is evil and only evil and from such we would save the man whom we so tenderly love and cherish.

"We call upon our Methodist parents to assist our pastors in maintaining high standards and lofty ideals during this crisis of the world. We call upon the mothers of our girls to exercise the tender restraints upon their girls which are so much needed now. We call upon the women's clubs to find entertainment for the soldiers other than the hurtful dance. If there ever is a time to dance, surely it is not now."⁶²

⁶²Ibid., May 30, 1918, p. 8.

Bradfield vigorously supported editorially the Allied cause even

before United States entry into the war. But like many of his ministerial colleagues, he was reluctant to accept as true British inspired stories of German atrocities. Finally, in the face of seemingly documentary evidence, he came to think of them as fact and denounced Germany for their perpetration.

He championed the Child Labor Law and favored editorially the development of labor unions. He engaged in bitter controversy with Dr. A.C. Miller, editor of the Arkansas Methodist, over the establishment of Southern Methodist University which had been undertaken before he became editor. Bradfield defended everything connected with the university.

Most of the June 15, 1916 issue was devoted to articles about it. In this issue, he reported the first graduation exercises. Among the seven students receiving Master of Arts degrees were Robert W. Goodloe and Umphrey Lee, two men Texas Methodists were to hear more of.

Bradfield succeeded in obtaining large numbers of articles from laymen, bishops and even statesmen such as Josephus Daniels, then Secretary of the Navy. Nothing was ever paid for these.

The Advocate claimed a circulation of 24,000 in its October 28, 1916 issue. In its November 30, 1916 issue it said circulation was 20,000.

Actually, under Bradfield, the Advocate never had a circulation of anywhere near 20,000, and what it did have declined steadily. It had been slightly less than 16,000 when he became editor. By March

1917, it had dropped to 14,000 and in November 1918 when Bradfield left the paper, it had diminished to 13,000.

In fairness to Bradfield, it should be mentioned that he probably never really knew what the Advocate's circulation was. Few of its editors ever did. So long as Blaylock published the paper, none of them had anything whatsoever to do with the business aspects of it and knew less about them. And when the ministers were in charge of the business conduct of the paper, it was so mismanaged that the number of paid subscribers usually was unknown.

However, by constant haggling with Blaylock, Bradfield became largely responsible for elimination of most of the patent medicine ads while he was editor. Exclusion of it reduced advertising content in many issues to as few as eight columns.

The cause of the circulation decline may partially be ascribed to increasing competition from secular media. The advent of the war and American entry into it stimulated new desires for daily national and international news which the Advocate could not provide. In addition, Bradfield ran secular news only sporadically whereas Rankin had been running four pages of it when he died.

But the major cause lay in the basic change in character of the paper Bradfield effected. Under him, it was much more of a magazine than a newspaper, more of a quasi-intellectual journal than a religious magazine. The crusading fire that made it such a bumptious member of the Texas press under Rankin was gone. Its content doubtless was of interest to scholarly ministers of the church

such as those who contributed copiously to it. But this content could scarcely be expected to appeal to uneducated preachers and laymen who constituted by far the majority of the readership.

Little dissatisfaction was expressed outwardly among readers at first. The first meeting of the Joint Board of Publication during Bradfield's editorship voted unanimously to retain him. But in the next months, discontent with his conduct of the paper grew among large segments of readers and was expressed effectively by some ministers. In the meeting of the Board in September 1917, several members argued heatedly for a change in editors, but the majority voted in favor of Bradfield. However, by the fall of 1918, sentiment was such that he would probably have been asked to resign if he had not done so voluntarily. He did so, and the Board of Publication elected Dr. Andrew J. Weeks editor at a meeting in Dallas September 19, 1918.

Bradfield ultimately became a professor at Southern Methodist University where his abilities found more rewarding and effective expression.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ADVOCATE UNDER ANDREW WEEKS

Weeks soon restored some of the Advocate's former popularity among its old time readers. He did this chiefly by lowering the level of content to one readily comprehensible to them.

After his first few editions, he achieved this lowering through several editorial changes.

He devoted pages four and five to what he called "Notes from the Field." Written primarily by pastors, these were similar to the grass roots news of the state and church that had appeared in the paper intermittently throughout its history. They contained gossip about church members, reports of progress of church programs, status of health in the community and crops in the surrounding area.

He filled the sixth page with articles about the Sunday School and Epworth League, the Methodist youth organization. The seventh page, under the heading "The Home Circle", was filled with devotional material, prayers, anecdotes and probably the worst religious poetry ever printed by any publication.

Weeks used pages eighth and nine for editorials. His were far briefer than any of his predecessors'. He also wrote a column of social and whimsical comment entitled "Shrapnel". On page nine, he ran two columns of "Personals" which were gossip about ministers over the state. The first page continued to be reserved for longer editorials and sometimes a column of religious poetry.

Typographically, some changes also were made. The page size was reduced to that of a tabloid, the number of columns to four.

But in one respect, the Advocate seemingly never was to change. It remained the arch enemy of dancing, alcohol, Catholicism. Weeks added motion pictures and tobacco to the regular list, and was ever ready to do battle with any of them as the editorials below indicate.

"Pope Benedict XV died last Sunday morning, Jan. 22, 1922. Being the head of the largest religious group in the world, his death naturally attracted world-wide attention. He belonged to a distinguished Italian family, and at the time of his election it was predicted that he would be one of the greatest Popes, but his subsequent career did not bear out the prophecy. He was a kindly disposed Roman Catholic priest and that was about all. Of course he lived in an atmosphere of unreality and make believe since his elevation to the Papacy.

"It would scarcely be in good taste at this time to say an unkind word about the community of which he was the recognized head, and yet we in this land cannot avoid a feeling of surprise and disgust as we read the voluminous newspaper accounts of the incidents connected with his death and burial.

"In the first place, the prominence given to his death in our American newspapers is just a bit disgusting. The accounts have filled many prominent columns in these papers. Then the pictures drawn of the body of the poor old man lying there with his foot sticking through the grating of St. Peter's and multitudes passing by and kissing it just about makes one despair of the race.

"After nineteen hundred years of Christian history is it not possible people have not gotten beyond that sort of thing."⁶³

⁶³Ibid., January 26, 1922, p. 8.

"During the war the dance, which had always been condemned by a large and influential section of the Christian world, was for a time tolerated. It was poor reasoning, of course, as it led to excesses that weakened rather than strengthened the morale of our fighting forces. We permitted it just as we permitted interested parties to put cigarettes in the mouths of our boys.

Since the war closed, the dance craze has swept over the world and it constitutes today a serious menace to the spirituality of the Protestant Churches. It will probably require a generation to overcome it and put the Churches back where they were in their attitude to this particular evil.

"The National Association of Dancing Masters in session last August approved only one new dance, which they named the 'Wesley-an'. A New York paper in referring to this new dance, says: 'The new dance, it was announced, is one which the dancing masters hope will appeal to the Methodist Church. It was named for the founder of the religion that has disapproved of dancing.'

"Personally we have always thought of dancing masters as being about on a par socially with snake charmers, but we confess that we did not expect even them to give such a vulgar exhibition of ill breeding as this action displays. In the name of all that is decent we protest against naming a dance after John Wesley!

"To name a dance after John Wesley is to exhibit a disregard for the properties which we would not expect the inmates of the lowest brothel in the vilest city in America.

"Physicians and educators who are worthy the confidence of the moral public are agreed that the influence of the modern dance is evil in the extreme, and any man who witnesses it knows it to be positively and wholly hurtful. Have we not come to the time when the Church of Jesus Christ must condemn it and demand of those who are affiliated in its membership that they refrain from a practice that cannot be defended?..."⁶⁴

⁶⁴Ibid., September 16, 1920, p. 8.

Weeks noted that Southern Methodist University had decided to expel students who were caught dancing or joy riding on the campus.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Ibid., August 18, 1921, p. 9.

He roundly approved of this and happily pointed out that university authorities had ordered construction of two new gridirons and intended to foster football rather than dancing, the implication being that

students who preferred the latter to the former might as well attend school somewhere else.

Southern Methodist was never too successful in suppressing dancing among its students, but met with some success in enlightening some of them with regard to football.

As early as 1916, Weeks began warning Texas Methodists of the dire threats posed by Communism in Russia. He wrote prophetically:

"...Is America secure? Is it not probable that Bolshevism will become a real menace in this country in the future?... There must be but one flag and above all real Americans must band themselves together to see to it that the people who have made a mess of Europe shall not make a mess of the United States.."⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid, January 16, 1919, p. 8.

