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**PIONEERS OF METHODISM IN  
NORTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA**  
By **Matthew H. Moore**

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1884

A very lengthy introduction and a few other opening words of commendation have been  
omitted from this digital edition -- DRM

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Rev. M. H. Moore, the author of these "Sketches," is a native of Warren county, North Carolina, and spent his childhood and youth in Halifax County, in that historic territory which is distinguished as the theater of the first toils and triumphs of Methodism in the state. He is an indefatigable student, and a highly esteemed and devout member of the North Carolina conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. His paternal grandfather was one of the heroic band that bore the standards of Methodism through the long hard conflicts in the Virginia Conference in the first quarter of the century. The home in which his mother was nurtured was for many years one of the hospitable and bountiful retreats that gave comfort and cheer to the weary itinerants on old Roanoke Circuit. His parents were worthy descendants of a loyal Methodist ancestry, well fitted to train their boy for the altars of the Church. Among the books in the family library that early engaged his eager mind were a number of old publications -- such as were written or circulated by the Methodist preachers in their pioneer labors. He was also often brought under the influence of the circuit-riders who enjoyed the blessings of his father's genial fireside, and he may thereby have received impressions from time to time that inclined his thoughts and desires toward the Church and its hallowed labors. Possibly the traditions that lingered about the storied ground in his native community awoke and fostered a warm interest in the remarkable lives of the men that first brought the doctrines of Methodism through these Southern lands.

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## 01 -- FRANCIS ASBURY

Throughout the annals of the world and the Church, and amid all the convulsions and revolutions of the ages, the student of history may recognize the hand of Supreme Power and Infinite Wisdom molding the affairs of men and nations. At the beginning of each revolution, and in the midst of each crisis, some figure comes to the front to direct aright the destinies of mankind. Generally it is the case that the very evils under which the world has groaned, the very thralldoms from which it is to be delivered, have been so overruled as to have become the very means for qualifying the commissioned leader for his appointed work. Joseph's slavery proves the means of

making him the benefactor of thousands. An inhuman edict leads to the preparation of Moses for the office of a great lawgiver and commander of the Jewish people. Luther, pining away in a monk's cell, finds in the old chained Bible the candle of Divine Truth with which to illuminate the world; and his austere life has prepared him to brave the dangers to which he is to be subjected. A man to become a leader of men, must know mankind: to become a benefactor, he must understand the evils from which humanity suffers; to become a great religious teacher or reformer, he must be in hearty sympathy with them; and sympathy is best learned in the school of a like experience. Luther spent three years among the peasantry of Germany before he undertook to translate the Bible for them.. An intimate acquaintance with their simple modes of life and thought and feeling, an insight into the the hidden springs of their joys and sorrows, could alone enable him to present to them in the language of their everyday intercourse with each other, and as the very Bread, of Life -- adapted to their wants, and supplying the cravings of their nature -- God's blessed "word written." The world's greatest reformers have been "men of the people." In our own day, and in our own Church, the greatest leaders among us are those who have served in the various departments of Church -- work, and have learned, by experience, a hearty sympathy for the veteran soldiers of the cross in every field of labor. To the British Conference which convened at Bristol, England, August 7, 1771, from the wilds of North America there came the cry, "Come over into Macedonia and help us!" John and Charles Wesley, Ingham and Whitefield, had long before visited the field; Embury, Webb, and Strawbridge had for some time been forming societies in the Middle States; and for two years Pilmoor, Boardman, Williams, and King had been laboring here. These had met with a sufficient measure of encouragement to lead them to believe that there was here an open door for the Wesleyan preachers and a glorious work for them to do. The spirit of the Fathers of Methodism -- so well expressed in the motto of his life, "The world is my parish" -- had been deeply imbibed by all of his followers, and the result was an earnest desire to send the gospel wherever there was hope of its being received. Little did the Conference, or any of its members, dream of the mighty results which were to follow in one hundred years; but in that little band of preachers there was one, a young man in his twenty-sixth year, whose eye had for some time been turned westward, and who felt that it was his duty to go to America. When the call was made for missionaries, Francis Asbury was the first to volunteer.

His early history we prefer to let him recite in his own language:

"I was born in Old England, near the foot of Hampstead Bridge, in the parish of Handsworth, about five miles from Birmingham, in Staffordshire, and according to the best of my after-knowledge, on the 20th or 21st of August, in the year of our Lord 1745. My father's name was Joseph and my mother's Elizabeth Asbury. They were people in common life; were remarkable for honesty and industry, and had all things needful to enjoy. Had my father been as saving as laborious, he might have been wealthy. As it was, it was his province to be employed, as farmer and gardener, by the two richest families in the parish. My parents had but two children -- a daughter, called Sarah, and myself. My lovely sister died in infancy; she was a favorite, and my dear mother, being very affectionate, sunk into deep distress at the loss of a darling child, from which she was not relieved for many years. It was under this dispensation that God was pleased to open the eyes of her mind, she living in a very dark, dark, dark day and place. She now began to read almost constantly when leisure presented the opportunity. When a child, I thought it strange that my mother should stand by a large window poring over a book for hours together. From my childhood, I may say, I have neither dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie. The love of truth is not

natural, but the habit of telling it I acquired very early; and so well was I taught that my conscience would never permit me to swear profanely. I learned from my parents a certain form of words for prayer, and I well remember my mother strongly urged my father to family reading and prayer. The singing of psalms was much practiced by them both. My foible was the ordinary foible of children -- fondness for play; but I abhorred mischief and wickedness, although my mates were among the vilest of the vile for lying, swearing, fighting, and whatever else boys of their age and evil habits were likely to be guilty of. From such society I very often returned home uneasy and melancholy; and although driven away by my better principles, still I would return, hoping to find happiness where I never found it. Sometimes I was much ridiculed, and called 'Methodist Parson,' because my mother invited any person who had the appearance of religion to her house.

"I was sent to school early, and began to read the Bible between six seven years of age, and greatly delighted in the historical part of it. My schoolmaster was a great churl, and used to beat me cruelly. This drove me to prayer, and it appeared to me that God was near to me. My father having but one son, greatly desired to keep me at school, he cared not how long; but in this design he was disappointed, for my master, by his severity, had filled me with such horrible dread that with me any thing was preferable to going to school. I lived some time in one of the wealthiest and most ungodly families we had in the parish. Here I became vain, but not openly wicked. Some months after this I returned home, and made my choice, when about thirteen years and a half old, to learn a branch of business, at which I wrought about six years and a half, during which time I enjoyed great liberty, and in the family was treated like a son or an equal than an apprentice.

"Soon after I entered on that business, God sent a pious, man -- not a Methodist -- into our neighborhood, and in my mother invited him to our house. By his conversation and prayers I was awakened before I was fourteen years of age. It was as now easy and pleasing to leave my company, and I began to pray morning and evening, being drawn by the cords of love as with the bands of a man. I soon left our blind priest, and went to West-Bromwich Church. Here I heard Ryland, Stillingfleet, Talbot, Bagnall, Mansfield, Howes, and Venn -- great names and esteemed gospel ministers. I became very serious, reading a great deal -- Whitefield and Cennick's Sermons, and every good book I could meet with. It was not long before I began to inquire of my mother who, where, what were the Methodists. She gave me a favorable account, and directed me to a person that could take me to Wednesbury to hear them. I soon found this was not the Church -- but it was better. The people were so devout -- men and women kneeling down, saying Amen. Now, behold! they were singing hymns -- sweet sound! Why, strange to tell, the preacher had no prayer-book, and yet he prayed wonderfully! What was yet more extraordinary, the man took his text, and had no sermon- book! Thought I, This is wonderful indeed! It is certainly a strange way, but the best way. He talked about, confidence, assurance, etc., of which all my flights and hopes fell short."

He soon after found pardon for sin, and at the age of sixteen began to read and pray in public. Before he was eighteen he began to expound the word of God, and exhort sinners to flee from the wrath to come. He had traveled nine months in Staffordshire and other adjoining shires; two years in Bedfordshire Circuit, and two in Salisbury Circuit, when he offered himself to the British Conference as missionary to America, and was duly received. From this Conference he returned home, and tenderly broke to his parents his determination. While grieved to part with him, they believed him to be following the dictates of Infinite Wisdom, and gave their blessing. When

he reached Bristol, to embark for his new field, he tells us that he "had not one penny of money." "But," he adds, "the Lord soon opened the hearts of friends, who supplied me with clothes and ten pounds. Thus I found by experience that the Lord will provide for those who trust in him." Never, perhaps, did the blessing of Heaven rest more abundantly upon a missionary offering than upon that; never was a missionary more devoted to the work before him than was Asbury. Already his heart was in America; already his soul longed to proclaim the glad tidings of free salvation on her far-distant shores.

Accompanied by Mr. Wright, who had also been appointed by the British Conference to America, he landed in Philadelphia on the 7th of October, 1771. They met an old-time Methodist welcome; and if there is one sect on earth which more than any other knows just how to receive a minister as the ambassador of God, and their "servant for Jesus' sake," we are prepared to accord that distinction to "the people called Methodists." Of their reception, Asbury says: "The people looked on us with pleasure, hardly knowing how to show their love sufficiently, bidding us welcome with fervid affection, and receiving us as angels of God."

After spending a few days in Philadelphia, he went to New York. He found that the preachers had been too much disposed to confine their labors to the cities, and immediately began to set an example of spreading the gospel by traveling out into the surrounding country, and preaching to many who had, perhaps, never heard the Word of Life proclaimed before. His example was followed by the other preachers, and a new impetus was given to the work. Boardman traveled north as far as Boston, and Pilmoor to the south as far as Savannah, Ga.

But the new missionaries did not meet the same cordial welcome everywhere. The rabble, and in many instances the clergy of the Established Church, opposed them, and endeavored by every possible means to block their way. There were evils, too, in the societies that needed correction, and Asbury, resolved to take a bold stand for the preservation of the purity of the classes, wrote: "Whomsoever I please or displease, I shall be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul."

This noble resolution he kept through the whole of his long and eventful ministry. The contrast between these earnest, consecrated men and the parsons of that day was too great to escape the notice of the world. They soon drew unto themselves the veneration and respect of those who feared and loved God, and their preaching was so accompanied with the power of the Holy Ghost that many of the rabble, who at first opposed them, were brought to a knowledge of the truth and were soundly converted.

As Mr. Wesley was considered, under God, the leader of the Methodist movement, those whom he appointed to circuits and stations were called "assistants." These had the general oversight of the local preachers, class-leaders, etc. Their assistants, or "junior preachers" as they were after ward known, were called "helpers." On the 10th of October, 1772, Mr. Asbury received a letter from Mr. Wesley appointing him "general assistant," or supervisor, of the work in America. This office he continued to fill until June, 1773, when two other missionaries -- Messrs. Rankin and Shadford -- landed in Philadelphia. As Mr. Rankin had been longer in the traveling connection than he, Mr. Wesley had appointed him to supersede Mr. Asbury as "general assistant."

Up to this time no regular Conference of the preachers had been held in America. Their business had been transacted at their quarterly-meetings, and, as no minutes of the proceedings were preserved, we have but meager information as to what they did. We learn from Asbury's journal that at some of these meetings there had been indicated a decided inclination to administer the ordinances among themselves. Mr. Strawbridge was an enthusiastic leader in this movement, which, triumphing over various Conference resolutions, led to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784.

The first regular Conference of the American Methodist preachers convened in the city of Philadelphia on the 4th of July, 1773 -- soon after Mr. Rankin's arrival. At this time there were eleven hundred and sixty members in the society in the colonies, one hundred of whom were in Virginia. Pilmoor had traveled and preached through North Carolina, on his trip to Savannah, but no societies were reported from this State. He was probably the first Methodist preacher that ever preached in North Carolina; while probably to Robert Williams belongs the honor of forming the first society within her bounds.

After spending the years 1773-4 in Baltimore and New York, and the surrounding country, we find Asbury, in 1775, appointed to Norfolk, Va. This was a most wicked place. Williams and Pilmoor had both labored here with little success; nor did Asbury hope to accomplish much when he had taken in the state of things. There were thirty members in society, and an "old shattered play-house" was the place of worship. Nor was the prospect in Portsmouth much more encouraging. Here he found thirty-seven members, but by enforcing the discipline he speedily reduced the number to fourteen. Discouraged by the prevailing wickedness around him, he wrote in his journal: "Unless Divine Justice has determined destruction on these two towns, I hope the Lord will undertake for them, and increase their number." But he did not confine his labors to these towns. As was his custom, he took in the surrounding country. He found a little society near Craney Island, and another six miles from Portsmouth, on the road to Suffolk. At the latter place the little membership, numbering "thirteen serious souls," seems to have refreshed his spirit. But so little encouragement did he meet on his field of labor that, hearing of a glorious revival in Brunswick, under the ministry of Shadford and Dromgoole, he left, with the feeling of a man who has suddenly emerged from darkness to light. "I am bound for Brunswick," he writes; and as he approaches the scene of the revival, "My soul catches the holy fire already."

These seasons of despondency, which he continued to suffer occasionally throughout the whole of his ministry, may be attributed, in part, to the state of his health, which was never good; and in the same fact we may find one reason for the "variableness of liberty in preaching," of which he complained.

We must now pass over some matters to be duly considered in another sketch, and glance at the peculiar troubles which threatened the overthrow of Methodism, and did retard its progress for some years, in this country. At the beginning of the war with Great Britain, some of the English preachers in America had manifested such an imprudent zeal for the cause of the king as to draw upon the Methodist movement the odium attached to Toryism. Mr. Rodda had been detected in circulating the royal proclamation on his circuit, and using his influence to stir up a spirit of opposition to the new government. This imprudent and unjustifiable conduct brought upon him the displeasure of the people; and fearing their resentment, he made his escape, by the assistance of

some slaves, to Philadelphia, then occupied by the British army, and from thence he returned to his native country. In this crisis, Asbury determined to act prudently, but on no account to forsake, as he said, "the poor sheep in the wilderness." All the other English preachers departing, he wrote in his journal: "So we are left alone; but I leave myself in the hand of God, relying on his good providence to direct and protect us, persuaded that nothing will befall me but what shall conduce to his glory and my benefit." He did not, however, escape political persecution. The indignation excited by the imprudent conduct of some of the preachers was aggravated by a pamphlet published by Mr. Wesley and addressed to the Americans, condemning the conduct of the people of the colonies and upholding British dominion; nor could Mr. Asbury persuade himself to take the oath of allegiance to the State of Maryland, required of him. He found, however, an asylum from the pursuit of his enemies, and from the storm of the war then waging, in the hospitable home of his life-long and devoted friend Judge Thomas White, of Delaware. Here he remained nearly twelve months. In this temporary confinement we may trace the directing hand of Providence; for it afforded him an opportunity, which he did not allow to pass unimproved, for extensive reading and preparation for the work that awaited him in the near future. Nor were his gifts as an ambassador for Christ idle or unemployed. From his place of concealment he would steal out at night, and proclaim to dying souls the word of life.

In the latter part of the year 1778 he left the house of his kind friend and protector, and once again entered upon the laborious itinerant life to which he had devoted himself. One of the first matters to engage his attention was the healing of the division that had taken place at the Brokenback Church, in Fluvanna county, Virginia -- a sufficient notice of which will be made in another sketch. This breach happily closed, the preachers all entered upon their work with renewed zeal, and a brighter day dawned upon the Church. During the year 1780 we find him making a tour and preaching through Virginia and North Carolina. Riding home with Dr. King, the pioneer preacher, who had then located and was practicing medicine in Franklin county, he spent a pleasant night with him and his wife, and wrote, under date of June 23: "I had too mean an opinion of the people of Carolina; it is a much better country, and the people live much better than I expected from the information given me."

As Methodism was but being introduced into this State, his mention of some of the first places visited may prove of interest. We quote from his journal: Friday, 16th of June -- I crossed Roanoke (North Carolina); felt a little better, though weak. We rode near thirty miles; was like to faint in the carriage, but at Brother Edward's felt refreshed and ease from pain. ... 17th -- preached at Jones's barn, to about a hundred people. ... 18th -- I rode fifteen miles to Brother Bustion's, and preached to about five hundred people; was much led out on Isaiah lv. 6, 7. The people were solemnly attentive. 19th. . . . We set off in the rain, rode over Fishing Creek to Davis's, ten miles. I spoke on I Thess. i. 8, 9; had some light, but the people were little moved. Rode twelve miles to Gabriel Long's, through the woods. ... 21.- I had a ride alone better than twelve miles to Mr. Duke's. When I came there found about thirty people, and they were quite ignorant. After preaching, I took dinner, and in talking found three or four of them tenderly serious. . . . 22. -- Rode to Jenkins's, and spoke plainly to about eighty people, and found the word was fitted to their cases. Met class. It was a day of peace to me; the Lord was with me at this poor but good man's house. 23.-Rode fifteen miles; preached, prayed, and sung near two hours; ate a little about four o'clock, and preached at Nutbush Creek Chapel (a little log-house, about twenty five feet long and twenty wide) to about one hundred and fifty people. Here I found a broken society. Rode home

with Dr. King. 24.-Rode to Edmund Taylor's, and, at the school house, spoke to about seventy people..... Was kindly entertained at Col. Taylor's. They were for the ordinances here, though not heated. 25. -- Rode six miles to the. tabernacle; about four hundred people, rich and poor, attended. Had very little liberty in speaking -- the people very insensible. I think these people must be awakened by judgments, for it appears the gospel will not do it. . . .

Sunday, 9th July. -- Preached at Green Hill, to about four hundred souls, on 1 Thess. ii. 4. The subject was new, the people dead. James O'Kelly spoke on 'Have ye understood all these things?' He raised high, and was very affecting, but to little purpose. There are evils here -- the meeting not solemn; the women appeared to be full of dress; the men full of news. These people are gospel slights. I fear some heavy stroke will come on them. James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other. This dear man rose at midnight, and prayed very devoutly for me and himself. He cries, 'Give me children, or I die!' but I believe no preaching or preacher will do much good at present."

These brief extracts will give us some idea of the religious state in which Asbury found the people of North Carolina in 1780. After traveling through what are now Halifax, Warren, Franklin, Wake, Granville, Chatham, Orange, and Cumberland counties, we find him, on the 16th of September, at the house of Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, in Virginia, writing to Mr. Wesley of the necessity for providing some means for administering the sacraments. The Virginia and North Carolina preachers had agreed to suspend the administration of them for one year, and were anxiously awaiting to see what step Mr. Wesley would take in the matter. The open and shameful corruptions in the clergy of the Established Church had caused the people to refuse to receive the sacraments at their hands; and, moreover, the connection which had existed between that body and the State government had fallen with British dominion. There appeared, then, no longer any necessity for remaining in connection with it. The appeal which Asbury made to Wesley resulted in his sending over Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey -- the former authorized to ordain other ministers -- and in the appointment of Coke and Asbury as "joint superintendents of the work in America." The new missionaries landed in New York on the 3d of November, 1784.

In the meantime the war had closed. The long suspense, the fearful anxiety as to its termination, which had drawn the minds of the people from the subject of religion, were at last ended. The dark clouds which for seven years had hovered over the colonies rolled away; and once more the sunlight of peace and prosperity dawned upon the land -- no longer colonies, but independent States. But with this era of gladness, Asbury, whose mind was always engaged in promoting the spiritual interests of the people, saw a yet more threatening danger to the Church. Adversity may drive some to destruction, but prosperity will ruin many more. The people were elated by their victory. He saw in them a disposition to become engrossed with worldly affairs to the neglect of their spiritual interests, and he trembled for their safety. For awhile his fears seemed to be well founded; but the ranks of the world's opposition finally gave way before the earnest preaching of the pioneers, and churches sprung up in the wilderness like visions responsive to the magician's art.

On the 15th of November, at Barrett's Chapel, in Delaware, Asbury met Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey. Coke opened to him Mr. Wesley's plan. To this Asbury objected, and absolutely refused to accept the position to which Wesley had appointed him; but it was finally agreed to



submit the whole matter to the decision of a general Conference of the preachers, which was called to meet in the city of Baltimore, on the 24th of December following.

As Mr. Wesley's intention in regard to the formation of a new Church organization has been the subject of much controversy, we give below an extract from his letter of advice and instruction, on which the preachers acted:

Bristol, September 10, 1784.

To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America:

1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the British Empire, and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the State Assemblies; but no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice, and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch.

2. Lord King's account of the primitive Church convinced me years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our traveling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace's sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction; in America there are none, and but few parish ministers -- so that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end, and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper.

5. If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

6. It has indeed been proposed to allow the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object: (1) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one only, but could not prevail. (2) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3) If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them; and how grievously would this entangle us! (4) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled from both the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the

primitive Church; and we judge it best that they should stand fast in the liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

John Wesley

The Conference met in Lovely Lane Chapel, in Baltimore, on the 24th of December, 1784, at 10 A.M., and here it was decided to form themselves into a Methodist Episcopal Church. Coke and Asbury were duly elected "superintendents" of the same. The episcopal office was made elective, and "the superintendent, or bishop, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers." Elders and deacons for the several States were elected and ordained, and rules for the government of the new Church were adopted. There were sixty preachers present, and Watters tells us there was not a dissenting voice to the adoption of Wesley's plan. Black, who was there from Nova Scotia, was filled with admiration, and wrote: "Perhaps such a number of holy, zealous, godly men never before met together in Maryland -- perhaps not on the continent of America."

On the second day of the session Asbury was ordained a deacon; on the third, an elder; on the fourth, a "superintendent," or bishop. On the occasion of his consecration to the episcopal office, Coke, who, assisted by Whatcoat and Vasey, and Mr. Otterbein, of the German Church, ordained him, preached a sermon full of beauty and power, describing the obligations of a true bishop. We quote a few eloquent passages from the peroration: "O thou Lover of souls, who willest not the death of a sinner, have pity on the world! Remember Calvary. Hear the pleading Intercessor, and raise up men after thine own heart, full of the Holy Ghost, full of love, and full of zeal. Guide them by thy Spirit, accompany them with thine omnipotence, that they may tread the kingdom of Satan under their feet, and build up thy glorious Church.

You may now perceive the dreadful effects of raising immoral or unconverted men to the government of the Church. The baneful influence of their example is so extensive that the skill and cruelty of devils can hardly fabricate a greater curse than an irreligious bishop. But thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, patience, and meekness! Be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Keep that which is committed to thy trust. Be not ashamed of the testimonies of our Lord, but a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry, and thy God will open to thee a wide door, which all thy enemies shall not be able to shut. He will carry his gospel by thee from sea to sea, and from one end of the continent to another. O thou who art the Holy One and the True! consecrate this thy servant with the fire of divine love; separate him for thy glorious purpose; make him a star in thine own right-hand, and fulfill in him and by him the good pleasure of thy goodness."

The Articles of Religion, as abridged, and the Prayer-book, as prepared by Mr. Wesley, were adopted. The Prayer-book, however, and the episcopal "gown and bands" were not long retained in the Church, as they did not accord with the primitive simplicity of the people.

After the permanent organization effected at this Conference, Methodism took higher ground, and moved on to greater usefulness and success. One of the first objects that enlisted the cares of the new bishops was the promotion of the cause of education. Day-schools were

established in various parts of the country, Sunday-schools were organized in the churches, and Cokesbury College -- a sufficient account of which has been given in the sketch of Dr. Coke -- was founded. The missionary spirit received a new impetus, and almost immediately after the adjournment of the Conference we find Asbury on his way to Charleston to introduce Methodism there.

He found an "open door," and a society was soon formed in that place. His labors were now simply amazing, and one will have to follow him in his published journal to form any correct idea of them. He was the central figure in the grand movement for the spread of the gospel known as American Methodism; and his history is the history of the Church for that period. Not only do we find him riding from the New England States on the north, to Georgia on the south, but across the Blue Ridge and Alleghenies, and into the wilds of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio he bore the standard of the cross and preached the word of life. On these trips it was his habit to travel on horseback, having along a "pack-horse" to carry his baggage, and which was trained to follow wherever he led. We introduce a few extracts from his journal that will give us some idea of the privations and sufferings with which early Methodism was baptized in what was then known as "the West."

In April, 1788, he writes: "After getting our horses shod, we made a move for Holstein, and entered upon the mountains, the first of which I call Steel, the second Stone, and the third Iron Mountain. They are rough, and difficult to climb. We were spoken to on our way by most awful thunder and lightning, accompanied by heavy rain. We crept for shelter into a dirty little house, where the filth might have been taken from the floor with a spade. We felt the want of fire, but could get little wood to make it, and what we gathered was wet. At the head of Watauga we fed, and reached Ward's that night. Coming to the river next day, we hired a young man to swim over for the canoe, in which we crossed, while our horses swam to the other shore. The waters being up, we were compelled to travel an old road over the mountains. Night came on; I was ready to faint with a violent headache; the mountain was steep on both sides. I prayed to the Lord for help. Presently a profuse sweat broke out upon me, and my fever entirely subsided. About nine o'clock we came to Gear's. After taking a little rest here, we set out next morning for Brother Coxe's, on Holstein River. I had trouble enough. Our route lay through the woods, and my pack-horse would neither follow, lead, nor drive, so fond was he of stopping to feed on the green herbage. I tried to lead, and he pulled back; I tied his head up to prevent his grazing, and he ran back. The weather was excessively warm. I was much fatigued, and my temper not a little tried. I fed at I. Smith's, and prayed with the family. Arriving at the river, I was at a loss what to do; but, providentially, a man came along who conducted me across. This had been an awful journey to me, and this a tiresome day, and now, after riding seventy-five miles, I have thirty-five miles more to Gen. Russell's. I rest one day to revive man and beast."

Again, in South Carolina, he writes: "Came to Green Ponds, where there was an appointment for me. I felt a little comforted. I have ridden about one hundred and forty miles in the last seven days, through a very disagreeable part of the country to travel when the waters are high. I have had various exercises, and have suffered hunger, fatigue, and fever, and have not had a comfortable bed for a week past."

Again: " Crossed the Kentucky River. I was strangely outdone for want of sleep, having been deprived of it in my journey through the wilderness -- which is like being at sea, in some respects, and in others worse. Our way is over mountains, steep hills, deep rivers, and muddy creeks; a thick growth of weeds for miles together, and no inhabitants but wild beasts and savage men. Sometimes, before I am aware, my ideas will be leading me to be looking out ahead for a fence, and I would, without reflection, try to recollect the houses we should have lodged at in the wilderness. I slept about an hour the first night, and about two the last. We ate no regular meal; our bread grew short, and I was much spent."

Asbury's opposition to African slavery was earnest and constant, and yet regulated by the dictates of prudence. This was, unfortunately, not true of many of the early Methodist preachers.

The name "superintendent" was in 1787 changed to "bishop." As a reason, the "early minutes," in a foot-note, say: "As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word bishop, instead of superintendent, it has been thought by us that it would appear more scriptural to adopt their term bishop." This, it has been stated, was an occasion of offense to Mr. Wesley. Perhaps he thought it was the outgrowth of vanity. However that may be, he was displeased on another account. At the Conference of 1784 a resolution was passed in which the preachers acknowledged Mr. Wesley as their spiritual father, and his right to govern them. When it became known that Mr. Wesley contemplated removing Mr. Asbury from America, this resolution was rescinded, and Wesley's name was dropped from the American minutes. While this action deeply wounded Wesley's feelings, it showed the high appreciation in which Asbury was held by his American brethren.

As a bishop, it will be seen that Asbury "made full proof of his ministry." He traveled as perhaps no other man since the days of the apostles has traveled; and the one ambition of his life seems to have been to devote the whole of his time, to the cause of Christ, and die poor. As a presiding officer, he was sometimes austere in his manner toward those projecting and defending measures that he did not favor. On such occasions it is said to have been his custom to turn and sit with his back to the speaker; and yet he was one of the most affectionate and sympathetic of men. Few men traveling over the United States, and meeting hundreds of classes every year, would have attempted to remember the individual members; but he did it, and felt in each an affectionate interest. We have before us a letter written to him by a preacher's wife, and which we give below because it illustrates this beautiful trait in his character:

North Carolina, Gates County,  
Knotty-Pine Chapel, March 17, 1799.

"When you were with me last, you desired I would give you an account of the dear saints who are fallen asleep in Jesus in this place. I will give you a list of their names, with a sketch of some of their characters.

"Elizabeth Norfleet, one of the first that embraced religion after the gospel was preached here. She was one of the meekest women -- a pattern of piety to the end of her days.

"Ann Gipson, converted from the height of pride and vanity to a humble lover of God and man; full of good works.

"Mary Hays, a dear, simple, humble, tender, affectionate woman."

[Then follow similar accounts of Moses Kittrell, Mary Parker, Mary Richardson, Susannah Benton, Mary Haslett, Sophia Hunter, Mary Tugwell, Henry Smith, Milbury Billips, Rachel Lawrence, Priscilla Graham, Mary Duke, Christopher Reddick, Hardy Brown, and Mary Gregorie.]

"O my dear brother, while I write and think of the dear saints in glory, how it fills my heart with joy! O the time will shortly come when these eyes shall weep no more, this heart, which is now the seat of sorrow, shall cease to flutter and beat, and not a wave of trouble roll across my peaceful breast!

"I hope the Lord will renew your health and strength, that you may live long to water his vineyard. Pray for me that I may be more holy and more heavenly-minded. Give my love to Brother Lee. Mr. Baker and the children join me in sincere love to you.

Your affectionate sister,  
I. Baker

For his parents Asbury always entertained the warmest affection, and frequently alludes to them in terms of filial devotion.

It is well known that he was subject to seasons of despondency. This may be attributed in part to the state of his health, which was never good. All along his pilgrimage we find him examining the foundations of his hopes for a better world; and if he did not feel a good measure of the Divine comfort, it was to him a source of grief, and an occasion for fasting and prayer. The financial straits in which he was sometimes placed added to this feeling of despondency, as also the occasional hopeless aspect of the outlook for doing good in some localities.

The North Carolina Conference some years ago received a young man into its connection, and Bishop Pierce appointed him the first year to Onslow Circuit. On reaching the appointment, the prospect appeared gloomy in the extreme. He was young; the people wanted an old man with experience. There were several church trials awaiting his attention, and the general opinion was that none but an old man would do for the work. After traveling nearly around the circuit, and meeting with cool treatment in some places, he stopped at the house of a good old brother for dinner. Taking down a volume of Asbury's Journal from the book-ease, on opening it his eyes fell on this passage: "I think I shall have no more appointments between New Berne and Wilmington. The people of Onslow resemble the ancient Jews -- they fear not God, and are contrary to all men." It is natural to suppose that this passage did not relieve the young man's feeling of despondency, but the Lord owned his labors; nearly a hundred souls were converted during the year; all of the interests of the Church were advanced, and at the close of the year the stewards asked for his return.

After the return of Dr. Coke to England, the labors of the episcopacy devolved wholly upon Asbury. The growth of the Church, and his own feeble health, soon demanded that relief be afforded him, and Jesse Lee was allowed him as an assistant. In 1800 Mr. Whatcoat was elected to the episcopacy to assist him, and after Whatcoat's death William McKendree was elected.

Bishop Asbury, we have said, was the central figure of American Methodism for nearly half a century. He beheld its origin; he labored to promote its growth; he was the principal leader in its organization, and supervised its development. For a full account of his labors and sufferings the reader is referred to the history of Methodism during the period of his life. It is our province here only to bring out some leading characteristics, and give such a condensed record of his life-work as will bring the man before us in life-like colors.

Perhaps no man among all the self-sacrificing and consecrated spirits with whom he labored was less moved by applause or reproach. He never forgot his accountability to God, and cared little for the opinion of men when he was assured of the Divine approval.

While under his administration of the government of the Church there appeared several schisms -- threatening sometimes the dissolution of the organization -- and he became the object of bitter reproach, he always showed a willingness to forgive and forget. To both James O'Kelly and William Glendenning he made advances, in the spirit of his Master, after his character had been bitterly assailed by them, and they all died at peace with each other.

His dislike of parade amounted almost to fanaticism. It was with great difficulty that he could ever be induced to allow his portrait to be taken; and the following extract from his journal, on the occasion of a visit to Augusta, Ga., is a further evidence of this feature in his character. The wonder is that such a man could ever have been induced to wear the "canonicals" and use a prayer-book:

"And, behold, here is a bell over the gallery -- and cracked too. May it break! It is the first I ever saw in a house of ours in America; I hope it will be the last."

Like all of the early Methodist bishops, he lived and died a bachelor. In his journal he gives us his reasons for this course. We quote:

"If I should die in celibacy, which I think quite probable, I give the following reasons for what can scarcely be called my choice: I was called in my fourteenth year. I began my public exercises between sixteen and seventeen. At twenty-one I traveled. At twenty-six I came to America. Thus far I had reasons enough for a single life. It had been my intention of returning to England at thirty years of age, but the war continued, and it was ten years before we had a settled, lasting peace. This was no time to marry or be given in marriage. At forty-nine I was ordained superintendent-bishop in America. Amongst the duties imposed upon me by my office was that of traveling extensively, and I could hardly expect to find a woman with grace enough to enable her to live but one week out of the fifty-two with her husband. Besides, what right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her his wife, and by a voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage state, by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit long to be put asunder. It is neither just nor generous. I may

add to this that I had little money, and with this little administered to the necessities of a beloved mother until I was fifty-seven. If I have done wrong, I hope God and the sex will forgive me. It is my duty now to bestow the pittance I may have to spare upon the widows and fatherless girls and poor married men."

In 1813 he received an invitation from the British Conference to visit again his native land -- the Conference kindly engaging to pay the expenses of the visit -- but his work in America, and his constantly failing health, would not permit him to do so.

From Methodist friends in the State of Maryland, who had died childless, he had received legacies amounting to about two thousand dollars. In 1813 he made his will, appointing Bishop McKendree and Revs. Daniel Hill and Henry Boehm its executors, and leaving the whole of his effects to the Book Concern.

He continued his public labors as long as his strength would permit, and preached his last sermon in the old Methodist church, in Richmond, Va., at three o'clock Sunday afternoon, March 24, 1816. One of the last entries in his journal reads: "My consolations are great. I live in God from moment to moment." Endeavoring to reach Baltimore, where the General Conference was to be held, he proceeded northward with his faithful traveling companion Bond, but when they reached the house of Mr. George Arnold, in Spottsylvania, it became evident that the Bishop was too weak to travel farther, and indeed that the end was near. He now began to fail rapidly, and on Sunday, March 31, 1816, he entered into rest. When too weak to answer the questions asked him concerning his confidence in Christ, he replied by raising both hands toward heaven. His remains were first interred in the family burying-ground of Mr. Arnold, but were removed, by order of the General Conference, to Baltimore, and reinterred beneath the altar of Eutaw Street Church. Bishop McKendree preached a memorial sermon on the occasion, and a procession, including all the members of the General Conference and hundreds of other clergymen of various denominations, followed the remains to their last resting place.

He had finished his course, but his example of ministerial integrity and devotedness to Christ remained as his richest legacy to the Church; and the story of his pure and useful life will continue to awaken the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion in the hearts of God's "sacramental hosts" as long as it is told.

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## 02 -- JOSEPH PILMOOR

The name of Joseph Pilmoor is connected with the early dawn of American Methodism and is indelibly engraved on the very foundation stones of the structure which the Wesleyan movement in this country has reared. He came to America in response to the earnest appeal for preachers, made by Captain Webb of Mr. Wesley and laid by the latter before the British Conference of 1769. There were at that time a few scattering societies in a few of the Middle States, formed under the energetic labors of Webb and Strawbridge, but these felt the pressing necessity for experienced ministers, and were all the more solicitous because of the golden opportunity for doing good which they saw in the New World. The Conference which sat in Bristol this year celebrated its

twenty-sixth anniversary. It numbered but forty-six circuits and less than twenty-nine thousand members. The preachers were nearly all poor, more than two-thirds of them remaining unmarried because unable to provide for families. A trip across the Atlantic at that day was a serious adventure, and the prospect which offered itself in America where they had no churches and no assurances of even the most meager support, and where they would be separated, in time of want, by three thousand miles of water from all to whom they could look for help -- was one that called for the exercise of no little daring to undertake.

It is not at all surprising, then, that when Mr. Wesley first made the call for missionaries there was no response. On the next morning, when the Conference reassembled, after Mr. Wesley had preached from the text, "I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me," the appeal was renewed, and Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor deliberately offered themselves and were accepted. Notwithstanding the poverty of the preachers, notwithstanding the fact that their Conference debt was nearly thirty thousand dollars, and notwithstanding the question had just been asked, "What is reserved for contingent expenses?" and answered, "Nothing," they took up a collection among themselves, and generously contributed three hundred and fifty dollars to the new enterprise.

Pilmoor is described as a man of marked courage, pleasing address, commanding presence, great executive capacity, and an easy flow of language. He had been converted, in his sixteenth year, under the preaching of Mr. Wesley, and had been educated at Wesley's celebrated Kingswood School. He had joined the Conference in 1765, and his four years of itinerant service had been spent in Cornwall and Wales. His fellow-missionary -- Mr. Boardman, whom Mr. Wesley appointed "assistant " or "superintendent " of the work in America -- was two years his senior in the ministry, and, thirteen years later, was to leave to the world a name embalmed in the most fragrant memories of Wesleyan Methodism.

After receiving the appointment of the Conference and the blessing of their brethren, the missionaries set sail for the New World, and, after a fearfully stormy voyage of nine weeks, landed at Gloucester Point, six miles south of Philadelphia, on the 24th of October, 1769. It is a singular coincidence that at the same time, and amid the same storms, that Wesley's first missionaries were first coming to this country, George Whitefield was making his thirteenth passage across the Atlantic and his final visit to America, to find here a grave far from the land of his nativity. On arriving in Philadelphia, he gave the new laborers his blessing, welcoming them to the fields that had already been made "white unto the harvest" under his own apostolical preaching.

Immediately after their arrival, Pilmoor preached from the steps of the old State House, on Chestnut street. A week afterward he wrote to Mr. Wesley that he "was not a little surprised to find Captain Webb in town, and a society of about one hundred members. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. I have preached several times, and the people flock to hear in multitudes. Sunday night I went out upon the common. I had the stage appointed for the horse-race for my pulpit, and I think between four and five thousand hearers, who heard with attention still as night. Blessed be God for field-preaching! There seems to be a great and effectual door opening in this country, and I hope many souls will be gathered in."



After spending five months in Philadelphia, he went to New York, and from that city wrote to Mr. Wesley and the British Conference, asking their continued sympathies and prayers, and appealing for more laborers in the vineyard. "We are at present," he wrote, "far from you, and whether we shall ever be permitted to see you again, God only knows. Dear brethren, I feel you present while I write. But O the Atlantic is between us! O this state of trial, this state of mutability! This is not our home! this is not our rest! After a little while we shall rest. Our coming to America has not been in vain. The Lord has been pleased to bless our feeble attempts to advance his kingdom in the world. Many have believed the report, and unto some the arm of the Lord has been revealed. There begins to be a shaking among the dry bones, and they come together that God may breathe upon them.. "He reports, "about a hundred members in society, besides probationers," and urges Wesley to send other preachers to their assistance, stating that they were so confined to the cities that they could not get out into the surrounding country. He did, however, make several visits into the adjacent country, which bore lasting fruit. At New Rochelle whither he had gone in company with Williams -- they found a little company gathered for worship, at the house of Frederick Deveau. A clergyman present refused Pilmoor the privilege of addressing the meeting, but the wife of Deveau, lying sick in an adjacent room, saw him through the opened door, and gave him a mysterious recognition. During her illness she had had much trouble of mind. She had dreamed that she was wandering in a dismal swamp, without path, or light, or guide; when, exhausted with fatigue and about to sink down hopeless, a stranger appeared with a light and led her out of the miry labyrinth. At the first glance she now identified Pilmoor with the apparition of her dream, and appealed to him from her sick-bed to preach to her and the waiting company. He did so, and while he was offering to all a present, full, free salvation,' the invalid was converted, and in a few days died triumphant in the Lord!" This event, attracting general attention, led to the effectual introduction of Methodism into New Rochelle.

In the month of April, 1772, we find Pilmoor starting out on a journey to the South. He spent several months in Eastern Virginia, making Norfolk his central point. Here his preaching drew upon him the opposition not only of the world but of the Established clergy. It is said that when he had left the city on one occasion, a minister of the Establishment, who did not like his appeals for holy living, attempted a reply, took for his text; "Be not overmuch righteous," and in the course of his remarks informed his hearers "he knew by experience the evils of this course." When Pilmoor returned, having heard of the matter, he announced as his text, "Be not overmuch wicked." He began by stating that he had understood that a certain preacher in the city had been warning the people against being overmuch righteous; then, raising his hands toward heaven, he exclaimed, "And in Norfolk he delivered this caution!"

The religious state of this place is well illustrated by a little anecdote that has come down to us. As Pilmoor was passing through Portsmouth on one occasion he found, at the ferry, two men indulging in the most horrible profanity "Well," said he in a stern voice, and uplifting his hands, "if I had been brought to this place blindfolded, I should have known I was near Norfolk."

From Norfolk he continued his preaching tour, through eastern North and South Carolina, to Savannah, Georgia. He was the first Methodist preacher to place foot on North Carolina soil, though to Robert Williams belongs the honor of forming the first society in this State. In South Carolina he was destined to encounter persecution. "At Charleston he could obtain no place for preaching but the theater, where, while fervently delivering a sermon, suddenly the table used by

him for a pulpit, with the chair be occupied, disappeared, descending through a trap-door into the cellar. Some wags of the 'baser sort' had contrived the trick as a practical joke. Nothing discouraged, however, the preacher, springing upon the stage with the table in his hands, invited the audience to the adjoining yard, adding pleasantly, 'Come on, my friends; we will, by the grace of God, defeat the devil this time, and not be driven by him from our work,' and then quietly finished his discourse."

After preaching to large congregations and adding many seals to his ministry, he returned to Philadelphia, in time to welcome, in the month of November, the new recruits, Richard Wright and Francis Asbury, whom Mr. Wesley had sent over.

We pass over the little unpleasantness that occurred between Pilmoor and Wright and Asbury, on account of the, seeming austerity of the latter, and which resulted in Mr. Wesley's sending over Thomas Rankin as "superintendent." The matter was a trivial one, and the tenderest relations were soon restored.

Seeing that war between the colonies and the mother country was inevitable, Pilmoor and Boardman, on the 2d of January, 1774, "after commending the Americans to God," set sail for their native land. On arriving in England, Pilmoor hesitated to reenter the itinerancy, and his name is reported on the Wesleyan Minutes for 1774 as desisting from traveling, but in 1776 we find him assigned to an appointment in London. He was afterward appointed to Norwich, Edinburgh, Dublin, Nottingham, and York.

In 1784, he became offended with Wesley, and retired from the Connection. The cause of this offense seems to have been the failure of Mr. Wesley to include him in the "Deed of Declaration," by which provision was made for the constitution of the Methodist Conference by the appointment of one hundred preachers who should legally represent that body after Wesley's death. The most important proceeding of the British Conference of 1784 was its confirmation of this "Deed of Declaration," and it was signalized by one of the most exciting scenes that ever took place in a Methodist Conference. Of it, Dr. Stevens says: "John Hampson, sr., and his son John Hampson, jr., with William Eels and Joseph Pilmoor, endeavored to form a party among the preachers against it, the apparent reason of their opposition being the fact that their names had not been inserted among the one hundred appointed by the deed to be the legal Conference after Wesley's death. The debate in the session became violent and personal. Fletcher was present, and by his pious influence produced a temporary reconciliation. In the height of the dispute his words were as oil poured on the troubled waters. 'Never,' says a young itinerant who was present, never, while memory holds her seat. shall I forget with what ardor and earnestness Mr. Fletcher expostulated, even on his knees, both with Wesley and the preachers. To the former he said, "My father, my father! they have offended, but they are your children!" To the latter he said, "My brethren, my brethren! he is your father!" and then, portraying the work in which they were unitedly engaged, fell again on his knees, and with much fervor and devotion engaged in prayer. The Conference was bathed in tears-many sobbed aloud."

Of this affair, Wesley wrote in his journal: "Four of our brethren, after long debate, acknowledged their fault, and all that was past was forgotten." He was mistaken. They all withdrew from the Connection, except Eels, and he did so three years later.

Pilmoor afterward returned to America, took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and became pastor of a Church in New York. He was afterward rector of St. Paul's Church in Philadelphia, and frequently and gladly, admitted Asbury, Coke, and other Methodist preachers to his pulpit. The University of Pennsylvania honored him with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Asbury held him in loving esteem, and as late as April, 1814, writes of him in his journal: "Joseph Pilmoor is yet alive, and preachers three times every Sabbath."

He never forgot his old attachment for his Methodist brethren, attending their Conference sessions when convenient, and paying an annual subscription to their preachers' fund. He overcame his feelings of displeasure toward Mr. Wesley, as the following extract from a letter from him to Atmore will show: "This will be handed to you by Dr. Coke, who leaves this country sooner than be intended on account of the death of that truly great man, John Wesley. For some years I have been pleasing myself with the thought of seeing him again before his departure to paradise, but I am too late. I always most affectionately loved him, and shall feel a special regard for him even in heaven itself if there be any thing which touches my heart, it is a concern for those preachers who were in the work before you or I ever heard of Methodism, and I entreat you to treat them with most tender respect. Yes, my, friend, I do and shall eternally love you; and if I must not see you any more upon earth, I shall shortly meet you before the throne of God."

He went down to his grave full of years and labors. The end of his life was peace. His love for Methodism and her preachers waxed warmer as he neared eternity, and the following beautiful tribute to his memory, by a Methodist preacher, is a suitable epitaph for his tomb: "The truly evangelical spirit produced through his instrumentality in the congregations over which he presided, and a correspondent attention to some of the peculiar means of grace which he introduced among them, continued to manifest themselves for a number of years after his death."

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### 03 -- ROBERT WILLIAMS

The subject of this sketch formed the first circuit in Virginia, and organized the first Methodist Society in North Carolina. He was second to no one in the history of American Methodism for zeal and usefulness during the period of his ministry; and while his mortal remains await, in an unknown grave, the final summons to eternal glory and rest, his name will be perpetuated as long as the story of the Wesleyan movement is told. He was born in England, but removed to Ireland, and there first labored as a local preacher. Eager to extend the kingdom of Christ, he soon turned his eyes toward America, where a few lay preachers were then organizing societies. Obtaining permission from Mr. Wesley to go, he sold his horse to pay his debts, and set sail for New York with no other worldly possessions than "a pair of saddle-bags, containing a few pieces of clothing, a loaf of bread, and a bottle of milk." A staunch friend of the Methodists, Mr. Ashton, who came over on the same ship, had encouraged him to come by offering to pay his passage, and has thereby merited the everlasting gratitude of American Methodists.

Thus kindly assisted, Williams landed in New York in the fall of 1769, shortly before the arrival of Boardman and Pilmoor in Philadelphia. He immediately began to preach in Embury's

Chapel. He did not confine himself to the city, however, but took in the surrounding country, where his labors were blessed in the conversion of many souls. In 1771 we find him stationed at John Street Church for some time. From here he started toward the South. After laboring with Strawbridge, in Baltimore county and on the eastern shore of Maryland, we find him early in 1772 in Norfolk, Va. His novel appearance elicited general attention. Standing on the steps of the court-house, he began to sing. The people gathered around, attracted by the unusual proceeding, and wondering what it meant. After singing, the preacher prayed. He then announced his text, and, in old Methodist fashion, warned them to flee from the wrath of God, and be saved from their sins. If the preacher's appearance seemed novel, his preaching was more so. The words hell, devil, damnation, etc., were freely used in the sermon, and the people declared that he was swearing. The universal verdict was that he was an escaped madman, and in the metropolis of hospitable Virginia no door was opened to him. But undaunted by the seeming failure, Williams persevered, hearts were touched, homes were opened, the word took root, souls were converted, a society was formed, and it is said that the first Methodist church in Norfolk was built on the very spot where he first stood and sung and preached to the rabble who gathered about him. From Norfolk, at the request of Isaac Luke, who had heard him there, and who had become concerned about the state of his soul, Williams went to Portsmouth. Here, in the shade of two persimmon trees, Luke had seats provided for the congregation, and here Williams preached the first Methodist sermon ever heard in that town. He continued his labors, preaching in the open air and in private houses, until quite a number were brought under deep conviction and induced to forsake their sins. Isaac Luke was so deeply concerned about his soul's safety that his friends were for awhile afraid that he was demented; but he was soon happily converted, and became a pious and useful member of the Methodist Church, in which some of his descendants remain to this day." He, with a few others, fitted up a warehouse as a preaching place for Williams, who now " thanked God, and took courage.

Early in 1773, at the invitation of Gussett Davis and Nathaniel Young, Williams went to Petersburg, and began to preach holiness of life. No immediate fruit appearing, he procured a horse, went out into the adjacent country on a preaching tour, and soon a most wonderful revival broke out. The flame soon extended over into North Carolina. Brunswick Circuit was formed, and the next year three other preachers were sent to it.

The religious aspect of Virginia when Williams first entered the State was simply deplorable. The pious Mr. Jarratt, rector of Bath parish, wrote Mr. Wesley that he did not know of but one Episcopal minister (Mr. McRoberts) who was not a reproach to his vocation. Experimental religion was almost unknown, and when the Methodist begin to thunder away of "sin, righteousness, and judgment," the moving on the dry bones was indeed wonderful.

Williams soon after married, and located in Eastern Virginia. His home was on the public road from Portsmouth to Suffolk, and about midway between the two places. Here, on the 26th of September, 1775, he laid down his armor, and exchanged labor for rest. He was regarded by his brethren as "a plain, simple-hearted, good man," his success being under God attributed to his "affectionate and animated manner," and his burning zeal for the salvation of souls.

The distinguished "Apostle of Methodism in the New England States," and the earliest historian of Methodism, Rev. Jesse Lee, who was himself brought into the Connection through

Williams's instrumentality, thus describes him: "He was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the gospel, and often proved the goodness of his doctrine by his tears in public, and by his life and conduct in private. His manner of preaching was well calculated to awaken careless sinners, and to encourage penitent mourners. He spared no pains in order to do good. He frequently went to church to hear the Established clergy, and as soon as divine service was ended he would go out of the church, and standing on a stump, block, or log, begin to sing, pray, and then preach to hundreds of people. It was common with him, after preaching, to ask most of the people some question about the welfare of their souls."

The grave in which his mortal remains are interred is unknown, but he will not be forgotten. He will be remembered in history as the first to publish Methodist books in America, the first to preach a Methodist sermon in Virginia, the first to organize a society south of the Potomac, the first to plan a circuit, the first of the Wesleyan preachers in America to marry, the first to locate, and the first to pass up from the scenes of earth's "great tribulation" to unite with the blood-washed hosts who surround the Great White Throne in the city of our God forever.

