

## BAPTISTS AND THE CHRISTIANIZING OF AMERICA IN THE NEW ORDER.

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The revival of the spirit of Americanism that has followed the world war is refreshing to every man who loves the ideals and institutions of the Republic.

After giving our best on European battlefields to save what is highest in civilization and human progress, it was inevitable that we should seek to envisage anew the priceless worth of those liberties which grew out of the souls of rugged pioneer fathers and reproduced themselves in succeeding generations of Americans.

The ferment of reconstruction is carrying on that wholesome, though often unpleasant, tutelage in patriotism which the war began. Every institution of society is being questioned and re-appraised. Time-honored standards in industry and social organization are being challenged, and the proven dogmas of our political and even of our Christian faith are being searchingly catechised and openly flouted.

These extreme doctrines of a time of unrest in the wake of great national trial are in some cases not less insolent and swaggering than was Mars himself in the horrible trappings by which he thought to shackle with bonds of fear the souls of mankind. But their reaction in the hearts of real Americans who fear God and love liberty has been as wholesome and hopeful as was that of the great war itself.

Monstrous as was the war, vain and threatening as are many of the present preachments of strange faiths in religion, politics and social organization, God is using these things to arouse Americans to a new sense of the value of their institutions and to enlist for the tasks necessary to their conservation.

There was need that America should be aroused. The organizing principle of an autocracy is the will of the rulers, but that of the American democracy is the soul of a people. Unmistakably there shines a soul through even the printed sentences and paragraphs of the early statesmen of America. But as the years passed that soul became complacent. In the pre-occupation of getting gain and living in the lap of material luxury, it became drowsy. Because of this, declares Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, it took America two years and a half after the European war began "to see that behind the struggling heroes that wore the uniform of France and behind the great, silent, powerful British navy, were protected the Constitution and the laws of these United States".

Rightly to estimate what Christianity means in relation to the institutions of the United States and to its usefulness as a beacon to kindle hope and high purpose among the peoples of other nations, is to lay down a measure by which to gauge the importance of organized effort to Christianize our country.

The organizing principle which under-lay the American Constitution was fundamentally religious and Christian. The Pilgrims who came to New England, the Scotch who penetrated the highlands of Pennsylvania and the South, the French Huguenots who came to Charleston, sought liberty to worship God unmolested, as well as civil liberty. If the same cannot be said of the religious purpose of the Jamestown settlers, it is still true that there followed them from Britain and joined them from other colonies so great a group who prized liberty of conscience more than peace and ease that the established religion was overthrown by the accumulated force of their opposition, which forever swept religious privilege and favoritism from legal recognition in our nation.

The Continental Congress humbled itself on its knees before God, led by a chaplain it had designated to open

its deliberations with prayer. It was proposed in that Congress that a seal should be adopted for the new republic which should be a picture of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and should bear the legend, "Resistance to Tyrants is Obedience to God".

The Constitution itself recognized the equal rights of all men, placed sovereignty in the hands of the citizen instead of an autocrat, declined to make any religious tests in connection with citizenship or government, and in the First Amendment specifically safeguarded religious liberty and freedom of speech. Recognizing the tendency of men in power to grasp more power and thus to destroy the liberties of the people, it divided the government into three departments, legislative, executive and judicial, and made each equal to the other and independent in its own field. In addition, it specifically safeguarded certain individual rights, which not even the majority of the people could take away.

I have recounted these provisions of the Constitution because they bear upon the claim that the organizing principle of the Constitution of the republic was essentially Christian. That document sets forth as the basal law of civil society principles which Jesus Christ wrought into the hearts of his followers.

After reading the Constitution, Gladstone said: "It is the greatest piece of work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." William Pitt said of it: "It will be the wonder and admiration of the world of all future generations and the model of all future constitutions."

Before the war there were some more or less erudite persons in America who were seeking to discount the Constitution of our country in the public mind. There is a spiritual kinship between this performance and that of rationalism in religion, which suggests the possibility of similar origin. But, though so-called religious mod-

ernism is blithely at work in the post-war days of ferment, the detractors of the fundamental law of our land have found it expedient for the present to withhold their teachings, except as they have been willing to ally themselves openly with the radical socialists who would by anarchy overthrow at once our government, our faith and our social institutions.

