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**METHODISM DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**  
**(With A History of The Great Virginia Revival)**

**Compiled from the HDM Library by Russell Gordon**

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Dear HDM Users,

At my request, Russell Gordon of Wichita, Kansas graciously agreed to compile a comprehensive publication on "Methodism During The American Revolution." This compilation from the HDM Library is now complete. We trust that our users will find this to be both an interesting and valuable resource in their studies on American Methodism. Herewith we express our Thanks to Russell Gordon for this worthwhile contribution to our Library.-- DVM

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## INTRODUCTION

The material gathered and compiled in this work is taken exclusively from Rev. Duane Maxey's HDM CD Library. This is a monumental library containing a vast amount of spiritual material, including many useful historical and biographical works. This could indeed be

considered a pioneer effort on the part of Rev. Maxey. Many fail to realize the treasures that are contained on this one CD. I own several CD's containing study material as well as books, but I have found none of them to compare with the usefulness of this one CD. The amount of information on the subject of this book is overwhelming. By typing in one word in the search program you can find every reference to it on the CD. Following through on this brings you to a wealth of good reading. The history following is a result of perusing this wonderful CD. I would urge those who own one to dig deep into it. It will bring spiritual refreshment which is so deperately lacking in this day. I feel an intense gratitude to Rev. Maxey for choosing to include so many valuable historical works. The histories of Jesse Lee, Nathan Bangs, and Abel Stevens are worth owning the CD. And what about the rare and priceless Autobiography of William Watters? Then one can read Asbury's Journal and biography with great delight. Thomas Jackson's Lives of Methodist ministers, and Lednum's work. This just scratches the surface, so to speak, of the depth and wealth of good wholesome reading. Its value goes far beyond the shallow religious literature so prevelant in our day. By a disciplined course of reading and study daily, one can get a good grip on the wonderful ways that God has worked in His church in earlier day. You can see the battles the church has fought. The church had to discipline her members, set rules and guidelines and grapple with the issues of the day in which she lived. It is relevant to our day. By applying ourselves to the study of church history and biography, while earnestly seeking God's face, we can hopefully begin to see our way more clearly through the dark maze of deception that pervades the atmosphere in which we live today. The study of Church history should have a practical effect on our hearts and lives. I cannot read about the workings of God in the past without my heart being stirred to ask God to do it again. He will if we'll pay the price. God never changes and what these primitive men and women did in sacrifice and self-denial, with prayer and fasting, we must do to see God work where we are. So I conclude my remarks with saying that the right use of this CD will have a good effect on your daily life. It will give you a fresh grip on the exploits of the Church and the doctrine of holiness. It is a wonderful tool to use to discipline the mind to study and to read. I urge all those who own the CD to dig deep into the well of material given to us by this dedicated man.

I will endeavor to minimize the amount of quotation marks in this work. My own comments will be enclosed in brackets. Generally, if the words are not enclosed in brackets, they will be quotes, whether enclosed in quotation marks or not. Now to begin our history. -- Russell Gordon

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## PART 1 THE GREAT VIRGINIA REVIVAL

### Division 1 Mr. Jarratt's Involvement in the revival

[The account of the glorious revival in Virginia is given by a number of eyewitnesses. Among these are Jesse Lee and Devereaux Jarratt, who was a Clergyman for the English Church who was laboring in the Bath Parish in the south parts of Virginia. Mr. Jarratt was a remarkable man in that he (an ordained clergyman of the English church) labored closely with the Methodist traveling preachers before the Methodist Episcopal Church was founded. He was a godly man and was useful in promoting the revival of which we are writing. Below you will find some quotations

about Mr. Jarratt and his character, leading up to the account of the mighty outpouring of God's grace in Virginia followed with the church's state before, during, and after the American Revolution.]

[This is from O.P. Fitzgerald's "Centenary Cameos"--hdm0699.txt. The writer is speaking of Jesse Lee, but pay special attention to what he says about Mr. Jarratt]:

[Jesse Lee] was born in Prince George county, Va., in 1758, of a good family. This was a time of religious depression in Virginia. The pulpit had no power, and the people had lost respect for a clergy most of whom were lifeless formalists, and many of whom were more or less tainted with the prevalent vices of the period. But there is one name that to this day seems to us like a green spot in this desert of religious declension. It is that of Devereaux Jarratt. He was a minister of the Church of England, then the established religion in Virginia. He was ordained in London in 1763, and came back to Virginia that year. He had caught the spirit of the new movement that was stirring and transforming the religious life of the British kingdom. His was a character of extraordinary beauty; his ministry was apostolic in its spirit, and its fruits made all the region round about bloom as the garden of the Lord. He preached five or six times a week, and traveled over a circuit five or six hundred miles in extent. The churches were crowded; where only seven or eight persons had partaken of the holy sacrament multitudes penitently bowed at their altars to receive the memorials of the death and passion of the Son of God. It was a genuine revival of religion; many souls were converted -- among them Nathaniel Lee, the father of the subject of this sketch [Jesse Lee]. The conversion of the son soon followed that of the father. [So we see that the labors of Mr. Jarratt bore wonderful fruit in the salvation of Jesse Lee, who has given us a wonderful history of the M.E. Church].

[Next is another quote from O. P. Fitzgerald's "Centenary Cameos"--hdm0699.txt, again speaking of Jesse Lee and his family, but again we wish to point out particularly to the reader what is said about Mr. Jarratt. Also bear in mind that all this was before the M.E. Church was formed. We regretfully inform the reader that Mr. Jarratt was not in favor of forming the M.E. Church. His relationship to the Methodists was never as warm afterwards as it was during the time of which we are writing].

The family[of Jesse Lee] soon after united with the Methodists, who had been organized into a society under the pastoral care of Robert Williams, the apostle of Virginia Methodism -- the first Methodist preacher in America that married, the first that located, the first that died. [This fact just mentioned would be a good thing for the reader to follow up on in the HDM CD library, namely the labors of Robert Williams]. The family residence was opened for preaching, and became one of the regular appointments of the newly formed circuit. The bright and ardent youth was powerfully and beneficially impressed by the Methodist preachers into whose society he was thus thrown. They were men of God, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. They preached a present, free, and full salvation, and their glowing zeal, consistent lives, and joyful experience attested the truth of their teachings. Revivals kindled and spread all over that region of country. Asbury himself came and took part in the work, and the excellent Jarratt -- the connecting link between the darkness and deadness of uniformity and the new era of light and life -- lent a helping hand, preaching, meeting the classes, holding love-feasts, and administering the Lord's Supper. Benedictions on his memory! There is at this hour a purer, sweeter life in thousands of Virginia

homes because of him, and the leaven of his evangelical influence still abides in the Church of which he was a burning and shining light in the days of its darkest eclipse. [The excellent Jarratt! What a wonderful thing to have said about one's character and ministry! This man went against the grain of his day. While most of the English clergy scorned the Methodists, this sanctified man humbled himself and entered into the labors. He recognized the hand of God with Wesley and his American veterans].

[The next quote is from "Francis Asbury, Prophet of the Long Road", by E. S. Tipple--hdm0562.txt. It gives a little picture of Mr. Jarratt's involvement in the Virginia revival.]

In 1775, four years after Asbury came, there was the greatest revival of religion in Virginia ever known in that part of the country. The Rev. Devereaux Jarratt, a clergyman of the Established Church, was very active in it, and wrote a long account of it to 'my justly admired friend Mr. Asbury' who printed it in full in his Journal, forwarding it also to Mr. Wesley.

[While Mr. Jarratt may not have had the most to do in the spreading of the revival, yet no account of it would be complete without being introduced to this man of saintly character and arduous toils in the Lord's vineyard. It might be said of him along with the Methodist traveling preachers that one planted, one watered, but God gave the increase. I feel that the reader has formed a sufficient acquaintance with this man of God to properly begin the history. As the story unfolds, Mr. Jarratt will re-appear to the reader. Others will be introduced as they come on the scene and enter into the work. I propose to take the reader to the beginning of the Virginia Circuit and the labors of Mr. Robert Williams who, as has been mentioned was the "apostle of Virginia Methodism."]

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## Division 2

The forming of the Virginia Circuit  
and the labors of Mr. Robert Williams

[The following quote is taken from "Pioneers of Methodism In North Carolina And Virginia" by Matthew H. Moore--hdm1526.txt.] [Robert Williams] 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.

[So we can see from the preceding account that the beginning work in Virginia was not promising, but the soon coming revival was a marvelous manifestation of what God is willing to do through men who are sold out for Him, and whose hearts are burning with a perfect love to God and a flaming passion for the salvation of immortal souls. The absence of all self-seeking is a striking spectacle in the lives of these holy preachers of Methodism.]

[The following is from The History Of The M.E. Church by Abel Stevens--hdmo216.txt.]

In 1773 Robert Williams traveled in various parts of Virginia. Jarratt, an apostolic churchman, and afterward a notable friend of the Methodists, encouraged his labors, and entertained him a week at his parsonage. Jarratt wrote, later, an account of "the work of God in these parts" -- Sussex and Brunswick counties -- and says: "It was chiefly carried on by the Methodists. The first of them who appeared there was Robert Williams, who was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the Gospel. He was greatly blessed in detecting the hypocrite, razing false foundations, and stirring believers up to press after a present salvation from the remains of sin. He came to my house in the month of March, in the year 1773. The next year others of his brethren came, who gathered many Societies both in this neighborhood and in other places as far as North Carolina. They now began to ride the circuit, and to take care of the Societies already formed, which were rendered a happy means both of deepening and spreading the work of God." Williams formed the first circuit of Virginia. A signal example of his usefulness (incalculable in its results) was the conversion of Jesse Lee. He was "the spiritual father" of this heroic itinerant, the founder of Methodism in New England." Mr. Lee's parents opened their doors for him to preach. They were converted. Two of their sons became Methodist ministers, and their other children shared largely in the blessings of the Gospel, which he proclaimed with such flaming zeal, holy ardor, and great success." He bore back to Philadelphia, says Asbury, a "flaming account of the work in Virginia -- many of the people were ripe for the Gospel and ready to receive us." He returned, taking with him a young man named William Watters, who was thus ushered into the ministry, and has ever since been honored as the first native American itinerant. Leaving him in the field already opened, Williams went himself southwestward, "as Providence opened the way."

[Mr. Watters labored in Virginia for awhile, but as he is not so much a part of the subject of this work, we will refer the reader to his autobiography (hdm07780.txt). I am sure the reader will find much to quicken his heart in the account this godly man gives of his life and ministry.]

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### Division 3

#### Letter To Mr. Asbury From Mr. Jarratt

[At this point in our history, we will insert a letter sent by Mr. Jarratt to Francis Asbury, who in turn sent it to John Wesley. Mr. Jarratt was an eyewitness to the great revival, as we have earlier stated. This account is one of the most inspiring to be found, more so because it was written by a clergyman of the English Church. For him it was not popular to be sympathetic towards the Methodists. Here is his letter (taken from "A History Of The M.E. Church by Nathan Bangs"--hdm0008.txt.):

#### A Brief Narrative of The Revival of Religion in Virginia In a Letter to a Friend

"Dear Sir, -- You was pleased, when in Virginia, to desire a narrative of the work of God in these parts. I shalt give you matter of fact, in a plain, artless dress; relating only what I have

myself seen and heard, and what I have received from men on whose judgment and veracity I can fully depend.

"That you may have a full view of the whole, I shall go back as far as my first settlement in this parish. August 29, 1763, I was chosen rector of B., in the county of D., in Virginia. Ignorance of the things of God, profaneness, and irreligion, then prevailed among all ranks and degrees; so that I doubt if even the form of godliness was to be found in any one family of this large and populous parish. I was a stranger to the people: my doctrines were quite new to them; and were neither preached nor believed by any other clergyman, so far as I could learn, throughout the province.

"My first work was to explain the depravity of our nature, our fall in Adam, and all the evils consequent thereon; the impossibility of being delivered from them by any thing which we could do, and the necessity of a living faith, in order to our obtaining help from God. While I continued to insist upon these truths, and on the absolute necessity of being born again, no small outcry was raised against this way, as well as against him that taught it. But, by the help of God, I continued to witness the same both to small and great.

"The common people, however, frequented the church more constantly, and in larger numbers than usual. Some were affected at times, so as to drop a tear. But still for a year or more, I perceived no lasting effect, only a few were not altogether so profane as before. I could discover no heartfelt convictions of sin, no deep or lasting impression of their lost estate. Indeed, I have reason to believe that some have been a good deal alarmed at times; but they were shy of speaking to me (thinking it would be presumption) till their convictions wore off.

"But in the year 1765, the power of God was more sensibly felt by a few. These were constrained to apply to me, and inquire, 'What they must do to be saved?' And now I began to preach abroad, as well as in private houses; and to meet little companies in the evenings, and converse freely on divine things. I believe some were this year converted to God, and thenceforth the work of God slowly went on.

"The next year I became acquainted with Mr. M'R., rector of a neighboring parish; and we joined hand in hand in the great work. He labored much therein, and not in vain. A remarkable power attended his preaching, and many were truly converted to God, not only in his parish, but in other parts where he was called to labor.

"In the years 1770 and 1771, we had a more considerable outpouring of the Spirit, at a place in my parish called White Oak. It was here first I formed the people into a society, that they might assist and strengthen each other. The good effects of this were soon apparent. Convictions were deep and lasting; and not only knowledge, but faith, and love, and holiness continually increased.

"In the year 1772, the revival was more considerable, and extended itself in some places for fifty or sixty miles around. It increased still more in the following year, and several sinners were truly converted to God. In spring, 1774, it was more remarkable than ever. The word preached was attended with such energy that many were pierced to the heart. Tears fell plentifully



from the eyes of the hearers, and some were constrained to cry out. A goodly number were gathered in this year, both in my parish and in many of the neighboring counties. I formed several societies out of those which were convinced or converted; and I found it a happy means of building up those that had believed, and preventing the rest from losing their convictions.

In the counties of Sussex and Brunswick, the work from the year 1773 was chiefly carried on by the labors of the people called Methodists. The first of them who appeared in these parts was Mr. R. W., who, you know, was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the gospel: he was greatly blessed in detecting the hypocrite, razing false foundations, and stirring believers up to press after a present salvation from the remains of sin. He came to my house in the month of March, in the year 1773. The next year others of his brethren came, who gathered many societies both in this neighborhood, and in other places, as far as North Carolina. They now began to ride the circuit, and to take care of the societies already formed, which was rendered a happy means both of deepening and spreading the work of God.

"I earnestly recommended it to my societies, to pray much for the prosperity of Sion, and for a larger outpouring of the Spirit of God. They did so, and not in vain. We have had a time of refreshing indeed a revival of religion, as great as perhaps ever was known, in country places, in so short a time. It began in the latter end of the year 1775; but was more considerable in January 1776, the beginning of the present year. It broke out nearly at the same time, at three places not far from each other. Two of these places are in my parish, the other in Amelia county, which had for many years been notorious for carelessness, profaneness, and immoralities of all kinds. Gaming, swearing, drunkenness, and the like, were their delight, while things sacred were their scorn and contempt. However, some time last year, one of my parish (now a local preacher) appointed some meetings among them, and after a while, induced a small number to join in society. And though few, if any of them, were then believers, yet this was a means of preparing the way of the Lord.

"As there were few converts in my parish the last year, I was sensible a change of preachers was wanting. This has often revived the work of God; and so it did at the present time. Last December, one of the Methodist preachers, Mr. S.[George Shadford], preached several times at the three places above mentioned. He confirmed the doctrine I had long preached; and to many of them not in vain. And while their ears were opened by novelty, God set his word home upon their hearts. Many sinners were powerfully convinced, and mercy! mercy! was their cry. In January, the news of convictions and conversions were common; and the people of God were inspired with new life and vigor by the happiness of others. But in a little time they were made strongly sensible that they themselves stood in need of a deeper work in their hearts than they had yet experienced. And while those were panting and groaning for pardon, these were entreating God, with strong cries and tears, to save them from the remains of inbred sin, to 'sanctify them throughout in spirit, soul, and body;' so to 'circumcise their hearts,' that they might 'love God with all their hearts,' and serve him with all their strength."

[Below is a continuation of the letter from Mr. Jarratt to Mr. Asbury which was also sent to John Wesley]

"During this whole winter, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out in a manner we had not seen before. In almost every assembly might be seen signal instances of divine power, more

especially in the meetings of the classes. Here many old stout-hearted sinners felt the force of truth, and their eyes were open to discover their guilt and danger. The shaking among the dry bones was increased from week to week: nay, sometimes ten or twelve have been deeply convinced of sin in one day. Some of these were in great distress, and when they were questioned concerning the state of their souls, were scarce able to make any reply but by weeping and falling on their knees, before all the class, and earnestly soliciting the prayers of God's people. And from time to time he has answered these petitions, set the captives at liberty, and enabled them to praise a pardoning God in the midst of his people. Numbers of old and gray-headed, of middle-aged persons, of youth, yea, of little children, were the subjects of this work. Several of the latter we have seen painfully concerned for the wickedness of their lives, and the corruption of their nature. We have instances of this sort from eight or nine years old. Some of these children are exceeding happy in the love of God; and they speak of the whole process of the work of God, of their convictions, the time when, and the manner how they obtained deliverance, with such clearness as might convince an atheist that this is nothing else but the great power of God.

Many in these parts, who have long neglected the means of grace, now flocked to hear, not only me and the traveling preachers, but also the exhorters and leaders. And the Lord showed he is not confined to man; for whether there was preaching or not, his power was still sensible among the people. And at their meetings for prayer, some have been in such distress that they have continued therein for five or six hours. And it has been found that these prayer-meetings were singularly useful in promoting the work of God.

"The outpouring of the Spirit which began here, soon extended itself, more or less, through most of the circuit, which is regularly attended by the traveling preachers, and which takes in a circumference of between four and five hundred miles. And the work went on with a pleasing progress till the beginning of May, when they held a quarterly meeting at B's chapel, in my parish. This stands at the lower line of the parish, thirty miles from W.'s chapel, at the upper line of it, where the work began. At this meeting one might truly say the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain of divine influence poured down for more than forty days. The work now became more deep than ever, extended wider, and was swifter in its operations. Many were savingly converted to God, and in a very short time, not only in my parish, but through several parts of Brunswick, Sussex, Prince George, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Amelia counties.

"The second day of the quarterly meeting 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 heart.

"When the love-feast was ended the doors were opened. Many who had stayed without then came in; and beholding the anguish of some, and the rejoicing of others, were filled with astonishment; and not long after with trembling apprehensions of their own danger. Several of them, prostrating themselves before God, cried aloud for mercy. And the convictions which then began in many, have terminated in a happy and lasting change.

"The multitudes that attended on this occasion, returning home all alive to God, spread the flame through their respective neighborhoods, which ran from family to family; so that within four weeks several hundreds found the peace of God. And scarce any conversation was to be heard throughout the circuit, but concerning the things of God: either the complainings of the prisoners, groaning under the spirit of bondage unto fear, or the rejoicing of those whom the Spirit of adoption taught to cry, 'Abba, Father.' The unhappy disputes between England and her colonies, which just before had engrossed all our conversation, seemed now in most companies to be forgot, while things of far greater importance lay so near the heart. I have gone into many, and not small companies, wherein there did not appear to be one careless soul; and the far greater part seemed perfectly happy in a clear sense of the love of God.

One of the doctrines, as you know, which we particularly insist upon, is that of a present salvation; a salvation not only from the guilt and power, but also from the root of sin; a cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God; a going on to perfection, which we sometimes define by loving God with all our hearts. Several who had believed were deeply sensible of their want of this. I have seen both men and women, who had long been happy in a sense of God's pardoning love, as much convicted on account of the remains of sin in their hearts, and as much distressed for a total deliverance from them, as ever I saw any for justification. Their whole cry was,

'O that I now the rest might know,  
Believe and enter in;  
Now, Saviour, now, the power bestow,  
And let me cease from sin.'

And I have been present when they believed that God answered this prayer, and bestowed this blessing upon them. I have conversed with them several times since, and have found them thoroughly devoted to God. They all testify that they have received the gift instantaneously, and by simple faith. We have sundry witnesses of this perfect love, who are above all suspicion. I have known the men and their communication for many years, and have ever found them zealous for the cause of God: men of sense and integrity, patterns of piety and humility, whose testimony therefore may be depended on.

"It has been frequently observed, that there never was any remarkable revival of religion, but some degree of enthusiasm was mingled with it -- some wild fire mixed with the sacred flame. It may be doubted whether this is not unavoidable in the nature of things. And notwithstanding all the care we have taken, this work has not been quite free from it; but it never rose to any considerable height, neither was of long continuance. In some meetings there has not been that decency and order observed which I could have wished. Some of our assemblies resembled the congregation of the Jews at the laying the foundation of the second temple in the days of Ezra -- some wept for grief, others shouted for joy, so that it was hard to distinguish one from the other. So it was here: the mourning and distress were so blended with the voice of joy and gladness that it was hard to distinguish the one from the other, till the voice of joy prevailed: the people shouting with a great shout, so that it might be heard afar off.

"To give you, a fuller insight into this great work of God, I subjoin an extract from two or three of my letters.

"To the Rev. Mr. M'R.

"May 3, 1776.

"Rev. and Dear Brother, -- Yesterday I preached at B.'s chapel to a crowded and attentive audience. Afterward the Methodists held their love-feast: during which as many as pleased rose, one after another, and spoke in few words of the goodness of God to their souls. Before three had done speaking, (although they spoke but few words,) you might see a solemn sense of the presence of God visible on every countenance, while tears of sorrow or joy were flowing from many eyes. Several testified the consolation they had received: some believed they were perfected in love. When the passions of the people were rising too high, and breaking through all restraint, the preacher gently checked them by giving out a few verses of a hymn. When most of the congregation went away, some were so distressed with a sense of their sins that they could no be persuaded to leave the place. Some lively Christians stayed with them, and continued in prayer for the space of two hours, till fifteen mourners were enabled to rejoice in God their Saviour. And some careless creatures of the politer sort, who would needs go in to see what this strange thing meant, felt an unusual power, so that like Saul among the prophets, they fell down on their knees, and cried for mercy among the rest. O may they still continue to pray, till God has given them another heart! "

"May 3, 1776

"Last night three or four score of my neighbors met together to keep a watchnight: at which it is the custom to spend three or four hours in religious exercises, and to break up at twelve. Such was the distress of those that were convinced of sin that they continued in prayer all night, and till two hours after sunrise. Here also fourteen or fifteen received a sense of pardon: so that in two days thirty of my own parish have been justified, besides others of other parishes.

"Indeed, I do not take it for granted that all are justified who think they are so. Some, I fear, are mistaken. But I shall judge better of this when I see the fruits.' "

"May 7, 1776

"The work of God still increases among us: I believe, within these eight days, more than forty here have been filled with joy and peace in believing. Of these I have had an account; but there may be many more. And several, who have been justified some time, believe God has blessed them with perfect love.

"I have no doubt but the work now carrying on is genuine: yet there were some circumstances attending it which I disliked: such as loud outcries, tremblings, fallings, convulsions. But I am better reconciled since I read President Edwards on that head, who observes, 'That wherever these most appear, there is always the greatest and the deepest work.'

"There is another thing which has given me much pain: the praying of several at one and the same time. Sometimes five or six, or more, have been praying all at once, in several parts of the room, for distressed persons. Others were speaking by way of exhortation, so that the assembly appeared to be all in confusion, and must seem, to one at a little distance, more like a drunken rabble than the worshippers of God, I was afraid this was not doing all things in decency and order. Indeed Dr. Edwards defends this also. But yet I am not satisfied concerning it. I had heard of it, but never saw it till Sunday evening. But this is a delicate point. It requires much wisdom to allay the wild, and not damp the sacred fire.

"The first appearance of any thing of the kind at my chapel was last Saturday night. I was not there, but a young man who studies at my house was. He is grave, prudent, and solidly religious, without the least tincture of enthusiasm. He met the society there in the afternoon, and would have returned home, but that many who were in great distress begged him, and some others, to stay and pray with them. They continued in prayer the whole night, during which about twelve were set at liberty. But, notwithstanding all they could do, there were often two, three, or more speaking at one time.

