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GEORGE SHADFORD
Mighty Methodist Missionary to America

Compiled, Edited, and Arranged
By Duane V. Maxey

From
History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I
By Abel Stevens

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Part 1
LESS KNOWN, BUT GREATLY USED OF GOD

George Shadford was born in England, apparently about the year 1739. He was one of the most Spirit-filled, powerful, and effective missionaries sent by John Wesley to America. The revivals that took place under his ministry on our continent were truly Pentecostal in nature, and had a mighty impact on the character and development of early Methodism. Other early Methodist leaders in the New World are better known today: Coke, Asbury, McKendree, etc., but perhaps none witnessed such deep and powerful movings of God's Spirit in their work as that seen by Shadford during American ministry. Through his efforts in America, "great numbers embraced religion; some professed sanctification, and the Societies were comfortably established in the Gospel of their salvation."

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Part 2
HIS INFLUENCE ON FREEBORN GARRETTSON

Before his conversion Freeborn Garrettson was greatly moved upon through the ministry of Shadford. Concerning this, Stevens writes:

"Garrettson's father became alarmed for him, and the young man's 'name was already cast out as evil,' though he had made no open avowal of Methodism. he attempted to satisfy his conscience by living a 'respectable' life, 'bending his mind to the improvement of his property, and serving God in a private manner.' He now attended the parish church regularly, fasted once a week, prayed in secret, rebuked profanity among his neighbors. 'I was so fast set in my way,' he says, 'that I thought I should certainly go to heaven; and if at any time overtaken in sin I would endeavor to mend my pace, and pray more frequently.' But he had to admit that 'often,' especially under Methodist preaching, his 'foundation would shake.' George Shadford's powerful ministration shook it thoroughly."

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Part 3

STEVENS' ASSESSMENT OF SHADFORD'S AMERICAN MINISTRY

"George Shadford excelled any of Wesley's other American missionaries in immediate usefulness. His ardor kindled the Societies with zeal. He was the chief "revivalist" of the times -- a man of tender feelings, warmest piety, and wonderful unction in the pulpit. Asbury and all his fellow itinerants loved him. The elder Methodists of America long delighted to recall his memory as precious. His preaching displayed no great intellectual ability, but was pathetic and consolatory, and abounded in scriptural phraseology and familiar illustrations.

The quotations above, and the biographical material that follows are taken from "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church" by Abel Stevens, and compiled, edited, and arranged by Duane V. Maxey.

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Part 4

SHADFORD'S EARLY LIFE AND RELIGIOUS TRAINING

George Shadford is one of the most interesting characters in the autobiographical sketches of Wesley's old Arminian Magazine. He tells his story with an honest directness, an Augustinian contrition and frankness, and, withal, a naivete and dramatic effectiveness which render it irresistibly entertaining. He had a somewhat strict early religious training, but was ebullient with the spirits of healthful childhood. He was continually indulging in pranks of childish mischief; and as continually repenting of them as guilty and perilous to his soul. He had sufficient points of both similarity and contrast with Rankin to account for the fond partiality which led the latter to prefer him as his companion in the mission to America. He was altogether a lovable and admirable man.

"When I was very young," he says, "I was uncommonly afraid of death. At about eight or nine years of age, being very ill of a sore throat, and likely to die, I was awfully afraid of another world; for I felt my heart very wicked, and my conscience smote me for many things that I had done amiss. As I grew up I was very prone to speak bad words, and often to perform wicked actions; to break the Sabbath, and, being fond of play, took every opportunity on Sunday to steal away from

my father. In the forenoon, indeed, he always made me go to church with him; and when dinner was over, he made me and my sister read a chapter or two in the Bible, and charged me not to play in the afternoon; but, notwithstanding all he said, if any person came in to talk with him, I took that opportunity to steal away, and he saw me not till evening, when he called me to an account. My mother insisted on my saying my prayers every night and morning, at least; and sent me to be catechized by the minister every Sunday.

At fourteen years of age my parents sent me to the bishop to be confirmed, and at sixteen they desired me to prepare to receive the blessed sacrament. For about a month before it I retired from all vain company, prayed, and read alone, while the Spirit of God set home what I read to my heart. I wept much in secret, was ashamed of my past life, and thought I would never spend my time on Sundays as I had done. When I approached the table of the Lord it appeared so awful to me that I was likely to fall down as if I were going to the judgment-seat of Christ. However, very soon my heart was melted like wax before the fire. I broke off from all my companions, and retired to read on the Lord's day; sometimes into my chamber, at other times into the field; but very frequently into the churchyard, near which my father lived. I have spent among the graves two or three hours at a time, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying, until my mind seemed transported in tasting the powers of the world to come; so that 'I verily believe, had I been acquainted with the Methodists at that time, I should have soon found remission of sins, and peace with God.