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#### 04 -- JOHN KING

The name of John King takes us back to the heroic days of Methodism -- the "iron age," so to speak, of our Church's history. The period in which he lived was marked by the sufferings endured by the leaders of a despised sect, which, was soon to become a power for good in the world; and by the zeal which they manifested in bearing the banner of Methodism to victory over all opposition. They were days that required nerve to endure, as well as courage to dare; and both these elements of success were possessed by the subject of this sketch. He was born in Leicestershire, England, in the year 1746. His father, Joel King, had three sons, of whom he was the youngest. He was a graduate of Oxford University and of a London medical college. About the time of his graduation in medicine he heard John Wesley preach, and was converted. Then his difficulties began. His father's family were communicants of the Church of England, and bitterly opposed to the Methodist movement. The new sect was despised on all sides. The society was an object of bitter ridicule and fierce persecution. To be connected with it was to be ostracized from what the world was pleased to call "society." It was but natural that young King should be affected by these considerations, but they did not drive him from what he believed to be the path of duty. Every effort was made to induce him to repudiate his religion and withdraw from the Connection, but in vain. Finally he was disinherited. It was the old story. The love for Jesus waxed all the warmer in his heart when he felt that he was "persecuted for righteousness' sake." So far from recanting his faith, he was now impressed with the conviction that he must preach. He went to Mr. Wesley and opened his heart to him. That conversation decided his course.

We next find him in Philadelphia, in the latter part of 1769, knocking at the door of the young society for license to proclaim the word of life, and burdened with the conviction, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" The Church for some reason hesitated to grant him the desired authority. Undaunted by this refusal, he determined to preach, and made an appointment in the Old Potter's Field, now Washington Square. Here, over the graves of the poor, he pointed his hearers to the riches of heaven, and besought them to obtain the "inheritance which is incorruptible,

undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Some of his Methodist brethren who heard him were so favorably impressed, and so convinced that he possessed elements of usefulness and success as a preacher, that they strongly urged his case upon the attention of the society. He was allowed to preach a "trial sermon," and afterward licensed. From Philadelphia he went to Wilmington, Del., where he labored with success. From here he went to Maryland, and assisted Strawbridge and Williams in their labors there. His indomitable courage and invincible zeal broke down every barrier, and success everywhere crowned his efforts. He was the first Methodist to preach in the city of Baltimore. Here he preached his first sermon from a "blacksmith's block, at the corner of French and Broad streets," his next from "a table at the junction of Baltimore and Calvert streets." On the latter occasion, the drunken crowd -- it being militia training day -- upset the table, and subjected him to ill treatment. The commander, however, who was an Englishman, recognized him as a countryman extended his protection, and allowed him to proceed. His effort made such a favorable impression that he was invited to preach in St. Paul's Church. It is said that King "made the dust fly from the old velvet cushion." The invitation was not repeated. The fervor of his manner did not suit the tastes of his audience, but he found other and more appreciative hearers; and in five years after he had preached his first sermon from a blacksmith's block there, Methodism in Baltimore had grown strong enough to welcome and entertain the Annual Conference of its preachers.

His name appears on the first printed minutes. He was one of the six or seven preachers present at the first Annual Conference held in America, and which convened in Philadelphia in June, 1773. From this Conference he was sent, with young, William Watters -- the first native American Methodist preacher -- to New Jersey Circuit. In 1774 he was appointed to Norfolk, Va. It is not to be inferred, however, that his labors were confined to that town. He took in all the surrounding country, and, there is reason to believe, crossed over into North Carolina. He extended his circuit "to the south part of Virginia, where his labors were made a blessing to many people." During this year he was married to Miss Sallie Seawell, of Brunswick county, Virginia, where he had doubtless been to assist his brethren Wade, Robbins, and Spragg, who were on that circuit. At the ensuing Conference, Norfolk reported one hundred and twenty-five members, a gain of fifty-three; and Brunswick reported eight hundred, a gain of five hundred and eighty-two. In 1775 he was returned to Trenton, N. J.

His name does not appear in the printed minutes for 1776. This was a stormy period in the history of the colonies, and every thing was in an unsettled state. The Revolution hindered the progress of Methodism for awhile, and it seems that King located. About this time he bought a home in Franklin county, North Carolina, near the present county seat, Louisburg, where he lived until 1789 or 1790, when he removed to Wake county, about ten miles west of Raleigh.

The Annual Conference of 1777 appointed him, with John Dickens, LeRoy Cole, and Edward Pride, to North Carolina Circuit. This was the second year of the existence of a circuit in this State. At the close of the year they reported nine hundred and thirty members. Carolina Circuit the year before had reported six hundred and eighty-three members in society; so that, notwithstanding the war, there had been an increase of two hundred and forty-seven.

At this Conference the following resolution was passed, viz.:

"Question 7. As the present distress is such, are the preachers resolved to take no step to detach themselves from the work of God for the ensuing year?"

"Answer. We propose, by the grace of God, not to take any step that may separate us from the brethren or from the blessed work in which we are engaged."

But King's name does not appear on the printed minutes after this year. He had married, and his itinerant days were drawing to a close. He practiced medicine to support his family, and served the Church in the capacity of local preacher. Bishop Asbury makes frequent and honorable mention of him in his journal; and there is abundant evidence that he continued to the end an earnest, fearless, faithful preacher of the gospel.

From the foregoing remarks, the reader has formed some idea of the style of King's preaching. Wesley calls him "stubborn and headstrong," and surely the difficulties he had to encounter were calculated to develop those traits. The following characteristic letter from Wesley, to King we find in the former's miscellaneous works, and deem it of sufficient interest to reproduce it here:

"My dear brother," he writes, "always take advice or reproof as a favor; it is the surest mark of love. I advised you once, and you took it as an affront; nevertheless I will do it once more. Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God now warns you, by me whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not cry.' The word properly means, 'He shall not scream.' Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently, but I never scream; I never strain myself -- I dare not. I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died was because they shortened their own lives. O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper. By nature you are very far from it; you are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit. If you cannot take advice from others, surely you can take it from your affectionate brother," etc.

Asbury makes frequent mention of King in his journal, and his house was a favorite stopping-place with the old Bishop.

King was present at the first Methodist Conference held in North Carolina. This convened at Green Hill's, in Franklin county, about one mile south of the town of Louisburg, on Wednesday, April 20, 1785. Coke and Asbury were present, and presided. There is a family tradition that as King entered the room in which the Conference had assembled, Dr. Coke, without a word of salutation, called upon him to pray. Laying aside his saddle-bags, he began his petition, thus offering the first prayer ever made in a Methodist Conference in North Carolina.

He died while on a visit to New Berne in 1794,\* and was buried at his home in Wake county. His children -- six in number -- were all members of the Methodist Church. Two of his sons, John and William, were Methodist preachers. A son of William, Rev. Marcus King, is now a member of the Kentucky Conference.

\*Stevens has it that he died about the middle of the present century, and quotes from another authority that "he was probably at that time the only survivor of all the preachers of ante-revolutionary date." It seems strange that such a mistake should ever have been made, especially as Asbury speaks of the marriage of King's widow to a Mr. Perry. The mistake evidently originated in confounding father and son, who both bore the same name. The dates given in this sketch are from family records.

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## 05 -- GEORGE SHADFORD

The name of George Shadford will ever be associated with the great reformation that accompanied the introduction of Methodism into Virginia. He was preeminently the popular favorite among the American Methodists in his day, and we refer to him now as the representative preacher of our denomination in this country at that period. His fame as an orator has been perpetuated by tradition, his earnest zeal, his Christian humility, his child-like simplicity, his tender, affectionate nature, all combine in making him one of the most interesting characters of those early days. No man since that time has exerted a more powerful influence over the masses; no preacher has been more honored of his Master in winning souls to Jesus; and even now the greatest revivals, the most wonderful displays of divine power, and the most glorious manifestations of the divine presence, are naturally compared with or referred to in connection with a mention of the scenes that transpired on old Brunswick Circuit when George Shadford was declaring to the people the whole counsel of God. He has left us an autobiographical sketch, for the preservation of which we are indebted to Wesley's old Arminian Magazine, which gives us an interesting account of his early life and the circumstances which led to his conversion and his connection with the Methodists.

He was born in Lincolnshire, England, January 19, 1739. His parents, like thousands of others in that day, were members of the Church, but ignorant of vital religion. They were strict in teaching him to observe the external duties of religion, though they were themselves ignorant of its saving power. Every Sabbath he was taken to church, and in the afternoon he was sent to the pastor to be instructed in the catechism. Ebullient with the spirits of healthful childhood, he was continually tempted to engage in pranks of childish mischief, though his tender conscience would, on afterthought, teach him to look upon them as sinful and perilous to his soul. But we prefer to let him tell his story in his own words: "When I was very young," says he, "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 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, foot-ball, 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 kinds of sport."

About this time, a new militia act drew four of his companions into the army. One of them being "much afraid to go," Shadford, who liked the life of a soldier, agreed, for the sum of seven guineas, to become his substitute. His parents were greatly distressed when they became acquainted with this step, and, in deference to their feelings, he attempted to break the engagement he had made, but it was too late. He, however, afterward relieved in part the pecuniary distress of his father by giving him all the money he received. He was subjected to many temptations peculiar to army-life, but escaped from most of them, and repented when overcome. At times he was so distressed on account of his sins that he was tempted to put an end to his wretched life; at other times he felt a degree of comfort in drawing nigh unto God.

At Gainesboro he heard, for the first time, a Methodist preacher. "I was struck," says he, "with his manner." He took out a hymn book, and the people sung a hymn. After this he began to pray extempore in such a manner as I had never heard. I thought it a most excellent prayer. After this he took his little Bible out of his pocket, read over his text, and put it into his pocket again. I marveled at this, and thought within myself, "Will he preach without a book too?" Of the impression the sermon made upon him, he says: "I was tried, cast, condemned. I then made a vow to Almighty God that if he would spare me until that time twelve-month (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!"

During the period that intervened before his return home he was frequently arrested by conviction, and would repent before God in tears. "Wherever I traveled," says he, "I found the

Methodists were spoken against by wicked and ungodly people of every denomination, and the more I looked into the Bible the more I was convinced that they were the people of God."

On his return home, his old associates welcomed him with great joy, and gave a dance in honor to him. He felt obliged to attend, but the old love for dancing had long, since left him. "We danced," says he, "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 farther before something spoke to my heart, 'Remember thy promise.' Immediately it came strongly into my mind, 'It is now a year 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 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."

This resolution was strengthened by learning that a young lady to whom he had engaged himself before entering the militia had died during his absence from home in the army. His convictions became deep and his grief pungent. In the providence of God, he was led to attend preaching by a Methodist, in the house of a neighboring farmer. Says he: "I went to hear him, and was pleased and much affected. He gave notice that he would preach again in the evening. In the meantime 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 checks. 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 -- every thing 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. But no sooner had I peace within than the devil and wicked men began to war 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 fortnight after, I joined the society."

After uniting himself with the people of God, his heart turned to his parents, who were yet ignorant of saving faith. He began holding with them family prayer, and exhorting every one who came to the shop to be religious. The father feared that this course, on the part of the young convert, would drive away his trade, but the young man replied: "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 twelve-month," says he, "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."

He now began to exhort in the neighborhood, and the Lord graciously owned his labors of love. Returning home from one such occasion, he found his father reading the book of Psalms. "I saw," says Shadford, "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 of sin and ignorance. I have been all the day idle, and entered not into his vineyard until 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!' His mother soon after found peace in believing, and then his sister. Young George's heart was full of gratitude. Receiving license to preach, he enlarged his field of usefulness as a local preacher. While acting in this capacity, Wesley met him, and, forming an attachment for him which endured through life, he called him to the itinerant work. He served, successively, Cornwall, Kent, and Norwich.

In 1772, the veteran founder of Methodism in the -- Middle States -- Captain Webb -- appeared before the Conference at Leeds, asking ministers for America. Wesley was captivated by him, heard him preach with "admiration," and wrote of him to a friend: "He is a man of fire, and the power of God constantly attends his preaching." He was the right man," says Stevens, "to appeal to British Methodism for America, for he could tell his own story about it, and his military ardor gave a singular inspiration to his words. He made vast calculations for American Methodism, and the timid Charles Wesley gazed at him with surprise, pronouncing him fanatical; but it was next to impossible to exaggerate the moral antisocial prospects of the New World. He demanded two of the ablest men of the British Conference, Christopher Hopper and Joseph Benson. Charles Wesley opposed the claim, but the zealous Captain was not to be altogether defeated." Under Webb's presentation of the case, young Shadford "felt his spirit stirred within him," and he and Rankin offered themselves as missionaries to go the ensuing spring. In the meantime Shadford traveled the Wiltshire Circuit.

Wesley felt a tender interest in the young hero, loving him as his own son, and shortly before his departure for America wrote him the following letter: "Dear George, 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."

Six years before, Shadford had had a dream, in which he seemed to receive a written message directing him to go and preach the gospel in a foreign land. "I thought," says he, "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 for it remained upon my spirit for many days. I could not tell what this meant, and resolved 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 was then assured that the mission before him was the realization of his dream, and that he was divinely directed.

Captain Webb and his wife added much to the pleasure of the missionaries while on board. After a passage of seven and a half weeks, they landed in America, and were welcomed by Asbury. Shadford extended his labors from Philadelphia into New Jersey, preaching with the ardor which characterized his whole career, until the first Annual Conference assembled in Philadelphia. From this Conference he was stationed in Philadelphia, changing every four months with Rankin in New York. The next year he served, with Dromgoole, Webster, and Lindsay, the Baltimore Circuit. Wherever he preached the power of God attended the word and souls were converted. In 1775, he was appointed with Lindsay, Dromgoole, Williams, and Glendenning, to Brunswick Circuit, in Virginia. Here a most wonderful work was to attend his labors. Before his earnest, searching preaching the masses of the people were moved, dead formalism was stripped of its disguise, and thousands were led to all experimental knowledge of saving faith in Christ as a living and personal Saviour.

The religious destitution of Virginia at the time of the introduction of Methodism has already been noticed. We may trace the cause in great part to an immoral and inefficient ministry. The earnest, zealous manner of Shadford, his burning thirst for the salvation of souls, at once opened the way for him to hearts that before were careless because they had not been alarmed. He was "amazed" at the success of his labors. At almost every appointment, under almost every sermon, from three to four were converted, until one grand revival-wave swept over the whole field, and thousands were brought under its influence. It will be seen from the following that some of the wealthy planters were woefully ignorant of religion, and in a spiritual condition little better than heathendom. "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 preached 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 staid 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." Such was the beginning of one of the Methodist churches in Virginia. Before the close of the year, Shadford had organized a class of more than sixty members at that place. "It was quite common," says Jesse Lee, alluding to the revival under Shadford's ministry on the Brunswick Circuit this year, "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 on the floor." "On the second day of a quarterly-meeting," says the same writer, 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 staid without then came in, and beholding the anguish of some and the rejoicing of others, were filled with astonishment, and not long afterward 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 had found peace with God. Scarce any conversation was to be heard throughout the circuit but concerning the things of God. "It was under such influences that Lee was himself brought to a clearer assurance of his acceptance with God, and to a sense of his duty to preach the gospel.

The foregoing extracts will serve to show the character of the work done. The revival influence spread through Dinwiddie, Amelia, Sussex, Brunswick, Prince George, Lunenburg, and Mecklenburg counties, in Virginia, and Halifax and Bute (now Warren and Franklin) counties, in North Carolina. Eighteen hundred members were added to the society in one year, and a year later Jarratt wrote to Wesley that he had "not heard of any one apostate" in all that number. Among the members received were Francis Poythress, James Foster, and Joseph Hartley, who became traveling preachers.

But the clouds of war now began to gather, and Shadford's ministry in Virginia and North Carolina was drawing to a close. He was required to renounce his allegiance to the king, but this he did not feel that he could conscientiously do. After undergoing some persecution on this account, he started toward the North for the purpose of embarking for England. "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." Reaching Judge White's, he met with Asbury, who tried to dissuade him from leaving. Together they observed a day of fasting and prayer for divine direction. Shadford was more than ever convinced that it was his duty to leave, and reaching Philadelphia in safety, he embarked for Cork, in Ireland, thence to Wales, and then crossed to Bristol.

In England he resumed his ministry, and continued to preach until 1791, when infirm health forced him to seek and obtain a supernumerary relation to the Conference. Nor did he then cease to work in his Master's vineyard. Serving as class-leader over three large classes, visiting the sick, and walking with God, he exerted an influence that was powerful for good.

"He had," says Stevens, "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 religious 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.

The 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 on sleep on the 11th of March, 1816, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

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. He was very effective in prayer. 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 have often experienced the efficacy of his prayers in the soul- converting power 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.'

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06 -- CALEB B. PEDICORD

The name of Pedicord is the first on the death-roll of the Conference after the organization of the Church. While it is a matter of deep regret to us that so little is now known of him, yet

enough has been preserved to assure us that he was one of the sweetest spirits that ever adorned American Methodism. His obituary was written at a time when his Church did not pay the attention to the memory of her dead that she has since felt constrained to do; a time when the sentiment of the Conference was, "The men are nothing; the work is every thing." The Church buried her dead heroes with hardly a stone to mark their resting-place; made brief mention of their exit from this world on the minutes, and hastened to the field of conflict. The tribute paid to the memory of Pedicord by his brethren has been preserved by the minutes in one sentence. Yet when we remember that they were days when the preachers were not given to fulsome eulogy, this short and simple notice will appear to us beautiful and affecting. It reads: "Caleb B. Pedicord, a man of sorrows, and, like his Master, acquainted with grief; but a man dead to the world, and much devoted to God." At the time of his death no man in the Connection was more beloved and respected where he was known. He had won the implicit confidence of his brethren, and throughout the circuits that he traveled he had sustained himself as a man of God, a consecrated hero of the gospel of Jesus. He was just coming prominently before the Church as a leader worthy to be loved, honored, and trusted when removed by death.

He was born on the western shore of Maryland, and is supposed to have been converted under the ministry of Strawbridge, in Frederick county. He entered the itinerancy in 1777, with such men as John Tunnell, William Gill, Leroy Cole, John Dickens, Reuben Ellis, and others -- afterward noted in the history of the Church for piety, usefulness, and suffering for his classmates. He is described as a man of remarkably handsome features and fine personal appearance. His countenance bespoke a high order of intelligence, elevated sentiment, and moral refinement. Of his mellifluous voice, both in preaching, and singing, traditions yet linger. There was a quiet, pathetic force in his sermons that both melted and stirred the hearts of his hearers. He was a true son of consolation, and presented a striking contrast to many of his contemporaries in the pioneer ministry in the manner of his pulpit delivery.

His first appointment was the Frederick Circuit, in Maryland, where he had first united himself with the society. He had entered the Connection at a time when Methodist preachers were suffering great persecution, not only at the hands of the common rabble, but from those who professed to administer the laws of the country. The attachment of a few of the preachers to the British Crown had brought great trouble upon the whole body, and subjected to like treatment many of the number who were among the strongest friends of the cause of independence. The political opinions of a few had brought the whole body into public disfavor, and gave those who hated Christ and his gospel a shadow of excuse to maltreat his servants. Garrettson was committed to the common prison in one county, for no other offense than that of preaching, and in another he was beaten nigh unto death. Hartley was severely whipped, and afterward imprisoned. Others were subjected to like persecution, nor was Pedicord to escape the reproach of the little band with whose fortunes he had cast his lot. His peaceful habits, his holy zeal, his pathetic style of preaching, his all-absorbing devotion to the work of the ministry, were to be no protection against the mad spirit of the times. Yet for persecutions he returned love; for stripes he returned prayers; and sometimes his Christian temper disarmed his persecutors, and led them to embrace the gospel. On one occasion while riding along the public highway, he was overtaken by a man, and so severely beaten that he bore to his grave the marks of his injuries. Reaching a neighboring house, while the friendly family dressed his wounds and administered to his relief, the brother of the man who had beaten him entered the room, and saw his condition. He was so enraged at the outrage that

he went forth immediately, swearing vengeance against his own brother in the flesh. Pedicord afterward had the pleasure of seeing both of the brothers happily converted, and of receiving them into the Church. He had imbibed the spirit of "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and, like him, rejoiced that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

In New Jersey his ministry was to be honored in the conversion of one who afterward became one of the most useful preachers and one of the best contributors to the early history of Methodism. While riding, slowly along the road he was singing:

I cannot, I cannot forbear  
These passionate longings for home.  
O when shall my spirit be there?  
O when will the messenger come?

The sweet voice of the singer, no less than the sentiment of the song, arrested the attention of a young Revolutionary soldier who was wandering in a neighboring forest. He followed the preacher for some distance, and learning that he would preach in the community that night, attended the service. The sermon was made the means of leading him to Christ, and thus Thomas Ware, one of the most pure-minded and successful of early Methodist itinerants, for fifty years a founder of the denomination from New Jersey to Tennessee, from Massachusetts to the Carolinas, was brought into the Connection.

After preaching in Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey, we find Pedicord in 1782 on the Sussex Circuit, in Virginia. He served this charge as senior preacher, and at the same time acted as an "assistant" -- an office similar to that of the presiding elder of our day and in the latter part of the year sent Edward Dromgoole and Jesse Lee " to that part of North Carolina which lies to the north and west of Edenton, for the purpose of forming a new circuit."

Meager as is the information that has been transmitted to us, enough is known to convince us that Pedicord was a worthy leader of the "sacramental hosts" in his day, that he bore on his heart the burden of souls, and that he was vigilant and untiring in his devotion to the work of extending the cause of Christ. Wherever he labored, tradition has perpetuated his fame as a preacher, and marvelous things are told of his power in the pulpit. Lednum tells us that he was every thing that could be desired in a Methodist preacher." Garrettson, his companion in tribulation, years after Pedicord had gone to his reward, paid the following tribute to his memory, in a semi-centennial sermon delivered before the New York Conference: "Caleb B. Pedicord," said he, commemorating some of the heroes of those early days, "was instrumental in bringing many souls to God. He was constitutionally subject to dejection, which sometimes led him to doubt his call to preach, and induced him to think of returning home. I remember a speech he made in a love-feast (during the sitting of the Conference at Baltimore which moved the whole assembly. He rose up, bathed in tears and said: 'My friends, I have labored under heavy trials the past year. I was afraid that I was doing no good, and that I was not called to preach; but shortly before I left my circuit I went to a house where I met an aged NEGRO woman, who told me that what I had said to her when I was there on a former occasion had been the means of awakening her and bringing her to God. "I bless the Lord," said she, "that ever I saw you; for I am now happy in God my Saviour! " O how greatly did this encourage me! for I thought it was better to gain one soul to



Christ than to acquire all the riches of the world. And now I am encouraged to go forward in the good work; and God being my helper, I will spend the remainder of my life wholly in his service. After this, he served the Church several years, and then went home to glory.

It was through Pedicord's godly influence that Thomas Ware and Joseph Everett -- two of the most valuable men of their day -- were induced to enter the ranks of the itinerancy. Everett had been, as he said, one of Bunyan's "biggest Jerusalem sinners." After his conversion, Pedicord gave him license to exhort, and encouraged him to enter the fields then white unto the harvest. While Ware was hesitating as to his duty, his "spiritual father," Pedicord, wrote him the following letter, which proved the means of banishing his doubts, and will, no doubt, be read with interest by many a young itinerant of the present day. The letter breathes the spirit of the man who penned it. The banner of the cross he had so long and so bravely borne was to fall from his hand, as he fell at his post, only to be caught up by another, and borne on to victory. He seems to feel while he writes that his departure is at hand, and that another must soon supply his place. "He who claims all souls as his own," he writes, "and wills them to be saved, does sometimes from the common walks of life choose men who have learned of him to be lowly in heart, and bids them go and invite the world to the great supper. The Lord is at this time carrying on a great and glorious work, chiefly by young men like yourself. O come and share in the happy toil and in the great reward! Mark me! Though seven winters have now passed over me, and much of the way has been dreary enough, yet God has been with me and kept me in the way, and often whispered, 'Thou art mine, and all I have is thine.' He has, moreover, given me sons and daughters too, born not of the flesh, but of God; and who can estimate the joy I have in one destined, I hope, to fill my place in the itinerant ranks when I am gone? Who, then, will say that mine was not a happy lot? 'Tis well you have made haste. Much more than I can express have I wished you in the ranks before mine eyes have closed in death on all below. When Asbury pressed me to become an itinerant, I said: 'God has called me to preach, and woe unto me if I preach not; but I had no conviction that he had called me to itinerate.' 'No conviction, my son,' said he to me sternly, 'that you should follow the direction of him who commissioned you to preach! Has the charge given to the disciples, "Go and evangelize the world," been revoked? Is the world evangelized? He said no more. I looked at the world; it was not evangelized. The world must be evangelized; it should long since have been so, and would have been so had all who professed to be ministers of Christ been such as were the first gospel preachers and professors; for who can contend with him who is Lord of lords and King of kings, when they that are with him in the character of ministers and members are called and chosen and faithful? Here the drama ends not, but the time, we think, is near even at the door. Nothing can kill the itinerant spirit which Wesley has inspired. It has lived through the Revolutionary War, and will live through all future time. Christendom will become more enlightened, will feel a divine impulse, and a way will be cast upon which itinerants may swiftly move, and in sufficient numbers to teach all nations the commands of God."

Pedicord served the Church as an "assistant" in Southern Virginia for two years, and particularly on Sussex and Mecklenburg circuits were his labors fruitful in the conversion of souls.

From the Conference held in Baltimore May 28, 1784, he was appointed to the Baltimore Circuit. This was his last field of labor. On it he laid down the cross to take up his everlasting crown. Some of our historians speak of him as present at the Christmas Conference in the city of Baltimore at the close of this year. We know not by what authority this statement is sustained, and

we think it exceedingly doubtful. At any rate, when the Conference met in 1785 he was not present with his brethren. In three lines on their minutes they made mention of his worth; and cherishing in their hearts his memory, they turned from his grave to the field of action.

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## 07 -- EDWARD DROMGOOLE

If oratory be the power of presenting truth in such a manner as to elicit the attention and convince the judgment of the hearers, and then move them to action; if, as one has said, "a man, to be an orator, must have something to say, something which in his very soul he feels to be worth saying, and he must so enter into the sympathies of his hearers that his smile shall be their smile, his tear their tear, and the throb of his heart the throb of the hearts of the whole assembly," we may safely say that some of the field preachers of early Methodism were notably gifted in this respect. The terrible burden of responsibility which they felt to devolve upon them as watchmen on the hill-tops of Zion, as ambassadors for Christ, and as intercessors on the threshold of mercy to introduce the sinner to Jesus -- the fearful peril in which they saw the world to lie, and the great love for humanity which their religion taught them to exercise developed in the "Thundering Legion" a peculiar and very high type of oratory. If they are judged by the rules of elocution that too often prevail in our day, and which tend to submerge the natural in the artificial, and produce upon the hearer an impression similar to the effect of perfect yet lifeless, soulless statues of polished marble, they will be found to be sadly wanting; but if our definition of oratory be correct, if that gift be the power of making mind move upon mind, and soul upon soul, then among the pioneers of American Methodism are names that deserve a place on the roll of the most gifted orators of our republic.

The second Annual Conference of the Methodist preachers in America convened in the city of Philadelphia on the 25th of May, 1774. In answer to the question "Who are admitted on trial?" we find seven names given, among them one that was to fill no mean place in the history of Methodism -- Edward Dromgoole. He was an Irishman, had emigrated to America, and was one of the earliest Methodist converts in the city of Baltimore. Possessed in a remarkable degree of the gift of oratory so peculiar to his countrymen, he impressed himself upon the period in which he lived as one of the leading spirits of the Methodist movement. Burdened with the conviction of the world's peril and his own responsibility, his impassioned delivery attracted general attention, and was calculated to awaken the conscience and awe the mind into reverence."

His first appointment was Baltimore Circuit, to which he was sent with George Shadford, Richard Webster, and Robert Lindsay. At the ensuing Conference they reported on this field a gain of one hundred and two members. The next year, 1775, he was sent, with Williams, Shadford, Lindsay, and Glendenning, to Brunswick Circuit, Virginia. This circuit had been so extended as to embrace fourteen counties in Virginia and what were then known as Halifax and Bute counties in North Carolina. There were at that time eight hundred members on this charge. At the ensuing Conference they reported sixteen hundred and eleven, a net gain of eight hundred and eleven, and the result of one of the most wonderful revivals even in the history of early Methodism. In 1776 he was sent, with Francis Poythress and Isham Tatum, to Carolina Circuit, which had been formed at this Conference -- Brunswick Circuit still retaining that part of North Carolina afterward known as

Roanoke Circuit. On Carolina Circuit there were at this time six hundred and eighty-three members. At the close of the year they reported nine hundred and thirty, a gain of two hundred and forty-seven.

In 1777 he was sent to Amelia, and in 1778 to Sussex, Va. We then see nothing more of him on the minutes until 1783. It is quite probable that he remained in Sussex, for we find that in the latter part of the year 1782 Caleb B. Pedicord (preacher in charge of Sussex Circuit) wrote to Jesse Lee, then a young local preacher in North Carolina, requesting him to go with Edward Dromgoole to that part of North Carolina lying north and west of Edenton, for the purpose of forming a new circuit. They went, reaching Edenton December 1, 1783. They were kindly received by the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew, of that town, preached there, and made a tour of the surrounding country, extending their travels as far as Norfolk county, Virginia. We do not know much about the places of which they speak, but the circuit which they formed (Camden) is the monument to their labors. They tell us of Mr. Jones's, at Plank Bridge (Pasquotank River) where about thirty people came out in about an hour's notice to hear Dromgoole preach, and who appeared to be desirous for them to come again, as they had so little opportunity to hear preaching; of Halstead's, of the North-west Brick Church, of Col. Williams a man who feared God, and was pleased at their calling on him; of Indian Town, of Gen. Gregory, of Mrs. Sawyer, of River Bridge where they had a large company of well behaved people, and a solemn and profitable time; of Yeopin Church, and of their return to Edenton and stopping with Mr. Pettigrew. They had traveled sixteen days, and had held nineteen meetings, forming a circuit with twenty-two members for the next Conference to supply with, a preacher.

The people of the Albermarle section -- especially the Methodists -- should venerate the names of Edward Dromgoole and Jesse Lee. Lee tells us that some of these people had formerly been in society with the Methodists, but during the Revolutionary War the preachers left them, and they were without preaching for about five years.

In 1784 Dromgoole was sent to Mecklenburg Circuit. In 1785 he was sent, with Ira Ellis, to Bertie Circuit, North Carolina. In 1786 to Brunswick Circuit, Virginia.

The last mention made of him on the printed minutes was in 1786, in answer to the question "Who desist from traveling?" when his name appears.

Among the Methodist converts on the Brunswick Circuit during the great revival of 1775 was a Miss Walton, the daughter of Mr. John Walton, a most respectable citizen of that county. She was a most estimable young lady, of refined sensibilities, cultivated tastes, and polished manners. Soon after her conversion she connected herself with the Methodists, and on the 7th of March, 1777, was united in marriage to Edward Dromgoole. Together they lived in happy wedlock during the extended period of forty-nine years and eleven days, when she was removed by death, leaving her husband to wait yet a few years on the shores of time before meeting with her in the better land. She was the mother of ten children, only four of whom survived her.

While this union in a few years necessitated Dromgoole's location, owing to the extremely limited provision made for ministers' support, he continued to the day of his death to evince the warmest attachment and devotion to the Church of his choice. At his house a cordial hospitality

was lavished upon her. servants, and in the local relation it was no mean service that he bestowed. When his duties at home would permit, he would again buckle on the armor, and go over the old fields, proclaiming, with all the impassioned zeal that characterized his first love, the blessed gospel of the Son of God. The late Rev. Benjamin Devaney has left us an interesting description of one such occasion. Says he: "At a camp-meeting, when he entered the stand he deliberately pulled off his coat and his neck cloth, which was nothing unusual with the old preachers of that day, and began by saying that in order that the attention of the people might not be drawn off by wondering who the preacher was, he would tell them: You recollect about thirty years ago there was a young man who traveled here by the name of Edward Dromgoole. I am the man. He then announced his text, 'God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.' The sermon that followed was at its height, and its application awfully sublime and beyond description."

He was universally beloved by his contemporaries, and was described by them as a strong preacher, "searching the heart and stripping the sinner and false professor of every subterfuge; sometimes proclaiming the law from Sinai to shake the conscience of the sinner, and then pointing him to the blood of Jesus Christ to wash away his sins." He was the bosom friend of Bishop Asbury and Jesse Lee, and they always allude to him in terms of the most endearing relation. Tradition has perpetuated his fame as a preacher, and the story of some of his pulpit efforts will form a part of the romance of Methodist history.

We cannot but regret the course pursued by the leaders of Methodism in its infancy in regard to ministerial support -- a course which drove from the regular work such men as Dromgoole, and deprived the Church in great measure of the services of some of her most gifted preachers. Bishop Asbury's position on this matter is well known. While a truly good and great man, ever ready to divide his own money with his suffering preachers, he made a grievous mistake just here. Following the erroneous opinion that his preachers would be more pious, more faithful, and more useful as single men, and that a life of the most abject poverty was best calculated to develop the deepest humility and turn the minds of the preachers from the perishing treasures of earth to the enduring riches of heaven, he discouraged every effort looking to an adequate and comfortable ministerial support, and would sometimes in his public devotions pray "that the preachers might be kept poor." Late in life he expressed himself as cherishing the opinion that if so many of his preachers had not located, the Methodists would by that time have taken the continent. Yet he never seems to have seen the mistake in his own course in regard to the matter. But though reduced to the necessity of locating in order to support their families, these men were by no means idle, and among the local ranks were to be found some of the Church's most useful workmen. Like Dromgoole, they continued to travel when they could, assisting in public meetings, laying the foundations for new circuits, building new churches, organizing new societies, and setting a good example to the rest of the members by liberally contributing of their means to the enterprises of the Church.

Dromgoole lived to see Methodism spread from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the far West. Its success surpassed the most sanguine hopes and more than verified the happiest dreams of its founders. The grain of mustard-seed became a great tree, and the tender vine, planted by loving hands, and watered with tears and prayers and sufferings, grew until under its shadow thousands of happy hearts found a refuge and "rejoiced in hope of the glory of God." From a small and insignificant band in the beginning, the Church of his love had become a mighty

power for good in the land; and the despised sect of "people called Methodists" was second to none of the leading evangelical denominations in strength and usefulness, when in the evening of life he reflected upon the past and anticipated the future. Lingered on the shore of time, his own beautiful Christian life gave evidence of the growth in him of the grace of God that he professed, and revealed the molding touch of the Divine Spirit. He died in 1836, leaving many descendants. His youngest son was a distinguished orator and political leader, and was for many years a leading member of Congress from Virginia. A grandson, Rev. Edward Dromgoole Sims, A.M., was for several years a professor in Randolph-Macon College, and in LaGrange College, and in the University of Alabama.

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## 08 -- FRANCIS POYTHRESS

"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." Churches, as well as republics, are ungrateful; and in nothing is this spirit of ingratitude more painfully and more clearly revealed than in our forgetfulness of the dead. Even in North Carolina, where he was one of the first preachers of Methodism, and one of the three circuit riders sent to the first field formed within her bounds, the name of Francis Poythress is little known -- so little known that it falls as an unfamiliar sound upon many a Methodist ear. The man who was among the very first to introduce and carry forward the Wesleyan movement in Virginia and North Carolina, and who was foremost in the heroic little band who planted the standard of the cross on the other side of the Alleghanies; the man whom Asbury earnestly endeavored to have elevated to the office of bishop, and whom Stevens declares to have been "a giant among his greatest compeers;" the man who deliberately renounced the ease and luxury of wealth and social position to endure the hardships and undergo the toils of the pioneer ministry, and who at last broke down, mentally and physically, under the superabundance of his cares and labors, has been well-nigh forgotten. We reap the fruits of the labors of such men; we enjoy the heritage their self-sacrifice and their sufferings won for us -- let us tread lightly over their graves; let us raise over their resting places stones that will commemorate their deeds and express our veneration; let us gather from the fast receding past the stories of their toils and triumphs -- they made history, it behooves us to write it.

Francis Poythress was a native of Virginia. Born of wealthy parents, he inherited large estates and occupied a high social position. But he was a spoiled child of fortune, and like so many others in similar circumstances, he early fell into dissipated habits, and gave little promise of ever doing service for the Church or the world. While pursuing his wild course, he was, on one occasion, sharply reproofed for his conduct by a lady, like himself, of high social rank. The reproof was timely. It proved an arrow of conviction, reaching his heart and causing him to reflect. He became alarmed for his soul's safety. His past sins rose up as a mountain before him, and his soul was burdened with a consciousness of guilt. For some time he wandered in darkness. There were none around him to whom he could go for comfort or advice. Finally, he heard of the saintly Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, who was preaching of regeneration and adoption on Bath parish. To him he went for instruction, and by him he was effectually led to the foot of the cross and pointed to the sinner's Friend. Light poured upon his soul and darkness fled; the "spirit of heaviness" was exchanged for the "garment of praise;" and a joy "unspeakable and full of glory" filled his heart. And with this newfound joy came the conviction that he must preach. He did not hesitate; he was

not disobedient to the divine command; he did not falter at the sight of the cross he was to take up and bear until his physical and mental powers should fail beneath it. He began at once to labor with Jarratt in calling the people to holiness of life.

About this time, George Shadford, with four other preachers, was thundering the law of Sinai and echoing the strains of calvary on Brunswick Circuit. One of the greatest revivals recorded in the annals of Methodism was the result. The flame swept every thing before it. Nothing like it had ever before been seen in Virginia; perhaps nothing like it has ever been seen there since. The most hardened sinners stood aghast at the new and strange power that attended the meetings, and then fell to the earth and cried for mercy. It amounted to a revolution. Francis Asbury hastened from Norfolk to assist in the work and swell the triumphant shout. Under these circumstances a quarterly- meeting was held on this circuit, November 7, 1775, and here Francis Poythress entered the itinerancy. He brought into the ranks of the thundering legion a restless, passionate, toilsome love for the Master, and a burning desire for the spiritual elevation of mankind that was to lead him through danger and labor to the utmost limit of his power of endurance.

He was first appointed to the Carolina Circuit. We are accustomed to say that this was the first circuit formed within the bounds of this State; but the reader must remember that circuits were not formed then as now; the boundary lines were not defined as now; there was no danger of one preacher encroaching upon another's field; there were no churches awaiting the weekly service, no folds anticipating the tender shepherd's loving care. Methodism was "Christianity in earnest." It was no hospital for sick folks to be petted and nursed in, but to "join society" meant to fall into line and move forward. Poythress, Dromgoole, and Tatum understood their marching orders. The order was, in substance, just this: "Through the preaching of Pilmoor and Williams, and a few local preachers, such as Green Hill, we have six hundred and eighty-three members scattered over North Carolina; go over and possess the land." And they went; went in the name of the Master; went in search of the perishing; went to attack everywhere the forces of sin; went expecting to "possess the land." "All things are possible to him that believeth." That was the battle-cry, and every true man among them believed it. It nerved every heart, and baptized that little band of heroes and martyrs with a power by which -- figuratively, at least -- they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

After opening the way in North Carolina, we find Poythress traveling the Hanover and Sussex circuits in Virginia, New Hope in North Carolina, and Fairfax in Virginia. In 1783 we find him pioneering the way and bearing the banner of Methodism across the Alleghanies to the waters of the Youghiogheny. At this day we will have to draw upon our imagination to form any correct idea of the sufferings he endured in these wilds; but success crowned his efforts, and the way was opened for others to follow.

In 1786 we find him presiding elder over Brunswick, Sussex, and Amelia circuits in Virginia, and in 1787 over Guilford, Halifax, and New Hope and Caswell circuits in North Carolina. The greatest part of his labors were now to be spent in the wilds of Tennessee and Kentucky. Of his work in the latter State, Dr. Redford, in his "History of Methodism in Kentucky," says: "He was more intimately identified with the rise and progress of Methodism in Kentucky than

any other minister. For ten consecutive years he had charge of the Kentucky District, and, in the absence of Bishop Asbury, presided over the Annual Conferences. Grave in his deportment, chaste in his conversation, constant in his private devotions, and faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties, he exerted an influence for Methodism, and contributed to its success in Kentucky, to an extent that can be claimed for no other man. When we recount his excessive and constant labors through twenty-four years, having never been known to disappoint a congregation, unless prevented by sickness or disease, with the weight of so many churches resting upon him, we are not surprised that his physical strength should have given way, and to the Church it is a cause for gratitude to God that his noble intellect did not become impaired in the morn or noon of life. It was not until he had entered 'its sear and yellow leaf' that he gave any indications of the overthrow of his reason.

The following incident relative to him, and illustrating the habits of life on the frontier at that time, we quote from an interesting little volume of reminiscences, entitled "Early Times in Middle Tennessee:"

"At that day our fare in this country was extremely rough, as already observed; but I never heard the old elder complain of any thing set before him. One incident I must mention. Knowing our destitution, and being quite weakly, he had provided himself with a canister of tea, which he carried with him. One night, having stopped at the house of a brother, he gave the canister to the good sister, with a request that she would make some tea for him. She took it to the kitchen, and having poured the leaves into a vessel, she gave them a thorough boiling; then, putting them into a pewter plate, she brought them and set them before her guest. This done, she began, in the kindness of her heart, to apologize to the old elder because she could not boil the tea down. He looked at it, and simply said: 'Why, sister, you have spoiled all my tea; it was the broth I wanted.' You may think it strange that a married woman should be so ignorant, but it was even the case. In fact, I assure you, when I was married I do not believe I had drank a half-dozen cups of coffee, and I know not that I had ever seen any specimen of imported tea."

And there was danger to be encountered, as well as hardships to be endured, on these fields. The writer just quoted -- himself an eye-witness -- observes: "We cannot but observe with wonder and praise how the providence of God guarded and preserved those bold itinerants, while they took their lives in their hands and went forth preaching the gospel from station to station, and from neighborhood to neighborhood, even where the people had settled away from the forts. In the midst of all the dangers of the day the war with the Indians raging, and blood flowing freely on every hand not one of the preachers was killed; and I know not a single instance of a failure to fill an appointment, though frequently we had to guard them from place to place, and I have myself been employed for five or six days together; and this, too at times when the Indians were in the habit of lying in ambush near the paths leading from fort to fort. Surely, those were seasons of peril, but the providence of God preserved those men of God."

In 1797 Asbury warmly recommended to the Conference at Wilbraham the election of Poythress to the office of bishop, but they declined solely on the ground that that was a matter to be decided only by the General Conference.

Poythress was a warm advocate of the cause of education, and was earnest and persistent in his efforts to enforce upon the Church her duty to train her children mentally as well as morally. Stevens says: "He was the chief founder of the first Methodist seminary in the West -- the Bethel Academy, in Jessamine county Kentucky. Its edifice was a large brick structure of two stories, and it had incurred a considerable debt, which weighed down his noble mind till it sunk in ruins. All efforts of himself, Valentine Cook, and other co-laborers, to retrieve the institution failed, and Poythress lingered a wreck like his favorite project."

Mr. Finley, in his "Sketches of Western Methodism," says: "In the year 1800 he was sent to a district in North Carolina, embracing fifteen circuits. His removal to a new field, among strangers, and the subjection, if possible, to greater hardships than he had endured in former fields, without a companion save the companionship which he gained at different and distant points among his brethren, preyed heavily upon his system, shattering his nerves, and making fearful inroads upon a mind naturally of a too contemplative if not somber cast, and seasons of gloom and darkness gathered around him. He should at once have desisted, and sought that rest and society for which he so much longed, among the friends and companions of his youth; but alas! the necessity that rested in those days upon a Methodist preacher, stern as fate, kept him at his post, and he toiled on till his shattered frame, like the broken strings of a harp, could only sigh to the winds that swept through it; and his mind, in deep sympathy with his frame, became alike shattered and deranged. The next year he came back to Kentucky, but the light of the temple was gone, and the eye which shot the fires of genius and intelligence now wildly stared upon the faces of old, loving, long-trying friends as though they were strangers. Here he remained till death released him and sent his spirit home. Poor Poythress! bravely didst thou toil and endure hardships on the well-fought field. A campaign of twenty-five years of incessant toil in the gloomy wilds of the West, away from friends and loved ones at home, proved too much for thy nature to bear. But thou art gone where the wicked cease to trouble and the weary are at rest."

His intimate personal friend Judge Scott, of Ohio, himself a pioneer Methodist preacher, says of him: "Poythress was grave in his deportment and chaste in his conversation, constant in his private devotions and faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties. We have no recollection of his having ever disappointed a congregation, unless prevented by sickness or disease. As often as practicable he visited from house to house, instructed and prayed in the family. He was unwearied in his efforts to unite the traveling and local ministry as a band of brothers, so that their united efforts might be exerted in furthering the cause of God. As the weight of all the churches in his district rested upon him, he sensibly felt the responsibility of his station, and put forth his utmost efforts to discharge with fidelity the important trusts which had been confided to him. The education of the rising generation he deemed to be intimately connected with the interests of the Church, and the result of that conviction was the erection of Bethel Academy. He was about five feet eight or nine inches in height, and heavily built. His muscles were large, and when in prime of life he was a man of more-than ordinary, muscular strength. He dressed plain and neat. When we first saw him we suppose he had passed his sixtieth year. His muscles were quite flaccid, eyes sunken in his head, hair gray, turned back, hanging down his shoulders, complexion dark, and countenance grave, inclining to melancholy. His step was, however, firm, and his general appearance such as to command respect. He possessed high, honorable feeling, and a deep sense of moral obligation. In general, he was an excellent disciplinarian. Among the eight pioneers of Methodism in Kentucky and Tennessee in the year 1788, the name of Francis Poythress stands



preeminent. By these intrepid heroes of the cross the foundation of Methodism was laid in those States, on which others have since built, and others are building. . Their names ought to be held in grateful remembrance by all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth; but among all we are inclined to the opinion there is not one of them to whom the members of our Church in those States owe a greater debt of gratitude than to Francis Poythress."

At the Western Conference of 1802, it was intimated that he was in "a critical state of unaccountability," and ordered that his name be "left off the general minutes," while it was agreed that it should be retained on their journal. And so his name disappeared from the minutes without a word of explanation. In 1810, Asbury, traveling through Kentucky, made an entry in his journal that seemed also to reflect upon his character, and these two facts made the impression upon the public that he had apostatized. Fortunately for the justice of history, the matter was cleared up by the bishop's traveling companion, the Rev. Henry Boehm. He says:

"On Monday we visited an old minister, one of the pioneers of the West, and the bishop makes this melancholy record -- I never read it without pain: 'This has been an awful day to me. I visited Francis Poythress, if thou be he; but O how fallen!' Perhaps no record in his journals has been so little understood as this, and none is more liable to be misinterpreted. Some have supposed that he had fallen like wretched apostates who have made shipwreck of the faith; but it was not so, and the bishop would not knowingly or willingly have done the unfortunate brother an injustice. My journal reads thus: 'Monday 15, we went with Brother Harris to see Francis Poythress, one of our old preachers. He has been for ten years in a state of insanity, and is still in a distressed state of mind.' This is the record I made over fifty years ago, and it was italicized as the reader now sees it. Francis Poythress was one of the leaders of our Israel: He was received into the traveling connection at the third Conference, held in 1776, with Freeborn Garrettson, Joseph Hartley, Nicholas Watters, and others. He was a pioneer of the West. In 1790, John Tunnell dying, Francis Poythress was appointed elder at the West, having five large circuits on his district, and on them were Wilson Lee, James Haw, and Barnabas McHenry. We have not space to trace his history. His excessive labors shattered his system, and his body and intellect were both injured. About the year 1800 he became deranged, and a gloom settled down upon him not to be removed. When Asbury saw him, he was shocked, contrasting his former look with his appearance then. He was then living with his sister, twelve miles below Lexington. Bishop Asbury never saw him any more; death soon came to the relief of poor Francis Poythress, and none who knew him doubt that he is among the clear, unclouded. intellects of the upper and better world."

He maintained, through all the privations of the frontier ministry, "the bearing of one who had been well raised, his deportment being very gentlemanly." He was particularly gifted in prayer, and it is said that when he led in intercession "it seemed that heaven and earth were coming together." The last years of his life were spent at the house of his sister, Mrs. Susannah Pryor, in Jessamine County, Kentucky. Here, after long years of mental derangement and bodily suffering, a relieving light broke upon his last hours, and in 1818 he entered into rest. Eternity may reveal a touch of romance -- a story of human love -- in the simple narrative of the reproof he received from a lady, and which drove him to Christ and the ministry; but if so, the stone of oblivion now hides it in the grave of the past.

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In the course of these Sketches we have had occasion to remark upon the peculiar type of oratory which the Wesleyan movement developed in America. The "burden" which the pioneers felt to rest upon them, the "woe" pronounced against their unfaithfulness, and above all the great love for souls that their religion kindled in their hearts, and the peril, the fearful peril, in which they saw the world to lie, developed an earnest, thrilling, overwhelming power in their pulpit efforts that swept every thing before it as by storm. These men had tasted the "wormwood and gall," they had passed from darkness unto light, they were acquainted with the devices of the wicked one and knowing the terror of the Lord, they persuaded men. They preached for immediate results. They saw, with the eye of faith, the approaching judgment and the sinners only refuge; and they made their hearers see as they saw, and moved them to act as they had acted. They combined plaintive strains of prophetic lamentations over the dry bones of the world's ruin with the apostolic shout of adoption and assurance, and moved upon the hearts of the people as no other men have done since the first era of Christianity. The great historian of Methodism has well said: "The usual process of a long preparatory training for the ministry could not consist with the rapidly increasing wants of the country. Methodism called into existence a ministry less trained, but not less efficient; possessing in a surprising degree that sterling and manly energy, examples of which great exigencies always produce among the common people. These it imbued with its own energetic spirit, and formed them to a standard of character altogether unique in the annals of the model Christian ministry. They composed a class which will perhaps never be seen again. They were distinguished by native mental vigor, shrewdness, extraordinary knowledge of human nature; many of them by overwhelming natural eloquence, the effects of which on popular assemblies are scarcely paralleled in the history of ancient or modern oratory; and not a few by powers of satire and wit, which made the gainsayer cower before them. To these intellectual attributes they added great excellences of the heart, a zeal which only burned more fervently where that of ordinary men would have grown faint, a courage that exulted in perils, a generosity which knew no bounds and left most of them in want in their latter days, a forbearance and cooperation with each other which are seldom found in large bodies, an entire devotion to one work, and withal a simplicity of character which extended even to their manners and their apparel. They were mostly robust. The feats of labor and endurance which they performed in incessantly preaching in villages and cities, among slave huts and Indian wigwams; in journeyings, seldom interrupted by stress of weather; in fording creeks, swimming rivers, sleeping in forests; these, with the novel circumstances with which such a career frequently brought them in contact, offered examples of life and character which in the hands of genius might be the materials of a new department of romantic literature. They were men who labored as if the judgment fires were about to break out in the world, and time to end with their day. They were precisely the men whom the moral wants of the New World at the time demanded. The usual plan of local labor, limited to a single congregation or to a parish, was inadequate to the wants of Great Britain at this time, but much more so to those of the New World. The extraordinary scheme of an itinerant ministry met in the only manner possible the circumstances of the latter; and the men described were the only characters who could have sustained that scheme amid the hardships of American life."

Among these men are to be found names that deserve a place on the roll of the world's greatest orators, and when justice is done, Virginia's patriot-statesman Patrick Henry will have no

higher place accorded him in history than will her patriot-preacher John Easter. The former electrified the nation, and stirred the heart of the colonies by his wild cry, "Give me liberty, or give me death!" The latter pictured the "sinfulness of sin," and its punishment, with such overwhelming power of eloquence that the trembling thousands who attended were constrained to fly to "the cleft in the rock" to escape the fury of the storm of Divine vengeance. He was preeminently the great pulpit orator of early Methodism.