An old friend of the Advocate, patent medicine advertising, also returned with Weeks.

Under the heading, "Peace Proposals", the makers of Ware's Black Powder instructed readers:

"In times of war shoot straight and keep your powder dry. In times of peace keep your bowels open, your head cool and your feet warm by taking Ware's Black Powder.

"Ware's Black Powder kills indigestion.

"Ware's Black Powder saves babies.

"For all troubles of the Stomach and Bowels USE Ware's Black Powder for Adults, and Baby Powder for Infants."⁶⁶

⁶⁶Ibid., July 10, 1919, p. 13.

The Advocate also offered its readers "Texas Christian Advocate File Coupon(s)" which would entitle the holder to a six day treatment for "Hem-Ro id".⁶⁷

⁶⁷Ibid., April 11, 1920, p. 13.

Blaylock sometimes wrote testimonials for the patent medicines advertised. He once told readers "Ware's Black Powder Cured My Son of Serious Stomach Trouble after other treatemts had failed."⁶⁸

⁶⁸Ibid., April 25, 1920, p. 13.

Blaylock added that one treatment did it.

Not all advertising that might be considered objectionable came from patent medicines, however, as the one below indicates.

"Wanted a Job: Three years ago I started out to make Texas dry. She went dry and the nation.

"Then I went to war against Germany (in the Army Y.M.C.A). But just as soon as the Boches heard I was coming, Germany gave up, and I was demobilized.

"Now can't some P.E. (Presiding Elder) find me a job somewhere that will last until conference? I really would like to have a great big eight-Church circuit way off from the railroad, anywhere in Texas---salary no object. Tough job is what I want.

"Or I will come and help any brother run the devil out of town with a good old fashioned, Holy Ghost revival.

"Anyone may see by my above record against Booze and Boches that I always get there!

"Only until conference, brethren. Then 'Mike' Phelan and the Bishop will 'tend' to me.

"Rearing to go.

"Simeon Shaw, 3524 Raymond St., Houston, Texas."⁶⁸

⁶⁸Ibid., February 20, 1919, p. 11.

Despite Weeks' relative popularity as an editor, circulation did not rise appreciably while he was editor. Recurrent drives to raise it were publicized in the paper. Preachers were beseeched to solicit subscriptions from their congregations. Many of them did, and periodically the Advocate would announce that it had one or two or three thousand new subscribers.

Actually most of these were not new at all. Almost all subscriptions expired in June or January. Campaigns were conducted in the fall and spring. The result of them was a few new subscriptions and enough renewals to maintain barely the circulation level at its preceding height, which during Weeks' editorship was never more than 13,000.

In May 1922, Weeks was elected editor of the missionary publications of the Methodist Church, South, a position not as rewarding nor important as its title might indicate. Nevertheless, it was an advancement of a kind and his elevation to it signified an act of commendation by the Church for his work as editor. His light editorials, his well-written column of editorial comment and his lively personality away from the Advocate made him popular among colleagues and readers.

The Advocate under him was not as good as it had been, but far better than it soon was to become.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ADVOCATE UNDER RILEY

For a few weeks after Weeks' election to the new post, it appeared as if the Church could find nobody willing to accept editorship of the Advocate.

Dr. J.M. Gibson, pastor of the First Methodist Church in Beaumont was appointed editor by the Board of Publication in June. Bigson startled everybody by wisely, so far as his career was concerned, refusing to accept the appointment. The Board had not bothered to consult him.

Weeks agreed to remain for a few weeks, and it was June 22 before he left. The Board still have not been able to come up with an acceptable editor.

It prevailed upon Gibson to edit the paper temporarily which he did ably until the second week in September when the Rev. P.E. Riley was elected editor. Riley was then pastor of the Polytechnic Methodist Church in Fort Worth. Friendly and likeable, Riley had been a minister for 15 years and was then 39. He was liked by his colleagues, but he had never served in a leading pastorate in the state nor did he have any apparent qualifications for the job he was undertaking.

He instigated few changes in the content of the paper. The brief editorials and column of editorial comment which had won

popularity for Weeks and which had formed the most worthwhile substance of the paper disappeared.

Infrequently, Riley did run an untitled column on the editorial page composed of comment upon odd incidents. Examples of this content appear below.

"It is said that a Mexican walked from Runge to San Antonio, a distance of 93 miles to be present when his case of negligent homicide was called in court. This was a very wholesome instance of respect for law, and, inasmuch as he had no money to pay his fare or any other expense, it appears like a case of poetic justice that he was found not guilty."⁶⁹

⁶⁹Ibid., March 22, 1923, p. 8.

"Because her husband forgot to give her flowers on her birthday, a California woman committed suicide by drinking poison. Before her death, she wrote this pitiful note: 'Tried to please---but failed---place flowers on my grave dear.' More 'taffy' and less epitaph make happier hearts and a better world."⁷⁰

⁷⁰Ibid., June 7, 1923, p. 8.

This kind of material perhaps appealed to readers whose theology and philosophy were not overburdened with complex profundities. But Riley evidently had trouble in finding incidents upon which to comment, and the column appeared only sporadically.

Editorials, for which the Advocate had won its greatest acclaim, virtually vanished from the paper under Riley. The page reserved for them often was filled with dry copy narrating the Sunday visit of the editor to some small community. These accounts of editors'

Sunday travels stemming from a basic longing to be back in the pulpit, had not changed since the century before, nor had they grown any more interesting. Nevertheless, they tended to constitute most of the editorial fare for Advocate readers during this period.

Riley continued to run articles by bishops and ministers. He often used as many as 14 an issue and they comprised the majority of the content. Bishop Warren A. Candlor was the most regular contributor. The title of one of his articles, "Can A Bishop Be An Evolutionist?", typifies their general subject matter (Candlor's answer to the question he posed: No!).⁷¹ Articles by others dwelt

⁷¹Ibid., p. 4.

at length upon such subjects as nature, science, atonement, the Bible and proposals for uniting the divisions of Methodism.

Riley consistently protested that the Advocate did not partipate in politics. It did so only slightly. In a backhanded way, it supported the candidacy of Dan Moody for governor and openly acclaimed his election. In scarcely audible tones, it condemned alcohol and candidates who did not oppose its sale in beverages. Certainly it did not participate in politics in the effective sense it had under Rankin.

CHAPTER XX

A TRAGIC DECISION

Riley had been editor less than six months when trouble concerning the publishing of the Advocate threatened to rock the paper, even though it was well insulated in the rut of mediocrity into which it slowly had been settling.

Lewis Blaylock was then 72 years old. He had spent almost 56 years with the Advocate, almost 50 of them as its publisher. Though never the sole cause, he was heavily responsible for whatever success the paper had had, for whatever contribution it had made to the development of the Church and the state. A gifted businessman, he had adroitly managed the Advocate into a stable financial enterprise. He had conferred upon it in commercial circles the prestige of his success, and made it one of the state's most respected businesses.

Many editors had come to the Advocate. All had come ignorant of their tasks, devoid of any semblance of journalistic background for them. Blaylock had suffered with them, trained them, encouraged them when no one else would and stood by them in the swirl and subtleties of religious politics. Each had left as his friend.

For nearly 50 years had had provided Texas Methodism with a religious publication that at times was equal to any in the country. This had cost the church not a cent. When he assumed publication of the Advocate, it was in debt and the undertaking seemed futile.

Blaylock claimed, and there is some reason to believe, that its survival was made possible only through contributions from his other enterprises. There can be no question in the mind of an impartial observer acquainted with the history of the paper and the conditions under which it was published, that, had it not been for Blaylock the Advocate would have died ignominiously in the 1870's. Neither can there be any question that its survival required sacrifices by Blaylock of money he could have made from more purely commercial undertakings.

Thus, it is understandable that in 1923 Blaylock felt that the Advocate was "his". Sentimental considerations had drawn him to it more than half a century earlier, and had been the fundamental ones in holding him in the intervening years.

At 72 he was a wealthy man with many achievements in his past. But to him, the proudest was the Advocate. In his old age, and thoroughly acquainted with the average minister's enormous incapacity in the business of publishing, he had worried about the paper's future. The result of his concern was a plan which he often expressed privately to endow the paper in the hope that it would exist always.

But if Blaylock had been good to the Advocate, it had been good to him too.

Methodism was a powerful force in Texas, and the Advocate was a respected instrument of it. If Blaylock had been respected for no other reason, he would have been respected at the time solely because he was associated with the Texas Christian Advocate.

Thus, the conferment of prestige was a reciprocal process between Blaylock and the Advocate.