The purpose of this article is to enquire into the ability and fitness of the faith of evangelical Christianity, and more particularly of the Baptists, to hold this nation for Christ in the new order which has come. It is religious, and not political. But the fortunes of Christianity and of our civil institutions are most intimately related to each other in America. The American government was made possible by the outworkings of the Christian faith of the American fathers into the Constitution and laws of the land. The effectiveness of Christianity in the days immediately ahead will be tremendously conditioned by the maintenance or overthrow of our institutions. At the same time, the vital force of Christianity in the hearts of American men and women at the present time will tremendously influence the result of the present attacks on the American government and our American liberties.

In America for more than a hundred years we have had a standard government. On the one hand, it destroyed autocracy and made the citizen free before man and God. On the other, it safeguarded certain rights of the individual against the unreasoned passions of even the majority—which are mobocracy, the forerunner of anarchy. Under this system we have developed the highest average intelligence in our citizenship the world has seen. We have accumulated untold wealth. We have released individual initiative and encouraged resourcefulness. We have developed a higher Christian spirit than ever known in another nation, they themselves be-

ing witness. In China, the Philippines, Cuba and numerous other countries, we have shown that a strong nation can be related to a weaker without exploiting it for selfish ends. In the world war our national soul, made torpid by gain and luxury, had to be shocked into awakens by a threat that our country would be dominated by the military Moloch of Germany. But once we were aroused from our strange sleep, the consecration that led free Americans freely to pour into the issue our most treasured blood, and with it mountains of that very gold about which they had been so absorbed, was essentially the product of the faith of our people in the God of our fathers.

A United States Supreme Court judge once decided that America is a Christian nation. His decision was based upon such considerations as the above. America's course has not been perfect. Many shortcomings could be pointed out. A strong argument could be made that we are not a Christian nation. But it is of unmeasured significance to the Christian statesman that here in America civil liberty and religious liberty have until now justified themselves before the bar of unbiased opinion as having more nearly approximated a Christian civilization than has ever been done under autocracy and religious regulation by government.

So much for the past. What of the present and future? Baptists rejoice that all the great evangelical Christian bodies are a unit with them in their appreciation of full-length Christian Americanism. They have both contributed greatly to that end, and are now ready to put underneath the conservation of it the full power of their spiritual impact. The result, if we shall attain it, of a permanently dominant Christian Americanism, will be largely creditable to these bodies—not through some politico-religious mass impact on the legislative and executive, but by their enthroning Jesus Christ in the hearts and lives of American people.

What of Baptists and the present world ferment—particularly Southern Baptists? Are we prepared to do great things for our Lord and our country in mastering this ferment with a spiritual dynamic in the hearts and lives of free American citizens?

A survey of our resources for the task would include our fertile evangelism. From their saving enthusiasm in gospel pioneering, our Methodist brethren have won a merited reputation for effectiveness in soul-winning. We have no desire to lessen their reputation and we pray for a continuance of their holy zeal. But it is a fact, in the South at least, that Baptists have outstripped even these honored leaders in evangelism. Largely, the remarkable growth of Baptists in the South, far outstripping other denominations, has resulted from their abounding devotion to soul-winning. The white Baptists of this section number 3,000,000 and the Negro Baptists 3,000,000 more. One man in six in the South is a Baptist and almost one in two is of Baptist inclination.

There are no present signs of this passion for soul-winning declining among Baptists in the South. Taking our people as a whole, not all the cynicism of rationalism has cooled their fervor. Nor has the playing down of religion to a low level in the press, nor the eye-filling propositions of men who would organize the denominations under a super-control and save the world by the power of great numbers used to secure outward reform and conventional religious conformity. The few churches in which such forces have tended to destroy evangelistic zeal are happily without apparent influence in stemming that tide of evangelism which swells in countryside and town and city, in summer meetings, city evangelistic campaigns, and state-wide campaigns.

The answer of the Southern Baptist Convention to the insidious dogma that education of the child or moral reform of the adult brings one into Christ's kingdom

was the establishment of the Home Board's present great Department of Evangelism. The answer of the churches widespread throughout the South to the popular playing down of religion to the plane of certain deeds of charity and public service was and is to turn their Sunday schools and regular services more carefully to soul-winning ends, and to provide for the periodic seasons for revival or protracted meetings for bringing all men to know that salvation is through the atoning Christ.