The late Rev. Dr. L. M. Lee, in his "Life and Times of Jesse Lee," says: "The facts which have come down to our times of the almost miraculous labors of the Rev. John Easter, his strong faith, and his astonishing success, are far more surprising than any of those recorded in the days of the Son of man. But we may not detail them. Yet respecting the character of the work, it ought to be said that convictions for sin were sudden and strong. The whole moral nature was wrought upon by deep and powerful emotions that found expression in confession of sin and cries for mercy. And conversions were no less sudden and powerful. Supplications for pardon were quickly succeeded by songs of rejoicing and shouts of triumph.

"Many who came to the house of God careless and scoffing returned clothed in their right minds, with new joy in their hearts, and a new pathway for their feet. The change was wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, and its genuineness received a thousand attestations in the altered lives, persevering fidelity, and increasing holiness of those who, in that generous effusion of the Spirit, were brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God." John Easter entered the itinerancy near the close of the Revolution, and was a co-laborer with Phillip Bruce and Jesse Lee, who began their ministerial labors about the same time. He is supposed to have been born in Mecklenburg county, Virginia, but the exact date is not now certainly known. His parents were among the first-fruits of Methodism on Brunswick Circuit, and after them one of the oldest churches in that section -- Easter's Meeting-house -- was named. Of John Easter's father, Matthew Easter, the late Rev. James Patterson says: "When I preached at Easter's in 1799 the good old man got his soul so full of the love of God that it overflowed, and he praised God and shouted until his frail body could scarcely contain his enraptured spirit. His lamp was not only burning, but was in a full blaze; his wings plumed, and nothing prevented him from soaring to the realms above but the casket of dust which contained the immortal spirit."

The old gentleman has two sons in the ministry, John and Thomas. Of the former of these the writer just quoted says: "John Easter, traveling Brunswick Circuit, held a meeting at Mabrey's Chapel, near a village called Hicksford, at which there was a great concourse of people, and while he was preaching several hundred persons fell flat upon the ground, struck down by the mighty power of God, and many of them were powerfully converted. The effects of that revival were exceedingly great, so much so that the wretched sellers of alcohol lost nearly all their customers at the village. John Easter was an extraordinary man with regard to his faith and power in preaching the gospel of salvation. Like Jacob, he had power with God and with men. When he preached or exhorted, great power fell upon the people, and many sinners were slain by the sword of the Spirit."

The fields of his itinerant labor were as follows: 1782, Hanover; 1783, Roanoke; 1784, Richmond (this is the first mention of Richmond, Va., on the minutes); 1785, Sussex; 1786, Mecklenburg; 1787, Brunswick; 1788, Sussex; 1789, Amelia; 1790, Brunswick; 1791, Surry.

Passing through Roanoke Circuit in 1783, on his way from Western North Carolina to Amelia, Va., Rev. Jesse Lee makes the following mention: Sunday, 20th of July, I preached at Whitaker's (Roanoke Circuit), and the congregation wept under the word preached. When we met the class, the power and presence of the Lord were among us, and many cried aloud. I was so deeply affected that I could not speak till I stopped and wept for some time. I preached again at night, and the people wept greatly.

"Monday, 21st, we had a very lively meeting at Brother Young's in the day and again at night, where there were about forty members in society, and none of them professed to be converted except the leader of the class, but many of the mourners were deeply distressed on account of their sins.

"Tuesday, 22d, we had a meeting at Low's, and the next day at John Clayton's, then went up into Warren county, where I met with John Easter, and held meeting at Wm. Jean's. The next day we came to Benjamin Doale's, in Halifax county, where John Easter preached a profitable sermon.

"Sunday, 27th, we held meeting at Jones's Chapel; the next day at Brother Lock's; the day following at Richard Whitaker's, and the two following days at Tar River Church. We had a good deal of life among us at these meetings.

"Saturday, 16th, and Sunday, 17th of August, I attended a quarterly-meeting at the Tabernacle, Roanoke Circuit. The first day we had two sermons, and the next day we had a lively love-feast. Then I preached, J. O'Kelly preached, and J. Easter exhorted. It was indeed a day of the Lord's power, and many souls were comforted."

It was under Easter's preaching in Virginia that William McKendree and Enoch George -- afterward bishops, honored, useful, and beloved in our Church -- were converted. We will let them tell the story of their impressions in their own language. McKendree, who was then thirty years of age, and who was living within the bounds of the Brunswick Circuit, and who had frequently experienced the wooings of the Spirit on hearing Easter, says: "My convictions were renewed. They were deep and pungent. The great deep of my heart was broken up. Its deceitful and desperately wicked nature was disclosed, and the awful, the eternally ruinous consequences clearly appeared. My repentance was sincere. I became willing and was desirous to be saved on any terms. After a sore and sorrowful travail of three days, which were employed in hearing Mr. Easter, and in fasting and prayer, while the man of God was showing a large congregation the way of salvation by faith, with a clearness which at once astonished and encouraged me, I ventured my all upon Christ. In a moment my soul was relieved of a burden too heavy to be borne, and joy instantly succeeded sorrow. For a short space of time I was fixed in silent adoration, giving glory to God for his unspeakable goodness to such an unworthy creature."

Enoch George, who was also living on the Brunswick Circuit, bears this testimony: "We had no religious services either in my father's family or any that I visited. Our time was whiled away in fiddling and dancing. But independently of any convictions received in the Church or elsewhere, I remember the visits of the Spirit of God, enlightening, melting, and alarming me. I continued in this situation for many months, and only wanted suitable direction and encouragement.

With these I should soon have found the pearl of great price. None of my acquaintances appeared to have any serious impressions, or if they had they were concealed, as my own were. At this time we heard that a certain Methodist preacher was traveling through a part of our parish and county, under whose labors hundreds were 'falling down,' and crying, 'Sir, what must we do to be saved?' They 'repented, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and were converted.' By these reports my foolish heart was hardened and 'darkened.' It was my delight to invent satirical epithets for these men, by which I and my companions were amused. In this way I continued to resist God, having formed my opinion on common report, until my father and stepmother were among the hearers of that venerable, holy, and useful minister, known to thousands in the south of Virginia -- John Easter.

"When Mr. Easter spoke, his word was clothed with power, and the astonished multitude trembled, and many fell down and cried aloud. Some fell near me, and one almost on me; and when I attempted to fly I found myself unable. When my consternation subsided, I collected all my strength and resolution, and left my friends and the family, determining never to be seen at a Methodist meeting again. In this I was defeated. My father and his family, with many of my friends, remained in the assembly, while I 'fled from the presence of the Lord;' and they determined to seek and taste of the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of the 'Holy Ghost.' On the next day there was to be another meeting in our vicinity, and as the people passed our house one and another said to me, 'Come, and let us go up to the house of the Lord,' and hear this awful messenger of truth. I replied to their entreaties and inquiries by surly negatives; but my father interposed his authority, and commanded my attendance. I went, intending to steel my heart against conviction. However, it pleased God on this day 'to open my eyes, and turn me from darkness to light,' by the ministry of the word; and I was willing to become a Christian 'in the way, of the Lord.' Day and night I cried for mercy. In this disconsolate state I wandered from meeting to meeting, and from valley to valley, 'seeking rest, finding none,' and almost ready to yield to despair, yet resolved to never renounce my hope of mercy while it was written, 'The Lord will provide,' and 'His mercy endureth forever.' On one Sabbath while thus 'tossed with tempests, and not comforted,' after meeting I retired to the woods, and there received forgiveness of sins 'by faith that is in Jesus Christ' and the witness of his Spirit with mine. Then I tasted that the Lord is gracious; felt grace in my heart -- God in man, heaven upon earth. I was in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and all around me each flower, each leaf spoke the praises of the Father who 'made them all.' From that day until now I have never doubted my conversion to Christ and adoption into his family."

The foregoing extracts will give the reader some idea of Easter as a preacher. He continued in the itinerant ranks until 1792, when his name appears on the minutes, in answer to the question "Who are under a location through weakness of body or family concerns?"

The zealous, eloquent, successful preacher was reduced to the necessity of locating in order to provide bread for his family. We refrain from comment. Though he retired from the regular ranks, Easter did not cease to labor whenever he could, and at last fell a martyr to his zeal. The following interesting letter from him to Rev. Stith Mead, written in 1799, is reproduced by Dr. Bennett in his "Memorials:"

Very Dear Brother: I received your favor, and wish to be thankful that either God or man remembers me in love and mercy; for I am so useless that I am ready to wonder how it is that I am

a half martyr. First for souls, and second for bread; at best a poor, unworthy, unprofitable servant. But I can yet rejoice that the Lord blesses your labors to the good of souls. May he bless you more and more in your return to Brunswick; though we have been blessed in the labors and piety of our good brother William Early. I greatly desire to be with you all at Conference, but the many afflictions of my family, and other occurrences, render it almost impracticable. But you will have my poor prayers for the great God to be present and powerful among you. My love to all that are willing to die for Christ and the truth.

"Yours in the best of bonds, John Easter."

While attending a protracted meeting, he so over-exerted himself as to bring on a disease of the lungs which closed his earthly career about the year 1801. He sleeps in a neglected, almost unknown grave in Virginia, and the Church for whom he laid down his life, and to whose interests he devoted the best years of his manhood, has well nigh forgotten him. Dr. Bennett tells us that "he left a son who became a very useful local, preacher, but finally left the Church of his father, and took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was the pastor of a congregation near Baltimore for some time, and died in that city not many years ago. He left an only son, who was suddenly killed, and thus the line of that branch of the family became extinct."

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## 10 -- ISHAM TATUM

As we look upon a wide, beautiful river, on whose broad, deep bosom the gallant boats that carry on the world's commerce are borne, the quiet fountain far up at the source is invested with a new interest to our minds. If the stream from the fountain does not draw to it tributaries, if before it falls into the sea it does not become a great agent in the world's service, it is to be noticed only by a few, and by them perhaps for only a short while, as a quiet thing of beauty in the world's great panorama. The value to the world of men's lives is to be estimated by the results which accrue from their examples, and from the moral forces which they set in motion. Methodism has in our day assumed proportions little dreamed of by the most sanguine of its founders. It has become, under the overruling providence of God, one of the mighty moral and religious forces at work for the world's spiritual elevation. It has been instrumental in the salvation of thousands and hundreds of thousands in the past; it has added a new impetus to all the other moral and religious agencies with which it was identified; it has infused new fervor, zeal, and activity into the world's spirit of benevolence, and the work that is to be done by it in the future, the millions who are yet to be led to Christ by it, can be estimated only by the foreknowledge of God. Those who originated the movement, and propagated it in the beginning, those whose suffering and sacrifice opened the way for it until it had accumulated sufficient force to make its own way and break over oppositions and obstructions, are invested with a peculiar interest to us; and while the movement has become broader and deeper in its sweep, it still retains the spirit of the founders who gave it life.

The name of Isham Tatum takes us back to the early dawn of Methodism in the South, back to the toils and triumphs of the pioneer heroes and martyrs, back to days of suffering and endurance, conflict and victory. It recalls the mighty struggle of a handful of consecrated, devoted men with the combined forces of evil, and brings up in long review acts of devotion, instances of

self-sacrifice, and deeds of daring that gild with a romantic touch the history of the past. Those days of spiritual deadness and darkness saw reproduced prophets denouncing sin with the vehemence of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and ambassadors of Christ reproving and exhorting under a sense of the most fearful accountability and responsibility. They were men of GOD, men upon whom rested the burden of lamentation; men who had received the great commission to "cry aloud, and spare not;" men who were dead to the world, and alike indifferent to its dangers and its allurements; men who sought nothing but the Divine approval, and feared nothing but the Divine condemnation -- those men who met, as a wall of stone, the waves of the world's fury, engaged in single-handed conflict with Apollyon, and came off victorious from every field. Fortunate indeed is the stream if in its flow it loses not the purity of the fountain; fortunate indeed is Methodism if it has lost not a measure of the spirit that gave it birth.

Isham Tatum was one of those men who, burdened with the great commission, set apart and anointed for the holy office, and baptized with the Divine unction, "spake as those having authority" -- an authority before which the sinner trembled and the strongholds of Satan fell. Herein is found one of the great secrets of their marvelous success. They felt themselves to be the servants and under the immediate direction of the Most High, and as such the masses respected them, and listened in reverential awe to their message. Tatum combined with burning zeal and untiring labor rare natural gifts as an orator. He was popularly known as "the Silver Trumpet," and over the old fields on which he met, in terrible conflict the powers of darkness linger yet traditions of his wonderful pulpit power and success. He was a native of Carolina, though the exact place and date of his birth are, we believe, now unknown. Of his early life and education we are likewise ignorant. The first mention made of him on the printed minutes is in the year 1776, when he entered the traveling connection. He was one of the three preachers sent that year to the first circuit formed in North Carolina. The religious aspect of Virginia at that time was distressing, but that of North Carolina was, if possible, more so. Indeed, if we accept as true the testimony of Col. Byrd, we would be forced to the conclusion that this State was populated with people little better than heathen; but fortunately for our State pride, the Colonel is known to have been a very unreliable witness -- so unreliable that his testimony will not be reproduced in this sketch. There is, however, sufficient evidence of an unimpeachable character to convince us that the extent of ignorance and immorality in this State at that time was appalling. Of the reputation she enjoyed abroad we have no vague hint in a passage in Asbury's journal. Traveling through Franklin county in 1780, four years after Tatum had traveled here his first circuit, and stopping with Dr. John King, the pioneer preacher, he writes: "I had too mean an opinion of the people of Carolina. It is a much better country, and the people live much better, than I expected from the information given me." The force of this is increased by the fact that Asbury very probably received his "information" from the preachers who had traveled circuits in this State, and this passage was written while stopping in what is now known to have been one of the most highly favored sections of it at that time. Dr. Coke, in 1735, gives a mournful account of the religious destitution of Northeastern North Carolina; and numerous passages in Asbury's journal go to prove that, while the matter may have been, and doubtless was, exaggerated by some, the state of religion was, to say the least, deplorable.

Scattered over this State, Methodism had in 1776 six hundred and eighty-three members, the fruits of the labors of Pilmoor, Williams, and others. Under the faithful labors of Tatum, Poythress, and Dromgoole, the number was increased during this year to nine hundred and thirty.

Within another year, the work was so extended as to necessitate the division of the State into three circuits. Tatum continued in the traveling connection but a few year, but they were memorable years in our Church's history. They were years that saw the wonderful development of a movement that sprung as by magic from insignificance to importance -- years that witnessed some of the mightiest conflicts between the powers of light and darkness, and produced some of the finest types of heroic manhood that this world has ever seen. In advancing the new movement, in opening new fields for its operation, and in carefully looking after and nourishing all of the interests of the Church, Tatum was a leading spirit. Not only was he distinguished for his pulpit oratory, but by his brethren he was regarded as a sound theologian and a useful and successful preacher. His fields of labor were as follows: 1776, Carolina; 1777, Pittsylvania; 1778, Fluvanna; 1779, Amelia; 1780, Hanover. These were nearly all new and hard fields, and here by toil and suffering he laid the foundations on which others have built and are building. Here he opened the way for others to follow, and sowed the seeds that have been since his day springing up unto harvest.

In 1781 his name appears in answer to the question "Who desist from traveling?" He had married, and was, in consequence, forced to retire from the itinerant ranks, where he had done such faithful and efficient service. He located in Madison county, Virginia, where he lived for more than half a century afterward, buckling on the armor, and going forth again to the battle, with all the ardor of youth, and whenever occasion offered. He lived to enjoy a serene and beautiful old age, and to be venerated as the oldest Methodist preacher in America, if not in the world. The late Rev. Peter Doub, D.D., in the second year of his own ministry, met this aged servant of God in Madison county, Va. He says of him: " He had been a minister for more than sixty years when he died. He was a very good, sound divine; very eloquent, and so highly esteemed by the public in this regard that he was known throughout the country as the 'Silver Trumpet.' He also left a large number of descendants, most of whom are members of the Church he so faithfully labored to establish."

Tatum lived to witness the growth and development of the Church and the republic for the first fifty years of their existence. In the evening of his life, the pioneer fields on which he had labored and suffered had "bloomed and blossomed as the rose." Songs of praise arose from wilds where only the woodman's ax had been heard. Churches had been erected on spots where he and his co-laborers had fought some of their hardest fights, and fitly commemorated their victories over the powers of evil. Without a stain upon his escutcheon, he laid aside his armor to wear the victor's crown, and universally beloved and respected, he entered into his eternal rest. In his pure, devoted, unselfish life, he left the Church a legacy as rich as the toilsome labor he underwent and the suffering he endured. What a glorious meeting with his old companions in tribulation! What a time of rejoicing over the fruits of their suffering awaited him within the gates of the City of God!

Some of his descendants are now living in Orange county, North Carolina.

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11 -- JOHN DICKENS

It is a well-known fact that few of the early Methodist preachers were men of liberal mental culture, but it is not evident that other denominations were as far in advance of them in this



respect as is generally supposed. The truth is that schools were few in the new country, and the standard of scholarship was very low. The very first enterprise that enlisted the energies of the Methodist Church, after its organization, was the establishment of a college. In the early history of our country only those who had been educated in Europe could lay claim to any thing like liberal training; and while Methodism has, through the various stages of its existence, utilized the labors of various types of men, and found fields for the employment of various orders and degrees of talent, it would be unfair to say that all the preachers of the Methodist movement were ignorant and unlearned men, and that all the preachers of other denominations were highly cultured. This would imply a disparity which did not exist in fact. There are abundant evidences that there was a wide field for improvement in this respect in the ministry of other denominations; nor is it to her most highly cultured men that American Methodism is most indebted. We have not one word to say against an educated ministry only that education can never supply the place of earnest zeal and consecrated labor, hearty sympathy and love for mankind.

As an evidence of the low standard of scholarship in America over a hundred years ago, the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, a minister of the Church of England, who became rector of the Bath parish, in Virginia, in 1756, tells that when nineteen years of age his fame as a man of learning had extended more than one hundred miles from his home, because he was "skilled in the Division of Crops, the Rule of Three, and Practice." The story has come down to us of a young Congregational minister in New England who prided himself upon his scholastic attainments, and whose church Jesse Lee, on one occasion, asked permission to occupy. Regarding a familiarity with the dead languages as essential to pulpit qualification, he asked Lee some question in Greek. Without understanding a syllable of his Greek, Lee promptly returned the compliment by addressing him, in reply, a few words of the Dutch which he had learned in North Carolina. The young minister thought he was speaking Hebrew, and thereupon, accounting him a very learned man, gave him permission to preach in his pulpit.

John Dickens, one of the earliest pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina, the first Book Editor, and for many years Superintendent of the Book Concern of the M. E. Church, was superior to most of his contemporaries in point of education. Asbury tells us that he was a man of "great skill in learning, drinking in Latin and Greek swiftly." Without being brilliant in his conceptions, he was a close reasoner, a clear thinker, and an earnest, practical, forcible preacher, knowing how to adapt his discourses to his congregations. He did not possess the magnetic power which enabled Edward Dromgoole, George Shadford, John Easter, and others of his day, to sway their congregations at will, but he carried with him the weight of "a man of great piety who prayed much and walked close with God." A gentle, sweet-spirited, God-fearing Christian, tender in his relations to his brethren, his friends, and his family, he was given to gloomy meditations, and was diffident to a fault. Asbury entertained a warm personal friendship and high esteem for him, and wrote in his journal, after hearing of his death: "For piety, probity, profitable preaching, holy living, Christian education of his children, secret closet prayer, I doubt whether his superior is to be found, either in Europe, or in America." We learn from the old minutes, which record his fields of labor, and the time and manner, of his death, that he was a native of Great Britain, born, and educated in the city of London. At what time he emigrated to America is not known but it appears that in 1774 he made a profession of religion and united with the Methodist Society in Virginia. In 1777 he was received into the traveling connection, and was appointed, with John King, Leroy Cole, and Edward Pride, to North Carolina Circuit. This was the second year of the existence of a

circuit in North Carolina, for, while two counties in this State had been embraced in the imperial old Brunswick, the Carolina Circuit (called this year the North Carolina) had been formed only the year previous. This is the last mention of North Carolina on the minutes as a circuit. The next year we have Roanoke; the next, Tar River and New Hope; the next, Yadkin; then follow Bertic, Guilford, Caswell, etc.

In 1778 Dickens was appointed to Brunswick, and in 1779 and 1780 to Roanoke Circuit. These were dark days for Methodism. Suspicion was attached to her preachers as being friendly to British dominion, and the people were too much concerned in the progress of the war to pay much attention to the subject of religion. While serving the Roanoke Circuit, Dickens conceived the idea of establishing in America a school similar to Mr. Wesley's Kingswood School in England. This enterprise Asbury heartily endorsed, and Gabriel Long, and Brother Bustion were the first subscribers. The project culminated, under the management of Dr. Coke, in the ill-fated Cokesbury College, at Abington.

At the close of the year 1780, in the language of the minutes, he "desisted from traveling." Dr. Bangs and others tell us that the reason for this step is unknown. By reference to Asbury's Journal (Vol. I., page 291), we learn that "his voice was gone." It is probable that this is one reason for his course. Another may be found in the fact that he had married, and such was the support given an itinerant preacher in those days that upon marrying he was generally forced to locate in order to support his family. So general was the custom of locating after marriage that the Church lost the services of some of its best and most useful men. As early as 1780 we find this entry in Asbury's Journal (Vol. I., page 290): "Edward Dromgoole is a good preacher, but entangled with a family. We spoke of a plan for building houses in every circuit for preachers' wives, and the societies to supply their families with bread and meat, so the preachers should travel from place to place as when single; for unless something, of the kind be done, we shall have no preachers but young men in a few years -- they will marry and stop.

The truth of his prophecy is seen in the fact that in 1809, when the Virginia Conference convened in the town of Tarboro, N. C. and numbered 5,823 white and 2,363 colored members, sixty of the preachers were young men and only three in the whole body were married men. Asbury makes this remark in regard to the matter (Journal, Vol. III., page 257): "The high taste of these Southern folks will not permit their families to be degraded by an alliance with a Methodist traveling preacher." There is much bitterness in this remark, and yet who can wonder that such was the case? The Methodist itinerancy was not a very inviting field to a well-bred young lady, to say the least. Asbury himself was not insensible to the meager support which he received and his dependence upon others. There were hours when he felt -- keenly, bitterly -- the sacrifice which he had made in becoming a traveling preacher. There are passages in his journal in which we read the language of poor, frail human nature -- for he was only human -- and hear the wail of his heart as he thought of the dependence to which he had subjected himself. We may well ask the question, Was this state of affairs ever necessary? Was it ever necessary to drive from the traveling connection married men who had enough self-respect to demand a decent support? Was it ever necessary that in the evening of life a grand old hero should be able to look back upon nothing but toil and privation, and rejoicings in tribulations, and around upon nothing but ingratitude and forgetfulness? The reason is not to be found in any inability on the part of the Church to support her servants. They had fixed themselves the limits of their support. They had signed and sealed with

their own hands the instrument which consigned them to life-long poverty. They had preached against comfortable salaries, and had educated the people to believe that a life of the most abject poverty was best suited to develop the deepest humility and the highest degree of pulpit power. As we look around upon the comfortable parsonages, and think of the adequate support which many of our preachers enjoy, the wonder is not that we hear, now and then, the old cry of "a hundred dollars a year," and meet occasionally, the cold, hard spirit of parsimony in the Church, but that the Church has so far broken the bands of early education and made such strides in the face of erroneous teaching.

The Church of Rome enforces celibacy upon her priests in order to center all their affections upon "Mother Church." In their ardent zeal, the early Methodist preachers endeavored to sever every tie which bound them to the world, that they might be more closely united to Christ. Whoever loved father and mother, wife and children, houses and lands, more than Christ, was not worthy of Christ; therefore, they were to despise houses and lands, renounce at once the pleasures and embarrassments of wedded life, and leave father and mother to God for protection. It was a grand sacrifice -- this laying of every thing which the heart holds dear at the foot of the cross -- and beautifully has Edward Eggleston compared it to the "alabaster box of very precious ointment" poured upon the head of the Saviour. Nothing is more natural than that in their youthful, ardent zeal they rejoiced in making the sacrifice, and felt that it was acceptable in the sight of God. Having made the sacrifice, they were ready to plunge into the wilderness, and thenceforth their watch-words were to be, "A Methodist preacher is immortal until his work is done."

They were to receive nothing more than the meager salary which they had allowed themselves; if presents were given them, they were to be reported as quarterage;" if marriage -- fees were tendered them, they were to be paid over to the general fund at the ensuing Conference. Few survived the hardships of itinerant life for many years. The Unites will show that in the great majority of cases they fell at their posts in less than ten years, and in many, very many cases, in less than three years of service. Of those who survived, the great majority, after ten or twelve years of traveling, married and located, and are known no more in the history of the Church. It may be interesting to note a few figures in support of this statement. In 1805 the Virginia Conference received fourteen preachers, and located four; in 1806 received fourteen and located seven; in 1807 received seventeen, and located six; in 1808 received eighteen, and located five; in 1809 received eighteen, and located eight. When we consider the number who died, or were superannuated, or expelled, we are not surprised to know that, at this rate, the Conference continued to be composed almost entirely of young men.

But we are digressing from the thread of our narrative. We have seen that John Dickens located at the close of the year 1780. He settled in Halifax county, N. C., where, it is possible, he had married.

In April, 1783, Asbury passed through this section, and preached on the fifth "at Clayton's, near Halifax, where they were firing their cannons and rejoicing in their way" over the news that the peace with Great Britain had been confirmed. Under this date, he makes the following entry in his journal: "This day I prevailed with Brother Dickens to go to New York, where I expect him to be far more useful than in his present station." During the Revolution, New York and many other important points had been dropped from the list of appointments. There was still a society there,

and Dickens had the task of reorganizing the forces of the Church after the devastation of war. The people, as a rule, were at this time little prepared to heed the gospel; they were elated and dissipated by the achievement of their freedom, and much disposed to engage in worldly affairs to the exclusion of religion.

When Dr. Coke landed in New York on the third of November, 1784, he found John Dickens stationed there, and to him he first communicated his plan for organizing an independent Church. Dickens was delighted with the idea, and it is interesting to note the measure of authority which he, and in fact nearly all of the preachers, yielded to John Wesley. No pope's opinion was ever more nearly infallible in the eyes of a Romish Church than was John Wesley's in the estimate of many of his preachers. His authority, however, was not based upon the dogma of Divine right, but upon the love of the preachers, who regarded him as their spiritual father, and their esteem for his talents. We quote from Coke's journal: "I have opened Mr. Wesley's plan to Brother Dickens, the traveling preacher stationed at this place, and he heartily approves of it; says that all the preachers most earnestly long for such a reformation, and that Mr. Asbury, he is sure, will consent to it. He presses me earnestly to make it public because -- as he justly argues -- Mr. Wesley has determined the point, though Mr. Asbury is most respectfully to be consulted in respect to every part of the execution of it."

"Mr. Wesley has determined the point," Well, indeed, has it been for American Methodism that Mr. Asbury refused to concede such a right, even to Mr. Wesley, and that the M. E. Church was organized not merely by authority of Mr. Wesley, but by the votes of the preachers. Asbury never showed more wisdom, foresight, and prudence in the whole of his life than when he declined to accept the appointment tendered him by Mr. Wesley until he should be duly elected to the office by his brethren. Had he acted otherwise, how different would have been the history of Methodism in America!

In 1785 Dickens was appointed to the Bertie Circuit in North Carolina. It seems that this field embraced a part of the old Roanoke Circuit, and he had many of the appointments which he had served when pastor of that work five years before. It seems probable, too, that he lived at the same place as when he sustained a local relation.

During this year Asbury visited this section, preaching, at "Whitaker's Chapel, near Fishing Creek, Conniconnara Chapel," and other places. He gives a mournful account of the moral declension of the people. Worldly prosperity was causing many to lose their hold upon God, and in some places spirituous liquors had removed others from their steadfastness. We cannot refrain from making, just here, an extract from his journal. Every preacher's wife will see our reason for doing it. Under date of March 26th, he writes: "We had a large congregation and a solemn time at Brother Clayton's. After meeting, returned to Brother Dickens's. He and his wife cleave to God, but there is great declension elsewhere." We feel grateful to Asbury for this mention of the preacher's wife, and while we gather what information we can in regard to the heroic men who founded Methodism in our land, we would gladly cull a flower now and then from the graves of the devoted women who shared their privations, and whose silent sufferings have been registered only by the recording angel and in the book of God.

We have now reached a very important era in the history of our Church. The organization effected the establishment of a Book Concern was determined upon, and the oversight and management of this important department of Church work was committed to John Dickens. It is probable that there was not another in the Connection so well fitted for the task. Robert Williams had been the first to publish Methodist books in America. They seem to have been chiefly reprints of Mr. Wesley's books. In the latter part of the year 1772 Mr. Asbury had received a letter from Mr. Wesley prohibiting Williams from publishing any more books without his (Wesley's) consent. What the reason for this course was we are not informed, but at the next Conference -- in June, 1773 -- the following resolutions were adopted:

"None of the preachers in America to reprint any of Mr. Wesley's books without his authority (when it can be gotten) and the consent of their brethren.

Robert Williams to sell the books he has already printed, but to print no more, unless under the above restrictions.

The history of Methodism reveals now and then some queer legislation. This is a specimen. We can understand that Mr. Wesley had a perfect right to control the publication of his books, but it is not so easy to see by what right a Conference requires its members to obtain "the consent of their brethren" before venturing the publication of a book; yet this action seems to have stopped the book business for awhile. John Dickens, who had been stationed in New York for the three preceding years, was appointed to Philadelphia as pastor of the Church and as "Book Steward." The Concern, which was afterward to become such a power for good in the land, was started on the small capital of six hundred dollars, loaned it by Dickens. The first book published was Mr. Wesley's edition of "A Kempis" a devotional book of pure sentiment, by a Roman Catholic. We have before us a copy of the Arminian Magazine, Vol. I., which was also issued this Year. These, with the Methodist Discipline, Baxter's Saints' Rest, and Wesley's Primitive Physic, completed the catalogue for this year; but so rapidly did the business grow under Dickens's skillful management that in 1797 a book committee, consisting of eight members, was appointed to assist him in his labor; nor did it cease to prosper when he had gone to his reward. In the year 1804 it was removed from Philadelphia to New York, where the business continued to increase, and a magnificent structure was erected for it, which was destroyed by fire in 1836.

As an evidence of the work accomplished by the institution which Dickens founded, we record a little incident related by Dr. Bangs. After the fire, a public meeting was held in New York to raise funds to rebuild it. At this meeting a gentleman present, a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, arose and said: "I have lived heretofore in the new countries, and I remember the time when the people who dwelt in their log-cabins had no other books to read than such as they obtained from Methodist itinerants, who carried them around their circuits in their saddlebags, and after preaching sold them to the people. In this humble way the poor people in the wilderness were supplied both with the living- word from the lips of God's messengers and with reading-matter for their meditation by the fireside when the living teacher had taken his departure. Therefore, he added, with a warmth of feeling, which brought forth a spontaneous burst of applause, "put me down one thousand dollars to help rebuild the Methodist Book Room.

But Dickens did not live to see the fruits of his labor and his loan. In 1793 the yellow fever swept Philadelphia, but he remained at his post. Again, in 1797, the fearful scourge visited the city, but still he remained. In 1798, and more terrible than ever before, the plague appeared again. Those of the inhabitants who could get away fled to a place of safety. Still he stood at his post, ministering to the sick, and pointing dying, souls to heaven. Surrounded by the sick, the sorrowing, and the dying, he wrote to Asbury: "I sit down to write, as in the jaws of death. Whether Providence may permit me to see your face, again in the flesh, I know not; but if not, I hope, through abundant mercy, we shall meet in the presence of God."

While visiting the sick and performing kindly offices for the dead, he fell a victim to the disease, and on the 27th of September, with exclamations of joy upon his lips, passed from earth to heaven. His death threw a shadow over the whole Church. He was fifty-one years of age. In the notice of his death written by his brethren and published in the minutes (and they were not given to fulsome eulogies in that day), it is said: "On his tomb might be engrave , or over his sleeping ashes with truth be pronounced, 'HERE LIETH ONE WHO, IN THE CAUSE OF GOD, NEVER FEARED NOR FLATTERED MAN.'

Dickens was the first of the American Methodist preachers to distinguish himself as a writer. Of his "Short Scriptural Catechism," issued by the Book Concern, Dr. Bangs says: "Whatever may be said in behalf of others which have been since issued from the press, this is among the most excel lent of them all, and should never be superseded by those of less intrinsic merit. It contains, in fact, a body of divinity in a few words, selected from the Holy Scriptures, arranged in due order, and in the very phraseology in which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

We have spoken of the tender friendship which existed between him and Bishop Asbury. He named for him one of his children -- the Hon. Asbury Dickens, a most estimable Christian gentleman, who was honored with many offices of public trust.

\* \* \* \* \*

12 -- JESSE LEE

The subject of this sketch is known in history rather as the apostle of Methodism to New England than as one of North Carolina's pioneer preachers, yet among them he deserves no mean mention. It was here that he first became a class-leader and exhorter, here that he preached his first sermon, here that his early years in the itinerancy were spent, and here that he endured his first sufferings "for righteousness' sake."

The period in which Jesse Lee lived was a memorable one. He saw the Established Church fall with British dominion in the States. He saw the birth of the young Republic, witnessed its baptism of blood, and beheld its growth for forty year. He witnessed the advent of Methodism into this country, saw it develop into an independent Church and extend its borders throughout the length and breadth of the land. He witnessed wonderful changes in the moral character and religious life of the people -- changes which few among the heroic spirits of his day did more to bring about than himself

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Mr. Lee kept a diary of his long and useful ministerial life, and noted not only his public labors, but his daily Christian experience, and the impressions made upon his mind by the chief actors in the grand drama of early Methodist history. This valuable record was destroyed by the fire which consumed the Methodist Book Concern, in New York, in 1836; not, however, until copious extracts had been made from it and preserved in a "Memoir of Lee," edited by the Rev. Minton Thrift, of Petersburg, Virginia, and published by the Church in 1823. To this work, and to the more comprehensive one by the Rev. Dr. L. M. Lee, nephew of Mr. Lee, we are indebted for many of the facts and incidents recorded in this sketch.

Born in obscurity, and in a time of great moral darkness; early awakened by the voice of conscience to seek after God, but with few around him to whom he could unbosom himself, or from whom he could derive religious instruction; for a long time convicted of sin and walking in the darkness of doubt and fear and gloom -- his soul at last finds perfect rest in perfect trust in Jesus. This blessed assurance of the divine favor he treasures in his heart as "the pearl of great price." Day by day we find him examining himself to see whether or not he is still united to Christ, and we need not be surprised if he sometimes seems too careful about the feelings which he thought a sense of redeeming love should excite in his breast. The Methodists of that day felt that they were falling into a "poor dying rate" of living when the story of the cross did not:

Dissolve their hearts in thankfulness,  
And melt their eyes to tears.

If they hesitated, as did Lee, to enter upon the life of a traveling preacher, it was not that they "conferred with flesh and blood." The toil and privation before them did not frighten them. The bread of life was precious to them, and they were not unwilling to break it in gladness to others; but they felt that God's messengers were called of him, and but the instruments -- the worthless instruments -- in his hands for carrying on his work. Once assured that the divine hand was upon them, that the divine command bid them "go forward," and that God's Spirit was leading them, they were ready to plunge into the ice-laden forests or the fever-laden swamps, swim freezing torrents, cross snow-covered mountains, and brave alike heat and cold, sin and death. With an unfaltering belief in their divine call to the work, they could not have been more sensible of the divine guidance had they seen the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night going before them, or the Red Sea opening, and the Jericho walls falling at their approach. Inspired with the belief that they were but the Lord's instruments, through whom it was his pleasure to perform his work, and display his power, they feared no man, did obeisance to no man, and assailed sin in high places and low places with a zeal which insured success and made Satan's strongholds tremble. We may laugh at the uncouth manner in which they sometimes delivered their message, or at the awkwardness with which they threw their thunderbolts, but it would be well for us of today if all our preachers went forth to the battle with the same assurance of success and the same confidence in the never-failing Source of their strength.

Jesse Lee was born of plain, respectable parents, in Prince George county, Virginia, sixteen miles from the city of Petersburg, on the 12th of March, 1758. As we have before intimated, it was a time and place of great spiritual darkness; the line of demarcation between the Church and the world was to be sought elsewhere than in the godly lives of either the clergy or the laity; the grand essential doctrine of Protestantism -- "salvation by faith" -- as little known, and all

that religion implied was supposed to be embraced in conforming to the ritual service of the Church. Notwithstanding this deplorable condition of affairs, we can trace the religious inclinations of the elder Mr. Lee in the names which he gave to his children -- Nathaniel, Jesse, Peter, John, Abraham, Sarah, and Rebecca, for instance, reveal the old gentleman's reverence for the Scriptures long before he made a profession of experimental religion.

As soon as young Jesse arrived at what was thought a proper age to begin to undergo the severities incident to the acquirement of knowledge in that day, he was sent to the neighborhood school. Judging from traditions which have reached us, illustrating the systems of instruction existing at that time, we may well be somewhat surprised to know that he loved books and delighted in study in after-years; but we may safely infer that he did not acquire the habit at school. However, as was the custom, the "reign of terror " for the day was begun by reading the morning service of the Church of England, on Wednesdays and Fridays; and as soon as young Jesse had learned to read with tolerable accuracy, he was required to procure a Prayer-book, take it to the church on the Sabbath, and learn the catechism. The record also adds that he would "repeat the service in a manner which did credit to one of his age." Little as he understood it, it made an impression for good on his mind for which he was grateful in after-life.

In the year 1763, a circumstance occurred which was, under God, the means of introducing religion into the family of young Lee's father. The Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," came over from London in July of this year, settled in Dinwiddie county, and in August following was elected minister of Bath parish. His soul was stirred at the deplorable state of religion, and he began to labor in a truly apostolic spirit, not confining himself to his parish, but traveling through the adjoining counties, and even into North Carolina, everywhere preaching the pure word of God in an earnest, searching manner, which was greatly blessed in a revival of genuine religion in the hearts of the people. He was little like the parsons to whom the Virginians had been accustomed, and impressed them with the fact that a dead form without the power of godliness would not suffice to save their souls. Through his influence the elder Mr. Lee was led to seek a knowledge of regenerating grace, and finally to become a happy Christian. His conversion made a deep impression upon the minds of his children. Jesse began earnestly to seek redemption through the blood of Christ, and after long walking in darkness and doubt and fear, he experienced a sweet sense of the divine forgiveness and acceptance which, it was the great concern of his after-life to cherish.

And so it came to pass that when good old Robert Williams, the Methodist pioneer, formed the first circuit in Virginia, in the year 1774, Mr. Lee, with his wife and two older sons, united with the young society. This (Brunswick) circuit soon extended its borders over fourteen counties in Virginia and two (Halifax and Bute) in North Carolina, and required the services of four traveling preachers. The wonderful revivals which followed the labors of these men were great means of grace to young Jesse, and it was not long before he began to feel that the Lord had work for him to do, but he was greatly depressed by youthful timidity, and could not get the consent of his mind to attempt to speak in public, particularly in the presence of so many of his old acquaintances.

About this time, a near relation in Halifax county, North Carolina, being left in a widowed state, he was impelled by motives of kindness to her to remove thither. In a new field he felt less



embarrassment, and as soon as he united with "the class at B. Dobs's " he was appointed class-leader, and began to hold meetings in the neighborhood, earnestly exhorting the people to flee the wrath to come and be saved from their sins. We note the fact that this part of North Carolina was at this time (March, 1778) on the Brunswick Circuit, and William Watters, Freeborn Garrettson, and John Tunnell were the traveling preachers. It was not embraced in the "North Carolina Circuit" on the minutes for this year, as we learn from his journal that Freeborn Garrettson was holding meetings at "Locke's," and other places. At the ensuing Conference, May 19, 1778, Roanoke Circuit was formed, and this territory was then ceded to it.

On the 17th of September, 1779, "at a place called the Old Barn," Lee tells us, he preached his first sermon. He had now entered upon a course of active usefulness, having spent much time in reading, such books as he could command, and which would be of service to him in expounding the word of God. About this time the Rev. John Dickens, pastor of Roanoke Circuit, desiring a few weeks' leisure to complete some writings, requested him to take his place on the circuit and supply his lack of service for a few weeks. This was his first experience as a traveling preacher.

In July of the next year (1780) the militia were drafted for the army, and it fell to Mr. Lee's lot to go. He weighed the matter in his mind, and determined that he could not, as a Christian man, bear arms; but he went to the army, which he found encamped at Thomas's Tavern, near the present city of Raleigh. When the guns were presented, he refused to take one, and was in consequence placed under guard. The officers and men, he tells us, tried to persuade him to lay aside his scruples and take up arms to defend his country, but he was not to be persuaded. Once convinced that a certain course of action was right, he was immovable. As was said of Andrew Jackson, Lee "never retraced his steps."

That night he remained under guard with a Baptist brother, and together they had prayers. Lee was happy, for he felt that he was suffering "for righteousness' sake." The next morning, "as soon as it was light," he began to sing, and the scene that followed is very touching. "Some hundreds of people" gather around him and unite "in making the plantation ring with the sweet songs of Zion." And then they kneel in prayer, and while he is praying his soul is "happy in God," and he "weeps much," and "prays loud," and "many of the poor soldiers also weep." And then the tavern-keeper, who has been awakened by the singing, and who "could not refrain from weeping" at the prayer, comes out to know if Lee will not preach that day; "it being the Sabbath." He consents, delivers his message, and "many of the people, officers as well as men, are bathed in tears" before he concludes. This was probably the first Methodist preaching in the vicinity of Raleigh. Lee, having made a good impression on the colonel by his preaching was released from confinement, and allowed to drive a wagon instead of bear arms; but he was soon after excused and allowed to return home.

In the latter part of the year he went, with Edward Dromgoole, at the request of the assistant, Caleb B. Pedicord, to form a circuit in the section of country contiguous to Edenton. It is thought that they were the first Methodist preachers who visited that town. There was a neat house of worship there, belonging to the Church of England. Of this the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew was rector. He was very kind to the Methodists, and was regarded as an inoffensive, good man. Lee and Dromgoole planned a circuit, which was afterward called Camden, and returned home. The town of Edenton, it seems, was not embraced in the circuit, as, in 1785, Dr. Coke writes that the

preachers "ought to take this place in." There is a tradition about Mr. Pettigrew's predecessor, who, it seems, was thought to pay rather much attention to his fisheries. On going to church one Sabbath morning he found the following doggerel on the door, staring him in the face:

"A very fine church,  
With a very tall steeple,  
A herring-catching parson,  
And a wicked set of people."

The following year (1783) Lee joined the Virginia Conference, and was sent as junior preacher to the Caswell Circuit in North Carolina. This, he tells us, was at that time a moral wilderness. The work being found inadequate to two preachers, he was transferred, after making one round, to Amelia Circuit, in Virginia.

In 1784 he was appointed to Salisbury Circuit, North Carolina, where his labors were greatly blessed. On the 24th of December of this year the celebrated "Christmas Conference," which organized the Church, met in the city of Baltimore, but, owing to the limited time of the notice given, he was unable to attend. During the month of February following, Asbury passed through Salisbury Circuit, on his way to Charleston, and had an appointment to preach at Colonel Hendren's, in Wilkes county. Lee attended, and was delighted to see him, as he had not met him since his election to the episcopacy, but was much surprised and mortified when Asbury appeared before the congregation assembled at the Colonel's in full canonicals-black gown, cassock, and band. The Prayer-book, which Wesley had prepared and Coke had brought over, was also brought into use. Lee looked upon these appendages as incentives to formalism, and ill suited to the primitive manners and simple form of worship of the times. At any rate, they were not long in vogue, and in a few years passed away. His displeasure did not extend, however, to Asbury, who wore them, it stopped with them. By this time he had made considerable reputation for himself as a preacher, and Asbury requested him to accompany him to Charleston, which he did, returning to his circuit, however, to finish the work of the year and meet his brethren of the Conference at Green Hill's, April 20, 1785. His labors for the next few years were mostly confined to the State of Maryland, although he frequently visited his old home in Virginia, and assisted in many of the great revivals with which the Church in that State was blessed.

While accompanying Bishop Asbury to Charleston, he met a man from New England who gave him some account of the state of religion in that section. From that time, Lee seems to have turned his eyes toward that quarter, and gradually worked his way northward. In 1789 he entered the New England States, where the greatest labors of his life were to be given, and where a rich harvest awaited him. Here he met and defeated Calvinism on its own fields, and under his preaching Methodist churches sprung up, and new circuits were formed and manned until the entire territory felt the influence of the circuit-riders. On these fields Lee richly merited the title accorded him of pioneer and father of American Methodism; but a detailed account of his labors here would be foreign to the purpose of this work.

In 1797 Bishop Asbury's failing health requiring him to take an assistant he selected Mr. Lee, who, in this capacity, traversed the entire length of the work from Canada to Georgia. He continued to fill this important position until the year 1800, when the General Conference

proceeded to elect another bishop. Lee came very near being elected, Richard Whatcoat receiving only four votes more than he.

In 1802 we find him on the Norfolk District, and traveling over the old battle-fields of early Methodism in Virginia. A letter from him to Asbury, while on this charge, may not be out of place or devoid of interest. It was published in a collection of letters in 1805, and has not, we believe, been reproduced since:

September 16, 1802.

"I received your letter from Philadelphia, and was made glad to bear of the great things that God was doing in the North. You can recollect with pleasure the glorious things that were wrought in this district in the year 1789, but the unhappy division which took place soon after, chiefly by one man, to the injury of many precious souls, was one great hindrance to the work. But the Lord has given some late gracious intimations of his presence amongst us once more -- may we hope never more to leave us as a people. The work began on Whitsuntide, at a quarterly-meeting at Mabry's Chapel, at which time and place about ten souls professed to be converted; and from thence it spread through many parts of the circuit; and I humbly hope from that time one hundred and fifty souls have been brought to God. It will give you great consolation to hear that God has visited the families of the ancient Methodists, especially in the young and rising generation; among these are the Dromgooles, Wyches, Hobbses, and Pelhams. We had thirteen that professed converting grace at Merit's Chapel, Brunswick Circuit. In Greenville there is a gracious work. It spread about Salem, from the last yearly Conference, and it came up from Brunswick Circuit. At Ira Ellis's meeting-house, at the last quarterly-meeting, we had twelve converted, if no more; among these Edward Dromgoole's second son and daughter professed to be born again. In short, the Lord is bringing home abundance of the ancient Methodist children. Sussex, that you recollect was favored in the last revival, is visited in this; I understand that about one hundred have been converted in the space of six weeks. It began at Jones's Chapel, at our quarterly-meeting; sixteen souls professed to have found a change. You will recollect how it was at this chapel in the year 1787, and God is gracious still. In the settlement of Lloyd's Chapel numbers have been brought to Christ. There has been a great and gracious work in the Amelia Circuit. There is a revival in some societies in Cumberland Circuit. Many souls have been converted in Mecklenburg Circuit. The work is considerably great in Bertie Circuit. There is a small revival in Portsmouth Circuit. Camden Circuit has gained a little. I bear that John Chalmers, Sr., has been at Norfolk, and the flame is kindled, and many are converted. Re member me in all your prayers. I am, sir, yours in love,

"Jesse Lee"

We cannot attempt to follow him in all his travels, or to record here his work; that finds its proper place on the record of the Church's history. We have only space to notice a few traits in his character before we close this sketch:

Jesse Lee was no lover of filthy lucre. After preaching near Raleigh, while under guard for refusing to bear arms, the people were so delighted with his sermon that they began to make up a

purse for him by voluntary contributions, but he ran out among them and begged them to desist, assuring them that he could not receive it.

At the Philadelphia Conference, he bitterly opposed the resolution to allow the preachers a small fee for performing the rite of matrimony. While traveling in New England, the people at one place were so pleased with him that they offered him a handsome salary to remain with them as their stationed pastor, but he only replied, "I am no hireling," and rode away. How little he accumulated of this world's goods is attested by the fact that when, in 1809, he determined to buy a small farm thinking that his itinerant days were about over, he had only two hundred dollars to advance toward paying for it after devoting twenty-six years of his life to the service of the Church.

His keen wit and hearty good humor were proverbial. Asbury, who was sometimes very despondent, tells us that he found Lee's company very desirable. More than once did his wit and humor serve him a good purpose in debate. He was quick to appreciate it in others. It is recorded of him that while traveling with several other preachers they came one day to the house of a Methodist about dinner-time. It was harvest-time. The gentleman had gathered his neighbors together to help him reap, and had provided a sumptuous dinner. The hungry preachers were seated first at the table, and made sad havoc with the before bountiful supply. They then made way for the harvesters. There was disappointment in their faces as they seated themselves at the table. One of them -- "a happy-looking genius with a dry gravity of demeanor" -- essayed to ask a blessing in these words:

O Lord, look down on us poor sinners,  
For the preachers have come and eat up our dinners.

The other preachers did not know at first how to take it, but Lee broke forth in a convulsive laugh, which showed how keenly he appreciated the joke.

This favorite weapon of his was used against him with powerful effectiveness in 1812. The question of graduating local deacons to elders orders had been discussed at every General Conference for sixteen years, and always opposed by Lee and defeated. At this Conference he was to be defeated himself, and with his own weapon. He urged his objections to admitting local preachers to elders orders with great force, and insisted that, as local preachers, they could not assume the vows and obligations required of applicants for elders orders. The grand old logician Rev. Asa Shinn silenced his battery forever by reminding the Conference that when Jesse Lee, twenty years before, was ordained an elder, he had promised to rule well his own family, and that the old bachelor had not kept his promise. The motion prevailed. The house was convulsed with laughter, and no one enjoyed the thrust more than the vanquished old elder.

He retained his anti-war principles to the last. While traveling near Petersburg, Virginia, one morning in, the latter part of his life, he was accosted by a man who expressed his determination to whip him for a rebuke given at a meeting several years previous. Lee stopped his horse, and looking him full in the face said: "You are a younger man than I am. You are strong and active, and I am old and feeble. I have no doubt but if I were disposed to fight you could whip me very easily, so it would be useless for me to resist. But as a man of God I must not strive. So, if

you are determined to whip me, if you will just wait I will get out of my gig and get down on my knees, and you may whip me as long as you please."

The man was completely disarmed. His anger was gone, his spirit was subdued, and he begged the old preacher's pardon for his rudeness. Years after, when his own locks were whitening for the tomb, and his heart had felt the subduing influence of divine grace, he told the story on himself

Mr. Lee was the author of several books. His "History of the Methodists," while very imperfect as a history is a very valuable record. Some of his published sermons are very good. Mr. Thrift gives a number of his sketches of sermons, which show him to have been a plain, practical, forcible, pointed preacher.

He was three times elected Chaplain to Congress, and filled for long years some of the most responsible positions of the Church. From the records which he has left us we learn that he was an industrious reader of such books as he thought likely to prepare him for his work as a minister of the gospel.