It would be unfair to say that Blaylock purposely exploited his relation with the Church and the paper to his commercial advantage, or that the opportunity to do so provided him with the motivation to publish the paper. Blaylock doubtless would have been financially successful regardless of the Advocate. Nevertheless, whether he purposely planned it or not, his association with the paper was advantageous to him in his other businesses.

In the early twenties, it appeared especially so to some in the Church.

After being awarded several prominent civic positions, Blaylock was elected mayor of Dallas on April 23, 1923. In reporting his election, the Dallas papers referred to him as the publisher of the Texas Christian Advocate, and this was the manner in which he usually was identified.

His election, along with his obvious financial affluency, confirmed in the eyes of many ministers the suspicion that he was using the Advocate for his personal gain.

Too, the Church was less than satisfied with the quality of the paper. Ministers and readers alike openly longed for the Advocate of George Rankin which they romanticized in their thinking to a stature far beyond the highest it ever actually attained. They universally failed to recognize that the reason they were afflicted with an increasingly ineffective paper lay in their inability or

refusal to appoint qualified men as editors. They failed, also, to realize that the Advocate in its current form was growing increasingly obsolete in light of changing conditions within and without the Church.

There were, however, some justifiable reasons for discontent.

The Methodist Church was becoming more and more socially minded. Opponents of the social changes it was beginning to advocate pointed to the advertising in the Advocate, much of which would have disgraced even a pornographic publication, and charged the Church with hypocrisy. Collier's first had brought this forcefully to the attention of the state more than a decade before, and there had been a desire among more intellectual ministers since to cleanse the advertising columns of the paper.

Blaylock, now a far different man from the ambitious and solicitous youth that had been popular among ministers decades earlier, reasoned that nobody in the Church knew anything about publishing a paper and therefore the Church should content itself with appointing editors and leave such difficulties to him.

Bradfield, who was perhaps even more stubborn than Blaylock, was the only member of the Church who achieved any success in persuading him to delete this noxious content.

Blaylock refused to tell anybody anything about the business affairs of the paper. He never published advertising rates. Circulation was revealed in the most general terms, and figures printed from month to month in the Advocate usually contradicted

immediately previous or subsequent statements.

Blaylock's obdurate refusal to tell even the Joint Board of Publication about the business aspects only heightened the belief that he was making money from it and tended to intensify the desire to take the paper out of his hands.

In the midst of this situation arose an obscure and rather ignorant minister with a grand plan of publishing the Advocate and jumping its circulation to astronomical figures. Capitalizing upon the discontent and doing all he could to further it, the Rev. George Slover began in April 1923 to present his plan to influential Church leaders. He continued his agitation throughout the summer.

When the Annual Conferences began meeting in November, Slover was present again making outlandish claims as to what he could do with the Advocate were he allowed to publish it. To ministers entirely ignorant of the journalistic and business abilities requisite to publishing a religious paper, and forgetful or unaware of Blaylock's contributions, the claims sounded good.

The result was an acrimonious and prolonged controversy argued out on the Conference floors in which Blaylock and Slover unfolded claims and counter-claims. The charge that Blaylock was making money from the paper was hurled at him frequently. One by one, the five Conferences voted to terminate the contract with Blaylock and award it to Slover.

On January 2, 1924, the day his contract ended, Blaylock published his last edition of the Advocate, a paper which in

so many ways, was "his".

He was inexpressably and irrevocably bitter, not only at Slover but at the Church, which seemed to him ingratitude and stupidity personified. He never again spoke of the decision without emotion. He decreed that no one connected with the Methodist Church should ever have access to any of the record or files of the Advocate, most of which were in his possession (a decree which his descendants with stubborn tenacity have upheld with few exceptions). He died with his memories of the Advocate clouded by rancor and sadness.

There is no way to determine with final accuracy the validity of the charge that Blaylock made money from the paper. Certainly the exaggerated charge that his affluence stemmed directly from profits from its publication is false. On the basis of evidence available and the opinion of the most informed Methodist leaders in Texas today, it appears highly improbable that Blaylock made much, if any, profit from Advocate operations.

If his primary motivation had been toward making money, he could have gratified it far more effectively by devoting a corresponding quantity of effort and time to purely commercial enterprises in which he had many interests. This would have brought him far greater returns than he could ever have hoped for from the Advocate. And few publishers acting from purely commercial motives would have consented to the arrangement Blaylock had with the Church whereby

he had no authority or say so over the selection of editors, their tenure or conduct of the paper.

But, in retrospect, the question of whether or not Blaylock made money from the Advocate seems utterly irrelevant to the basis on which the Church should have decided whether or not the paper was to remain in Blaylock's hands. For if Blaylock made money from the Advocate, by any criterion of equity, he certainly deserved it.

So far as the publishing of the paper and its business management were concerned, the Church had a good deal. How good, it did not know until subsequent events rather harshly forced realization upon it. Unquestionably, the patent medicine advertising should not have been allowed. And the Church, whose representatives were largely responsible for maintaining circulation through their promotions, was not unfair in demanding to see first hand figures revealing circulation and to be informed of the financial status of the publication.

Still, it seems that the Church could have devised a practical method of accomplishing these aims through understanding with Blaylock, rather than summarily dismissing a man who had donated 56 years of his life to its service.

If it had, it would have been far better off. For with the departure of Blaylock, the Texas Christian Advocate began its most desolate days.

And much of their bleakness was to be caused by the absence of
a man such as Louis Blaylock.

CHAPTER XXI

A PUBLISHING FAILURE

The new publisher, Slover, with high optimism arranged for the Harben-Boswell Company at Richardson to publish the Advocate.

The company had new linotypes. A high grade of ink was used and the quality of paper Slover ordered was superior to that of the contemporary slick magazine. All of this, of course, improved the overall appearance of the paper.

Slover had agreed to turn over to the Church 50 per cent of all profits resulting from publication of the Advocate. However he and his potential beneficiary soon started discovering the mythical nature of these profits.

The first of many of Slover's surprises came when Blaylock turned over to him a circulation list containing only 4180 subscribers whose subscriptions had not expired.

This astonished Slover and he complained bitterly about it, inferring that Blaylock had altered the list or had withheld part of it. He had expected to find at least 13,000 subscribers. In his intrigues leading to Blaylock's ouster, he had hinted that the Advocate's was still larger.

Actually, there was nothing irregular about the list given to Slover. While circulation had dropped under Riley's editorship, the Advocate still had between 12,000 and 12,500 names on its circulation

list. But as Blaylock well knew, almost two-thirds of all subscriptions expired at the first of each year. Two promotional campaigns were required each year to secure renewals, one coming in the fall, usually after the Conferences had met. But in the fall of 1923, Blaylock had been in no mood to encourage any kind of campaigns for the benefit of the paper, and he was not inclined now to tell Slover anything that would simplify his work.

Slover, though, launched a campaign to raise circulation and received the aid of the Church. In February, he boasted that circulation had increased 200 per cent. Most of the readers simply had renewed their subscriptions, exactly as they had been doing for years. Few were taking the Advocate for the first time.

Slover started writing a column on page nine called "Publisher's Corner" in which he set forth his views on both religious and secular topics. In his first one, he indicated some of the bitterness still surrounding the change in publishers. He wrote:

"I am very glad to be able to say that notwithstanding all of the stress and strain and any unpleasant things that have happened with the whole Advocate business, that I have come thru it all without having any bitterness in my heart or unchristian feeling toward anyone. I have no ax to grind, no old scores to settle, no wound that has to heal.

"The Church don't owe me nothing (the double negative is Slover's). I have tried to give her more than forty years of faithful service, but during these years of labor and sacrifice the Church has given me far more than I have done for it. I see more every day how empty and useless and unsatisfactory my life would have been without her assistance.

"One of the greatest sources of satisfaction of my life, though conscious of my shortcomings, is being able to go and stand at the bar of my Conference for twenty-six years and hear the brethren say 'There is nothing against him.' Money

can't buy such pleasures."⁷²

⁷²Ibid., February 7, 1924 p. 9.

Two months after this, the Joint Board of Publication met in Dallas and on April 24 announced that the Advocate had a circulation of 15,000 and was financially sound. At that time it doubtless did have operating capital gained from the renewals and new subscriptions which had been secured chiefly through pastors buying blocks of subscriptions, paying for them from their local church budget and sending them gratis to members of the congregation who had taken the paper before.

Through all the turbulence attending the change in publishers, Riley droned on, apparently undisturbed.

Aside from typographical innovations introduced by Slover, the paper remained the same as it had been when Riley was editing it under Blaylock.