"I heard of this the next day, when I was at church, and hastened thence to the chapel. Some hundreds were assembled there, and were in much confusion when I went in. I went into the pulpit and began to sing, adding short exhortations and prayers. The confusion ceased: several spirits were revived, and some mourners comforted.

"Since that evening this kind of confusion has never been known in my neighborhood. It continued longer in other places; but for some time has been totally gone. But as this abated, the work of conviction and conversion usually abated too. Yet, blessed be God, it still goes on, though not with such rapidity. I have heard but of two or three that found peace for three weeks; whereas some time ago seldom a week passed, but I could hear of eight or nine; sometimes between twenty and thirty at one meeting.

"I have chiefly spoken of what was done in my parish. But that you may know a little of what was done elsewhere, I subjoin an extract from the letters of two local preachers, in the county of Sussex.'

"July 29, 1776

"Rev Sir, -- With unspeakable pleasure I acquaint you of the glorious revival of religion in our parts. It broke out at our last quarterly meeting, and has since wonderfully spread throughout the circuit. The time seems to be coming when we shall not need to teach every man his neighbor to know the Lord: for they daily know him from the least to the greatest, from little children to men of fourscore. Above seven years have I been exhorting my neighbors; but very few would hear. Now, blessed be God, there are few that will not hear. It is no strange thing for two or three to find the Lord at a class meeting: and at a Sunday meeting, although there was no preacher, ten, fifteen, yea, nearly twenty have been converted. At a place near me, thirty have found the Lord within eight days. It is common with us for men and women to fall down as dead under an exhortation, but many more under prayer, perhaps twenty a time. And some that have not fallen to the earth have shown the same distress, wringing their hands, smiting their breasts, and begging all to pray for them.

With these the work is generally quick; some getting through in less than a week, some in two or three days; some in one, two, or three hours. Nay, we have an instance of one that was so indifferent as to leave her brethren at prayers and go to bed. But all at once she screamed out under a sense of her lost estate, and in less than fifteen minutes rejoiced in God her Saviour. And, blessed be God, many of these retain a sense of his favor. Many, who a few weeks ago were despisers and scoffers, are now happy in the Lord. Many old Christians, who were always full of doubts and fears, now walk in the light of his countenance. Some have a clear witness in themselves that they have given their whole hearts to God. O may God carry on his work among us, until we are all swallowed up in love!

T. S.'

"Mr. S. lives two-and twenty miles from me: the writer of the following letter about thirty.

"July 29, 1776

"Rev. Sir, -- On June the 9th, we had a large congregation. I spoke on, "No man can serve two masters." Several appeared to be much distressed, two women in particular. We spent above an hour in prayer for them, and they arose in peace. When we met the class, we suffered all that desired it to stay. The leader only put a question or two to each member. This was scarce ended, when the fire of God's love was kindled. Praises hung on the lips of many; and several cried out, "What must we do to be saved?" Thus it swiftly went on; every now and then one rising with faith in Jesus. Surely this was one of the days of heaven! Such a day I never expected to see in time. While we were met, one I. W. was observed to be looking through the crack of the door which being opened, he came with it, and, being unable to stand, fell on the floor quite helpless. But in two or three hours he rose and praised a pardoning God while one of the class who had been justified some time, received a blessing greatly superior to any thing he had known before. We have reason to believe that, on this day, fifteen were enabled to believe in Jesus.

"Saturday, June 15. -- I was speaking to the class, and one found peace to her soul. Sunday 16, I spoke from "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," to four or five hundred people. This was also a day of Pentecost. Convictions seized on numbers, who wrestled with God till their souls were set at liberty. A young woman told me, "She heard that many people fell down, and she would come to help them up." This she said in scorn. She came accordingly. The power of God soon seized her, and she wanted helping up herself. But it was not long before the Spirit of grace helped her, by giving her faith in Christ. We believe twenty souls found peace this day. O may we see many such days!

"July 7. -- I spoke to a large congregation. Afterward was going to give out a hymn, when one was so powerfully struck that he could not hold a joint still, and roared aloud for mercy. I immediately went to prayer; the cries of the people all the time greatly increasing. After prayer, B. T., lately a great opposer, jumped up, and began to praise God, with a countenance so altered, that those who beheld him were filled with astonishment. Our meeting continued from twelve at noon till twelve at night; during which, God raised up about fifteen more witnesses.

"The Thursday following, six of those who were convinced on Sunday, found peace in believing. We hear of many others converted in the neighborhood, several of whom were strong opposers; and some hoary-headed ones, who had been strict Pharisees from their youth up.

"Sunday 21. -- We had a large and attentive auditory, and the power of the Lord prevailed. The next day I was much tempted to doubt, whether I was sent of God to preach or not? I prayed earnestly to the Lord that he would satisfy me, and that he would keep all false fire from among us. Afterward I preached. While I was speaking, a mother and her daughter were so struck with conviction that they trembled every joint; but before I concluded, both found peace. Glory be to God.

"I am, &c., J. D.'

"God has made examples of several opposers -- examples not of justice, but of mercy. Some of them came to the assembly with hearts full of rancor against the people of God, so that, had it been in their power, they would have dragged them away to prison, if not to death. But unexpectedly their stubborn hearts were bowed down, being pierced with the arrows of the Almighty. In a moment they were filled with distress and anguish, their laughter turned into mourning, and their cursing into prayer. And frequently in less than a week their heaviness has been turned into joy. Of this sort are several of our most zealous and circumspect walkers at this day. A goodly number of these are rich in this world; yet they are now brought so low that they are willing to be taught by all, and to be the servants of all.

"A gentleman in this parish, in particular, had much opposed and contradicted; he was fully persuaded that all outward appearances, either of distress or joy, were mere deceit. But as he was walking to his mill, about half a mile from his house, deep conviction fell upon him. The terrors of the Lord beset him around about, and distress and anguish got hold upon him. When he came to the mill and found no one there, he took that opportunity of prostrating himself before God, and of pouring out his soul in his presence. As his distress was great, his cries were loud, and his prayer importunate. The Lord heard him, and set his soul at liberty before he left the place. And the power which came upon him was so great, that it seemed as if his whole frame was dissolving.

"Upon the whole, this has been a great, a deep, a swift, an extensively glorious work. Both the nature and manner of it have been nearly the same, wherever its benign influence reached. Where the greatest work was, where the greatest number of souls have been convinced and converted to God, there have been the most outcries, tremblings, convulsions, and all sorts of external signs. I took all the pains I could that these might be kept within bounds, that our good might not be evil spoken of. This I did, not by openly inveighing against them in the public assembly, but by private advices to local preachers and others, as opportunity would permit. This method had its desired effect, without putting a sword into the hands of the wicked. Wherever the contrary method has been taken, where these things have been publicly opposed, when they have been spoken against in promiscuous congregations, the effect has always been this: the men of the world have been highly gratified, and the children of God deeply wounded. The former have plumed themselves as though they were the men who kept within due bounds, and those that had 'made so much ado about religion,' were no better than hot-brained enthusiasts. I cannot but think this has a great tendency to hinder the work of God. Indeed, if we thought that God wrought every

thing irresistibly, we should not fear this. But we know the contrary: we know that as some things promote, so others hinder his work. I grant means should be used to prevent all indecency; but they should be used with great caution and tenderness, that the cure may be effected, if possible, without damping the work of God.

"With regard to the inward work, there has been a great variety as to the length, and depth, and circumstances of the convictions in different persons; but all in general have been at first alarmed with a sense of the multitude and heinousness of their sins; with an awful view of the wrath of God, and certain destruction, if they persisted therein. Hence they betook themselves to prayer, and as time permitted, to the use of all other means of grace; although deeply sensible of the vileness of their performances, and the total insufficiency of all they could do to merit the pardon of one sin, or deserve the favor of God. They were next convinced of their unbelief, and that faith in Christ is the only condition of justification. They continued thus waiting upon the Lord, till he spoke peace to their souls. This he usually did in one moment, in a clear and satisfactory manner, so that all their griefs and anxieties vanished away, and they were filled with joy and peace in believing. Some indeed have had their burdens removed so that they felt no condemnation. And yet, they could not say they were forgiven. But they could not be satisfied with this. They continued instant in prayer till they knew the Lamb of God had taken away their sins.

"Most of these had been suddenly convinced of sin: but with some it was otherwise. Without any sense of their guilt, they were brought to use the means of grace by mere dint of persuasion: and afterward they were brought by degrees to see themselves, and their want of a Saviour. But before they found deliverance they have had as deep a sense of their helpless misery as others. One in my parish was a remarkable instance of this. He was both careless and profane to a great degree; and remained quite unconcerned, while many of his companions were sorrowing after God, or rejoicing in his love. One of his acquaintance advised him to seek the Lord. He said, 'I see no necessity for it as yet. When I do I will seek him as well as others.' His friend persuaded him to try for one week, watching against sin, and going by himself every day. He did so: and though he was quite stupid when he began, yet before the end of the week, he was thoroughly sensible of the load of in, and is now happy in God.

"If you ask, 'How stands the case with those that have been the subjects of the late work?' I have the pleasure to inform you, I have not heard of any one apostate yet. It is true, many, since their first joy abated, have given way to doubts and fears, have had their confidence in God much shaken, and have got into much heaviness. Several have passed through this, and are now confirmed in the ways of God. Others are in it still; and chiefly those over whom Satan had gained an advantage, by hurrying them into irregular warmth, or into expressions not well guarded. I have seen some of these in great distress, and just ready to cast away hope.

"I have a great deal upon my hands at present, and have little time either to write or read. The difficulties and temptations of the lately converted are so many and various, that I am obliged to be in as many places as I can for now is the critical hour. A man of zeal, though with little knowledge or experience, may be an instrument of converting souls. But after they are converted, he will have need of much knowledge, much prudence and experience, to provide proper food and physic for the several members, according to their state, habit, and constitution. This at present seems in a great measure to devolve upon me. And though I have been twenty years in the Lord's



service, yet I find I am quite unequal to the task. However, I will do what I can and may the Lord bless my endeavors!

"The enemy is busy, night and day, in sowing the tares of division among the wheat. And in some places he has prevailed so far as to plunge some of them in the water. In other places little feuds and animosities arise, to grieve the preachers, and damp the spirits of the people. On these occasions, they commonly apply to me; and all is well, at least for a season. -- When I consider what it is to watch over souls, and how much labor and pains it implies, to discharge it in any degree, I cannot but cry out with the apostle, 'Who is sufficient for these things!'"

"However, upon the whole, things are in as flourishing a condition, as can reasonably be expected, considering what great numbers, of various capacities and stations, have been lately added to the societies.

But after all, a great, part of Virginia is still in a very dark and deplorable condition. This province contains sixty-two counties and the late work has reached only seven or eight of them. Nor has it been universal even in these, but chiefly in the circuit which is regularly visited by the preachers. In this alone very many hundreds have in a few months been added to the Lord. And some are adding still. May he continue to pour out his Spirit upon us, and increase the number of the faithful every day!

"Our highest gratitude is due to our gracious God; for he hath done marvellous things! In a short time he hath wrought a great work: and let who will speak against it, it is evident, beyond all contradiction, that many open and profligate sinners, of all sorts, have been effectually changed into pious, uniform Christians. So that every thinking man must allow that God hath been with us of a truth, and that his 'glory dwells in our land.' I am your sincere friend, and brother in Christ

"To Mr. M. R.  
"D. J., September 10, 1776."

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## PART 2 METHODISM AND THE REVOLUTION

### Division 1 William Watters and the Revolution

[The previous account of the great revival of Virginia by Mr. Jarratt lifts one's heart to God in wonder for His wonderful works among the children of men. But we must remember that the church is faced with an arch foe who is not content to stand by and see so many of his servants snatched from the burning. War clouds began to loom on the horizon even as the Spirit of God was being poured out. The remaining part of this work will be devoted to Methodism during the American Revolution. It will be instructive to us to watch the way the church was effected by the travail of America to be born. There were godly men with widely different views concerning the war and which side was right. Wesley himself was not in favor of the colonists. To him they were

rebels. It is my hope that the reader will find instruction and interest in this account. I also take the liberty to hope that it will increase your appreciation of the HDM CD Library.]

[As the ominous signs of war loomed on the horizon different ones of the itinerant preachers reacted in various ways, each at peace with his own conscience that he was doing what was right. As we read from different of the writers and historians of the day we will no doubt catch a fleeting glimpse of the inner turmoil that gripped so many hearts. One thing is certain, there were a few of these godly men who carried the burden of the church on their hearts and never lost the vision for eternal souls. They were single minded men who allowed nothing to distract them from the one thing needful.]

[We will begin this part of the story with words taken from "The Autobiography of William Watters" --hdm0778. Remember that William Watters was the first Itinerant in America who was born in America. All the other travelling preachers were from the mother country until now. His bias was probably more towards the colonists, and yet this man carried a greater concern for the work of God than for any political factiion.]

The dreadful cloud that had been hanging over us continued to gather thicker and thicker, so that I was often bowed down before the God of the whole earth, fearing the evils which were coming on our sinful land.

Though wars and rumors of wars were all around us, we were permitted to dwell in peace, while every man sat under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. It is true we sometimes were charged with being deceivers, false prophets, enthusiasts, and even with being enemies to our country; but we seldom suffered either in person or property.

[We can see that the "dreadful cloud" that Mr. Watters called the war wasn't taken lightly by the church or even Congress. In fact, Mr. Watters goes on to say, "Congress . . . appointed a fast (as they frequently did during the war) to implore the divine protection in our unhappy struggles with our mother country."]

[Abel Stevens in his "History of the M.E. Church", volume 1--hdm0216, gives us a picture of Mr. Watters labors during this time. This gives us an insight of the single mindedness of this godly man of American Methodism. In spite of the War, God was with him.]:

Young Watters was abroad, abundant in labors and patient in trials, during this troubled period. He went from the Philadelphia Conference of 1775 to the Frederick Circuit, Md. It extended over a region which might still be called the frontier. The roads were difficult, the settlements very scattered, the habitations mostly log-cabins, without conveniences for the sojourner. Watters went to proclaim his message through this wilderness, desponding often on his route, but he was refreshed at last by unexpected success. About midsummer a spiritual awakening appeared in almost every appointment of his circuit. He records that it was affecting to see how the people turned out, by day and by night, from their secluded homes with "earnest looks and many tears," inquiring "about the things of the kingdom." Every week he was cheered with conversions -- several often at a single meeting. His own earnest spirit was kindled with the extending interest, and reconciled to all the labors and privations of his hard field. "I often preached, prayed, and

exhorted," he says, "till I was so exhausted that I was scarcely able to stand. This flame not only spread among sinners, but among professors of religion also, and even reached my poor heart, so that I could not but bless and praise God's holy name that though I was deprived of many conveniences, yet he made all up unto me, and I was contented to sleep in cabins, to eat a dry morsel, and frequently to retire into the woods to read, to meditate, and pray. My Lord and Master had not on earth a place to lay his head, and shall not I be thankful for the meanest place? He was hated, spit upon, condemned, crucified; and shall such a worm as I look for anything better?" The changes of preachers from circuit to circuit were still semi-annual. After six months unremitting labors, during which scores of converts were gathered into the Church, Watters departed for Fairfax Circuit, Va., where, notwithstanding the prevalent political and military agitations, his powerful ministrations bore down all before him over at least two thirds of his circuit, a flame of "revival kindling and spreading from appointment to appointment." "In less than a quarter," he writes, "we had the greatest revival I had ever seen in any place. If ever I was enabled to labor for the salvation of souls, it was now." There were some "very astonishing instances of the mighty power of God in the conversion of respectable persons;" among whom he mentions, as one of his trophies, Nelson Reed, destined to be a standard-bearer in the itinerant ministry. "So gloriously," he adds, "did the word of the Lord prevail, that though there was preaching but once in three weeks in the same place," he being the only preacher on the circuit, "yet in five or six months there were added to the Society upward of one hundred souls. Though wars and rumors of wars were all around us, we were permitted to dwell in peace, while every man sat under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid." [We can see by this account that this man had a single eye to the glory of God and the work of the ministry. He did not allow even the storm clouds of the Revolution to blot out his vision. God give us men of this caliber in this our day! Men who will keep on course and refuse to get distracted from the work of the ministry and the eternal value of souls!]

[We will now go back to the comments from Watters' Autobiography where he refers to the fast that Congress had called. He gives an account of an encounter with a parson. He and other Methodists had suffered persecution relating to the war. The colonists were suspicious of those representing the Methodists because they seemed to represent the English oppression. He gives us a little insight into the state of things in the following words:] "Congress having appointed a fast (as they frequently did during the war) to implore the divine protection in our unhappy struggles with our mother country, I had appointed to preach on the occasion, and finding that the parson of the parish had an appointment at the same hour, I thought it better with the congregation, to attend his appointment, intending nothing thereby but friendship, and thinking that on the present occasion it became us to forget all smaller differences, and to unite in seeking the common interest. The parson preached first. His text was Romans the 13th chapter, 1st and 2d verses:--"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation."

His discourse consisted of two parts. First, of what he called an explanation of the text. Secondly, an attack on the Methodists. This was to me more unexpected, as I never had heard of his saying a word about us in public. I was glad I happened to be present to speak for myself. We were all in general, and the preachers in particular, declared to be a set of Tories, under a cloak of religion. He said that the preachers were sent here by the English ministry to preach up passive

obedience and non-resistance, that they pretended their desire for the salvation of the people, led them to travel and preach through the country; but money in his opinion was their real object. He concluded this part of his subject by declaring that he would, if at the helm of our national affairs, make our nasty stinking carcasses pay for our pretended scruples of conscience.

My turn was next, and my text was Matthew 17:21 -- "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting." My first proposition was, that all men since the fall were possessed of this evil spirit, that goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting. After proving this doctrine from the old and new Testament. My second attempt was to prove it from matter of fact among all people, and in every age of the world down to the present day. Among other proofs I remarked it was this spirit that had led those, who had been our guardians and ought still to be such, to become our unnatural oppressors in the present unhappy war, and that it was our duty in our affliction to humble ourselves under the hands of Almighty God, who, only could turn the hearts of our oppressors, and defend us from their cruel power, it being the same with the Lord to save by few or by many.

But a still stronger proof of this spirit possessing all orders of men, until he is cast out by prayer and fasting, is, that until that event takes place, he even creeps into the sacred pulpit, and often rails and reviles others of different denominations, because they differ in some smaller matter of religion. My second proposition was, that this evil spirit -- this spirit of the Devil, is in this day (as heretofore) to be actually cast out by prayer and fasting.

Thirdly, I was to reply to the accusations just brought against the Methodists. First, I observed, that in all accusations particularly those of a public nature, where there was no proof offered, (and that the parson had not pretended to offer any of any sort) they deserved no answer, except by silent contempt; yet as the present assertions were of so extraordinary a nature, I hoped I should be excused on the present occasion in acting in a different manner.

First -- The parson has told you, "we are all Tories." I say as preremptorily we are not, and call on him or the whole neighborhood, to prove if they can, an action in any one of us, which is unbecoming good citizens.

Second -- The parson has told you, "we are sent by the British ministry, to preach up passive obedience and non-resistance." I deny that they ever sent me, or that they knew there is such a being on earth. I appeal to the many hundreds and thousands both in the towns and in the country, who are our stated hearers, whether they have ever heard any one of us say one word like the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, and that I was confident the present large and respectable congregation must and would acquit us from any such charge.

Likewise I do in the most unequivocal manner deny knowing anything about the Methodist preachers being sent by anyone but Jesus Christ, who hath said "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The parson has also told you, "that we preached for money." Then I venture to say we preach for what we don't get. I cannot tell what could induce him to assert this, unless it is from his own motive in preaching. Certainly if I was so disposed I might retort. But to our own master, "we stand or fall." I concluded by observing, that though I did not think politics ought to be introduced into the sacred pulpit on any occasion, yet I did most seriously deny that there was one drop of Tory blood flowing through my veins. I firmly believed my business

was to preach the gospel, and not to meddle with those public affairs, which were in much better hands, and in my opinion was unbecoming men of my profession.

The parson was polite enough to stay and hear me till I drew near a close, he then quietly and alone rode off; or we might have had each other, company in riding home."

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## Division 2

### Jesse Lee and the Revolution

[Our next quotes are from Jesse Lee's book "A Short History of Methodism in the United States of America"--hdm0118. Lee was drafted for the War, but would not fight. We will see some of the difficulties he encountered in his stand.]

"In 1775, the third conference was held on May 17, in Philadelphia. Two preachers were sent over from England, viz. James Dempster, and Martin Rodda: Mr. Rodda had been traveling twelve years, and Mr. Dempster ten years. The conference took in three preachers besides the two from Europe.

It was planned at the conference, for some of the preachers to change in three, and others in six months; the preachers saw that it would be best for themselves and for the people to have frequent changes of gifts, and of congregations. And we still know the good effects of having strangers to preach, and strangers to hear.

Hanover circuit in Virginia was formed this year, and preachers sent to it; but in the minutes it was included in Brunswick circuit.

This year the preachers at the conference concluded to have a yearly collection in the classes, for the benefit of the ensuing conference: they also concluded to have a general fast in the societies, on the 18th of July, for the prosperity of the work of God, and for the peace of America.

At that time the revolutionary war between us and England was fast approaching; and the Americans showed a firm and fixed determination to contend for their rights and liberty."

[Included in Jesse Lee's History is a short sketch of his life. From it I now quote:] Born during the French and Indian War, Jesse Lee was only seventeen years old when the first gun of the Revolutionary War was fired. The agitation and excitement caused by war and rumors of war must have hindered young men of Mr. Lee's talents. The schools to which he had to look for his education were poor and indifferent. He attended the singing schools of his time taught by roving singing masters and from them received one of the needed preparations for an itinerant preacher. In after years when he stood on the street corner or mounted a table under the elm tree on Boston Common to preach, he knew that his song leader was present and ready.

During 1780 Mr. Asbury traveled through that part of the country where Mr. Lee lived, visiting, preaching, and patching up the first division in Methodism in America-namely, that which

occurred at Broken Back Church, in Virginia, in 1779, over the question of administering the sacraments. John Dickens, who was his circuit preacher, used Mr. Lee to supply for him in order that he might finish some writing that he was engaged in. This gave Mr. Lee an opportunity to try out what was to become before long his beloved employ the work of a traveling preacher.

It must be remembered that the colonists were at this time engaged in the Revolutionary War for freedom. The struggle had been going on for four years, and they were almost broken in spirit, exhausted in munitions, and the ranks greatly depleted. They were making the last rally for victory; men were sought for almost with out regard to age or vocation. Mr. Lee was no exception; he was drafted.

"I weighed the matter over and over again; but my mind was settled as a Christian, and as a preacher I could not fight." On July 27 he left home for the army, which he joined on the 29th. Then his troubles began; he would neither take a gun nor go to parade, but did have to go to the guardhouse. The captain of the company took him to one side and argued the case with him, but to no purpose. The officer gave many reasons why all should bear arms at that time. But Brother Lee was still obstinate, feeling that the reasons were not sufficient, so he was then turned back to the guard. The next morning the camp was aroused by the praying of the prisoner. He must have prayed rather loudly, because he awoke a hotel keeper in the neighborhood who came afterwards and told him that his praying had affected him seriously. In a short while the army was moved from North Carolina down into South Carolina and camped on the Pedee. Mr. Lee's Journal gives us some idea as to how he carried on in that camp. "On Sunday, August 16, we lay by and did not march. About three o'clock in the afternoon I preached to a large number of the soldiers from Isaiah iii. 10, 11. Some of the hearers were very solemn." After this the colonel came to argue with him the question of bearing arms; but to no purpose, except that Mr. Lee did agree to drive the baggage wagon, or maybe was employed to go along with it and care for the luggage. A little later he was appointed sergeant of the pioneers; but this did not last long, for he received his discharge from the army on October 29, 1780. He was not disloyal to the cause of freedom, but felt that he could not fight in the ranks. He was willing to do anything in his power to aid in the struggle going on -- that is, he would do anything except fight.