In the present time of ferment, the best of men will make mistakes in their efforts to bring the Christ-dynamic into effective relationship to the needs of the hour. But here is a point where we cannot possibly err. The final proof of the gospel of Christ is that it works. It makes good, this faith in our blessed Lord who saves us from sin, when it takes hold of the lives of men and women. Moreover, there is absolutely no doubt of its taking hold, if we proclaim it in faith and earnestness; the Holy Spirit of God takes care of that. This gospel of redemption has blessed untold generations. It has made them the saving social leaven among many and varied conditions of unrest and social ferment. It can and will do it again, if we shall be faithful in proclaiming it. The new order includes strange problems, some of unprecedented momentousness. Who can see the way through them all? But the most essential thing is within the reach of us all: we can exalt the crucified Christ before the hungry eyes of men in a needy and sinful world.

Pleasure has more material blandishments wherewith to make people forget the hungry soul through absorption in worldly enjoyment than ever before. Material science, through machinery, transportation and quick communication, has made business as absorbing as pleasure, and its prizes big enough to lure the souls of men as never before. The automobile, the movie, the magazine with tawdry sex-problem bait—in the new order fur-

nish food for the superficial amusement and absorption of the masses of people to a degree that human ingenuity has never before equaled. Into all this insulation of people against the spiritual appeal comes, through tract and newspaper and lecture, an assortment of false faiths, both highbrow and lowbrow, both from the university light and the unsophisticated inventor of a new religion. They differ widely at points, but all agree at one, namely, that Jesus Christ did not atone for man's sins on the cross.

My prayer and my belief is that Southern Baptists, instead of being discouraged by these bolder and more organized and flagrant assaults of the Prince of the Power of the Air on the fortress of the souls of men, will by them be led to consecrate themselves to a more determined, more carefully prepared, and more persistent and unceasing quest for souls than they have ever before been. If we shall even stumble and fail at some other points, we shall yet abundantly justify ourselves before God and nation and a world waiting for our help, if we shall with full consecration continue our witness to the souls of men that Jesus is the Savior from sin.

But so significant a people as Southern Baptists are in numbers and wealth and influence must be great enough to carry forward the whole program of Christ. That program includes the teaching principle. A full obedience to it will inevitably head up in adequate teaching in the churches, and in a large service in the field of Christian education.

Facts can be adduced to show that Baptists have done a significant service in the field of education in America, facts that rightly encourage us. But I beg rather that I may direct attention to the great unfulfilled task that still lies ahead. A great evangelizing denomination will necessarily always be creating a great teaching task. Baptists have many men and women of culture and edu-



cation and wealth. But our concern just now is that we have many more who have had small teaching advantages. Many of them are attaining wealth, and one of the first-rate problems now before us is the problem of thousands of men who have achieved large possessions, but in Christian teaching are still babes in Christ. Both their souls and the influence of their unmastered possessions are in jeopardy.

Baptists in the South have reason to appreciate and respect the Southern Presbyterians. They are a relatively small body, but they have taught their members with a thoughtful care worthy of admiration and emulation. One result is that when a Presbyterian grows wealthy he nearly always remains a Presbyterian, and with a regularity which should instruct us he remains an active, interested Christian who gives of his means to Christian purposes perhaps with more regularity than do men of his class in any other considerable Christian body in the South. I have no faith that we shall ever enlarge our educational evangel merely in the hope of commanding more money from the prosperous Baptists of the future. But it is worth considering that the proper expenditure of effort and money in our churches and schools to train for Christ the life of the convert would bring back into the Baptist treasuries tenfold talents and monies for the spread of the gospel of Christ in the years that lie ahead.

In our churches—the considerable majority of them—if Baptists are to function with full force in the new order, we need much more opportunity for the general teaching of the principles of the gospel in the New Testament. The city churches have problems that are becoming more acute, and the cities will require from us in the new order a degree of attention which will far surpass anything we have ever done.

But the city problem is quite largely made up of establishing new missions and churches on the one hand

and of a much enlarged co-operating program of church building on the other. It is a problem which will not wait longer for enlargement and capable leadership, if Southern Baptists are to make good in the fullest sense as the largest Christian body in their section.

But the lack of teaching opportunity here considered is mainly a rural problem. The fourteenth census is showing an alarming movement of people from country to city. The partial records to this date indicate that the movement has been more pronounced in the South than in other sections. But the completed figures will show that the characteristic life of the South is still rural. Industry is growing rapidly, but the fertile fields of the South, where man still pursues the first and most fundamental business of mankind, still grow the crops which must feed and clothe a considerable part of the world. Hardby the fields are still the homes of nearly or quite three-fourths of the people of the South.