Riley began soliciting reports of local shurch activities and ran them on page 13. Typical of this material was a story which, after announcing that a youth meeting had been held, said:

"...The entertainment committe furnished games and contests that were greatly enjoyed by all, such as the three legged race, between Ennis and Palmer; the fifty yard dash which resulted in a tie and was not run off; visitors race, by the pastors which created much fun, there being only one pastor present we had to use a substitute.

"The refreshment committee served a delightful picnic lunch which consisted of all good things to eat and lemonade."⁷³

⁷³Ibid., August 19, 1926, p. 13.

This was almost representative of the general quality and significance of the news printed in the paper under Riley, the paper that was supposed to be the journalistic leader of religious thought in Texas.

It led the Advocate to nothing but trouble.

In the fall of 1924, the quality of paper on which the Advocate was printed was lowered. The patent medicine advertising to which such strenuous objections had been raised and which Slover had promised to keep out of the paper, began slowly to creep back into its columns.

On August 13, 1925, Slover informed readers the Advocate was owed several thousand dollars in unpaid subscriptions and that its bank account was low." It always had been owed several thousand dollars in unpaid subscriptions.

Beginning in January 1926, the Advocate ran an advertisement for "Snake Oil" which said:

"...Stops chest colds and flue quick. Contains coal oil, turpentine, camphor, capsicum, oil euclyptus and other valuable ingrediants. Will penetrate the thickest sole leather in three minutes, goes to affected parts. Quick relief assured. For rheumatis, neuralgia, lumbago, said to be without equal."⁷⁴

⁷⁴Ibid., January 21, 1926, p. 16.

One "R. Lepso, Apt. 92, 895 Island Avenue, Milwaukee", advertised a nostrum which he promised would cure fits in three days.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Ibid., January 28, 1926, p. 13.

Despite the inclusion of patent medicine advertisements such as these, which was a certain signal of distress, Slover lost money consistently, and unlike Blaylock, he could not afford to lose money at all. After its initial spurt, circulation steadily declined and Slover had trouble collecting the money owed on subscriptions he did have.

In ill health and involved in a disintegrating enterprise, he asked the Church to relieve him of his publishing contract. This, the Church eagerly did on September 27, 1930.

On the same date, Riley resigned, announcing he wished to return to the active ministry.

The Advocate under Riley and Slover was in every sense mediocre. The time had come when it could not afford mediocrity. But the cause of its unhappy status lay as much with the Church for assigning unqualified men to operate the paper as it did with the men themselves.

The Advocate was in dire straits financially when they left. Its prestige had sunk to a new low. But the worst was yet to come.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DECLINE UNDER COLE

As Riley's successor, the Board of Publication appointed the Rev. E.V. Cole, a man with as few qualifications for the editorship as his predecessor.

Like Riley, Cole was nearing 40 and had spent almost half of his life in the ministry. At the time of his appointment, he was pastor at Electra, a small town in northwestern Texas. He had never been pastor of an important church nor was he recognized as an outstanding minister.

The Advocate under him was to be as undistinguished as it had been under Riley.

Cole began his editorship November 25, 1926. He and the Board of Publication entered into a contract with Sam P. Harben and Sherwood Spotts in which the latter agreed to assume all responsibilities of publishing the Advocate (Harben and Spotts were representatives of the same firm that had printed the paper since Blaylock's ouster).

Cole like past editors reserved the eighth page for editorials, but never got around to writing many for it. He usually wrote at least one for the front page. In these, he continued to snipe at the Advocate's favorite targets: liquor, gambling and dancing. He also took shots at bridge and cigarettes. The majority of his

remaining editorial effort was consumed in support of Methodism in the abstract; its specific programs in Texas such as its orphans home, Southern Methodist University, donations for missionary work in Asia and Africa; and his conception of morality.

In the summer of 1930, Cole began running two to three columns of gossip about ministers called "Folks, Figures and Facts." This type of content always had been popular, and his installment of it again elicited about the only favorable comment the Advocate received during this period.

Aside from the gossip, the content remained essentially unchanged.

Harben and Spotts made the paper typographically attractive. Its size was increased slightly. Pages containing long articles by ministers and bishops had two columns six inches wide, the front page had three and the rest of the pages four. Pages were broken by large, appealing headlines often four columns wide. Typographically, at least the paper was very readable.

Most of the advertising came from patent medicine companies or distributors, just as it had under Blaylock, The Snake Oil ad still appeared occasionally. Most of the advertisements, though, were not as offensive as many of the past, but they still made ridiculous claims.

Until the full force of the depression hit Texas in 1930, circulation remained around 10,000. But not even high-powered

pulpit pleas were sufficient to sustain it when the effects of the general business recession began to paralyze the state.

Harben and Spotts began losing money on Advocate operations in the fall of 1930. They told the Board of Publication they no longer wished to publish the paper and asked that their contract be ended. The Board promised more energetic promotion by the Church, and the printers reluctantly agreed to continued their work as publishers.

The Advocate, though, continued to decline in popularity and circulation during 1931. Cole, knowing very well that all was far from well, resigned in September.

Some of the older members of the Board of Publication who had seen the Advocate deteriorate almost imperceptibly from one of the most respected religious newspapers in the country to an obscure journals which was subscribed to in many instances out of a sense of duty or from habit were dismayed.

Bewildered by the paper's growing impotency, the Board began to look for an editor who could restore it to its past status.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ADVOCATE DURING THE THIRTIES

Determined to revitalize the Advocate, the Board of Publication persuaded Andrew Weeks, who had acted as editor with relative success more than a decade before, to quit his job with the general board of publication in Nashville and return to Dallas.

He began editing the paper November 5, 1931.

One of his first actions was to negotiate the merger of the Oklahoma Methodist with the Advocate. After this had been done early in December, the New Mexico Conference and the two in Oklahoma adopted the Advocate as their official publication.

On January 7, 1932 the name of the paper was changed from the Texas Christian Advocate to the Southwestern Advocate. Wallace Crutchfield, who had been editor of the Oklahoma paper, was listed as associate editor of the Advocate. Actually, he had nothing to do with the direction of it. He did supply it with frequent articles about Methodism in his state, and each week contributed items about Oklahoma churches. He did this in conjunction with his regular pastoral work, and received no salary for it.

The Advocate gained some 600 subscribers from the merger (though it got no money for their subscriptions the first year after its incorporation of the Oklahoma paper). But aside from Crutchfield's reports, it made little effort to extend its coverage to Oklahoma.

The slightly altered name and inclusion of Crutchfield's reports, constituted the major difference between the paper Weeks now edited and the one he directed before 1920.

His editorials on the front page differed from those of past editors in that they were readable and interesting. But they concerned the invariable subjects: prohibition, temperance, gambling, dancing, the Methodist Orphans home at Waco, Methodist missionaries abroad, proposals for uniting the Church---topics that seemed eternal with the Advocate.

On pages two and three, eight and nine, the bishops and ministers held forth with their usual verbosity. They wrote what they had been writing for the past 25 years. Some wrote well, most did not.

On page four, Weeks ran several of his brief, breezy editorials. On the adjoining page, he printed a column called "The Editor's Easy Chair" written in the lazy, amiable style of a talented country editor. Often witty, never vitriolic, these columns were easily the best feature of the paper, save for an occasional searching article by a bishop or a bright, young minister not long out of theological school. Along with the column, he ran one or two columns of "Personals" which contained the usual gossip readers liked.

Pages six, twelve and thirteen were the only ones containing anything resembling news. Under the heading, "Notes from the Field",

reports from pastors boasting of their accomplishments and popularity and sometimes containing news were run. These were not edited by Weeks nor anyone else. It was unusual for a leading pastor to report anything in the Advocate columns. Most of the accounts came from small churches and those in rural areas. With them, Weeks printed small stories that had been sent into the Advocate office by temperance or semi-religious organizations, or perhaps that he had picked up himself.

Page seven was filled with articles and anecdotes copied from other papers.

Pages ten, eleven and fourteen were set aside for the "Children's Department", "Woman's Department" and "Department of W.C.T.U."

Obituaries were printed on page fifteen. More gossip under the heading, "Folks, Figures and Facts", which Weeks inherited from Cole, was run on the back page.

Advertising was scattered through the back pages, but just barely so.

By the summer of 1933, the Advocate was having extreme difficulty in securing even patent medicine advertising. It was averaging less than four columns of advertising an issue. Some editions contained less than a column.

Circulation had dropped to below 10,000.

Harben and Spotts continued to lose money on the paper. Finally, in September 1935, they told the Board of Publication they were through once and for all, and refused to accept further responsibility

for publishing it.