When the remains of Bishop Asbury were taken to Baltimore for interment, in the long train of mourners was Jesse Lee. Mr. Thrift, his biographer, and who walked by his side on the occasion, says: "Mr. Lee's countenance bespoke the emotions of his mind -- a dignified sorrow such as veterans feel while following to the grave an old companion in-arms was evinced by his words and countenance. They had suffered together, and had long fought in the same ranks; the one had gained his crown, the other was soon to receive it."

He "died well." His sun set without any sign of storm or cloud. He was taken ill at a camp-meeting on the eastern shore of Maryland, and was removed to the house of Mr. Sellers, in the town of Hillsboro. There he saw the end draw nigh, but there was light in the valley. "Glory, glory, glory! Hallelujah! Jesus reigns!" broke from his lips ere his spirit took its everlasting flight. His remains were deposited in the old Methodist burying-ground in Baltimore, and over them a plain marble slab was erected, bearing this inscription:

IN MEMORY OF  
THE REV. JESSE LEE,  
Born in Prince George county, Virginian, 1758;  
Entered the Itinerant Ministry of the M. E. Church, 1783; and  
Departed this life September, 1816,  
Aged 58 years.

A man of ardent zeal and great ability as a minister of Christ, His labors were abundantly owned of God, Especially in the New England States, in which he was truly The Apostle of American Methodism.

\* \* \* \* \*

If the reader will call to mind the appearance of Thomas H. Stockton, and the mellifluous voice of Thomas G. Lowe, he will have formed some idea of John Tunnell, one of the most eloquent and effective preachers of early Methodism, and one of the most saintly characters that ever adorned the Christian profession in any age or in any denomination. They were all orators; all consumptives. Tunnell, like Stockton, bore in his features the traces of disease and the appearance of death; like Lowe, his rich, strong, melodious voice charmed all hearers, as his eyes glowed and his pale features were lit up with the inspiration of his theme, and he poured forth upon the listener a flood of heavenly eloquence. Jesse Lee calls him a "great preacher;" Asbury calls him "a great saint." He was a man dead to the world and its vanities; a man who saw in eternity his home, and was conscious that he was marching steadily there; a man whose life had been severed from the chains of sin, and "hid with Christ in God;" a man who, in the light of God's grace, read his "title clear to mansions in the skies;" a man who loved Jesus, and desired that the whole world should know and love him; a man walking with God in the garden of faith, and merely repeating to his audience, at the place of worship, the message delivered to him in the retreat of prayer. He did not attain unto this exalted height in the spiritual life without conflicts; and his features were marked by the unmistakable lines of sorrow and humiliation, and intercession and abnegation. A man must sound the depths of human misery before he can begin to comprehend or appreciate the wonder of human redemption. He must taste of the gall and the wormwood before he is prepared to rejoice in God's free grace abounding to the chief of sinners. He must read by the heaven-lit torch of pain in his own heart the mighty mystery of life, and the solemn and awful meaning of duty and destiny, before he is prepared to declare unto others the whole counsel of God. So, then, we are prepared to know that Tunnell was called an apostolic man in his day. The supports of his faith had reached down, deep down to the eternal springs of God's purpose, God's will concerning him, and God's everlasting love toward him in Christ Jesus, and with joy he drew water from the wells of salvation. The light of a grand life-purpose shone out through the windows of his soul, and his countenance was radiant with a mighty hope. His words fell upon his hearers as the echo of the answer of divine inspiration to human entreaty. The listener felt that the man before him was just from the mountain-top, where he had conversed, almost face to face, with God. He was a true son of consolation, winning the sinner away from his sins, bearing him on the never-drooping wing of his own strong faith, opening to his enraptured vision the closed doors of the Father's gracious design, and pointing him to the glories and beauties of the kingdom and city of God, purchased for his habitation and enjoyment forever. No better picture could be drawn of Tunnell than that afforded us in a little incident that has come down to us, illustrating the impression he made upon a hardened sinner. A sailor passing one day where he was preaching was attracted by the lute-like voice of the preacher, and paused and listened. He was deeply affected, and on returning to his associates, gave expression to his feelings in these words: "I have been listening to a man who has been dead and in heaven; but he has returned, and is telling the people all about that world."

Tunnell entered the traveling connection at the Conference held at Deer Creek, Md., May 20, 1777, and was appointed, with William Watters and Freeborn Garrettson to Brunswick Circuit. This field at that time embraced several counties in Virginia, and, crossing the Roanoke, took in a part of the territory afterward known as "Roanoke Circuit." It numbered thirteen hundred and sixty members. Jesse Lee, then living in Halifax county, North Carolina, was one of the class-leaders. It had been blessed with the labors of Williams, Shadford, Dromgoole, Asbury, and Rankin, and was regarded the most important field in the Connection. Imperial old Brunswick! Not

only did it present at that time the highest type of Methodism in America, but ever since have the various branches of our common family continued to draw from its primitive territory some of their ablest defenders.

After faithfully serving this charge one year, he was sent to Baltimore Circuit, and for several years preached with great success in the Middle States. His health failing, he sought a milder climate, and removed to St. Christopher's Island, in the West Indies. Not only did the change prove beneficial, but he so won the affections of the people at his new home that he was offered by them a large salary, a furnished house, and a slave to wait upon him, if he would remain with them as their pastor. But he declined their generous offer, returned to America shortly after the Christmas Conference of 1784, where he was elected an elder, and was sent to Charleston, S. C. Methodism was just then being introduced into South Carolina, and this is the first mention of Charleston on the minutes. In 1786 he labored as an "elder" in the Middle States. The next year, at the head of a little band of kindred brave spirits, he bore the banner of Christ across the Blue Ridge, and laid the foundations of Methodism in Western North Carolina and East Tennessee. In 1788 he appears as presiding elder over Tar River, Bladen, New River, Roanoke, Caswell, New Hope, Guilford, Salisbury, Yadkin, and Halifax circuits, in North Carolina. But laborious as was this field of labor, it was on a yet harder field that the consecrated hero was to die. In 1789 he was returned to the Holston District. Although rapidly declining into consumption, he did not shrink from the hardships before him. In that wild, rugged country, amid savage beasts and savage men, he proclaimed the glad tidings of the gospel of peace; and lying down in the wilderness, with no other shelter than the star-lit canopy, we may well imagine that, like Jacob of old, he had visions of angels and dreams of heaven. Asbury, traveling through this country, learned, on July 9th, 1790, of his death at Sweet Springs. His remains were borne by his brethren over the mountains to Dew's Chapel, about four miles east of the Springs. There Asbury preached his funeral, and there he still sleeps, without a memorial. Of this occasion the old Bishop says: "I preached his funeral; my text, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." We were much blessed, and the power of God was eminently present. It is fourteen years since Brother Tunnell first knew the Lord, and he has spoken about thirteen years, and traveled through eight of the thirteen States. Few men, as public ministers, were better known or more beloved. He was a simple-hearted, artless, child-like man; for his opportunities, he was a man of good learning; had a large fund of Scripture knowledge, was a good historian, a simple, improving preacher, a most affectionate friend, and a great saint. He had been wasting and declining in health and strength for eight years past, and for the last twelve months sinking into consumption. I am humbled. O let my soul be admonished to be more devoted to God!"

He had not toiled and suffered and died in vain. The seeds he had sown sprung up and produced abundant fruit; and from his unmarked grave in the mountains a voice seems to whisper to us who have taken up the same cross and proclaim the same gospel: "Be faithful to the great trust that is committed to you. Be devoted to Christ. Serve your generation by the will of God. Look beyond for your reward."

He has been well and truly styled the Apollos of early Methodism. But not only was he an orator, he was a saint. No man in that body of devoted heroes was more holy, more heavenly-minded, more like his Master; and imbibing the same spirit, he followed to the letter the injunction of the "disciple whom Jesus loved:" "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

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## 14 -- THOMAS COKE

Some men are never fully appreciated until they are dead. They have little foibles which prevent them from directing and molding public thought and opinion, petty faults which estrange them from the great public heart, and hide their true greatness and nobleness from the public gaze; but when they are dead, when the mists of prejudice and dislike, which their unfortunate manner or imprudent zeal has gathered, clear away, and the one great, noble, loving, unselfish purpose, which ran through their whole lives and shaped them, looms up in pure light which shines at last over their graves, it is then that they find their proper place in the roll of the world's benefactors.

Such a man was Thomas Coke, the first "Superintendent" of the Methodist Church. Born at Brecon, Wales, in the year 1747, he was educated at Oxford, and took orders in the Established Church. His superior talents and acquirements are attested by the fact that the degree of D.C.L. was conferred upon him when only twenty-eight years of age.

It is possible that the very consciousness of his intellectual superiority unfitted him in a measure for the office of an American Methodist bishop. He could not but be aware of his advantage, in this respect, over his brethren; and nothing is more natural than for such a consciousness to develop a rather dictatorial spirit. Again, the life of student is not suited to the study of human nature. Nothing but rough contact with the world can bring that knowledge of men without which it is impossible to attain the plane of highest usefulness. Coke presented the spectacle of a man in hearty sympathy with his fellow-men in some respects, and yet out of harmony with them. Unflagging energy and zeal, and great consecration to the cause of Christ, marked his career from beginning to end. He made no reservation in the surrender which he made of himself to Christ -- all of the ardent zeal of his Welsh temperament was enlisted in the great work of leading the world to Jesus. To serve his generation was the great end and aim of his life -- the one purpose to which every thing else was made subordinate. A more unselfish character is not recorded in the annals of Methodism, and had he possessed the power to adapt himself to the primitive simplicity of the American people of his day, had he not been separated from them by living in a sphere of advanced ideas, had he possessed the capacity of adapting himself to human thought and feeling in its various stages of development -- as did his colleague, Francis Asbury -- Coke would have been to American what Wesley was to English Methodism.

That he had foibles which disqualified him for the office of a great leader, that he was frequently wanting in prudence and in the consideration due to the views of others who differed from him in opinion, will appear in the short narration of his life which we shall give in this sketch; but that these faults are to be regretted and excused rather than censured, we trust will likewise appear; and it is due to his memory to say that no evidence of inappreciation from his brethren, no semblance of disrespect on their part, which he doubtless sometimes saw and keenly felt, was ever allowed to dampen in the least the ardor of his interest in their welfare. "Over every such instance of human frailty," says Dr. Bangs, "he threw the mantle of forgiveness and oblivion;" and it is doubtful whether the great religious movement of the last century produced a character



who will be longer remembered, or whose influence will be longer and more widely felt. This is saying much, but we say it in view of his influence upon the missionary spirit of the Church.

He was the only child of wealthy parents; and after entering upon his ministry, his mind wavered under the infidelity which at that time pervaded the University and the higher circles of English society. He was appointed to South Pemberton parish, Somersetshire, and pursued his labors with great earnestness and in deep religious anxiety. The writings of Shirlock dismissed his doubts, yet he had no experimental knowledge of religion, but was earnestly inquiring after God. An interview with Maxfield, Wesley's first lay preacher, and frequent interviews with an untutored Methodist class-leader, whom he chanced to meet in Devonshire, proved under God to be the means of leading him to the rest of faith in Christ. The ignorant laborer he found to know more of the peace of assurance, justification, and adoption than the educated divine had learned, and together they would converse and pray until Coke, too, could rejoice in the same confidence. And now his preaching became too evangelical for his congregation. A rich and deep religious experience soon developed an earnestness in the pulpit which gave offense to the Churchmen. He was soon accused of having Methodist proclivities, and was admonished by the bishop, threatened by a mob among his parishioners, and finally dismissed. In this dilemma he went to Mr. Wesley, and formally connected himself with the Methodists. "On the day," says Dr. Stevens, "that he left his parish to cast his lot with the Methodists, the bells were rung, and hogsheads of cider were brought out for the free use of the mob. Petherton celebrated as a jubilee its deliverance from a " Methodist curate," but it gave to the world a man who was to rank second only to Wesley in the success of American Methodism, and to be the first Protestant bishop of the New World." After connecting himself with the Methodists, he was first appointed to the city of London, where he preached with great acceptability to large congregations, and his labors were crowned with many seals to his ministry. Wesley held him in high esteem, and called him his "right-hand." He rendered valuable service to Wesley and to English Methodism in 1784, in procuring the confirmation of the celebrated "Deed of Declaration," which defined and gave legal existence to the Methodist Conference.

At the Conference held at Leeds this year it was seen to be necessary to make some arrangements for ordaining preachers in America. The Revolutionary War had left the Church of England no jurisdiction in the States, and the Protestant Episcopal Church had not then been organized. The great majority of the Episcopal preachers had left the country at the outbreak of the war, and had returned to England. There seemed but one way out of the dilemma, and Mr. Wesley took steps to organize a Church where his own had no longer any organization. The Prayer-book was abridged for their use, and on the 2d of September, 1784, at Bristol, and assisted by other ordained ministers of the Church of England, Wesley ordained Coke, and instructed him to consecrate likewise Mr. Asbury -- the two to be "joint superintendents " of the work in America. The credentials Wesley gave to Coke read as follows:

"To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyterian of the Church of England, sendeth greeting.

"Whereas many of the people in the Southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the Doctrines and Discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's

Supper, according to the usage of the said Church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers:

"Know all men that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands and prayer (being assisted by other ordained ministers), Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, a Presbyterian of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 2d day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

"John Wesley"

With this commission, and with a letter from Mr. Wesley setting forth his reasons for the step he had taken, Coke, accompanied by Whatcoat and Vasey, who had also been appointed to America by the Conference at Leeds, landed in New York on the 3d of November following. On the 15th they met Mr. Asbury, at Barrett's Chapel, in Delaware, and Coke opened to him the plan. With superior judgment and foresight, Asbury asked that a Conference of all the traveling preachers be called; that the matter be first duly considered and determined by them; and declined the position to which Wesley had appointed him until he should be duly elected thereto by his brethren. Accordingly it was decided to hold a Conference in Baltimore, to begin its session on the 24th of December following. "Freeborn Garrettson was sent off like an arrow, the whole length of the continent, or of our work," says Dr. Coke, "to gather all the preachers together in Baltimore on Christmas-eve."

At this Conference it was decided to form the societies into a Methodist Episcopal Church, making the episcopal office elective, and Coke and Asbury were, by the votes of the preachers, elected "superintendents" of the same. Of the meeting, Coke makes this mention in his journal:

Baltimore, Friday, Dec. 24-Jan. 2, 1785. On Christmas-eve we opened our Conference, which has continued ten days. I admire the body of American preachers. We had near sixty of them present. The whole number is eighty-one. They are indeed a body of devoted, disinterested men, but most of them are young. The spirit in which they conducted themselves in choosing the elders was most pleasing. I believe they acted without being at all influenced either by friendship or resentment or prejudice, both in choosing and rejecting. One elder was elected for Antigua -- Jeremiah Lambert; two for Nova Scotia-Freeborn Garrettson and James Cromwell; and ten for the States -- John Tunnel, John Haggerty, James O'Kelly, Leroy Cole, William Gill, Nelson Reed, Henry Willis, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, and Beverly Allen. They also elected three deacons -- John Dickens, Caleb Boyer, and Ignatius Pigman. Brothers Tunnell, Willis, and Allen, of the elected elders, were not present at the Conference; nor Brother Boyer, of the deacons. The Lord, I think, was peculiarly present while I was preaching my two pastoral sermons, the first when I ordained Brother Asbury a bishop, the second when we ordained the elders. God was indeed pleased to honor me before the people. At six every morning one of the preachers gave the people a sermon. The weather was exceedingly cold, and therefore Brother Asbury thought it best to

indulge the people, and our morning congregations held out and were good to the last. At noon I preached, except on the Sundays and other ordination days, when service began at ten o'clock, it generally lasting on those occasions four hours; and the chapel was full every time. At six in the evening a traveling preacher preached in the Town chapel, another in the Point chapel (a chapel about half a mile out of town), and another in the Dutch church, which the pious minister, Mr. Otterbein, gave us the use of in the evenings during the Conference. (Brother Asbury has so high an opinion of Mr. Otterbein that we admitted him, at Brother Asbury's desire, to lay hands on Brother Asbury with us on his being ordained bishop.) By this means the congregations were divided, otherwise we should not have had half room enough for the people who attended in the evening. Our friends in Baltimore were so kind as to put up a large stove, and to back several of the seats, that we might hold our Conference comfortably. Before I left the town I met our principal friends, who promised me to put up a gallery in our Town church (for so we call our preaching-houses now) immediately. One of the week-days at noon I made a collection toward assisting our brethren who are going to Nova Scotia and Antigua, and our friends generously gave fifty pounds currency (30 sterling)."

From this Conference Coke started out upon an extensive preaching tour through the country. He was met by large congregations. On the 15th of March, 1785, he reached Portsmouth, Va., on his way to North Carolina, as he tells us, "with only a part of a dollar left." This town was then embraced in what was called "Hampton Circuit" -- a circuit of no mean dimensions, certainly, extending, as it did, to "Pasquotank," N. C. This field was manned by a single preacher, James Morris.

Dr. Coke was highly displeased to find that Mr. Morris had not published his appointment. A quotation from his journal may serve both to give the reason for this seeming neglect and also to illustrate a feature in the Doctor's character. He says:

"Brother Morris (the only preacher on this circuit) has neglected to publish me, so that the people have had hardly any notice, for which reason I suppose my congregations throughout the circuit will be comparatively small. Indeed he has committed a much worse neglect than this, for he has not preached in most parts of the circuit for these two months, and in some places not these ten weeks, although the people have regularly attended at the accustomed times and gone away like fools." He states as the reason, the delicate state of Morris's wife's health, which he evidently thought no excuse at all, and adds: "If I knew of any preacher to supply his place, I would suspend him immediately."

When the scope of territory embraced in the circuit and the facilities for traveling are taken into consideration, some in these days will think that the good Doctor was a little severe on "Brother Morris;" but his views were in wonderful harmony with the spirit of the early Methodist movement. With the grand old pioneers, "the men were nothing, the work was every thing," and we are not surprised to find in the minutes of the ensuing Conference the name of James Morris in answer to the question, "Who desist from traveling?"

On the 23d of March, Coke reached Edenton, which, he tells us, was "a most wicked place." The people seemed to prefer the court-house -- an elegant place -- so he went there and "preached to a large congregation." There "seemed nothing but dissipation and wickedness" at the

tavern at which he stopped, "and yet the landlord would have nothing for his dinner." Of the Episcopal minister in Edenton, Coke wrote: "I suppose Mr. Pettigrew does as much good in Edenton as a little chicken." This uncalled for remark about a man who had been exceedingly courteous and hospitable to the Methodist preachers was published in the *Arminian Magazine* for July, 1789. We are glad to know that the Doctor afterward felt called upon to apologize for it.

From Edenton, preaching at various points on the way, he proceeded to Roanoke Chapel. This was a notable church in those days. Coke was painfully impressed with the moral destitution of the people in the country through which he passed. At Roanoke Chapel he met, for the first time, the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, of the Church of England, a man who by his courteous demeanor and hearty sympathy had drawn to him the hearts of all the Methodist preachers. But there was a point of difference between the English Doctor and the Virginia minister. The abolition of slavery was an end which Coke desired with all his soul to bring about. The condition of the slaves enlisted his hearty sympathy, and he was far from prudent in the manifestations of his zeal. Mr. Jarratt could not be convinced that slavery was wrong, and Coke, with characteristic impetuosity, wrote: "The secret is, he has twenty-five slaves of his own." This remark was also published, but, on mature reflection, the superintendent wrote an apologetic letter to Jarratt, which gave satisfaction. We give these little incidents because they reveal the man's character in living colors. They will not lower our estimate of his true nobility of soul when we remember his readiness to make amends when convinced that he was wrong.

After preaching at various places along the line between Virginia and North Carolina, we find him, on the 19th of April, at Green Hill's, in Franklin county, where the first Conference held in North Carolina (and it was the first Annual Conference held in the United States after the organization of the Church) met on the next day. This event deserves more than a passing notice. It is invested with a peculiar interest to us as its one hundredth anniversary approaches. Of this Conference Bishop Asbury, with characteristic brevity, says, under date of April 19, 1785: "I met Dr. Coke at Green Hill's that evening. Here we held our Conference in great peace." But the Doctor has favored us with a little more information. The question of providing for a North Carolina Conference has become quite a serious one in these days since that body has grown to such unweildy proportions. Let us see how it was done -- April 20, 1785. Coke tells us: "There were about twenty preachers or more in one house, and by making or laying beds on the floors there was room for all." There seems to have been a little jar on the slavery question, which Coke took pains to make a prominent one at this Conference, as at every other place he visited. Jesse Lee was present, and advocated a more deliberate and prudent policy in regard to slavery than that to which the Doctor was committed. Coke concluded that he was not friendly to the abolition idea, and mentioned this as an objection to the passage of Lee's character. This fired the heart of the young pioneer, and words of bitterness passed, but we learn from Minton Thrift's "Memoirs on Lee" that the Doctor, discovering his mistake, "with true nobleness of soul made an apology, which was satisfactory, and the breach was healed." The Conference held three days, and was a time of rejoicing. There had been a gain of nine hundred and ninety-one in this division during the year, and the borders had been extended into Georgia. Asbury had brought good news from Charleston, where a door had been opened to him. Beverly Allen, who "had all South Carolina to range in," was here ordained deacon and elder, sent to "Georgia Circuit," and two preachers were sent to South Carolina. The house in which this Conference was held is yet standing and in good repair. It

is situated about one mile south of Louisburg, the property of Dr. William R. King, of that town, a grandson of the pioneer preacher, John King.

From Green Hill's, Coke, in company with Asbury, went to Mason's, in Virginia, where another Conference was held May 1. Here he met the spirit of opposition to the minute against slavery (which had been passed at the "Christmas Conference"), which gave him no little trouble, rendered him very unpopular in many places, and sometimes drew upon him threats of uncivil treatment. He says: "A great many principal friends met us here to insist on a repeal of our slave rules, but when they found that we had thoughts of withdrawing from the circuit on account of the violent spirit of some leading men, they drew in their horns and sent us a very humble letter, entreating that preachers might be appointed for their circuit."

Again he says: "After mature consideration, we formed a petition, a copy of which was given to every preacher, entreating the General Assembly of Virginia to pass a law for the immediate or gradual emancipation of all the slaves. It is to be signed by all the freeholders we can procure, and those I believe will not be few."

In the interest of this measure, and having a letter of introduction from General Roberdeau, Coke and Asbury called on General George Washington, at Mt. Vernon, on the 26th instant following. They were well received and much encouraged. But notwithstanding the petition bore the signature and the project carried with it the influence of the Father of his Country, it met so great opposition and so little sympathy that the enterprise was soon abandoned in despair, and the Conference, unable to enforce them, had to cancel the slave-rules at the ensuing meeting. Of the visit to Mt. Vernon, Coke says:

"His Excellency's seat is very elegant, built upon the great river Potomac, for the improvement of the navigation of which he is carrying on jointly with the State some amazing plans. He received us very politely, and was very open to access; but he is quite the plain country gentleman, and he is a friend of mankind. After dinner, we desired a private interview, and opened to him the grand business on which we came. He asked us to spend the evening and lodge at his house, but our engagement at Annapolis the following day would not admit of it. I was loath to leave him, for I greatly love and esteem him, and if there was no pride in it, would say that we are surely kindred spirits, formed in the same mold. O that my God would give him the witness of his Spirit!"

On the first of June, Coke met his brethren at the Conference in Baltimore, and after presiding with Asbury over the deliberations of the body, he took affectionate leave of them and embarked for Europe. He afterward made eight visits to this country, defraying the expenses of each voyage out of his own private means.

But the peculiar relations which he sustained to Methodism in America and in Great Britain were to cause him no little annoyance. The conduct of all the British preachers in America, except Asbury, during the Revolution; their loyalty to the king, and the manner in which they had left their flocks in the wilderness and returned to England; and the unfortunate and imprudent, if not Quixotic, attempt of Mr. Wesley to induce the Americans to lay down their arms and own the dominion of the Crown, had created in the minds of the American preachers a prejudice to their

brethren on the other side of the water. Dr. Coke, by his unfortunate and abrupt manner and his imprudent zeal in the cause of emancipation, had done little to heal the wounds, and his brethren in America were prepared to view with ill favor his long absences in Europe.

In 1787 he reached this country just in time to attend the first Conference of the year, held at Salisbury, North Carolina, on the 17th of March. From that point he traveled extensively through various parts of the country, preaching to large congregations; but when he reached the Baltimore Conference, he found that his brethren were much displeased with him because he had, while in Europe, so far transcended the powers rightfully pertaining to his office as to change the time and place for holding the Conference after those matters had been determined by that body itself. This, together with some minor complaints, induced Coke to give them the following certificate:

"I do solemnly engage by this instruaent that I never will, by virtue of my office as superintendent of the Methodist Church, during my absence from the United States of America, exercise any government whatever in said Methodist Church during my absence from the United States. And I do also engage that I will exercise no privilege in the said Church when present in the United States except that of ordaining according to the regulations and laws already existing, or hereafter to be made in said Church, and that of presiding when present in Conference; and, lastly, that of traveling at large. Given under my hand the second day of May, in the year 1787.

Thomas Coke.

"Witness: John Tunnell, John Hagerty, Nelson Reid."

In 1789 a circumstance occurred which drew upon him unfavorable comment in some quarters. The Conference this year met in New York, at the same time that the first Congress under the new Constitution assembled in that city. Bishop Asbury asked the Conference to consider the propriety of presenting, as a Church, a congratulatory address to General Washington, who had been recently inaugurated President of the United States, expressing their approbation of the new Constitution, and professing their allegiance to the Government. The Conference unanimously recommended the measure, and requested Bishops Asbury and Coke to prepare the address. It was written and read first before the Conference. The Revs. John Dickens and Thomas Morrell were delegated to wait on the President, present him a copy, and request him, to appoint a day and hour when he would receive the bishops and their message. This being done, when the appointed time arrived Asbury and Coke waited on the President, and Asbury read the following address:

"To the President of the United States."

"Sir: We, the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, humbly beg leave, in the name of our society, collectively, in these United States, to express to you the warm feelings of our hearts and our sincere congratulations on your appointment to the Presidentship of these States. We are conscious, from the signal proofs you have already given, that you are a friend to mankind, and under this established idea place as full confidence in your wisdom and integrity for the preservation of those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of God and the glorious Revolution, as we believe ought to be reposed in man.

"We have received the most grateful satisfaction from the humble and entire dependence on the great Governor of the universe which you have repeatedly expressed, acknowledging him the Source of every blessing, and particularly of the most excellent Constitution of these States, which is at present the admiration of the world, and may in future become the great exemplar for imitation; and hence we enjoy a holy expectation that you will always prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine, vital religion, the grand end of our creation and present probationary existence. And we promise you our fervent prayers to the throne of grace, that God Almighty may endue you with all the graces and gifts of his Holy Spirit, that he may enable you to fill up your important station to his glory, the good of his Church, the happiness and prosperity of the United States, and the welfare of mankind.

"Signed in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church."  
Thomas Coke  
Francis Asbury  
New York, May 29, 1789.

The following is Washington's reply:

"To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

"Gentlemen: I return to you individually, and through you to your society, collectively, in the United States, my thanks for the demonstrations of affection, and the expressions of joy offered in their behalf, on my late appointment. It shall be my endeavor to manifest the purity of my inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desires to contribute whatever may be in my power toward the civil and religious liberties of the American people. In pursuing this line of conduct, I hope, by the assistance of Divine Providence, not altogether to disappoint the confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me.

"It always affords me satisfaction when I find a concurrence of sentiment and practice between all conscientious men in acknowledgments of homage to the great Governor of the universe, and in professions of support to a just civil government. After mentioning that I trust the people of every denomination, who demean themselves as good citizens, will have occasion to be convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine, vital religion, I must assure you, in particular, that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the throne of grace for me, and that I likewise implore the divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community.

"George Washington."

This action of the Methodist Conference was followed by similar proceedings on the part of other denominations; but the fact that Dr. Coke, a subject of the British Crown, signed the address -- eulogizing as it did the American Constitution and President -- exposed him to severe censure on the part of his English brethren; and, in America, sectarian hate made an attack upon him, accusing him with stirring up the English people against the colonies, by a bitter address against the movement for independence, during the progress of the war. From the latter charge he was, however, successfully defended by his friends.

At the Conference held in Baltimore in 1796, some of the preachers, on account of the extension of the work, the ill health of Bishop Asbury, and the long absences of Dr. Coke, agitated the question of electing and consecrating one of the members of the Conference an assistant bishop. Dr. Coke, however, put an end to this discussion by making, in writing, the following offer of himself, which was gladly accepted:

"I offer myself to my American brethren entirely to their service, all I am and have, with my talents and labors in every respect, without any mental reservation whatever, to labor among them and to assist Bishop Asbury; not to station the preachers at any time when he is present; but to exercise all the episcopal duties when I hold a Conference in his absence and by his consent, and to visit the West Indies and France, when there is an opening and I can be spared. Signed:

Thomas Coke.

"Conference-room, Baltimore, Oct. 27, 1796."

On his return to England, his brethren there expressed great regret at hearing of this action on his part, and desiring him to preside over their deliberations, and greatly needing his services to heal some divisions among them, they addressed an affectionate letter to their American brethren, stating the pressing necessity for the presence and influence of Dr. Coke among them, asking relief for him from the obligations he had made to the General Conference, and requesting his speedy return. This letter Coke brought with him on his visit to America in 1797, and it was presented and read to the Virginia Conference. No definite action could be taken upon it by any other body than the General Conference, which did not meet until 1800, but the following extract from Asbury's letter, in reply, will show us the estimate placed upon the Doctor's services:

"Respected Fathers And Brethren: You, in your brotherly kindness, were pleased to address a letter to us, your brethren and friends in America, expressing your difficulties and desires concerning our beloved brother Dr. Coke, that he might return to Europe to heal the breach which designing men have been making among you, or prevent its threatened overthrow. We have but one grand responsive body, which is our General Conference, and it was in and to this body the Doctor entered his obligations to serve his brethren in America. No yearly Conference, no official character, dare assume to answer for that grand federal body.

"By the advice of the yearly Conference, now sitting in Virginia, and the respect I bear to you, I write to inform you that in our own persons and order we consent to his return and partial continuance with you, and earnestly pray that you may have much peace, union, and happiness together. May you find that your divisions end in a greater union, order, and harmony of the body, so that the threatened cloud may blow over, and your divisive party may be of as little consequence to you as ours is to us.

Acting, upon this consent of his brethren, Coke returned at once to Great Britain, where his labors and influence met, in their results, the high expectations of his brethren. He was the embodiment of the spirit of missions in the British Conference, laying extensive plans for promoting the cause, and traveling from house to house soliciting subscriptions to carry on the



work. During the Irish rebellion in 1798 he was of great service in successfully shielding, the Methodist preachers there from all blame.

At the General Conference for 1800 he appeared before his American brethren to fulfill his engagement or be released. That body, after deliberating upon the letter from the British Conference requesting his return, passed the following resolution:

"That in compliance with the address of the British Conference to let Dr. Coke return to Europe, this General Conference consent to his return, upon condition that he come back to America as soon as his business will allow, but certainly by the next General Conference."

The permission granted in the above resolution was renewed at the General Conference of 1804, when Coke appeared with a similar request from the British Conference; and in 1808 he was granted an indefinite leave of absence, subject to recall when needed.

The two great objects which Coke had in view in America were the abolition of slavery and the establishment of the ill-fated Cokesbury College. The latter enterprise had a history which deserves a passing notice in this sketch. The first subscribers to the project were Gabriel Long and Brother Bustion, of Halifax county, North Carolina. About five thousand dollars was raised. A beautiful situation in the town of Abingdon, about twenty-five miles from Baltimore, was obtained, and the building was commenced. All went well for ten years, when it was consumed by fire. Un dismayed by this misfortune, the energetic Coke went to work again, bought a large building in Baltimore for twenty-two thousand dollars, and "Cokesbury College" was reopened with fairer prospects than ever; but a similar fate awaited it. Through the carelessness of some of the boys, it too was consumed by fire; and the cause of education was for several years almost abandoned in despair by the Church.

In 1805 he married a very wealthy lady, who, possessed of a kindred spirit, laid her fortune upon the missionary altar, and enabled Coke to carry out many of the plans he had projected. He survived her about three years.

Shortly after his marriage, he made a proposition to his American brethren to come over and make America his permanent home, provided the Continent be divided in nearly as possible between himself and Bishop Asbury. This proposition, the acceptance of which would have been a sad step toward diocesan episcopacy, was respectfully declined.

We cannot pass over Dr. Coke's career in America without noticing the proposition that be made to Bishop White in 1791, in regard to the union of the Methodist with the Protestant Episcopal Church. So much has been argued from and written about his celebrated confidential letter to Bishop White that we give the whole correspondence.

It has been charged that Dr. Coke sought reordination at the hands of Bishop White. This, the reader will observe, he denies. The whole truth of the matter seems to be that Dr. Coke, on the withdrawal of James O'Kelly and his party, feared the dismemberment of the whole Methodist Church, and thought that a union with the Protestant Episcopal Church was the greatest end that could be desired. It seems that he was willing to submit to reordination if that proved to be the

only means of bringing about the desired end; but he declared himself to have ever been perfectly satisfied with the validity of his ordination. We give below his letter to Bishop White:

"Right Rev. Sir: Permit me to intrude a little on your time upon a subject of great importance. You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that Church. For many years I was prejudiced, even, I think, to bigotry, in favor of it; but through a variety of causes and incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went farther in the separation of our Church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did, indeed, solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place. He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them (there being very few of the clergy of the Church of England then in the States), went farther I am sure, than he would have gone if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am certain of, that he is now sorry for the separation.

"But what can be done for a reunion, which I much wish for, and to accomplish which Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people is very strong toward him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small. Both his and mine would readily and to the utmost be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object, if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to unite.

"It is even to your Church an object of great importance. We have now above sixty thousand adults in our society in these States, and about two hundred and fifty traveling ministers and preachers; besides a great number of local preachers, very far exceeding the number of traveling preachers; and some of these local preachers are men of very considerable abilities. But if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their Church -- viz., by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship -- they will make a larger body than you probably conceive. The society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average to give us our stated congregations, which will then amount to three hundred thousand. And if the calculation which, I think, some eminent writers have made be just, three-fifths of mankind are un- adult (if I may use the expression) at any given period, it will follow that all the families the adults of which form our societies in these States amount to seven hundred and fifty thousand. About one-fifth of these are blacks.

The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia, and in breadth from the Atlantic to Lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Red Stone, Holstein, Kentucky, Cumberland, etc.

But there are many hindrances in the way. Can they be removed?

Our ordained ministers will not, ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I do not think that the generality of them -- perhaps none of them -- would refuse to submit to reordination, if other hindrances were removed out of the way. I must here observe that

between sixty and seventy only of the two hundred, and fifty have been ordained presbyters, and about sixty deacons (only). The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

The other preachers would hardly submit to a reunion if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops in America, because, though they are all, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides they would argue, If the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a reunion is so sincere and earnest that these difficulties almost make me tremble; and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success; for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well as in Europe, is, I doubt not, increasing, yet Mr. Asbury, whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply; nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.

In Europe, where some steps had been taken tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday, the 17th of May. If that be agreeable, I will beg of you just to signify it in a note, directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market street, Philadelphia; or, if you please, by a few lines sent me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers's, Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw, and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge on these subjects.

I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley be circumstantially known. I must therefore beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw till I have the honor of seeing you. Thus, you see, I have made a bold venture on your honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject, as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful. I have notwithstanding been guilty of inadvertences. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, which gave him great satisfaction; and for the same reason, I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew. When I was last in America, I prepared and corrected a great many things for our magazines -- indeed, almost every thing that was printed, except some loose notes which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating that no part of them might be printed which would be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose), be suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above-mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry; and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgment more public, though Mr. Jarratt does not desire it.

I am not sure whether I have not offended you, sir, by accepting of one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw, of the use of your churches about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did

offend (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said on the subject to Mr. Richard Dellam, of Abingdon), I sincerely beg your and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I will endeavor to amend. But alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor -- that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter, and take no more notice of it, for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated from each other if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent wishes desire. But if you will further negotiate the business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the meantime permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself, right reverend sir, your very humble servant in Christ,

Thomas Coke  
Richmond, Va., April 24, 1791.  
The Right Rev. Father in God, Bishop White

Bishop White's answer reads:

Dear Sir: My friend Dr. Magaw has this day put into my hands your letter of the 24th of April, which I trust I received with a sense of the importance of the subject, and of the answer I am to give to God for the improvement of every opportunity of building up his Church. Accordingly, I cannot but make choice of the earliest of the two ways you point out to inform you that I shall be very happy in the opportunity of conversing with you at the time proposed.

You mention two difficulties in the way of the proposed union; and there are further difficulties which suggest themselves to my mind. But I can say of the one and of the other that I do not think them insuperable, provided there be a conciliatory disposition on both sides. So far as I am concerned, I think that such a disposition exists.

It has not been my temper, sir, to despond in regard to the extension of Christianity in this new world; and in addition to the promises of the great Head of the Church, I have always imagined that I perceived the train of second causes so laid by the good providence of God as to be promoting what we feel to be his will in this respect. On the other hand, I feel the weight of most powerful discouragements in the increasing number of the avowed patrons of infidelity, and of others who pretend to confess the divine authority of our holy religion while they endeavor to strip it of its characteristic doctrines. In this situation it is rather to be expected that distinct Churches, agreeing in fundamentals, should make mutual sacrifices for a union than that any Church should divide into two bodies, without a difference being even alleged to exist in any leading point. For the preventing of this, the measure which you may propose cannot fail of success, unless there be on one side or on both a most lamentable deficiency of Christian temper.

I remember the conversation you allude to with Mr. Dellam. I hope I did not express myself uncharitably, or even indelicately. As to personal offense toward me, it is out of the question, for I had not at that time any connection with St. Paul's Church. But this, as well as the other parts of your letter, may be discoursed of at the proposed interview. Therefore, with assurance of the

desired secrecy, and with requesting you to accept a like promise of candor to that which I credit from you, I conclude myself at present,

Your brother in Christ, and very humble servant,  
"W. W."

This correspondence, as will be seen, was regarded by both parties as strictly confidential, but was, in the summer of 1804, communicated by Bishop White to one preacher in the Protestant Episcopal, and to one in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in answer, according to his version, to their inquiries. "The matter being variously reported," says he, "a copy of the letter was, after some lapse of time, delivered to the Rev. Dr. Kemp, of Maryland, and at last published in a controversy raised in the diocese." On the publication of this letter, a storm of indignation, on the part of the American Methodist, was excited against Dr. Coke, and an explanation was demanded. Below we give all that part of his letter to the General Conference of 1808 which refers to the matter:

"Near Leeds (Yorkshire), Jan. 29, 1808.

To the, General American Conference.

My Very Dear Brethren:..... I find that a letter which I wrote to Bishop White in 1791 has been animadverted upon, though, if I mistake not, the letter itself has not yet been published.

There are very few of you who can possibly recollect any thing of what I am next going to add. Many of you were then only little children. We had at that time no regular General Conferences. One only had been held in the year 1784. I had, indeed, with great labor and fatigue, a few months before I wrote this letter to Bishop White, prevailed on James O'Kelly, and the thirty-six traveling preachers who had withdrawn with him from all connection with Bishop Asbury, to submit to the decision of a General Conference. This Conference was to be held in about a year and a half after my departure from the States. And at this Conference -- held, I think, the latter end of 1792 -- I proposed and obtained that great blessing to the American Connection -- a permanency for General Conferences, which were to be held at stated times. Previously to the holding of this Conference (except the general one held in 1784), there were only small district meetings, excepting the council which was held at Cokesbury College, either in 1791 or 1792. Except the union which most justly subsisted between Bishop Asbury on the one hand, and the preachers and people on the other, the Society, is such, taken as an aggregate, was almost like a rope of sand. I longed to see matters on a footing likely to be permanent. Bishop Asbury did the same; and it was that view of things, I doubt not, which led Bishop Asbury, the year before, to call, and to endeavor to establish, a regular council, who were to meet him annually at Cokesbury. In this point I differed in sentiment from my venerable brother. But I saw the danger of our situation, though I well knew that God was sufficient for all things. I did verily believe then that under God the Connection would be more likely to be saved from convulsions by a union with the old Episcopal Church than any other way -- not by a dereliction of ordination, sacraments, and the Methodist discipline, but by a junction on proper terms. Bishop White, in two interviews I had with him in Philadelphia, gave me reason to believe that this junction might be accomplished with ease. Dr. Magaw was perfectly sure of it. Indeed (if Mr. Ogden, of New Jersey, did not mistake in

the information he gave me), a canon passed the House of Bishops of the old Episcopal Church in favor. Bishop Madison, according to the same information, took the canon to the lower house, 'but it was there thrown out,' said Mr. Ogden -- to whom I explained the whole business -- because they did not understand the full meaning of it. Mr. Ogden added that he spoke against it because he did not understand it; but that it would have met with his warm support had he understood the full intention of it.

I had provided in the fullest manner, in my indispensably necessary conditions, for the security, and I may say for the independence, of our discipline and places of worship. But I thought (perhaps erroneously, and I believe so now) that our field of action would have been exceedingly enlarged by that junction, and that myriads would have attended our ministry in consequence of it who were at that time prejudiced against us. All these things unitedly considered led me to write the letter, and meet Bishop White and Dr. Magaw in Philadelphia.

But it may be asked why did I not consult Bishop Asbury before I took these steps. I answer, It was impossible. I was at and near Philadelphia, and he was somewhere in the South. We had finished our district meetings, and he was to be in the State of Maryland about the time of my sailing for England. I wanted that every thing, should be prepared against my return -- God willing -- in about a year and a half, for further consideration; that Bishop White, etc., should have time to consult their convention, and that I might also lay the matter before Bishop Asbury, and correspond with him on the subject, and after that, if proper, bring the business before the General Conference, which was to be held in order to take into consideration of James O'Kelly's division. Before I sailed for England, I met Bishop Asbury, at New Castle, in the State of Delaware (from which place I went on board), and laid the matter before him, who, with that caution which peculiarly characterized him, gave me no decisive opinion on the subject.

The next objection (and I think the only important one remaining) is the following: If you did not think that the episcopal ordination of Mr. Asbury was valid, why did you ordain him? Was there not duplicity in this business?' I answer:

1. I never, since I could reason on those things, considered the doctrine of the uninterrupted apostolic succession of bishops as at all valid or true.
2. I am of our late venerable father Mr. Wesley's opinion -- that the order of bishops and presbyters is one and the same.
3. I believe that the episcopal form of Church-government is the best in the world, when the episcopal power is under due regulations and responsibility.
4. I believe that it is well to follow the example of the primitive Church as exemplified in the word of God, by setting apart persons for great ministerial purposes by the imposition of hands, but especially those who are appointed for offices of the first rank in the Church.

From all I have advanced you may easily perceive, my dear brethren, that I do not consider the imposition of hands, on the one hand, as essentially necessary for any office in the Church; nor

do I, on the other hand, think that the repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office when important circumstances require it, is at all improper.

If it be granted that my plan of union with the old Episcopal Church was desirable (which now, I think, was not so, though I most sincerely believed it to be so at that time), then, if the plan could not have been accomplished without a repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, I did believe, and do now believe, and have no doubt, that the repetition of the imposition of hands would have been perfectly justifiable for the enlargement of the field of action etc., and would not, by any means, have invalidated the former consecration or imposition of hands. Therefore, I have no doubt but my consecration of Bishop Asbury was perfectly valid, and would have been so even if he had been reconsecrated. I never did apply to the general convention, or any other convention, for reconsecration. I never intended that either Bishop Asbury or myself should give up our episcopal office, if the junction were to take place; but I should have had no scruple then, nor should I now, if the junction were desirable, to have submitted to, or to submit to, a reimposition of hands in order to accomplish a great object; but I do say again, I do not now believe such a junction desirable.....

And now I conclude with assuring you that I greatly love and esteem you; that it is my delight to pray for your prosperity; and that I am your very affectionate brother and faithful friend

T. Coke.

This letter assured his American brethren of the purity of his intentions, however he had been mistaken in his views; and resolutions of love and respect for him were passed, and friendly letters to him and to the British Conference were addressed by the General Conference.

It is proper to note here the fact that Dr. Coke did what he did in the matter without consultation with any one, and no one was responsible for it but himself. He declares -- and the whole tenor of his letter supports the declaration -- that it was not reordination he was seeking, but a union of two Churches. In fact, he attaches so little importance to the imposition of hands in the consecration of a bishop that he sees no impropriety in a reimposition, while he declares himself to have been ever satisfied with the validity of his own ordination. He does not speak as knowing Mr. Wesley's opinions, and what he says about his (Mr. Wesley's) regrets in regard to the matter may very probably have originated in a misunderstanding of Mr. Wesley's views. What Mr. Wesley wrote to Asbury about calling himself a bishop, and about naming Cokesbury College after Coke and himself, may have led him to think so. But it is a matter of very little concern to American Methodism whether Coke and his brethren went farther in the organization of a new Church than Mr. Wesley intended or not. The Methodist Episcopal Church was the natural outgrowth of the Revolutionary War, and it was organized not by Mr. Wesley, but by the votes of the preachers themselves -- Asbury himself declining the office of "superintendent" on the mere appointment of Mr. Wesley. Recognizing, then, no "third order" in the ministry, a "superintendent" and "bishop" is one and the same, and we need give ourselves very little concern about Mr. Wesley's right to ordain Coke a "superintendent," from a High-church point of view. The publication of the confidential letter, which, as Dr. L. M. Lee observes, has been the occasion of much "uncircumcised rejoicing" in some quarters, has, we believe, never been satisfactorily explained by the friends of Bishop White.

We have spoken of Coke's missionary zeal. It was the absorbing passion of his life; and the impetus which he gave to the cause can never be fully known until the end of time. In his efforts to promote the spread of the gospel, he sometimes found himself in embarrassing positions, as the following incident will show:

In 1786 he started with the other missionaries for Nova Scotia. They had a tempestuous season. The vessel was nearly wrecked, and still the stormy weather continued. The captain, a very superstitious man, became at last convinced that the trouble all originated from his having a set of preaching and praying Methodists on board, and, would walk the deck, exclaiming, "There is a Jonah on board, a Jonah on board!" Infuriated with passion, he rushed to Coke's state-room, and threw his books and manuscripts overboard. He then seized the little Doctor, and informed him, in uncivil tones and ungentle looks, that if he did not cease to pray on board, he should follow his books and papers.

The closing scene of Coke's life was in beautiful harmony with his whole career. In 1813 he asked leave of the British Conference to initiate a mission to India. His proposition met with great opposition, but when he offered to defray the expense of the expedition to the extent of six thousand pounds, they gave their consent, and authorized him to undertake a mission to Ceylon and Java, and allowed him to take six missionaries with him.

They set sail January 2, 1814, and rounded the Cape of Good Hope, in safety, April 20. On the first of May Coke complained of slight indisposition. On the morning of the 3d he was found cold and stiff on his cabin floor. He had died of apoplexy. His remains were committed, with solemn service, to the deep. His last voyage was ended, his work was done, but his death gave a new impetus to the missionary zeal of the Church, and his influence is still felt in the grand movements of this age to lead the whole world to a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The New York Conference was in session when the news of Coke's death reached this country. Bishop Asbury, by request of that body, preached his funeral discourse. He afterward wrote of him in his journal: "As a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labors, and in services, the greatest man of the last century."

It seems eminently proper that the grand old missionary, whose whole unselfish life had been spent in one ceaseless untiring effort to exalt humanity wherever found, should find a grave at last in the sea -- its restless, rolling waters symbolizing the stirring, moving spirit of missions, and its waves laving the shores of all lands.

\* \* \* \* \*

15 -- DANIEL ASBURY

We will lose a measure of our astonishment at the privations and hardships so cheerfully endured by the pioneers of Methodism in America when we consider the sympathy for their fellow-men which prompted them to endeavor to elevate their condition. When Mr. Wesley wanted Dr. Coke to undertake a mission to Nova Scotia, the latter demurred, saying that he did



not think he would like the people. "You don't like them," replied Wesley, "because you don't know them. When you know them, you will become interested in them." Many a preacher on a mission field today has become so interested in the people of his charge as not only to be willing to adapt himself to their habits of life, but really to prefer it to what others might consider a better appointment. So with the pioneers. As they learned to love the people, they cheerfully adapted themselves to the surrounding circumstances, and were content to live as their parishioners lived, that they might be of service to them. Some of the most successful of the preachers, however, had been prepared for rough experiences by hardships endured in their youth.

Among this more fortunate class was Daniel Asbury, whose name deserves no mean place on the roll of the heroes of Methodism in the South. Perhaps no character in all the noble band of daring spirits who composed the "Thundering Legion" was a better embodiment of the spirit of the movement; and perhaps none did more of strictly pioneer work than he. He was one of the first to penetrate the wilds of Western North Carolina, and sow the seeds that have sprung up and produced abundant harvests since; and in South Carolina and Georgia his labors were so abundant and successful that their results can never be estimated until the day of final reckoning at the end of time. He was an earnest, bold preacher; ever ready for the work; never dismayed by hardships to be endured in the way of success; a man of strong native intellect, but limited education, and yet a clear, forcible, successful expounder of the word God. Like most of his contemporaries in the traveling connection, he was a "man of one book;" and, unlike some who have succeeded him, he preached not poetry nor philosophy, but Christ crucified as revealed in that book. With a deep and rich religious experience; by a constant study of the revealed will of God, aided by the enlightening agency of the Holy Spirit; by a close walk with God and constant communion with him -- he became a man of power, and was owned of his Master in becoming the agent in leading to Christ hundreds of souls who in the last day will rise up and call him blessed.

He was born in Fairfax county, Virginia, Feb. 18, 1762. We are told that his parents differed in their opinions as touching the doctrines of Christianity, and as a consequence their son grew up with little religious instruction. When about twelve years of age, he tells us, he became much concerned about his soul's safety. But alas! there was no one to encourage or instruct him. He wandered for awhile in serious concern; but with no one to lead him to Jesus, he soon banished his fears by relapsing into his former course of thoughtless folly. A friendly voice at that critical moment might have encouraged him to press forward until he should have emerged out of darkness into light; a friendly hand might have led him to the foot of the cross to lay his burden of guilt upon Him who has promised to bear it, and to rejoice in the fullness of a Father's love; but that voice and hand denied him, he fell again into a life of sin.

When about sixteen years of age, having gone to Kentucky, he was captured by a band of Shawnee Indians and taken to the far West. He was adopted and kindly treated by his captors, but endured many hardships before he became accustomed to savage life. And many a lonely hour did he spend in vainly regretting his captivity, and in longing to see again the familiar faces and scenes of his youth. Finally he was taken over into Canada, and, as the Revolutionary War was then raging, he was taken prisoner by the British, confined in irons, and imprisoned at Detroit. There he endured many hardships, but finally made his escape, and after a long, toilsome, and dangerous journey, reached his father's home in Virginia, having spent five weary years in captivity. On reaching the home of his childhood, it is said that he passed himself at first for a stranger, and his

mother did not recognize him. When he made himself known to her as her long-lost son, her joy can be better imagined than described.

