



Another



The Making of A Pastor

I. Wesley Lord, The Rebel.

When the black frock coat reflected the prevailing shade of religious beliefs and the parson was an awesome figure as he moved from place to place, admired by the saints and avoided by the sinners, John Wesley Lord was learning the catechism on his mother's knee. His mother was a devout Methodist and she had given her son the name of the founder of her church in the hope that he, the second of her three boys, would become a Methodist minister.

Young Wesley had other ideas. He was a wholesome lad, richly endowed with good humor, and he thought ministers did not smile enough and the rules of the church were too severe. Obedience, he thought, should be voluntary. He wanted to be free. As he afterwards discovered, he was a rebel at heart. Conflicting currents of religious belief stirred in his blood. His maternal sire, Andrew Carmichael, the inventor of the first loom to weave steel, was a rebel. Born a Presbyterian, he joined in the revolt against the rigid rules of Calvinism, denied the doctrine of predestination, joined the Wesleyan Church of Scotland and became one of its most influential lay preachers. On the paternal side was staunch conformity to ritual and dogma. The Lords were members of the Church of England, the mother church of his namesake, the great rebel, John Wesley, who never left its communion and who "denounced any of his followers who should dare set up another organization outside the church" (of England).

Early in life, John Wesley Lord decided that preaching was too exacting a calling for him; that teaching was inspiring and better suited to his tastes; and he entered Montclair Normal resolved to become a schoolmaster. His older brother, Andrew, president of Lord, Abbott & Co., had been a school principal. Why not he? It was a step in the right di-

rection, at least. These were self-revealing years. To help pay for his schooling, he did all kinds of work in the summer—was a waiter in a hotel, a shoe salesman in New York and Asbury Park, a gob in the Merchant Marine. In the first World War, he left school and worked on the "powder line," charging detonator caps with fulminate powder for the DuPont Co. It was dangerous work for a lad of fifteen, but he performed his daily tasks without mishap and, when peace came, he felt that "the next fifty years would be easy and relatively safe".

Safe but troublous. He returned to Normal School thinking that he was not good enough to be a minister. He thought, also, that it would be a fine thing for ministers to know more about folks outside the fold, particularly those who never went to church. Why didn't they go to church? After graduation, in 1922, he taught in the Normal School for a year, was principal for a year, and enjoyed the comradeship of young people. Here was a strong bond of sympathy and understanding which he wanted to continue through life, but he would lose it, he thought, if he became, say, a lawyer. But what about the ministry? He entered Dickinson College still in doubt, but leaning slightly toward the law. He was studious, observant, friendly. One who knew him well in those days, says he was "the best mixer on the campus". After he received his A. B., the prophets of the law no longer interested him and he turned to the law of the prophets to face the inescapable—"Am I qualified to be a minister?" Pondering the question, he sought an interview with the president of Drew Theological Seminary and informed him of his uncertain state of mind. Said the president: "Ninety per cent of the boys who come here don't know whether they want to be ministers." Thus assured that he was no exception to the rule, John Wesley Lord enrolled as a student.