For a while, it appeared as if the Advocate might be through too. Its reputation and financial record for the years immediately past was such that no firm around Dallas would agree to become its publisher.

But Weeks, rather than have it die while he was its editor, decided he would publish it himself. The Board consented and Weeks prevailed upon Harben and Spotts to print the paper for a flat rate.

He kept the Advocate funds in his personal bank account and the business management of the paper became an intuitive one. Largely through the generosity of influential Methodists in and around Dallas who contributed advertising and continual entreaties by Church leaders to their people, Weeks managed to keep the Advocate alive for another four years, though its future from month to month was never secure.

Most of the advertising came from public utility companies, railroads, firms selling products to ministers and churches, and various branches of the Methodist Church such as its publishing house and bookstores. Most of it was institutional. Occasionally, small patent medicine advertisements appeared, but compared to past ones, they were scarcely repulsive at all.

With the rise of Germany and Italy in the mid-thirties and growing disturbances abroad, Weeks made the Advocate more and more internationally minded. His position on United States foreign

policy was somewhat ambiguous. He applauded efforts to strengthen the military and all gestures of defiance toward Germany and Japan. But he violently opposed, as did the Methodist Church, anything suggestive of national military conscription.

Much of his comment upon national and international affairs was contained in his column which became highly popular and was sometimes quoted in the secular press.

This column was the last stronghold of personal journalism, the only kind of journalism Weeks or his predecessors knew.

Weeks happened to have a personality which when expressed through print was amiable and appealing. So what he wrote, particularly when he wrote sentimentally, was attractive to readers. But as an editor, Weeks demonstrated little ability. He could not write all the content. Much of what he did write belonged to other days, days of carpet baggers and circuit riders, not days of super-highways and 50,000 watt radio stations. As an editor, he was responsible for all the content.

He died of a heart attack December 12, 1939, an editor popular among his readers, but an editor whose work was unknown to the majority of Methodists in Texas because in terms of the thirties he had not made it worth knowing.

Two bishops, the president of Southern Methodist University and United States Senator Tom Connally participated in his funeral at the largest Methodist Church in Dallas. Characteristically,

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this was probably the greatest tribute the Church to which he gave
his life ever paid him.

CHAPTER XIV

A COMMITTEE OF EDITORS

With the death of Weeks, many responsible Methodists declared the Advocate had outlived its usefulness and should be discontinued.

This could not be done conveniently without official sanction from the Annual Conferences, and some sentiment favored retaining it.

In an effort to keep it alive until the meetings in the fall, the Board of Publication asked Bishop John M. Moore, a distinguished Methodist then retired, to become the temporary editor and Dr. Harry S. DeVore, superintendent of the Dallas District of the Church, to act as business manager.

Along with these two, Dr. J.N.R. Score, Dr. Dawson Bryan, Dr. Edward Heinshon, Dr. Marshall T. Steel, Dr. J.A. Haymes and Wallace Crutchfield agreed to serve on the editorial staff. Some of these men were among the foremost ministers in the Southwest. All agreed to serve without pay, and all retained their pastorates.

Riding the wave of prosperity in Texas in the very late thirties, Weeks and the Church had pushed circulation to 13,000 in 1939. Moore and his colleagues succeeded in maintaining it at this level (actually they increased it by 250 principally through the high pressure salesmanship of DeVore) though their primary aim was to put the paper's business affairs in order so some permanent disposition of it could be made when the Conferences met.

By July 1940, the Advocate was out of debt and Moore decided he had better quit while he was ahead, especially since most of the subscriptions had expired. Publication was suspended July 25.

However, the Conferences meeting in November were unable to decide what to do with the Advocate and no decision concerning it was reached.

Moore, who favored maintaining a Methodist publication in Texas, gained permission from the Board of Publication to resume the Advocate. It was stipulated, however, that he was to make no debts and if the paper could not support itself financially it was to be ceased. Moore agreed, and the Board appointed the Rev. R.H. Nichols, Mrs. T.H. Minga, the Rev. J.D. Hinkston, the Rev. Walter N. Vernon and Dr. Dawson Bryan to the Advocate staff on the same basis as the other ministers had served.

This staff was not quite as distinguished as the former one, but prominent minister contributed material, some of which was outstanding. Promotional efforts netted nearly 12,000 subscribers, and the Advocate seemed sounder, temporarily at least, that it had been at any time since Blaylock left.

Ill health forced Moore to quit in June 1941. The Board appointed an editorial committee consisting of Dr. Angie Smith, DeVore and the Rev. J. Daniel Barron to direct the paper.

Under these men, as under Moore, the Advocate was edited only slightly. Each of them simply wrote articles for it and ordered

material from leading preachers in the state.

The result was that while the Advocate contained a diversity of views and styles of expression and while it was without any formal or consistent make-up, it contained the most intelligent, and even brilliant, writing its columns had known since Carnes edited it before the Civil War.

At once, it became a trade journal for ministers, an utterly disorganized one, but one with some intellectually stimulating and professionally provocative material.

Analytical articles favored United States participation in international affairs, but heatedly opposed selective service. Others interpreted the meaning of government policies and denounced Germany, Italy and Japan.

Not all the material, of course, was good or profound. After the attack upon Pearl Harbor, DeVore wrote an article saying war was a bad thing and even went as far as to assert that "...Next to the liquor and drug traffic, war is the greatest enemy of mankind."⁷⁶

⁷⁶Southwestern Advocate, Dallas, December 11, 1941.

In a later issue, the same writer said the United States was a fool for sending its boys to the Far East, when, if the Chinese were fed, they could do all the fighting. He proposed to take all the money spent upon liquor and divert it to this purpose, but he did

not say quite how this should be done.

Some of the articles were more rational, as the one below indicates.

"I Feel For Them Too."

"The cold was all but insufferable when I called on her in the rickety house on the edge of the business section of the town. Her surroundings, though flimsy, were tidy and clean. She was frail of body and dejected in spirit. When she talked, a twitching hand was lifted to beckon her hesitating thoughts.

"Presently the conversation picked up her son, a marine on the Pacific coast. It turned on the war---the slaughter of Japanese in their recent offensives and the freezing of the Germans in their retreat in Russia. Her sentences, though short and frequently unfinished, showed a lively knowledge of current events.

"I was on the edge of going when five words dropped from her heart into mine. Of the soldiers of our dreaded enemies, she said: 'I feel for them too.' Her succinctly elaborated reason, though not the classic one---'For they know not what they do'---was sufficient: 'They're trained to it, just as our boys.'

"I went out into the winter wind with the warmth of her words inside. Her piping note of divine mercy in a merciless world was a welcomed one.

"Her simple and elemental vision of things did not frame Stalin and Hitler in personal combat, or John Bull and Uncle Sam rubbing out the rice-stuffed War Lords of Japan. She drew a circle around boys like other boys compelled by a thousand forces to kill boys like other boys.

"Calling this group of boys by the name of this man and another group by that name of that nation did not change for her the naked fact that they were boys.

"The three million fresh, frozen graves lined out in western Russia, in her mind, do not hold the bodies of Comrade Stalin or Herr Hitler but the mutilated bodies of boys, endless rows of boys, millions of bright faced boys.

"Is this twisting of good and evil into a rope with which we helplessly hang the members of our family the inevitable logic of our shared sins?

"For him who thinks and tries to live in terms of the whole of God, every communicate evokes mingled emotions. 'I feel for them too.'"⁷⁷

⁷⁷Ibid., January 29, 1942, p. 1.

In addition to articles such as these the Advocate, under this composite editorship, printed two pages of "Personals" comprised of gossip about churchmen and their leaders in the state. A page was set aside for summaries of outstanding sermons delivered in pulpits over the state the week before and was called "Preacher's Workshop".

The advertising, for which DeVore was responsible, was made up primarily of the Advocate's old favorite, patent medicine ads.

There was little news in the paper.

The quality of the paper varied greatly from week to week, and depended upon which of the ministers found time to write.

This type of content was not expected to appeal to the average laymen. But the Advocate had not been appealing to the average layman anyway, and now it did appeal, at least sometimes, to ministers and superior laymen.

In fact, its appeal was sufficient to convince enough ministers that it should be continued.

In January 1942, Dr. H.M. Whaling was elected editor, and he began editing the paper February 11. The former staff was still listed as contributors, but they contributed only sporadically.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ADVOCATE UNDER WHALING

The Advocate changed at once under Whaling.

Though editorializing was rampant throughout the paper, the Advocate printed no conventional editorials.