While in his captivity, he had learned many lessons that were to be of service to him in the work that God had for him to do a little later. All religious concern had been banished from his mind, and he was now a hardened sinner. By this time the Methodist pioneers had penetrated the neighborhood of his father's home, and under their preaching he "came to himself" -- saw himself at last a helpless, undone rebel, "without God, and without hope in the world!" "The great deep of his heart was broken up," say his brethren, "and he began to bewail his wretched case and cry to God for mercy." But he had many sore conflicts with the tempter, and walked for some time in the shadow of despair before he was enabled to rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Then it was the old story. Rejoicing in the fullness and freeness of the grace of God that had been extended to the chief of sinners -- as he had learned to regard himself -- he united with the Methodists, whom he had before disliked, and soon began to exhort in public.

We can imagine how his heart glowed as he told the story of his wild, sinful youth, and the dangers and hardships of his captivity; how the providence of God had preserved him all along; and how, after long wanderings and rebellions, he saw himself an outcast sinner, and looked to Jesus for salvation; and how he heard his cry, and raised him from his despair, and hid him in his pavilion, and put a new song in his mouth, even praise unto God. Those of us who have heard just such narratives in public meetings, and witnessed their thrilling, melting effects upon the audience, will not wonder that Asbury's simple story fell upon the ears of his hearers as bubbling water from a full fountain, and that, as his brethren say, "his labors were not in vain," and "he was encouraged to extend his efforts."

In 1786 he was received into the traveling connection, and appointed to Amelia Circuit in Virginia. He did not bring into the ministry any extraordinary abilities to entitle him to the distinction of a great preacher, but he brought a consecrated heart, a rich and deep religious experience, a never-wavering faith in God, a burning desire to promote his glory, a meek, submissive spirit -- patient under suffering, and a courage that was alike ready to brave danger and to endure hardness. His fields of labor were as follows: 1786, Amelia; 1787, Halifax; 1788, Holstein; 1789, Yadkin -- after three months, Lincoln and Catawba counties, where he formed a new circuit; 1780, Lincoln. He then retained a local relation for several years. In 1800 he was readmitted, and appointed to Union Circuit: 1801-2, Yadkin; 1803, Union; 1804, Enoee; 1805, chiefly at home; 1806-10, presiding elder of Savannah District; 1810-14, Camden District; 1814-18, Catawba District; 1818-22, Broad River District; 1822-3, Lincoln Circuit; 1824, Sugar Creek Circuit.

During the first two years, he traveled fields that had been surveyed before, and followed upon the foot-prints of such men as Garrettson, Gatch, Easter, Dromgoole, Dickens, and Ellis. Whatever inconveniences he may have suffered, quite another sort of work awaited him along the banks of the French Broad, where he was sent the next year as a missionary. On this frontier field there was a rude, half savage population scattered here and there along the banks of the river and in the caves of the mountains. Many of them were roughs who had fled from civilized society to escape the punishments incurred by crimes, and had, therefore, but little sympathy for a messenger of the gospel of peace. Again, now and then, he could but expect to meet the wily Indian who

lurked in the mountain fastnesses to take the life of his hated white enemy and oppressor. But with a firm reliance on God, with the happy consciousness that the divine hand was upon him, Asbury went to this field with as light a heart and with as clear views of special providence as the preacher goes today to Centenary, Richmond, or to Front Street, Wilmington. The stories of his adventures and hardships seem hardly credible to us, living as we do in a brighter and better day, yet we are told: "He was often forced to subsist solely on cucumbers, or a piece of cold bread, without the luxury of a bowl of milk or a cup of coffee. His ordinary diet was fried bacon and cornbread; his bed not the swinging hammock, but the clapboard laid on poles supported by rude forks driven into the earthen floor of a log-cabin. A safe guide was necessary to direct his devious footsteps from settlement to settlement through the deep forest, and a trusty body-guard to protect his life from the deadly assault of the lurking Indians." And here, amid these scenes of toil and danger, he thought of heaven and preached of heaven as a place of rest and safety. The solitudes of the mountains were disturbed and made to echo the sound of his songs, his exhortations, and his prayers, and many a guilty wretch was constrained to go for cleansing to the "fountain filled with blood." Way was opened for other preachers to follow, and after the lapse of nearly a century the fruits of his labors are manifest in that beautiful "Land of the sky."

The next year, after three months' labor on the Yadkin Circuit, we find him pioneering the way into Lincoln and Catawba counties, and forming "Lincoln Circuit." Here he found a settlement of Methodists who had removed from "Old Brunswick" in Virginia. His heart was made glad at meeting with some who had rejoiced under the preaching of John Easter and Hope Hull, and there went up a shout in the camp occasionally that would perhaps remind him of the old circuit-paths of Robert Williams and George Shadford.

But he was not allowed to pursue his course without molestation. Ruffian mobs threatened his life, sectarian hate rose up against him; but the man who had spent five years in the wild, exciting life of the far West, and who had traveled through the mountain passes, as he had done the year before, was not the man to be intimidated by such opposition. We quote an instance of this persecution from Dr. Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina." The affair occurred in Rutherford county, in 1789: A ruffian band of men headed by one Perminter Morgan -- a Baptist preacher -- seized Daniel Asbury and hurried him for trial before Jonathan Hampton, a worthy justice of the peace and a gentleman of intelligence. 'What crime has been committed by Mr. Asbury,' said the just and prudent magistrate, 'that you have thus arrested him and brought him in the presence of an officer of the law?' 'He is going about everywhere through the country preaching the gospel, and has no authority whatever to do so,' responded Mr. Morgan for the rest. 'We believe he is nothing but an impostor, and we have brought him before you that you may do something with him, and forbid him to preach any more in future?' 'Why, does he make the people who go to hear him preach any worse than they were before?' further asked the magistrate. 'We do not know that he does,' answered Mr. Morgan, 'but he ought not to preach.' 'Well,' said the magistrate, 'if he makes the people no worse, the probability is he makes them better; so I will release him and let him try it again.' And Mr. Asbury departed from the presence of the court rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer persecution for the name of Christ."

Among the old-time Methodists in Lincoln county, Asbury found one whose charms captivated his bold spirit, and he violated the rules of the itinerant soldiery by marrying. This of course necessitated his location, but he did not cease to preach, and his labors were abundant and

successful in the local relation. We feel it proper to observe just here, that history has hardly credited the local ministry with the honor due them in the pioneer work of the Church. On many a circuit, the first sermon was preached and the first society formed by some local preacher who had removed to the frontier to improve his temporal condition, and who took pains to remind the people of a "better country, that is, a heavenly;" called sinners to repentance, established "preaching-places," and paved the way for the "circuit-rider."

After spending nine years in the local relation, Asbury was induced to again enter the itinerant work, and continued a faithful sentinel on the walls of the militant Zion until age and feebleness necessitated his retirement. He was a leader of the "sacramental hosts" in the great revival of 1802, as the following letters to Bishop Asbury will show. They were published in 1805, and have not, we believe, been reproduced since. They reveal the spirit of the man, and are quaint and interesting. Their historical value will justify us in giving them in full:

Yadkin Circuit, N. C., Aug. 20, 1802

A great and glorious work has taken place in this circuit since Conference, The number converted I cannot tell. I have seen and felt more since I saw you than ever before. Many stout-hearted sinners have turned to the Lord, and at our common meetings loud cries and shouts of praise are heard. It is not uncommon for meetings to last from twelve o'clock in the day to twelve at night. At a quarterly-meeting held in Iredell county, which began the thirtieth of July, and continued four days, the power of the Lord began on Friday about sunset, under an exhortation, and continued till Monday twelve o'clock without intermission. The groans of the distressed went up on Friday night from all parts of the camp, and increased till ten o'clock the next day, when many found the Lord precious in the pardon of their sins.

On Saturday afternoon, while Brother Douthet was at prayer, the mighty power of the Lord came down; many hard-hearted sinners fell to the ground and cried to the Lord for mercy as from the belly of hell. The slain of the Lord were many, and numbers that fell rose again with the new song. The next morning was an awful time, some shouting praise to the Lord, others screaming for mercy, and the whole congregation seemed thunder-struck.

On Sunday evening, after Brother Ormand's sermon, under prayer, the Lord displayed his power in an increasing manner. The heavens were black with clouds, the thunder and lightning were awful, and the ground seemed covered with sinners. The wounded were taken to the tents, but some staid at the stand in the hardest rain, and pleaded with the Lord, and about midnight they were delivered. The storm of rain was so powerful that the wicked were obliged to keep close to the tents, and the Lord mowed them down on every hand. Mr. Hall, Mr. King, and myself continued the whole night in prayer for the mourners. Next morning I preached, and notwithstanding the rain they heard with the greatest attention. Among the subjects of this work was a doctor who came with salts of hartshorn to apply to those who fell, but the Lord brought him down, and many others with him, who went home praising God. This is a little of what I have seen in Yadkin Circuit. I am more than ever bound for glory.

"Yours, -- Daniel Asbury"

Again he writes:

Iredell, N. C., Sept. 8, 1802.

Sometime past I gave you an account of the work of God in this circuit. Jehovah is still working, in great power, sinners are coming home to Jesus day and night. I believe that since the formation of Yadkin Circuit there has not been such a glorious revival and so great a cry for mercy among sinners. Glory, glory, glory to God of all grace for the many souls that have been born of God this year! Now we reap the fruits of our hard labors, our former prayers and supplications. I am nearly broken down; my breast is weak, but my faith and love are strong. I want to do good and receive more grace. I am thine in love till death.

Daniel Asbury

It is proper to notice here the singular affection known as "the jerks," which appeared during the great religious excitement about this time. It is thus described by an eye-witness:

One of the most mysterious exercises among the people was what was called the jerks. I saw members exercised in this way at a camp-meeting held in Lincoln county. Sometimes their heads would be jerked backward and forward with such violence that it would cause them to utter involuntarily a sharp, quick sound, similar to the yelp of a dog, and the hair of the women to crack like a whip. Sometimes their arms, with clinched fists, would be jerked in alternate directions with such force as seemed sufficient almost to separate them from the body. Sometimes all their limbs would be affected, and they would be thrown into almost every imaginable position, and it was as impossible to hold them still almost as to hold a wild horse. When a woman was exercised in this way, other women would join hands around her and keep her within the circle they formed, but the men were left without constraint to jerk at large through the congregation, over benches, over logs, and even over fences. I have seen persons exercised in such a way that they would go all over the floor with a quick, dancing motion, and with such rapidity that their feet would rattle upon the floor like drum-sticks.

It was more generally known in the camp-meetings of the West. The Rev. Jacob Young in his autobiography gives us the following account of it as it appeared in Tennessee:

In 1804 I first witnessed that strange exercise, the jerks, although I had heard much of it before. It took subjects from all denominations and all classes of society, even the wicked; but it prevailed chiefly among the Presbyterians. I will give some instances.

A Mr. Duke, a Presbyterian clergyman of high standing, having charge of a congregation in Jonesboro, was the first man of eminence in this region that came under its influence. Often it would seize him in the pulpit with so much severity that a spectator might fear it would dislocate his neck and joints. He would laugh, stand, and halloo at the top of his voice, finally leap from the pulpit and run to the woods screaming like a madman. When the exercise was over, he would return to the church calm and rational as ever. Sometimes at hotels this affliction would visit persons, causing them, for example, in the very act of raising the glass to their lips, to jerk and throw the liquid to the ceiling, much to the merriment of some and the alarm of others. I have often

seen ladies take it at the breakfast table. As they were pouring out tea or coffee, they would throw the contents toward the ceiling, and sometimes break the saucer. Then hastening from the table, their long suits of braided hair hanging down their back would crack like whip. For a time the jerks was a topic of conversation -- public and private -- both in the Church and out. Various opinions were expressed concerning it, some ascribing it to the devil, others to an opposite source; some striving against it, others courting it as the power of God unto salvation. In many cases its consequences were disastrous, in some fatal.

A preacher, who was in early life a dancing-master, joined the Conference, and was sent to a circuit where the jerks greatly prevailed. He declared it was of the devil, and that he would preach it out of the Methodist Church. He commenced the work with great zeal and high expectations, but before he got once round he took the jerks himself, or rather the jerks took him. When the fit began he would say, 'Ah yes! O no!' At every jerk he used his hands and arms as if he were playing the violin. One morning, being seized as he was going to an appointment, he let go the bridle, and the horse ran off till he was stopped by a gate. The rider having dismounted, in order to steady himself laid hold of the palings of the fence, which unfortunately gave way. The lady of the house coming to the door to see what was the matter, heightened his mortification. Attempting to hide himself by running into the orchard, his strange movement, as he ran fiddling along, and the tail of his long gown flying, in the wind, attracted the attention of the hounds, the whole pack of which pursued him with hideous yells. Being afraid of dogs, he turned and rushed into the house by the backdoor, and running up- stairs, jumped into bed, where he lay till the fit was over.

His proud heart would not submit, and the disease, as he termed it, growing worse and worse, he gave up the circuit and withdrew into retirement, where he soon went down under a cloud.

Usually, the subjects of the strange affection were happy when they had it, and happy when it passed off, and it did them no harm.

The jerks prevailed for only a short time. The wisest of the preachers did not attempt to check or rebuke it, but went on preaching and praying as if the strange phenomenon were nothing unusual.

We have before observed that Asbury was a man of limited education. He was utterly ignorant of the rules of logic, rhetoric, and grammar; and yet, his earnest zeal, his close, patient study of the word of God, together with his superior gifts, and his thorough conversion and consecration, made him "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

While one of the most spiritually-minded of men -- walking with God, and having his "conversation in heaven" -- there was a humorous side to his character, and no one enjoyed a good joke more than he. In the evening of life it was his delight to entertain his friends, in his intercourse with them, by relating humorous incidents from his long and varied experience.

He knew how to secure the attention of his hearers, as the following little incident will show: While preaching in Columbia, S. C., one night, the congregation, wearied by the services of

the day, showed a decided inclination to drowsiness. The old hero suddenly paused and remarked: "Just see what the devil is doing here. These dear people want to hear the word of the Lord, and do you think the devil isn't getting them to sleep already?"

The close of his life was as serene and beautiful as the twilight that succeeds a peaceful summer-day. His meekness, his patience, and the simplicity of his manners drew to him the hearts of his brethren, and lighted up the evening of his career with a quiet beauty that lingered on the mind of the beholder. On Sunday, April 15, 1825, as he was returning from a walk in his yard, he stopped suddenly, looked up toward heaven, and with a pleasant smile on his face, uttered indistinctly a few words, then fell to the ground -- dead. It is said of him that he had frequently expressed the belief that he should die on the Sabbath, and it is rather a singular coincidence that he was born on the Sabbath, captured by the Indians on the Sabbath, returned home on the Sabbath, was converted on the Sabbath, and on this holy day ascended to his eternal rest and entered his Father's house.

His remains are interred in the church-yard of Rehoboth Church, Catawba county, North Carolina.

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## 16 -- PHILIP BRUCE

At the beginning of the second quarter of the present century, when Methodism had been firmly established, the work well organized, the Conference and circuit lines definitely drawn, and the fields well manned; when the smile of Heaven had rested upon the toilsome and perilous labors of the pioneer heroes, and houses of worship commemorated their conflicts with the powers of darkness and their victories over the forces of sin; when the great Wesleyan movement had completed the first half century of its history, and from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, thousands of happy hearts rejoiced in the consciousness of favor with God -- there were two names on the Conference rolls that vividly recalled the days of the past. Williams, and Gill, and Pedicord, and Tunnell, and Asbury, and Lee, and Ellis, and scores of others who had stood shoulder to shoulder with them in the thickest of the fight, had gone to their reward; but Philip Bruce and Freeborn Garrettson tarried on the shore of time, like bright stars of evening that linger on the bosom of the horizon to leave on the beholder the impress of their beauty forever. Within a few years of each other they had enlisted in the "Thundering Legion," and side by side they had fought some of their hardest fights. In the same year -- 1817 -- they had retired from the active work, worn out by old age and hard labor; and when, in 1827, the preachers gathered together in their annual meetings, they were called upon to weep for them both -- they were dead.

Few names deserve a higher place in the annals of American Methodism than that of Philip Bruce -- certainly to no one are the Methodists of the Carolinas and Virginia more indebted. He was born near King's Mountain, in North Carolina, on the 25th of December, 1755. His ancestors were French Huguenots who had fled from the persecution of Louis XIV to seek civil and religious liberty in the New World. "The family name," it is said, "was De Bruise, but was corrupted into Bruce by a Scotch teacher from whom Philip received his education" Great spiritual darkness prevailed at the time and place of his birth; indeed, he tells us that when he was fifteen or sixteen

years of age, a living minister and a living Christian could scarcely be found in that part of the country. About this time the pioneers of Methodism reached that section; a glorious revival of religion broke out, and many were converted and brought into the Church, young Philip among them. There, in the wilds of the new settlement, and under the preaching of these bold heralds of the cross, he saw himself a sinner, and looked to God for pardon through faith in Jesus Christ. Light dawned upon him and darkness fled. His soul was filled with love, and "peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The sacred flame, which was now kindled on the altar of his heart, animated him in many a hardly contested fight, and, fifty years later, lighted with glory the dark valley of the shadow of death.

Having found the Lord himself, his next step was to lead others to him. And first of all, his heart turned to his parents, who, it seems, were yet in an unconverted state. The story of his effort to win them to Christ is, to our mind, one of the most pathetic in the whole range of Methodist biography. Let us look at the picture: It is evening; the trio have gathered around the fireside; the boy's heart is full -- he has embraced Christ, and now he yearns over his parents. We can well imagine how his frank, open countenance and his bright, piercing eyes express his emotion as he tells his father his own religious experience, and urges him to embrace the Saviour. The direct, loving message is not in vain. The boy loves his father; the father loves the boy, and is proud of him- more proud of him tonight than ever before, for his brave, noble, loving nature never found such expression before. While the boy pleads the father trembles, and tears of penitence steal down his cheeks. The mother, too, is deeply affected. The boy calls on the father to pray; he replies that he cannot pray. He then requests his mother to pray; she asks him to pray. Then they kneel in prayer, and young Philip earnestly presents the case of his parents at a throne of grace. Earth has seen few holier sights than that. Did not Heavens witnessing angels rejoice over it? There in the hush of the evening, in their quiet frontier home, a family-altar is erected, and broken, contrite hearts are offered in sacrifice upon it. The parents soon find peace in believing, and unite with the Methodists. Young Philip was shortly afterward licensed to exhort, and began to call sinners to repentance. There is a tradition that his credentials saved his life on one occasion. While hunting wild-turkeys in the woods, he was arrested by a band of Tories, who proceeded to hang him, but finding in his pocket his credentials as a licensed exhorter, "the captain said it would never do to hang a priest," and he was set at liberty. Bruce was fully in accord with the spirit of independence, and was present at the battle of King's Mountain; the commanders, however, did not require him to bear arms as they looked upon him as a sort of chaplain.

The Conference for 1781 met in the city of Baltimore, and here Bruce entered the itinerancy. There were at this time 10,539 Methodists in America. Of this number 3,239 were in Virginia, and 1,993 in North Carolina. There had been a small decrease in the South, on account of the war then waging. At this Conference some important measures were adopted which deserve a passing notice. It was here ordered that candidates were to remain on three months' probation before they could be admitted as regular members of the society; members who had been expelled were required to give satisfactory proof of their repentance and be recommended by the society. It was made the duty of the preachers to read, frequently, the "Rules of the Society," the "Character of a Methodist," and the "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," and to give a written "plan" of their circuits to their successors. Here, for the first time a rule was adopted for the settlement of business disputed between members.



Bruce was appointed to New Hope Circuit in North Carolina. It is difficult to ascertain the circuit boundaries at that early day -- if, indeed, they had any boundaries. Of New Hope we only know that it "took its name from a creek which runs through Orange county and empties into Haw River, in the southern part of Chatham, a few miles above its junction with Deep River, to form Cape Fear," and that it was one of the three circuits reported as lying in North Carolina. It extended over a large portion of the Cape Fear section, and embraced much of the territory afterward known as Bladen Circuit. The Bladen Circuit was formed by Daniel Combs, in 1787, and soon after embraced the entire scope of country lying, between Long Bay, in South Carolina, and the Cape Fear River, and numbered among its regular appointments Lumberton, Elizabethtown, Smithville, and Wilmington. It is said that the preachers on this circuit found many who had been received into society by Philip Bruce in 1781.

The war, however, greatly retarded the progress of religion, and Bruce had this year many narrow escapes from the British and the Tories. We quote a few incidents as recorded by Dr. Bennett in his "Memorials of Methodism in Virginia:" On one occasion he was induced to preach to a band of Tories whose captain had gone to procure arms. He did so, and actually persuaded them to disperse. When the captain returned with the arms he found no men, and on being, told through whose influence his men had dispersed, he swore vengeance against Bruce. Not very long afterward, when he had preached at the house of a friend, up rode the captain with two of his men. Springing from his horse he rushed to the porch where Bruce was quietly reading, and with horrid oaths presented his gun at his breast. Bruce caught the muzzle, and a scuffle ensued. The, captain, dropping his gun, drew his sword and made a tremendous cut at his head, but in its sweep the weapon struck the rafters of the roof. Just at this moment up rode three Whigs; the two Tories gave the alarm, and Bruce finding the captain willing to be off, pushed him down the steps, sprung into the house and shut the door. The three Tories rode off in quick time one way, and the Whigs as fast in another. As the captain passed the window, Bruce shouted, 'Good-by, captain!' In reply, he swore he would kill him. A day or two after, Bruce reached his next appointment, and although his horse had been put up and the people had assembled for preaching, it was so solemnly impressed on his mind that it was his duty to leave the place immediately that, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrance of the landlord, he called for his horse and rode off, leaving an appointment for another time. Among those who had come to the meeting was a preacher of another denomination. Bruce was not more than out of sight when the captain's lieutenant rode up with a file of men and inquired for the preacher. The one who had come to hear Bruce preach was pointed out to them as the only preacher present; they instantly shot him down and rode off, bragging that Bruce would never disperse another Tory company.

We quote, from the same source, another incident: "Having an appointment which required him to start very early in order to reach it in time, after a ride of several miles he stopped at the house of a widow lady to get breakfast. He was scarcely seated in the house when an officer and a squad of men from Tarleton's troop rode into the yard and called for breakfast. Bruce met them and politely invited them in, saying, that he had called for the same purpose. He then left them and went to assist the good lady in the preparations. Very soon the table was spread with an abundance of good cheer, to which Bruce and the soldiers did ample justice. The breakfast ended, Bruce turned to the officer and said: 'Sir, I am your prisoner. I am a Methodist preacher on my way to an appointment, and would be pleased to be permitted to go.' 'Certainly, certainly, Mr. Bruce,' replied the officer, 'you are at liberty to go.' He politely thanked the officer for his kindness, and rode off

rejoicing. On being asked how he managed to get on so well with them he said: 'My father used to say to me, Phil, if they will only let you talk, they will never hang you.'

His next fields of labor were Isle of Wight Circuit in Virginia, and Yadkin and New River circuits in North Carolina. These were all pioneer fields. The toil, the privation, the suffering, that he "endured, as seeing Him that is invisible," to plant the standard of the cross in these settlements, finds its record nowhere but in the Book which shall be opened only at the last day; but his labors were crowned with success -- hundreds of souls were led to a knowledge of the truth, new churches were erected, new societies formed, and work for new preachers provided.

In 1786, four years after his admission into the traveling connection, he was appointed a presiding elder, his district embracing Portsmouth, Bertie, Camden, and Banks. This office, which was similar to that known in the societies before the organization of the Church as "assistant," dates its origin from the Conference of 1785. So similar were the duties of an "assistant" and a "presiding elder" that the terms are used as synonymous by some of the earliest biographers -- e. g., the Rev. Minton Thrift in his "Memoir of Jesse Lee" (page 43), says "he received a letter from the presiding elder, Caleb Pedicord," etc. This was in 1782, before the ordination of elders. Dr. Bennett and others attribute the origin of the office of presiding elder to the necessity of supplying the people with the sacraments, and the limited number of ordained preachers, but it seems more probable that it followed naturally upon the office of "assistant," and that the "assistant's" duty of overseeing the work was an important consideration in originating the presiding eldership. In this office Bruce spent the remainder of his itinerant life, with the exception of a few years when we find him appointed to such important stations as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Raleigh. The districts traveled by him extended over nearly the whole of Virginia and North Carolina, and over considerable portions of South Carolina and Georgia.

To us, in this day, the accounts of the wonderful revivals that followed his preaching sound more like romance than reality. The days when hundreds of souls were converted at an ordinary protracted meeting, and when preachers spoke of a meeting "where about a hundred souls were converted" as a "small revival," have long since passed away. From an old volume of "Extracts of Letters" from the preachers and members to Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat, published in 1805, and long since out of print, we find the following letters from Bruce, which we transcribe, preferring to let him tell the story of his successes in his own quaint, modest way. In 1801-2 he traveled the Richmond District in Virginia, but did some good work in North Carolina also, as this letter will show:

North Carolina, June 1, 1802.

On the second Sabbath in September, after preaching at South River, I rode to Lawyer Sharp's to attend prayer-meeting in the evening; many appeared to be deeply affected, and cried for mercy; and I suppose there were about a dozen deeply wounded; and Monday evening, at family prayer at my father's, there was a serious cry for mercy until twelve o'clock. On Tuesday evening a number of the neighbors collected. Immediately as meeting commenced, the cry of distress arose in every part of the house. In this meeting two gave glory to God for redemption in Jesus. The Saturday evening following, I visited the Snow Creek neighborhood again, and a large

congregation attended, and in the course of the meeting eight or ten professed deliverance from the guilt and burden of sin.

I held meeting as often as my strength would admit; the presence and power of God attended the meetings, and from three to four, and from seven to eight, were brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God at each meeting. I formed a society of about fifty members at my father's house; on Snow Creek near about the same number joined in society. Numbers of the awakened and converted continued in the societies where they held their birthright and education. The Presbyterian preachers in Iredell county were in favor of the work, and invited me to assist them at a sacramental occasion, to be held by encampment, near Statesville, about the middle of February, 1802. They met at the time and place appointed. On Friday there were present seven or eight Presbyterian ministers.

From Saturday till Tuesday ten o'clock, the cries of the wounded, prayers, shouting, exhortation, and singing continued without intermission -- near one hundred were apparently under the operations of grace at a time. But it is not possible to ascertain the number that found peace and deliverance the probability is, if the meeting had continued longer the consequence would have been wonderful.

The public congregation was dismissed at ten o'clock on Tuesday. It was a common circumstance for companies to retire from the camp for private devotion, and some of them to be struck down in the woods, and for single persons when thus retired to alarm their friends in the camp with their cries. On Monday evening, numbers left the camp, and I suppose not more than three or four hundred remained.

I agreed to continue with them, as did two or three other ministers. I told some of the mourners if they would come to the tent where I was, I would spend the whole night with them in prayer. Soon after they came together, a young man told us he, with his companions, had left the camp in the morning, and went to a whisky-house, and while one of the company was blaspheming, he was struck with such dread and horror that he quit his wicked companions and returned to the camp, and joined in with the first praying company he met with, and the Lord manifested his pardoning love to his soul. The simple relation had the most astonishing effect on the congregation. A young woman who was taking some refreshments cried out that she was feasting her body and her poor soul was in danger of perishing to all eternity. The cry for mercy became general throughout our large tent, and fifteen or sixteen rose before morning, shouting, praising, and giving glory to God for pardoning mercy; at the same time the work was carrying on in the other tents. Through the course of the meeting many old professors, who had been in frill communion for years in the regular congregations, were stripped of the garments of their own making, and cast away their old religion, as it was termed, and, with repenting publicans, began to cry aloud for mercy until they had found the sinner's Friend. After this meeting was dismissed, some were found by the way-side, others were struck in the wagons; some returned home praising and shouting, others crying for mercy. This may serve as a sample of the work that God is carrying on in this once abandoned part of the country. Where thirty years ago a living minister and a living Christian could scarcely be found, now there are scores of ministers and hundreds of Christians. I am yours in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Philip Bruce."

In the following, to Asbury, he gives some account of the work on his district:

Iredell, December 12, 1802.

As I think it probable that you may not have had any accurate account from Virginia since we parted, I give you the following:

The meeting we had the pleasure of opening at Rockingham continued nine days -- that is, until the Sunday week after it began. During that memorable week business was wholly suspended, nothing was attended to but waiting on the Lord; and there was also a constant crowd from the country round about. On Sunday -- the last day of the meeting -- the door of admission was opened and one hundred and seven joined the Church, of the new converts who lived in and near the town. The number of those who lived at a distance and shared in the gracious visitation has not been ascertained, but it is probable it bore a full proportion to those in the town. The postman carried the news to New Town, while Brother Samuel Mitchell was there, and it gave them such a spring in that barren place that when my information came away about fifty souls had happily found redemption in the blood of Jesus; and the prospect was growing in that quarter of the vineyard, as our old Steadies had caught the flame. But to return to Rock Town. There were some particular cases that deserve a place in my letter, especially the work among the professed deists, among whom was young Mr. Cocran, merchant, Major Harrison, and a companion of theirs. Cocran, on the Thursday, determined to satisfy himself as to the work, took his stand in the gallery, where he could have the whole scene under his eye. He felt unusual, and concluding it was from the heat of the crowded house, determined to walk out and take the air. As he slipped out of the house he felt an impression like a voice speaking to him, "Turn and seek the Lord!" He turned, but concluded it was the force of imagination. He went to the door a second time, and the impression came more powerful than at first, "Turn and seek the Lord!" He turned into the congregation and fell helpless on the floor; he continued in that helpless state until next morning; while prayer was making for him the Lord set his soul at liberty. His companions, as mentioned above, were struck about the same time. And next morning when Cocran's friend, at his request, supported him to meeting, that he might tell the people what God had done for his soul, he met the Major and their companions, witnesses of the same salvation. They rushed into each other's arms, and such a shout of 'Glory, glory!' was seldom heard.

"Philip Bruce"

The following, from the New Berne District, on which he spent so many of the best years of his life, is quaint and interesting:

New Berne District, N. C., November, 1804.

There has been a small revival of religion near Trenton, Trent River -- perhaps nearly one hundred added in that neighborhood; also Queen's Creek, near Swan's Bridge; also some at Yelverton's Contentney. There have been some revivals in many parts of Roanoke Circuit, and the upper part of Tar River Circuit; especially about Shous Church the work goes on well among the rich and great.

At a camp-meeting, October 23d, Ebenezer meetinghouse, twelve miles above Halifax, it was supposed we had about forty souls converted to God.

At that awful place, Partridge's, we held a camp-meeting on the first Friday in November; we had a most powerful awakening time; we suppose twelve found the Lord on the ground, and we heard of some others who professed after they left the encampment.

Philip Bruce

The late Rev. Benjamin Devaney gives us some idea of the personal appearance of the man in the following extract:

My first acquaintance with this remarkable man of God, one of the fathers of the Virginia Conference, took place in New Berne, North Carolina, February, 1807, at which time and place the Virginia Conference held its annual session. He was the oldest preacher then belonging to the Conference, having traveled twenty-six years. His general appearance indicated that he was of French origin. In his person he was tall and spare, face thin, black eyes, dark skin, and a prominent nose, with a pleasing, open countenance. He possessed great ministerial gravity, and yet he seemed ever cheerful without levity. He seldom spoke in the Conference or in the social circle without a smile lighting up his face..... As a presiding elder, he was kind and affectionate to the preachers under his charge, and treated them as brethren beloved. He was a great favorite among the preachers and the people. He possessed a philosophic mind, and it was well stored with useful knowledge. I think his mind was better cultivated than that of any of his compeers in the Conference. He united fine conversational powers with polished manners, and passed well in any company in which he chanced to be thrown. He stood high in every community, both as a preacher and a presiding elder. His sermons were generally short and delivered with much zeal and energy.

A characteristic anecdote, illustrating the style of his pulpit delivery, is given by Dr. Bennett, as related to him by the late Rev. Joseph Carson, who was present on the occasion. Asbury was to preach in the town of Winchester, Virginia, within the bounds of Bruce's district. In the afternoon, the Bishop remarked to Bruce in a playful manner: 'Now, Philip, I intend to pile up the brush to-night, and you must set it on fire.' Asbury preached a plain, pointed, practical sermon, and when he sat down, Bruce arose and delivered a most powerful exhortation, which told with overwhelming effect on the congregation. The Bishop's brush-heap blazed at the touch of Philip's torch."

Bruce's popularity as a preacher, and the high esteem in which his talents and other qualifications were held, is further attested by the fact that on two occasions he came within three votes of being elected bishop. He was a prominent leader in all the grand movements of the Church during, the thirty-six years of his itinerant life, and went down to his grave honored and beloved by the whole Connection.

Like most of the early preachers who remained long in the traveling ministry, he never married. It is recorded that he once had serious thoughts on the subject, and had even selected the lady -- if, indeed, he had not made known to her his feelings; but Asbury dissuaded him from so entangling himself, doubtless fearing that he would be lost to the itinerancy. So great was the

opposition to the marriage of preachers that when one of the number broke the rule it was expected of him to publicly state his reasons for the step at the ensuing Conference. It is said that on one such occasion, when a brother had explained to the Conference that "he believed it to be his duty, had prayed over the matter, and thought he was divinely directed," etc., Jesse Lee arose and said: "Bishop, I once experienced the same feelings that the brother has. I prayed over the matter. I believed it to be best for me to marry, but the Lord and the woman were of a different opinion."\* (\*Bishop Granbery, in a letter to the Richmond Advocate, mentions meeting in Missouri a sister of the lady alluded to by Lee. The lady said that her sister was Lee's "only love.") It is recorded of Asbury that, being provoked to learn on one occasion that one of his favorite preachers had fallen a victim to the charms of one of the fair sex, he exclaimed, "I believe the devil and the women will get all my preachers!"

Borne down by the weight of years and disease, Bruce, in 1817, asked for and obtained a superannuated relation. His old age" was serene and bright, And peaceful as a Lapland night.

Having laid down the armor he had so long worn, and given over to other hands the blood-stained standard he was no longer able to bear, he longed to take up his crown, and quietly watched for the signs betokening the breaking day. Hearing that he was quite ill, his old and faithful friend the Rev. John Early (afterward bishop) made a long ride to reach his bedside and attend him as nurse. On inquiring how he had rested, one morning, the old hero expressed a feeling of disappointment. He had been dreaming of heaven; he had thought himself in the innumerable throng entering in through the gates of the Eternal City, and had awaked to find that he was still buffeted upon the waves of time.

In the latter part of his life, he removed to Tennessee and resided with his brother Joel Bruce in Giles county. Shortly before his death, the Virginia Conference sent him an official request to visit again that body that they might once more behold him in the flesh. In reply, he wrote: "Many affections bind me to the Virginia Conference. Your expressions of good-will have awakened the tenderest friendships of my soul; but it is very probable that I shall never see you again, for though in my zeal I sometimes try to preach, my preaching is like old Priam's dart, thrown by an arm enfeebled by age. Indeed, my work is well-nigh done, and I am waiting in glorious expectation for my change to come, for I have not labored and suffered in vain, nor followed a cunningly devised fable."

A thrill of sadness was felt throughout the Connection when the Rev. Robert Paine (afterward bishop) wrote from Nashville, Tennessee, under date of May 17, 1826, to the editors of the Methodist Magazine:

"Dear Brethren: I am just now informed, by letter from my father, of the death of one who for a number of years has been one of the brightest ornaments and most useful ministers of our Church. The Rev. Philip Bruce is dead. He had for some time past been a superannuated member of the Virginia Conference, and had been an itinerant more than forty years. He died at the residence of his brother Joel Bruce, in Giles county, of this State. In the short notice given me of his death, it is briefly stated that he was perfectly resigned, and said he had never had such clear views in his life -- for a whole night he could not sleep for joy; and the Lord was with him and blessed him mightily.' Thus died Father Bruce. A better man, a brighter example of ministerial

simplicity, purity, and devotedness to the cause of God, or a more evangelical and successful preacher, I have never seen, and expect never to see, on earth.

Brother T. L. Douglass and myself are requested to attend his funeral, and you will doubtless be furnished with a more enlarged obituary notice of our venerable father.

The Virginia Conference, in loving gratitude and respect, erected a neat monument over his last resting place. He had given all to God and died from the world's standpoint -- poor. Dr. Taylor, who wrote his will, tells us that he was not worth more than three hundred dollars of this world's goods at the time of his death; but, "counting as angels count," was he poor? Hundreds of souls led to Christ by him awaited to welcome him in heaven; hundreds on earth were following him there; was he poor? Hath not the Master said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal? After he had been sleeping his last sleep for nearly sixty years, it seemed strange to read in the religious press, a few weeks ago, of the recent death of one who had been converted under the ministry of Philip Bruce.\* Doubtless few of the many who were led to Christ under his personal ministry now remain; but, the wave of holy influence which he started out on the ocean of time will continue to widen and increase until it touches the very throne of God in the last day.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

(\*Mrs. Jane Holland, who was converted in 1802, during the meeting alluded to by Bruce in the first letter quoted, and a notice of whose death, by the Rev. P. F. W. Stamey, appeared in the Methodist Advance of April 11, 1883.)

\* \* \* \* \*

17 -- REUBEN ELLIS

The men who occupy the uppermost seats in the synagogue of public esteem are not always the most humble, pious, devoted followers and imitators of our Divine Master. This is too often true of the militant Church of Christ. Oratory often passes for pure gold, while true piety, Christ-like humility, silent suffering for and earnest devotion to the religion of Jesus, are often at a discount. The world is slow to learn the lesson that the "beloved disciple" taught when he wrote, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." Paul did not think that the hosts of sin were to be defeated, or that humanity was to be lifted from its degradation by the use of the world's weapons of warfare, but by the "foolishness of preaching." Nor was his preaching "with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that his hearers' faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." It was the mournful acknowledgment of one of the most gifted and popular preachers of Southern Methodism, in the evening of life, that he had learned on how little religion a man could live. The grand work of the gospel ministry is to lead souls to Jesus, to comfort the hearts of God's people, to lead them to green pastures, and still waters in the divine life; and the shepherd must know himself the way

before he can lead thither the sheep. It was, perhaps, a disgust with the undue importance which the Church is so ready to attach to what should be secondary considerations in our estimate of pulpit qualification that led Daniel Webster to say, on uniting with the people of God: "I believe that the refinements and subtleties of human wisdom are more likely to obscure than to enlighten the revealed will of God, and that he is the most accomplished Christian scholar who has been educated at the feet of Jesus, and in the college of fishermen."

Believing as we do that acquaintance with God and an earnest desire to promote his cause are the first qualifications for real usefulness in the gospel ministry, it is a pleasure to rescue from the receding past such pictures as are presented to us in the lives of such men as Reuben Ellis. This world never gave a grander or more devoted and self-sacrificing body of men than the founders of American Methodism, but we must remember, what we are sometimes prone to forget, that they were not angels, but men. In all the moral grandeur of their attachment to the work of exalting humanity, we will find, if we look, the lurkings of human weakness; and, strange and inconsistent as it may seem, while we admire their devotedness to Christ, we will sometimes be called upon to deplore evidences of a far less commendable spirit. All along the pathway of Methodist progress we find the stones which mark the ruin of those who fell ingloriously by the way, and the histories of the purest and best are too often blurred by instances of petty jealousy and strife which the faithful, truthful pen of history must record. In the midst of all the contentions and rivalries which now and then led to disruptions and separations, it is pleasing to note a character superior to all motives of personal ambition and ever ready to throw the mantle of charity over the foibles of his brethren; a "lover of union," desiring most of all to preserve the peace of the Church, promote the spiritual interests of God's people, and extend the borders of his kingdom. Such a man was Reuben Ellis, "a native of North Carolina," who entered the itinerancy in 1777, for nearly twenty years filled some of the most important and responsible positions in the Church, and died leaving a name so fragrant with the incense of holiness as to draw from his brethren the eulogy: "It is doubtful whether there be one left in all the Connection higher, if equal, in standing, piety, and usefulness."

The first years of his itinerant life were spent on Amelia and Mecklenburg circuits in Virginia, where his labors resulted in great religious awakenings. These revivals, in the more retired parts of the South, relieve, in part, the gloomy picture which the history of Methodism, at that time, presents. The war clouds had gathered over the colonies; the people were engaged in a bloody struggle for civil liberty. As is always the case under such circumstances, the cause of religion suffered. One by one important points -- as, for instance, Norfolk and New York -- had to be left unsupplied with preachers, as they were occupied by the enemy. But the Revolution, which was cradling a new republic, was also laying the foundations for a new Church organization. Hitherto the Methodists had sent only lay preachers into the field. They had no ordained ministers in America, and they earnestly enjoined their people to go to the Church of England to receive the ordinances. It is a matter of history that the ministers of that body were not as a rule, at that time, noted for piety. There would never have been such a sect as the Methodists but for the corruptions in the mother Church. There were, it is true, notable exceptions to the rule in the ministry of the Establishment. The Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, of Virginia, rendered the Methodists great service by uniting heartily with them in their efforts to promote vital godliness, and by administering to them the ordinances; but there were not enough Jarratts to keep pace with the advancement of the new movement. As souls were brought to a knowledge of the truth and happily converted to God, they began to complain of the necessity of receiving the sacraments at the hands of men no better than



the world. The preachers themselves began to feel the necessity for providing some better means for administering the sacraments. The question was brought up, again and again, at their yearly meetings only to be overruled by the majority. But the sentiment grew and became so strong, that at the Conference held at Deer Creek, Maryland, in 1778 -- at which Mr. Watters, in the absence of all the English preachers, presided -- it was only disposed of by unanimously agreeing to refer it to the next Conference for decisive action. This "next Conference" was held at the Broken-back Church, in Fluvanna county, Virginia, May 18, 1779. In the meantime, Mr. Rankin had returned to England, and Mr. Asbury, on whom the superintendency devolved, was confined to the hospitable home of Judge White in Delaware, on account of political persecution, and could not attend the regular session of the Conference in Virginia. Therefore, to forestall the anticipated action of the brethren in Virginia, a Conference was held at Mr. White's, beginning April 28 -- a few weeks previous to the time set apart for the regular session -- a protest was issued against any action in regard to the ordinances, and Mr. Watters was commissioned to communicate the sentiments of the Northern preachers to the Conference in Virginia. But the Southern brethren were not to be dissuaded. After attending to the preliminary business, and after gravely discussing the subject which most engaged their attention they agreed upon a plan for administering the sacraments, and set forth their reasons for the step taken on the minutes. We quote:

Question 14. What are our reasons for taking up the administration of the ordinances among us?

Answer. Because the Episcopal Establishment is now dissolved, and therefore in almost all our circuits the members are without the ordinances -- we believe it to be our duty.

Eighteen traveling preachers endorsed this step. Philip Gatch, Reuben Ellis, James Foster, and LeRoy Cole were constituted a presbytery, and were authorized,

1. To administer the ordinances themselves.
2. To authorize any preacher or preachers approved by them, by the form of laying on of hands.

They were to re-baptize none. Baptism was to be administered "by sprinkling or plunging, as the parent or adult should choose;" the sign of the cross was not to be used in administering the Lord's Supper, kneeling was thought to be the most proper attitude for the recipient, but, in cases of conscience, this was to be left to the choice of the communicant.

At this Conference the first Friday after each quarterly meeting was set apart as a day of fasting and prayer. The term of a traveling preacher's probation was extended from one to two years, and it was agreed that any preacher should be expelled who "received money by subscription."

The presbytery first ordained themselves, and then proceeded to ordain others. Thus ordained, they went forth administering the sacraments. This action of the Southern brethren led to a temporary division of the Methodists.

At the ensuing Conference of the Northern preachers, held at Baltimore in April, 1780, the following resolutions were passed:

Question 20. Does this whole Conference disapprove the step our brethren in Virginia have taken?

Answer. Yes.

Question 21. Do we look upon them as no longer Methodists in connection with Mr. Wesley and us until they come back?

Answer. Yes.

Philip Gatch and Reuben Ellis attended this Conference in the interest of peace, and to bring about a reconciliation; but they met no encouragement -- indeed, Mr. Watters was the only one of the preachers who treated them with affection and tenderness. Before adjourning, however, wiser counsels prevailed, and Asbury, Garrettson, and Watters were commissioned to attend the ensuing Conference in Virginia, inform the Southern brethren of their proceedings in regard to them, and receive their answer.

This Conference convened at Manakin Town, Powhatan county, Virginia, on the 8th of May, 1780. Asbury arrived here to find that Garrettson and Watters had tried in vain to induce the brethren to retrace their steps in the matter. The sentiment for administering the sacraments was stronger than ever. John Dickens was opposed to longer union with the Episcopal Church. The brethren argued that they were more than ever convinced of the wisdom of their course, since God had blessed them in pursuing it. It was a critical time. Asbury spoke before the Conference, beseeching them to alter their course. Their answer was that if he would provide for supplying the people with the sacraments they would desist. This he was unable to do. He then proposed to them to suspend the measures they had taken for one year, advise with Mr. Wesley, and meet in a sort of general conference in Baltimore the next year. After an hour's deliberation, they decided that they could not accede to the terms of union. It was a time of weeping. Asbury retired to the house where he lodged, and Garrettson and Watters retreated to the room over the one occupied by the Conference, and engaged in prayer. It was the offering of broken hearts, and the incense of the sacrifice ascended to heaven. While they were thus engaged, the Conference reconsidered its action and agreed to accept Asbury's proposition. Now was a time of rejoicing. The breach was closed. Eighteen preachers and three thousand members were saved to Methodism. They had preaching by Mr. Watters, on the text, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Then followed a love-feast. Preachers and people wept. Christian love and sympathy had triumphed. "It was a jubilee of joy." Thus was the first breach in Methodism happily closed; and the preachers, learning lessons of mutual sympathy and forbearance, were drawn closer to each other. Asbury recognized, in the happy termination of the difficulties, the hand of God. He felt it to be the direct answer to prayer. May we not cherish the hope that as all the factions of Methodism in this day -- the divisions of a grand army -- draw nearer to Christ, we may draw nearer to each other? The "Christmas Conference" of 1784 settled the ordinance question to the satisfaction of all parties, and here Reuben Ellis was ordained an elder. At the Conference held

at Green Hill's in April following, he was appointed to one of the three presiding elder districts into which the State of North Carolina was divided. His work embraced Wilmington, New River, Tar River, Roanoke, New Hope, and Guilford circuits. Wilmington was not at that time a city appointment, but a circuit, embracing, it seems, what are now New Hanover, Brunswick, Columbus, Bladen, Robeson, and Cumberland counties -- possibly others. It is mentioned as "Wilmington" for only a few years, and then called "Bladen Circuit." Rapid as was the growth of Methodism, it was several years after this before the Methodists had a stationed preacher in North Carolina. Even as late as December 22, 1796, we find Bishop Asbury writing in his journal, "If we had men and money, it would be well to station a preacher in such places as Wilmington;" and in the year 1800, when it was made a station, and Nathan Jarratt was appointed there, the membership numbered only forty-eight white and two hundred and thirty-one colored people. New River Circuit, in 1785, seems to have embraced Onslow, Jones, Carteret, Craven, and perhaps Lenoir and Duplin. New Berne was the principal appointment, but Swansboro, Queen's Creek, and Richland's, in Onslow county, were considered important points. This field was manned by Philip Bruce, of whom we speak more at length in another sketch. While we have but little information as to the circuit boundaries at that time, we can form some idea of a pioneer presiding elder's field of labor from the fact that Ellis's district extended from Greensboro to Wilmington, and from Fayetteville to New Berne.

But, fatiguing as were the duties of the office, it was in this sort of work that he spent the remainder of his life. His travels extended from Maryland to Georgia, and he had the pleasure of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in his hand. Under his preaching there were mighty awakenings; souls were converted, churches sprung up, and circuits were formed. An unselfish, sweet-spirited Christian, the one aim of his life was to make full proof of the blessed ministry which had been committed to his trust. His self-sacrificing spirit is shown in the fact that in nearly twenty years of active, laborious work for the Church he did not accumulate twenty pounds. Nor did he desire any thing more than he received. The necessaries of life were all that he asked of this world.

Asbury esteemed him highly, and accounted him a wise counselor. He was always of slender constitution, but did not hesitate to go to any appointment assigned him -- ever ready to brave death to carry the word of life to perishing souls.

During the last year of his ministry he committed an act which his brethren seem to have thought inconsistent with the development of the highest type of piety -- he married. They allude rather mournfully and regretfully to that fact in their notice of his death. We quote: "Although he married in the last year of his life, he, like a Fletcher, lived as on the verge of eternity, enjoying much of the presence of God." Perhaps they considered this step as an indication of weakening zeal for Christ and a growing attachment to the world. Asbury viewed the matter from a different stand- point, and, on hearing of his marriage, wrote good naturedly: "Brother Reuben Ellis is certainly married for the first time; may it be for the glory of God and the good of his Church, and comfort of the dear man and wife."

He did not long survive his marriage. After a short illness, he ended his warfare in the city of Baltimore in February, 1796, leaving to the Church of his choice the legacy of a good name and the benefits of a long and useful ministry. He was universally admired, respected, and beloved;

and justly so, for he lived above all selfish aims, and his whole ministerial life was a commentary on the gospel which he preached, and an exhibition of the love that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things."

\* \* \* \* \*

## 18 -- RICHARD WHATCOAT

As a man of God, as a devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, patient in suffering, earnest and fearless in the discharge of duty, walking with God, dead to the world, and living for eternity, no name shines brighter on the roll of the heroes of Methodism than does that of Richard Whatcoat, third bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The story of his early life we will let him tell in his own words:

"I was born," says he, "in the year 1736, in the parish of Quinton, in the county of Gloucester. My father, dying while I was young, left a widow and five children. At thirteen years old I was bound apprentice, and served for eight years. I was never heard during this time to swear a vain oath, nor was ever given to lying, gaming, drunkenness, or any other presumptuous sin, but was commended for my honesty and sobriety. And from my childhood I had at times serious thoughts on death and eternity."

I served the greatest part of my apprenticeship at Darlaston, in Staffordshire, but at the age of twenty-one I removed from thence to Wednesburg. Here I found myself in continual danger of losing the little religion I had, as the family in which I lived had no religion at all. Therefore I took the first opportunity that offered of removing to another place. An a kind Providence directed me to a family that feared God and wrought righteousness.

I soon went with them to hear the Methodists, which I did with deep attention; and when the preacher was describing the fall of man, I thought he spoke to me in particular, and spoke as if he had known every thing that ever was in my heart. When he described the nature and fruits of faith, I was conscious I had it not; and though I believed all the Scripture to be of God, yet I had not the marks of a Christian believer. Again I was convinced that if I died in the state wherein I then was I should be miserable forever. Yet I could not conceive how I, that had lived so sober a life, could be the chief of sinners. But this was not long, for I no sooner discovered the spirituality of the law, and the enmity that was in my heart against God, than I could heartily agree to it. The thoughts of death and judgment now struck me with terrible fear. I had a keen apprehension of the wrath of God, and of the fiery indignation due to sinners; so that I could have wished myself annihilated, or to be the vilest creature, if I could but escape judgment. In this state I was when one told me, 'I know God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven all my sins, and his Spirit witnesseth with my spirit that I am a child of God.' This gave me a good deal of encouragement, and I determined never to rest until I had a testimony in myself that my sins also were forgiven. But in the meantime, such was the darkness I was in, such was my consciousness of guilt and the just displeasure of Almighty God, that I could find no rest day nor night either for soul or body. So that life was a burden, and I became regardless of all things under the sun. Now all my virtues, which I had some reliance on once, appeared as filthy rags; and many discouraging thoughts were put into my mind; as, 'Many are called, but few chosen; Hath not the potter power over his own clay, to make one vessel to

honor and another to dishonor?' From which it was suggested to me that I was made to dishonor, and so must inevitably perish.