After his discharge he returned home, but suffered more or less anxiety for fear of being drafted again. This soon ended, however, for the British power had by this time shown signs of being broken, and the final blow came to them at Yorktown in October, 1782.

During the closing years of the war Mr. Lee was very active, preaching wherever opportunity offered, and finally joined the Conference on May 7, 1783. Although he had been preaching for five years, he had grave doubts about his fitness for the itinerant ranks; however, having entered upon this solemn work, he availed himself of the means and opportunities that were offered to improve his time and talents. He soon became one of the best preachers in the connection and the outstanding street preacher of his time. It made no difference to him whether he was at an Annual Conference, the General Conference, or traveling his circuit, when the opportunity offered he could be found on the roadside or on a street corner calling sinners to repentance and full surrender. [Here was a man who was sympathetic to the cause of freedom, but whose conscience would not allow him to take the life of another. This was the struggle of an American in the American army. It's remarkable to see that there were godly men on the other side

as well. One of these men was Captain Webb, who served in the British Army. We will give some information about this useful man at this time.

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### Division 3

#### Captain Webb and the Revolution

[To introduce this man to our readers, we will quote from Matthew Simpson's book "A Hundred Years of Methodism"--hdm0519.txt. This is taken from Chapter 4 of the book.]

"In North America the rise of Methodism was wholly incidental. A few persons connected with Mr. Wesley's Societies in England and Ireland emigrated to the Western Continent, and among them were two local preachers. One of these, Robert Strawbridge, from the north of Ireland, settled about the year 1764 on Sam's Creek, Maryland. Being an earnest Christian, he commenced holding religious services in his own house. Subsequently, at a date not specifically determined, he erected, with the help of his neighbors, a small log building, about a mile from his house, in which services were held. This building does not appear ever to have been finished, or to have been deeded to the Church. The farm on which it was erected passed into other hands, and hence it can scarcely be numbered among the Methodist churches. He also visited other neighborhoods, and was instrumental in the accomplishment of much good, though he does not appear to have organized many permanent Societies, or to have erected any permanent churches. Under his ministration, however, several were converted who became active and zealous preachers.

About the same time some emigrants from the west of Ireland, originally of German stock, settled in New York. Their ancestors had been expelled from that portion of Germany then known as the Palatinate by religious persecution, and had found an asylum in Ireland. Being a foreign people, they had not very readily assimilated with the native population, and their religious condition had been greatly neglected. Mr. Wesley visited their locality about 1750, and under his ministration many were converted, some of whom were among the emigrants mentioned. In 1776, at the earnest request of one of these -- Barbara Heck, a Christian woman -- Philip Embury (the other preacher referred to) commenced service in his own house, and shortly after in a larger room. One day the little Society was startled by the appearance in their midst of a British officer, (Captain Webb,) who they feared had come with a design to persecute them. They were both surprised and delighted in finding him to be an earnest co-worker. He had been converted in England, and licensed by Mr. Wesley as a local preacher. He was connected with the barracks in Albany, New York, and was a brave, bold man, who had lost an eye in his country's service. Hearing that Methodist services had been commenced in the city he had come to visit them. Under his zealous labors the Society was greatly enlarged. A sail-loft was rented for temporary services, and in 1768 a lot of ground on John Street was purchased. A building was soon commenced; but such was the intolerance of the age, that in New York no church was permitted to be erected except by the recognized denominations. In order to evade the law, they were obliged to build a fire-place in one end of the house, thus making it resemble a family residence. The building was finished in 1768, and an earnest application was made to Mr. Wesley for a minister, and also for some pecuniary assistance. At the Conference held in Leeds in August, 1769, occurs the following

record: "Question 13th. We find a pressing call from our brethren in New York, who have built a preaching house, to come over and help them. Who is willing to go? Answer. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor. Question 14th. What can we do further in token of our brotherly love? Answer. Let us now make a collection among ourselves. This was immediately done, and out of it, fifty pounds were allotted toward the payment of their debt, and about twenty pounds given to the brethren for their passage."

Captain Webb not only preached in New York, and assisted in the erection of the John Street church, but with restless energy he made excursions to other parts of the country. He visited Long Island, where he gathered a Society, and he preached in the chief towns of New Jersey. He also introduced Methodism into Philadelphia, where, in 1768, he formed a class of seven members, who met in a sail-loft for worship. He was also active in the purchase of the first church property in Philadelphia, St. George's, on Fourth Street, which had been built by a German Reformed Society, but, in an unfinished state, had been sold to a private individual. He also penetrated into Delaware and Maryland, and thus laid extensive foundations for rising Methodism. He not only supported himself while he thus labored, but he contributed liberally to the erection of the chapels. He also corresponded with Mr. Wesley, and entreated him to send missionaries to the new field.

While great credit is due to Strawbridge for his efforts in Maryland, and to Embury for his faithful work in New York, (as a mechanic laboring in building John Street Church, and in occupying the pulpit which his own hands had built,) yet Webb merits the title of the chief apostle of Methodism, prior to the coming of Mr. Wesley's missionaries. His more extensive knowledge of Methodism in England, his better education, and his position in society, gave him more power to lay proper foundations. He was also a preacher of great earnestness and eloquence. During one of the sessions of the American Congress, John Adams describes him as "the old soldier, one of the most eloquent men I ever heard. He reaches the imagination and touches the passions very well; he expresses himself with great propriety." A Methodist writer says,

'They saw the warrior in his face, and heard the missionary in his voice; under his holy eloquence they trembled, they wept, and fell down under his mighty word.' "

[Mr. Simpson makes some more remarks about Captain Webb. Wesley had sent Asbury to America, and this is the setting of Simpson's next words.] With the exception of Captain Webb, who had traveled extensively, the preachers had confined themselves chiefly to a few of the larger places. Asbury at once commenced itinerating through the country, and, inspired by his example, the other ministers followed in his footsteps. Captain Webb visited England in 1772, and representing the prospects in America induced Mr. Wesley to send out two additional ministers, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford, with whom he returned in '773. Both of them were men of more than ordinary ability and prominence. Rankin was a careful disciplinarian, possibly somewhat too rigid, while Shadford was a successful revivalist. As Mr. Rankin was the older preacher, and a good executive officer, Mr. Wesley appointed him as the general assistant or superintendent.

[The next words of Simpson about Captain Webb are remarkable. As much as he loved and esteemed the Methodists and Wesley, He was not a part of their conference.]: Prior to this time



there had been no general meeting of the preachers in conference. They had met occasionally at the Quarterly Conferences, and being few in number they had distributed their labors as from time to time was judged best. Mr. Rankin called the preachers together in Philadelphia, July 14, 1773, to hold their first Annual Conference. The Minutes show ten preachers stationed, and one thousand one hundred and sixty members reported. Only eight preachers, however, were present besides Boardman and Pilmoor, who were about returning to England, and all of them were from Europe. Two others, whose names appear in the Minutes, were not present, Strawbridge and Watters. Embury had, prior to this time, removed from the city of New York, and had settled in one of the northern counties, where he shortly afterward died. Captain Webb, though laboring earnestly until the breaking out of the Revolutionary movements, was never connected with the Conference.

[Our next bit of information comes from Rev. Maxey's work on the life of "Captain Thomas Webb"--hdm0211.txt.]: While Asbury felt constrained to remain in America during the Revolutionary War, come what may, virtually all of the other Methodist missionaries, including Captain Webb, finally felt that it was best for them to return to England. He lingered in the Colonies a year more after the departure of Boardman and Pilmoor, laboring with his might to extend and fortify the young Societies, notwithstanding the increasing tumults of politics and war. Then, about 1775, his beneficent labors in America were apparently cut short, and he too returned to England. From the year 1776 to 1782, a time of war by land and sea, he annually made a summer's visit to the French prisoners at Winchester, addressing them in their own language, which he had studied while in Canada. He proceeded thence to Portsmouth, where crowded auditories of soldiers and sailors listened to him with all possible veneration. In Bristol and the neighboring country, wherever he preached, spiritual good was effected."

[We will include in this narration a little estimate on the character of this man, just so the reader can see that regardless of the sides these men represented, they were holy in their lives and hearts before God. In their own sphere, God used them regardless of the regrettable circumstances caused by the conflict of both nations in the Revolution. This is also taken from Rev. Maxey's work we have referred the reader to.]:

It is matter of gratitude to God that Capt. Webb, as well as Mr. Embury, "held fast his confidence steadfast unto the end," and therefore "received the full reward" of his labors. Mr. Embury, after laboring successfully in the cause of Christ in New York, removed to Ashgrove, where he ended his days in the service of his God, and where he lies entombed, mingling his ashes with his relatives who have followed him to the grave, waiting for the "final doom," when the trump of God shall awaken him to life and immortality. Capt. Webb, after "sowing the good seed of the kingdom" in various places in this country, returned to Europe, and spent the remainder of his days in "kindling the fire" of divine love in the hearts of God's people, in warning sinners of their impending danger, and pointing penitent mourners to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." While therefore the one shall arise at the voice of the Son of God" from his "dusty bed" in America, and receive the plaudits of those of her sons and daughters who were brought to God by his ministry, the other shall come forth in obedience to the same mandate from his resting-place in England, and hail each other blessed amid the shouts of the redeemed, while all, whether white or black, whether from the eastern or western continent, shall unitedly, and with one voice, ascribe the GLORY OF THEIR SALVATION TO GOD AND HIS LAMB FOR EVER.

In the meanwhile, were the happy spirits of these individuals, so obscure in their life time, and by some considered as merely "honest and loving enthusiasts," permitted to look down on this American continent, and behold the thousands which have been "taken out of the horrible pit and miry clay," and had "their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," since they commenced their humble efforts in the city of New York, would not their souls exult in praises to God and the Lamb for having redeemed them from the earth, and placed them among the princes of his people!

Captain Webb was no doubt somewhat eccentric in his movements, limited in his knowledge, and of moderate talents as a preacher of the gospel; but, from the testimony of Mr. Wesley and others who knew him well, his soul was fired with an ardent zeal for God, and was drawn out with an unquenchable thirst for the salvation of his fellow-men, and the building up of the Redeemer's kingdom. As such, God honored him with his blessing -- and as such we honor his memory, and record this feeble tribute of respect to him, as one of the first Wesleyan preachers who published the gospel on these American shores.

Asbury characterized him as "an Israelite indeed." Wesley, delighted in the disciplinary regularity, the obedience and courage of military men, not a few of whom entered his itinerant ranks, evidently loved the good captain. "He is a man of fire," wrote the great founder, "and the power of God constantly accompanies his word." In 1773 Mr. Wesley speaks of his preaching at the Foundry in London, and says, "I admire the wisdom of God in still raising up various preachers, according to the various tastes of men. The captain is all life and fire; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many, who would not hear a better preacher, flock together to hear him. And many are convinced under his preaching; some justified; a few built up in love."

Ten years after this, in 1783, Wesley speaks of Capt. Webb, having "lately kindled a flame here," (in the neighborhood of Bath,) "and it is not yet gone out. Several persons were still rejoicing in God. I found his preaching in the street of Winchester had been blessed greatly. Many were more or less convinced of sin, and several had found peace with God. I never saw the house before so crowded with serious and attentive hearers." In 1785 he bears a similar testimony to his usefulness, in kindling up the fire of devotion among the people.

The brave captain's word "in the street in Winchester" was to sound further than Wesley supposed when he made this entry in his journal. There were soldiers in the town, and Webb always drew such to his congregations; some of them were converted, and their regiment was afterward sent to the Norman Isles in the Channel. They wrote back for a Methodist Preacher; if one were sent who could speak both French and English they predicted that "the Gospel would shine over the islands." The sainted Robert Carr Brackenbury, "gentleman" and "Local Preacher," Alexander Killham, (founder of the "New Connection Methodists,") and, later, Adam Clarke, were sent, and Methodism was founded in the beautiful Channel Islands, where it has ever since flourished, and whence it sent forth at last the evangelists who have founded it in France.

For eleven or twelve years we catch glimpses of the military evangelist in the Journals of Wesley. The last of them is in 1785, when, being at Salisbury, where the captain had recently preached, he "endeavored to avail himself of the fire which" that veteran "seldom fails to kindle." Fletcher of Madeley appreciated him, and tried hard with him to induce Benson, the commentator,

to throw himself into the Methodistic movement in America. Fletcher himself; doubtless by the influence of Webb, had strong thoughts of doing so, but his health forbade it. The allusions to Webb in the contemporary publications of Methodism show that he was a man of profound piety. "He experienced much of the power of religion in his own soul," says an itinerant who usually lodged at his home in Bath. "He wrestled day and night with God for that degree of grace which he stood in need of that he might stand firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke, and he was favored with those communications from above which made him bold to declare the whole counsel of God. His evidence of the favor of God was so bright that he never lost a sense of that blessed truth, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' For him to live was Christ, to die was gain."

There must have been an eminent power of natural eloquence in the preaching of this zealous man. John Adams, the statesman of the American Revolution and President of the Republic, heard him with admiration, and describes him as "the old soldier -- one of the most eloquent men I ever heard; he reaches the imagination and touches the passions very well, and expresses himself with great propriety." By another hearer he is spoken of as "a perfect Whitefield in declamation." His discourses were very effective, as has been remarked, with military men. They admired his noble mien and commanding voice. One of them, John Parsons, heard him in the open air at Salisbury, and has left us a brief representation of his manner.

"With all that reverence," says the account, "which he had been wont to pay to his superiors, he stood before the preacher, (whose piercing eye he thought scrutinized every individual present,) prepared to listen with deep attention." The service commenced by the singing of a hymn, with which, we are told, the military hearer was highly delighted; an earnest prayer was then offered up in behalf of the assembled multitude; and, another hymn having been sung, the preacher read his text from his pocket Bible, and addressed the people in an extemporaneous discourse of considerable length, during which "the admiration of Parsons was excited to the highest pitch by the earnestness of his manner and his powerful voice, which so wrought upon the military feelings of the soldier that he thought the word of command, by such an excellent officer, could distinctly be heard throughout the line, from right to left."

The sermon being ended another hymn was sung, and a short prayer concluded the meeting. John Parsons's favorable opinion was won for the Methodists by this sermon. He afterward himself became a powerful Local Preacher, and, having done much good in various parts of England during forty-five years, he departed to the hosts above, in his seventieth year, shouting as he went, "When I get to glory I will make heaven ring with my voice, and wave my palm over the heads of the saints, crying, 'Victory! victory in the blood of the Lamb!'"

A high Methodist authority, who knew the captain well, says, "They saw the warrior in his face, and heard the missionary in his voice. Under his holy eloquence they trembled, they wept, and fell down under his mighty word."

The native talent of Webb was sustained by considerable intelligence. He had seen much of human life, and had some knowledge of books. He read the Scriptures in the Greek language, and his Greek Testament is still a precious relic in America.

One of Wesley's veterans, who was intimate with the captain, and who read the funeral service over his coffin, says, "Great multitudes crowded to hear him, and a vast number in different places owned him for their spiritual father. His ministry was plain, but remarkably powerful; he was truly a Boanerges, and often made the stouthearted tremble."

[In Lednum's book "A History of the Rise of Methodism in America"--hdm0324.txt, we read,]

In 1775 the colonists took up arms against England, and Captain Webb returned to his native land, where he ended his days, doing all the good he could. The last time that Mr. Wesley notices him in his Journal was in 1785. He says: "I preached at Salisbury; as Captain Webb had lately been there, I endeavored to avail myself of the fire which he seldom fails to kindle." [There are two pictures of Captain Thomas Webb on the the HDM Library. They are hdm0688s.jpg and Webb-1.jpg.]

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#### Division 4

#### Paul and Barbara Heck and the Revolution

[We want to introduce a 'mother in Israel' to the reader at this time. Barbara Heck has been called the "Mother of American Methodism" and rightly so. Yet this woman of God was loyal to the mother country and was not in sympathy with the colonists. It shows that God can make useful those whose hearts are perfect toward Him in spite of the differences they might have had with those among whom they labored. We will be quoting from W. H. Winthrow in "Barbara Heck, Mother of American Methodism"--hdm0544.txt.]:

Those who feel deeply patriotic toward the United States, and who feel that the American Colonies were totally justified in rebelling against England at the time of the Revolutionary War, might be disappointed to learn that Paul and Barbara Heck were loyal to the Crown, and thus moved to Canada at the outbreak of that war. Beyond humanitarian and non-violent help, the Hecks did not fight in the War, but much of the story dealing with the Revolutionary War casts the Colonial Army in the role of "the enemy". This may make it difficult for some to accept Barbara Heck as "The Mother of American Methodism." However, we should remember that even John Wesley did not side with the Colonies in that conflict, and numbers of native-born Methodist-Americans did not feel that they should take part in it. There were those like Freeborn Garrettson whose sentiments lay with America but who did not believe that God wanted them take up carnal weapons and kill the "Red-Coats."

Those who read this book will see how the Palatine Germans in Ireland, including the Heck and Embury families, owed a huge debt of gratitude to England, for having received and provided for them during a time of deep distress. No wonder, then, that they felt loyal to the Crown. However, the loyalties of "The Mother of American Methodism" lay first and foremost with "The Kingdom of God." It was the killing and bloodshed of the Revolutionary War that she and her husband deprecated the most. And, it was the establishment of Christ's Kingdom that they worked for the most, both in New York and in Canada.

Readers who wish to learn more about the beginnings and establishment of Methodism on this continent are encouraged to read the M. E. History of Jesse Lee (hdm0118.tex); the four-volume M. E. History of Nathan Bangs (hdm0008.tex, hdm0009.tex, hdm0010.tex, hdm0011.tex); the M. E. History of John Lednum (hdm0324.tex); and the four-volume M. E. History of Abel Stevens (hdm0216.tex, hdm0219.tex, hdm0226.tex, hdm0244.tex), along with a number of other publications in our HDM Digital Library about the people and events of early American Methodism. -- DVM [Duane V. Maxey]

The general policy of Great Britain toward her American Colonies was one of commercial repression. The Navigation Laws (passed 1651 by the Commonwealth, confirmed by Charles II, 1660) prohibited the exportation from the Crown Colonies of certain products, except to Great Britain and in British ships; or the conveyance of any products of Asia, Africa, or America to any port in Great Britain, except in British ships, or in ships of the country of which the goods were the product. American merchants were, therefore, precluded by law from the direct importation of sugar, tea, spices, cotton, and similar foreign products. These were required first to be shipped to Great Britain, and then to be reshipped to America at greatly-increased cost and delay. The Colonial traders largely disregarded this prohibition, and grew rich by smuggling, which acquired in time a sort of toleration. With the growth of American commerce, imperial jealousy was aroused. The Colonial vessels were seized, and the contraband goods confiscated by British ships or by the officers of His Majesty's customs. These confiscations sometimes took place with very little ceremony, if not with violence; and it not infrequently happened that serious riots occurred. The manufacture of certain materials, as wool and iron, was also, in defiance, it was felt, of natural rights, prohibited in the Colonies. The oligarchical power of the Crown officials, and the offensive assumptions of the Church established by law, moreover, gave deep offense to the democratic communities of the American Colonies.

Meanwhile, at Concord and Lexington (April 19, 1775), while [Phillip] Embury lay upon his death-bed, occurred the collision between the armed Colonists and the soldiers of the king, which precipitated the War of Independence, and the loss to Great Britain of her American Colonies. The bruit [report, rumor] of war became louder and louder, and filled the whole land.

"Nay, dear heart," Embury had said to his faithful and loving wife, as she repeated the rumors of the outbreak which had reached the quiet valley in which they dwelt; "nay, dear heart; this is only some temporary tumult. The Colonists surely will not rebel against His Majesty, when every Sunday in all the churches they pray, 'From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion, good Lord deliver us!'"

But the loyal heart did not rightly interpret the signs of the times. The country was ripe for revolt. From the mountains of Vermont to the everglades of Georgia, a patriotic enthusiasm burst forth. A Continental army was organized. General Gage was besieged in Boston. A small force was collected in Vermont for the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. On the night of May 9th it crossed Lake Champlain, and at dawn next morning eighty-three men surprised and captured, without a blow, the fort which had cost Great Britain eight millions sterling, two great campaigns, and a multitude of precious lives to win. Crown Point, with its slender garrison of twelve men, surrendered at the first summons, and thus the "gateway of Canada" was in the hands of the

insurgent Colonists. At Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775), the Colonial volunteers proved their ability to cope with the veteran troops of England.

By this time, however, Philip Embury had passed away from the strifes and tumults of earth to the everlasting peace and beatitude of heaven. Many of the loyal Palatines, whose forefathers had enjoyed a refuge from persecution under the British flag, would not share the revolt against the mother country of the American colonists. On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, therefore, they maintained their allegiance to the old flag by removing to Lower Canada. It was not without a wrench of their heartstrings that they left the pleasant homes they had made, and the grave of their departed religious teacher and guide, and set their faces once more resolutely toward the wilderness.

"Why not cast in your lot with us, and fight for your rights and liberty?" asked one of their neighbors who had caught the fever of revolt.

"The service that we love is no bondage," spoke up brave-hearted Barbara Heck, "but truest liberty; and we have, under the old flag beneath which we were born, all the rights that we want -- the right to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, none daring to molest us or make us afraid."

"If fight we must," chimed in Paul Heck, although he was a man of unwarlike disposition, "we will fight for the old flag under which we have enjoyed peace and prosperity."

For conscience' sake, therefore, this little band of loyal subjects left their fertile farms, their pleasant homes, their flocks and herds. They sold what they could, at great sacrifice, to their revolutionary neighbors, who, while they respected their character, were not averse to making gain out of what they regarded as their fanatical loyalty. When the wheat harvest had been reaped, the exiles, reserving sufficient for their maintenance during their journey, turned the rest into money for their future necessities.

Two rude-looking and unwieldy bateaux [bateaux = a light river-boat, esp. of the flat-bottomed kind used in Canada. -- Oxford Dict.--DVM] had been provided for the long journey over unknown waters to the king's loyal Province of Canada. In it were placed some simple household gear -- bedding and other necessities. Among the most precious articles of freight were Philip Embury's much-prized concordance and Barbara Heck's old German Bible. A nest was made in the bedding for the five children of Paul and Barbara Heck -- the oldest and youngest, bright-eyed girls, aged ten and two respectively, the others three sturdy boys -- and for the young children of Mary Embury. The fair young widow sat in the stern to steer the little bark which bore the germs of Canadian Methodism, while the matronly Barbara cared for the children. Paul Heck took his place at the oar -- aided by his friend, John Lawrence, a grave, God-fearing Methodist, who had been his companion in travel from their dear old island home. In another boat were their fellow voyagers, Peter Switzer and Joel Dulmage, with their wives and little ones. Several of their Palatine neighbors, who intended soon after to follow them, came down to the river side to see them off and wish them "God-speed."

"God will be our guide as he was the Guide of our fathers," said Paul Heck, reverently, as he knelt upon the thwarts and commended to his care both those who journeyed, and those who, for the present, should remain.

"My heart feels strangely glad," said Barbara Heck, the light of faith burning in her eyes; "we are in the hollow of God's hand, and shall be kept as the apple of his eye. Naught can harm us while he is on our side."

The last farewells were spoken, the oars struck the water, the bateaux glided down the stream, the voices of the voyagers and of those upon the shore blending sweetly in the hymn:

"Our souls are in his mighty hand,  
And he shall keep them still;  
And you and I shall surely stand  
With him on Zion's hill.

"O what a joyful meeting there!  
In robes of white arrayed  
Palms in our hands we all shall bear,  
And crowns upon our head.

"Then let us lawfully contend,  
And fight our passage through;  
Bear in our faithful minds the end  
And keep the prize in view."