The closest thing to them was a column called "The Broadcaster" written two or three times a month by J. Daniel Barron. Intellectually flavored, sometimes witty, it drew heavily upon the thought of Harry Emerson Fosdick, E. Stanley Jones and modern liberal theologians in proposing solutions for everyday problems in terms of Christian philosophy. Sometimes, Barron cracked down with subtle viciousness on what he considered unethical practices by ministers. And, sometimes, he got into trouble for it.

Aside from this column, the Advocate's editorial views were largely expressed through Whaling's selection of what might be classified as news stories.

For the first time in its history, the Advocate said almost nothing in favor of prohibition. It scarcely raised its voice against whiskey, dancing, gambling and all its other enemies. This was not because Whaling thought differently from any other editor, but because, under him, the Advocate scarcely raised its voice against anything.

The Advocate became more and more a regional paper within the

state. Most of its news and most of its support came from the area encompassed by the North Texas Conference. Like Richardson almost a century before, Whaling found it easiest to gather material that was nearby. Little effort was made to gather it elsewhere. Some came anyway, mostly from loyal ministers who considered contributions to the Church paper part of their ministerial duty.

Their spirit was commendable, but their news contributions usually were not. Whaling did little to improve them, as these typical headlines from the March 21, 1946 issue indicate: "Speaking A Good Word for Christ in Winnie, Texas," "For All Sinners From Laredo and Roundabout," "Soldier Boys Come Home and Voted Against Beer."⁷⁸

⁷⁸Ibid., March 21, 1946, pp. 6,7.

The Advocate also printed stories released by various boards of the Methodist Church and the Council of Bishops. Some of these expressed highly enlightened views favoring foreign aid to ravaged countries, social reform to deal with Communism, support of labor unions and generally liberal views, which, right or wrong, obviously resulted from intelligent thought and which were revolutionary for the Advocate.

None of this type of content was original with the editor. It reached the paper in the form of official releases from the

highest councils of the Methodist Church. Such releases were helpful in solving the ever present problem of filling 16 pages of space each week.

Despite the intelligence that managed to creep into the Advocate, the paper as a whole during Whaling's editorship was far from an exemplary manifestation of religious journalism.

However, it succeeded in keeping its creditors at slightly greater distance than on many past occasions.

The year after Whaling was appointed editor, the five Texas Conferences had agreed to donate each year \$500 a piece to subsidize the Advocate. In 1944, Whaling employed George B. Latham as advertising manager. Latham was a colorful, irascible, ruthless old advertising man in his seventies who knew thousands of people all over Texas.

He persuaded Whaling to pay him a rather comfortable commission of 50 per cent of all advertising revenue he obtained for the paper.

As a result of Latham's ceaseless harangues, the Advocate embarked upon a program which members of the secular press called "gyp" advertising.

On the slightest pretext, Whaling and Latham would visit a town in Texas---any town. Whaling would try to write several stories about the Methodist Church in the community or some minor meeting that was occurring there, or anything that could provide the basis for some kind of a story involving the community.

At the same time, Latham would besiege the local merchants, telling them the Advocate was to run a special edition on their city. Appealing to civic pride, and among Methodists, to religious loyalty, Latham would extort advertising of little conceivable benefit to those who paid for it.

The resultant ads frequently resembled those appearing in a high school play program. Some of them said simply: "A Friend", "Best Wishes" or "Compliments of..."

But the Advocate's advertising rates were \$100 a page, and often these forays into the hinterland would result in ten pages of advertising which meant \$500 for Latham and \$500 for the paper.

By this means, along with the page ads Latham hoodwinked out of the Texas Power and Light Company and other large concerns, the Advocate survived.

Preachers had found enough Methodists, who considered taking the Advocate their duty, to keep the paid circulation near 10,000.

But Whaling's position as editor carried with it little prestige and less security. By September 1946, he had grown as tired of editing the Advocate as Methodists had of reading it. He resigned, and Dr. E.A. Hunter, then superintendent of the Wichita Falls District of the Church, was selected to replace him.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ADVOCATE UNDER HUNTER

Hunter was introduced to Advocate readers in the December 5, 1946 issue as a staunch prohibitionist and head of the United Texas Drys. With that issue, he began "editing" the paper.

He hired the Rev. W.O. Bucy to assist him. Each week Hunter would assemble what he hoped was enough material to fill, along with the scrawled, scarcely legible advertisements Latham had dug up during the week, sixteen pages. This was turned over to Bucy who determined the make-up and sent it to the Harben-Spotts plant at Richardson where the Advocate was still printed.

There, printers, often under the influence of the alcohol anathema to the paper they swore at, selected type faces for headlines exclusively on the basis of whether or not they would allow the proposed head to fit in the space allotted for it.

Later Hunter employed his wife to oversee the Advocate's business affairs. He also had on his staff as secretary an eccentric woman who fancied herself a vocalist.

Also frequently seen in the Advocate office was Latham's secretary. She was a middle-aged woman with her hair dyed a flaming orange who sometimes amused herself by walking in mid-day down the middle of Dallas' Main Street with her eyes shut and her hands outstretched before her, oblivious to any perils

of city traffic.

The product of this interesting staff was a sad one. For if the Advocate was poor under Whaling, it was worse under Hunter.

The front page usually was occupied by a sermon by a bishop or preacher, or the transcript of a speech by a prominent Methodist. Some of these, such as the brilliant and controversial utterances of Bishop G. Bromley Oxman were interesting. Most were not.

Page two usually contained two columns of advertising and an article by a minister which was of the same nature as those the Advocate had printed since 1920.

Page three also was partially filled with advertising and ordinarily a report from some district superintendent.

Page four contained a dull column by Hunter called "The Editor Says" in which he said very little and a promotional ad for the Advocate. The front page article was continued on the fifth page.

Page six contained advertising and "Our Weekly Meditation" which was a condensed sermon submitted by some preacher.

Page seven was filled with "Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico News" consisting of items about churches in the Southwest and holding most of the real news in the paper.

Pages eight and nine were occupied with an advertisement urging attendance or support of some coming church conference or campaign.

On page ten under the heading "Town and Country Work" material about the general church program for rural area was run.

Page eleven contained advertising and prohibition propaganda under the label, "Wine is a Mocker...Strong Drink is Raging."

Page twelve and thirteen were devoted to "Our Church School" and "The Woman's Society of Christian Service", and advertising.

The make-up of this content and its location in the paper sometimes changed, but its character and quality never did. Sometimes, Hunter devoted several pages to attacks upon liquor and admonishments to readers to vote a certain way in an election. Other than this, support of specified Methodist activities, and advertising, the Advocate advocated little explicitly.

Circulation had risen shortly after Hunter took over under the impetus of a church campaign to almost 17,000. But it descended rapidly thereafter.

In June, 1947, the Texas Conferences voted to double their subsidy to the Advocate in the hope of keeping it alive. But it apparently was beyond saving.

Circulation dropped by 10,000 during the next year. By May 1948 it was below 6,000. The Advocate had barely enough money in its account to meet its outstanding debts, and except for a few hundred dollars in unpaid subsidies, no prospect of obtaining any.

Hunter, knowing this better than anyone, resigned in May.

Now it was virtually certain the Advocate would be discontinued.

Even its most loyal adherents of the past now dispaired of it.

The Christian Advocate, the national organ of the Methodist Church, had made tentative offers to incorporate it and continue its publication as a regional supplement within its pages.

While negotiations were being undertaken, J. Daniel Barron agreed to act as editor in conjunction with his work as pastor of the Grace Methodist Church in Dallas.

The Advocate was to have one last fling.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LAST FLING

Barron's major pupose when he assumed editorship was to introduce solvency to the paper so that it would be free of debt when it was finally disposed of.

However, though he had suffered for years as a reader of the Advocate's colorless columns, he strongly believed it was possible to issue a religious paper which if nothing else would at least command the attention of Methodists in Texas.

He became editor June 17, 1948 and the Advocate began to emit some of the fire for which it had once been noted.

Barron completely reversed some of the historic stands which the Advocate had been righteously railing for for amost a century. He advocated unequivocally total and immediate racial equality in all phases of Texas life. He not only sanctioned dancing as a wholesome form of recreation if practiced in the proper places, but even proposed that churches sponsor dances in their buildings to make sure it occurred under the proper auspices and to stimulate interest in their programs.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Readers were stirred. Abusive tirades poured into the Advocate office, one of which charged that the editor want "our pure white daughters to sleep with big, black buck niggers."

Surprisingly enough tough, there were more letters commending

the new attitude toward Negroes than those denouncing it. A much greater storm of indignation was evoked by the suggestions about dancing. Finally, the Northwest Texas Conference suggested deleting all mention of dancing from the Advocate.