But I had not a single companion that feared God. Nay, I believe at that time the whole town was covered with darkness, and sat in the shadow of death. Having none to guide or direct me, the devil soon persuaded me to take more liberty, and suggested that I had repented and reformed enough; that there was no need to be always so precise; that there were no young people in the town who did as I did. I gave way to this fatal device of Satan, and, by little and little, lost all my good desires and resolutions, and soon became weak as in times past. I was fond of wrestling, running, leaping, football, dancing, and such like sports; and I gloried in them because I could excel most in the town and parish. At the age of twenty I was so active that I seemed a compound of life and fire, and had such a flow of animal spirits that I was never in my element but when employed in such kind of sports."

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Part 5 JOINS THE MILITIA AND MEETS THE METHODISTS

A new Militia Act placed four of his fellow-youth in the army. One of them was "much afraid to go." Shadford liked soldiering, and went in his stead for seven guineas. His father was "almost distracted" with grief; but the tenderhearted boy, finding afterward his parent in pecuniary distress, gave him all the money he had received. He was tossed about the country in the army, tempted by the vices of his comrades, but escaping most of them, and repenting with tears when overcome. "I well remember one day," he writes, "when being exceedingly provoked by one of my comrades, I swore at him two bitter oaths, by the name of God; a practice I had not been guilty of. Immediately I was, as it were, stabbed to the heart by a sword. I was sensible I had grievously sinned against God, and stopped directly. I believe I never swore another oath afterward."

At Gainsborough he went with a sergeant to hear a Methodist preach in a hall. He was exceedingly entertained and surprised at the services, and deeply smitten in his conscience by the discourse. "I was tried, cast, and condemned," he adds. "I then made a vow to Almighty God, that if he would spare me until that time twelvemonth, (at which time I should be at liberty from the militia, and intended to return home,) I would then serve him. So I resolved to venture another year in the old way, damned or saved. O what a mercy that I am not in hell! that God did not take me at my word and cut me off immediately!" "In Kent," he says, "the Lord arrested me again with strong convictions, so that I was obliged to leave my comrades at noonday, and, running up into my chamber, I threw myself upon my knees and wept bitterly. I thought, 'sin, cursed sin, will be my ruin!' I was ready to tear the very hair from my head, thinking I must perish at last, and that my sins would sink me lower than the grave." "Wherever I traveled I found the Methodists were spoken against by wicked and ungodly persons of every denomination; and the more I looked into the Bible the more I was convinced that they were the people of God."

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Part 6

REMINDED OF HIS PROMISE TO SERVE GOD

On his release from the militia service he returned home, musing much about this "sect everywhere spoken against." Of course he was a favorite among his early associates; they welcomed him with delight, and got up a dance to express their joy. "Though I was not fond of this," he says, "yet to oblige them I complied, much against my conscience. We danced until break of day, and as I was walking from the tavern to my father's house (about a hundred yards) a thought came to my mind, 'What have I been doing this night? serving the devil.' I considered what it had cost me; and upon the whole, I thought, 'The ways of the devil are more expensive than the ways of the Lord. It will cost a man more to damn his soul than to save it.' I had not walked many steps further before something spoke to my heart, 'Remember thy promise.' Immediately it came strongly into my mind, 'It is now a year ago since that promise was made. "If thou wilt spare me until I get home, I will serve thee." ' Then that passage of Solomon came to my mind, 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that thou vowest.' I thought, 'I will. I will serve the devil no more. But then it was suggested to my soul, 'Stay another year, until thou art married and settled in the world, and then thou mayest be religious.' That was directly followed with, 'If I do, God will surely cut me off and send my soul to hell, after so solemn a vow made.' From that time I never danced more, but immediately began to seek happiness in God."

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Part 7

TRUE SALVATION SOUGHT AND FOUND

A Methodist farmer moved into the neighborhood, and opened his house for preaching. Shadford could not stay away. "I was now determined," he says, "to seek God, and therefore I went constantly to church and sacrament, and to hear the Methodist preachers, to pray, and read the Scriptures. I thought, 'I will be good. I am determined to be good.' I read at night different prayers.

Sometimes I prayed for humility or meekness, at other times for faith, patience, or chastity; whatever I thought I wanted most. I was thus employed, when the family were in bed, for hours together. And many times while reading the tears ran from my eyes, so that I could read no further; and when I found my heart softened and could open it to Almighty God, there seemed a secret pleasure in repentance itself; with a hope springing up that God would save me. While I was thus employed in seeking the Lord, drawn by the Spirit of God, I esteemed it more than my necessary food."

