

**ECCLESIASTICAL POLITICS
IN THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH: A SYMPOSIUM**

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Ecclesiastical Politics in the Methodist Episcopal Church: A Symposium by Charles Parkhurst

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CHARLES PARKHURST

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INTRODUCTION.

WITH a view to eliciting representative opinions from different sections of the Methodist Episcopal Church upon an admitted and growing evil, the following circular letter was sent out from the office of ZION'S HERALD, Boston, Mass., and the accompanying articles, received in reply, were published in the columns of that valuable weekly. In response to a general demand for more permanent publication, the articles have been gathered together in their present form, with the editorial comments of Dr. Parkhurst preceding each. The following is a copy of the letter named above:

MY DEAR DOCTOR: We wish to treat the subject of "Ecclesiastical Politics" in our columns. Our sole purpose is to conserve the interests of the denomination and to protect its good name.

We have decided on the following plan—to lay before our readers as the foundation for editorial

comment the convictions of several of the leading representatives of the church. To this end, we have divided our Methodism into six districts—the Pacific Slope, the Western, the Middle, New York, New England and Southern Districts.

We would be glad to have you write for the—district, under no other restraint than that of conscience, and inspired by your love for the church.

You might answer, in the main, the following inquiries: Is there good reason for the application of the phrase, "ecclesiastical politics," to our denomination? How is it manifested? How may the tendency be overcome?

In order that each writer may be relieved from undesirable notoriety, criticism or misapprehension, his name will be withheld from the public. Each man will also write without knowledge of what the other has written, and no one of the articles will be published until all are received.

Hoping for a favorable reply, we remain for a Methodism "above reproach,"

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES PARKHURST.



CHAPTER I
ÉCCLESIASTICAL POLITICS.

Editorial Comment.

On the first page we publish the first of the series of articles on this topic. There, also, will be found the request which evoked these utterances from the representatives of our church. A further word in frank explanation is here added. It is anxiously desired that our position be rightly understood. The exposure of shameful practices in our ecclesiastical life is made only from a feeling of stern necessity that something must be undertaken within the church to correct this harmful tendency. In the editor's extensive travels over our land to become personally acquainted with our aggressive Methodism, it was discovered that this one painful characteristic of our church-life filled loyal Metho-

dists with chagrin and foreboding. In many instances personal appeal was made that ZION'S HERALD seek to correct this wrong. It was appreciatively declared that the genius and history of this paper especially qualified it to "speak out" upon this great and growing evil. To serve the church, in its hour of distress, therefore, is our sole purpose.

Our readers are assured that the men who write are the elect servants of the church, and are prompted only by the desire to inaugurate a reform in this matter. Their names are withheld at our suggestion for the present, that the attention of the denomination may be concentrated upon the condition revealed rather than upon the persons who expose the situation. ZION'S HERALD assumes the responsibility for what each writer says.

We bespeak for our readers a prayerful and earnest co-operation in this crusade. We plead with our Methodist press to lead in a united endeavor to check this growing and scandalous practice. ZION'S HERALD will be content to play a most humble part if only the work of thorough reform be set in

motion. We are anxious solely for the honor, good name and usefulness of the denomination. That our laity are feeling most keenly upon this subject is already evinced by the fact that we are in receipt of numerous letters, since our announcement of this series of articles, according us hearty approval and cheer in our purpose. God save our beloved Methodism from further exhibitions of such unholy aspirations and methods!