All day the Methodist refugees glided down the winding stream, through scenes of sylvan loveliness. Towards sunset they caught a glimpse of the golden sheen of the beautiful South Bay, a narrow inlet of Lake Champlain, glowing in the light of the fading day like the sea of glass mingled with fire. They landed for the night on the site of the pleasant town of Whitehall, then a dense forest. A rude tent was erected among the trees for the women and children, and a simple booth of branches for the men. The camp-fire was built. The bacon frying in the pan soon sent forth its savory odor, and the wheaten cakes were baked on the hot griddle. The children, with shouts of merry glee, gathered wild raspberries in the woods. A little carefully-hoarded tea -- a great luxury at the time -- was steeped, and, that nothing might be lost, the leaves were afterwards eaten with bread. A hearty, happy meal was made; a hymn and prayer concluded the evening; and the same simple service began the morning, after a night of refreshing sleep.

The second day the bateaux stretched out into the placid bay, and, wafted by the soft south wind, skirted along the wooded shores. Sailing up the narrow channel, between lofty banks, the voyagers passed the still formidable forts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, memorable for the bloody struggles of the war. Those steep slopes, only sixteen years before, had been gory with the best blood of England and France. But the ravelins and demilunes, the curtains and casemates, the ramparts and fosse of these fortresses, under the kindly ministries of nature, were clothed with softest verdure and sweetest wild-flowers; and the exiles recked not of [did not think of] the bloody fray which had incarnadined [died, or crimsoned] the spot. So may the bitter memories of

the unnatural strife between the mother and the daughter land be buried forever beneath the kindly growth of the gentle charities and sweet amenities of friendly intercourse!

Day after day the rude bateaux, impelled by oar and sail, glided up the broad and beautiful Lake Champlain. Its gently sloping shores were then almost a wilderness, with only here and there the solitary clearing of an adventurous pioneer. On the borderland between the possessions of French and English, it had been for over a hundred years the battleground of the warfare of the rival races for the mastery of the continent. In the background rose the forest-mantled Adirondacks, which are, even to this day, the home of the lynx and wolf, the bear and catamount [cantmount = a lynx, leopard, puma, or other tiger-cat. -- Oxford Dict.]. The crystal tide over which they sailed was destined in after years to be plowed by hostile keels, and crimsoned by kindred bloodshed in unhallowed strife.

All went well with the exiles till the afternoon of the third day. While in the widest part of the lake, wearily rowing in a dead calm, a sudden thunderstorm arose that for a time threatened them with no small peril. The day had been very sultry, with not a breath of air stirring. The burning sunlight was reflected from the steel-like surface of the water. The children were fretful with the heat and the oarsmen weary with their toil. Presently a grateful coolness stole through the air, and a gentle breeze refreshed their frames and filled the swelling sails, and at the same time a cloud veiled the fervid beams of the sun.

"Thank God," said Barbara Heck, "for this change!" and the children laughed with glee.

Presently, Paul Heck, who had been leisurely scanning the horizon, sprang up with a start.

"Down with your sail!" he shouted to his fellow-voyagers, Switzer and Dulmage, whose boat was not far off, pointing at the same time toward the western horizon, and then eagerly taking in and close-reefing his own sail.

To a careless eye there was no sign of danger; but a closer observation revealed a white line of foam, advancing like a race-horse over the waves.

"Lawrence, take the helm! Get her before the squall!" he continued; and scarcely had the movement been accomplished when what seemed a hurricane smote their frail bark.

The waters were lashed to foam. The rising waves raced alongside as if eager to overwhelm them. The air grew suddenly dark; the lurid lightning flashed, followed instantly by the loud roll of thunder, and by a drenching torrent of rain.

"The Lord preserve us!" exclaimed Lawrence. "I can scarcely keep her head before the wind, and if one of these waves strike us abeam, it will shatter or overturn the bateau."

But Barbara Heck, unmoved by the rush of the storm, sat serene and calm, holding the youngest child in her arms, while the others nestled in terror at her feet. In the words of another storm-tossed voyager upon another boisterous sea, seventeen hundred years before, she said, quietly:



"Fear not; be of good cheer; there shall not a hair fall from the head of one of us."

Enheartened by her faith and courage, her husband toiled manfully to keep the frail bateau from falling into the trough of the sea. Lightly it rode the crested waves, and at last, after a strenuous struggle, both boats got under the lee of Isle-aux-Noix, and the voyagers gladly disembarked in a sheltered cove, their limbs cramped and stiffened by long crouching, in their water-soaked clothing, in the bottom of the boats. A bright fire was soon blazing, the wet clothes dried as fast as possible, and over a hearty meal of bacon, bread, and coffee, they gave thanks with glad hearts for their providential deliverance, and the stormy lake sobbed itself to rest. Like the fiery eye of a revengeful Cyclops, the sun set lurid in the west, a dark cloud shutting down upon it like a huge eyelid. But there in the east gleamed a glorious rainbow, spanning the heavens in a perfect arch, the seal of God's covenant with man, the presage of the happiness and prosperity of our storm-tossed voyagers.

At Isle-aux-Noix they found a British outpost, in a log block-house, the sole defenders of this gateway of Canada. They were guided by a corporal to the entrance of the Richelieu River, by which they sought the St. Lawrence and Montreal, the desired haven of their hopes. It was very pleasant gliding down the rapid river, between its forest-clad banks, now tinged with the glowing colors of the early autumn foliage. Along that placid stream, long known as the "River of the Iroquois," the cruel raids and forays of the French and English, and their Indian allies, for a hundred years, were made. At the hamlet of Sorel, at its mouth, the red-cross flag, which the exiles loved so well, waved over a stone fort, constructed by the French as a defense against the dreaded incursions of the Iroquois.

Here, although they received hospitable entertainment from the commandant of the little garrison, they made but slight delay. Embarking once more, they urged their bateaux up the stream of the majestic St. Lawrence, hugging the shore in order to avoid the strength of the current.

"I never thought there was so large a river in the world," said Mary Embury, as she scanned its broad expanse. "I believe it is twice as wide as the Hudson at New York."

"More like four times as wide," replied Paul Heck. "If it were not for its rapid current, one would hardly think it was a river at all."

The strength of this current made itself so strongly felt at times that the men had to walk along the shore, dragging the boats by a rope, while the women assisted with the oar.

It was with glad hearts that the weary voyagers beheld the forest-crowned height, the grassy ramparts, and the long stone wall along the river front of the medieval-looking town of Montreal. A red-coated sentry paced up and down the rude landing-stage, and another mounted guard at the ponderous iron-studded wooden gate. Paul Heck and his wife and John Lawrence set out to find temporary lodgings, leaving the others to "keep the gear," or, as Barbara Heck phrased it, "to bide by the stuff."

The pioneer explorers, entering the "watergate," first turned towards the long, low line of barracks; for their hearts warmed toward the red-coats, the visible sign of the sovereignty of that power for which they had sacrificed so much. Their first reception, however, was rather disheartening to their loyal enthusiasm. In reply to Paul Heck's civil inquiry of an idle soldier, who was lounging at the gate, if there were any Methodists in the town, the low-bred fellow replied:

"Methodies? W'ot's that, I 'd like to know?"

The explanation that they were the followers of John Wesley did not throw any light on the subject.

"John Wesley? Who was he? Oi niver heard of un. Zay, Ned, do 'ee know any Methodies hereabouts?"

"Methodies?" replied the man addressed, pausing in his operation of pipe-claying his belt and bayonet pouch. "O, ay! 'e means them rantin' Swaddlers, w'ot was in the King's Own in Flanders, d' ye mind? The straight-laced hypocrites! An honest soldier couldn't drain a jack, or win a main at cards, or kiss a lass, or curse a John Crapaud, but they'd drop down on 'im. Noa, ther' bean't noan on 'em 'ere, and w'ot's more, us doan't want noan on 'em, nayther."

"Well, we're Methodists," spoke up Barbara Heck, never ashamed of her colors. "So take us to your captain, please."

"What d' ye say? You are?" exclaimed the fellow, dropping both pipe-clay and belt. "Well, you 're a plucky un, I must say; but you're just like all the rest on 'em. Here, Geoffrey," he went on, calling to an orderly, who was grooming an officer's horse, "take the parson and 'is wife to the captain."

"Taake 'em yoursen. Oi bean't noan o' your servant," replied that irate individual.

The altercation was speedily interrupted by the presence of the officer himself, clattering down the stone steps, with his jangling spurs and clanging sword.

"Hello! What's the row with you fellows, now? Beg pardon, madam!" he continued, taking off his gold-laced cocked-hat, with the characteristic politeness of a British officer, to Barbara Heck. "Can I be of any service to you?"

"We have just arrived from the province of New York," replied Barbara, making an old-fashioned courtesy, "and we're seeking temporary lodgings in the town."

"From New York, eh? Come to the council-room, please, and see the governor." And he led the way along the narrow Rue Notre Dame to a long low building, with quaint dormer windows, in front of which the red-cross flag of St. George floated from a lofty flagstaff, and a couple of sentries paced to and fro in heavy marching order. This venerable building, almost unchanged in aspect, is now occupied as the Jacques Cartier Normal School. It had been erected as the residence of the French governor; but at the time of our story it was the quarters of Colonel

Burton, the military governor of the District of Montreal, and commandant of His Majesty's forces therein. It was subsequently occupied, during the American invasion, by Brigadier-General Wooster, and by his successor, the traitor, Benedict Arnold. It was here, also, that the first printing-press ever used in Montreal was erected by Benjamin Franklin, in order to print the Proclamation and Address to Canada.

After a moment's delay in a small anteroom, the officer conducted our travelers, somewhat bewildered by the contrast between his respectful treatment and that of his rude underlings, into a long low apartment, with flat timbered ceiling. In this room the present writer, on a recent visit, found a number of old historic portraits, probably of the period to which we now refer.

Seated at a large, green-covered table, on which lay his sword and a number of charts and papers, pay-rolls, and the like, was an alert, grizzled-looking officer of high rank. Near him sat his secretary, busily writing.

"Ah! be seated, pray. Pierre, chairs for the lady and gentlemen," said the governor, nodding to a French valet, and adding, "You may wait in the anteroom. I hear," he went on, turning to Paul Heck, "that you have come from the disloyal province of New York?"

"Yes, your worship," said Paul Heck, rather nervously fumbling his hat.

"Say 'his excellency,'" put in the secretary, to the further discomfiture of poor Paul, who had never before been in the presence of such an exalted personage.

"Never mind, Saunders," said the governor, good-naturedly; and then, to his rustic audience: "Feel quite at home, good people. I wish to learn the state of feeling in New York, and whether there is any loyalty to the old flag left."

"O yes, your worship -- your excellence, I mean," said Paul; "there are yet seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal."

"Seven thousand, 'Baal' -- what does the man mean, Featherstone?"

"Blest if I know, your excellency," said Colonel Featherstone, who, like the governor, was more familiar with the Letters of Lord Chesterfield than with the Hebrew Scriptures.

"He means," said Barbara Heck, "that there is yet a remnant who are faithful to their king, and pray daily for the success of the old flag."

"Ah! that's more to the purpose. But how many did you say, my good man, and how do you know the number? Have they any organization or enrollment?"

"I said seven thousand, sir -- your excellence, I mean -- because that's the number Elijah said were faithful to the God of Israel; a perfect number, you know. But just how many there are, I can not say. The Lord knoweth them that are his."

"A pragmatical fellow, this," said the governor to Colonel Featherstone; and again addressing Heck, he asked: "Well, what are they going to do about it? Will they fight?"

"Many of them eschew carnal weapons, your excellence. I'm not a man of war myself. I have come here, with my wife and little ones, to try to serve God and to honor the king in peace and quietness; and there's a-many more, your excellence, who will follow as soon as they can get away."

"Good! that has the right ring. We want a lot of true-hearted, loyal subjects to colonize this new province, and you are welcome, and as many more like you as may come," said the governor, rubbing his hands, and taking a snuff with Colonel Featherstone. He then conversed kindly and at some length about their plans and prospects. "I doubt if you can find lodging with any English family," he said. "There are not many English here yet, you see; but I will give you a note to a respectable Canadian, who keeps a quiet inn;" and he rang his table-bell, and wrote a hasty note. "Here, Pierre, take these good people to the Blanche Croix [the White Cross Inn], and give this note to Jean Baptiste La Farge. I will send for you again," he added, as he bowed his guests politely out of the room, kindly repressing their exclamations:

"A thousand thanks, your worship -- your excellence, I mean," said Paul Heck; and, added Barbara, "The Lord reward you for your kindness to strangers in a strange land!"

We turn now to notice briefly the concurrent public events of the province. Sir Guy Carleton, the governor-general of Canada, resolved to recover, if possible, Crown Point and Ticonderoga, which, as we have seen, had been seized by the insurgent American Colonists. He called upon the seigneurs to enroll their tenants or censitaires, in accordance with the terms of the feudal tenure by which they held their lands. Many of the seigneurs responded promptly to this appeal, but the tenantry, who had not forgotten the hardships of the late war, denied their liability to military service. The governor, who had scarcely eight hundred regular soldiers at his command for the protection of the province, declared martial law to be in force, and endeavored to call out the militia by proclamation. But even this appeal, backed up as it was by the mandate of Bishop De Briand, exhorting the people to take up arms, was ineffectual.

The American Congress now resolved on the invasion of Canada, believing that the revolted Colonists had many sympathizers in the country, who were only waiting for the presence of an armed force to declare in favor of the Revolution.

In the month of September an American force of a thousand men, under General Schuyler, advanced by way of Lake Champlain against Montreal; and another, under Colonel Arnold, by way of the Kennebec and Chandiere, against Quebec. General Carleton still endeavored, but at first with only very partial success, to enlist the co-operation of the French for the defense of the country. They were not, indeed, seduced from their allegiance by the blandishments of the revolted Colonies, but, for the most part, they continued apathetic, till their homes were in danger. Some of the French Canadians, however, as well as English, sympathized with the invaders, and gave them both passive and active assistance.

While Schuyler was held in check at Fort St. John, on the Richelieu, Colonel Ethan Allen, with some three hundred men, advanced to Montreal. Crossing the river by night, he attempted to surprise the town; but the vigilance of the little garrison frustrated his design.

In the dim dawn of a September morning -- it was the 25th of the month -- Barbara Heck was aroused by an unusual commotion in the barrack-square. It was before the hour of the reveille, and yet the shrill blare of the bugle rent the air, and the rapid roll and throb of drums beat to arms. The soldiers rushed from their quarters to take their places in their companies, buckling on their belts and adjusting their accouterments as they ran. The sharp, quick words of command of the officers were heard, and the clatter of the muskets as the men grounded their arms on the stone pavement. Ball cartridge was served out, and the little company filed through the narrow streets and out of the western gate of the town, where Notre Dame now intersects McGill Street.

Four of the English force were slain, but one of these was Major Carsden, the officer in command, who had recklessly exposed his life. Several, however, were severely wounded, and in nursing these Barbara Heck and Mary Embury found opportunity for the exercise of their woman's tenderness and sympathy.

"Sure we left our comfortable homes," said Mary Embury, "to escape these rude alarms of war, and here they are brought to our very door. But the will of God be done."

"I doubt if it be his will," replied Barbara. "I fear it is more the work of the devil. 'Whence come wars and fighting among you?' says St. James. 'Ye lust and have not, ye kill and desire to have.' How long, O Lord, how long will men thus seek to destroy each other? Surely the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. But God permits this evil, I fear, for the hardness of men's hearts."

Scarcely had the wailing music of the Dead March, which had followed the slain major to the grave, ceased, when the shrill scream of the pipe and rapid throb of the drum invited the townsmen to enroll for an attack on the enemy, who were besieging Forts St. John and Chambly.

"Now, my fine fellow," said Major Featherstone, who had succeeded to the rank and title of his slain superior officer, to Paul Heck, "why don't you take service for the king? With your education and steady habits you're sure to be corporal before the campaign is over."

"I have taken service under the best of kings," said Paul, devoutly, "and I desire no better. And as for King George, God bless him, I am willing to suffer in body and estate for his cause; but fight I cannot. I would ever hear the voice of the Master whom I serve, saying: 'Put up thy sword in its sheath.'"

"You're an impracticable fellow, Heck. How ever would the world wag if everybody was of your way of thinking?"

"I doubt not the widows and orphans of His Majesty's slain soldiers think it would wag on better than it does without so much fighting. And if we believe the Bible, we must believe the day

is coming when the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks, and learn war no more."

"Yes, I suppose so," said the major; and tapping his sword by his side, he added: "But not in my time will this good blade's occupation be gone."

"I fear not, more's the pity," said Paul with a sigh.

"But the Methodists are not all like you," the major continued. "When I was an ensign in the 'King's Own,' in Flanders, there were a lot of Methodists in the army. In my own company there was a fellow named Haime, a tremendous fellow to preach and pray. In barracks he was as meek as a lamb, let the fellows shy their belts and boots at him, and persecute him to no end. But when he was before the enemy he was the bravest man in the army. Another fellow named Clements, in the Heavy Dragoons, had his left arm shattered at Fontenoy. But he wouldn't go to the rear. 'No,' he said, 'I've got my sword-arm yet,' and he rode with his troop like a hero, against the French cuirassiers."

Paul's eyes had kindled while listening to the tale, but he merely said: "I judge them not. A man must follow his own lights. To his own master he standeth or falleth. But they died well, as well as lived well, the Methodists in the army, I'm sure."

"That they did. I never saw the like," continued the major, with genuine admiration. "There was a Welshman named Evans -- John Evans -- an artilleryman, a great hand to preach too, had both his legs taken off by a chain-shot at Maestricht. They laid him on a gun-caisson, and he did nothing but praise God and exhort the men around him as long as he could speak. I'll never forget his last words. His captain asked him if he suffered much. 'Bless you, captain,' he gasped, 'I'm as happy as I can be out of heaven,' and fell back dead. I never jeered at the Methodists since, as, I'm sorry to say, I used to do before. I felt, and I'm not ashamed to own it, that there was something in religion that they understood, and that I didn't."

"Dear major, you may understand it and know all about it. The dear Lord will teach you, if you only will ask him."

"Thank you, my good fellow. But I see I can't make a recruit of you for active service. I'll have to make you hospital sergeant."

"I would fain make a recruit of you, sir, for the best of masters, in the best of service. As for the hospital, fain and glad I'll be to do all that I can for both the bodies and the souls of my fellow-men, especially for them that need it most. But I'll do it for love, not for money. I can't take the king's shilling."

John Lawrence, however, did not share the scruples of his friend, Paul Heck, and eagerly volunteered for the relief of Fort St. John, on the Richelieu. Colonel Richard Montgomery, a brave and generous Irish gentleman, whose tragic fate has cast a halo around his memory, had succeeded Schuyler in the command of the American invading expedition.

On the 31st of October, General Carleton attempted, in thirty-four boats, to cross the St. Lawrence from Montreal, in order to relieve Fort St. John. A great crowd of the townspeople -- the mothers, wives, and children of the volunteers, and other non-combatants -- gathered on the shore, or watched from the walls the departure of the little flotilla. From the windows of their own dwelling, Paul and Barbara Heck and Mary Embury followed with their prayers the expedition, in which they were the more interested that it bore their friend and companion in exile, John Lawrence. Gallantly the bateaux rode the waves, and under the impulse of strong arms resisted the downward sweep of the current. The red coats gleamed and the bayonets flashed in the morning sun, as, with ringing cheer on cheer, boat after boat pushed off, and the music of fife and drum grew fainter and fainter as they receded from the shore. They had almost reached the opposite bank, when, from out the bushes that lined the shore, where lay an ambush of three hundred men, there flashed a deadly volley of musketry, and the deep roar of two pieces of artillery boomed through the air. Instantly everything was in the direst confusion. Many men were wounded. Some of the boats were shattered and began to sink. After a brief resistance, General Carleton gave the word to retreat, and the discomfited expedition slowly made its way back to Montreal.

"The Lord have mercy upon them!" exclaimed Barbara Heck, as from her window she saw the flash and heard the sound of the first fire. But she was even more startled by the sudden gasp of Mary Embury, beside her, and, looking round, she beheld her turn ashen pale and fall fainting to the floor. The usual restoratives of the period -- cold water and burnt feathers -- were speedily applied, and the swoon passed gradually away.

"Dear heart," said Barbara gently caressing her pale cheek, "they are in the Lord's hands. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

"What has happened?" asked Mary Embury, in a weak, bewildered voice; and then, "O, I remember. It is not the Lord's doings. It is those wicked men. Can they not let us bide in peace? Why do they follow us even here? Is -- is John hurt?" she asked, blushing with eagerness.

"No, Molly dear, thank God!" exclaimed, Lawrence, bursting into the room. "Though we had a desperate time of it, and many a gallant fellow has got his death-blow, I fear. They want you, Barbara, in the hospital. Paul is there already. They are bringing in the wounded."

"I can't leave Mary, you see," said Barbara, administering a cordial [cordial = a fruit-flavored drink; a comforting or pleasant-tasting medicine -- Oxford Dict.].

"O yes, you can," exclaimed the fair young matron, becoming rapidly convalescent. The safe return of John Lawrence seemed to have a more restorative effect than even the burnt feathers. There was a rather awkward self-consciousness on the part of each, of having betrayed feelings of which they had hardly, till that moment, been fully aware. It sometimes happens that chemical solutions may become super-saturated with some salt, which, upon a sudden jar of the vessel, will shoot instantly into solid crystals. So also it may happen that certain feelings may be in unconscious solution, as it were, in our souls, which suddenly, under the agitating impulse of some great crisis, may crystallize into conscious reality. So was it with these two honest and loving hearts. For years they had known each other well, and with growing esteem. But since their common exile they had been drawn more together. The bereaved young widow had leaned for

sympathy upon the warm heart of Barbara Heck; but she had unconsciously come to lean also for protection on the strong arm of John Lawrence. The peril through which he had just passed was the shock that revealed her feelings to herself. But the present, with its awful shadow of disaster and death, was no time for the indulgence of tender emotions. So Mary Embury busied herself, with Lawrence's help, in tearing up sheets for bandages, and scraping lint for the wounded [lint = a fabric, orig. of linen, with a raised nap on one side, used for dressing wounds -- Oxford Dict.], who were being borne beneath the window on bloody litters to the barrack hospital.

The Revolutionary War continued, with varying fortune, to drag its weary length. Several European officers, of high rank and distinguished military ability, placed their swords at the disposal of the young Republic of the West, and rendered valuable service in organizing, animating, and leading its armies. Among these were the Barons Steuben and DeKalb; the brave Polish patriots, Kosciuszko and Pulaski; and, most illustrious of them all, the gallant Marquis de la Fayette. The genius and moral dignity of Washington sustained the courage of his countrymen under repeated disaster and defeat, and commanded the admiration and respect of even his enemies. The last great act of this stormy drama was the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, with seven thousand troops, at Yorktown, Virginia, October 19, 1781. Lord Chatham, Lord North, and many of the leading minds of Great Britain, were averse to the prosecution of the war, and now public opinion compelled the king and ministry to recognize the independence of the revolted Colonies; and the angel of peace at last waved her branch of olive over the weary continent.

We return now to trace more minutely the fortunes of the principal characters in our little story. During the long years of the war they lived quietly in the town of Montreal, whose growth was stimulated to fictitious prosperity by the military movements upon the adjacent frontier. The little group of loyalist exiles shared this prosperity. Paul Heck found constant employment -- notwithstanding his honest scruples about fighting -- in the construction of gun-carriages and other military carpentry, and John Lawrence as house-joiner. The latter, soon after his return from Quebec, built a small, neat house for himself in the suburbs.

Hither, the following spring, he brought as his bride the blooming young widow, Mary Embury. It was a very quiet wedding. They were married by the military chaplain, in the little English church which had been erected for the use of the growing English population. Theirs being the first marriage celebrated in the church, they received from the Church wardens the present of as handsome a Bible and Prayer-book as the store of the principal mercer and draper of the town, who was also the only bookseller, contained.