"But," he adds, "the Lord did not suffer me to take conviction for conversion. After those pleasant drawings, I had sorrow and deep distress. My sins pressed me sore, and the hand of the Lord was very heavy upon me. Thus I continued until Sunday, May 5, 1762, coming out of church, the farmer that received the preachers told me a stranger was to preach at his house. I went to hear him, and was pleased and much affected. He gave notice that he would preach again in the evening. In the mean time I persuaded as many neighbors as I could to go. We had a full house, and several were greatly affected while he published his crucified Master. Toward the latter part of the sermon I trembled, I shook, I wept. I thought, 'I cannot stand it; I shall fall down amid all this people.' O how gladly would I have been alone to weep! for I was tempted with shame. I stood guilty and condemned, like the publican in the temple. I cried out, (so that others heard,) being pierced to the heart with the sword of the Spirit, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

No sooner had I expressed these words, but by the eye of faith (not with my bodily eyes) I saw Christ my Advocate, at the right hand of God, making intercession for me. I believed he loved me, and gave himself for me. In an instant the Lord filled my soul with divine love, as quick as lightning. Immediately my eyes flowed with tears, and my heart with love. Tears of joy and sorrow ran down my cheeks. O what sweet distress was this! I seemed as if I could weep my life away in tears of love. I sat down in a chair, for I could stand no longer, and these words ran through my mind twenty times over: 'Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.' As I walked home along the streets I seemed to be in paradise. When I read my Bible, it seemed an entirely new book. When I meditated on God and Christ, angels or spirits; when I considered good or bad men, any or all the creatures that surrounded me; everything appeared new, and stood in a new relation to me. I was in Christ a new creature; old things were done away, and all things then became new. I lay down at night in peace with a thankful heart, because the Lord hath redeemed me, and given me peace with God and all mankind.

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Part 8

HE BECOMES A METHODIST -- HIS EARLY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

But no sooner had I peace within than the devil and wicked men began to roar without, and pour forth floods of lies and scandal in order to drown the young child. And no marvel, for the devil had lost one of the main pillars of his kingdom in that parish; and therefore he did not leave a stone unturned, that he might cast odium upon the work of God in that place. But none of these things moved me, for I was happy in my God, clothed, with the sun, and the moon under my feet; raised up, and made to sit in heavenly, holy, happy places in Christ Jesus. In a fort night after I joined the Society."

Thus had George Shadford become a Methodist, and now his filial heart turned toward his aged parents. He proposed to them family worship, and after his first prayer "they all wept over one another." He continued the domestic devotions for half a year. "My father," he writes, "at length began to be in deep distress. I have listened and heard him in private crying for mercy, like David out of the horrible pit and mire and clay, 'O Lord, deliver my soul!' I began to reprove, and warn others wherever I went. My father was sometimes afraid if I reproved the customers who came to our shop it would give offense, and we should lose all our business. Upon which I said, 'Father, let us trust God for once with all our concerns, and let us do this in the way of our duty, from a right principle, and if he deceives us we will never trust him more; for none that ever trusted the Lord were confounded.' In less than a twelvemonth, instead of losing, we had more business than ever we had before. The Society increased from twelve to forty members in a short time, for the Lord gave me several of my companions in sin to walk with me in the ways of holiness."

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Part 9 FOUR OF HIS FAMILY BROUGHT TO CHRIST

He was soon exhorting friends, neighbors, enemies, and whosoever came in his way to "flee from the wrath to come." After one of his exhortations he returned home and found his father reading in the Psalms of David. "I saw," he says, "the tears running down his cheeks; yet there appeared a joy in his countenance. I said, 'Pray, father, what now? What now? What is the matter?' He instantly answered, 'I have found Christ; I have found Christ at last. Upward of sixty years I have lived without him in the world in sin and ignorance. I have been all the day idle and entered not into his vineyard till the eleventh hour. O how merciful was he to spare me, and hire me at last! he hath set my soul at liberty. O praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!' I left him rejoicing in God his Saviour, and retired to praise God for answering my prayers." His mother was quickly added to the list of his converts, then his sister; four of his family were converted in less than a year, and the little Society of the town grew vigorous by his humble labors.

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Part 10 BECOMES A METHODIST PREACHER

Shadford became a Local Preacher. Wesley met him and summoned him into the itinerant field. In 1768 he was sent into Cornwall, the next year to Kent, and the next to Norwich.