On September 3, 1758, being overwhelmed with guilt and fear, as I was reading, it was as if one whispered to me: 'Thou hadst better read no more; for the more thou readest, the more thou wilt know. "And he that knoweth the Lord's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." I paused a little, and then resolved, Let the consequence be what it may, I will proceed. When I came to those words, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God,' as I fixed my eyes upon them, in a moment my darkness was removed, and the Spirit did bear witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. In the same instant I was filled with unspeakable peace and joy in believing; and all fear of death, judgment, and hell suddenly vanished away. Before this, I was kept awake by anguish and fear, so that I could not get an hour's sound sleep in a night. Now I wanted not sleep, being abundantly refreshed by contemplating the rich display of God's mercy in adopting so unworthy a creature as me to be an heir of the kingdom of heaven. This peace and joy continued about three weeks, after which it was suggested to me: 'Hast thou not deceived thyself? Is it not presumption to think thou art a child of God? But if thou art, thou wilt soon fall away; thou wilt not endure to the end.' This threw me into great heaviness, but it did not continue long; for as I gave myself unto prayer, and to reading and hearing the word of God at all opportunities, my evidence became clearer and clearer, my faith and love stronger and stronger. And I found the accomplishment of that promise, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.' Yet I soon found that though I was justified freely I was not wholly sanctified. This brought me into a deep concern, and confirmed my resolution to admit of no peace -- no, nor truce -- with the evils which I still found in my heart. I was sensible both that they hindered me at present in all my holy exercises and that I could not enter into the joy of my Lord unless they were all rooted out. These considerations led me to consider more attentively the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we may escape all the corruption that is in the world, and be made partakers of the divine nature. I was much confirmed in my hope of their accomplishment by frequently hearing Mr. Mather speak upon the subject. I saw it was the mere gift of God, and consequently to be received by faith. And after many sharp and painful conflicts, and many gracious visitations, on March 28, 1761, my spirit was drawn out and engaged in wrestling with God for about two hours, in a manner I never knew before. Suddenly I was stripped of all but love. I was all love and prayer and praise; and in this happy state rejoicing evermore, and in every thing giving thanks, I continued for some years, wanting nothing for soul or body more than I received from day to day.

I began to look around, and to observe more than ever the whole world full of sin and misery. I felt a strong desire for others to partake of the same happiness with myself. I longed to declare unto them what I knew of our Saviour. But I first sat down to count the cost, and being then fully convinced of my duty, I began to exhort those of the neighboring towns to repent and believe the gospel. This I did for about a year and a half, but was still convinced I might be more useful as a traveling preacher. This I mentioned to Mr. Pawson a little before the Conference in 1769. A little after it, he wrote and let me know that he had proposed me at the Conference, and that I was accepted as a probationer and stationed in the Oxfordshire Circuit. Having settled my temporal affairs with all the expedition I could, I went into the circuit, and was received far better than I expected; and I found that affection for the people which never since wore off. After spending some time very agreeably there -- I believe to our mutual satisfaction -- I removed to Bedford

Circuit, where I remained till the Conference in 1774. I was then appointed for Inniskillen Circuit, in the north of Ireland. This was a trial to me on several accounts. I was an utter stranger to Ireland, of which I had heard little good spoken; I had a great aversion to sea voyages; and what troubled me more than all was that my mother was on her dying-bed. But she knew and loved the work in which I was engaged, so she willingly gave me up to the Lord, though she did not expect to see me any more till we met in eternity. In this circuit I found many things that were not pleasing to flesh and blood. It took us eight weeks to go through it, and in this time we slept in near fifty different places, some of them cold enough, some damp enough, and others not very clean. We commonly preached two or three times a day, besides meeting the societies and visiting the sick; and very frequently we had no other food than potatoes and a little salt meat."

On the occasion of a call from America for ordained preachers, Wesley, on the first day of September, 1784, assisted (according to the custom of the English Church) by two presbyters -- Creighton and Coke -- ordaiued him first a deacon and then an elder, and then appointed him a missionary to America. He was accompanied by his fellow-missionary Vasey, and Coke, who had been appointed "superintendent" by Wesley. They set sail on the 18th of September, and after a stormy passage of more than six weeks, landed in New York on the 3d of November. Here a wide field of usefulness invited his toil. He entered without delay upon his mission, preaching and administering, the sacraments through the Middle States, until the Christmas Conference met in the city of Baltimore, when he assisted in the formation of the separate Church organization there decided upon. We then find him traveling through Maryland and Delaware, preaching almost every day, sometimes twice, and administering the sacraments. It is said that in Kent county he baptized seventy-five persons in one day, so long had the ordinance been neglected. Wherever he went his presence was regarded a benediction, and his preaching was accompanied with the convicting, converting, and comforting influences of the Holy Ghost. The following extract from a letter which he wrote to his brother missionary in Nova Scotia, Garrettson, will give us some idea of the spirit of the man in entering upon his new field. The letter was written from Elkton, Md., in 1785:

"I am in a strange land," says he, "and I think my natural disposition is to be little and unknown, content to live and die to God alone; and I find a willing mind to go to the ends of the earth if I can help forward the Redeemer's cause thereby. We have had a quickening among the people in these parts; some great quarter meetings -- happy seasons to my own soul and many others. Glory be to God for all his mercies!"

In 1786 he labored in Philadelphia and the surrounding country, and in 1787 we find him penetrating the wilds of Western Pennsylvania, where he spent nearly fourteen months, preaching in barns and in the woods, but everywhere leaving upon the minds of the people the impress of a man dead to the world and alive to God.

In 1787 he was appointed by Wesley to the office of superintendent, but the Conference refused to elect him, through fear that Wesley would recall Asbury to England. Coke, who was present at the Conference, contended that that body was bound to obey Wesley by its pledge given at the Conference of 1784, that "during Mr. Wesley's life we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands." But the Conference argued that "as they had made the engagement of their own accord, and among themselves, they had a right to depart therefrom when they pleased, seeing it was not a contract

made with Mr. Wesley, or any other person, but an agreement among themselves."Of this pledge Asbury says: "I never approved of that binding minute. I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley, at three thousand miles' distance, in all matters relative to Church government; neither did Brother Whatcoat nor several others. At the first General Conference I was mute and modest when it passed, and I was mute when it was expunged. For this Mr. Wesley blamed me, and was displeased that I did not reject the whole Connection, or leave them, if they did not comply. But I could not give up the Connection so easily, after laboring so many years for them."

In 1788-9 Whatcoat was appointed elder over sixteen large circuits, his district extending from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and Redstone, and from the Maryland peninsula to Ohio. During the latter part of the latter year he began to travel with Asbury. Their route lay to the north as far as New York, then across the Alleghanies as far as Pittsburgh, thence to Uniontown, "where he assisted at the first ordination beyond the mountains." Returning to Baltimore, they proceeded south, through Virginia, North and South Carolina, to Charleston, where they held a Conference February 15, 1790. Of this conference Whatcoat writes: "The Lord was present in power, the saints were glad, and the wicked offended." From this point they proceeded into Georgia, and thence to Tennessee and Kentucky. On their return to Baltimore, they had to perform the mournful task of laying John Tunnell to rest in his grave in the mountains.

We next find him traveling through the Middle States. In 1791 he was stationed in New York City. The following year he was appointed to Baltimore, where he welcomed the first regular General Conference, which held its session in that city. During the three following years he served as presiding elder in Maryland and New Jersey.

In 1797-8-9 he was presiding elder on a district in Virginia and North Carolina, extending from James River to Roanoke, and from the mountains to the sea-board. It embraced Cumberland, Amelia, Greensville, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Sussex, Bertie, Portsmouth, Norfolk, and Camden circuits. "On this district," says he, "we passed through and touched on thirty counties in Virginia and North Carolina. It took me about six or between that and seven hundred miles to go through my district once in three months. We had a great revival in several parts of this district. I filled up my time with a good degree of peace and consolation."

It was from this field that he was, at the General Conference of 1800, elected to the office of bishop. Probably a wiser selection could not have been made. No sooner had he been elevated to the episcopacy that there appeared a forward movement all along the lines of American Methodism. A glorious revival wave swept almost the entire Connection. Although advanced in years, he yet traveled from three to four thousand mile a year, preaching almost every day, and holding Conferences, sometimes in company with Bishop Asbury and sometimes alone, but always with satisfaction to his brethren. He left the impression upon the preachers and people of one who realized that his home was in heaven. He was the Marvin of the pioneers. He seemed to be looking forward only to eternity, and marching directly there. A Methodist authority says: "My late lamented friend, Dr. Thomas E. Bond, sr., who knew him well, said to me: 'He was one of the purest spirits I ever knew. Everybody about the house loved him -- cats, dogs, and all.' Mary Snethen said to me that of all the pure and holy men that came to that old parsonage [John Street], he seemed to be the most heavenly-minded. He talked of heaven, he sung of heaven, and meditated of heaven." (Wakeley.)

"He sustained his episcopal functions," says Dr. Stevens, with continual disability from chronic disease, but was ever in motion throughout the whole extent of the Church, North, South, East, and West. His beautiful character preached more effectually than his sermons. Peculiarly simple, sober, but serene and cheerful, living as well as teaching his favorite doctrine of sanctification, extremely prudent in his administration, pathetically impressive in discourse, and 'made perfect through suffering,' he is preeminently the saint in the primitive calendar of American Methodism."

One who knew him long and loved him well say: "My first journey with him was over the Allegheny Mountains to the frontiers of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. I found him so fixed in the ways of God that nothing could disengage him or move his patience so as to make him murmur in the least degree. He was never wearied with fatigue of riding or of preaching so as to make him abate his private devotions; but after lecturing and praying, several times a day in public, on retiring he poured out his soul before he laid his body to rest, by which means he was ready to sound forth the high praises of his gracious Redeemer at all times and on all occasions. His tours through the backwoods were very dangerous. The Indians were not then at peace with the United States, but remained hostile, and made frequent incursions, and destroyed many families, as well as single persons, whenever they met them; so that some whom he preached to and baptized in these parts were killed and scalped a few weeks after. I think not less than seventy were miserably mangled and killed within a year and a half in and about their own houses.

Whatcoat appeared to be the same at all times and under all circumstances; to be as calm in the wilds as in the cultivated fields; in the smoky cabin as in the carpeted parlor; amidst the clamors of untoward children, where he was detained during the mountain storm or flood of rain that had raised the rivers so that they could not be forded.

His voluntary labors and travels in America proved his strong attachment to the Redeemer's cause and an itinerant life. He refused honor, worldly gain, and worldly pleasure, which were strewed at his feet. He refused all, and preferred feeding the lambs of Jesus Christ, and calling sinners to repentance, to all the glories of the world. Wearing himself out to give light and heat to others, he allowed himself little rest. He arose at five in the morning wherever he was, even in winter, that having communed first with his Sovereign he might be early at his studies, and well prepared to declare the accepted time of the Lord and the day of salvation. His moderation was known to all who knew him. In all things he showed himself a pattern in piety, in doctrine, and in zeal, he was a living witness of all he taught to others."

In 1801 the bishops estimated the extent of their field of labor to be "four thousand one hundred and eighty-four miles." The travel was fatiguing in the extreme, and a few extracts will show us the character of the work: "The way we traveled from Nashville to Knoxville," says Whatcoat, "was about two hundred and twenty miles, partly a south-east course; but it was trying to our delicate constitutions to ride through the rain a great part of the day until late in the night, and then encamp on the wet ground, the wind and rain beating hard upon us." Continuing their journey from Knoxville to Augusta, he says: "We took nearly a south course of above three hundred miles, but O what mountains and rocks we had to pass over! When we came within a few miles of the Hot Spring, Bishop Asbury got a friend to lead his horse, but the road being rough and



narrow, the horse stumbled or started, and turned the sulky bottom upward, between the Paint Rock and French Broad River; but the horse lay quietly on his back until we released the harness; the carriage rested against a large sapling, which supported it from going down into the river."

The Virginia Conference convened at Edmund Taylor's, in Granville county, North Carolina, March 1, 1805. We make a few extracts from Asbury's journal, reciting his adventures, in company with Whatcoat, shortly previous to meeting this session:

January 14, 1805. -- We came to Mr. Lee's, dined, and came on, lodging at Lumbertown, a town of about twenty families. On Tuesday we had another cold ride to Fayetteville. At the African meeting-house I preached upon Heb. x. 38, 39. It was a time of feeling -- but eleven o'clock was no hour for some folks. I was invited to preach in the State-house, but it did not suit my mind at all -- the object of our visit, was a Methodist congregation and society. Home is home; ours is plain, to be sure, but it is our duty to condescend to men of low estate; and therefore I felt justified in declining the polite invitation of the Rev. Mr. Flinn to officiate in his meeting-house. I must take the road again. O what sweetness I feel as I steal along through the solitary woods! I am sometimes ready to shout aloud, and make all vocal with the praises of His grace who died and lives and intercedes for me. Brother Whatcoat preached at night. I added a few words -- a sort of gossiping exhortation.

Thursday, 17. -- We crossed Cape Fear, dined at Simpson's, and after night stopped at the Widow Andress's, a stage house. On Friday we had a stormy morning. It paid us for a time, and then cleared away. We came to Moore's Creek. We were so near swimming I dipped my heels. We stopped at Parker's, dined, and continued on to Negro Head. We had swamps and spring-tides; and, behold, one of the bridges in Mr. Mellett's rice-field was gone! Well for us the overseer -- one of our sheep -- brought a ladder for us to walk upon; and by means of two planks laid together lengthwise our horses passed over. We asked the housekeeper to let us stay. She consented, little knowing who we were, which when she discovered the poor thing was surprised and gladdened. We had a room, and prayed and talked with the blacks, and exhorted them. On Saturday morning we crossed north- east before sunrise. We came to our own house to breakfast. Our chapel in Wilmington is elegant, sixty-six by thirty-six feet. Brother Whatcoat preached this morning.....

Friday, 25. -- We reached New Berne, twenty-six miles. On Saturday it rained. We have happily escaped it. We have made two thousand nine hundred and eighty miles since General Conference. We lodged at the Widow Jones' -- her dear James is gone; he appeared to be as healthy as any man in New Berne; he went off after a few days' illness of pleurisy in the breast. Lord, and am I yet alive?

Sabbath, 27, was an awful day of cold rain. Few attended the worship of God. In my zeal I preached again at night. I exposed myself and exerted myself.

Monday, 28. -- We came away through a cold wind to Neuse Ferry. Swift Creek swam us, and the waters of the greater stream floated us across in a tottering canoe, the horses along-side swimming. A twenty-eight miles' ride brought us to the Widow Richards's to lodge. Arrived at Tar River, we found it was blowing a storm. I was unwilling to cross. The flat was nearly filled with

water shortly after we put off. A boat came out to take us up. Brother Whatcoat stood mid-leg in water. . . . Brother Whatcoat preached at Washington in the evening.

Wednesday, 30. -- I preached to a congregation of very unfeeling people. The blacks have no gallery. The whites look upon us with contempt. O Washington! Washington!

Saturday [Feb.], 2. -- We stemmed the northeast wind twenty miles to cross the awful Roanoke. For a mile and a half from the ferry the fences were swept away. During the freshet, cattle and hogs and some slaves had been carried off. Its proud waves were stayed when we arrived. We rode thirty-two miles to Joseph Penner's, Northampton, without seeing the inside of a house.

Friday, March 1. -- We opened our yearly Conference for Virginia at Edmund Taylor's, Granville county, North Carolina. We closed our sitting on Friday evening following. I have so frequently noticed the affairs of Conferences, and they are so common, that I will only observe of this that we added fourteen preachers and located four. Our business we conducted in great peace, and we had preaching as usual. Our increase is one thousand nine hundred members.

Whatcoat was now nearing the end of his pilgrimage. His sun was nearing the setting, and his spirit, that had been so long ripening for heaven, was soon to pass within the gates of the City of God. We will only notice a few traits in his character before we close this sketch.

While a an of great fortitude, fearing no danger where duty led him, he was possessed of a most serene temper and heavenly frame of mind. Asbury was more impetuous -- in fact, sometimes irritable. As an illustration, the following anecdote is related:

On one occasion Asbury was complaining bitterly of the annoyance of visitors -- all doubtless eager to see the bishops. Whatcoat quietly replied, "O Bishop, how much worse should we feel were we entirely neglected!" Asbury acknowledged the reproof, and thanked his friend for administering it.

Whatcoat was careful and painstaking in all that he undertook. It is said that he kept a copy of the laws of the State in which his fields of labor lay, also a manuscript copy of the municipal laws of towns in which he preached or presided, so that he might do nothing "whereby the gospel might be blamed."

He was perfectly free of selfish ambition, and his whole beautiful life exemplified the truth of the saying that "the way to heaven is heaven all the way." He was a great sufferer, but he bore his sufferings with patient humility, waiting for the summons calling him from labor to rest. It came on the 5th of July, 1806. He had retired to the house of his friend Senator Bassett, of Dover, Del. -- a former governor of that State. Here, surrounded by persons of high rank and social position, the old veteran was to finish the task. given him to do by showing to these the beauty and glory of the religion of Jesus in the dying-hour. He was in extreme pain for thirteen weeks before he died, but he bore it without murmuring or complaining. His victory over death was complete, and his admonitions to those who saw him in his last hours were peculiarly impressive. In November following, Asbury wrote to Fleming -- "Dear Father Whatcoat, after thirteen weeks' illness --

gravel, stone, dysentery combined -- died a martyr to pain, in all patience and resignation to the will of God. May we, like him, if we live long, live well, and die like him."

He had about completed his sixth episcopal tour through the Connection. He was seventy years of age; had been an itinerant preacher thirty-seven years, twenty-two of which had been spent in America, and six in the episcopal office. In their notice of his death, his brethren say of him: "He professed the justifying and sanctifying grace of God, and all that knew him well might say, If any man on earth possessed these blessings, surely it was Richard Whatcoat."

Nearly a year after his death Asbury preached a funeral oration over his tomb, on the text, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." (2 Tim. iii. 10.) The Bishop stated in the course of his remarks that he had known Richard Whatcoat from his own age of fourteen to sixty two years most intimately -- his holy manner of life, in duty, at all times, in all places, and before all people, as a Christian and as a minister; his long- suffering as a man of great affliction of body and mind, having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors; his charity, his love of God and man, in all its effects, tempers, words, and actions; bearing with resignation and patience great temptations, bodily labors, and inexpressible pain. In life and death he was placid and calm. As he lived, so he died."

His remains were interred under the altar of the old Dover Wesley chapel, where he had first met Asbury in America, and where he had so often preached with tears and with power, and where for years his name, inscribed on stone, was a spell of influence to all in the congregation who had known him." Stevens tells us that the old chapel stood about a quarter of a mile from Dover. "The congregation outgrew its size, and in 1850 its materials were incorporated in a new and costly church in the town. The Bishop still sleeps in the old place, near the railroad station. The Philadelphia Conference erected in 1855 a beautiful monument over his grave."

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## 19 -- STITH MEAD

In the year that John Easter retired to the local ranks the Virginia Conference enlisted the services of a young man who, in earnest, successful labors, was to prove his equal.

Stith Mead was born in Bedford county, Virginia, September 26, 1767. His father, Colonel William Mead, was a wealthy farmer of that county, and had served with distinction in the Revolutionary War. He was a vestryman in the Church of England; but those were dark days in the religious history of that denomination, and young Stith in after-years felt himself under small obligations to his mother Church for the religious influences she threw around him. Dancing, card-playing, horse-racing, fox-hunting, cock-fighting, were the most popular of what were regarded harmless amusements. He declares himself to have been skilled in all of these save card-playing. But, notwithstanding the fact that he had so few religious associations thrown around him, he acknowledged that he often felt the obligations of duty and the calls to a better life. He would visit the Negro cabins on his father's plantation, and listen to the slaves converse about heaven and hell, duty and destiny. These visits proved the means of causing him, on more than one occasion, to

determine to reform and lead a moral life; but the impressions and resolutions were alike forgotten as he was thrown into ungodly company.

While he was quite young, his father removed to the State of Georgia, and, before he was eighteen years of age, Stith was sent to school in Augusta. Here his religious impressions returned with redoubled force. While yet surrounded with ungodliness and worldly-mindedness, he felt himself to be a vile, undone sinner, under the wrath of God, and in danger of eternal punishment. In great distress of mind he was directed to one of the teachers in the school, who, he was told, "had studied divinity." The teacher, it seems, gave him good advice -- he advised him to pray. But young Mead was quite ignorant as to the proper manner of adopting the advice. However, he committed to memory a form of prayer which he found in his spelling-book, and with this he humbled himself before God in supplication. This, he tells us, was the first time that he had ever attempted to pray from a conviction of his unfitness for heaven and fitness for hell. But it was not long before these convictions and impressions passed away, and he was as careless and unconcerned about his soul's salvation as ever.

After about four years he returned on business to his native county in Virginia. Christopher S. Mooring and Richard Pope, assisted by John Ayers, a local preacher, were conducting at that time a series of meetings in the neighborhood. He attended. Again he felt the wooing spirit of God knocking at the door of his heart. "I felt hard," says he, "under Ayers, a slight impression under Mooring, and under Pope the power of God came upon me, and cast me out of the chair on the floor. I was like the man in the gospel torn by the foul spirit: the burden of my sins was so great, and I had so plain a discovery of my lost and undone state, that if my next step was to have been in hell I do not suppose more horrid shrieks or doleful cries could have been uttered." Attending another meeting, conducted by Pope, he says: "I fell among the slain -- and they were many. On my first recollection I found myself on my back on the floor, groaning for deliverance. I was carried out of the house by some friendly hands, and laid under the shade of a tree, the house being so crowded that the people trod one upon another."

Soon after this he was happily converted, and gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry. He brought into the ranks of the itinerancy earnest zeal for the conversion of souls, and no mean gifts as a preacher of the gospel. Few men in his day were more successful in winning sinners to Christ. His first fields of labor were as follows: 1792, Botetourt; 1793, Holston; 1794, Bedford; 1795, Cumberland; 1796, Hanover; 1797, Gloucester; 1798, Brunswick. Most of these were among the hardest fields in the Virginia Conference; and Mead, at the conclusion of these seven years, could justly claim to have borne a fair share of the hardships incident to the itinerancy. His labors, too, had been owned of the Master, and wherever he had traveled sinners had been convicted of their sins and converted to God.

In 1799 he was appointed to Augusta, Ga. To introduce Methodism into this ungodly place proved to be no small undertaking. Mead's account of the religious state of the place is gloomy in the extreme. "Though the metropolis of Georgia," he writes to Bishop Asbury, "it is the seat and nursery of infidelity, atheism, deism, materialism, fatalism, diabolism, etc. The apostate B. A. [Beverly Allen] and others have done great injury to the cause of Methodism. In a census of four thousand souls in the city, I know of none who know their right-hand from their left in religion." In his efforts to promote the work of Christ, he soon learned that he was regarded with contempt by

his old companions in worldly folly. The Episcopal Church was at first opened to him, but it was opened only once. The earnest, heart-searching sermon, stripping the sinner of his vain excuses and causing the professor to investigate the foundations of his hope, created such dissatisfaction on the part of his hearers as not only closed the door of the church upon him, but drew upon his head no little opposition. Threatened, reviled, execrated, unable to procure a boarding-place among his relations, he retired from the Church, and formed a two-weeks circuit in the surrounding country; spending one week in Georgia, and one in South Carolina, as his little field was evenly divided by the Savannah River. He found however, an open door at the house of Mr. Ebenezer Doughty, in Augusta. Here he preached, and formed a class of six persons. Such was the beginning of Methodism in Augusta. After laboring another year on this field, he was appointed presiding elder of the Georgia District. In this capacity he labored, shoulder to shoulder, with such men as Hope Hull, Nicholas Snethen, and others. Camp-meetings were held, at which thousands were brought into the Church, and the foundations of Methodism were laid deep and wide. The following extract from a letter from Mead to Bishop Asbury cannot but prove of interest, giving as it does a graphic picture of the spirit and labors of the men who introduced Methodism into the State of Georgia:

Georgia, April 21, 1803.

To give you a narrative of the work of God, in its remarkable occurrences, since my letter to you, cannot be done with ease. It may suffice to say that the first general camp-meeting that I attended in the Georgia District was at a quarterly-meeting held for Little River Circuit, and commenced on Friday, the 8th, and closed on Tuesday, the 12th of October, 1802, at Rehoboth Chapel, Warren county. The ground was opened at the meetinghouse in an oblong of near a quarter of a mile, with two stages at suitable distances, having the meeting-house in the midst. The people began to pitch their tents as early as Thursday night. By Sunday the carriages were computed at upward of one hundred, the number of people at seven thousand, the communicants at six hundred, preachers at twenty-six, viz., eighteen Methodist, three Presbyterian, and five Baptist. Preaching at the sound of the trumpet at the hours of eight, twelve, and three; and at night the exercise of singing and prayer; in the intervals pointing souls to Christ through faith. Family worship also attended by the preachers, night and morning, at such tents as were most convenient, where several families might unite. Souls were converted on this second day. On Sabbath a masterly discourse by Hull, preparatory to the sacrament.

The two crowds from each stage marched to the house, which was like the meeting of two armies, and the shouts of the redeemed were heard in the midst. At the table my own soul feasted on the riches of paradise; my cup was filled, yea, it ran over, while I proclaimed aloud, and concealed not the truth- no, not in the great congregation. On Monday the exercise increased greatly, and Monday night was the greatest I ever saw. The engagement was general. I labored by moonshine under the trees, and with sweat, and with the dew of the night, until two o'clock. On Tuesday, before the close, the wife of Colonel Wm. Stith, Judge of Civil Law, being powerfully converted, lifted up her voice with strength, and shouting among the thousands, came near the stage (himself present), to render thanks to God for converting her soul at that meeting. This made way for one to propose that all remaining on the ground (for numbers had gone away) who had attained the like blessing during the same period would stand forth with Mrs. Stith. A cloud of witnesses stood forth -- I suppose above fifty.

I have concluded, on a moderate scale, there might have been one hundred converted during the meeting. Thursday and Friday, 14th and 15th of October, I attended a Presbyterian camp-meeting, with Robert Cunningham, and had the pleasure to hear several openly testify they had obtained a saving religion at the Warren meeting. Several, I trust, at this meeting, obtained religion. From thence I passed on and attended a quarterly-meeting for Appalachee Circuit, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, 23d, 24th, 25th of October, at Pentecost meeting house; and although we were surrounded with meetings by other denominations, yet the Lord gave us a large audience, and a great time with saints and sinners; ten converted and nine joined. From thence I attended a quarterly-meeting at Cold Water meeting-house, in Broad River Circuit, where your appointments entered on the district. You being hindered from us through affliction, Brother N. Snethen came, and we had a good meeting; four were converted. From thence we proceeded to the place where your appointments were formed in a joint camp-meeting with the Presbyterians, which commenced on Thursday, the 11th, and closed Monday, November 14th, near Lexington, Oglethorpe county.

The outlines of this encampment were near a mile round. The first day was mostly taken up in pitching the tents, some cutting down trees, some carrying off, others riving boards. About noon I was directed to open meeting, which I endeavored to do from Rev. xiv. 6, 7, at one stage; and Henry Moss at the other. Friday night the bounds of the ground were thickly stowed with camps. The number that attended on this occasion is computed from eight to ten thousand; the number of carriages at two hundred and fifty; preachers twenty-five -- Methodist, fifteen: itinerant, five; local, ten; Presbyterian, five; Episcopal, one; Baptist: five. The conversion of souls began on Friday night, and the exercise increased day and night during our stay on the ground. It is impossible to ascertain with any degree of precision the number converted on this occasion; but I suppose from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. During this exercise Gen. Jas. Steward discovered a mark of generalship in the conversion of his brother-in-law, Captain J. FFloyd. Some time previous Captain Floyd appeared under the alarm of a guilty conscience, but threw off his conviction, and came to this meeting only to gratify the wishes of his wife.

General Steward, watching an opportunity, invited Captain Floyd apart, telling him he believed him to be a man of honor, candor, and truth, and that what he undertook he was faithful to perform; therefore desired he would then give him his hand in confirmation that he would pray to God with him during life for salvation; and if they went to hell, to go with a prayer in their mouths: which proposal Captain Floyd acceded to; and after Brother N. Snethen had preached a sermon, and Brother Hull had exhorted, from the valley of dry bones (or rather under the administration of the word), in the presence of thousands, Captain F. fell, among others, in an agony of conviction. I stepped to him in full-faith, for I felt the sanctifying power of the spirit in soul and body; and while I was praying and pointing him to Jesus, he was visibly delivered, and praised God in an ecstasy of joy. He called for his wife -- the partner of his bosom -- who came weeping, and fell into his arms, saying, 'Are you going to leave me?' After this, passing through the crowd, he cried out to General Steward, 'Don't you remember the bargain we made this morning?' (being the Sabbath). Many at the close, unable to help themselves, were put into wagons and carried home.....

I do assure you, the sweet union contracted at such meetings, and enjoyed for days together, like heaven upon earth, makes solemn impressions on parting with each other.

Your brother and friend, and well-wisher in Jesus Christ,

Stith Mead

In 1805 he was transferred to the Virginia Conference and, placed in charge of the Richmond District. The following characteristic letter, written to Asbury from that field, may prove of interest:

Richmond District, April 4, 1805

I have been in the habit of communicating to you the remarkable occurrences which have fallen in my way from time to time; but your being kept from us in the South by sickness, I have been at a loss to know where to direct my intelligence. Being informed you will shortly be in Baltimore, I shall endeavor to throw the following narrative in your way; but passing over a great number of pleasing scenes which might be noticed, for brevity's sake, I shall confine myself to giving you a list of the camp and other meetings of magnitude, with their immediate effects, and then, in an aggregate, the consequences of the meetings will be seen on a more enlarged scale; though still much of their fruit will be unnoticed, being scattered generally over the circuits. [I decided to omit these figures. -- DVM]

In this great and glorious work it may be observed that at the close of two months I numbered six hundred converted, and five hundred and twenty added to the Church; and in the six months -- and that principally at the meetings -- the number converted amounted to eleven hundred and seventy-six; and eight hundred and fifty joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. With the preachers in the five circuits -- Bedford, Botetourt, Amherst, Cumberland, and Franklin -- each having one or more camp-meetings, hundreds are brought to God and into his militant Church; and other denominations have shared largely the fruits of our labors.

In this work it may be remarked that I have baptized near one hundred adult believers from ten to twenty at a time; and after giving them the choice of the mode, there has not been one instance where they have chosen immersion, and the blessing of God has visibly attended the ordinance by affusion; and there are but few who have joined but what professed saving religion previous to their joining. Persecution has raged in proportion to the revival, but hitherto the Lord has helped us, and we can say with the apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 8-10: 'By honor and dishonor; by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.'

Stith Mead

Other letters might be quoted, but the above will give the reader some idea of the spirit of the man, as well as of the character of the work he performed for the Church of his love. Under his faithful and zealous ministry many were led to Christ who afterward became ornaments to Methodism and to society. He was the intimate friend of Asbury, Coke, and Whatcoat, and ever maintained with them the most affectionate and confidential relations. In the evening of life, after freely giving his best days to the service of the Church, he was allowed to feel the pinchings of poverty; and with a large family dependent upon him for support, he no doubt was keenly sensible to his misfortunes; but his faith in Christ never wavered, and his zeal for his cause never waned.

Now that he rests from his labors, it only remains for us to remember his sacrifices and cherish his memory.

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## 20 -- HOPE HULL

The name of Hope Hull occupies a prominent place in the history of our Church during the latter part of the last and the beginning of the present century. He possessed sterling qualities of head and heart, and, directed by superior judgment and foresight, laid broad foundations for the future. He was one of the most famous of the field-preachers of his day, and the traditions of some of his conflicts with Belial that have come down to us serve to lend an air of romance to Methodist history. Beloved by the believers, feared by the ungodly, respected by all who knew him, few men have done more to lay the foundation of Methodism deep and wide in the South. He loved his Church with an intense fervor of devotion; to her interests he was always attached, and in her service he, was ever ready to "spend and be spent." He was born on the eastern shore of Maryland in the year 1763, and in his youth connected himself with the Methodists in Baltimore. In the year 1785 he entered the ranks of the itinerancy, where his rare talents and earnest zeal gave him immediate success. Though brought up a mechanic, Hull saw the importance of education, and applied himself to his studies with such diligence as to become quite proficient not only in his own but in the Latin language and literature. All the time he could command was spent in the work of preparing himself for more extended usefulness, and the Methodist Church afterward reaped a rich harvest from his studious tastes and habits, as we shall see in the course of this sketch.

He was first appointed to Salisbury Circuit in North Carolina. This circuit had been formed two years before, with only thirty members, and to it the unfortunate Beverly Allen, with James Foster and James Hinton as assistants, had been sent. At the ensuing Conference they reported three hundred and seventy-five members, a net gain of three hundred and forty-five in one year. On this field Hull succeeded the afterward famous preacher Jesse Lee, whose labors here had also been eminently fruitful. After serving the appointment with great success for one year, leading souls to Christ, and opening the way for new preachers, we find him the next year on Pedee Circuit, with Jeremiah Mastin, gallantly leading the little band then bearing the banner of Methodism toward the South. Of his work here, Dr. Shipp says: "His popularity in the Pedee country was unbounded, and his name, like that of Mastin, was perpetuated by incorporation as a family name in many households. Edward Crosland, of Green Pond Church, was so partial to both the preachers that he named a son Mastin and a daughter Hope Hull; and Robert Purnell, of Beauty Spot, who was awakened and converted under a sermon preached in the open air, because the log church could not contain the multitude that thronged the appointment, and who was one of the first local preachers raised up in the South Carolina Conference, and a great revivalist, named his second son Hope Hull, and sent him afterward to the academy which he established in Georgia to be educated for the ministry."

Dr. Coke was delighted with him, and two years afterward makes this mention of his work on that charge: "Mr. Hull is young, but is indeed a flame of fire. He appears always on the stretch for the salvation of souls. Our only fear concerning him is that the sword is too keen for the scabbard -- that he lays himself out in work far beyond his strength. Two years ago he was sent to



a circuit in South Carolina which we were almost ready to despair of, but he, with a young colleague (Mastin) of like spirit with himself, in one year raised that circuit to a degree of importance equal to that of almost any in the Southern States."

The next year (1787), we find him appointed to Amelia Circuit in Virginia. This year is a memorable one in the history of Methodism in that State, on account of the wonderful revival that attended the preaching of the itinerants. John Easter was on the Brunswick Circuit, and shoulder to shoulder with Hull, these two "flaming heralds of the cross" fought together some of the hardest fights and won some of the most glorious victories recorded in the annals of the Church.

The Old Theater which stood on Old street, not far from the present site of Murray's mill, in the city of Petersburg, and in which Robert Williams and many of the pioneers had thundered the law and the gospel, was the scene of one of these conflicts. Dr. Bennett has given us the following description of it: "The house was packed from door to pulpit. The slain of the Lord were many, and the power of God was present to heal them. Excited by the cries and groans of the stricken sinners within, the furious sinners without raved round the house like a tempest.

At length they gathered, and rushed with yells and curses against the doors. They burst in among the worshipers, throwing lighted squibs and fire-crackers. Meanwhile another band brought up a fire-engine and played a stream of water into the house until every light was put out, saints and sinners involved in darkness, save where a bursting fire-cracker gave a momentary glow, and the whole congregation routed and driven from the place. Great was the joy of the wicked, but short was their triumph. God was in his work; his hand moved it on in the midst of opposition, and its blessed influences reached and subdued not a few of those who had fought against it."

In 1788 we find Hull sent to Washington, Georgia. To this State he gave the remainder of his ministerial life, with the exception of one year -- 1792 -- spent with Jesse Lee in New England. But that one year was a memorable one, and his labors indissolubly connected his name with the history of Methodism in that section. It was under Hull's preaching in New England that a young man, whose name was afterward to become familiar as household words in every State in the Union, was converted. The young man had been for some time laboring under conviction, when, led by curiosity, he attended a Methodist meeting and heard Hull preach on the text, "This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," etc. Says he, "I thought he told me all that ever I did." The next day he heard him again, and of the impression the preacher made upon him he tells us: "Pointing his finger toward me he made this expression: 'Sinner, there is a frowning Providence above your head, and a burning hell beneath your feet, and nothing but the brittle thread of life prevents your soul from falling into endless perdition. But, says the sinner, what must I do? You must pray. But I can't pray? If you don't pray, then you'll be damned!' and, as he brought out the last expression, he either stamped with his foot on the box on which he stood or smote with his hand on the Bible, which came like a dagger to my heart. I came near falling backward from my seat, but saved myself by catching hold of my cousin, who sat by my side; and I durst not stir for some time, for fear I should tumble into hell." He afterward found pardon for sin, and was known to the world as the great revivalist Lorenzo Dow.

In Georgia, Hull was the soul of the Methodist movement. His son, Dr. Hull, quoted in "Sprague's Annals," tells us: "He was in many places the first Methodist preacher the people ever

saw, and to many individuals the first preacher of any denomination. It was chiefly through his exertions that the first respectable brick building was erected in Washington, designed to be used as an academy." In Savannah he met with great persecution on account of the opposition to Mr. Wesley and to the minutes against slavery. He was attacked by mobs and forced to seek refuge in the country, but the "word of God" was "not bound," and gradually the way opened before him. As an evidence of his readiness under all circumstances to promote the work of the Church, the following story is told. While traveling he was invited to spend the night at a house where a ball was to be held.

The story goes: "He entered, and when, soon after, he was requested to dance, he took the floor and remarked aloud, 'I never engage in any kind of business without first asking the blessing of God upon it, so let us pray.' Quick as thought the preacher was on his knees praying in the most earnest manner for the souls of the people, that God would open their eyes to see their danger, and convert them from the error of their ways. All present were amazed and overwhelmed; many fled in terror from the house, while others, feeling the power of God in their midst, began to plead for mercy and forgiveness. After the prayer, he said, 'On today four weeks I expect to preach at this house,' and quietly retired. . On the appointed day the inhabitants for miles around were assembled, and heard one of the most eloquent and powerful sermons that ever fell on human ears. From the work begun in a ball-room, a most powerful revival of religion extended in every direction, and many were added to the Church."

In 1794, Asbury chose him as a traveling companion; but before a year had passed in this service, Hull's health failed, and he saw that he could not continue in the regular work. But he was still able to fill another and hardly less noble and important field of labor -- that of the Christian teacher -- and he determined to do it. Retiring into Wilkes county, Georgia, he opened an academy for both sexes, and threw his soul into his new work. The reader must remember that this was a day when the office of a "schoolmaster" was little respected, and few persons competent to fill other stations in life could be secured for this work. But Hull threw his earnest, manly life into the struggling cause, and it received a new impetus. The good that he accomplished at the head of that academy, in those days of "Irish schoolmasters," the grand results that flowed to the State and to society from his Christian labor and noble example, eternity alone will reveal. Nor did he forget to preach. Whenever and wherever opportunity offered, he continued to proclaim the word of life as his health would permit. He was one of the founders of the State University at Athens, its acting president for some time, and the most active and efficient member of its board of trustees until the day of his death.

The Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce, in "Sprague's Annals," says of him: "Mr. Hull's style of preaching was awakening and inviting -- by far the most successful mode with the masses of mankind. He was also emphatically what may be called an experimental preacher, both as regards the renewed and unrenewed heart; a style growing out of the fact that he had carefully studied human nature in its deceitful workings, and Christian experience, not only in its more palpable, but more intrinsic phases; so that when an attentive hearer had listened to one of his searching discourses, whether it was intended to lay bare the sinner's heart or to test the Christian's hopes, he always felt that he had passed through a process of spiritual engineering which had mapped before him the whole field of his accountable life. Sinners often charged him with having learned their secrets, and using the pulpit to gratify himself in their exposure; and Christians, entangled in the

meshes of Satan's net, and ready to abandon their hope of divine mercy, have been cleared of these entanglements under his judicious tracings of the Holy Spirit in his manifold operations on the heart and conscience.

Powerful emotion could be seen as it played in unmistakable outline upon the anxious believer's countenance, while undergoing one of these spiritual siftings; and when at last the verdict was written on his heart that he was a child of God according to the rules of evidence laid down, all the conventional rules about the propriety of praise were broken by one willing wave of joy, and he told aloud that the kingdom of God was not a kingdom of word only, but of power. Mr. Hull was a fine specimen of what may be regarded as an old-fashioned Methodist preacher. His oratory was natural, his action being the unaffected expression of his inmost mind. Not only was there an entire freedom from every thing like mannerism, but there was a great harmony between his gesticulation and the expression of his countenance.

He seemed in some of the finest moods of thought to look his words into his audience. He was one of nature's orators, who never spoiled his speaking by scholastic restraints. He wisely cultivated his mind and taste that he might rightly conceive and speak; but he left all external oratory to find its inspiration in his subject, and to warm itself into life in the glow of his mind. Hence in many of his masterly efforts his words rushed upon his audience like an avalanche, and multitudes seemed to be carried before him like the yielding captives of a stormed castle."

Of his first meeting with the pioneer preacher, the same writer says: "I well remember that in the days of my youth he used to be known under the coarse but graphic appellation of the 'Broad-ax,' an honorary distinction conferred on him because of the mighty power that attended his ministry. My eyes first fell on him as he sat near the pulpit of a small log-chapel called 'Hull's Meeting-house,' in Clarke county, near Athens. It was a memorable day in my own history. I had longed to see, and now I feared to meet him. It was my second year in the ministry, and, above all, my fear of criticism made his presence dreadful to me. The wonderful reports which had reached me made me look upon him rather as an August than a fatherly being, and, when I saw him, there was nothing in the appearance of the real to relieve my mind of the dread of the ideal man. His head was rather above the medium size, his hair curling, just sprinkled with gray, and each lock looking as if living under a self-willed government. His face was an exceedingly fine one; he had a well-developed forehead, a small, keen blue eye, with a heavy brow, indicative of intense thought. His shoulders were unusually broad and square, his chest wide, affording ample room for his lungs, a circumstance of great value to a speaker who drew so freely on his deep, strong voice; his body was unusually long and large in proportion to his lower limbs, his hair originally black, and his voice full, flexible, and capable of every variety of intonation, from the softest sounds of sympathy and persuasion to the thunder-tones of wrath. . . . I was very intimate with him for about ten years; staid at his house, and talked and prayed and praised with him.

At that time he was a local, I an itinerant, preacher; but often did he leave home and business and travel with me for days. Together we preached; nor did Jonathan and David love each other more. All my intimacy with him only served to multiply evidences of his exalted worth. . . . When he was a circuit missionary, sixty years ago, after preaching one day, he proceeded to meet the little class, and having gone through the names of the class-paper, he approached an elderly man sitting afar off, and inquired after his soul's welfare. The old gentleman, after taking

sufficient time to digest his answer, said, 'I am like old Paul-when I would do good, evil is present with me.' To which Mr. Hull replied, 'I am afraid you are like old Noah, too -- get drunk sometimes.' It was a center shot, for the poor old man was a drunkard. Many such cutting remarks, made in utter ignorance of the persons to whom they were addressed, went to prove that he possessed a power of discerning spirits above most other men."

His peaceful death was a fitting and beautiful close to his pure and useful life. The unwavering faith and unfaltering zeal, that had led him along through suffering and danger toward the goal, shone around his dying couch. He ended his warfare on the 4th of October, 1818, at the age of fifty-five, and the entire submission to the divine will, which had been so beautifully exemplified in his life, found expression in his dying remark, "God has laid me under marching orders, and I am ready to obey."

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21 -- JOHN MCGEE

One of the great elements of pulpit power in the founders of Methodism was the ministerial authority with which they felt themselves to be invested. They believed themselves to be the "anointed of the Lord" for the work of the priesthood; and in delivering their messages, they spoke as those "having authority, and not as the scribes and Pharisees." True, the people to whom they addressed themselves were accustomed to a priesthood clothed with power from Church and State, but these men claimed to derive their authority from a higher source than either Church or State -- they professed to be called of God. The prophet of old, speaking under the immediate inspiration of the Most High, and working miracles to attest the divinity of his calling, was not more certain of the continual presence and protecting care of God, nor more burdened with a sense of the awful responsibility which his office involved. This sense of responsibility developed an all-absorbing earnestness, a fearless, untiring zeal, and an austere purity of life in the pioneer Methodist ministry, causing the masses to accord to them a claim which they refused to concede to a more self-indulgent clergy, invested with more of human authority. Conscious of their own integrity; with no unsundered vice separating them from the favor of God; with a sublime trust in the faithfulness of him who had ordained them to the work, and with a courage derived only from a sense of God's protection; with the burden of the world's woe resting upon them; having tasted of the wormwood and gall, and been "saved as by fire" from the thralldom of sin -- these men were baptized with a power before which the world trembled, and their utterances were clothed with an authority which even the ungodly conceded.

Criticize as we may the austerity of their lives and discipline, laugh as we may at the uncouth and abrupt manners of some of them, we must confess that, combining what was purest and best in the Stoics, the Mystics, and the Platonists, crucifying the flesh to the development of spiritual excellence, looking upon human life as the soul's crucial test -- a probationary period on which the momentous issues of life and death eternal are suspended -- these men, woefully deficient in what we are pleased to term "pulpit qualification," developed a spiritual power which, while it has largely infused itself into other denominations, Methodism has in a great measure lost.

Of how much other denominations owe to this infusion of spiritual life we have an intimation in the statement of an acknowledged American authority, himself not a Methodist, who says: "That something of vital Christianity exists among believers of every name; that the doctrine of justification by faith is generally understood and preached; that we are not blind Pharisees, or dead formalists, or practical Socinians and deists -- we may trace the cause in part (we cannot tell how largely) to the Holy Club of Oxford Methodists." (Bibliotheca Sacra, January, 1864, Art. IV.)

Holiness of life was the great pursuit of these men, and they felt it to be their one great work to spread scriptural holiness over the land. They introduced no new doctrine. Even Wesley's Arminian opinions had been held in the Church of England by such men as Sancroft, Barrow, Burnet, South, Chillingworth, Cudworth, Bull, More, Hammond, Wilkins, Tillotson, and Stillingfleet. "One condition, and only one," was required of candidates for admission into the society -- "a real desire to save their souls." "I desire," Wesley wrote to Venn, "to have a league, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ." The object of the movement was to reform the heart and life rather than the theological tenets of the religious world; and so Methodism grew into "a revival Church in its spirit, a missionary Church in its organization." Aiming at holiness of life alone, it left behind the dogmatic questions which the Church was discussing, and endeavored to form a league with every true follower of Jesus Christ in the effort to save the world in the hour of crisis.

Before these men baptized with the divine unction and forgetful of all else save the peril of souls, the world trembled, and the powers of darkness gave way. Called of God, and answerable only to him, they feared no man; their trumpets gave no uncertain sound, and thousands bowed before the cross, and acknowledged them to be indeed ambassadors of the Lord. It is possible that these men would see much to correct in our day. Indeed, we cannot imagine a resurrection of the Asburys, and Lees, and Dromgooles, and Easters, and Watterses, and Ellises, and Bruces, without picturing to ourselves a mighty shaking of the dry bones in both clergy and laity.

John McGee entered the itinerancy in 1788. He was a native of North Carolina; born near the Yadkin River, below Salisbury. He was raised by Presbyterian parents of the stricter sort, and carefully trained in the external duties of religion. But on attaining years of maturity he was ignorant of regeneration and justifying faith, and, as he himself confessed, sadly given to dissipation. Leaving his widowed mother, he removed to the eastern shore of Maryland. Here he first met with the Methodists, and under their influence he was led to see himself a vile, undone sinner, without God, and without hope in the world." Earnestly seeking forgiveness and adoption, as the great want of his nature, he soon experienced the joy of the new birth. Within three days after his conversion he felt assured that God had called him to the work of the ministry, and began at once to labor with the circuit preacher.

With a full heart he wrote home, telling of what "great things the Lord had done for his soul," and announcing the fact that he had become a preacher among the Methodists. It seems that his mother had imbibed the prevailing prejudice against the new sect, and it is said that when she heard that her wayward son had turned Methodist preacher, the cup of her sorrow was full; she was "almost distracted, and thought seriously of disowning him." In about two years he returned home. His younger brother, William, had been pursuing a theological course, preparatory to entering the Presbyterian ministry -- an office which he afterward adorned with a pure life and

holy zeal. On the first night after the prodigal son's return, his mother and brother held a grave consultation as to the propriety of inviting John to conduct the family worship. The mother was at first violently opposed to it, but William insisted, and finally John was asked to "take the books."

Then followed a scene that, we may well imagine, heaven delighted to witness. The young man was remarkably gifted in prayer. On this night grateful thoughts occupied his mind. He had left home a wayward sinner; he had returned in the favor of God. Memories of the past crowded upon each other as he contemplated the mercies of his Heavenly Father. His heart even now was overflowing in thankfulness for the divine goodness. He led in prayer. In the hush of the evening his spirit seemed communing with a loving Father. There was a strange sweetness in his petition. It was the communion of a loving child with a gentle parent. There was a filial awe and yet a strange confidence in the divine love that was new to those who listened. The heart of the young man waxed warmer. The incense of praise ascended to heaven. Now he seemed to be in the very presence of the Saviour, and all was peace and joy. The mother and brother were deeply affected. They felt that John had undergone a strange change -- a change which, while they did not understand it, they could not but admire and they began to have more respect for the young Methodist's religion. There might be something in it after all.

Soon after his arrival, an appointment was made for him to preach, at a neighbor's house, on a Sabbath morning. The news spread rapidly over the country that John McGee had returned home a preacher, and curiosity led many to attend. Perhaps the young preacher never afterward excelled the effort of that day. With a heart laden with joy and peace, he derived an inspiration from the dead formalism by which he found himself surrounded. He spoke on the one great theme of his life -- the new birth. The divine unction was upon him. The dry bones were shaken. The congregation was melted under the sublime yet simple eloquence of the preacher. Hearts were touched by the word, souls felt themselves condemned, and soon the cry of "Mercy!" broke from the sobbing mourners on every side. His mother and his brother were among the penitents. Convinced that they had only the form of godliness, they did not rest until they knew its power. A great revival broke out as the result of that sermon. The Church was opened to the new evangelist, and from the pulpit he proclaimed the word of God until numbers experienced a knowledge of saving grace.

McGee was associated with Daniel Asbury in carrying the banner of Methodism into the pioneer fields of Western North and South Carolina. The first Methodist church in North Carolina, west of the Catawba River, was built in 1791. It was situated in Lincoln county, near where Daniel Asbury lived when he located. It was called Rehoboth. In 1792 McGee was placed in charge of this circuit. In the following year he located. About this time he was married to a Miss Johnson, of that section. But he did not cease to render active service to the Church. Both he and his Presbyterian brother, William, were shining lights in the great camp-meetings which were started in 1794. These meetings proved a means of drawing together large congregations and concentrating public thought on the subject of religion. Thousands were brought into the Church. So intense grew the religious interest it seemed that the millennium was approaching. Twenty thousand people gathered for weeks in the woods, singing, and praying; the encampment lit up at night with pine-torches below and the stars overhead; the groans of the penitents agonizing for pardon; the shouts of the redeemed as they found the salvation of the Lord -- present a scene which belongs to the early history of Methodism. It has passed.