Barron attempted to change the Advocate to a religious newspaper.

On the front page of each issue he sought to run a news story, preferably one involving controversy, of interest to all Methodists in the state. These concerned feuds between leading bishops and leading Texas newspapers, bishops' denunciations of Communism, the voting records of legislators on legislation regulating sale of alcoholic beverages and gambling, interviews with the outstanding Methodist minister in the Southwest on the civil rights question, and accounts of specific instances of racial intolerance or injustice in Texas.

In the less fiery lead stories, as well as throughout the paper, he undertook to include as many names as possible. These stories concerned such events as statewide gatherings which would be attended by hundreds of laymen and ministers, journeys of Methodists from the Southwest to international religious conferences and election of bishops. In them, Barron tried to interpret the significance of the event in terms of meaningful to the layman.

Editorially and through his selection of news stories, Barron continued to oppose alcohol and gambling, though he treated these

as social ills rather than moral sins. He frequently attacked the Catholic Church.

Sometimes his overwhelming desire to force readers' attention upon the paper resulted in a front page that resembled the sports page of a yellow tabloid as much as anything else.

One story in which a prolonged fight among supporters of several candidates for bishop at a general conference was narrated as if it had been a bloody bout for the world's heavyweight championship was headed "Dawson Cops Bishopric".

On the front page of the July 15, 1948 issue, he ran an item in a box entitled "A Sober Prayer" which said: "God, damn the liquor traffic! Thou knowest it has damned men, Merciful God, damn it."⁸⁰

⁸⁰Ibid., July 15, 1948, p. 1.

Readers and friends began chastising Barron for headlines such as the one concerning the election of the bishop. He replied to these admonishments editorially:

"Those Headlines!"

"The Southwestern Advocate is told now and then by its friends that its headlines are too strong, or too this or too that.

"The Southwestern Advocate likes its headlines to be as strong as horseradish.

"The Advocate takes this opportunity to apologize to its readers for every insipid, flaccid, weasel-like headline that detracts from its pages.

"This paper does not need gagging. It needs ginger.

"Pass the pepper, please! Or ginger. Anything to keep the Advocate from looking like the funeral notice of a bum."⁸¹

⁸¹Ibid., July 29, 1948, p. 2.

All letters blasting the Advocate and its editor were printed, if they were sufficiently free from scurrility and profanity. Run regularly on page three, they constituted one of the most popular features of the paper.

The most popular, though, was the editorial page. It contained six to eight extremely brief editorials. Their brevity alone distinguished them from most the Advocate ever had used before. But they were different in other ways, as the typical ones reproduced below indicate.

"Them Baptists!"

"In this issue is a news story on a Christian Century editorial dealing with purported Southern Baptists' derelictions as members of the Christian Family.

"The Southwestern Advocate presents it as a news story, of course, and not as an editorial expressing its views.

"The Advocate's appreciation of Baptists is high and going higher. They are a great people. Their zeal is admirable. Their simplicity of program is enviable. Their evangelistic ardor is exemplary. Their growth is amazing. Their ministry to the masses is a page out of Wesleyana. Their stand on moral issues is salutary. Their large service of the Master is a joy to Christendom.

"If they get out of bounds, as the Century thinks they do, let others, in love, crack them on the head.

"When the head-smashing is over, be it known to all men, 'them' Baptists will have taken care not only of themselves, but of all those who have attempted to upset their well-loaded applecart.

"A teacher asked her class what were rabies and what could you do about them? A small boy said rabies were Jewish preachers and there was not anything you could do about them.

"There is only one thing you can do about the Baptists--- love them!"⁸²

⁸²Ibid., July 1, 1948, p. 2

"Liquor and the Lads"

"The South Central Jurisdictional Conference called on the army to ban the sale and use of alcohol on or near army posts.

"That was a commendable Methodist gesture.

"It also was a useless one.

"So far as having the request complied with is concerned, the conference might as well have called on Stalin to join the Methodist Church.

"The United States government in a real sense is controlled by the liquor interests. The reason for it is that it is precisely the way the majority of American people want it.

"The liquor business will cash in on the draft program. To these people it will be like shooting ducks on the ground. They will set out not only to provide liquor for the young men away from home, but they will leave no stone unturned to whet the appetites of the sons for their money-making stuff.

"From the Alpha to the Omega of it all, the U.S. government will give them one hundred per cent cooperation.

"That is the way liquor and government always have gone at the thing. There is no sign the leopards are putting on white rabbits' coats.

"Pessimistic? Cynical? No. Just historically minded.

"And mad as hops."⁸³

⁸³Ibid., July 8, 1948, p. 2.

"Condemn Sin?"

"The Advocate is in receipt of letters of late in this vein: Why don't you condemn sin instead of stirring up trouble about civil rights and racial matters?

"Why lambast youth movements when there is so much sin you could be denouncing.

"Revealing questions, these.

"Since when, dear questioners, did adultery become more of a sin than contempt for a black man merely because he is black?

"Since when, zealous individualists, did taking money at the point of a pistol become more heinous than taking money from a minority group through means of established social customs?

"Since when, Bible scholars, did gambling become more hurtful than false teachings about God and the Christian faith?

"Incidentally, the spirit and content of these letters of protestation usually point to authors who themselves are sinners in disposition if not in the flesh."⁸⁴

⁸⁴Ibid., September 2, 1948, p. 2.

"Square Dancing"

"There is no more harm in square dancing than there is in drinking spring water.

"It is a healthful form of physical and mental recreation through rythm to music.

"It would be well for the many good people who object to this means of wholesome fellowship and innocent pleasure in the Church to attend, and if possible, take part in a square dance.

"The experience would clear up a great many things, including their minds."⁸⁵

⁸⁵Ibid., December 11, 1948, p. 2.

"Dancing"

"The Advocate regrets to announce that the school children of Texas will have to use slates in their work for the time being.

"Their pa's and ma's temporarily have exhausted the stock of nickel tablets in writing the editor about the alleged atomic-bomb-like danger of the square dance.

"They have given him a round of lashes about the square thing. His head is bloody, but disappointingly unbowed.

"Sympathetically and smilingly he has read page after page of denunciation, exhortation, counsel, warning and innuendo.

- "His adversaries have quoted the Bible to him, told him harrowing tales of damned souls, pointed out the pits to him, and prayed that he would shun the very appearance of evil.

"His love for all people who see in the swuare dance the Devil's rope to drag people into his bottomless pit of fire and brimstone is exceeded only by his inescapable, unrelenting, inexorable conviction that they are wrong.

"After having been shown the way by the saints, the editor, poorly equipped for learning anything, still openly says that the square dance is no more harmful to the mind, the spiritual life, the social relations of people who do it than is walking to a country store for a pound of cheese---and a lot less cost-ly.

"The only things that keep the editor from square dancing himself are Methodism in one leg and rheumatism in the other."⁸⁶

⁸⁶Ibid., December 18, 1948, p. 2.

"Refusing An Old Pattern"

"The treatment of Negroes in the Sowers school district, reported in last week's Advocate, bad as it is, is above the average in Texas Public Schools.

"The facts, however, will not support Superintendent Joe P. Harris in his contention that the Negroes in the district have no grounds for complaint.

"They have no say-so in the administration of their school, their teaching evidently is inferior, their schoolroom equipment is scant, they have no water, their toilet facilities are primitive and they are convinced the white leaders have no wholesome concern for their welfare.

"Harris' explanation of why the Negroes have no water supply is childish.

"Had the white school in that district been confronted with the problem faced by the Negro school it would have been solved in a jiffy.

"Why make the minority group dig their well? Did the whites dig their well?

"As for Negro leader, Charles Ritchie, being a 'trouble-raiser', it is well to remember that trouble-raisers are not necessarily to be condemned. George Washington raised a lot of trouble for the British.

"Moses was a terrible trouble-raiser in ancient Egypt.

"Harris' invitation to the Negroes to elect one of their number to the board of trustees was not a piece of counsel; it was an act of cynical scorn.

"On the very face of it, the Sowers Negro school episode is but a recurrence of the familiar pattern: Any old thing is good enough for the Negroes.

"Any old thing is not good enough for the Negroes!

"Nothing is good enough for Negro children that is not good enough for white children.

"Christian conscience is saying so, more and more, louder and longer."⁸⁷

⁸⁷Ibid., October 7, 1948, p. 2.

Barron scornfully berated South Carolinians for hurling eggs and tomatoes at Henry Wallace, whom he opposed politically; derisively ridiculed President Truman for shunning Dixiecrat Strom Thurman at Washington inaugural ceremonies; condemned Methodism for boasting that

it was a middle-class church, declaring the Church must serve all classes; and filled editorials with quotations from Paul Tillich, Emmanuel Kant and George Buttrick.