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Part 11 HE VOLUNTEERS TO GO TO AMERICA IN 1772

The veteran Captain Webb having labored about six years, the principal founder of Methodism from New York to Baltimore, returned again to England in 1772 to appeal to Wesley and his Conference for more missionaries. He went to the Conference, which began on August 4, 1772, at Leeds, a city which was thus again to be distinguished in the missionary annals of the denomination. He there addressed the preachers with an eloquence that kindled the assembly into enthusiasm. George Shadford heard him, and says, "I went to the Leeds Conference, where I first saw Captain Webb. When he warmly exhorted preachers to go to America I felt my spirit stirred within me to go; more especially when I understood that many hundreds of precious souls were perishing through lack of knowledge, scattered up and down in various parts of the country, and had none to warn them of their danger. When I considered that we had in England many men of grace and gifts far superior to mine, but few seemed to offer themselves willingly, I saw my call the more clearly. Accordingly Mr. Rankin and I offered ourselves to go the spring following."

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Part 12

WHY RANKIN CHOSE SHADFORD AS A FELLOW MISSIONARY

Thomas Rankin wrote: "I chose my much-esteemed friend and brother Shadford to accompany me. I had proved his uprightness, piety, and usefulness in several circuits where he had labored with me, and I knew I could depend upon him. It was settled that we should sail in the spring."

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Part 13

A LETTER FROM WESLEY -- A DREAM FULFILLED

He was appointed to Wiltshire circuit till the ensuing spring, when he was to embark with Rankin. As the time drew near Wesley sent him a characteristic letter, for he loved the young itinerant as a son. "Dear George," he wrote, "the time has arrived for you to embark for America. You must go down to Bristol, where you will meet with Thomas Rankin, Captain Webb, and his wife. I let you loose, George, on the great continent of America. Publish your message in the open face of the sun, and do all the good you can. I am, dear George, yours affectionately."

When he reached the wharf where the ship lay he was reminded of a dream which he had six years before, and in which a written message seemed sent him from heaven, requiring him "to go and preach the Gospel in a foreign land." "I thought I was conveyed to the place where the ship lay, in which I was to embark in an instant. The wharf and ship appeared as plain to me as if I were awake. I replied, 'Lord, I am willing to go in thy name, but I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me.' An answer to this was given: 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' I awoke, awfully impressed with the presence of God, and was really full of divine love; and a relish of it remained upon my spirit for many days. I could not tell what this meant, and revolved these things in my mind for a long time. But when I came to Peel, and saw the ship and wharf; then all came fresh to my mind." He now looked upon the ship and the whole scene before him as the realization of his vision, and took courage for his mission.

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Part 14

THE VOYAGE TO AMERICA IN 1773

Captain Webb and his wife were on the deck, and had made all necessary provisions for the little band. On Good Friday, April 9, 1773, accompanied by Joseph Yearbry (another preacher) and other passengers, they set sail. Both the missionaries and Webb kept up daily prayers, and preached often on the voyage with much effect. "The Lord was in the midst of us," writes Rankin, "and attended our meetings with power from on high." Webb especially seemed to enjoy with zest these devotions, for he could not fail to feel that his errand had been successful. Rankin's Journal repeatedly records that "Captain Webb exhorted, and was attended with the divine blessing; the word seemed to lay hold on some hearts, and they began to show it by their tears." On the 18th they had a special day. Prayers were read by Rankin, an exhortation delivered by Webb, a sermon from the quarter-deck by Shadford; the evening was spent in exhortation, singing, and prayer. "We were led out," says Rankin, "in earnest prayer for our friends and Christian brethren in England, as also that God would open a great and an effectual door for the spreading of his Gospel among those to whom his mercy and providence were now sending us. Indeed, we felt the gracious influence of the divine presence so among us that we could scarce conclude. The Lord did indeed open the windows of heaven, and the skies poured down righteousness."

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Part 15

ARRIVAL IN AMERICA

On the 1st of June they came to anchor in the Delaware, "opposite Chester, about sixteen miles south of Philadelphia," after a passage of seven and a half weeks. On the 3d they were cordially received by Asbury and the Methodists of the city. Asbury had been anxiously expecting them; "they have arrived," he writes, "to my great comfort."

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Part 16

THE COMMENCEMENT OF SHADFORD'S AMERICAN MINISTRY

Shadford had hastened from Philadelphia to New Jersey. He "labored there," he says, "with success for a month, adding thirty-five to the society, many of whom were much comforted with the presence of the Lord."