In 1798 McGee removed to Sumner, afterward Smith county, Tennessee, whether his Brother William had preceded him; and in these new fields he introduced the camp-meeting. Whatever objections may be raised against them now, since the country has become more densely populated, they were a means of great spiritual blessing to the sparsely settled sections of the far West. The following letter from McGee to his son-in-law, Rev. Thomas Logan Douglass, at the time presiding elder of Nashville District, appeared in the Methodist Magazine for May, 1821. It is not only a graphic picture of the early camp-meeting, but it serves to give us an intimation of the spirit of the man, and we have thought proper to reproduce it here:

June 23, 1820.

In compliance with your request, I have endeavored to recollect some of the most noted circumstances which occurred at the commencement of the work of God in the States of Kentucky and Tennessee, and which came under my observation in 1799 and the two following years. I suppose I am one of the two brothers referred to in 'Theophilus Armenius's account of the work of God in the Western country. My Brother William McGee is fallen asleep in the bosom of his beloved Master. We were much attached to each other from our infancy, but much more so when we both experienced the uniting love of Jesus Christ. I was the oldest, and by the mercy and grace of God sought and experienced religion first. With great anxiety of mind, he heard me preach the unsearchable riches of Christ before he felt or enjoyed peace with God. After he obtained religion he thought proper to receive holy orders in the Presbyterian Church; and after preaching some time in North Carolina, and in the Holston country, he came to Cumberland ( now West Tennessee) about the year 1796 or 1797, and settled in a congregation in Sumner county about the year 1798.

Several reasons induced me to remove with my family from Carolina to the Western country, and in the year 1798 I settled in Sumner (now Smith) county. The difference of doctrine professed by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches was not sufficient to dissolve those ties of love and affection which we both felt. We loved and prayed and preached together; and God was pleased to own and bless our labors. In 1799 we agreed to make a tour through the Barrens toward Ohio, and concluded to attend a sacramental solemnity in the Rev. Mr. McGready's congregation, on Red River, in our way. When we came there I was introduced by my brother, and received an invitation to address the congregation from the pulpit, and I knew not that God ever favored me with more light and liberty than he did each day while I endeavored to convince the people they were sinners, and urged the necessity of repentance, and of a change from nature to grace, and held up to their view the greatness, freeness, and fullness of salvation which is in Christ Jesus for lost, guilty, condemned sinners.

My brother and the Rev. Mr. Hodge preached with much animation and liberty. The people felt the force of the truth, and tears ran down their cheeks, but all was silent until Monday, the last day of the feast. Mr. Hodge gave a useful discourse; an intermission was given, and I was appointed to preach. While Mr. Hodge was preaching, a woman in the east end of the house got an uncommon blessing, broke through order, shouted for some time, and then sat down in silence. At the close of the sermon, Messrs. Hodge and McGready went out of the house; my brother and myself sat still; the people seemed to have no disposition to leave their seats. My brother felt such a power come on him that he quit his seat and sat down on the floor of the pulpit (I suppose not

knowing what he did); a power which caused me to tremble was upon me. There was a solemn weeping all over the house.

Having a wish to preach, I strove against my feelings. At length I rose up, and told the people I was appointed to preach, but there was a greater than I preaching, and exhorted them to let the Lord God omnipotent reign in their hearts, and submit to him, and their souls should live. Many broke the silence; the woman in the east end of the house shouted tremendously. I left the pulpit to go to her, and as I went along through the people the thought came to me: 'You know these people are much for order; they will not bear the confusion. Go back and be quiet' I turned to go back, and was near falling. The power of God was so strong upon me I turned again, and losing sight of the fear of man, I went through the house shouting and exhorting with all, possible ecstasy and energy, and the floor was soon covered with the slain. Their screams for mercy pierced the heavens, and mercy came down.

Some found forgiveness, and many went away from that meeting feeling unutterable agonies of soul for redemption in the blood of Jesus. This was the beginning of that glorious revival of religion in this country which was so great a blessing to thousands; and from this meeting camp-meetings took their rise. One man, for the want of horses for all his family to ride and attend the meeting, fixed up his wagon, in which he took them and his provisions, and lived on the ground throughout the meeting. He had left his worldly cares behind him, and had nothing to do but attend on divine service.

The next popular meeting was on Muddy River, and this was a camp-meeting. A number of wagons, loaded with people, came together, and camped on the ground, and the Lord was present, and approved of their zeal by sealing a pardon to about forty souls. The next camp-meeting was on the Ridge, where there was an increase of people, and carriages of different descriptions, and a great many preachers of the Presbyterian and Methodist order, and some of the Baptist, but the latter were generally opposed to the work. Preaching commenced, and the people prayed, and the power of God attended. There was a great cry for mercy. The nights were truly awful; the camp-ground was well illuminated; the people were differently exercised all over the ground, some exhorting, some shouting, some praying, and some crying for mercy, while others lay as dead men on the ground.

Some of the spiritually wounded fled to the woods, and their groans could be heard all through the surrounding groves, as the groans of dying men. From thence many came into the camp rejoicing and praising God, having found redemption in the blood of the Lamb. At this meeting it was computed that one hundred souls were converted from nature to grace. But perhaps the greatest meeting we ever witnessed in this country took place shortly after on Desha's Creek, near Cumberland River. Many thousands of people attended. The mighty power and mercy of God was manifested. The people fell before the word like corn before a storm of wind, and many rose from the dust with divine glory shining in their countenances, and gave glory to God in such strains as made the hearts of stubborn sinners tremble; and after the first gust of praise they would break forth in volleys of exhortation.

Amongst these were many small home-bred boys, who spoke with the tongue, wisdom, and eloquence of the learned; and truly they were learned, for they were all taught of God, who had



taken their feet out of the mire and clay, and put a new song in their mouths. Although there were converts of different ages under this work, it was remarkable they were generally the children of praying parents. Here John A. Grannade, the Western poet, who composed the Pilgrim songs, after being many months in almost entire desperation, till he was worn down and appeared like a walking skeleton, found pardon and mercy from God, and began to preach a risen Jesus. Some of the Pharisees cried disorder and confusion, but in disorderly assemblies there are generally dislocated and broken bones, and bruised flesh; but here the women laid their sleeping children at the roots of trees, while hundreds of all ages and colors were stretched on the ground in the agonies of conviction, and as dead men, while thousands day and night were crowding around them, and passing to and fro; and yet there was nobody hurt, which shows that these people were perfectly in their series. And on this chaos God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light, and many emerged out of darkness into it. We have hardly ever held a camp-meeting since without his presence and power to convert souls. Glory to God and the Lamb forever and ever! Yours respectfully, John McGee

Asbury rejoiced at the introduction of the camp-meeting as peculiarly adapted to the wants of the West. It gave him immense congregations, and added the people to the Church by thousands. From one of them he wrote: "I cannot say how I felt, nor how near heaven." Again: "I pray God that there may be twenty camp-meetings a week!" And again: "More of camp-meetings! I hear and see the great effects produced by them."

The camp-meetings produced a religious interest throughout the whole country, and were the means of carrying on the great revival which began with the nineteenth century and continued to grow several years. But as the great religious excitement was maintained, there appeared at the meetings, and sometimes elsewhere, a "physical phenomenon" not to be mentioned even now without a sensation of fear. "The jerks" are one of the mysteries in the history of religion. "Violent opposers were sometimes seized by them; men with imprecations upon their lips were suddenly smitten with them." Drunkards, attempting to drown the effect by liquors, could not hold the bottle to their lips. Their convulsed arm would drop it or shiver it against the surrounding trees.

Horsemen charging in upon camp-meetings to disperse them were arrested by the strange affection at the very boundaries of the worshiping circles -- sometimes struck from their saddles as if by a flash of lightning -- and were violently shaken the more they endeavored to resist the inexplicable power. . . . Infidels and scorners could hardly dare oppose them, for they themselves were often seized by the mysterious affection, while their arguments or jests were but half uttered; and drunken revilers were smitten by it when alluding to it in their carousels in bar-rooms." The most thoughtful people became alarmed, and gradually camp-meetings fell into disfavor.

McGee's latter days were spent in the quiet of his beautiful country home, near Dixon's Springs, Smith county, Tennessee. He raised a family of four daughters and one son. His eldest daughter married Rev. T. L. Douglass; another married Rev. Thomas Joyner; another, Col. Burchett Douglass; the other, Dr. Timothy Walton. He is said to have excelled as a farmer as well as a preacher. His beautiful farm evinced the care of an industrious, energetic spirit, as his pulpit success had crowned a living, toilsome zeal for the Master. He was well educated in the English branches, and was noted as a preacher of fine address. A bold defender of Methodism, he did no mean service in laying broad foundations for her future growth and prosperity. He died from an

ulcer on his arm, and breathed his last at his country home, leaving the old fields, of his toils and triumphs in the ministry, and the quiet of his latter retirement, to join in the everlasting shout of victory before the Throne, and to enjoy the endless "rest that remaineth to the people of God."

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## 22 -- WILLIAM ORMOND

Within the bounds of the Snow Hill Circuit, North Carolina Conference, there is a monument to the memory of one of the heroes of early Methodism, more enduring than brass or marble. These may be demolished or forgotten, but "Ormond's Chapel," with its hallowed associations, so dear to hundreds of living hearts, and so embalmed in memories of the departed, will ever be connected with the history of Methodism in North Carolina. The first structure was erected with funds bequeathed for that purpose by the subject of this sketch, and it is eminently proper that this place of worship shall ever perpetuate the name and memory of one of the purest men that ever laid down his life in the service of Christ. Certainly no more suitable monument could have been suggested. Like Jacob's well, a means of blessing to the generations who succeed him, it symbolizes the spirit of active, loving service which was in him whose name it bears, and who, after devoting his life to the best interests of humanity, sealed his work by dying, like a hero, at the post of duty in a time of danger.

Only the true Christian is a true hero. The one Perfect Man, he "in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," submitted to be bruised and smitten of men; he bore, without show or feeling of resentment, the wrongs, insults, and persecutions of the world; but when "his hour was come," he went to his death with a sublime fortitude and courage which sealed his claims to divinity forever. The history of early Methodism presents to us many characters who were afraid to resent the indignities that were heaped upon them -- but it was a fear of God, not man -- and these very men could brave all manner of danger, and go to their death with a song and a shout upon their lips.

William Ormond did not live long enough to attain the place in history which others of more extended experience have won, but his twelve years of itinerant service suffice to show what might have been expected of him in later life; and the occasional and fragmentary notices of him in the as yet unsatisfactory records of our Church's history, patiently gathered from various sources and thrown together, will enable us to form an estimate of the man; and that is the purpose of our present task.

He was born of respectable parents in what was then known as Dobbs county, and near the present town of Kinston, North Carolina, on the 22d of December, 1769. His parents were considered wealthy in that day, and left him a patrimony which, had he been guided by different views of life and duty, might have developed into a considerable fortune; but when he gave himself to Christ, he made an entire consecration of every thing to his service. We know but little as to his early life and education. It is probable, from the small number and interior character of the institutions of learning in the country at that time, that his early literary advantages would be now considered very meager; yet his brethren speak of him as one of the most gifted of their number.

These grand old heroes have left us little information concerning themselves, but the few notes which they made are full of interest and significance. Mr. Ormond seems to have been no exception to the rule, and the following record, which the Church has preserved with fidelity, embraces what he considered the most important events in his life:

Convicted, 10th December, 1787;  
Converted, 11th December, 1787;  
Sanctified, 20th March, 1790.

A little reflection may show us a deeper significance in these notes than we might at first be disposed to accord to them. One of the great secrets underlying the marvelous success of our pioneer ministry is found in the fact that they "knew they had passed from darkness unto light" They remembered -- ah! never to forget it -- the day "when God, for Christ's sake, spoke peace to their souls." They lived in daily, prayerful communion with their God and Saviour, lest they should lose "the pearl of great price," and fail, at last, of eternal life. To them, time was nothing, eternity was every thing; they were "dead, and their lives were hid with Christ in God." And these men were preachers CALLED OF GOD.

They were watchmen on the walls of Zion. Their business it was to show the sinner the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to strip him of the garments of his vain excuses, to reveal to him, as messengers and ambassadors of Christ, his wretched, lost condition, and then to point him to the Lamb of God, slain for the sin of the world. They spoke as those having authority; an audible voice from the throne of heaven could hardly have added to their conviction of their duty to preach. By faith, they felt the weight of the divine hand laid upon them; by faith, they heard the voice bidding them "cry aloud, and spare not;" and in the inmost heart of every true man among them burned this conviction, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" And they preached the gospel -- the good news of God's grace abounding to the chief of sinners -- they made the sinner feel and see his burden of guilt and shame, pointed him to Christ for salvation, and trusted to God's Spirit to do the rest. There was a realm they dared not enter.

They did not attempt to simplify or explain away the mystery of the new birth; they did not make justifying faith so simple a thing that the sinner in his sins could understand it; they did not make the religion of pardon and trust a thing that the sinner could obtain without forsaking his sins and laying his all of service a willing sacrifice upon the altar of Christ. They preached of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Their great themes were re pentance, justification, sanctification, and adoption, and under their preaching the world was moved, the ranks of sin were broken; men were converted, regenerated, led to an experimental knowledge of Christ as a living personal Saviour and Redeemer, and made to rejoice in the fullness and freeness of the divine love.

It was such an experience in the divine life, such a consecration of self and service, and such a conviction of duty, that William Ormond brought with him into the Conference in 1791. Without attempting to follow him through his several years of service, we will simply give here the various appointments to which he was assigned: 1791, Tar River; 1792, Goshen; 1793, Pamlico; 1794, New Hope; 1795, Sussex; 1796, Trent; 1797, Roanoke; 1798, Portsmouth; 1799, Washington (Georgia); 1800, Tar River; 1801, Brunswick; 1802, Salisbury; 1803, Norfolk and Portsmouth.

As a man, he was quick in his bodily movement and in his perceptions; generous, affectionate, fervid, and faithful. In all his relations, he exemplified the truth of Bayard Taylor's oft-quoted lines:

The bravest are the tenderest,  
The loving are the daring.

He lived above those motives of cold, calculating policy which too often prevail, even among ministers, and never inquired whether or not a measure was popular before supporting it. He was rapidly becoming a leader of public thought when removed by death.

At the General Conference of 1800 he introduced a motion which created no little discussion, through successive years, before it was finally defeated -- namely, "That the Yearly Conferences be authorized to nominate and elect their own presiding elders."

His motion, at the same Conference, "To make local deacons eligible to the elder's office," though defeated here by a vote of forty-seven nays to thirty-six ayes, was destined to pass, twelve years later, into a law of the Church.

Ormond was now entering the prime of his manhood, and a brilliant career of usefulness seemed to spread out before him. His affectionate nature, his tender sensibilities, his compassionate interest in all who wore the garb of humanity, his striking natural gifts, and his entire consecration, made him a power in the pulpit and out of it, and gave a peculiar impressiveness and tenderness to his public prayers. He was a marked leader in the great revival of 1802, in Western North Carolina, being at that time on the Salisbury Circuit. From the scene of the revival, that year, on Yadkin Circuit, Daniel Asbury wrote: "After Brother Ormond's sermon, under prayer, the Lord displayed his power in an increasing manner."

But whatever of service he might have given in after-years, an all-wise and inscrutable Providence ordained it otherwise, and permitted him only to leave to the Church of his choice the example of one who was faithful to duty, even unto death.

In 1803, he was appointed, with Joseph Toy, to Norfolk and Portsmouth. While here, the yellow fever appeared, and began its work of death. From the scene of its ravages he wrote to a friend: "I expect to continue upon my station, for it appears I cannot well leave at this time. I might as well die of the fever as with any other affliction, and there is as direct a passage from Norfolk to heaven as from any other part of the globe. I have no widow to weep over my lifeless body, no babes to mourn for a father, and I find this world a dangerous and troublesome place."

He was called off, two months later, to attend the meeting of a committee on some business of the Church in the country, but the seeds of death were already sown. After attending the meeting, and as he was returning to his post, he was taken with the fever, and died at the house of a friend, in Brunswick county, Virginia, October 30, 1803. His last hours were blessed by the consolations of the gospel, and he died with the shout of victory upon his lips.

The "early minutes " tell us that "he left a legacy to the Conference, another to build a house for God, in the neighborhood of his nativity; the balance to his relations, with particular instructions that a part of it be applied to the education of their children."

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## 23 -- JAMES JENKINS

It is arresting to note the various shades of character that were brought out by the Wesleyan movement, and more interesting still to witness the utilization by an overruling Providence, of the various types and degrees of talent, in the work of saving souls and advancing the kingdom of Christ. When Paul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" he expressed his recognition of individual duty and responsibility, and his acquiescence in the divine purpose and plan in his creation. When David said, " I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," he expressed his willingness to do the kind of work which Infinite Wisdom had prepared him, for performing. Here lies the secret of success in the Christian life -- submission to the divine will, and conformity to the divine purpose.

When Paul brought himself and laid his all upon the altar of the divine will and asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the question was answered, the desired direction was given. And it was an abiding consciousness of his individual acquiescence in and conformity to the divine purpose, united with his unwavering faith in God, that enabled him to rejoice in tribulations, and to declare that he had learned in whatsoever state he was "therewith to be content." This willingness to "endure hardness as good soldiers" -- resulting from an entire conse cration, and an abiding faith in the divine guidance -- this readiness to render the entire service in just the field for which God had adapted and to which he called the subject, was beautifully exemplified in the pioneer Methodist ministry; and in this fact we may read the secret underlying their wonderful success.

The history of Methodism is indeed wonderful, and the chain of circumstances which connects its origin with its firm establishment shows in its several links the molding hand of Providence. Various shades and degrees of talent finding their proper fields for usefulness -- various types of pulpit power suiting to various shades of human character and temperament, showing the directing mind of the great Captain of our salvation, leading this sacramental host on to victory.

For many years, and until the year 1847, the name of James Jenkins stood upon the roll of the South Carolina Conference, connecting that generation with the noble band of pioneer heroes who had gone before. In the year 1792 he had joined the Conference, and his fields of labor were as follows: 1792, Cherokee Circuit; 1793, Oconee; 1794, Santee; 1795, Broad River and Edisto; 1796, Great Pedee; 1797, Washington, Georgia; 1798, Bladen, North Carolina; 1799, Edisto; 1800, Santee and Catawba; 1801, South Carolina District; 1802-4, Camden District; 1805, superannuated; 1806, located. He reentered in 1812, and was appointed to Wateree Circuit, but located again in 1813. From 1831 to 1847 he sustained a superannuated relation to the Conference.

He is described as "tall and commanding in person, with a face -- even in old age expressive of great energy and courage, and a voice -- until impaired by long use -- clear and trumpet-toned." He belonged to the class of preachers popularly known as "Sons of Thunder," and was familiarly called "Thundering Jimmy," "Bawling Jimmy," etc. So vigilant was he in his oversight of the young preachers, and so ready to correct what appeared to him to be errors in them, that he was styled by the preachers "the currycomb of the Conference."

Whatever objections criticism may make to such a character in this day, it is at least certain that James Jenkins accomplished a work in his generation that will live for eternity, and his consecration to the work of the ministry, his devotedness to Christ, underlying all his conduct and shining out in the motives impelling his actions, would command respect and win veneration in any day. It was under his ministry that those grand pillars of early Methodism, Reddick and Lovick Pierce, were converted. Of the former of these we shall have occasion to speak in another sketch. The latter tells us that Jenkins was the first man that he ever heard preach "with the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven." Had he done nothing else, these seals to his ministry would have justly won for him the everlasting gratitude of the Church he served so faithfully and loved so well.

Besides the traditions that have reached us of his wonderful successes in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, showing the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," and constraining the listening multitudes, overwhelmed by the storm of his exordiums, to turn to a living Advocate and Redeemer, before their day of probation ended, we have, fortunately, a few old letters that he wrote to Bishop Asbury, and which we give as valuable not only in bringing out the man in living colors before us, but as contributing to the history of Southern Methodism:

Camden, S. C., June 30, 1802.

Hell is trembling, and Satan's kingdom is falling. Through Georgia, South and North Carolina, the sacred flame and holy fire of God, amidst all the opposition, is extending far and wide. I may say with safety that hundreds of sinners have been awakened and converted this year in the above-named States.

The general meeting held at the Waxaws, was on the last of May. Five Methodist, five Baptist, and twelve Presbyterian ministers officiated. The Lord was present and wrought for his own glory; sinners were converted on all sides, and numbers found the Lord. One among many remarkable cases I will relate, of a professed atheist who fell to the earth and sent for Brother Gassaway to pray for him. After laboring in the pangs of the new birth for some time, the Lord gave him deliverance. He then confessed before hundreds that for some years he had not believed there was a God, but now had found him gracious to his soul.

Not far from Rutherford courthouse there was another general meeting the first of June, 1802. The same power attended the meeting; thousands were present; many poor sinners felt the power of God, and were raised up to testify that he had forgiven their sins.

The Methodists had another general meeting a few days past at the Hanging Rock; fifteen ministers -- Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian -- with about three thousand people. The work

began, in some degree, on Friday night. The preachers were singing, praying, or preaching all the night. Saturday evening it began again at the stand. Sabbath evening, at the close of the sacrament, some fell to the earth, and the exercise continued the whole night. Monday morning the people came together again, and began singing and exhorting. The Lord wrought again, and this was the greatest time. They were crying for mercy on all sides. One man, that had one Sabbath evening been in a dreadful and unreasonable rage, at the close of this meeting the Lord brought to plead for mercy. I found him weeping -- he had watered the ground with his tears. We judged twelve or fifteen found peace. A letter from Daniel Asbury informs me he never saw such a work, and that he had joined fifty in going round the Yadkin Circuit. Brother Mead informs me the work is still going on in Georgia. We have a revival in Anson and the upper part of Santee. Brother Gassaway joined at one time nineteen, and at another seventeen. There is also a revival at Bladen, Kingston, and several other places.

James Jenkins

Camden District, July 28, 1803.

After attending several camp-meetings, the particulars of which I will not detail, but contenting myself with saying the Lord was with us at every one, I will proceed to give you an account of one held in Sandy River Circuit, which began the first day of July. I have seen in my travels many good and great times; but among sinners, I think this was the greatest I ever saw. On Saturday the Lord began to shake Satan's kingdom in a glorious manner. On this day a man was struck with the power of God, who tried to get off the ground, but got only about three hundred yards, when he fell and cried for mercy. Another such case happened on Sunday. One of the brethren and myself retired in the bushes for private devotion. Scarcely were we there when a man came along lamenting his wretched case, two men following him, with whom he pleaded to stay behind, while he should go and pour out his soul to God. We stood and listened at him -- it was truly affecting. He confessed his sins in these words: O God, I have sinned against thee, and dared thee to thy face; and I deserve nothing but hell; yet I plead for mercy!' And I have no doubt he obtained that mercy he pleaded for. On Sunday and Sunday night the powers of darkness gave back. Many sinners were on the ground crying for mercy, and many believers crying for perfect love. About twenty found redemption in the blood of Jesus at that time.

I next attended a camp-meeting in Union Circuit. The Lord was with us indeed; many were convicted and several converted, and the shouts of his people were heard afar off. At the Waxaws also I had a very remarkable and gracious time; though this was chiefly among believers. Several spoke in love-feast and testified that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all sin. Eight more professed to have received the same blessing, and the same, witness at this meeting. Thus the work goes on. May it spread more rapidly, is my fervent prayer.

I am, etc.,

James Jenkins

Wilmington, N. C., October 18, 1804.

Our first camp-meeting began the 22d of June, in Bladen Circuit, about ten miles from Wilmington. The power of God was present to wound and to heal. The cries of the distressed, and the shouts of joy from those that were healed, were truly awful and pleasing. The work broke out

the first day, and increased until Sunday evening and Monday morning, when God seemed to bow the heavens, and come like the rushing of a mighty wind. The slain of the Lord were many; every mouth was stopped, and confessed that it was the power of God. On Monday morning we had three persecutors struck with the power of God; two fell and never rose till God spoke peace to their souls. We suppose that there were seventy souls found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our next camp-meeting was in Great Pedee Circuit, at Brother E. James's. Upon this occasion God made bare his arm, and worked for his own glory. Some fell under the power of God, and others found redemption in the blood of the Lamb. There is still a blessed work in that circuit. There was a camp-meeting at the Hanging Rock, in Santee Circuit. This was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord to souls of believers. Sinners were awakened, mourners converted, believers sanctified, and backsliders reclaimed.

The next camp-meeting was at the Beauty Spot, 21st of September. Ten preachers and numbers of people. We had some stir on Friday night, but were interrupted by the rain. We began the exercise after breakfast, and continued nearly till night with very little stir, but under the last prayer the power of God came down among the people. The saints began to shout aloud and praise God, and sinners began to cry for mercy. In a little time there were many agonizing on the ground -- some found the pearl of great price. The work lasted nearly all night. In the morning I gave them my farewell from 2 Tim. ii. 12. This was the greatest time that was seen among the preachers - they were filled with the Holy Ghost. The last camp-meeting is just over in Bladen Circuit, by Brother Gauteers. Ten preachers and about sixteen hundred people. This exceeded all that I ever saw. The work broke out the first day, and increased rapidly until we left the ground. The Lord rode forth conquering and to conquer; the devil's kingdom fell like lightning to the ground.

Many sinners fell under a sense of guilt and danger, and cried loud as if in the agony of death; many praising God for pardoning love. It was truly affecting to see parents, with their children in their arms, crying over them, and pleading with them to serve God; children pleading with their parents to flee from the wrath to come. All souls were made subjects of the work -- males and females, whites and blacks, rich and poor. From the hoary-headed sinner to children of nine years old were the subjects of this blessed work. Many sinners had to fly from the ground or fall under the power of God. One sinner that had been burning the Negroes that were down at last fell himself, and never rose till he was happy in God. We suppose there were three or four hundred Christians; about twelve hundred sinners, and of twelve hundred one hundred found the Lord. We left the ground about two o'clock in the afternoon, and then several lay on the ground like dead men. We suppose since our first camp-meeting in June there have been about three hundred souls converted in and about Bladen Circuit. We had a powerful time last night in this place. Some awakenings in this town this year.

I have labored under great weakness for two months -- colds and fevers latterly, and now a sore leg; but have kept along hitherto. I do not expect much to take a station next year. I expect to meet you in Camden. I am as much as ever thine to obey.

James Jenkins



In 1809, Bishop Capers, then just entering, the itinerant work, was sent to the circuit on which Mr. Jenkins lived, the latter, at that time, sustaining to the Conference a local relation. Speaking of the neighborhood of Sawney's Creek, the Bishop says:

Here lived that most remarkable man James Jenkins, whose goodness no one ever doubted, but whose zeal was always brandishing in the temple a scourge of not very small cords, as if for fear that some one might be present who did not love the temple well enough to take a scourging for it, and who ought therefore to be driven out; and in full faith that the more men were beaten the better for them, as it would make them more humble and less worldly-minded. His was the first house I entered in my new field of labor, and if I might have been driven off by the first discouragement, that might have been my first and last appearance in that quarter. I seemed to be younger, greener, and a poorer prospect for a preacher in his estimate than even in my own; and he was an old preacher, and withal a famous one. That first introduction to the responsibilities of my new charge was after this sort:

Well, have they sent you to us for our preacher?

Yes, sir.

What, you? and the egg-shell not dropped off of you yet! Lord have mercy upon us! And who have they sent in charge?

No one, sir, but myself.

What, you, by yourself? You in charge of the circuit?

Why, what is to become of the circuit? The Bishop had just as well have sent nobody. What can you do in charge of the circuit?

Very poorly, I fear, sir; but I dare say the Bishop thought you would advise me about the discipline, and I am sure he could not have sent one who would follow your advice more willingly, Brother Jenkins, than I will.

So, so; I suppose then I am to take charge of the circuit for you, and you are to do just what I tell you?

I would be very glad, sir, to have you take charge of the circuit.

Did ever! What, I, a local preacher, take charge of the circuit? And is that what you have come here for? Why, man, you know nothing about your business. How can I take charge of the circuit? No, no; but I can see you do it, such a charge as it will be; and if I don't, nobody else will, for these days the discipline goes for nothing.

And he groaned deeply.

It was on my second or third round that coming to Brother Jenkins's he asked me, in his usual earnest manner, how many members I had turned out at H -- meeting-house.

None, sir.

What, do you let people get drunk, run for the bottle, and turn up Jack, and keep them in the Church?

My dear sir, I hope nobody does so at H\_\_\_\_. I am sure I never heard of it.

A pretty piece of business, rejoined he. Why, at Polly H.'s wedding, a whole parcel of them ran for the bottle, and old J. A. held it, and got drunk into the bargain. And now you, the preacher in charge, come here and tell me that you never heard of it, though I can hear of it forty miles off.

This was a poser [a conundrum, a puzzle] for me. With feelings too sad for society, I took the earliest hour for retirement. My bed was in an upper room, the floor of which was made of loose plank, without ceiling of any kind at the lower edges of the joist, which might have obstructed the passage of sound from the room below. And I had not been long in bed before I heard my kind-hearted sister say:

O Mr. Jenkins, you do not know how much you have grieved me!

Grieved you, Betsy, replied he; how in the world can I have grieved you?

By the way you have talked to Brother Capers. I am afraid he will never come here again. How can you talk to him so?

Why, Betsy, child, returned he, don't you reckon I love Billy as well as you do? I talk to him because I love him. He'll find people enough to honey him without my doing it; and he's got to learn to stand trials, that's all.

"Sister Jenkins seemed not to be satisfied, but wished to extort a promise that he would not talk so roughly to me any more. But his conscience was concerned in that, and he would not promise it -- You may honey him as much as you please, but I go for making him a Methodist preacher. Well, then, thought I, it's a pity, my old friend, that you should spoil your work by not tightening your floor. You might as well have promised, for I will take care that you shall not make any thing by the refusal. The next morning it was not long before something fetched up the unpleasant theme, and as he was warming into the smiting spirit, I looked in his face and smiled. What, said he, do you laugh at it? As well laugh as cry, Brother Jenkins, I returned; did you not tell Sister Jenkins that you loved me as well as she did, and only wanted to make a Methodist preacher out of me? I am sure you would not have me cry for anything, that is to do me so much good. It was all over; he joined in the laugh, and threw away his seeming ill humor. But as for the matter of the immoralities at H-, it turned out to be all a hoax. Some wag, knowing, how such a circumstance would trouble him, probably originated the tale for that purpose.

For the following incidents we are indebted to Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina:"

At a protracted meeting in one of the larger towns, a talented minister, who a few days before had been married to a most excellent young lady in the place, preached a carefully prepared sermon to a large congregation -- in which the bride, the family, and divers friends were included -- on the frailty of man and the immutability of the gospel, from 1 Peter i. 24, 25. In the discourse, which was throughout highly rhetorical and excessively ornate, there occurred in particular a passage in which the pyramids of Egypt were made to stand out very conspicuously to view. Mr. Jenkins, who had been trained in a widely different school of homiletics, and who had been requested to close the exercises after him, began his exhortation by saying: Brethren, the hour is gone, and nobody is profited. I should like to know what the pyramids of Egypt have to do with converting souls. Fire, Holy Ghost, power, is what we want! And he proceeded to criticize in unsparing terms of severity a style of preaching so revolting to his taste, and so foreign from his conception of the proper object of the pulpit. Notwithstanding the mortification on the one side, and the merriment on the other, produced for a time by the severity of his strictures, yet by his honesty of purpose and earnestness of spirit, which all were obliged to recognize, he brought the services to a close amid feelings of deepest solemnity and awe on the vast congregation.

During the session of one of the Conferences, Mr. Jenkins felt bound by his conscience to make complaint against a young preacher who had allowed himself to be detained with a wedding-party after the dancing had been introduced. The young brother pleaded in excuse that he had not been notified beforehand that there was to be dancing, and that he was imprisoned in a room from which there was no way of exit without going through the hall in which the dancing was going on, and withal the door was kept fast closed. The defense was not at all satisfactory to Mr. Jenkins, who insisted on an honest application of discipline, on the ground that it was a will on the part of the young brother, and not a way of egress, that was wanting. 'If I had been there,' said he, 'I would have gotten out of the house if Satan himself had been the door-keeper.'

From the foregoing letters and incidents, the reader has formed an estimate of the character of the man. Amid all his peculiarities, his passionate love for the Master, his intense devotion to the Church, and his burning, restless, toilsome zeal for the conversion of souls and the honor of Zion shone out through all his actions, and inspired confidence in all who knew him. And while this zeal led him to criticize sharply what he thought to be wrong, it never led him -- as it so often does others -- to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. A beautiful humility, a Christlike spirit of self-abasement, ran through his whole life, tempering the ardent intentness of his toilsome love for Christ and his kingdom, and revealing the melting, molding influences of divine grace in his heart. He feared no man, and in the discharge of what he conceived to be his duty he was ever ready to brave danger and death, but at the foot of the cross he was as meek and submissive as an ignorant, dependent child.

This beautiful spirit of Christian humility shone out in radiant colors as the sun of his life approached its setting. When some one, perhaps to encourage him, in his last hours reminded him of the work he had done for the Church, he replied: "I have never done any thing; don't mention these things to me; I am nothing but a poor, unworthy sinner, saved by grace. Christ is all; to him be all the praise." He had raised the shout of victory over many a hard-fought field, and now, "saved

by grace," he was to come out more than conqueror" in the final conflict. "The last enemy, even death," was overcome. On the 24th of January, 1847, at Camden, South Carolina, in the eighty-third year of his life and in the fifty-fifth of his ministry, without a struggle, he yielded his spirit up to God who gave it, and sweetly "fell on sleep." The notes of victory lingered upon his lips even as his spirit was passing up to the blood-washed hosts to take up the everlasting shout of praise before "the throne of God and of the Lamb."

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## 24 -- JAMES DOUTHIT

We learn from Bishop Asbury's journal that the father of the subject of this sketch was born in Maryland. Removing from his native State, he settled on the Yadkin River, in North Carolina, became a member of the Methodist Church, was appointed class-leader, and opened his house as a preaching-place for "the assemblies of his brethren." But, alas! an infamous woman found her way into the society, seduced Douthit away, and he departed from his brethren and from God. Some years after this, the family removed to the Table Mountain, Pendleton District; preachers came to the house, the father was reclaimed, and his two sons, James and Samuel, joined the Methodists and were useful and respectable traveling preachers; the former laboring twelve, the latter seven years in the ministry." The father fell a second time into sin, led away by his weakness for strong drink, but in the evening of life "became a true penitent, was blessed with justifying and sanctifying grace, and slept in peace in the seventy-third year of his age."

James Douthit entered the itinerant ministry at the Conference held in the city of Charleston, December 24, 1792, though it seems he had traveled some before this time. It may be interesting to note just here the fact that the Methodists had been so imposed upon by unworthy characters traveling through the country and passing for preachers that the Conferences this year took steps to protect themselves and the preachers by issuing the following caution which appears on the printed minutes:

The brethren are requested to be on their guard against impostors, one of this character having made his way through North and South Carolina, collected money, purchased a horse by falsehood, and disappeared. If a preacher is on the traveling plan, he will be sent out from the District Conference; if he is in the local line, he can be recommended from his quarterly-meeting. If doubts arise relative to any person who may appear under the character of a Methodist preacher, refer him to the preacher who has charge of the circuit for examination before he is permitted to preach."

The term "District Conference" was used in place of "Annual Conference," as it was the intention at that time to hold an Annual Conference in each presiding elder's district. This, however, was found to be impracticable, and the term "District Conference" fell into disuse until it was used to designate certain local preachers' Conferences known in the Church from 1820 to 1836.

In the year 1792, the Conferences received forty-three young men into the itinerant ranks, and Douthit's name appears on the roll of the general minutes with such names as Anthony Sale,

Francis Acuff, and Hezekiah C. Wooster. He was appointed this year to Saluda Circuit, with young George Clark as co-pastor, and Reuben Ellis as presiding elder. It was the custom then to send two preachers to each of the large circuits. They could not get around the circuits, generally, in less than six weeks' time, preaching from three to ten times a week; and they succeeded each other at intervals of about three weeks at each place. As the preachers were mostly young men, and unordained, the presiding elder was expected to reach every preaching place on his district, as nearly as possible, at least once a year to administer the sacraments. Like Paul and Barnabas, young Douthit and Clark went to their work with the divine unction upon them.

The Lord blessed their efforts, and crowned their labors with success. The next year, Douthit traveled Burke Circuit, in Georgia, with Benjamin Tarrant as co-pastor, and Philip Bruce as presiding elder. Here, also, he was permitted to raise the shout of victory over many a hard-fought field. At the close of this year, he was ordained a deacon by Bishop Asbury. In 1795, he was returned to Saluda, and in 1796 he traveled Broad River Circuit, adjoining. At the close of the latter year, he was elevated to elder's orders. In 1797, we find him on the Great Pedee Circuit; and in 1798, with the saintly George Dougherty and Robert Gaines, he traveled Santee and Catawba. These were all new fields where Methodism was just opening the way, and demanded indomitable energy and courage to meet the oppositions that offered, and to withstand the privations of frontier life.

In 1799, we find Douthit on the Salisbury Circuit, in North Carolina. In 1800, he traveled Greenville Circuit in Virginia. The latter was one of the old fields of Methodism, and had been blessed with the labors of the first preachers who came to Virginia.

In 1801-2, he traveled Salisbury District as presiding elder. These were memorable years in the history of Southern Methodism. A revival-wave seemed to sweep over the land, and thousands were added to the Church. The Salisbury District at this time embraced Caswell, Guilford, Yadkin, Morganton, Swannanoa, Salisbury, Haw River, and Franklin circuits. Rather an appalling extent of territory surely for one man to travel, but he did it, and the following letter to Asbury will give us some idea of the progress of the work:

July 13, 1802

At the quarterly-meeting in Swannanoa, May 1st and 2d, Mr. Newton, a Presbyterian, attended, and assisted me in the administration of the Lord's Supper. It was a solemn time; thought by some to be the greatest meeting ever held in Buncombe county. At the quarterly-meeting in Morganton, the 8th and 9th of May, we had a very large congregation, a solemn time, and some very powerful convictions. At the Yadkin quarterly-meeting, the 15th and 16th of May, we had also a gracious season. At the quarterly-meeting in Guilford, which began on Friday 21st and continued until Monday the 24th of May, we had the greatest time and the most powerful work that I ever saw. The work broke out on Saturday, about four o'clock in the afternoon, and there was no intermission till after two o'clock in the afternoon on Monday. I think there were (at times) during this meeting, upward of one hundred souls down at one time crying for mercy; between forty and fifty professed to be converted. At the quarterly-meeting in Caswell, at Edward Taylor, jr.'s, Brother Jackson met me. On Sabbath-day, under preaching, the work broke out; perhaps five professed faith, while several others were struck to the earth and cried aloud for mercy.

At the quarterly-meeting in Haw River Circuit, held at the Hickory Mountain meeting-house, which began on Friday the 11th of June, and continued until Monday the 14th, we had the greatest time that had ever been seen there. The power of the Lord came down on Saturday, like a mighty rushing wind, and appeared to rest on the congregation during the meeting. The number of the converted could not be ascertained. The work of the Lord at this time is reviving in a most pleasing manner in all the circuits in the district, except Franklin. I pray God to send it there and everywhere till the earth is filled with the knowledge and glory of God. The preachers in the district are all able to travel and preach, although some of them complain, and are greatly weakened by excessive labors.

I am your son and servant in the gospel of Christ,  
James Douthit

We hear the shout of victory in the following, which he wrote four months later:

November 13, 1802

I am now at the quarterly-meeting in the Yadkin. Brother McKendree is with us. The Lord has been powerfully present this day, and we are looking for greater times tomorrow and the next day. The Lord is doing wonders throughout the district; the holy flame has caught and is going on very considerably in all the circuits. I suppose at the several quarterly-meetings, the second time I went round the district, not less than five hundred souls professed to find the Lord. Hail, Jesus! thou art our King, and we will praise thee.

James Douthit

From these letters we must form our estimate of the character of the preacher, unless there be some who will flavor us with information that has not yet been permanently recorded. Although an earnest worker, filling high positions in the Church, traveling twelve years, and exploring new fields, Douthit's name has as yet no place in the written history of his Church. His brother Samuel went West, and his name is accorded honorable mention in Redford's "History of Methodism in Kentucky." James located in 1803, and we hear no more of him until ten years after, when Bishop Asbury stops at his house "on the quiet banks of the Saleuda" to write his "valedictory address to the presiding elders," and mentions it in his journal.

We have been unable to ascertain the exact time and place of his birth or of his death. Asbury spells his name Douthat; in the early minutes it uniformly appears Douthet; but we have been guided by his own signature as it occurs, each time, in an old volume of printed letters.

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25 -- GEORGE DOUGHERTY

To the right and left of the main entrance to Front Street Church, in Wilmington, N. C., two of the pioneers of Methodism in the South sleep their last sleep, awaiting the sound of the trump

that shall call them to the resurrection of the just. Until the close of the late war between the States, a marble slab marked the resting-place of each one perpetuating the memory of William Merideth and the other of George Dougherty. Side by side they had been buried at the old "African Chapel" which Merideth had founded, and which stood where the Front Street parsonage now stands, corner Walnut and Second streets. Their remains were removed when the new church was built. At the close of the war the Negroes claimed the building, and, under bayonets, came near getting control of it; and an allusion to the old "African Church" in the epitaphs on the slabs caused their removal when the front steps to the church were remodeled.

In this city Merideth had labored and founded the first Methodist house of worship. To it Dougherty, broken down in health and dying of consumption, had come to take shipping for a milder climate; and here, in graves now unmarked save by the bricks which inclose them, their mortal remains await the day when Christ shall come to make up his jewels, and when the redeemed spirits and glorified bodies shall be wedded together in immortal union and unfading bloom. And while Dougherty spent the whole of his ministerial life in another State, the fact that he here ended his warfare and now rests from his labors brings a notice of his life within the domain of the intention of this work.

He was born in Newberry District, South Carolina, about the year 1772, and was here reared to manhood's state. His parents, though not wealthy, were in comfortable circumstances, and managed to give him early educational advantages, which he well employed, and, which were far superior to those enjoyed by the majority of youths of his day, yet the reader will hardly need to be reminded that they were far from being what would now be called liberal. After spending a few years in teaching, he joined the South Carolina Conference at its session in Charleston, January 1, 1798, and his fields of labor were as follows: 1798, Santee; 1799, Oconee; 1800-1, Charleston; 1802-1804, presiding elder of Saluda District; 1805-1806, Camden District. Here his health failed, and he found it necessary to take a superannuated relation, which he did not long maintain before he exchanged labor for rest.

Perhaps no man among the early preachers of Methodism made for himself a more enviable reputation in the short space of nine years. He was an indefatigable student, untiring in his efforts to acquire knowledge that would be useful to him in his work as a preacher. As a Greek and Hebrew scholar, he stood preeminent among his brethren; and as an earnest, forcible, eloquent minister of the gospel of Christ, he was equaled by few in any Church in his day.

In personal appearance he was quite unprepossessing. He had lost an eye, and was otherwise sadly disfigured by smallpox; his tall, frail figure was ungainly in the extreme, and yet, by the force of an intellect which no cloud shadowed, thorough consecration to the work of the ministry, and a rich and deep religious experience, he won for himself the reputation of one of the most eloquent and effective preachers that ever graced a South Carolina pulpit.

The following instances of his pulpit success we quote from Dr. Shipp's "History of Methodism in South Carolina." The first was related by the Rev. Dr. Flinn, of Charleston, one of the most eloquent divines of the Presbyterian Church:

The Doctor, in the early part of his ministry, was carrying forward, in a country church, an interesting protracted meeting, without help and quite exhausted. Mr. Dougherty passed through the neighborhood, and hearing that Mr. Flinn was in need of help, called upon him, and tendered his services for a short time. Ministerial comity demanded that he should accept the proffered aid, but he did so regretting the necessity that seemed to be laid upon him. When the hour of service came, the Doctor conducted him to the pulpit, and took his seat in a distant part of the church, fearing, and rather expecting, that his Methodist brother would make a grievous future. Mr. Dougherty began the service by reading a hymn in a style of great impressiveness.

Then followed a prayer, rich in evangelical thought, and altogether pertinent to the occasion. But the sermon was yet to come, and he was not relieved altogether of his anxiety, especially as the text that was announced required the skill of a master workman. The Doctor said that he actually turned his eyes downward to the floor that he might not see the ungainly form that rose up in the pulpit before him. The preacher, however, launched forth fearlessly into his great subject, 'and in fifteen minutes,' said the Doctor, 'I found myself straightened into an erect posture, but absolutely enchained by a burst of eloquence, a mellow blaze of rich thought, as rare as it was overwhelming; and to this day my recollection of that discourse places George Dougherty in the very front rank of American preachers. He filled my ideal of an able minister of the New Testament.'

A similar incident occurred at the General Conference in Baltimore in 1804. It was announced that the Rev. Mr. Dougherty was to preach at a certain church that night, but who was Mr. Dougherty? Nobody knew him; it was only known that he was a delegate from South Carolina. The hour for service came at last, and with it a very large congregation. The members of the General Conference were out in great force. I was there early, said an old preacher, giving his experience of that night's work, and took my seat convenient to the pulpit. The congregation was waiting for the preacher, and all eyes were directed to the door through which he was to enter. Now I saw a fine-looking man enter, and advance toward the pulpit. That's the preacher; but, no, the stranger took his seat in the congregation and several times I was thus disappointed. At length I saw a tall, gaunt, one-eyed man, in rather shabby dress, enter, and walk up toward the pulpit; and to my astonishment the awkward stranger entered it, and went through all the motions preparatory to preaching.

Mortification succeeded astonishment. Is it possible that this fine congregation is to be bored and mortified by this awkward, blundering backwoodsman? At length the preacher arose. The whole congregation seemed disappointed, and there was an almost universal hanging of heads. The preacher proceeded to read his hymn, and there was something hopeful in that part of the performance. He prayed, and I felt that there was more in the preacher than I had supposed. He proceeded to his text and the sermon, and a few minutes sufficed to raise every head and fix every eye. Meanwhile the preacher advanced in his discourse, rising higher and higher, till he carried the congregation as it were by storm.

At one of the early camp-meetings, held some distance below where Anderson Court-house now stands, the congregation was immense -- Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists being encamped on the ground, and all three of these denominations being represented in the pulpit,



Messrs. Bennett and Dougherty were appointed to occupy the stand on Sabbath, and to follow each other without intermission.

Mr. Bennett opened with a discourse on Romans viii. 29, 30, and from the text advanced the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism. Mr. Dougherty followed with a discourse on the same text. After a clear exegesis in correction of the erroneous interpretation and misapplication of the passage, he advanced in thunder-peals the doctrine of a free and full atonement, and urged with prodigious energy an immediate compliance with the conditions of salvation. The power of God came down, and one universal cry for mercy was heard all through the vast concourse of people. Some fell prostrate on the ground, others, rising to fly from the scene, fell by the way. Hundreds were crying for mercy all over the encampment, while the rejoicing of heaven-born souls and the shouts of victory over the powers of darkness were heard all through the crowd and surrounding grove.

At the close of the sermon, Mr. Dougherty turned to Mr. Bennett, and with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, begged him, in God's name, always to preach a free and full salvation by grace through faith. The scene, said George Clark, who was an eyewitness, was overwhelming, and begged all description. At a camp-meeting held in Darlington District in 1805, the assembled rowdies perpetrated enormities over which it is necessary, even at this distant day, to draw a veil. On Sunday, when fully reenforced, and roving about in a large pine-forest which surrounded the tent, it came to pass, under the preaching of the Rev. James Jenkins -- famous through all the country for having a stir and a shout -- that a lady in the congregation began to praise God aloud. From every point of the compass they came thundering into the camp with the tramp of a herd of buffaloes, thus producing a scene of the utmost tumult and confusion.

The lady had by this time become quiet, and everything seemed to indicate that the time had come for Mr. Dougherty to launch a thunderbolt. He accordingly arose, and said: I desire very much to engage your attention for a short time, and I am aware of your impatience, I propose, as a sort of compromise with you, to waive all the usual introductory services, and proceed directly to my discourse. He then announced for his text Mark v. 13: And the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were choked. He commenced with some striking remarks upon the general policy of Satan, showing that he cared not what means he used for the accomplishment of an object if they might only prove successful. Thus when he was dislodged from a man he was well satisfied to enter swine, if by so doing he could prejudice men against Christ.

In this maneuver he was in the instance here recorded very successful. But, said the preacher, let us consider the text in the order of the thoughts which it suggests. First, we will notice the herd into which the devils enter; secondly, the drivers employed, and thirdly, the market to which they are going. Never, perhaps, was an effort made under similar circumstances that equaled this. It was pertinent, awful, living, scathing, and unique. It was the attack of a master-mind in a last resort, and was entirely successful. He swept along his pathway like a blazing comet, drawing such life-like pictures of vice and diabolical intrigue that the miserable creatures before him seemed spell-bound; though they were all standing, scarcely a man among them broke ranks. When he reached his imaginary market with them -- the end of an abandoned life, of a dark and soul-destroying course of wickedness -- the picture took on such an appalling hue that an involuntary shudder came manifestly over the audience; they seemed actually to see them in successive

columns disappearing from mortal view and sinking into the everlasting abyss. The most stout-hearted sinners present seemed overwhelmed with amazement, and when the preacher closed, they left in wild confusion, and were soon en-route for home.

In his efforts to serve the blacks, he fell a victim to the persecution which the insane zeal of some of the preachers, and Dr. Coke in particular, had excited. On one occasion a traveling preacher in passing through Charleston made some injudicious remarks in denouncing the evils of African slavery. A mob went to the church, and mistaking Mr. Dougherty for the offending minister, dragged him to the town-pump, and came well-nigh drowning him by pouring water upon him. He was rescued by a brave Methodist woman -- Mrs. Martha Kugley -- who, rushing into the midst of the crowd, gathered up the folds of her gown with both hands, and thrusting it into the spout of the pump, stopped the flow of water until a courageous citizen, with a drawn sword, obliged the mob to release their victim. Dougherty never recovered from the treatment of that night, nor did Mrs. Kugley. Dr. Mood, in his "History of Methodism in Charleston," says of her: "The wetting she received at the pump from the heartless ruffians was the cause of her premature death. Like Dougherty, she was of a consumptive habit, and the cold she acquired that wintry night never left her, and she and Dougherty died about the same time. Dr. Bangs says: Of all those concerned in this persecution, not one prospered. Most of them died miserable deaths, and one of them acknowledged that God's curse lighted upon him for his conduct in this affair.

The following letter from Dougherty to Bishop Asbury reveals his earnest spirit, and gives us an intimation of the peculiar embarrassments under which he labored:

Charleston, May25,1801.

My black school has increased to upward of forty, several of whom have discovered an excellent capacity in learning. But you will readily believe that this has no tendency to remove the reproach of the cross. The epithet of Negro school-master, added to that of Methodist preacher, makes a black compound sure enough; yet, wonderful to think, the congregations are as large and serious as they were at any time since I came to Charleston. The number of blacks that attend on the Sabbath is truly pleasing; yet, alas! I cannot say that there is any revival. But I humbly hope the storms in Charleston have taught me some useful lessons. Outward persecution seems to abate, and I am again cheered with the sight of some black faces in the galleries at night.