After the marriage ceremony they received a hearty "infare" to their own house, under the motherly management of Barbara Heck. Nor was this little group of Methodists without the chastening effects of sorrow. Two children, the daughters of Paul and Barbara Heck -- sweet girls, about twelve and eight years old -- within a short period of each other, died. The parent's heart was stricken sore; but smiling through her tears, Barbara consoled her husband with the holy words: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Such were the difficulties and obstructions of travel during the war that none of their old loyalist neighbors in the province of New York were able to carry out their cherished purpose of escaping to the great northern province which still remained loyal to the king. At the close of the



war, however, a number of them reached Montreal, and, after a temporary sojourn there, sought new homes in what was then the virgin wilderness of Upper Canada, and was recently erected into a province. The Hecks and Lawrences, desirous of returning to the simple agricultural life in which they had been bred, resolved to join them. The sturdy boys of Paul and Barbara Heck were growing up almost to man's estate; indeed, the oldest was over twenty-one. The little company of Methodist pioneers, therefore, again set their faces to the wilderness.

"We go forth, like Abraham, not knowing whither we go," said Barbara Heck. But with the prescient instinct of a mother in Israel, she added: "But I have faith to believe that this is my last removal, and that God will give us a home, and to our seed after us. A many changes have I seen. I seek now a quiet resting-place, and a grave among my children and my children's children."

Prophetic words! She now sleeps her last sleep amid her kinsfolk after the flesh; and her spiritual kinsfolk -- the great Methodist community of whom she was the mother and pioneer in this new province -- far and wide, have filled the land.

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#### Division 5

#### The Work of God Prospering In the Midst of the War

[We now go to a wonderful account of the work of God even in the midst of the war. These words are written in the book "History of the Old Baltimore Conference" by J.E. Armstrong--hdm0805.txt. This will surely move the reader's heart. We will include the whole of Chapter 4 and part of Chapter 5 in this quote.]:

The war of the Colonies could not fail to exert an important influence upon the young American Church. Methodism in this country had been bound by the closest ties to the English Wesleyans. Revering Mr. Wesley as their Father in God, his spiritual children were naturally influenced by his opinions on all subjects. He had shown the deepest interest in their welfare, had sent worthy and honored men as missionaries to preach the Word and organize societies; and, until the war actually broke out, had prudently refrained from interfering with political affairs. Unquestionably he must have been acquainted with the spirit and feeling of the American people. His constant correspondence with his preachers in this country, and the outspoken declarations of the larger part of those who had been gathered into the Methodist fold, warrant this view. The latter not only had sympathized with their countrymen in resisting the oppressions by the Mother country, but under the influence of the independent Irishman, Robert Strawbridge, had already given expression to their revolt against receiving the sacraments at the hands of the priests of the Anglican Church. The war intensified this revolt, and disaster to the infant societies would have been inevitable but for the wise conservatism of Asbury.

The public feeling, which revealed itself in the cruel persecution that began even prior to the war, was manifestly political, and grew out of the peculiar circumstances by which the Methodists were surrounded. The larger number of their preachers, with Wesley as their chief authority, were Englishmen. Their religion was love, and inclined them to peace. But suspicion grew into violent hostility. Insults, fines and imprisonment followed. The opposition culminated in

personal assaults, bloodshed, wounds and scars. In Annapolis, several preachers were committed to jail. In Prince George county one was tarred by a mob. In Queen Anne's, Joseph Hartley was arrested and prevented, under bond, from preaching in the county; in Talbot, he was whipped by a young lawyer and imprisoned. From the grates of his jail window he preached to large concourses of people, who came from long distances to hear him. In Queen Anne's, Freeborn Garrettson was beaten with a stick by an ex-judge of the county, and felled to the ground from his horse. Caleb Pedicord was whipped in Dorchester and carried the scars to his grave. What gave the greater fierceness to these persecutions was the imprudent conduct of some of the English preachers. [36] Asbury and Shadford were shining exceptions. The latter, after much hesitation, decided to return to England with his brethren in the spring of 1778, and Asbury was left the single representative amongst the preachers of the Wesleyans in America.

The record in Asbury's Journal after the parting scene, is peculiarly pathetic "I am under some heaviness of mind. But it is no wonder, three thousand miles from home -- my friends have left me -- I am considered by some as an enemy of the country -- every day liable to be seized by violence and abused. All this is but a trifle to suffer for Christ and the salvation of souls. Lord, stand by me!"

When Mr. Wesley's "Calm Address to the American Colonies," written in the fall of 1775, reached this country, it fell with crushing force alike on preachers and people. Asbury wrote (1776): "I received an affectionate letter from Mr. Wesley, and am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped his pen into the politics of America. My desire is to live in love and peace with all men: to do them no harm but all the good I can." He was worn in body and troubled in mind. In the midst of great excitements, he strove to rally the societies in the vicinity of Philadelphia early in 1776. The strain upon muscle and nerve was too much for him; he was stricken down in Pennsylvania with serious illness and prevented from reaching the first Conference that met in Baltimore, May 21, 1776.

It will be remembered that the transfer of Conference sessions to Baltimore was occasioned by the political agitation in Philadelphia. In less than two months after the Baltimore Conference met, the delegates from thirteen colonies adopted (July, 4) the Declaration of Independence.

During the war that ensued, Maryland and Virginia, the colonies in which Methodism had already struck its deepest roots, neither of them at any time the theater of protracted military operations, afforded a field of comparative security to the Societies already organized. With the exception of one year (1780) there was, despite the serious obstacles, remarkable and steady growth in numbers to the end of the war.

The Conference in the humble chapel on Lovely Lane compels our interest and excites our admiration. No luxurious appointments are about the place. The benches are plain, and, as yet without backs. Fortunately the rigor of winter has passed, and we may hope that the spring has so far advanced, that the preachers shall not miss the absent fire. The alarms of war are at their very doors; distrust and open hostility are all around them. Some of them already "bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus." There is sublimity in their simple silence. Besides the five regular questions, one minute alone of their deliberations, remains: "July 26 is appointed a day of fasting."

As one by one the nine young men, more than one third of the entire body, present themselves for admission on trial, we think of them as ready to face hardship, imprisonment, scourging and death, so that they may preach the Gospel committed unto them. Let their names be held in everlasting remembrance: Nicholas Watters, John Sigman, Joseph Hartley, Francis Poythress, James Foster, Freeborn Garrettson, Thomas McClure, Isham Tatum, William Wren.

Calmly, but with firm resolve, do they all go forth, "not knowing the things that shall befall" them; yet they go, trusting in Him "whose they are and whom they serve." Freeborn Garrettson had left his home sick in body, and in sore conflict of spirit, rode to Baltimore, passed in examination and was admitted on trial. Leaving the Conference room, and reaching his temporary lodgings, he fainted, but reviving, was so happy that the preachers around him seemed to him angels, and his room the vestibule of heaven. Frederick Circuit was his first appointment. To preach was a sore cross, but the power of God attended his word. One of his meetings lasted all night and twenty souls were added to the little society of four members. In the second half of the year, three months were spent in Fairfax. Then crossing the Blue Ridge into the Valley (then called New Virginia), he preached three or four times daily, building up the new societies that Watters had organized the year previously in Berkeley; and, pausing several days in Shepherdstown, drew large crowds to hear him. At his last meeting, a woman cried aloud for mercy, and was happily converted. The resident minister looked on in wonder, and said that the doctrine Mr. Garrettson preached might be true, as he seemed to bring Scripture to prove it, but he knew nothing about it. The next year Garrettson followed Shadford and his colleagues on Brunswick, and with William Watters and John Tunnell, preached to immense congregations with such effect that he was reminded of the day of Pentecost. He extended his travels into North Carolina, and encountered opposition, but came out "as gold tried in the fire." Joseph Hartley, one of the nine of the first year (1776), became his colleague in Kent, Maryland, in 1778, and shared with his noble comrade imprisonment and violence.

Asbury, sick and absent from Conference, 1776, was again assigned to the Baltimore Circuit. [37] On reaching Perry Hall, his feeble condition compelled him to sojourn there a few days, and then, with his friends, Gough and Merryman, he proceeded to the springs in Berkeley county, Virginia, to try the waters. Richard Webster, having at the session of 1776, retired from the itinerancy, supplied the Baltimore Circuit during his absence. The three friends improved their time at the Springs by holding daily meetings for prayer and exhortation, Asbury preaching as often as he could. He was impressed by the contrasts experienced; and after he retired from the famous watering place, pronounced it "the best and the worst place he had ever seen; the best for health and the worst for religion." Returning to his work, [38] he appears to have sought new preaching places, visiting Reisterstown, Md., February 6, 1777, where with Rankin he held a quarterly meeting, February 10. In March he entered Annapolis, where infidelity was so rampant that "courage was needed to preach the gospel." He persevered, however, making appointments as he could; at one time arrested and fined, at another refused admission to a private house. At the forks of the Patuxent he found "a large company of wild looking people." On the road a bullet passed through his chaise. He pressed on, not heeding danger and opposition, until the good seed sown took root, and at last came the joyous harvest of souls. Names that are today familiar among the families of Calvert and Anne Arundel counties appear on the record of first converts: Weems, Childs, Griffith, Heneliss, Bignell, Gray, Dorsey, Ridgeley, Bennett, Wood and Wilson. Annapolis yielded as the first fruits of Asbury's preaching the name of Wilkens, afterwards noted among

Baltimore Methodists. Richard and Dorothy Guest, parents of Reverend Job Guest, for over fifty years an honored member of the Baltimore Conference, lived near Annapolis. Afterwards the names of Watkin, Simmons and Williams appear.

The conference held at Watters' on Deer Creek, Md., May 20, 1777, is remarkable as presenting for the last time the names of Rankin, Shadford and Rodda, the English preachers, soon to return on account of their loyalty to the mother country; and, for the first time the names of men who were to become illustrious in the annals of the church: Caleb B. Pedicord, whose handsome person, saintly character, sweet spirit and pathetic tones of voice gave wondrous power in both song and pulpit eloquence; John Tunnel, frail in body but "with great gifts as a preacher;" William Gill, his bosom friend "pre-eminently astute and philosophical;" Reuben Ellis, "a weighty and powerful preacher;" John Dickens, in "literature, logic, zeal and devotion a Paul among the preachers;" John Littlejohn, "but little his inferior;" LeRoy Cole, [39] for a long time an itinerant and doing great good; Thomas S. Chew, "very popular as a preacher;" Joseph O. Cromwell, [40] "a mystic giant," and Edward Bailey, whose brief career closed gloriously by the side of his leader, Asbury, in Virginia, in 1780.

Though the war was now raging, Asbury tells us that the session of the Conference was marked by "harmony, peace and love." The parting with the English brethren, who had determined to return to the old country, is described as peculiarly affecting. "We parted," says Garrettson, "bathed in tears, to meet together no more in this world. I wish I could depict to the present generation of preachers, the state of our young and prosperous Society. We had gospel simplicity and our hearts were united to Jesus and to one another. We were persecuted and at times buffeted, but we took our lives in our hands and went to our different appointments, weeping and sowing the precious seed, and the Lord owned and blessed his work."

The year that followed (1777-8) was most trying to the faith and patience of the little band of heroes. Asbury attempted to continue his work in the counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and in Delaware, but so fierce were the fires of political opposition that in February, 1778, he found refuge in Delaware at the home of Judge Thomas White, who became one of his staunchest friends. There George Shadford met him for the last time. Then for five weeks he was in seclusion, and after eleven weeks of silence, could be no longer restrained, but resumed his work, confining it, however, to Delaware and the Eastern Shore.

Leesburg, Virginia, became for the first time, the seat of Conference, May 19, 1778. Their leader was for the second time absent, and Rankin was in New York, awaiting with his colleagues the departure of the vessel that should convey them to their native land. William Watters presided. The ravages of war had diminished the numbers in society by 873, with a net loss among the preachers of six. Lee tells us that, "by the war on the one hand and persecution on the other, the preachers were separated from their flocks, and all conspired to increase the burdens of the Christians."

The young men attending the session were wisely directed and acted with great prudence, and the appointments were judiciously made. Of the nine admitted on trial, James O'Kelly was destined to become, by his talents and devotion, a prominent person in the councils of the church, and in later years (1792) the notable leader in the first secession from the Methodist ranks;

Richard Ivy, capable, pious, eloquent and courageous; Henry Willis, favorite of Asbury, frail in body but steadfast in work, dying, 1808 at Pipe Creek, the first home of Strawbridge; and John Major, the "weeping prophet," surpassingly popular and wonderfully successful.

Berkeley Circuit was formed at this Conference with Edward Bailey as the preacher. It covered all the territory that had been penetrated by the Methodist pioneers in the Valley of Virginia, and stretched northward, beyond Capon river, to the south branch of the Potomac.

The year 1779 was marked by serious events that threatened consequences more dire than even the war produced. For a decade of years the itinerant system had, under the blessing of God, yielded marvelous results. The consecrated enthusiasm of the preachers, the crowds attracted by their ministry, and the constantly increasing number of their adherents, had thus far given promise of unlimited success. But these itinerants, like the most of Mr. Wesley's helpers in Great Britain, were as yet only lay-preachers. There were however enough ordained ministers in connection with Mr. Wesley, and many more in the Church of England not members of Mr. Wesley's societies, who were in warm sympathy with the Methodist movement, to supply the need for the administration of the sacraments. In fact the Wesleyans for the most part were regular communicants in the State Church. But when the war of independence occurred, many Anglican priests fled to the old country, and left their flocks unprovided. No English Bishop had ever resided in this country; and especially in Virginia, the heart of Anglicanism in the American colonies was this want felt to the utmost degree.

Mr. Asbury had been sent out by his chief as an unordained missionary. No authority was present to invest the growing company of earnest, holy men with the ecclesiastical functions of their ministry. The very first man who, as a Methodist preacher, proclaimed the Gospel, felt an instinctive revolt against the yoke of Anglican Ecclesiasticism. Strawbridge was, on that account, looked upon with distrust by the conservative Asbury. He had pleaded for presbyterial ordination in the first years of his ministry, and doubtless his zeal and independence had fostered the spirit of resistance among the native preachers.

And now in the midst of war's alarms, the severest test was to be applied to the new Societies. Asbury, wrongfully suspected of sympathy with the English side during the two first years of the war, had been driven into retirement. We have seen that he was hindered by sickness from the Lovely Lane Conference in 1776. Though present at the Deer Creek Conference in 1777, he was troubled in spirit on account of the near departure of his English co-laborers. When the first Virginia Conference was held in Leesburg in 1778 he was in hiding from his enemies; and in 1779, he felt constrained to remain in seclusion. But he called the preachers east of the Potomac to the house of Judge White in Kent county, Delaware, April 28, 1779, and, while not claiming any formal authority to preside, or to regard the meeting as a regular session of the Conference, it is evident, from his Journal, and from the writings of contemporaneous preachers, that he desired to interpose such action as might tend to restrain the more southern preachers from a course which he believed would be dangerous to the peace and unity of the connection. But he failed in his expectation. The regular conference, held May 18 at the Brokenback Church in Fluvanna county, Virginia, believing, that, as ministers called of God, the right inhered in them to administer the sacraments, appointed a committee to ordain each other and then to ordain those among them who would consent. Watters, who was present, tells us that besides himself there were "a few who did

not agree with the affirmative." But this action, so distressing to Asbury, was an important one, not only in furnishing a precedent in Methodist history for a repudiation of what Mr. Wesley had called "The fable of Apostolical Succession," but doubtless in determining the great Founder himself five years later, virtually to sanction the act by giving it the very best authority his followers could desire, namely, by setting apart Dr. Coke to the Episcopal office, and Whatcoat and Vasey as Elders. These were to inaugurate the organization of the church upon a firm ecclesiastical basis whose validity is demonstrated by the millions today dependent upon its ministrations and ordinances. Surely such men as Gatch, Dickens, Ellis and others, renowned for their preaching power, and for the multitudes saved under their ministry, could have been actuated only by the highest and purest motives in yielding to what seemed to them a providential call to meet the most pressing needs of the church. They were abundantly vindicated when Asbury himself submitted to ordination by the hands of Coke, Vasey, Whatcoat and Otterbein at the Christmas Conference, 1784.

The Conference that met in Baltimore, April 24, 1780, deputed three of their number -- Asbury, Watters and Garrettson -- to visit the Virginia Conference two weeks later at Manakintown. Brave, honest men, strong in their conviction of right, but ready with "strong cries and tears" to plead with God for a way out of the threatening danger, at last found the way that led to reconciliation and unity. For a year the administration of the ordinances was suspended. They waited in rare patience for five years, [41] and then rejoiced together in the wonderful liberty wherewith God had set them free.

Amid all the hindrances that the disturbed condition of the country presented, we are impressed with the fact that new recruits to the itinerancy came in at every session of the Conference, While some of the most useful of these were, after a few years of effective service, compelled to locate, others equally noted for their ability and zeal in the work, pursued it with fidelity to the end of their lives.

[Armstrong also has this to say about Methodism and the Revolution]:

That the rise and progress of Methodism in this country was purely providential is manifest from the fact that even Mr. Wesley himself did not look across the Atlantic until the news reached him that emigrants from Ireland, impelled by the love of God and of immortal souls, had voluntarily begun the work of evangelization at the points from which the gospel might spread, first, to the adjacent sections, and then to the regions beyond. But when the intelligence came to him, he was not slow to discern the grace of God, and promptly to send missionaries who could give direction to the movement. Even then the work was crude and without definite form. Gradually the scope of territory became enlarged and was speedily occupied by the zealous and faithful pioneers. The war of the Revolution checked their labors for seven years, but the very tribulations and persecutions they suffered served only to feed the fire the Lord had kindled. So soon as peace prevailed, it burst forth into a lambent flame and reached the period of organization as early as 1784.

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## Freeborn Garrettson and the Revolution

[We will now bring to your attention another veteran of early American Methodism. Mr. Freeborn Garrettson suffered much persecution because of his failure to take up arms in the American cause. His own story is found in "Freeborn Garrettson's Experience And Travels"--hdm0710. The story is also told by Ezra Tipple's "Freeborn Garrettson"--hdm0168.txt.]

[Garrettson]: I was determined to have nothing to do with the [Revolutionary] War. It was contrary to my mind, and grievous to my conscience, to have any hand in shedding human blood. This brought me into some trouble. I was taken before the rulers at the general meeting. But the Lord was with me, and gave me words, which my opposers could not resist. I was so happy, even when surrounded by my enemies, that with tears flowing from my eyes, I told them of their danger, and entreated them to turn to the Lord. They laid a fine upon me, but were not permitted to take a farthing of my property. On being dismissed I withdrew, and found great freedom to pray for them; I returned home with a glad heart."

About this time the State Oath began to be administered and was universally complied with; but I could not be subject to the rulers in this respect, as it touched my conscience towards God. I was informed, that I must either take the oath, or go to jail; or otherwise leave the state. I answered the persons who came to tender the oath to me, "I am a friend to my country:-- I can do nothing willingly or knowingly to the prejudice of it; if required, I will give good security for my behavior daring my stay in the state, but I think the Oath is too binding on my conscience. Moreover, I never swore an oath in my life; and ministers of the gospel have enough to do in their own sphere. I want, in all things, to keep a conscience void of offense; to walk in the safest way and to do all I can to bring sinners to the Lord. The Conference appointed me to labor in this state, and I am confident that my appointment is approved of by my heavenly Father; and therefore, I dare not leave the state. And as for going to prison, I leave that matter to the God of Daniel; being well assured he is able to defend my cause, whether in, or out of jail."

The various trials I had on this occasion drove me nearer to the Lord; and as it was generally expected that every sermon would be my last, many more attended than otherwise would have done. At a certain place, several of the rulers engaged to put me to jail when I came that way again. My friends endeavored to persuade me to decline going there; but I answered, "I cannot be clear, if I distrust so gracious a God." Before I came to the place, several of the ruling men who had threatened to imprison me, were removed by the hand of affliction, and another was lying at the point of death. From this time the persecution which had chased me several months, entirely subsided, and I preached with much freedom during my stay in the state.

Though I met with a number of inward and outward trials, yet I bless the Lord that he sent me into this part of his vineyard; and particularly for the conversation of many worthy friends, which was made a special blessing to my soul.

[Tipple]: Garrettson seems to have had almost more than his share of persecution. His recital of some of his hardships in a letter written to John Wesley from Halifax in 1785 reads like Saint Paul's account of his sufferings in Second Corinthians: "Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten, left on the highway speechless and senseless; once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my

breast; once delivered from an armed mob in the dead of night on the highway by a surprising flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently; I have had to escape for my life at dead time of night."

But he lacked Paul's gift of climax or he could have told a more thrilling story. His experiences were certainly thrilling enough. Much of the opposition was natural. It was of the sort which is always stirred up by the faithful preaching of the gospel. Paul met with it in almost every place. Wesley was repeatedly menaced by mobs. Garrettson was evil spoken of, refused permission to preach, and annoyed in petty ways.

The rage of his enemies oftener, however, took a more intimidating form. To a funeral which he conducted a woman came with the avowed intention of shooting him, but was thwarted of her design. At another service, as he was giving out a hymn, some twenty roughs rushed at him, the ringleader seizing him and pressing a pistol against his breast; but Garrettson had seen God in a dream and was not perturbed. He began to exhort, and soon the entire congregation was in tears.

One day while riding in Queen Anne County, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, a man who had formerly been a judge intercepted him, and taking his horse by the bridle began to beat the preacher over the head and shoulders with a club, calling meanwhile for his servants to assist him. When Garrettson saw some of them coming with a rope he thought it time to beat a retreat, which fortunately he was able to do, only to be overtaken a little later and so cruelly beaten that he fell from his horse unconscious. Providentially, as he says, a woman who had a lancet with her passed, and, bleeding him, as was the custom, he was restored to his senses, though it was supposed for a time that his injuries would prove fatal. One of his friends was shot, but not mortally, for entertaining him. He himself was in constant peril.

At Dover, Delaware, he had scarcely dismounted before he was surrounded by a mob, who cried lustily, "Hang him! hang him!" When he made an appointment to preach at the side of a river he was threatened with drowning, but one "dressed like a soldier" attended him on his journey, saying to him, "I heard you preach at such a time, and believe your doctrine to be true. I heard you were to be abused at the river today, and I equipped myself and have ridden twenty miles in your defense, and will go with you if it is a thousand miles and see who dare lay a hand upon you!"

Garrettson's severest trials, however, were not the issue of his religious activity, but in consequence of his refusal on conscientious grounds to take the "state oath" as it was called, that is, an oath of allegiance to the United States of America, as required of all citizens when the war with Great Britain was begun. He declared himself a loyal American and a friend to the cause of freedom, but when he refused to take the oath because he thought it was so worded as to bind him to take up arms when called upon -- and he felt no disposition to bear "carnal weapons" -- he was told that he must leave the State, or go to jail.

The fact that he was a Methodist preacher augmented the feeling against him. All the Methodists were under suspicion throughout the war, and particularly during the early years; there were good reasons for it. Wesley's "Calm Address to the American Colonies" would have created prejudice against them if nothing else had been said or done, but several of the preachers were indiscreet. Rankin spoke so freely and imprudently on public affairs as to cause fear that his



influence would be dangerous to the American cause. Rodda was so unwise as to distribute copies of the king's proclamation, and left the country under circumstances unfavorable to his reputation and hurtful to the interests of religion. When the times were about at the worst Shadford returned to England, and, indeed, two years after the Declaration of Independence not an English preacher remained in America except Asbury, who, at the risk of his life, deliberately resolved to continue to labor and to suffer with and for his American brethren. His sympathies were undoubtedly with his countrymen, but his unerring judgment, however, foresaw the inevitable outcome.

Lednum tells of a letter which Asbury wrote to Rankin in 1777 in which he expressed his belief that the American people would become a free and independent nation, and declared that he was too much knit in affection to many of them to leave them, and that Methodist preachers had a great work to do under God in America. The letter fell into the hands of the authorities in the Colonies and produced a change in their feelings toward him, but before this change took place there was much suffering.

It was asserted that the Methodist body was a Tory propaganda, though I can find no proof to establish the contention. In New York the leading members were thorough Loyalists; elsewhere the membership was divided in political sentiment, as were all communities at the time; but it is an indisputable fact that the prejudice against the Methodists was pronounced, and this prejudice was evidenced in much hostility. Jesse Lee, our first historian, says: "If a person was disposed to persecute a Methodist preacher it was only necessary to call him a Tory and then they might treat him as cruelly as they pleased." Judge White was arrested on the charge of being a Methodist, and presumptively a Tory, but after five weeks' detention was acquitted. Asbury was compelled to go into retirement for many months; part of the time in almost absolute concealment.