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Part 17

NEW YORK LABORS

Shadford began his work for the ecclesiastical year [1773-74] in New York with an ardor equal, if not superior, to that of Rankin. He had a soul of flame, and was singularly effective in his preaching. "A volume might be written," says the chronicler of John Street Chapel, "concerning Mr. Shadford. He had a great harvest of souls in America." And, again, writes the same authority, "Most powerful revivals accompanied his ministry. His preaching was in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Moral miracles were performed, hell's dark empire shook, and victory was proclaimed on the Lord's side. He was a very sweet-spirited brother, and the love subsisting between him and Asbury was like that between Jonathan and David."

Shadford, though a courageous preacher, was modest even to diffidence, and entered New York with painful self-distrust. He has left us a brief record of his labors there. "My next remove," he says, "was to New York, where I spent four months with great satisfaction. I went thither with fear and trembling and as much cast down from a sense of my unworthiness and inability to preach the Gospel to a polite and sensible people. But the Lord, who hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are wise, and weak things to confound the things which are mighty, condescended to make use of his poor weak servant for the revival of religion in that city. I added fifty members in those four months, about twenty of whom found the pardoning love of God, and several backsliders were restored to their first love. A vehement desire was excited in the hearts of believers after all the mind of Christ, or the whole image of God. I left in New York two hundred and four members in society."

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Part 18 PHILADELPHIA LABORS

Exchanging with Rankin, he went to Philadelphia, where he says, "I had a very comfortable time for four or five months that I spent with a loving, teachable people. The blessing of the Lord was with us of a truth, and many were really converted to God. There was a sweet loving spirit in this Society; for nothing appeared among them but peace and brotherly love. They had kept prayer-meetings in different parts of the city for some time before I went to it, which had been a great means of begetting life among the people of God as well as others." He preached in the streets and lanes of the city, and left it at the end of the year, with two hundred and twenty-four members in its Society. His first year's labor in America had added nearly two hundred to the Church, "while hundreds had been benefited in various ways under his labors."

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Part 19 BALTIMORE MINISTRY

Shadford was appointed by the Conference of 1774 to Baltimore Circuit, with three other preachers. He was a man of fervid eloquence, of great tenderness of feeling, and readiness for any opportunity of usefulness. The people sought, especially in affliction, his sympathetic counsels. A few weeks after his arrival in Baltimore "a young man," he says, "came to me with two horses, and

entreated me to go to his father's house, about four miles from the city, to visit his poor distressed brother, who was chained in bed, and whose case they did not understand, supposing him to be mad, or possessed with a devil.

"When I entered the room I found the young man in the depth of despair. I told him Christ died for sinners; that he came to seek and to save the lost; yea, that he received the chief of sinners, and added, 'There is no other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, but that of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The young man laid hold of those words, 'The name of Jesus Christ;' and said he would call upon Jesus Christ as long as he lived, and found some little hope within him, but knew no more how he must be saved than an Indian. I sung a verse or two of a hymn, and then his father, mother, and brethren joined me in prayer. The power of God was among us of a truth; we had melted hearts and weeping eyes, and indeed there was a shower of tears among us.

"I know not when I have felt more of the Divine presence, or power to wrestle with God in prayer, than at this time. After we rose from our knees, I gave an exhortation, and continued to go to preach in their house every week or fortnight for some time. They loosed the young man that was bound; and the Lord shortly after loosed him from the chain of his sins, and set him at perfect liberty. He soon began to warn his neighbors, and to exhort sinners to flee from the wrath which is to come; and before I left the country, he began to travel a circuit, and was remarkably successful. I followed him in Kent, Delaware; and verily believe he was instrumental in awakening a hundred sinners that year."

The faithful itinerant thus provided a new preaching place and a preacher. This young man was Joseph Cromwell, whose name was enrolled, on the Conference list of itinerants, in 1777.

Through his ardent efforts, Shadford, and his fellow-laborers (all of them for the first time on the list of appointments) were, with their coadjutors on the two other Maryland Circuits, greatly successful. The number of Methodists in the state was increased, by more than one third, before the ensuing session of the Conference.

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Part 20

ON THE BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT OF VIRGINIA

At the Conference of 1775 Shadford and four other laborers had been appointed to the Brunswick Circuit, and were now sweeping, like flames of fire, over its extensive field. Shadford had gone thither in deep dejection, for he was "a stranger in a strange land," he says; "but," he adds, "I often felt much of this before a remarkable manifestation of the power and presence of God. In preaching and prayer the Lord strips and empties before he fills. I saw myself so vile and worthless as I cannot express, and wondered that God should employ me in his work. I was amazed when I first began to preach in Virginia; for I seldom preached a sermon but some were convinced and converted, often three or four at a time. I could scarcely believe them when they told me."