What of the farmer's church? Its characteristic practice in the South is still that of once-a-month preaching. Of about 21,000 small village and country churches in the South, about 19,000, certainly not fewer than 18,000, have preaching only one Sunday in the month, and practically always the pastor lives away from the community. About 5,000 preachers serve all these country churches. The last religious census shows that 1,000 out of 5,000 white Baptist preachers in the South who answered its queries on the point are farmers. A large proportion of our rural preachers still find it necessary to make much of their support from ordinary week-day work of some kind. To make the gloomy picture a bit more complete, hardly more than one of these men in five has enjoyed special training for the ministry.

These country preachers and churches have rendered a great and valuable service, too varied and significant to detail here. Moreover, there is noteworthy improve-

ment recently among a significant number of them. They are consciously getting ready to muster their forces to serve God and society in the new order. They are paying better salaries and having more preaching and are securing at least some of the preacher's life for pastoral service. Still a larger group, to use the words of an observant country preacher, "want to do something and don't know what it is". They are hungry to advance to spiritual dominance in their communities in the new order, but do not know how. They will hear and heed any man who wins their confidence and will show them the way to advance. What they need is leadership, leadership!

Which is not any reflection on the one preacher to four churches who has only one chance in five to have received special training as a preacher, on whom they have depended for service. It is a challenge to Baptists as a body to reappraise country life and the rural church to get from under the suspicion of exploiting it and at the same time despising the dignity of its mission. It is a challenge to the best thought and statesmanship we have to help to bring a new rural life to serve the new order by aiding to vitalization and adequate teaching the thousands of churches through which Baptists influence the life of almost every rural community in the South.

There is a fact which in an astonishing way reinforces the argument for an enlarged rural church program from Baptists. During the last few years, several distinct investigations have shown that we are losing out of the "back-door" of our churches about thirty-five percent of all we receive at the front door by baptism. That is, thirty-five percent go back to the world or are victims of the vendors of false faiths. It is capable of demonstration that most of this enormous and inexcusable loss comes from lack of adequate teaching and pas-

toral instruction. If Baptists and Methodists would do their duty in instructing the country people of the South, for whom God will rightly hold them responsible, the day of the Holy Roller, the Russellite and the Mormon elder would be done. With certain modifications, the same principle holds true in the cities. Wonderful baptizers that we are, if we do not greatly enlarge our teaching service there is danger that our loss shall nullify what would otherwise be the net gain of our denomination. We are still increasing, while some other great bodies are losing, but our annual increase is only about forty percent of those we baptize.

Specific doctrinal instruction is another teaching need of our churches today, both urban and rural. By which I mean the great fundamental doctrines of the Bible, whether held in common with other evangelical groups or whether peculiar to Baptists.

Within recent years there has been a widespread combination of forces which have wrought to make Christian doctrine or dogma appear moss-back, contemptible. Doubly odious, in the judgment to which astute forces for directing public opinion have given vogue, is it for a minister to instruct his people on the peculiar tenets for which his denomination stands. It is the dogma of the evangelical churches which is particularly blameworthy. For a small search always reveals that those who give currency to the mad craze against Christian doctrine themselves hold definite dogmas to which we must capitulate, whether they are learned rationalists or Christian Scientists, or Russellites, or merely careless worldlings, instinctively giving adherence to a public opinion which would shut out the power of the Christian polemic, by frightening the spokesmen of Christianity.

This psychological climate, which has been so industriously and withal successfully created, makes it more difficult for a minister to preach the doctrines of the New

Testament, but he cannot therefore trim his teaching to please spiritually-weak and wobbly souls, without unfaithfulness to his Lord and Master. Paul became all things to all men that he might save some, but Paul never played the coward nor trimmed his testimony to the mighty Saviour in order that he might find favor among the worldly-minded without nor amid time-servers within the churches.

Southern Baptists have with heroism recently withstood certain potent influences which pressed from without, which in our compliance would have weakened our testimony to our Lord and Saviour. This mass resistance of our great group against entangling alliances will doubtless react helpfully on many a pulpit, giving fresh confidence and courage even to some who had not yielded to the essentially anti-Christian attack on Christian teaching. May it be so, for there were not lacking evidences, both in urban and rural pulpits, that some were beginning, before the able mass attack on doctrinal teaching, in magazines and newspapers, on prominent platforms and in books, to fear lest after all there should be something pernicious in having definite convictions concerning God's revelation to man and in daring to stand up and set them forth in a church dedicated even though it is to the preaching of exactly those convictions.