The native ministers who had been raised up, Watters, Gatch, Morrell, Ware, and Garrettson, were true-hearted Americans, and while the moral views and conscientious scruples of some of these, and many other Methodists, were not on general principles favorable to war, they were consistently loyal, even though many of them suffered persecution. It was a common experience for the preachers to be "honored" with tar and feathers. Caleb Pedicord was cruelly whipped, and carried his scars to the grave. Joseph Hartley was imprisoned, and during his confinement preached through the gratings of his window to crowds of people. In many places our preachers were insulted, beaten, and maimed.

Garrettson, because of his refusal to subscribe to the oath, was the object of more frequent attacks than any other preacher of the time. But he was without personal fear, and when friends at Salisbury, knowing that a mob was lying in wait for him, urged him to escape, his answer was, "I have come to preach my Master's gospel, and I am not afraid to trust him with body and soul." On another occasion a company of twelve men made him a prisoner and started to take him to jail some distance away. While they were en route, suddenly the darkness of the night was shattered with "a very uncommon flash of lightning, and in less than a minute all my foes were dispersed."

But finally, in 1780, he was taken before a magistrate in Dorchester County, Maryland, and put in jail at Cambridge, the keys being hidden to prevent his friends from ministering to him. "I had a dirty floor for my bed," he writes, "my saddlebags for my pillow, and two large windows open with a cold east wind blowing upon me, but I had great consolation in my dear Lord and

could say, 'Thy will be done.' " But he was by no means forsaken. Asbury wrote "to comfort him under his imprisonment," and sent him a volume of Rutherford's letters. He also interceded for him, visiting the governor of Maryland on his behalf, with the result that Garrettson was soon set at liberty. Like Chrysostom he could say, "I bless God that I am not afraid of the jail." Whatever happened to him was for the furtherance of the gospel. As he once wrote after he had been stoned, "This is but trifling if I can win souls to Jesus."

This period of trial for Garrettson and the other preachers was not without fruitage. Stevens says that not only did the Revolution prepare the societies for their organization as a distinct denomination, but it can be affirmed that American Methodism was born and passed its whole infancy in the invigorating struggle of the Revolution, and that its almost continual growth in such apparent adverse circumstances is one of the marvels of religious history. To this growth Garrettson contributed his full share, both in the heroic endurance of the trials which awaited him in every place and in the abundance of his labors and the zeal and success with which he prosecuted the work to which he had consecrated his life.

His labors during this period were tremendous, despite the grave impediments in his way. For instance, when he went to Sussex Circuit in 1781, Cornwallis was harassing the people of Virginia with his army, a condition unfriendly to the spread of Christianity. As this was the time of the siege and surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, he could hear the roar of cannon day and night. Lednum, an historian of Methodism, says that as the sum of this particular year's labor Garrettson traveled about five thousand miles and preached some five hundred sermons. These figures need not surprise us when the urgency of that early Methodist evangelism is recalled. Sin was an appalling fact, souls were in peril, the day of judgment was drawing on, men must be warned of their danger and told of a Saviour, and so Garrettson pushed on.

Thus from 1775 till 1784 he traveled and preached in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, finding formalism and sin, churches abandoned and going to decay, and lost sheep, and leaving extensive circuits, vigorous societies, and people who blessed God for sending his servant among them; aiding in a multitude of ways, more than any man of the times, save Asbury, to give character and success to the denomination from New Jersey to South Carolina.

In September, 1784, when on the point of departing for this last-named State, that he might press the battle to the gates of the far South, Dr. Coke, who had been empowered by Mr. Wesley to organize the American societies into an independent Church, arrived in America, and his coming, together with the rush of the important events which followed, indefinitely postponed his proposed expedition. When Coke had met Garrettson in Delaware, and had conferred with Asbury and other preachers, and it had been decided to call a General Conference at Baltimore, he wrote in his Journal: "Here I met with an excellent young man, Freeborn Garrettson. He seems all meekness and love, and yet all activity. He makes me quite ashamed, for he invariably rises at four in the morning, and not only he but several others of the preachers. Him we sent off, like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas Eve." And this the appointed herald of the Christmas Conference did. "I set out for Virginia and Carolina," he writes, "and a tedious journey I had. My

dear Master enabled me to ride about twelve hundred miles in about six weeks; and preach going and coming constantly. The Conference began on Christmas Day."

[More of the story of Garrettson's trials is told by Nathan Bangs in his book "The Life of The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson"--hdm0013.txt. The writer makes his own observations, while also using Garrettson's own words to tell the account. I beg the reader to overlook the repetition of some parts of this story. I don't wish to be needlessly repetitive, but, in this case there will be some in order to fully cover this account]: "About this time the state oath began to be administered, and was universally complied with, both by preachers and people where I was; but I could by no means be subject to my rulers in this respect, as it touched my conscience toward God: so I was informed I must either leave the state, take the oath, or go to jail. I told those who came to tender the oath to me, that I professed myself a friend to my country: that I would do nothing willingly or knowingly to the prejudice of it that if they required it, I would give them good security of my friendly behavior during my stay in the state. 'But why,' said they, 'will you not take the oath?' 'I think,' said I, 'the oath is too binding on my conscience; moreover, I never swore an oath in my life: and ministers of the Gospel have enough to do in their sphere. I want, in all things, to keep a conscience void of offense, to walk in the safest way, and to do all the good I can in bringing sinners to God.'

"We began to labor under heavy political trials, as it was a little after the commencement of what we call the revolutionary war, and indeed the clash of arms was a new thing in our country, especially such powerful blows from an overgrown mother, who wanted to keep her children under subjection, in matters wherein they thought they were capable of judging for themselves. It might be asked, Why did you not comply with the law? From reading, my own reflection, and the teachings of the good Spirit, I was drawn quite away from a belief in the lawfulness of shedding human blood under the Gospel dispensation, or at most it must be in an extreme case, touching which, at that time, my mind was in doubt. Again, I thought the test oath was worded in such a way, as to bind me to take arms whenever called on, and I felt no disposition to use carnal weapons.

"Many of my friends endeavored to persuade me to comply: alleging that I might be more useful among the people: but it was to no purpose. The rulers said, 'You must leave the state.' This I cannot do, for first, the conference appointed me to labor in this state: and in the second place, I am confident that my appointment is approved of by my heavenly Father; and therefore I dare not leave the state. 'Then,' said they, 'you must go to prison.' That matter, I replied, I leave to the God of Daniel; assured he is able to defend my cause, whether in or out of jail.

"The many trials I had on this occasion drove me nearer to God, and as many thought that every sermon would be my last, more attended than otherwise would, and I found much freedom to preach the word, and good was done.

"At a certain place several of the rulers bound themselves to put me to jail, when I came that way again: my friends persuaded me to decline going there; but I told them I could not be clear if I distrusted so good a God. Before I came round to that place, the Lord laid his afflicting hand on some of those ruling men who had threatened to imprison me; so that when I went there, several of them had already made their exit into eternity! and another was lying at the point of death. I

preached with much freedom, but though I had been chased for several months, there was none to lay the hand of violence upon me. The persecution from this quarter entirely subsided during my stay in the state. In this circuit I met with a number of inward and outward trials; but I bless God, that he ever sent me into this part of his vineyard: so that I can truly say, that the life and conversation of many of my worthy friends, (some of whom were older in the grace of God than myself,) were made a great blessing to me. O! how sh all I make suitable returns to my God for the thousands of his favors.

"We had a comfortable conference in Leesburg, and May 20, 1778, I set out for my destined place. After preaching a few sermons, and visiting my old friends and relations, on the 30th of May I crossed the Chesapeake, and in the evening had a delightful opportunity of pressing the necessity of holiness on the minds of many. Blessed be God! there was a shout in the camp among our blessed Saviour's despised followers; and I have no doubt but that the Lord directed my lot into this part of the work.

"On Sunday I spoke in Kent preaching house with much liberty, and we had a sweet refreshing season. This was the first Methodist preaching house that was built on this shore. In the evening I was much drawn out in prayer and self-examination; and felt the sweet beams of the blessed Spirit, and experienced the bliss of prayer, with a comfortable hope that my Lord had deepened his work of grace in my heart. Four preachers were appointed by conference for the Peninsula -- Brothers Hartley, Littlejohn, John Cooper, and myself. The enemy of souls had stirred up a great persecution against the Methodists. Brother Hartley was taken by the rulers, and put in confinement. Brother Littlejohn thought it his duty to return to Virginia. And poor brother Cooper was too unwell to travel much: so that for a considerable time I was left almost alone."

This was a season peculiarly trying to the Methodist preachers. War knows no mercy; and the mere circumstance that the first Methodist preachers were from England, under the direction of Mr. Wesley, whose loyalty to his king and country led him to speak and write against the proceedings of the American provinces, was enough of itself to excite suspicions in the ruling party here against the preachers. The fact, also, as stated by Mr. Garrettson, that most of those who had joined the societies, and especially the preachers, were from principle averse to war, which led them to refuse to bear arms in their country's defense, tended to strengthen the suspicion, and of course to provoke opposition against them. But the following facts, which are recorded in the manuscript notes to the printed journal by Mr. Garrettson, show that some imprudences on the part of those whose example should have been of a different character, evince that these suspicions were not entirely without foundation.

"To human appearance," says Mr. Garrettson, "our prospects were gloomy." In this place what was called a tory company embodied themselves, and a backslidden Methodist by the name of Chancey Clowe, who was once thought to be a pious man, of considerable note in the society, laid aside his religion, and began to raise a company with a view to make his way through the country to the Chesapeake to join the British, whose fleet at that time lay in the Chesapeake bay. He succeeded in raising about 300 men. He did much mischief before he was detected and his plans frustrated. It was not, however, before some blood was shed, that this mob was dispersed, and the leaders brought to justice. His excellency, Cesar Rodney, at that time governor of the state, was friendly to religion. Our enemies were assiduous in their endeavors to prejudice his mind

against us; inculcating the idea that we were tories, and ought to be crushed as a body. He insisted on knowing how many of these insurrectionists there were of each denomination, and when they found there were only two Methodists among them, the governor's remarks made our enemies look small before the court. They were all pardoned except C. Clowe, the leader, who was hung. This happened in the Peninsula, a tract of country lying between the Chesapeake and Delaware bays, comprehending a part of Maryland, part of Virginia, and the whole of the Delaware state.

"While these things were transacting among this class of people, Mr. Rodda, one of the British preachers, no doubt thinking he was doing God service, was spreading on his circuit the king's proclamation, and acting in several respects unbecoming the character of either a Christian or minister. He fled, however, to the bay, and employed a slave or slaves to take him to the British fleet, and thus just escaped with his life. The truth of history requires this record. As Philadelphia was at this time in possession of the British, he was taken there, and from thence to his native land; and so we got clear of a backslidden preacher.

"In the midst of these and many more troubles which might be mentioned," says Mr. Garrettson, "God enabled me to go forward through good and evil report, and he stood by me; and thanks to his blessed name, he fulfilled his promise, and I went on without fear."

The above circumstances, however, as related by Mr. Garrettson, had a very deleterious effect upon the tranquillity of the societies, as they tended very much to stir up the spirit of persecution against the Methodists. At such times when men's spirits are excited, they are not very accurate in distinguishing between the innocent and guilty: though the conduct of these few ought not to have implicated the whole body, yet it served as a pretense for those who wished for an excuse to reproach pure religion.

"Hence," Mr. Garrettson observes, "it was soon circulated through the country that the Methodists were enemies to the American cause: and were embodying themselves to meet the English army. A short time before this, the English preachers had embarked for Europe; and the conduct of Mr. R., as before mentioned, had been very injurious to the persecuted flock. During this time, Mr. Asbury found an asylum, at the house of good old Judge White, and I believe none but the Lord and himself knew what he suffered for nearly twelve months. We have since seen the hand of the Lord in his preservation.

My exercises of mind were very great, and my friends in Kent, on every side, entreated me to remain with them, and not to travel at large at the hazard of my life. I was ready at first to consent, but had not remained more than a week among them, when my spirit was stirred within me, and I cried earnestly to the Lord to know his will. I felt an impulse, believing that God would stand by me, and defend my cause. And I received such a deep sense of God in my heart, and such precious promises of his parental care over me, that I took leave of my Kent friends, and set out without any dread of my worst enemies. I then traveled largely through the country, preaching once, twice, three, and sometimes four times a day, to listening multitudes bathed in tears.

I shall not soon forget the 24th of June, 1778. O what a wringing of hands among sinners, and crying for mercy! God's people praising him from a sense of his divine presence. O how did my heart rejoice in God my Saviour! I went through Cecil county, and part of Delaware state. A

precious flame was kindled in many hearts, and many were brought to inquire what they should do to be saved. I visited Mr. Asbury at Judge White's and found him very unwell. I had a sweet opportunity of preaching at his place of confinement. After some agreeable conversation with Mr. Asbury, I went on to Maryland, and had much liberty in preaching to our persecuted friends in Queen Ann.

"In this place they threatened to imprison me; but as they did not take me in the public congregation, I concluded they did not intend to lay hands on me: however, the next day, as I was going to Kent, John Brown, who was formerly a judge in that county, met me on the road. When I came near him, he made a full stop as if he wanted something; apprehending nothing, I stopped and inquired the distance to Newtown. His reply was, You must go to jail, and he instantly, took hold of my horse's bridle. I desired him in the Lord's name, to take care what he was about to do; assuring him I was on the Lord's errand, and requesting him to show his authority for his proceedings. He immediately alighted from his horse, and taking a large stick that lay in the way, for some time beat me over the head and shoulders. Not being far from his quarter, he called aloud for help. I saw several persons, as I thought, with a rope, running to his assistance. Providentially, at this moment, he let go my bridle: had not this been the case, it is probable they would have put an end to my life; for the beasts of the field seemed to be in the utmost rage. I thought the way was now open for my escape; and being on an excellent horse, I gave him the whip and got a considerable distance before my enemy could mount; but he, knowing the way better than myself, took a nearer route, met me, and as he passed, struck at me with all his might; my horse immediately made a full stop, my saddle turned, and I fell with force upon the ground, with my face within an inch of a sharp log. The blows I had received, together with my fall and bruises, deprived me of my senses. Providentially, at this time, a woman passed by with a lancet. I was taken into a house, not far distant, and bled; by which means I was restored to my senses, but it was not expected I had many minutes to live. My affliction was good for me; and I can confidently say, nothing induced me to wish to stay any longer in this world, but the thirst I had for the salvation of my fellow creatures. The heavens, in a very glorious manner, seemed to be open; and by faith I saw my Redeemer standing at the right hand of the Father, pleading my cause; and the Father smiling as if reconciled to my poor soul.

"I was so happy I could scarcely contain myself. My enemy was walking to and fro, in great agitation, wishing he had not molested me. I had a heart to pray for him, and desired him to sit down by me and to read such and such chapters. He did so; I told him if he did not experience that blessed work he would surely go to hell. I said, if the Lord should take me away, I had a witness within me that I should go to heaven; that I had suffered purely for the sake of our Lord's blessed Gospel; and that I freely forgave him. I entreated him to seek the salvation of his soul, and never again to persecute the followers of our Lord. The poor unhappy man did not know which way to look. 'I will take you in my carriage,' said he, 'wherever you want to go.' Notwithstanding this, when he perceived I was likely to recover, he went to a magistrate who was nearly as bitter against us as himself, and brought him to me.

"They both appeared as if actuated by the devil. With a stern look the magistrate demanded my name: I told him; and he took out his pen and ink, and began to write a mittimus to commit me to jail. Pray sir, said I, are you a justice of the peace? He replied that he was: why then, said I, do you suffer men to behave in this manner? If such persons are not taken notice of, a stranger can

with no degree of safety travel the road. 'You have,' said he, 'broken the law.' How do you know that? answered I; but suppose I have, is this the way to put the law in force against me? I am an inhabitant of this state, and have property in it; and if I mistake not, the law says for the first offense the fine is five pounds, and double for every offense after. The grand crime was preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which I greatly rejoice. My enemy, said I, conducted himself more like a highwayman, than a person enforcing the law in a Christian country. Be well assured, this matter will be brought to light, said I, in an awful eternity. He dropped his pen, and made no farther attempt to send me to prison. By this time the woman who bled me came with a carriage; and I found myself able to rise from my bed and give an exhortation to the magistrate, my persecutor, and others who were present.

"I rode to the house of old brother Dudley, and preached with much delight, in the evening, to a few despised disciples, as I sat in the bed, from John xvi, 33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.'

"I can truly say, what I suffered was for my good, and I think it was rendered a blessing to the people in the vicinity: for the work of the Lord was carried on in a blessed manner, and I met with very little persecution in that county afterward. (Some time after I preached the funeral sermon of the wife of the above magistrate, and he was very much moved.) In the morning I awoke about four, and desired the friend of the house, if possible, to prepare a carriage for me by six; as I had a long way to go, and to preach twice. But being disappointed in getting a conveyance, though scarcely able to turn in my bed, my body being so bruised, I looked to the Lord for help, which was granted with sweet consolation. I mounted my horse about seven o'clock, and rode about fifteen miles, and preached at eleven o'clock. O! what a nearness I had to the Lord, while I held up a crucified Jesus to upward of five hundred persons! My face bruised, scarred, and bedewed with tears! the people were for the most part much affected. I rode afterward ten miles farther, and preached to hundreds with great freedom. O! how sweet my Saviour was to me! It seemed as if I could have died for him.

"After a few days' respite I went to the place where I was beaten, and found that the persecuting spirit had in a measure subsided; and that my way was surprisingly opened. I had many hearers, and the word was much blessed to many souls. The language of the hearts of many was, Surely this must be the right way.

"The Lord was very kind to me in making a discovery, in a vision of the night, of the things I was to pass through; and they came to pass just as they were made known to me."

Mr. Garrettson had labored in the Peninsula in the manner related in the preceding words about fifteen months. During this time several new circuits had been formed, and the work of God had prospered in his hands; so much so that the number returned in the societies, in Delaware and Kent county, in the year 1779, was 1288. When the many difficulties they had to contend with, in consequence of the war which was now raging with increased violence, are considered, we can but admire the good hand of God that was with them in the awakening and conversion of so many souls. Notwithstanding these obstacles, Mr. Garrettson was enabled to prosecute his labors in the Gospel with increased vigor and perseverance, and with great success; so that at the time we are

now speaking of, there were no less than forty-nine preachers, and 8577 members in the societies. Mr. Asbury was still confined, principally at Judge White's, so that the chief management of the affairs fell upon Mr. Garrettson, so far as active labor was concerned. It is true he corresponded with Mr. Asbury, and acted according to his advice, and under his direction. It is not to be wondered at that "all manner of evil" should be said of a man who was thus instrumental in the hand of God in giving such a shock to Satan's kingdom.

Having given such evident proofs of his designation to the work of the Christian ministry by the supreme Head of the Church, and of his skilfulness in conducting the spiritual interests of the societies, Mr. Asbury requested him to leave his present field of labor, and pay a visit to the city of Philadelphia, the society in this place being in a very depressed state.

The British army had been for a considerable time quartered in this city, and at this time had just taken their departure. The confusion occasioned by this state of things, tended very much to obstruct the work of God. Previously to the entrance of the British into the city, many of the inhabitants had fled into the country, and it was some time even after they had departed, before the citizens returned and arranged their affairs, so as to feel themselves in a settled state. "I stayed," says Mr. Garrettson, "about two months in Philadelphia, and though I did not see much fruit of my labor, I found many of my dear friends near and precious to me."

In 1781, in Virginia, where Mr. Garrettson was appointed to travel, was, a time of great distress, on account of the war. Lord Cornwallis was then harassing the people with his army, and the Americans were exerting themselves to oppose his progress; so that by the marching and countermarching of armies, and frequent skirmishes, the minds of the people were constantly excited with fear and perplexity; a state of mind very unfavorable to the progress of religion.

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#### Division 7

##### Mr. Rodda and the Revolution

##### The imprudence of some of the ministers

[Some of the persecutions that this good man faced were due to the unwise actions of some who were on the side of England. The feelings of the colonists at this time were very explosive, and it didn't take much for their wrath to be stirred. For any of the Methodists, who were objects of suspicion any way, to openly sympathize with the oppressive England, caused their smoldering anger to burst forth in fury. The imprudence of a couple of these travelling preachers only added to the trials of those were endeavoring to conduct themselves wisely for the kingdom of God. One such man is Martin Rodda. We must tell this gloomy story in order to get a full picture of the times. The next account comes from "The Rise of Methodism in America" by John Lednum--hdm0324.txt.]: In 1777, Mr. Rodda was appointed to Kent Circuit, Eastern Shore of Maryland. Here he very imprudently circulated King George's proclamation, which so exasperated the friends of American liberty against him, that he was obliged to leave his circuit, and, with the aid of some slaves, was carried to the British fleet, then in the Chesapeake Bay, and was, by the English, sent to Philadelphia, from thence to England, where he continued to labor, in connection with Mr. Wesley, until 1781, when he retired from the work.



Mr. Rodda's conduct was highly imprudent, and caused trouble and suffering to his brethren, both preachers and people, that stayed in this country. It was, no doubt, in part, the cause of the arrest and abduction of Judge White, by the light horse patrol; and of the ill treatment of Messrs. Hartley and Garrettson, the following year, in Queen Anne's county; so the cause of Mr. Littlejohn, who was an Englishman, leaving Kent Circuit in 1778, and retiring into local life. John Littlejohn was one of the most promising men that entered into the Methodist itinerancy in this country, in the last century; he was a second John Dickens, and, perhaps, greatly his superior in pulpit eloquence. But, aside from this rash act of Mr. Rodda, we have never heard anything alleged against him while he labored in America.

[In Rev. Maxey's "Captain Thomas Webb"--hdm0211.txt, we find these words]: One writer said: "I feel no disposition to conceal that a few of the preachers were imprudent and reprehensible in some things, and gave too much cause for such suspicions. Rodda, in particular, acted improperly, and left the country under circumstances unfavorable to his reputation, and hurtful to the cause of religion. Captain Webb also did not act so well as he ought to have done. Rankin likewise had spoken so freely and imprudently on public affairs as to excite the jealous fear that his influence would be dangerous to the American cause. So it was that the way of the preachers on every side was almost hedged up; and for a considerable time it was with the utmost difficulty, and at the greatest risk of personal safety, that they could travel and preach at all."

[While I would hesitate to call Mr. Wesley imprudent, yet his publishing of "A Calm Address To The American Colonies in no way helped the safety of the preachers in America.]

[We again turn to Nathan Bangs for a further insight into the imprudence of certain preachers during the war. This is taken from his "History of the M.E. Church; volume 1--hdm0008.txt.]: 1777. The fifth conference was held this year in the Deer Creek meeting house, Harford county, in the state of Maryland. The war at this time raged with great violence, so that by the marching and countermarching of armies, enlisting of soldiers, frequent skirmishes between the contending parties, some of the places, even where religion had prevailed to a considerable extent, were not visited at all by the preachers. Last year Norfolk in Virginia was abandoned, and this year no preacher was stationed in New York; nor do we find this city among the stations again until 1783, though there was a small society of members still there. The cause of this abandonment of the city for so long a time was, that the British troops had it in possession, and had converted the meeting house into barracks for the soldiers, so that it was not possible to occupy it for preaching regularly, even had a preacher been permitted to reside among them. Such are the fatal results of war, that scourge of humanity. \*[7]

But although these were the disastrous results of the war in some places, more particularly in the middle states, yet in others there were gracious outpourings of the Spirit, and revivals of the work of God, the southern states not being yet so much exposed to the ravages of this cruel warfare. In the Brunswick circuit, particularly, as well as the two circuits, Sussex and Amelia, which had been recently taken from it, and in some parts of North Carolina, the work of God continued to spread to a considerable extent. Though, therefore, there was a decrease of members on those circuits which were exposed to the depredations of contending armies, yet, when they came to the conference, they found an increase on the whole of 2047 members and 12 preachers,

making the entire number in society to be 6968, and 36 preachers -- so mercifully did God own their labors for the salvation of souls. It was at this conference that those preachers who came from England took into consideration the propriety of returning home; but they finally concluded to remain a while longer, as the way seemed not yet plain for them to leave their American brethren. It seems, indeed, that as early as the month of January preceding, Messrs. Rankin and Shadford had seriously meditated on returning to England; for Mr. Asbury says, under date of January 22, that he met them at their request, and "found them inclined to leave America and embark for England. "But," he adds, "I had before resolved not to depart from the work on any consideration." About the middle of September, however, Messrs. Rankin and Rodda embarked for their native country.