Among them were some of the "characters" of the times, the leaders of its rustic dissipations, whose reformation became an influential example. "One of these was a dancing-master, who came first to hear on a week-day, dressed in scarlet, and came several miles again on Sunday dressed in green. After preaching he spoke to me, and asked if I could come to the part where he lived some day in the week. I told him I could not, as I was engaged every day. I saw him at preaching again that week, and another man of his profession. When I was going to preach one morning a friend said to me, 'You spoiled a fine dancing-master last week. He was so cut under preaching, and feels such a load of sin upon his conscience, that he moves very heavily; nay; he cannot shake his heels at all. He had a large, profitable school, but hath given it up and intends to dance no more. He intends now to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic.' I said, 'It is very well; what is his name?' 'He is called Madcap.' 'A very proper name for a dancing-master,' I said; but I found that this was only a nickname, his real name being Metcalf."

This example, if apparently of doubtful importance, was not so to the itinerant; the eccentric convert became one of the most encouraging proofs of his ministry. "He began to teach a school, joined our Society, found the pardoning love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto him; lived six or seven years, and died a great witness for God, having been one of the most devoted men in our connection."

Not a few of the wealthy planters of the colony were in a moral condition hardly above heathenism; for their religious instruction, by the established clergy, had been incredibly desultory and defective. Methodism took strong hold of many of them, and, consecrating their local influence, rendered them greatly useful among their neighbors. "Going to preach one day," says Shadford, "I was stopped by a flood of water and could not reach the bridge. I therefore turned back to a large plantation, and having found the planter, I told him my case and asked him if I could sleep at his house. He said I was welcome."

"After I had taken a little refreshment I asked if that part of the country was well inhabited, and on his answering in the affirmative, I said, 'If it is agreeable, and you will send out to acquaint your neighbors, I will preach to them this evening.' he sent out, and we had many hearers, but they were as wild boars. After I had reproved them they behaved very well during the preaching. When I conversed with the planter and his wife, I found them entirely ignorant of themselves and of God. I labored to convince them both, but it seemed to little purpose."

"Next morning I was stopped again, when he kindly offered to show me another way some miles about, and go with me to preaching. I thanked him and accepted his offer. As I was preaching that day I saw him weeping much. The Spirit of God opened the poor creature's eyes, and he saw the wretched state he was in. He stayed with me that night, and made me promise to go again to his house and preach there. In a short time he and his wife became true penitents, and were soundly converted by the power of God." This case is not recorded by him for its individual importance alone, but because it became the foundation of a local "appointment" and a Church. "A very remarkable work," he adds, "began from this little circumstance and before I left Virginia there were sixty or seventy raised up in Society in that settlement. There were four traveling preachers that year in the circuit. We added eighteen hundred members, and had good reason to believe that a thousand of them were converted to God."

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Part 21

MIGHTY REVIVAL -- 1811 MEMBERS ADDED TO BRUNSWICK DISTRICT

Young Jesse Lee witnessed this "remarkable" interest, as his home was one of the preaching stations of the circuit. He writes that, "In the course of this year there was a gracious work in several places, but in none did it equal that on Brunswick Circuit, where George Shadford was traveling at that time. It was quite common for sinners to be seized with trembling and shaking, and to fall down as if they were dead; and many were convulsed from head to foot, while others retained the use of their tongues, so as to pray while lying helpless on the floor. Christians, too, were sometimes so overcome with the presence and love of God as not to be able to stand on their feet.

"Mr. Jarratt, the Church clergyman, was very useful in this revival, and his heart was closely united to the Methodists. He would frequently preach, meet the classes, hold love-feasts, and administer the sacraments among them. He was an eyewitness of this work; and as it was the greatest revival of religion that had ever been known in that part of the country, I think it will be a satisfaction to many to give a further account of it."

He proceeds to say that the excitement extended into the southern parts of Virginia, and was the "most remarkable reformation ever known, perhaps, in country places, in so short a time." It continued into the ensuing year. Shadford still preached in Virginia, and his ministry was attended with extraordinary scenes. "On the second day of a Quarterly Meeting," continues the historian, "a Love-Feast was held. As soon as it began, the power of the Lord came down on the assembly like a rushing, mighty wind; and it seemed as if the whole house was filled with the presence of God. A flame kindled and ran from heart to heart. Many were deeply convinced of sin; many mourners were filled with consolation; and many believers were so overwhelmed with love that they could not doubt but God had enabled them to love him with all their hearts. When the Love-Feast was ended the doors were opened. Many who had stayed without then came in, and beholding the anguish of some and the rejoicing of others, were filled with astonishment, and not long after with trembling apprehensions of their own danger. Several of them, prostrating themselves before God, cried aloud for mercy. And the convictions which then began in many have terminated in a happy and lasting change.

