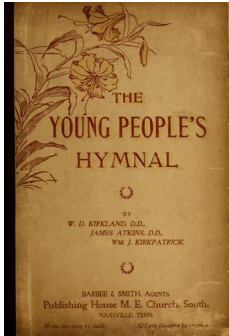


Atkins, James, Jr. ^[1]

Atkins, James, Jr.

by Grady L. E. Carroll, 1979

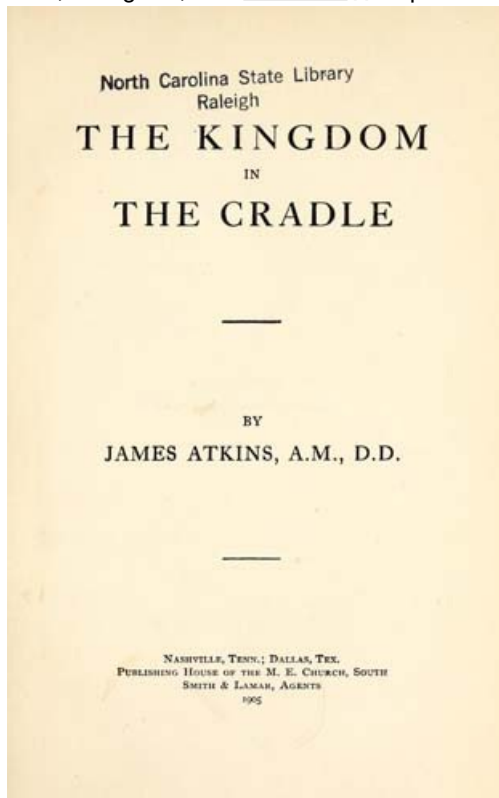
18 Apr. 1850–5 Dec. 1923



adapted to the use of
Sunday schools,
Epworth leagues,
prayer meetings, and
revivals. Image
courtesy of the

Internet Archive. ^[2]James Atkins, Jr., Methodist ^[3]clergyman, was born at Knoxville, Tenn., the son of a Methodist preacher who served his church almost half a century and was elected a delegate to the general conference six times. After Atkins's education was interrupted by the Civil War ^[4], he received the M.A. degree from Emory and Henry College and later the D.D. degree from Trinity College ^[5] (now Duke University ^[6]).

Atkins served his church in several capacities. In 1872 he was admitted on trial in the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and was appointed to Morristown and Mossy Creek. Between 1873 and 1878 he served Jonesboro, Abingdon, and Asheville ^[7] as pastor. In 1879 he served as president of Asheville Female College ^[8],



Kingdom in the cradle. Courtesy of the Internet
which closed Archive.

^[9]permanently in 1901, and in 1889 he became president of Emory and Henry College. In 1893 he returned to the Asheville Female College and remained there three years. In 1896

he was elected general secretary of the Sunday school board and editor of Sunday school literature, serving with distinction for ten years. He wrote a notable book, entitled *The Kingdom in the Cradle*^[9], which advanced the concept of training young people into the Christian life without the radical conversion experience that had been regarded as essential. It had far-reaching influence across the denomination; revivals gave way to "preaching missions" for spiritual growth of church members.

In 1906, Atkins was elected a bishop at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Birmingham, Ala. He exercised supervision over conferences across the country, including the Pacific Coast, always maintaining Waynesville as his home. In 1918–19 he was chairman of the Centenary Commission and helped raise \$50 million for home and foreign missions. As a result of this effort, missions were established in Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. For four years he supervised work in these fields.

In 1913, Atkins was instrumental in establishing the Southern Assembly^[10] and choosing Lake Junaluska, near Waynesville, as its site. He was the first chairman of the board of trustees and erected two houses at the site. His son operated the institution from 1933 to 1938, when the indebtedness was paid, and the assembly was accepted as the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In 1876 he married Ella M. Branner by whom he had four children; after her death he married Eva Rhodes in 1921. Bishop Atkins was buried at Waynesville.

References:

Western N.C. Conference, *Minutes* (1924).

Additional Resources:

"Atkins, James, 1850-1923" in the Internet Archive:<https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Atkins%2C+James%2C+1850-1923%22>^[11]

Robert D. Gilmer Papers, 1796-1926 (collection no. 00435). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Gilmer,Robert_D.html^[12] (accessed February 6, 2013).

James Atkins Papers, 1874-1931 (collection no. 00032). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/a/Atkins,James.html>^[13] (accessed February 6, 2013).

Image Credits:

Kirkland, W. D; Kirkpatrick, William J. *The Young people's hymnal : adapted to the use of Sunday schools, Epworth leagues, prayer meetings, and revivals*. Nashville, Tenn. : Publishing House, Methodist Episcopal Church, South. 1897. <https://archive.org/details/youngpe00kirk>^[2] (accessed February 6, 2013).

Atkins, James. *Kingdom in the cradle*. Nashville, Tenn. : Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South. 1905. <https://archive.org/details/kingdomincradle00atki>^[9] (accessed February 6, 2013).

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Dictionary of North Carolina Biography. University of North Carolina Press.^[18]

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^[1] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/atkins-james-jr> ^[2] <https://archive.org/details/youngpe00kirk> ^[3] <https://ncpedia.org/methodist-church> ^[4] <https://ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/civil-war> ^[5] <https://ncpedia.org/trinity-college> ^[6] <https://ncpedia.org/duke-university> ^[7] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/asheville> ^[8] <https://ncpedia.org/asheville-female-college> ^[9] <https://archive.org/details/kingdomincradle00atki> ^[10] <http://www.lakejunaluska.com/> ^[11] <https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Atkins%2C+James%2C+1850-1923%22> ^[12] http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Gilmer,Robert_D.html ^[13] <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/a/Atkins,James.html> ^[14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term> ^[15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/clergy> ^[16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/educators> ^[17] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/carroll-grady-l-e> ^[18] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no>