Notwithstanding the prudent caution given to the preachers by Mr. Wesley, in which he advised them not to meddle with the political affairs of the country, they did not all abide by it, but some were very busy in exciting a spirit of disaffection toward the American cause. That they should have felt strongly inclined to favor the cause of their king and country is but natural, and might very well be pardoned on the score of national partiality; but that any professed minister of Jesus Christ should have descended from his high and holy calling to mingle with the combatants of that day in their warlike measures, is a fault for which Christianity furnishes no apology. This, however, was the unhappy case with Mr. Rodda previously to his departure for England. While on his circuit he was detected in spreading the king's proclamation, and otherwise endeavoring to stir up a spirit of opposition to the American government. Fearing, however, the resentment of his enemies, by the assistance of some slaves he made his escape to the British fleet; and as Philadelphia was then in possession of the British army, he was sent thither, and from thence to his native land. His departure, therefore, was no cause of regret to the Methodists in this country.

Another circumstance tended not a little to excite a spirit of persecution toward the Methodists. A backslider, by the name of Chauncey Clowe, succeeded in enlisting about three hundred men for the British standard, and before he was detected, was the means of shedding blood. He was, however, arrested, and finally hung as a rebel against the government. In the course of the examination, it was found that only two Methodists were engaged in this plot; and the remarks of Governor Rodney, who was friendly to our cause, to those of our enemies who had assiduously endeavored to fix upon them the foul mark of toryism, put them to silence, and obtained for our friends temporary relief.

What made this war the more distressing was the fact, that in many parts of the country the people were divided among themselves in regard to the lawfulness or expediency of taking up arms against Great Britain. This led to domestic disputes, and not infrequently the father was against the son, and the daughter against the mother, and one neighbor against another. These things produced an irritation of spirit exceedingly unfriendly to the progress of pure religion. But that which exposed the Methodist preachers still more to the suspicions of their enemies, was the fact, that Mr. Wesley had published a pamphlet addressed to the Americans, in which he condemned their conduct, and justified the measures of the British cabinet. This well-meant endeavor of Mr. Wesley, though it may have had a good effect upon the societies under his care in Great Britain, had quite a deleterious influence upon the Methodists in this country. As some copies of this pamphlet found their way here, they tended to increase the irritation against the Methodist preachers, and to expose them to fresh insults. Though Mr. Wesley may be commended as a loyalist for his well-meant endeavors to convince the Americans that they were wrong in taking up

arms against his king and country, yet we cannot but believe that he committed an error in thus interfering in the political affairs of this country, as it manifestly tended to increase the difficulties with which the preachers had to contend, without at all mitigating the evils resulting from the war which was then raging. Amid all these difficulties, however, Mr. Asbury stood his ground knowing that his "record was on high, and at his reward was with his God."

Speaking of the of Mssrs. Rankin and Rodda, he says, "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."

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## Division 8

### Some miscellaneous history of the church and the Revolution

[We will now go to Edward J. Drinkhouse in "The History of The Methodist Reform; volume 1--hdm0428.txt. He has some further information that will be helpful and interesting to us, I'm sure.]

The next Conference was appointed for Brokenback chapel, [2] Fluvanna County, Va., May 18, 1779. It marks a crisis in the history of early Methodism and must receive special attention. Before doing so, it seems proper to embalm some of the precious names and labors of these long-suffering preachers.

During the five years from 1774 to 1779, as the Revolution culminated and ran its course, space would fail to narrate these sufferings and labors. Stevens devotes 150 pages to this phase of the subject, and to him readers are commendatorily referred. America was already an asylum for the oppressed religiously as well as civilly. Many refugees were prominent in the colonies, while the native-born felt the thrill of free air and independent surroundings. Stevens says aptly, "The hierarchy of Great Britain was to them a form of antiChrist, and it was an integral part of its constitution." The people had received a military education through the two French and Indian wars. They had taken up arms against the mother country, it may be almost literally said, for an idea. They had been educated to self-government and had reached the point when they could not and would not suffer any infringement of their civil rights; while in religion they spurned all trammels upon their conscience and freedom. No environment could have been more inauspicious for a Methodist hierarchy, yet the first steps which led to it had been already taken and its consummation will presently occupy our attention. The Stamp Act was repealed, as it could not be enforced, with other objectionable legislation for the colonies by the home government; only the duty on tea remained; but as this involved the principle, it was resisted in the overt acts of the burning of the Peggy Stewart in the harbor of Annapolis, Md., with its cargo of tea, not by men disguised as Indians, as in the Boston tea-party, but the owner himself was compelled to fire his ship. This event took place October 19, 1772, thus antedating the Boston affair, which took place December 15, 1773. As already noticed, the Tory party was largely American and sincere in their convictions, just as sincere as in after days Asbury was, and those who cooperated with him, in a polity for the Methodists, utterly incongruous with all the principles of government in which they were educated and for the maintenance of which they staked "their lives, their fortunes, and their

sacred honor." Snethen, whose brilliant and analytical mind looked into the seeds of things, luminously exhibits the parallel: "Our brethren are no doubt quite serious in believing that lay-delegates will lead to a change in all the rules of discipline, because they cannot conceive how the form of discipline can be maintained without exclusive power in traveling preachers. Their sincerity, however, is equaled by that of the opposers of our national independence, who believed that with the loss of kingly power the common law of England would be lost forever. They, too, could not conceive how laws which had been administered for hundreds of years in the name of the king could be respected and enforced for their own sakes. It was not the majesty of the laws which they revered so much as the majesty of the king. The tendency of all absolute principles of government is to make the ministers of justice more fearful than justice itself." Entertaining such opinions, the Anglo-American clergy had fled the country for the most part; Jarratt in Virginia and a few others were exalted exceptions. The English missionaries of Wesley followed them, in their loyalty to the king. Some of them acted and talked after a manner which prejudiced the native mind against the whole confraternity, so that, like the Tories, they were watched and put under disability. George Shadford was the last to leave. He and Asbury, quite bosom friends, conferred and prayed together over it, and differing answers came to each, as they professed. Asbury said, "If you are called to go, I am called to stay; so here we must part." They parted to meet no more.

Meantime Asbury came under suspicion; for while he was discreet and did not meddle with the politics of the country, yet the test oath was too much for him, as it conditioned that the subscriber to it would, if called on, take up arms in defense of the country. He did what he conscientiously could to conciliate public opinion. Finding that he could best conform to the conditions of citizenship offered in Delaware, he had himself registered as a citizen of that colony, or state. He was offered a quiet settlement over an Episcopal church, but answered: "I will do nothing that shall separate me from my brethren. I hope to live and die a Methodist." In March, 1778, the patrol became so rigid that Asbury took refuge with Judge White of Kent County, Del. [3] On the 2d of April the light-horse seized the judge and bore him away from his wife and children. Asbury again fled and found refuge in the neighborhood. He says, "I lay in a swamp until sundown, and was then kindly taken in by a friend." About a month afterward he ventured back to Judge White's, who after five weeks' detention was released, the charge against him being that he was a Methodist. From Judge White's he was able to keep up a surreptitious correspondence with some of the preachers, and covert visits were paid to him. During this time he formed the acquaintance of Judge Barratt and Richard Bassett, both names figuring conspicuously in early Methodism. For a year he did not venture far from his retreat. The governor of Delaware became friendly to him, and a letter he had written to Rankin about 1777 became known, in which he expressed the opinion that the outcome of the war would be the independence of the colonies, served him a good purpose in securing him wider liberty to preach.

Except the name of Perry Hall no retreats for Asbury are so frequently mentioned in his Journal as Bassett's princely home at Bohemia Manor, and Barratt's, on which the chapel of that name was built, famous for the meeting of Coke and Asbury in 1784. Asbury's stately manners and wide intelligence gave him influence with not a few families of social distinction, which gave to the Methodism of the day more commanding position than it first possessed. To offset these mollifying influences, Wesley about this time, issued and sent to America his "Calm Address to the Colonies," in which the most radical monarchical sentiments were avowed, and exasperated the Americans. Asbury deprecated this intermeddling of Wesley in the politics of the country. Not a

few writers from time to time have inveighed against Asbury for his concealment at Judge White's, as reflecting upon his courage and impugning his motives. The writer cannot join them. He acted as a conscientious Christian man of his avowed sentiments might be expected to act. The deprecatory thing about his course was the effect it seemed to have upon other preachers of the native-born stock in refusing to take the test oath, leading to their arrest, imprisonment, maltreatment, and increase of usefulness. It is no wonder, on the other hand, that the Revolutionists could not excuse them. [4] The light they had was reflected during the Civil War, from 1861-66. Test oaths of the most binding nature were applied to all who were suspected as out of full sympathy for the preservation of the Union. In the North, not even ministers were exempt from the draft. Men who took the position as to American independence, such as Asbury and other of the preachers, were dealt with with greater severity. Jonathan Forrest and William Wren were arrested at Annapolis, Md., with some others and committed to jail. In Queen Anne County Joseph Hartley was bound over in 500 not to preach in the county. Freeborn Garrettson was beaten with a stick by one of the county judges, pursued on horseback, and nearly killed. Hartley was also whipped in Talbot County and imprisoned. Caleb Peddicord was whipped and bore the scars to his grave. Isham Tatum of South Carolina must be mentioned as a local preacher of renown. Francis Poythress, already named, was a distinguished character of early Methodism. He was a Virginian, and held in the highest esteem by Asbury for his labors in Virginia, Carolina, Maryland, and Kentucky. He was designated by Asbury for a superintendent, or bishop to peer with himself, in 1797, and would have been elected probably, but for the fact that the preachers took the ground that it was not competent for a yearly Conference to elect bishops. It illustrates how little Asbury cared for precedents or constructions, if his will could be gratified. Poythress died insane. Jesse Lee was a giant in those days, and did for New England Methodism, as elsewhere, an immortal work.

Richard

Webster and John Watters were local leaders in their day, and Maryland owes much to them. Dromgoole lived to an old age, and, though he never changed his church relations, was in sympathy with O'Kelly and the later Reformers, whose day he lived to see. [5] Dickins was a leader in the southern movement to liberalize Methodism, but afterward became Book Agent in Philadelphia and, as will be seen in not a few other cases, official position made a change in his sentiments. Thomas Ware labored for fifty years, and his sketches of his life and travels are the best contributions to early Methodist history. John Tunnell was a saintly man of great gifts, who, in East Tennessee and the far West, did pioneer work for thirteen years. He died July, 1790, and Asbury preached his funeral sermon. William Gill, his bosom friend, was another great light of the day. The famous Dr. Rush of Philadelphia pronounced him "the greatest divine I have ever heard." He died in Chestertown, Md., but his grave is unmarked, says Atkinson in his "Memorials." His last words were, "All is well," and he closed his own eyes as he expired. Reuben Ellis of North Carolina was among the leaders, with few as his equal. Le Roy Cole, a Virginian, for fifty years ranked high, lived to 1830, nearly eighty-one years old. John Littlejohn was an Englishman of superior parts, who settled in Virginia, served the Church for sixty years, and died in 1836. All these were men who would rank with the ablest of ministers in this day. Richard Ivy must be added to this roll of the worthy. As a preacher he was known from New Jersey to Georgia, and after eighteen years of service retired to care for his aged mother in 1794, and died in peace in 1795. John Major was known as the "weeping prophet," owing to his pathetic eloquence, which kept his congregations in tears. Henry Willis, now scarcely remembered, is a name history will not suffer to die. After thirty years' labor he died in 1808 at Pipe Creek, Md., and Asbury, on visiting his grave, apostrophized: "Henry Willis! Ah, when shall I look upon thy like again! Rest, man of

God!" James O'Kelly needs but to be named, as his prominence will call shortly for special notice. As the memory of these noble men fades away the printed page must preserve Ruff, Boyer, Baxter, Mair, Bruce, and others whose record is on high. They were nearly all native-born south of Pennsylvania, as the strength of Methodism was in Maryland and Virginia, and the pertinence of this fact will presently be recognized as the Conference of 1779 comes to be considered.

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## Division 9 Asbury and the Revolution

[No history of this kind would be complete if we failed to include Asbury. We want to examine this man throughout this turbulent time. As might be expected, his sympathies were with England, and yet he denied himself of going back although his heart longed for his native country. He was suspected, and for a time his ministry was almost crippled in many places. He eventually had to go in hiding. We will insert here part of this story taken from Ezra Tipple in "Francis Asbury, Prophet of the Long Road"--hdm0562.txt.]: April 21, 1777. Heard Mr. Rankin preach his last sermon. My mind was a little dejected, and I now felt some desire to return to England, but was willing to commit the matter to the Lord.

It would have been strange had he not 'felt some desire to return.' His sympathies at this time were undoubtedly with his countrymen. His relatives and friends were over the seas in the land of his birth. His English associates in the work in America were leaving him one by one. At the Conference this year, 'when the time of parting came many wept,' Asbury records, 'as if they had lost their firstborn sons.' 'We parted,' says Garrettson, 'bathed in tears, to meet no more in this world.' 'Our hearts,' says William Watters, 'were knit together as the hearts of David and Jonathan, and we were obliged to use great violence to our feelings in tearing ourselves asunder.' It is not long after this that Asbury confesses: 'I was under some heaviness of mind, but it was no wonder. Three thousand miles from home; my friends have left me. I am considered by some as an enemy of the country, every day liable to be seized by violence and abused. However, all this is but a trifle to suffer for Christ and the salvation of souls. Lord, stand by me!' And how his Lord did stand by him! These were trying times for the English missionary, who had determined that, come what might, he would not forsake the flock committed unto him. Even at the risk of his life he was resolved to remain.

That this decision had cost him a struggle cannot be gainsaid, but that he had come to this determination shows not only a high sense of devotion to the great object which had brought him to America, but also a growing conviction as to the righteousness of the contention of the colonies.

Though I have talked much, I have kept my temper. I feel nothing but love, and no contradiction I meet with makes me angry. I have a natural affection for my countrymen, yet I can hear them called cruel people and calmly listen to threatenings of slaughter against them. Were a people spreading desolation with fire and sword in England, I, as an inhabitant, whether the invaders were right or wrong, would probably feel as the Americans now do, and use the same harsh expressions. Thus I reason, and cannot therefore condemn.

But though he was naturally drawn out in affection to his native land, he was even more strongly attached to the people among whom he was now working:

"I received a letter from Thomas Rankin, in which he informed me that himself, Mr. Rodda, and Mr. Dempster consulted and deliberately concluded it would be best to return to England. But I can by no means agree to leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America. It would be an eternal dishonor to the Methodists that we should all leave the three thousand souls who desire to commit themselves to our care; neither is it the part of the Good Shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger. Therefore I am determined, by the grace of God, not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may."

Moreover, his unerring judgment foresaw the inevitable outcome. Lednum tells of a letter which Asbury wrote to Rankin the year that Rankin returned to England, in which he expressed his belief that the Americans would become a free and independent nation, and declared that he was too much knit in affection to many of them to leave them, and that Methodist preachers had a great work to do under God in America. The letter fell into the hands of the authorities in America, and produced a change in their feelings toward him and toward his fellow Methodists.

But before this change took place there was much suffering. Nor was it without good reason that the American patriots who were contending for 'liberty or death' regarded the Methodists with suspicion. The leaders of the Methodist movement in the colonies were Englishmen. The commanding genius of the Evangelical Revival in England, John Wesley, had, as Asbury hinted in his Journal, dabbled in the politics of the two countries. His 'Calm Address to the American Colonies', in which he boldly restated with few changes Dr. Samuel Johnson's 'Taxation No Tyranny', had created a general prejudice against his adherents in America. Moreover several of the preachers also were indiscreet. Rankin spoke so freely and imprudently on public affairs as to cause fear that his influence would be dangerous to the American cause. Rodda was so unwise as to distribute copies of the King's proclamation, and left the country under circumstances unfavorable to his reputation and hurtful to the interests of religion. Wesley's pamphlet, Calm Address, which had a wide sale, forty thousand copies having been disposed of in twenty days, made it evident that the societies in America could not continue in relation to the English societies should the outcome of the war be favorable to the American colonies. When the times were about at their worst Shadford returned to England, and, indeed, two years after the Declaration of Independence not an English preacher remained in America except Asbury. It was freely asserted that the Methodist body was a Tory propaganda, though there was no proof to establish the contention. In New York the leading members were thorough Loyalists. Elsewhere the membership was divided in political sentiment, as were all communities at the time. But the prejudice against the Methodists was pronounced. Judge White was arrested on the charge of being a Methodist and presumptively a Tory. The native ministers who had been raised up -- Watters, Gatch, Garrettson, Morrell, and Ware -- were true-hearted Americans, and while the moral views and conscientious scruples of some of these and many other Methodists were not on principle favorable to war, they were consistently loyal. Notwithstanding this, many of them suffered persecution. Caleb Pedicord was cruelly whipped, and carried his scars to the grave. Freeborn Garrettson was beaten to insensibility, and on another occasion thrust into jail, as were also Joseph Hartley, one of the traveling preachers of Virginia, Wren, and Forrest. Other preachers were tarred and feathered. For

two years Asbury, having refused to take the Maryland State oath, was a refugee in another State. As Lee quaintly says,

On the fifth of March Mr. Asbury began to lie by at Thomas White's, in the Delaware State, where he shut himself up. . . . Notwithstanding Mr. Asbury was shut up in a friend's house, he looked forward, and hoped for the time to come when he might again visit his brethren, and be of some service to the scattered flock, among whom he had labored almost seven years.

This period of retirement was as valuable to Asbury as the desert experience of John the Baptist or Paul's stay in Arabia, and it was as much in the order of Divine Providence. He himself seems to have had this belief: 'I formerly thought it would be death to me to keep silence from declaring the word of God, but now I am in a measure contented. It appears to be the will of God that I should be silent for a season, to prepare me for further usefulness hereafter. Therefore my time shall be employed to the best advantage.' And he did spend 'these perilous days in retirement, devotion, and study.' It has been asserted that Asbury was in personal danger during his stay at Judge White's; and while on one occasion, a report having become current which inclined him to think it would be prudent for him 'to move the next day,' and, accordingly, he 'set out after dinner and lay in a swamp until about sunset,' during which time he thought of himself as 'like some of the old prophets who were concealed in times of public distress,' most of the time he felt himself at liberty to go about among the people and preach as he found opportunity. In 1804, twenty-five years after this retirement in Delaware, Asbury said in a letter to Zachary Myles, a layman in Baltimore:

"I have observed an error in Mr. Almore's performance of my concealment in the State of Delaware. That was at Judge White's, whose son is now a senator in Congress. It is a mistake. I had access to the house of Governor Rodney and Bassett, and Dr. Magaw's. I went where I thought fit in every part of the State, frequently lodged in the houses of very reputable people of the world, and we had a great work. I think near eighteen hundred were added in that State during my stay of about twenty months. I suppose Dr. Coke received some misinformation, as he was hasty. Notwithstanding I took no State oath, first or last, no one molested me."

It was a great relief to him, however, when he could go afield again, as he was able to do after about two years in Delaware, returning to Maryland for the Conference in Lovely Lane Church, Baltimore, April, 1780.

[More of the story comes to us from Abel Stevens "History of the M.E. Church; volume 1--hdm0216.txt. This account includes the arrest of Judge Thomas White, the friend of Asbury who offered him assylum during the War.]:

On the 19th of March 1776, he reached Philadelphia, having "rode about three thousand miles" since he left it, on the 22d of the preceding May. Here, on receiving a letter from Wesley, he records his sentiments respecting the Revolution, cautiously, but with sufficient distinctness to show that he did not share the opinions of his English coadjutors. Of Wesley he says, "I am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America. My desire is to live in love and peace with all men; to do them no harm, but all the good I can. However, it discovers Mr. Wesley's conscientious attachment to the government under which he lives. Had he been a subject



of America, no doubt he would have been as zealous an advocate of the American cause. But some inconsiderate persons have taken occasion to censure the Methodists in America on account of his political sentiments." Soon afterward he received word from New York that "troops were being raised and entrenchments made in that city." "O Lord," he writes, "we are oppressed, undertake thou for us." He doubtless inclined to the side of the colonists; his sagacious mind foresaw the grand advantages of the national organization of the Anglo-Saxons in the opening new world, and the vision of the prospective triumphs of the Gospel, in his own denomination, probably rose luminously before him amid the clouds of the war-storm, though he knew that the restoration of peace would be followed by general prosperity and riches, which might divert many of his fellow-laborers from the hardships of the itinerancy. His own policy was cautiously defined; it was to prosecute his evangelical work without intermeddling with the conflicting parties. His work was sublimely apart from and above them all. A few days after his comments on Wesley's error he wrote, "How changeable are all things here, and especially in these precarious times! but my determination is to cast all my care on the Lord, and bear with patience whatsoever may occur. May the Lord make me more indifferent both toward persons and things, and only intent on doing his will!" And, again, he says, his "soul enjoys a delightful sense of the divine favor, and is fixed on God as its center, though in the midst of tumults." "Glory to God, I can leave all the little affairs of this confused world to those men to whose province they pertain, and can comfortably go on in my proper business of instrumentally saving my own soul and those that hear me."

After spending some months in Philadelphia, rallying the Society from the public distractions, and making excursions into New Jersey and other parts of the country, where he found the young Churches desolated by the agitations of the war, he passed southward again on the last day of May, 1776. He is welcomed in Baltimore, and finds temporary shelter at Perry Hall; is refreshed by good news "of the glorious spread of the work of God in Virginia and North Carolina, where the Lord is still fulfilling his promise, and pouring out his Spirit on the people." He preaches for Otterbein, and remarks that "there are very few with whom he can find so much unity and freedom in conversation as with him." In one of his excursions he is arrested, taken before a magistrate, and "fined five pounds for preaching the Gospel." His health again fails, through excessive travel and preaching. He goes to the Warm Sulphur Springs of Virginia, accompanied by Gough, of Perry Hall; there he holds a meeting every night and preaches often in the open air. "My confidence," he writes, "is strong in the Lord, and accompanied with sweet consolation. My company and myself are quickened in our own souls, and the hearts of several others are under some religious impressions. But the zealous conversation and prayers of Mr. Gough seem to move and melt the hearts of the people more than my preaching does. Lord, send by whom thou wilt: only end to the conviction and salvation of immortal souls. At this time Christ is all in all to me. My heart is sweetly occupied by his gracious Spirit."

His plan of relaxation and recuperation here is singular enough. He reads about a hundred pages a day; usually prays in public five times a day; preaches in the open air every other day; and lectures in prayer-meeting every evening. "And," he adds, "if it were in my power I would do a thousand times as much for such a gracious and blessed Master. But, in the midst of all my little employments, I feel myself as nothing, and Christ to me is all in all."

The accommodations at this celebrated resort were still of the most primitive kind. Asbury's "boarding house" was twenty feet by sixteen in size, "with seven beds and sixteen

persons therein, and some noisy children." "So," he says, "I dwell among briars and thorns; but my soul is in peace." Doing here the work of half a score of ordinary pastors, yet surrounded with the grand and tranquil solitudes of nature, he richly enjoyed his retreat. But the din of war still reached him. "I spent," he writes, "some time in the woods alone with God, and found it a peculiar time of love and joy. O delightful employment! All my soul was centered in God! The next day while preaching at three o'clock, to an increased company, the word produced great seriousness and attention. And we had a happy, powerful meeting in the evening at Mr. Gough's. But my mind is in some degree disturbed by the reports of battles and slaughters. It seems the Cherokee Indians have also begun to break out, and the English ships have been coasting to and fro, watching for advantages; but what can they expect to accomplish without an army of two or three hundred thousand men? And even then, there would be but little prospect of their success. O that this dispensation might answer its proper end! That the people would fear the Lord, and sincerely devote themselves to his service! Then, no doubt, wars and bloodshed would cease."