"The multitudes that attended on this occasion, returning home all alive to God, spread the flame through their respective neighborhoods, so that within four weeks several hundreds found the peace of God. Scarce any conversation was to be heard, throughout the circuit, but concerning the things of God. In many large companies one careless person could not be seen; and the far greater part seemed perfectly happy in a clear sense of the love of God. This work in a very short time spread through Dinwiddie, Amelia, Brunswick, Sussex, Prince George, Lunenburg, and Mecklenberg Counties. It thus increased on every side; more preachers were soon wanted; and the Lord raised up several young men, who were exceedingly useful as local preachers."

Lee himself was one of the most conspicuous of these local evangelists ... When the returns of members were made to the Conference this year there had been added to the Societies, on

Brunswick Circuit, eight hundred and eleven members. But if we include Hanover Circuit and Caroline, which had been united to Brunswick, there had been added, in one year, eighteen hundred members. I have spoken largely of this revival of religion, but my pen cannot describe one half of what I saw, heard, and felt. I might write a volume on this subject, and then leave the greater part untold."

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Part 22

SECOND WORK OF GRACE INSISTED UPON

Such was the success which the militant Preachers of Methodism pushed forward their conquests amid the tumults of the Revolutionary War. This "Great Revival" was as remarkable, in some respects more remarkable, than the "Great Awakening," under Edwards, in New England. It was more durable. I have had occasion to cite frequently the report which Jarratt made of it to Rankin for Wesley. He says, "One of the doctrines, as you know, which we particularly insist upon, is that of a present salvation; a salvation not only from the guilt and power, but also from the root of sin; a cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God; a going on to perfection, which we sometimes define by loving God with all our hearts. Several who had believed were deeply sensible of their want of this. And I have been present when they believed that God answered this prayer, and bestowed this blessing upon them. We have sundry witnesses of this perfect love who are above all suspicion. I have known the men and their communication for many years, and have ever found them zealous for the cause of God, men of sense and integrity, patterns of piety and humility.

As Asbury approached the Brunswick Circuit he wrote, "God is at work in this part of the country, and my soul catches the holy fire already." On Sunday, 5th of November, he met Shadford at a rural chapel. "My spirit," he wrote, "was much united to him, and our meeting was like that of Jonathan and David.

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Part 23

LABORS WITH ASBURY AFTER RANKIN'S RETURN TO ENGLAND

While pursuing his zealous course on the Baltimore Circuit, Asbury received word of the return of Rankin to England. Shadford, still lingering, meets him, and informs him of the departure of Rankin and Rodda. "So," he writes in sadness, "we are left alone; but I leave myself in the hands of God." He goes forward on his circuit, dragging Shadford with him far on his route; though a heavy gloominess hangs on his mind he inspirits his timid brethren, proclaiming as his text, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Shadford "exhorts" after him, and "the hearts of the people melt under the power of the word." Wherever they go record is now made of "the merciful hand of God displayed" in the assemblies, of "a moving in the congregations," of "powerful seasons," of "extraordinary visitations of grace." "We have been greatly blessed," he adds, "and have seen great displays of divine grace since we have been together, and have been made a blessing to one another."

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Part 24

SHADFORD'S DECISION TO LEAVE AMERICA

Ominous developments during the Revolutionary War raised the question in Shadford's mind about whether God wanted him to remain in America, or whether he should return to England. Methodists, and particularly English Methodists were suspected and accused of collaborating with England against the colonies, or of being disloyal to America. In Virginia, Shadford was threatened with imprisonment, and, after a year and a half of remarkable usefulness, he left it for the north in the depth of winter.

On his route he was lost in the woods at night when the weather was intensely cold, and the snow a foot deep. He could discover no house; without relief he must perish. He fell upon his knees and prayed for deliverance. On rising he stood some time listening, when he heard the distant barking of a dog. Following the sound, he was welcomed at the house of a plantation. Thus saved, he hastened into Maryland; but there also he was required to renounce his loyalty, or be in peril of imprisonment, if not of death. "he could not travel," he says, without a pass, nor have a pass without taking the oaths."

Shadford decided to have a meeting with Asbury at Judge White's about staying or leaving America. This meeting took place shortly before the judge himself was abducted, and during the time Shadford and Asbury met there, both of them had to keep themselves concealed, a part of the time, in an outhouse, hidden in a neighboring skirt of wood, whither the good judge's wife furtively carried their meals.