It was masterly strategy for the enemies of a spiritual religion, just at the time they were preparing more anti-Christian dogmas for public consumption than ever they had before, to veil the approach of their poison squads by a barrage directed against an active opposition from the truth of Christ in the mouths of His servants. Right well does the satanic enemy of that truth know that it is winged by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that he cannot grapple men's souls with the destructive dogma of unbelief in any way so rapidly as by first frightening them away from the great doctrines of

Christ. It is my profound conviction that Baptists must spiritualize America in the new order by fearlessly preaching the truth, the dogma, of the New Testament, loving all men, respecting all honest religious views, "speaking the truth in love", careful not to give needless offense, but *speaking the truth*, and with a holy indignation against that hypocrisy and cowardice that would sacrifice the faith in exchange for the noisome pottage of worldly favor.

One of the great and hopeful results of the 75 Million Campaign was the determination it revealed on the part of Southern Baptists adequately to equip their educational institutions. It has been as if a common instinct has taken possession of our body to the effect that we must arise and do great things in Christian education. It is now assured that our colleges, our secondary schools and our theological schools shall be far better provided than ever before.

Meantime, they are almost all full to overflowing with students. God gave us the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary almost without the denomination itself knowing what a great gift was bestowed. The same was true with most of our colleges. Heroism of great souls there was; it was the way Baptist education advanced in the South. The eyes of the rank and file did not see clearly that Christ would have saved life-powers as well as saved souls. It was the same when God gave us the Southwestern Seminary and practically threw into our unsuspecting laps, almost as a gift, the promising Baptist Bible Institute at New Orleans.

But in connection with the 75 Million Campaign there has been a blessed "moving in the mulberry trees". There has developed for the first time in Southern Baptist history something that approximates a great ground swell among our people looking to enlarged denominational education.

What did it? I will name a single thing that seems to me to have been one of the most potent influences. Our people were unquestionably becoming conversant with the influences at work among many American educational centers, the success of which would mean the overthrow of vital Christianity. There is room and need for state-controlled education, which, besides the institutions under Christian control, educate most of America's youth. But not only is the state-school unable to teach a definite Christianity; its state control makes it the more or less helpless victim of every learned skeptic with a set of anti-Christian views who happens to get into one of its professorships.

Our Baptist people have determined to contribute to the nation through the schools men and women who shall have a culture that bows humbly before God, that feels free to follow Truth wherever the Truth may lead, but always as bond-servants of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, whom learned teachers of atheistic evolution and savants who reduce all possibilities of truth to what they can prove by natural science, have not found in all of their philosophy, and whom they therefore teach students was nothing more than a good man, exalted by the imagination of his ignorant disciples into a god.

Our Baptist people have awakened in the "nick of time" to help save America from a race of skeptics and infidels. Let our institutions in the South remember, in the coming day of comparative prosperity, what we thank God they have so generally remembered in the hard days: the denomination which has aroused itself to education so promptly in a crisis will be ready to do still greater things for a really Christian education in the future. But they are going to demand, and it is well for our schools that it should be so, they will demand and will see to it that it shall really be a Christian education.

It is the province of educators to know many things the people whom they serve cannot know. It is also their fortune, if they serve a democracy like ours, sometimes to have an undiscerning criticism leveled at them. This is unfortunate. But it would be still more so for our institutions to be freed from the necessity of seeing eye to eye and heart to heart with the great honest body of people they serve, from among whom are to come the men and women who shall be the thinkers, leaders, teachers of the generations that are to follow.

To serve as they ought, and must, the new order in America, Southern Baptists need right now three thousand more educated preachers than they have. I believe we could within the next five years assimilate more than that number of trained men into rich fields for spiritual service in the South and on foreign mission fields. By that time we should need three thousand more.

But we are not training them that rapidly. At Louisville, Fort Worth and New Orleans, counting out the women of the training schools, we are hardly sending out more than two hundred young preachers yearly with a two- or three-year theological training. I doubt if we are sending out that many with as much as a two-year training. But we need and can use six hundred yearly. Testimony from state secretaries, college and seminary professors, editors and others who look in upon what is going on in current pastoral supply, will verify my claims on this point.