George Dougherty

It is difficult for us in this day to appreciate the peculiar trials under which our fathers labored in founding Methodism in these fields. But if we can bring before us the persecutions they suffered, if we can think of them as preaching in the very face of danger, and offering the word of life to the mob threatening to take their lives, if we can picture to our minds the overwhelming reaction in this very mob as the word spoken "in demonstration of the Spirit and with power" sinks into their hearts, and they begin to cry unto God for pardoning mercy, there will appear to us a strange, quiet beauty in the spirit of the man returning from such scenes, and, without a particle of self-glorification, writing to Bishop Asbury the following letter:

South Carolina District, October 20, 1802.

As to the state of the district, it is tolerably pleasing. Edisto Circuit has had a revival which has added very considerable members to the societies. Broad River Circuit has likewise been much blessed. Saluda Circuit and Charleston have advanced, but not equally with the others.

Believe me as ever you affectionate son in the gospel,  
George Dougherty

There is no self-assumption here; no men are eulogized; to no sermons is the work attributed. But the letter reveals the fact that the writer recognized himself and his co-laborers to be but mere agents in the matter, and that the work was God's alone.

At the Conference held in Sparta, Ga., in 1807, he asked for and obtained a superannuated relation. His health continuing to fail, it was thought by his friends that a voyage to the West Indies might restore him. Accordingly he set out for Wilmington, from which point the vessel was to sail on which the kind Captain Bingley had offered him a free passage. Arriving here, he found that the vessel was to be detained for several days, and he stopped with a kind family who did all in their power to relieve and make him comfortable. It was soon evident that he was too feeble to undertake the voyage, and, indeed, that his hours upon earth were numbered. He was perfectly aware of his condition, and spoke with the composure of a child of God of his approaching dissolution. The marvelous love and the free, unbounded grace of which he had so often spoken to others now comforted his heart and lighted up the valley before him. "The goodness and love of God to me," said he, "are great and marvelous as I go down the dreadful declivity of death." On the 23d of March, 1807, he fell on sleep, and entered into rest.

At the last Annual Conference that he attended he brought forward the following resolution, which was adopted: If any preacher shall desert his station through fear, in time of sickness or danger, the Conference shall never employ that man again. Ringing down through the years, these words echo to us the spirit not only of the man who wrote them and advocated their adoption, but of all the early actors in the great movement that has left its everlasting impression for good upon our world.

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## 26 -- RICHMOND NOLLEY

Away from his home and the friends of his youth  
He hasted, the herald of mercy and truth,  
For the love of his Lord, and to seek for the lost;  
Soon, alas! was his fall-but he died at his post.

The stranger's eye wept, that in life's brightest bloom  
One gifted so highly should sink to the tomb;  
For in ardor he led in the van of the hosts  
And he fell like a soldier-he died at his post.

He wept not himself that his warfare was done  
The battle was fought, and the victory won;  
But he whispered of those whom his heart clung to most:  
"Tell my brethren for me that I died at my post."

He asked not a stone to be sculptured with verse,  
He asked not that fame should his merits rehearse;  
But he asked as a boon, when he gave up the ghost,  
That his brethren might know that he died at his post.

Victorious his fall-for he rose as he fell,  
With Jesus, his Master, in glory to dwell;  
He has passed o'er the stream and has reached the bright coast,  
For he fell like a martyr-he died at his post.

And can we the words of his exit forget?  
O no! they are fresh in our memory yet:  
An example so brilliant shall never be lost;  
We will fall in the work-we will die at our post.

-- Hunter, Songs of Zion

No name in the whole range of Methodist biography is invested with a more tender interest than that of the young hero-martyr, Richmond Nolley. The world's grandest heroes, the world's greatest benefactors, are not always those who fall on the battle-fields of civil liberty, or who lead their country's hosts to victory. Courage is not always more displayed in the heroic daring of the leader who attacks and defeats advancing error or tyranny than in the calm intrepidity of him who seals his principles with his life-blood, and, through all time, throws over his memory the halo of a martyr's death. It was by pouring his life out upon the cross that the incarnate Son of God established forever the divinity of his mission and the truth of the principles he had advanced, and accomplished the work of man's redemption. Through all the ages of her history, the ashes of the martyrs have been the seed of the Church. No man ever yet died in vain who died for humanity. No life was ever yet spent in vain that was breathed out in benediction upon mankind, or offered in sacrifice upon the altar of holiness and truth. God's way is not man's way. Christ accomplished the world's redemption by dying upon the cross. He subdued mankind by offering up his life for them, giving them the grandest evidence of love that this world has ever seen. And since that time the Church has won her grandest victories by the silent suffering, the patient endurance, and the unshaken fortitude of her defenders in the death-hour.

Luther defeating Rome with his logic was no more a hero, possibly not more a benefactor, than the less gifted believer who, unable to preach like Luther, was yet permitted to ascend the scaffold and die for the principles that Luther advocated. The value to the world of a human life offered in sacrifice upon the altar of humanity is beyond all estimate. From every such life there springs a tide of influence that will flow on forever. From every such memory the ages will derive an inspiration. Over every such grave there will hover a halo of light and glory that will shine through the ages as a candle of truth in the night of error.

Richmond Nolley was born in Virginia, but we believe the exact place and date of his birth are not now known. While he was quite young, his father removed to the State of Georgia. Here, his parents dying, young Nolley was left an orphan, dependent upon his own exertions for a support. A prominent Methodist of Sparta, Captain Lucas, gave him employment as a clerk in his store. In 1806 a camp-meeting was held near this place which was crowned with results long to be remembered. An immense throng of people attended. Lovick Pierce, who had entered upon his long and useful ministry, was present, and was, on this occasion, to be especially honored of the Master. Standing upon a table, he proclaimed the word of God in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Among the first to fall, smitten by conviction, was a daughter of Captain Lucas. The vast multitude was moved by the word, and gathered around the preacher. They fell upon their knees, and the groans and prayers of the penitents were soon mingling with the shouts of those delivered from bondage. It is said that more than a hundred souls were converted around that table, during that memorable day and the night that succeeded. Among the converts was Richmond Nolley.

He was of a slender and delicate frame and feeble constitution, and his previous life had ill prepared him for the hardships of the itinerant life; but he soon felt that the hand of God was upon him, and that the divine voice was calling him to the field. In the hour of conversion he had made no reservation in surrendering himself to Christ, and now he was ready to take up any cross that He might impose, and follow any line that He might direct. He remained with his old friend and employer, preparing himself for the ministry by exhorting in the neighborhood until the South Carolina Conference held its annual session in the city of Charleston, December 28, 1807. Here he was admitted on trial and appointed to Edisto Circuit.

On this field it was his customs after preaching in the day, to visit the huts of the slaves at night, and instruct them by the light of their pine-torches. Still he followed to the letter the advice of the Father of Methodism. He rose with the lark. He was never idle or unemployed. He was as methodical as it was possible for him to be under the circumstances attending his ministry. He punctually observed the days which the Church had set apart for fasting and prayer, and his feeble constitution grew gradually weaker under the austere mode of life to which it was subjected. After preaching a year on Edisto Circuit, during which time one hundred and sixty white members were added to the Church there, and great good was accomplished among the slaves, he was appointed the ensuing year to Wilmington Station, North Carolina. Under his faithful pastorate here the membership was increased from thirty-six white and two hundred and seventy-nine colored members to fifty-three white and six hundred and seventeen colored members -- a net increase of three hundred and fifty-five in one year.

In 1810 he was appointed to Charleston, South Carolina. Here he was to encounter no little opposition. Fire-crackers were often thrown upon him in the pulpit, and while he was on his knees praying; but he would shut his eyes that he might not be distracted by menaces, and preach and pray on with overwhelming power -- a habit which, it is said, lasted through the remainder of his life. His voice was as a trumpet, and no man of the South proclaimed the gospel with greater energy than he. (Stevens.) In 1811 we find him traveling the Washington Circuit in the State of Georgia.

At the ensuing Conference a call was made for missionaries to the far South-west. Richmond Nolley, Lewis Hobbs, Drury Powell, and Thomas Griffin responded and were accepted. "Hobbs," says Bishop McTyeire, "was a lovely spirit. He was called the weeping prophet.' He shed tears over sinners while he warned them. A year or two afterward he was stationed in New Orleans, where his last strength was spent. Their appointments scattered them widely. Griffin's was on the Ouachita. Few have been so honored in planting Methodism in the South-west. He lived to a good old age, and his memory is blessed by thousands. While Nolley persuaded sinners and Hobbs wept over them, Griffin made them quail. There was a clear, metallic ring in his nature. By the campfire, on the forest-path, he studied.

One of the saddle-bags men- to whom Western civilization is more indebted than to any other class of agents -- he mastered the hardy elements of frontier life; he was sagacious in judgment, decisive in action, strong in speech, and generous-hearted. The minutes of 1815 say of Hobbs: Truly it may be said that he counted not his life dear to him so he might be instrumental in advancing the Redeemer's kingdom; for, although he was of slender habit, he cheerfully submitted to the inconveniences of a missionary station and the almost incredible difficulties he had to surmount in New Orleans, where he became deeply consumptive. In a lingering and dying condition he traveled nearly one thousand miles (great part of which lay through an almost uninhabited wilderness) to his native country, where he departed this life on the 4th of September, 1814, in full assurance of endless life. He was for some time a witness of that love which casteth out all slavish fear. I am going, but not a missionary-I am going to Jesus! He exclaimed on his death-bed. 'When I entered the connection I gave myself to the Lord and the connection. I now feel no sorrow for having filled the stations to which I was appointed, but a peculiar consolation that I have preached the gospel to a people who till then had been strangers to it.

Such were the men chosen for the bravest work of the itinerancy -- chosen because of the heroic spirit they had developed on former fields. Nolley's appointment was Tombigbee Mission. "After passing through a wilderness of three hundred and fifty miles," says Mr. Finley, "embracing many savage nations, during which he was subjected to all kinds of hardships, such as swimming deep rivers and creeks, often destitute of food, sometimes lost in the depths of the forest, exposed to wild beasts or savage men, and lying out with nothing but the earth for his bed and the dark vault above for his covering, he at last arrived at the place of his destination. Here, on this distant and toilsome field, he spent two years in laboring most indefatigably for the glory of God and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Thousands would have lived and died in this frontier region, without having heard of salvation had it not been for the itinerant system of a Church which had the men of nerve to carry it out. And while the successors of the apostles' were sitting in their gas-lighted saloons, reclining on their rich velvet-cushioned Elizabethans, discoursing pathetically about the moral wastes of the West, and the inefficient ministry, Nolley and his coadjutors were carrying the bread of life to starving, dying thousands, and peopling heaven with little less than the redeemed of heathen lands.

On this mission, where appointments were as far apart as Conferences now are long, or as would embrace an entire circuit, he never lost an appointment. He never stopped for wet or cold. The invisible hand beckoned him onward, the inaudible voice urged him forward, and often without a horse he would take his saddle-bags on his shoulders and walk to his appointments. In regard to the hours of sleep, he carried out to the letter the rules of the Father of Methodism, an at

early morn, while many were locked fast in the embrace of Morpheus, he was up with the lark, at his morning ori sons. It is reported of him that he diligently instructed the children in every place -- a duty alas too often neglected by many who have declared before God and the world that they would attend to it.

The poor slave was not forgotten in his daily ministrations. Every day almost found him in the hut of the sable son and daughter of Africa, teaching them the religion of Christ and the way to heaven; and had it not been for the labors of just such faithful men, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' would have been devoid of every element of interest. But not only did he instruct the children, and labor and pray with the slave, but at every house, among parents and masters, with the young and the old, the sick and the poor, the bond and the free, he endeavored to make full proof of his ministry by warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

"In the great work he often met with opposition; he was threatened and execrated; but for revilings and persecutions he returned blessings, and his tears and prayers often disarmed persecution, and sent trembling to the stoutest heart. He was on the Tombigbee Mission when the Indian war raged with the most relentless fury, and the unprotected whites fell in every direction beneath the murderous tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage. When the people had all taken refuge in forts, and were afraid to visit their plantations, the intrepid missionary, as if conscious of immortality till his work was done, unarmed and unattended, went from fort to fort, and preached the gospel as a visiting angel of mercy. By these, and other acts of Christian kindness, he enthroned himself in the hearts of all the people, and his name will be a household word in time, his deeds will live forever."

For the following incident we are indebted to Bishop McTyeire: "In making the rounds of his work, Nolley came to a fresh wagon-track. On the search for any thing that had a soul, he followed it, and came upon the emigrant family just as it had pitched on the ground of its future home. The man was unlimbering his team, and the wife was busy around the fire. 'What!' exclaimed the settler upon hearing the salutation of the visitor, and taking, a glance at his unmistakable appearance, have you found me already? Another Methodist preacher! I left Virginia to get out of reach of them, went to a new settlement in Georgia, and thought to have a long whet, but they got my wife and daughter into the Church; then in this late purchase (Choctaw Corner) I found a piece of good land, and was sure I would have some peace of the preachers, and here is one before my wagon is unloaded. Nolley gave him small comfort. My friend, if you go to heaven, you'll find Methodist preachers there; and if to hell, I am afraid you will find some there; and you see how it is in this world; so you had better make terms with us, and be at peace.

His quenchless zeal and ceaseless toil preyed heavily upon his constitution, and it was soon evident that he must quit the field or go prematurely to his grave; but he had no thought of desisting. "Reduced almost to a shadow, with pale, attenuated features, he was found among his brethren at the Conference, after the year's toil had ended. His dauntless spirit would not allow him to desist from labor and seek that rest which was essential to his restoration. Determined, as it seemed, to run on and burn out, like the arrow of Acestes, which took fire in its flight and vanished in the immensity of heaven, so be, a flaming herald of the cross, on fire of a quenchless zeal,

pressed on to the mark of the heavenly prize." From this Conference, he was appointed to Attakapas Circuit, in the State of Louisiana.

The story of his life on this field was to be the story of toil, hardships, persecution, fortitude, and death. We find him on one occasion driven, by a sugar-planter, away from the smokestack, where he had gone to warm himself; and, on another, rescued by "a Negro woman, armed with a hoe," from a mob who were taking him from the preaching-stand to a bayou to duck him. Gradually sinking into his grave, it was yet thought necessary at the next Conference to return him to the circuit another year. He was accompanied, on his return, by his former companion Griffin. Together, they crossed the Mississippi and a vast swamp.

The difficulties they had to encounter," says Mr. Finley, were almost incredible, and, coming to a place where they must separate, after embracing each other, with mental benedictions, they parted. It was in the latter part of November, and it was a dark, cold, rainy day. Arriving at night at the house of a friendly man, where he staid till morning, imparting the comforts of religion to its inmates, he departed on his journey. Across his path there lay a large swamp and deep creeks, and not a single white man was to be found between that and the place of his destination. Alone he travels on till evening, when he found himself at an Indian village. Having to cross a creek before night, and apprehending from the rains that it would be swollen, he employed an Indian to go with him. When he arrived on its banks, he found it, as he anticipated, a full and angry flood, rushing tumultuously along.

There was no alternative but to cross or remain with the savages; so he chose the former, and, leaving his valise, saddle-bags, and a parcel of books with the Indian, he urged his horse into the stream. No sooner did his noble charger strike the furious current than he was beaten down the flood. The noble animal battled courageously with the tide, but before the other shore was reached, horse and rider were far below the landing-place of the ford, and the banks being high and precipitous, it was impossible for the horse to get a foot-hold or make the ascent of the other shore. In the struggle to do so, the rider was thrown, and, grasping the limb of a tree which extended over the stream, he reached the shore. The horse swam back to the side of the stream from which he started.

The missionary directed the Indian to keep his horse till morning, and he would walk to the nearest house, which was distant about two miles. He traveled through the woods about one mile, wet, cold, and weary. Unable to proceed any farther, and conscious, perhaps, that his work was done, and he had at last fulfilled the errand of his Master, he fell upon his knees and commended his soul to God."

He was found the next day calmly sleeping beneath a clump of pines, his limbs composed, his eyes closed on the earth forever. His knees were muddy, and the indentures made by them on the ground marked the spot where he had knelt in prayer. He had died on Friday -his fast-day. He was probably weaker than usual, and the weather was unusually cold for that climate. His remains were borne to the nearest house, and on the following Sunday were buried in Catahoula Parish, near the road leading from Alexandria to Harrisonburg.



"In 1856," says Bishop McTyeire, "three members of the Conference sought out the long-neglected and almost forgotten spot, marked it, and, kneeling down, consecrated themselves afresh to the same ministry of faith and patience and love. These forty years the recollection of Nolley has quickened the zeal of his brethren. From that mound of earth, in the fenceless old field, a voice has spoken, 'Be faithful.' In the minds of the people the effect was profound.

He was but thirty years of age at the time of his death, and was never married. He is described by his contemporaries as tall, slender, wasted by exposure and fasting; his eyes, dark and radiant, flashing with determination, and glowing with saintly love and hope. His memory will be cherished by the Church as a hero and a martyr.

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## 27 -- JAMES O'KELLY

Near the public road leading from Chapel Hill to Raleigh, and eight miles from the former place, near a country church known as "O'Kelly's Chapel," and belonging to the Christian denomination, James O'Kelly sleep's his last sleep, awaiting the sound of the trump that shall call those that have done well to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. He is dead; and buried, like his own dust, are the passions and prejudices and heart-burnings which threatened to rend American Methodism in his day. We are not writing a history of the Church, but merely sketching the characters of the great and noble spirits through whose instrumentality her borders were advanced, and her glory promoted.

In that list few names will shine with more enduring luster than that of James O'Kelly; for his early labors should never be forgotten in the remembrance of any harm that he may have done. It is mean and cowardly to take advantage of the dead. We would do the old Irishman full justice; and in writing a sketch of his life we shall endeavor to present his views, so far as it becomes necessary to introduce his views, as he held them, giving his reasons for the faith that was in him. We would not open the controversies or rekindle the passion-fires of the past. The shadows of the years have fallen upon them. They are buried and extinguished in the grave of forgetfulness. It is not our purpose to approve or condemn his course, in some things, but simply to give a sketch of it. We have to do with him mainly as a pioneer of Methodism, and, as such, his name and memory deserve to be embalmed in her history forever. Time gives a softening, mellowing touch to all things. When the smoke of combat has cleared away, and the pure sunlight of historic truth falls upon us, we are better prepared to judge of motives and feelings as well as of actions.

James O'Kelly entered the itinerant ranks in 1777, and remained in the Methodist Connection for the space of fifteen years. He was one of the boldest spirits in a movement that enlisted none but heroes. From the first, he impressed himself upon his brethren as a strong character, combining a spirit of bold adventure with an indomitable will. No man in the Connection possessed superior mental powers, nor was he unconscious of his power. He had been in the ministry but a few years when he was acknowledged to be, preeminently, the leader of the Southern preachers. In debate he was universally feared; and on no occasion did he hesitate to express his sentiments. He soon became a favorite with the many who love courage and delight in adventure. He wielded an influence which Dr. Coke feared, and a few years later, would prove the

certain destruction of the Methodist Church. He was lacking in prudence, and was prone to carry measures to extremes.

He did not know, when in the minority, how to submit to the voice of a majority; and he was not always liberal or unprejudiced in his views of the motives of those who differed with him. And yet, after all of the bitterness of the past, no fair-minded critic can stand over O'Kelly's grave and charge him with insincerity. The petty flings that calumny has made at his character fade, like the mists at sunrise, before the light of his great spirit as it shines through all of his errors, and through all the fierce controversies of unhappy years. He was relentless in his opposition; by nature, slow to forgive a wrong; too ready, perhaps, to attribute base motives to those who differed with him; and yet this man, who feared no human being, who asked quarter of no human foe, who never hesitated to face danger and death in the path of duty, was, at the foot of the cross, as meek and submissive and humble as a little child.

In their later years, he found in Asbury an opponent not less determined and not less conscious of his power, but more generous toward those who differed with him, and less disposed to brood over a wrong. In earlier life, they were as Jonathan and David. O'Kelly was not less noted for the fervor of his piety than for the reckless daring and intensity of his zeal. As a preacher, he was eloquent and powerful; discovering to the sinner his sins, disrobing him of his vain excuse; taking away the hopes, and awaking awe and trembling in the false professor, comforting the believer and the mourner in Zion," with words of assurance from the book of God; thundering the law of Sinai, and echoing the strains of Calvary. At the altar of public intercession all hearts were melted under the intense fervor and childlike simplicity of his petitions.

In 1778, he laid the foundations of New Hope Circuit, in Orange, Durham, Chatham, and Wake counties. Here he was associated with the unfortunate Beverly Allen whose great services for the Church were, in later life, to be shrouded with the mantle of a great crime. Their labors were greatly blessed. "Number," says Mr. Allen, "joined our society, and many professed faith in the Redeemer." In 1779, New Hope Circuit appears for the first time on the minutes, with James O'Kelly and Philip Adams as pastors. During this year O'Kelly extended his labors down the Cape Fear, and through the section afterward embraced in the Bladen Circuit. The war was then raging, and he met not a few adventures. The following incident is recorded by Dr. Shipp. In his travels through this section, O'Kelly, that writer tells us, "became well known to Col. John Slingsby, a commissioned Tory officer in the Revolutionary War, who resided on the lower Cape Fear, and was deeply and most favorably impressed by his preaching. A granddaughter of Colonel Slingsby writes: The anecdote of the Methodist preacher (James O'Kelly), which you wish me to relate, I had from the old gentleman's own lips.

Mr. O'Kelly, then a young Methodist preacher, when traveling over the country and preaching, was taken at the house of a friend or acquaintance by a small band of Tories. His horse, saddle, and saddle-bags were taken from him, and he was tied to a peach-tree. A party of Whigs coming up just at the time, a skirmish ensued; an although he was between the two fires, he was not hurt. Before this skirmish was ended, Colonel Slingsby came up with a larger party of men, and the Whigs were dispersed. Recognizing Mr. O'Kelly, the Colonel asked him to preach for them, which he did; and drawing up his men in good order, he stood with his head uncovered during the whole

of the service. Mr. O'Kelly said, when relating this anecdote to me, "Ah, child, your grandfather was a gentleman!"

An old lady, who was well acquainted with Mr. O'Kelly, tells me that the man at whose house he was taken was also taken, bound to the same tree, and killed in the skirmish. She had heard him (O'Kelly) relate the anecdote frequently -- I only once. In 1780, O'Kelly was appointed to Tar River Circuit. Of his labors here we have an intimation in Asbury's journal. Under date of July 9, 1780, he writes: "Preached at Green Hill's to about four hundred souls, on I Thess. ii. 4. The subject was new, the people dead. James O'Kelly spoke on 'Have ye understood all these things?' He raised high, and was very affecting, but to little purpose. There are evils here; the meeting was not solemn, the women appeared to be full of dress, the men full of news. These people are gospel slights. I fear some heavy stroke will come on them. James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other. This dear man rose at midnight and prayed very devoutly for me and himself. He cries, 'Give me children, or I die!' but I believe no preaching or preacher will do much good at present."

O'Kelly subsequently traveled Mecklenburg, Brunswick, and Sussex circuits. At the Christmas Conference of 1794 he was elected and ordained an elder. The district to which he was appointed embraced Amelia, Bedford, and Orange circuits. The next year he presided over Guilford, Halifax, and Mecklenburg circuits. In 1787, his district embraced Bladen, New River, Tar River, Roanoke, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Sussex, and Amelia; in 1788, Anson, Bertie, Camden, Portsmouth, Brunswick, Amelia, Mecklenburg, Buckingham, Bedford, Amherst, Orange, Hanover, Williamsburg. In 1789, he was returned to the same charge; only that a few changes had been made in the territory embraced by the district -- Anson is dropped, and Halifax and Orange again appear within its bounds.

In 1790-1-2, he was successively returned to this district, the "time-limit" not having then been instituted. Throughout this territory, O'Kelly was highly esteemed and beloved. His labors were greatly blessed in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the hearts of the preachers and people were greatly drawn to him. No other man wielded so powerful an influence over the people of this section; no man enjoyed more entirely the public confidence. Not a breath of suspicion had fallen upon his religious character in all his goings in and out before the people. He had conducted himself as a man of God and a Methodist preacher.

And now we approach a period that was marked by contentions and bitterness better to be forgotten but for the lessons they taught. In order to do justice to the memory of O'Kelly, we must remember the power with which the Methodist Episcopal Church invested Bishop Asbury. Coke spent the greater part of his time abroad, where he could not exercise his episcopal functions, and he had signed a written agreement never to station the preachers except in the absence of Bishop Asbury. The British Conference, after the death of Mr. Wesley, had provided for the submission of the appointments, made by the President, to the vote of the Conference; but in America, Asbury had full power to station the preachers where he pleased; there was no appeal whatsoever from his decision, and there was no earthly tribunal to which he was accountable for his actions. No General Conference had been held since the one in 1784, which organized the Church, and elected the bishops. No provision had been made for holding another, and there was no organized body competent to try a bishop for any misdemeanor.

As Methodism advanced, it was seen to be necessary to have a general meeting of the preachers of some sort, in order to maintain organic unity. Coke wanted a General Conference. Asbury objected, and it was finally agreed to have a "council," to be composed of the bishops and the presiding elders, to take under consideration all of the general interests of the Church. The council was to meet at the bishops' discretion, and as the appointing power was vested in them, they chose the presiding elders -- the members of the council. An action of the council, however, was not to be binding on an Annual Conference that protested against such action; so that we are prepared to learn that the idea of a "council" was abandoned by the time it had held two sessions. It met with little favor in any quarter.

In 1789, the following curious question and answer appear on the minutes: "Who are the persons that exercise the episcopal office in Europe and America? Answer. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession. The latter clause of the answer is left off in the bound reprints of the minutes, but is mentioned by both Jesse Lee and Nathan Bangs; the latter, as Dr. Stevens says, "animadverted curiously" on its "peculiar phraseology."

O'Kelly objected to what he termed the "one-man power of the episcopacy, and was bitterly opposed to the term "bishop." The first that we hear of his dissatisfaction is the following in Asbury's journal, under date of January 12, 1790: "I received a letter from the presiding elder of this district, James O'Kelly. He makes heavy complaints of my power, and bids me stop for one year, or he must use his influence against me. Power, power! there is not a vote given in a Conference in which the presiding elder has not greatly the advantage of me. All the influence I am to gain over a company of young men in a district must be done in three weeks; the greater part of them, perhaps, are seen by me only at Conference, whilst the presiding elder has had them with him all the year, and has had the greatest opportunity of gaining influence.

This advantage may be abused -- let the bishops look to it -- but who has the power to lay an embargo on me, and to make of none effect the decision of all the Conferences of the Union?" Again, under date of August 21, 1791, he writes: "I received the olive-branch from Virginia. All is peace; it was obtained by a kind letter from me to O'Kelly. Coke tells us, in his letter to the General Conference of 1808, that he had prevailed on O'Kelly to remain in the Connection, together with his thirty-six preachers, and submit the matter in dispute to a General Conference; and Asbury says that the General Conference was called for this purpose. It met in Baltimore, in 1792. The chief matter that came up for its deliberation was the resolution offered by O'Kelly, viz.:

"After the bishop appoints the preachers at the Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the bishop shall appoint him to another circuit."

Asbury regarded this resolution as a reflection on his administration, and retired from the Conference, leaving Dr. Coke to preside. The debate that followed lasted nearly a week, and exhibited the deliberative talent of the body. The ablest men of American Methodism were arrayed against each other. O'Kelly, Ivey, Hull, Garrettson, and Swift led for the affirmative; Lee, Willis,

Morrell, Everett, and Reed for the negative. They were all chieftains in the Thundering Legion, and were famous throughout the Connection for their pulpit eloquence. "Coke," says Stevens, "however anxious for the issue of the controversy, sat in the chair wrapped in admiration of the talent it elicited."

Lee, in his journal, quoted by Thrift, says:

"Thursday, 1st of November. -- The General Conference commenced in Baltimore.

"Monday, 5th. -- We spent the whole day in debating one point, viz.: 'Whether or not a preacher that thinks himself injured in his appointment to a circuit shall have an appeal to the District Conference.' We had long and close debates, and at five o'clock we went to the Dutch Church, and about eight o'clock we broke up, and a majority was for no appeal. Some of the preachers were much dissatisfied about it, after it was decided.

"Tuesday, 6th -- James O'Kelly wrote a letter to the Conference, that he should leave the traveling connection on account of the vote that was taken the night before. When the letter was read, many of the preachers wept heartily. It was a sorrowful day to me, yet I could say, The will of the Lord be done."

Thomas Ware says: "It was allowed on all hands that no sacrifice could be too great to accomplish the object we had in view -- namely, the salvation of souls; but the question was, whether the means were the most perfectly adapted to the accomplishment of that object; whether for this purpose so large a body of men should hold themselves ready to go wherever the general superintendent should deem it best in his judgement to send them. The number of traveling preachers was at this time two hundred and thirty-six. Had O'Kelly's proposition been differently managed, it might possibly have been carried. For myself, at first I did not see any thing very objectionable in it. But when it came to be debated, I very much disliked the spirit of those who advocated it, and wondered at the severity in which the movers, and others who spoke in favor of it, indulged in the course of their remarks. Some of them said that it was a shame for a man to accept of such a lordship, much more to claim it; and that they who would submit to this absolute dominion must forfeit all claims to freedom, and ought to have their ears bored through with an awl, and to be fastened to their master's door, and become slaves for life.

"One said that to be denied such an appeal was in insult to his understanding, and a species of tyranny to which others might submit if they chose, but for his part he must be excused for saying he could not. The advocates of the opposite side were more dispassionate and argumentative. They urged that Wesley, the father of the Methodist family, had devised the plan, and deemed it essential for the preservation of the itinerancy. They said that, according to the showing of O'Kelly, Wesley, if he were alive, ought to blush, for he claimed the right to station the preachers to the day of his death.

"The appeal, it was urged, was rendered impracticable on account of the many serious difficulties with which it was encumbered. Should one preacher appeal, and the Conference say his appointment should be altered, the bishop must remove some other one to make him room; in which case the other might complain and appeal in his turn; and then again the first might appeal

from the new appointment, or others whose appointments these successive alterations might interrupt. Hearing all that was said on both sides, I was finally convinced that the motion for such an appeal ought not to carry."

As we have seen, the Conference received O'Kelly's letter of withdrawal with deep regret. A committee was at once appointed to wait upon him and induce him to come back. Garrettson, who had sided with him in the debate, was one of the committee. He says of the interview: "Many tears were shed, but we were not able to reconcile him to the decision of the Conference. His wound was deep, and apparently incurable." Coke also had an interview with him, but to no purpose. Taking their saddlebag, great-coats, and other baggage on their shoulders, they set off for Virginia, walking twelve miles to the place where their horses had been kept during the Conference.

The Conference, while it regretted the departure of the brethren, did not anticipate any further trouble, although Lee thought it possible that O'Kelly might "become the head of a party." At the request of Asbury, a resolution was passed allowing the dissenting preachers to continue to preach in Methodist churches, and voted to give O'Kelly his usual forty pounds per annum, as he was "almost worn out," "provided he would be peaceable, and forbear to excite divisions." But O'Kelly did not long consent to receive the money on such a stipulation. Lee's prediction proved correct. He "excited divisions" as no other man could have done; and, though it sounds strange to us now, among those who withdrew with him were William McKendree -- afterward one of the most saintly bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church -- and Rice Haggard.

The following letter, written shortly after the separation, gives expression to O'Kelly's feelings at the time:

"To Dear Brother Nicholson, Local Preacher:

"O my brother! Alas! my brother. I beseech God to grant you a share in every blessing of the everlasting covenant. O brother, the heart knows its own bitterness! I am too often giving way to the overflowings of a full heart. O the heart-breaking thoughts! the Methodist preachers who stood together like regular soldiers are now afraid of each other, as you told me last evening that you feared me! Fearful prelude to a universal decline, or a fearful separation! Find out the cause; search for the Achan. One there is in our camps; and if the lot justly falls on me, cast me away, and there will be a calm. But be sure, before God, to give me justice. I am not given to change. A Methodist I am, and how can I change? The elders to the North, not knowing what to accuse me of, make me their table laugh; still I am loath to go away. What have I done? overturned government? What? the council -- not Methodism. I only say no man among us ought to get into the apostle's chair with the keys, and stretch a lordly power over the ministers and kingdom of Christ. 'Tis a human invention, a quicksand; and when my gray hairs may be preserved under-ground, I may be remembered.

"We ought to respect the body before any mere man. A consolidated government is always bad. We have published that we believed a General Conference to be injurious to the Church. District Conferences have lost their suffrages; men of wit will leave the traveling connection. Boys with their keys, under the absolute sway of one who declares his authority and succession from the

apostles -- these striplings must rule and govern Christ's Church, as master-workmen; as though they could finish such a temple. People are to depend on their credibility. These things are so; I know what I say; I am able, when called upon, to answer it. I am a friend to Christ -- to his Church, but not to prelatie government. If you will read the bishop's address to me and others of the preachers who oppose the late proceedings, there you will find the heresy reflection -- and the manner of the new constitution; but, unless you look over and over it, 't is hard to understand. My dear brother, farewell; reject me, all of you, and let me feel the sneers, the frowns of strangers. My days are few among you; when the members reject me, I drop my journeyings. I am, etc.,

"James O'Kelly."

We pass over the long and bitter controversy, the criminations and recriminations that ensued. O'Kelly became the founder of the Republican Methodist Church, and carried with his party many preachers, members, and churches from the Methodist Episcopal Church; but the enterprise failed, and he and his followers assumed the title of Christian Church -- a denomination that still survives him.

In August, 1802, Asbury writes in his journal: "Mr. O'Kelly having been taken ill in town (Winchester, Va.), I sent two of our brethren -- Reed and Walls -- to see him, by whom I signified to him that if he wished to see me I would wait on him. He desired a visit, which I made him on Monday, August 23. We met in peace, asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of former times -- perhaps this is the last interview we shall have upon earth."

O'Kelly settled in Orange county, North Carolina, and lived to the good old age of ninety-one years. He died in peace, on the 16th day of October, 1826, and his remains were buried at his homestead near the church which he built, and which still bears his name. His memory is held in veneration by all classes and denominations in the county where he was one of the first to spread the knowledge of the truth, and where he now rests from his labors.

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28 -- JONATHAN JACKSON

The subject of this sketch deserves no mean mention among the heroes of Southern Methodism. His long and faithful service, and his immediate connection with the laying of the foundation-stones on which others since his day have built, entitle his name to a high place in his Church's history. So far as we have been able to learn, he possessed no extraordinary gifts to claim for him distinction -- was not brilliant in his conceptions nor eloquent in his delivery. Yet he was a patient, laborious student; a man of deep piety, recognizing at all times his accountability to God as an " ambassador for Christ," and full of zeal for the conversion of souls. Travis says of him: "He was one that could bear acquaintance. The more you were with him, the more you were brought to love and admire him. He was emphatically a man of God. His piety was deep, his fervent zeal was governed by knowledge, and his walk was in accordance with the Bible. His preaching talents were not the most brilliant, but his sermons were orthodox, scriptural, practical, and experimental; and on the prophecies of Daniel he was profound."

He entered the traveling connection in 1789, four years after the organization of the Church, and at the time that Christopher S. Mooring and Benjamin Abbott began their brilliant and glorious careers. His first fields of labor were as follows: 1789, Anson; 1790, Catawba; 1791, Little Pedee. During these years he had for presiding elder the saintly Reuben Ellis. It is no improbable conjecture that the intimate relations which they sustained to each other had much to do with molding Jackson's character, and that he imbibed the spirit of that devoted servant of God -- a spirit that was so beautifully exhibited in patient suffering and loving labor in after-years. His next fields of labor were: 1792, New Hope; 1793, Charleston; 1794, Black Swamp. During these years he developed such sterling qualities that he was the next year elevated to the office of presiding elder -- an office which he maintained during fifteen of the twenty six years of his itinerant labor. The districts he traveled during the first four years lay in Georgia, South and North Carolina, and demanded indomitable courage and persevering toil. Methodism was extending her borders, and these districts embraced some of the hardest fields in the Connection. In 1799 and 1800 we find him traveling districts in Virginia, his fields of labor extending over much of the territory then known as the "Western wilds," and during the latter year embracing Camden and Bertie circuits in North Carolina.

The year 1800 marked a new era in the history of Methodism. With the new century, the movement seemed to imbibe new life. Old difficulties which had threatened dissolutions, and had impeded the progress of the work, had been settled, harmony had been restored, and Methodism took heart and moved onward. A deep and wide-reaching religious interest was developed among the masses. This interest was promoted by camp-meetings, where thousands would meet and remain for weeks at a time, and during the first few years of the new century the history of Methodism is the story of a sweeping -- almost uninterrupted -- revival, which bore every thing before it as by storm.

Nothing was more natural than that during these periods of time, wholly devoted to religious services -- or, rather, particularly devoted to the work of inducing the ungodly to forsake their sins -- preachers and people should fall into religious excesses. Such was the case, and the excesses were such as to finally bring camp-meetings into disrepute. As earnest as any of his brethren, and as fully devoted to his Master's service, Jackson's zeal was ever tempered with prudence. He guarded against disorder, and all through his career we may see the traces of those solid qualities that good "common sense" -- which won for him the confidence of all, and made him a trusted leader of the sacramental hosts.

The following letter from him to Bishop Asbury will give us some idea of the state of affairs on his district at this time:

Cumberland Circuit (Virginia), August 20, 1800.

I have been round the district, and, glory be to God, I have seen very good and gracious times in all the circuits! There are prospects of a good revival; but in many parts of Bertie and Cumberland they have great and powerful times, and many have been awakened, converted, and added to the Church; I expect not less than two hundred. The preachers were all able to labor, and much engaged in the Lord's work. The local preachers in general seem to be very zealous and



useful. We have great peace and union in this district. I have not heard a murmur from any of our brethren.

Jonathan Jackson

It will be noticed that in this letter great stress is laid upon the fact that harmony prevailed, and that the local preachers are working well. How much credit is due to Jackson for this state of affairs, eternity alone will reveal. He had encountered dangers from two sources. The influence of James O'Kelly was great within the bounds of this district, and the unhappy circumstances attending his withdrawal, only eight years before, were still fresh in the public mind. Methodism had been sorely crippled, and the work of God retarded by the secession. Some of the purest and noblest spirits of the movement had been drawn from their confidence in Asbury, and the schism had for awhile threatened the annihilation of the Church. These wounds were only healing, when another matter, perhaps growing out of it, was sprung upon the Church. The local preachers claimed ordination at the hands of the Bishop to the order of elders. The motion was promptly met with the objection that only those who were wholly devoted to the work of the ministry were eligible to elder's orders. It found defenders in such men as William Ormond, by whom the motion was made at the General Conference of 1800; but opposed by Jesse Lee and others, it had been lost by a vote of thirty-six ayes to forty-seven nays. Nothing was more natural than that the local preachers should feel aggrieved. They had ever proved valuable allies to the itinerant preachers, many of the best circuits had been explored by them, and the withdrawal of their zeal, to any extent, could only be regarded as a calamity calling for the tears of the whole Church.

In the year 1801, for the first time, the districts appear on the minutes by name. Heretofore the Church had had presiding elders having the oversight of a number of circuits, and their fields were known as districts, but no names had been given them, and it was several years afterward before the boundaries of the districts and Conferences were definitely drawn. For instance, the city of Wilmington appears first on one district and then on another -- one year in the Virginia and the next year in the South Carolina Conference.

In 1801 New Berne District embraced Wilmington, New Berne, Goshen, Contentney, Pamlico, Roanoke, Tar River, Mattamuskeet, and Banks. Jackson appears as the presiding elder. Wilmington was manned by young Bennet Kendrick, who loomed up as a brilliant star on the bosom of the horizon, and rising rapidly for a few years, went out forever in the glory of mid-heaven; while New Berne was served by Christopher S. Mooring, before whom a long life of toil and suffering and usefulness was yet extended.

In 1802-3 Jackson was returned to this district. In nothing is the devotion of the early preachers to the one work of saving souls more clearly shown than in their readiness to assist their brethren on other fields of labor. Jackson's territory extended from Halifax and Franklin to New Berne and Wilmington, yet we find him in the summer of 1802 assisting the presiding elder of the Salisbury District, James Douthit, and the preachers -- Daniel Asbury, Ormond, Pinnell, Moore, and others -- in the wonderful revival with which they were blessed. From Caswell Circuit, on this district, he wrote to Bishop Asbury the following account of the state of the work on his charge:

Caswell, North Carolina, June 5, 1802

In Roanoke Circuit there is a gracious revival. There have been additions to the societies, and some have professed converting grace. We had great congregations when I visited the circuits. At a quarterly-meeting at Malory's meetinghouse, it was the most awfully glorious season I ever saw among sinners. I judged the congregation was about fifteen hundred. There were but few sinners but what were stricken with the power of God; and many of the saints of the Most High shouted as if they had taken the kingdom. Tar River quarterly-meeting also was attended with the power and presence of the Most High God.

Jonathan Jackson

We have before observed that about this time camp-meetings began to be generally introduced. In Eastern North Carolina they were, we believe, comparatively free from those excesses with which they were attended in the West, and which finally brought them into disfavor. The following letter from Jackson to Asbury, touching upon the work accomplished by them, and the manner in which they were conducted, may prove of interest:

New Berne District, December 16, 1803

The greatest times we have had have been at our camp-meeting. Great pains have been used to prevent irregularities and disorders, which has so far won the hearts of the people to them that they want camp-meetings almost everywhere. It is impossible to tell the good which has been done at them; for while some have been crying for mercy, others shouting the praises of the Most High, there would not be a sinner found who would open his mouth against the work. At the first camp-meeting I suppose there were twenty-seven converted; several at the second and third, about ten at the fourth, and about sixty-seven at the last which was held in my district. In the lower part of the district we have had the greatest seasons that have been ever seen, and I hope the work will go on and prosper.

I am, etc.,  
Jonathan Jackson

In 1804 we find the old veteran presiding elder on Swannanoa District, his field embracing Swannanoa, Morganton, Union, and Saleuda circuits. The next year he traveled Holstein District, embracing as it did Holstein, Nollie-chuckie, French Broad, New River, Clinch, and Powell's Valley circuits. This frontier work proved to be too laborious for him. His physical strength gave way beneath the toilsome labors and the privations to which he was subjected, and the year following his name appears on the minutes as the solitary supernumerary of the Western Conference. The next year he was transferred to the South Carolina Conference, where he continued to travel until 1815, when he located. Twenty-six years of his life he had given to the itinerant service of the Church, when he retired to the local ranks, and during those years he had made a record preserved nowhere but in the book of God's remembrance. Nor did he cease to labor in the cause of the Master when he entered the local relation. To the day of his death he was a true friend to the Church, ever ready to spend and be spent in her service. "The memory of the just is blessed." The examples of such men form one of the grandest legacies of the Church, and the

recital of their deeds, the story of their self- sacrifice and devotion, will continue to awaken the same spirit in others, and inspire others to like deeds of Christian heroism, so long as their memory is perpetuated.

The good man's end was as serene and peaceful as the close of a tranquil summer day. The same quiet trust that had marked his whole ministerial life shed a halo around his dying-bed. There was light in the valley, but he was not surprised to find it so. No song, no shout found expression in his expiring breath, but "leaning upon the very breast of the Son of God," he felt the throbbing of Infinite Love, and all was peace. To him it was no surprise that He who had never left him or forsaken him should draw nigh unto him in the dying-hour, and gently bear him over the cold flood. With the loving confidence of a child he looked for the Father's presence, and he was not disappointed.

He set as sets the morning-star, which goes  
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides  
Obscured amid the tempest of the sky,  
But melts away into the light of heaven.

As the shades of evening gathered about his pillow, a brother preacher, who was there to witness the closing scene, asked, "Brother Jackson, do you know me?" "No," replied the dying saint. He was then asked if he knew his wife, and again the answer faintly came, "No." Once again the preacher aroused him to ask, "Do you know Jesus?" "Jesus!" he replied, as if the sound of that precious name had recalled him from the valley which he was entering". "Yes, I have known my Jesus for better than forty years." And so he died.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving be that receiveth it."

Note. -- We take the liberty of appending the following note from Rev. S. J. Hill, of Little Rock, S. C., to the author after the above sketch had been written:

"Jonathan Jackson was born August 22, 1758; was converted in November, 1784; began traveling in May, 1788; married Mrs. Margaret Roberts (I think of Tennessee); died February 13, 1831. He had no children. He was my great uncle. The above record I took from the old family Bible. I think it likely he was related to 'Stonewall' Jackson. If I mistake not, they came from the same locality-both Methodists by birth, both named Jonathan."

He bequeathed his property to Rev. Jacob Hill, who now sleeps beside him in Rehoboth church-yard, Catawba county, N. C.

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29 -- HENRY EVANS

[Incomplete as this work necessarily is, it would be sadly more so were no mention made in it of Henry Evans, the saintly colored preacher of Fayetteville. But an abler pen, drawing upon

memories of personal acquaintance and friendly associations, has left us a picture of his character; and we have taken the liberty to transcribe the touching sketch just as it appears in Bishop Capers's Autobiography.]

The most remarkable man in Fayetteville when I went there, and who died during my stay, was a Negro, by the name of Henry Evans. I say the most remarkable in view of his class; and I call him Negro with unfeigned respect. He was a Negro; that is, he was of that race, without any admixture of another. The name simply designates the race, and it is vulgar to regard it with opprobrium. I have known and loved and honored not a few Negroes in my life, who were probably as pure of heart as Evans, or anybody else. Such were my old friends Castile Selby and John Boquet, of Charleston; Will Campbell and Harry Myrick, of Wilmington; York Cohen, of Savannah, and others I might name. These I might call remarkable for their goodness. But I use the word in a broader sense for Henry Evans, who was confessedly the father of the Methodist Church, white and black, in Fayetteville, and the best preacher of his time in that quarter; and he was so remarkable, as to have become the greatest curiosity of the town; insomuch that distinguished visitors hardly felt that they might pass a Sunday in Fayetteville without hearing him preach. Evans was from Virginia; a shoe-maker by trade, and, I think, was born free. He became a Christian and a Methodist quite young, and was licensed to preach in Virginia. While yet a young man, he determined to remove to Charleston, South Carolina, thinking that he might succeed best there at his trade. But having reached Fayetteville on his way to Charleston, and something detaining him for a few days, his spirit was stirred at perceiving that the people of his race in that town were wholly given to profanity and lewdness, never hearing preaching of any denomination, and living emphatically without hope and without God in the world. This determined him to stop in Fayetteville; and he began to preach to the Negroes, with great effect. The town council interfered, and nothing in his power could prevail with them to permit him to preach. He then withdrew to the sand-hills, out of town, and held meetings in the woods, changing his appointments from place to place. No law was violated, while the council was effectually eluded; and so the opposition passed into the hands of the mob. These he worried out by changing his appointments, so that when they went to work their will upon him he was preaching somewhere else. Meanwhile, whatever the most honest purpose of a simple heart could do to reconcile his enemies was employed by him for that end. He eluded no one in private, but sought opportunities to explain himself; avowed the purity of his intentions; and even begged to be subjected to the scrutiny of any surveillance that might be thought proper to prove his inoffensiveness; any thing, so that he might but be allowed to preach. Happily for him and the cause of religion, his honest countenance and earnest pleadings were soon powerfully seconded by the fruits of his labors. One after another began to suspect their servants of attending his preaching, not because they were made worse, but wonderfully better. The effect on the public morals of the Negroes, too, began to be seen, particularly as regarded their habits on Sunday and drunkenness.

It was not long before the mob was called off by a change in the current of opinion, and Evans was allowed to preach in town. At that time there was not a single church-edifice in town, and but one congregation (Presbyterian), who worshiped in what was called the State-house, under which was the market; and it was plainly Evans or nobody to preach to the Negroes. Now, too, of the mistresses there were not a few, and some masters, who were brought to think that the preaching which had proved so beneficial to their servants might be good for them also; and the famous Negro preacher had some whites as well as blacks to hear him. From these the gracious

influence spread to others, and a meetinghouse was built. It was a frame of wood, weather-boarded only on the outside, without plastering, about fifty feet long by thirty feet wide.

Seats, distinctly separated, were at first appropriated to the whites, near the pulpit. But Evans had already become famous, and these seats were insufficient. Indeed, the Negroes seemed likely to lose their preacher, Negro though he was, while the whites, crowded out of their appropriate seats, took possession of those in the rear. Meanwhile Evans had represented to the preacher of Bladen Circuit how things were going, and induced him to take his meeting-house into the circuit, and constitute a church there. And now, there was no longer room for the Negroes in the house when Evans preached; and for the accommodation of both classes, the weather boards were knocked off and sheds were added to the house on either side; the whites occupying the whole of the original building, and the Negroes those sheds as a part of the same house.

Evans's dwelling was a shed at the pulpit end of the church. And that was the identical state of the case when I was pastor. Often was I in that shed, and much to my edification. I have known not many preachers who appeared more conversant with Scripture than Evans, or whose conversation was more instructive as to the things of God. He seemed always deeply impressed with the responsibility of his position; and not even our old friend Castile was more remarkable for his humble and deferential deportment toward the whites than Evans was. Nor would he allow any partiality of his friends to induce him to vary in the least degree the line of conduct or the bearing which he had prescribed to himself in this respect; never speaking to a white man but with his hat under his arm; never allowing himself to be seated in their houses; and even confining himself to the kind and manner of dress proper for Negroes in general, except his plain black coat for the pulpit. "The whites are kind to me, and come to hear me preach," he would say; "but I belong to my own sort, and must not spoil them." And yet Henry Evans was a Boanerges, and in his duty feared not the face of man.

I have said that he died during my stay in Fayetteville this year (1810). The death of such a man could not but be triumphant, and his was distinguishingly so. I did not witness it, but was with him just before he died; and as he appeared to me, triumph should express but partially the character of his feelings, as the word imports exultation at a victory, or at most the victory and exultation together. It seems to me as if the victory he had won was no longer an object, but rather as if his spirit, past the contemplation of triumphs on earth, were already in communion with heaven. Yet his last breath was drawn in the act of pronouncing 1 Corinthians xv. 57: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It was my practice to hold a meeting with the blacks in the church directly after morning preaching every Sunday. And on the Sunday before his death, during this meeting, the little door between his humble shed and the chancel where I stood was opened and the dying man entered for a last farewell to his people. He was almost too feeble to stand at all, but supporting himself by the railing of the chancel, he said: "I have come to say my last word to you. It is this: None but Christ. Three times I have had my life in jeopardy for preaching the gospel to you. Three times I have broken the ice on the edge of the water and swam across the Cape Fear to preach the gospel to you. And now, if in my last hour I could trust to that or to any thing else but Christ crucified, for my salvation, all should be lost and my soul perish forever."

A noble testimony! Worthy not of Evans only, but St. Paul. His funeral at the church was attended by a greater concourse of persons than had been seen on any funeral occasion before. The whole community appeared to mourn his death, and the universal feeling seemed to be that in honoring the memory of Henry Evans we were paying a tribute to virtue and religion. He was buried under the chancel of the church of which he had been in so remarkably a manner the founder.

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THE END