Shadford proposed to Asbury, "Let us have a day of fasting and prayer, that the Lord may direct us; for we were never in such circumstances as now since we were Methodist preachers." They did so, and in the evening Shadford inquired what conclusion Asbury had reached. "I do not see my way clear to go to England," he responded.

Shadford replied, "My work is here done; I cannot stay; it is impressed on my mind that I ought to go home, as strongly as it was at first to come to America." "Then one of us must be under a delusion," rejoined Asbury. "Not so," said Shadford; "I may have a call to go, and you to stay." "I believe," adds Shadford, "we both obeyed the call of Providence. We saw we must part, though we loved as David and Jonathan. And, indeed, these times made us love one another in a peculiar manner. O how glad were we to meet and pour our griefs into each other's bosom!"

Soon, Asbury was compelled to go into hiding. Shadford obtained from the military authorities a pass for his route northward, and set out. That night, however, he was attacked by an armed man on the highway, who presented a musket at his breast, threatening his life. He was allowed at last to proceed, but found that the bridge at Chester was broken down.

"With our saddle-bags," he says, "upon our backs, we crept on our hands and knees on a narrow plank to that part of the great bridge that remained standing, and got our horses over the

next morning. Thus, through the mercy and goodness of God, we got safe into Chester that night, and the next night into Philadelphia. Here we met three or four of our preachers, who, like our selves, were all refugees. I continued near six weeks before I got a passage, and then embarked for Cork in Ireland; from thence to Wales, and then crossed the passage to Bristol."

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Part 25

HIS SANCTIFIED, AND EFFECTIVE LABORS AGAIN IN ENGLAND

George Shadford resumed his ministry in England, and labored with his characteristic ardor till 1791, when, after twenty-three years of itinerant life, his infirm health required him to take a supernumerary relation to the Conference. He retired to Frome, on Congleton Circuit, but there continued his evangelical work as he had strength, preaching often, "visiting the sick constantly and at all hours, and faithfully discharging the duties of a Class Leader, having three large Classes under his care. It was by his own diligent exertions that these Classes had been raised; two of them met in his own house."

In these later years his preaching is described as not remarkable for any intellectual superiority; but "in unction and effectiveness" he is said to "have been surpassed by few." "Being intensely devotional, he walked with God, and enjoyed in rich maturity the 'perfect love that casteth out fear.' He was a living sacrifice. He 'kept back no part of the price,' and received in return such a luminous assurance of the divine acceptance of the offering that his joy was full. He literally toiled for souls. The force of his character and the power of his influence was great, and was felt far beyond the circle of the Wesleyan community. He rose early, and began the day with God. Long before the dawn, parties passing to their work often heard him engaged in wrestling prayer."

The heaven-sent influence through his prayers was felt. A Wesleyan preacher, who knew him in his old age, records that during the period of his own ministry in Frome, where Shadford resided, "I often experienced the efficacy of his prayers in the soul-converting influence it brought down upon my discourses. Being held in general esteem throughout the town, he had extensive access to the dwellings both of the rich and the poor, and in his visits his constant aim was to do good. His patriarchal appearance, his great simplicity and kindness of manner, and above all, his unmistakable piety, always caused his advice and admonitions to be listened to with respect. Many sought counsel from his lips, and an interest in his prayers."

He had, till the end of his life, more than a hundred persons under his care as a Class Leader. At an inspection of them by Jabez Bunting it was found that "more than ninety were clear in their Christian experience, and many of them were living in the enjoyment of the perfect love of God." He found a good wife in his latter years, had a competent livelihood, assembled his neighboring brethren of the ministry every Saturday afternoon at his table, and enjoyed an enviable old age. Nor could some years of blindness interrupt his serene happiness. By a surgical operation his sight was restored. "You will have the pleasure," said his surgeon, "of seeing to use your knife and fork again." "Doctor," replied the veteran, "I shall have a greater pleasure, that of seeing to

read my Bible;" and the first use of his restored sight was to read the sacred pages through three delightful hours; reading and weeping with inexpressible joy.

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Part 26

HIS TRIUMPHANT PASSING IN 1816

This old soldier of the cross, worn out with infirmities and labors in both hemispheres, had at last a triumphant end. When informed by his physician that his disease would be fatal, "he broke out in rapture, exclaiming, Glory to God!" "While he lay in view of an eternal world, and was asked if all was clear before him, he replied, 'I bless God it is;' and added, 'Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb!' Two friends, who were anxious for his recovery, called upon him, and when they inquired how he was, he replied, 'I am going to my Father's house, and find religion to be an angel in death.'" His last words were, "I'll praise! I'll praise! I'll praise!" He fell asleep on the 11th of March, 1816, in the 78th year of age.

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THE END