Some of them would place the needs higher. We shall never Christianize the new America without an adequate ministry of trained preachers. This is fundamental. Where shall we get them? Out of our churches—mainly our rural churches. How? First, by praying God to call them and by personally and in public discourses and prayers putting this blessed calling on the hearts of our young men. This we have not generally



done. It is wonderful how God has kept up the sources of supply for our pulpits so well, even when those sources were drying up in many denominations. We surely did not pray much about it nor show concern for it—not that anyone could see. I think it means that God has blessed us with many godly Baptist mothers in the South, whose yearnings and prayers for their boys were of a higher spiritual discernment than those of many of our pastors and churches have shown. And then God used the quiet places of the open country as a condition where these lads could find time to meditate and in the meditation hear His voice calling to high spiritual service.

If one who would speak with becoming modesty concerning the noble seers in the Louisville Seminary and elsewhere whose lives are given to the holy service of training our preachers may be bold to say it, I have often wondered why our theological seminaries do not set in operation *and maintain* a propaganda among Southern Baptists that shall reach even the remotest church in favor of a movement to impress upon young men the challenge of the ministry as a life calling. It may be that educators as a class are too enamored of intensive bigness and genuineness to estimate the value of spreading abroad a single big idea by propaganda till it reaches everywhere and sticks. But, gentlemen, here is a holy propaganda of which it seems God has made you the proper and most influential exponents. If you will lead, there are thousands who will follow. If your class rooms are not large enough, it will be fine to have that as a leverage for larger. If there are not enough seminaries, Baptists will provide more. Already these quickened-to-serve-the-new-order Baptists are talking of starting another.

Great and hopeful enlargement of program in Foreign Missions and in every activity at home has already eventuated from our 75 Million Campaign. Our greatest

need was not new activities, but a great enlargement of spirit, of purpose and of support in carrying on activities already being prosecuted. In the enlarged program Baptists are now carrying forward, there is no need to seek for new ways to spend money. Open doors are waiting our coming into far fuller service upon strategic fields already entered.

At the same time, we shall only serve as well as we ought the new day, if we shall be ready with constructive effort to take hold of every new problem that comes, and to adjust our activities to the requirements of every new situation. Constructive leadership is required to meet new needs by new efforts, as well as wisdom for the fuller service in fields already cultivated.

The new day in America, full of dangers and unproven dogmas in politics, industry and religion, is a halcyon day for Home Missions.

When the world war came, the sore sense of need among Southern Baptists led them with quick insight to remove the limitations on home mission endeavor. They bade the Board enter with large service the great American army camps and gave it the money for the work. Then came reconstruction! We soon found that the demand for home mission endeavor was larger still than in the great war. To meet unprecedented problems and ferment, our people turned almost instinctively to a larger Home Mission. For the last fiscal year they gave above \$1,600,000 for this cause.

The Home Mission Board never before confronted such tremendous opportunities. As goes America, so goes the world. Largely as goes the South, so goes America. And in the South is the Baptist center of gravity of the world. And the long-approved agency through which Baptists act as a single body for saving America is their Home Mission Board.

A record in evangelism not equaled by any other similar agency anywhere; a gift for co-operation which

enables it to act in conjunction with the responsible local bodies of the denomination with exceptional skill; a movement toward enlistment or educational missions, rich in results and richer in promise; opportunities to lead Baptists in unsurpassed saving activities in the cities and in the country places; unequaled opportunity to help the Southern Negroes toward fuller and better Christian lives; an open door to the Indians and the foreigners, to Cuba and to Panama; the permission and implied mandate of a great denomination to go forward in new fields of need as they may develop; the unique privilege of serving in making our country Christian—such are the opportunities of the largest religious body in that section of America where Americanism most nearly holds the whole field for serving the New Order through the Home Mission Board of Southern Baptists in these days.

May God enlarge our souls to comprehend and make keen our wills and shrewd the cunning of our hands to perform the present vastly-needed service for men's spirits, which shall mold their lives and deeds and those of their children after them into a Christian America worthy of the pioneer patriots who conceived and crystallized our American institutions in the atmosphere of faith. May He make us competent to do for our needy and distracted days what with far fewer advantages they both conceived and performed for their generation—and for us.