Page three, labeled "Opinion" was opened to anyone who had anything to say. It usually was filled, as mentioned, with letters denouncing the Advocate and its editor, along with some praising them. After a few months, the latter grew so prolific and saccharine that Barron decided to omit virtually all of them.

Pages four and five were set aside for news stories concerning actions by Protestant churches in the Southwest.

All of pages six and seven were filled with gossip and names of laymen and ministers. These pages were labeled "People". Whenever possible, pictures of ministers and laymen were used on these pages.

Pages eight and nine, labeled "Events", contained smaller news stories concerning pastoral changes, individual church programs and achievements of Methodist churches over Texas.

Pages ten and eleven were devoted to articles specifically requested by the editor from leaders in particular fields of Methodism. These often presented the Church's side of an issue involved in one of the paper's lead stories. When such articles were unobtainable, Barron reprinted articles with some kind of religious interest (such as a story of a gypsy preacher in Texas, a harrowing experience of a circuit rider fleeing from Indians) which had appeared in the secular press.

Page twelve was reserved for obituaries and continuation of other articles, as was page thirteen.

Page fifteen, entitled "Inspiration", was filled with brief poems, moralisms and prayers. Reviews of books likely to be of interest to ministers and churchmen were run on page fifteen. The last page contained advertising exclusively.

Pictures and advertising were scattered liberally throughout the back pages. There was no patent medicine advertising, though Latham's gyp advertising occurred sporadically.

The Advocate prospered in popularity and circulation. Its offices in the Methodist Publishing House became part of religious reporters' daily beats. Its stories and editorials were quoted in the Dallas and state press.

Barron was asked if he would consent to relinquish his pastorate and devote all his time to editing the paper. He refused, and recommended that it be merged with the national paper.

In October, 25 representatives of the Church in Texas met in Dallas and decided to do this by March, 1949.

Barron had succeeded in achieving both his aims. On February 22, he turned over \$468 to the Joint Board of Publication. All of its debts had been paid, and, for a while at least, Texas Methodism had paid attention it.

But on February 24, 1949---almost a century after Chauncey Richardson carried the first edition from the press---publication of the paper he began ended; with it ended ingloriously the history

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of the Texas Christian Advocate whose history was not without glory.

CHAPTER XVIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. The Texas Christian Advocate was born of the desire of consecrated churchmen to establish a journalistic voice of Methodism in Texas more than a century ago.

But in the years before the Civil War it emerged as one of the foremost newspapers in the state. Its functioning as a journal of information on a remote frontier tended to overshadow its performance of the mission for which it was established.

Through the competency of Chauncey Richardson and C.C. Gillespie, and the brilliance of J.E. Carnes, the paper survived primitive publishing conditions with the aid of business guidance and financial assistance from Methodist laymen. At the end of 1861 the Advocate had gained a circulation of more than 6,000 in a sparsely populated region. It was a highly profitable and influential enterprise.

The Civil War and demoralization of the Southern economy forced suspension of the paper late in 1861. Publication was resumed in 1864. But for ten years the Advocate floundered on the verge of extinction, inflicting heavy financial losses upon successive publishers who attempted to underwrite its operations.

Restoration of stability to publication of the paper began in 1874 when Louis Blaylock and William Shaw became its publishers. Change in the basic character of the paper began also. Content

emphasis shifted from secular news to militant advocacy of the causes espoused by Texas Methodism. The shift was accompanied by increased attention to news of Methodist churches and their people in Texas.

Under George Briggs, the Advocate initiated the first of many vociferous campaigns against liquor, gambling and prostitution. These campaigns reached their height during the editorship of George Rankin from 1898 to 1915. As a result of them, the Advocate enjoyed political power and public prestige scarcely surpassed by any publication in Texas. Contemporary observers cited it as one of the chief causes of the passage of prohibition and the abolishment of legalized gambling and prostitution in Texas.

From 1872 until 1922 the Advocate's business affairs were soundly managed by its publisher, Louis Blaylock. But in 1922, through the improvident judgment of ill advised and misinformed Church leaders, Blaylock was deposed as publisher. His ouster led to ingrained bitterness on the part of him and his family. After it, the Advocate labored under extreme financial difficulties or imminent threat of them for the remainder of its history.

It began, too, an editorial decline which ultimately resulted in its demise. The paper under P.E. Riley and E.V. Cole was undistinguished and increasingly ineffective. Andrew Weeks managed to sustain it from late in 1931 until 1939, but was unable to restore much of its former power and favor. During 1939 and parts of 1940 and 1941, a committee containing several eminent ministers loosely edited it

and sometimes filled its columns with stimulating material. But the highly inept direction of H.M. Whaling and E.A. Hunter from 1942 to 1948 condemned the Advocate in the minds of dominant Church authorities to discontinuation.

J. Daniel Barron edited it somewhat spectacularly in the summer and fall of 1948, completely reversing several of the paper's historic editorial positions. In its last few months, the Advocate experienced popular approbation reflected in slowly rising circulation and financial stability.

But the cumulative mediocrity of the preceding decades had predetermined its fate. And on February 24, 1949, the last issue of the Advocate prior to its merger with the Christian Advocate went to press.

Conclusions. Whenever the Advocate fulfilled needs of Texas Methodists, they rewarded it with popularity, prestige influence and prosperity. At many times during its history, its circulation was stimulated through promotional campaigns conducted through the hierarchy of the Church. But retention of this periodically inflated circulation always depended upon the actuality of the service the paper provided its readers. Texas Methodists never supported their church publication solely on the basis of religious loyalty in sufficient strength to make it a successful undertaking.

All of the various needs of Texas Methodists were not always the same or of the same acuteness.

Before the Civil War, when most Methodists lived in relative

isolation on a frontier, one of their major needs was news. Three editors recognized, probably unconsciously or as a matter of course, this, and devoted the paper to supplying them with it. In this period in Texas, the requirements for editorship were not stringent compared to those of later days. An intelligent man without notable journalistic talent could reproduce and summarize news from other newspapers, and, by doing so, provide his readers with a genuine service. The Advocate editors did somewhat more. They wrote with force editorially and commanded the respect of those who read.

In the years after the Civil War, the need for information was supplied more and more by an increasing secular press spreading over the state. Texas was in a period of transition from a gun-ruled, unexploited frontier to a stabilized, productive society. Evangelism, fearless and simple in the tradition of John Wesley, was sociologically appropriate, and from a religious standpoint indispensable. For 60 years after the War, the Advocate, with the exception of the homely and interesting reports from little communities about their health, crops and churches, was little more than a pulpit from which preachers practiced evangelism against sin which for them was crystallized in alcohol, prostitution and gambling. Success of the paper depended largely upon just how good a preacher its editor was. Most of them were good, and the Advocate prospered. The most spectacular of them all was Rankin, and under him the paper prospered the most.

But with the coming of the twenties, the needs of the people

were more complexly manifested. Surely, the same basic spiritual needs that existed for the people of 1855 existed for those of 1925 and 1935 and 1945. But journalistically, at least, they could be ministered to far less simply, far less directly than half a century before.

There no longer was a dearth of communications nor an abundance of time. And now the Advocate was only one of many publications to which the people had easy access. Everything else had changed. But the Advocate had not. The nature of its content was the same. Its methods of gathering news and distributing it were the same. The basis of selecting its editors was the same.

In a day when giant metropolitan dailies with extensive and trained staffs penetrated every segment of the state, when every community of any size had its own daily, a single, untrained minister could no longer write and edit a newspaper even approaching the quality of those available to his readers everywhere. Nor in a day when sophisticated, entertaining, appealing periodicals flooded the mails and newstands could the Advocate be nothing but a pulpit from which an old time preacher could harangue a congregation about the evils of drinking, smoking and dancing. In light of the social turmoil and uncertainties and injustices and the economic changes of the past three decades, these traditional evils seemed scarcely evil at all. But the Church tried to do both.

Brilliant men, sensitive to the times, with journalistic talent and training were needed to make the Advocate the vibrant organ it

once had been in the lives of Texas Methodists. Instead, Church authorities appointed as editors tired preachers with no such qualifications. Therein lies the primary reason for the decline and demise of what once was an important and useful publication.

Probably Texas Methodism's need for a journalistic voice to give powerful and articulate expression to its opinions was greater in the past two decades than at any time in its history. But Texas Methodism failed to realize that the requirements for creating such a voice, also, were far greater than at any time in its history.

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