Having spent six weeks at the Springs, he left them for his Baltimore Circuit, where he resumed his travels with unrelaxing energy. His journals are characteristically laconic [brief, concise -- DVM]; they abound in abbreviations which obscure, at this late day, their allusions; we are perplexed in tracing his journeyings, as he hurries us along from place to place; but we are kept in excited interest and wonder at his hardly intermitted movements, his continual preaching, in the morning at a chapel, in the afternoon at a barn or schoolhouse ten or fifteen miles distant, in the evening at a private house twenty miles further. The next day he is early in the saddle and again away to other fields; and so, day after day; week after week, year after year, for nearly half a century; for with him ministerial zeal was not a paroxysm, but a divine fire which kept his whole life incandescent until he dropped at last in the pulpit, consumed by it, or rather borne by it away, as if ascending, like the Hebrew prophet, in a chariot of fire. Neither Wesley nor Whitefield labored as energetically as this obscure man. He exceeded them in the extent of his annual travels, the frequency of his sermons, and the hardships of his daily life. His temperament was less buoyant than theirs, he was often depressed by a constitutional sadness, if not melancholy; but he had an iron will, a profound conscience, an ineffable sense of the value of the human soul, and an invincible resolution to attain the maximum availability of his life for the eternal welfare of himself and his fellow-men. He studied hard on his long routes, and, by his unaided endeavors, became able to read the holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek, and was familiar with ecclesiastical and general history and scientific theology. In practical prudence, the wisdom which is profitable to direct in the government of large bodies of men, he perfected himself beyond almost any modern example, as the great results of his administration prove. But as yet he had no distinct perception of the administrative responsibility which was pending over him. The duty of the hour was all he knew of, if not all he cared for, assured that if that were well done the future would unfold itself aright.

He visited Annapolis often about this time, preaching in an old theater. One of the earliest Methodists there was a Mr. Wilkins, who became his steadfast friend, and whose family afterward was among the most influential in the denomination in Baltimore. The Guest family was also important in the early history of Methodism in Annapolis, and their name has been honorably represented in the itinerant ministry. The war spirit menaced Asbury in this region, and his friends could not protect him. His chaise was shot through but he escaped unharmed. It became necessary, however, for him to think of means of safety. A pause is reported in his career of two or more

years, during which he is usually represented as sequestered from the storms of the Revolution; but though it seemed to him such, it was but a partial retirement, for he still had a whole state for his parish most of the time. While pursuing his zealous course on the Baltimore Circuit, he received word of the return of Rankin to England; Shadford, to whom he clung as David to Jonathan, was persuaded to tarry, but he also soon departed; at last all Wesley's English missionaries but himself had left the country or the denomination. He bowed his head in profound dejection, but his will could not be bowed. He was offered a quiet settlement over an Episcopal Church, but he replied, "I will do nothing that shall separate me from my brethren. I hope to live and die a Methodist." "We have great commotion on every side, but in the midst of war the Lord keeps my soul in perfect peace." Shadford, still lingering, meets him, and informs him of the departure of Rankin and Rodda. "So," he writes in sadness, "we are left alone; but I leave myself in the hands of God." He goes forward on his circuit, dragging Shadford with him far on his route; though a heavy gloominess hangs on his mind he inspirits his timid brethren, proclaiming as his text, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Shadford "exhorts" after him, and "the hearts of the people melt under the power of the word." Wherever they go record is now made of "the merciful hand of God displayed" in the assemblies, of "a moving in the congregations," of "powerful seasons," of "extraordinary visitations of grace." "We have been greatly blessed," he adds, "and have seen great displays of divine grace since we have been together, and have been made a blessing to one another."

At last Shadford gives up and retreats. "George Shadford left me," writes the solitary missionary; "I am easy, however, for the Lord is with me. If he will be with me, and bring me to my Father's house in peace, he shall be my God forever. Yea; let him do with me as seemeth good in his sight -- only let him not take his Holy Spirit from me -- and he shall be mine, and I will be his, in time and through eternity." Soon afterward he again writes, "I am under some heaviness of mind. But it is no wonder: three thousand miles from home -- my friends have left me -- I am considered by some as an enemy of the country -- every day liable to be seized by violence and abused. All this is but a trifle to suffer for Christ and the salvation of souls. Lord, stand by me!" He still pursues his work, though daily expecting to be arrested, for he hears from various directions of the mobbing and imprisonment of his itinerant brethren; though none but native preachers now remain with him. As Methodists they are held responsible for Wesley's opposition to the Revolution, the modification of his opinion being yet unknown in the colonies; and the mob and petty magistrates, swayed by political excitement and many of them by sectarian jealousy, listen to no remonstrances or entreaties. The test-oaths require a pledge to take up arms, if called upon to do so by the authorities. Asbury, though well affected toward the colonial cause, cannot consent to such a contingency. His conscience as a preacher of the Gospel forbids him. The peril at last comes nearer home to him. In March, 1778, he writes, in concealment, at the house of his friend, Judge White, of Kent County, Del., "I intend to abide here for a season till the storm is abated. The grace of God is a sufficient support while I bear the reproach of men, and am rewarded evil for all the good which I have done, and desire to do for mankind. I am strongly persuaded that divine Providence will bring about a change before long."

On the 2d of April the light horse patrol came to the house, and seizing Judge White, bore him off, leaving his wife and children with Asbury in great alarm. They observed together the next day as an occasion of fasting and prayer. On Saturday, April 4, Asbury says: "This was a day of much divine power and love to my soul. I was left alone, and spent part of every hour in prayer;

and Christ was near and very precious." "On Monday, 6th, I found freedom to move. I rode on through a lonesome, devious road, like Abraham, not knowing whither I went; but weary and unwell, I found a shelter late at night, and there I intended to rest till Providence should direct my way. This was something like the faithful saints of old times, mentioned Heb. xi 'They wandered about, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;' though it must be acknowledged their trials far exceeded. Tuesday, 7. My soul was kept in peace, and I spent much of my time in reading the Bible and the Greek Testament. Surely God will stand by and deliver me! I have none other on whom I can depend. And he knows with what intention and for what purposes I came into this distant and strange land, and what little I have suffered for his cause. At night a report was spread which inclined me to think it would be most prudent for me to move the next day. Accordingly I set out after dinner, and lay in a swamp till about sunset; but was then kindly taken in by a friend. My soul has been greatly humbled and blessed under these difficulties, and I thought myself like some of the old prophets who were concealed in times of public distress. Thursday, 9. I promised God that if he would lift me up I would be wholly his, and spend as much time in returning thanks as I have in seeking his protection, which has been some part of every hour. My soul has been much comforted in reading Alleine's Letters, which he wrote in prison. I felt strong confidence in God that he would deliver me; being conscious that I sought neither riches nor honor, and that what I suffered was for the sake of his spiritual Church, and the salvation of my fellow-men. I was informed that Brother Hartley was apprehended last Lord's day in Queen Anne. May the Lord strengthen and support him while he suffers for righteousness' sake! He shall be faithfully remembered by me in my addresses to the throne of grace. This evening I was called upon to visit a person in distress of mind, and the Lord gave him rest for his soul. Perhaps Providence cast my lot in this place for the assistance of this man. Friday, 10. My heart was kept pure, and panting after God, though I was in some sense a prisoner, and under the necessity of being concealed. O my Lord, guide thy poor pilgrim through the rugged ways of this ungodly and dangerous world! My practice is to keep close to God in prayer, and spend a part of every hour, when awake, in that exercise. My exercises are very deep and various. The Lord makes great discoveries of my defects and shortcomings in many points. He melts my heart into humility and tenderness; he graciously draws me nearer and nearer to himself, and fills me with the spirit of holy love."

After about a month's concealment among these strangers, he ventured back to Judge White's mansion. The judge, having been seized on the absurd charge of being a Methodist, was acquitted, after five weeks' detention, and allowed to return to his home. A contemporary authority, a witness of many of these sufferings of the Methodist itinerants, gives us a somewhat minute account of Asbury's present circumstances. "After having traveled and preached at large with all the zeal, fidelity, and caution which prudence could dictate, he, being much suspected as an Englishman, had at length to retire, in a great measure, for a season, until the indignation was overpast. The spirit of the times was such that he could not safely continue to travel openly. In the year when the storm was at its highest, and persecution raged furiously, he advisedly confined himself chiefly to the little state of Delaware, where the laws were rather more favorable, and the rulers and influential men were somewhat more friendly. For a time he had even there to keep himself much retired. He found an asylum in the house of his fast and firm friend, Thomas White, Esq., one of the judges of the court in Kent County. He was a pious man, and his wife one of the holiest of women. They were great friends to the cause of religion, and to the preachers generally. From this place of retreat he could correspond with his suffering brethren who were scattered

abroad. He could also occasionally travel about, visiting the Societies, and sometimes preach to the people. He was accessible to all the preachers and his friends who came to see him; so that by means of correspondence and visits they could communicate with one another for mutual counsel, comfort, and encouragement. In some of their movements they had to be very cautious; for they were watched as the partridge is watched by the hawk on the mountain. However, his manner of life was such as to procure him many friends, among whom were some of the most respectable characters in the state, and eventually he gained the goodwill and confidence of the public generally, and of the principal officers of the state. Among those whose particular confidence he secured we might mention, with Judge White, the pious Judge Barrett, both of whom opened their houses for the brethren as homes, and protected the preachers, and exerted their influence in support of religion. Each of them was instrumental in having a preaching house built in his respective neighborhood, which to this day are called White's Meeting-house and Barrett's Chapel. We may also mention the late Richard Bassett, Esq., well known as a distinguished character, not only in the state, but in the United States. At different times he filled high and honorable stations. He was a lawyer of note, a legislator, judge, and a governor of Delaware. He was also a member of the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, a senator in the first Congress, and a judge of the United States Court for the circuit comprising the Districts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. Their friendship and confidential intercourse was intimate and uninterrupted till death, the one surviving the other but a few months. I mention these names, and many others might be mentioned, if time would permit, as a tribute of respect due to their memory, in order to give an idea how the Lord providentially favored Asbury and his brethren in raising up friends to open the way before them, that his word might go forth as a lamp that burneth. Their friendship and patronage not only extended to him, but to his suffering brethren generally; to the persecuted Societies, and to the weeping cause of religion. Under their fostering protection bleeding Zion smiled in the midst of tears. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. They found Asbury to be a safe and a good citizen, a circumspect and a pious Christian, and a faithful minister of the Gospel, worthy of confidence as a friend to the country of his choice, of which he had voluntarily and providentially become a citizen. They also found him associated with others who were plain, honest, upright men, inculcating religion, reforming and improving the morals of the people. The Governor of Delaware, though I believe not a professor of religion, being influenced by goodwill and friendship toward Asbury and his brethren, wrote to the Governor of Maryland in behalf of some of the suffering preachers in that state, in consequence of which they were released from recognizances or from prison."

One cause of the improved treatment of Asbury and his brethren is supposed to have been the fact that about 1779 "a letter which he wrote to Rankin in 1777, in which he gave it as his opinion that the Americans would become a free and independent nation, that he was too much knit in affection to many of them to leave them, and that Methodist preachers had a great work to do under God, in this country, had fallen into the hands of the American officers, and had produced a great change in their opinions and feelings toward him."

Asbury's retirement, so called, was a period of no little labor. He was closely confined only about five weeks, and there were but eleven in which he did not travel more or less. [5] Through the first year he ventured not far from home; but, besides preaching occasionally, he frequently held meetings for prayer and exhortation among his friendly neighbors. The preachers often met him in the hospitable family of Judge White, and he privately held with them there a

Conference in 1779. He was restless, however, under his present restrictions. His energetic temperament could not brook confinement. Men constituted or endowed for great destinies have an instinctive, though it be a vague, consciousness of their high calling, and are urged forward by instinctive impulses to fulfill it. "My spiritual trials," he writes, "have been heavier and more grievous of late than I have ever experienced before in all the course of my pilgrimage. They seem to indicate to me that I shall lose my soul, or lose my life, or live for some peculiar usefulness in the Church of Christ." The latter was the true presentiment. It was his steadfastness to American Methodism, during these trying times when all other foreign laborers deserted it, that, next to his commanding abilities, won for him the admiration and love of his brethren, and led them, when the storm had passed, to exalt him to the leadership of their cause. He did not anticipate his coming elevation, but he saw clearly that great times were approaching -- that, as he wrote, "the independence of America by a treaty of peace would be a singular blessing, especially as it would give the Gospel a free course through the land," and he knew that if his life were spared he should share largely in this enlarged spread of the kingdom of Christ. He gradually ventured to preach more openly; and during the second year of what he considered his confinement, the whole state of Delaware was his Circuit; the Conference which had furtively met at Judge White's house having appointed him to it and designated the appointment in the Minutes. The mansion of his friend was his headquarters; it was not expedient for him to be absent for a long time from it; it was usually his shelter by night, but his ministerial excursions were made almost daily.

The family which thus gave refuge to him and to not a few of his brethren during this stormy period was notable in the early days of Methodism. Like that of Gough, at Perry Hall, of Bassett, at Bohemia Manor, and of Barratt, at "Barratt's Chapel," Kent, its name continually recurs in the Journals of Asbury, Coke, Garrettson, Abbott, and in other early Methodist publications. Leaving Asbury in his comfortable asylum, we may appropriately digress, a moment, to notice some of these memorable historical families, who, though associated with the highest social circles of their times, counted not their opulence nor their lives dear unto them, choosing rather to suffer persecution with the people of God.

Thomas White, "Chief Judge of the Common Pleas," had been an unexceptionable member of the English Church before he met with the Methodists. His wife was a lady of special excellence; devoted, charitable, strict in the religious education of her family, not omitting her numerous colored servants, to whom she carefully taught the Holy Scriptures. Hearing the Methodists preach, her devout heart recognized them as congenial Christians, and she reported them so favorably to her husband that he was induced to accompany her and their children to one of their appointments. The preachers were invited to his mansion, and it remained a "preaching place" till the erection of White's Chapel. His wife, Mary White, not only led him to the Methodist communion, but became his best guide to heaven. She was the priestess of the family, a woman of rare talents, of remarkable but modest courage, and of fervent zeal. When he was seized by the military patrol she clung to him, defending him, and declaring to the ruffians, who brandished their swords over her, that she feared them not, until, overpowered by their numbers, he was borne away. She soon followed them, found out the place of his confinement, and rested not till she effected his restoration to his family. "On another sorrowful occasion," says a Methodist annalist, "when a drafted company of soldiers came by her house and halted, while the men were weeping on account of leaving their parents, wives, and sisters, and while wives and sisters were clinging to their husbands and brothers, telling by their gushing tears how deeply they felt as they were

parting with them, fearing they should see them no more, Mrs. White knelt down on the ground before them and offered up fervent prayers, mingling her tears with theirs for their temporal and eternal salvation; and when the Methodists were met for worship, if there were none present more suitable, she took up the cross, led the religious exercises, and met the class -- and she would have gone further and preached if Asbury had encouraged her. That child of nature and of grace, Benjamin Abbott, was at Mr. White's in October, 1782; when about to start for Quarterly Meeting at Barrett's Chapel, he says, 'Mrs. White came to me as I sat on my horse, and took hold of my hand, exhorting me for some time. I felt very happy under her wholesome admonitions.' Thomas Ware says: 'She was a mother in Israel in very deed.' When her husband informed her that his end was nigh, she spent the last night in supplications for him, and with him exulted in victory as he entered into the joy of his Lord. She, like her husband, professed and exemplified the grace of perfect love. They were lovely in their lives, and in death were not long divided; she soon followed him to the 'better country.' Near by the old homestead the bricks that arched their graves, now sunk in the earth, mark the spot where their heaven-watched dust reposes, till they shall again appear in the bloom and beauty of immortality."

"In moral worth," says the same authority, "Judge White had no superior in his day -- his house and hands were always open to relieve the needy -- he was the friend of the poor and oppressed, and left no one in bondage whom he could make free. For many years he lived in the enjoyment of perfect love. Just before he died he showed his son Samuel his books, and gave him directions concerning the brick house that he was building as an addition to his old house. Then, coming to his wife, he said, "I feel as I never felt before," and gave directions concerning his burial. He died in the spring of 1795, in his sixty-fifth year. When Asbury heard of his death, he wrote," The news was an awful shock to me; I have met with nothing like it in the death of any friend on the continent. I have lived days, weeks, and months in his house. He was among my very best friends."

Richard Bassett, of Dover, Delaware, was a man of pre-eminence in the civil and social life of these times. He first met Asbury in his concealment at Judge White's residence. On a professional journey to Maryland, he called there to spend a night with his friend, the Judge. As a door in the house was opened he observed Asbury, with some other Preachers, apparently retired in quiet conversation, and inquired of Mrs. White who "they were, dressed in sable garments and keeping themselves aside?" "They are some of the best men in the world; they are Methodist Preachers," replied the hostess. He was evidently disturbed by this intelligence, and observed, "Then I cannot stay here tonight." "You must stay; they cannot hurt you," rejoined the lady. Supper being ready, they all sat down at the table. Asbury had considerable conversation with Bassett, by which he was convinced that Methodist Preachers were not so ignorant or unsociable as to make them outcasts from civil society. On taking leave, he invited Asbury, more from custom than desire, to call on him in case he visited Dover. When Bassett returned home and informed his wife that he had been in company with Methodist Preachers, and had invited one of them to his house, she was greatly troubled; but was quieted when he told her, "It is not likely that he will come." But some time later, Bassett, while looking out of his window, saw the itinerant approaching. That evening Asbury charmed by his conversation a large circle at the tea-table, till late into the night; and for nearly twoscore years Richard Bassett was his unfailing friend.

Bassett was a man of bravery and generosity. Not long after White had joined the Methodists he visited his friend at Dover, and spent a night with him. All Methodists were then denounced as Tories, and the rabble, hearing of White's presence, approached Bassett's house to seize him. Bassett was a militia officer, and, with drawn sword, defied them at his door. "He is no more a Tory than you are," he shouted; "you shall have him only by passing over my dead body." He compelled them to fall back and leave the premises. Bassett's chivalric character and high standing were not to be trifled with, and his friend remained unmolested.

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## Division 10

### The Christmas Conference

#### The founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church

#### Some observations from different sources

[I feel that I have given you a fairly comprehensive picture of the American Methodists before and during the war. I know that much material has been left out that the HDM Library contains. I would urge each owner of the Library to register the Search And Replace program and run your own searches to find as much material on this subject as you can. I want to conclude this work with an account of the Christmas Conference, in which the Methodist Episcopal church was formed after the Revolution. The church not only had to grapple with the political turmoil of the war, but also the internal conflicts respecting the administering of the sacraments. The Methodists felt that most of the ministers of the Established Church were immoral and unfit to baptize their infants or administer the sacraments. The travelling preachers under Wesley were not allowed to do so. However, a few took it upon themselves any way. This caused a great rift in the church; a rift wide enough to cause two different conferences to be held. William Watters was greatly used of God to maintain a fairly peaceful relationship between the two sides, each feeling that they were right. His account in his Autobiography is touching. Finally, the preachers who were administering the sacraments were persuaded to put off doing so for another year or so until they could write Mr. Wesley in England. He advised the forming of the M.E. Church, which would separate the American Methodists from the mother Church and allow them to ordain ministers among themselves who could then administer the sacraments and baptize infants. This is a thrilling and touching narrative to read. I will include an account of the Christmas Conference and this will conclude the story. It is my desire that this will prove helpful and edifying for those who take the time to read it. It is also my hope that it will inspire a more earnest use of the HDM CD. It will be well worth the time invested. God bless you all. May we all live true to God and make it safely to that happy shore, to spend all eternity praising the One who is the Head of the Church Militant]--Russell Gordon

[This account is taken from Abel Stevens' "History of the M.E. Church; volume 2--hdm0219.txt.]: On Friday, the 24th of December, [1] 1784, the apostolic little company rode from Perry Hall to Baltimore, and at ten o'clock A.M. began the first "General Conference," in the Lovely Lane Chapel. The latter was still a rude structure, and Coke commended gratefully the kindness of the people in furnishing a large stove, and backs to some of the seats, for the comfort of the Conference. [2]



Garrettson had sped his way over twelve hundred miles in six weeks, calling to Baltimore the itinerants, and preaching as he went, and had returned to find sixty present. Coke, on taking the chair, presented a letter from Wesley, dated Bristol, September 10th, 1784, and addressed "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America." It said that "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, many more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over the 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. Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me, many 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' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church, to which I belonged. 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. 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 ministering the Lord's supper. 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. It has indeed been proposed to desire 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, both from the state and from 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 that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."

In accordance with this document "it was agreed," says Asbury, "to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons." Asbury declined ordination to the superintendency, unless, in addition to the appointment of Wesley, his brethren should formally elect him to that office. Coke and he were unanimously elected superintendents. Whatcoat's notes of the occasion, though brief, are more specific than any other contemporary document relating to it. He says: "On the 24th we rode to Baltimore; at ten o'clock we began our Conference, in which we agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, in which the Liturgy (as presented by the Rev. John Wesley) should be read, and the sacraments be administered by a superintendent, elders, and deacons, who shall be ordained by a presbytery, using the Episcopal form, as prescribed in the Rev. Mr. Wesley's prayer book. Persons to be ordained are to be nominated by the superintendent, elected by the Conference, and ordained by imposition of the hands of the superintendent and elders; the superintendent has a negative voice." [4] He further

states that on the second day of the session Asbury was ordained deacon by Coke, assisted by his presbyters, Vasey and Whatcoat; on Sunday, the third day, they ordained him elder; on Monday he was consecrated superintendent, his friend, Otterbein, of the German Church, assisting Coke and his elders in the rite. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday were spent in enacting rules of Discipline, and the election of preachers to orders. On Friday several deacons were ordained; on Saturday, January 1st, 1785, the project of Abingdon College was considered; on Sunday, the 2d, twelve elders (previously ordained deacons) and one deacon were ordained; "and we ended," adds Whatcoat, "our Conference in great peace and unanimity."

The session was a jubilee to the Methodists of Baltimore and its vicinity. Coke preached every day at noon, two of his discourses being especially on the ministerial office, and afterward published; there was preaching, by other members of the body, every morning and evening; Otterbein's Church, and the Methodist chapels in the town and at the Point, were occupied by them. Coke says: "Our Conference continued ten days. I admire the American preachers. We had nearly sixty of them present; the whole number is eighty-one. They are indeed a body of devoted, disinterested men, but most of them young. The spirit in which they conducted themselves, in choosing the elders, was most pleasing. I believe they acted without being at all influenced by friendship, resentment, or prejudice, both in choosing and rejecting. The Lord was peculiarly present while I was preaching my two pastoral sermons. On one of the weekdays, at noon, I made a collection toward assisting our brethren who are going to Nova Scotia; and our friends generously contributed fifty pounds currency -- thirty pounds sterling."

Coke's sermon at the Episcopal consecration of Asbury produced a vivid impression, and presents some eloquent passages. After describing the true bishop it thus concludes: "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 testimony 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."

Watters says that Wesley's plan was adopted "in a regular formal manner, with not one dissenting voice." Black, from Nova Scotia, gazed upon the scene with admiration. "Perhaps," he says, "such a number of holy, zealous, godly men never before met together in Maryland, perhaps not on the continent of America."

It is now too late to identify all the preachers who constituted this important Conference. We are certain of the presence of Thomas Coke, LL.D., Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, Freeborn Garrettson, William Gill, Reuben Ellis, Le Roy Cole, Richard Ivey, James O'Kelly, John Haggerty, Nelson Reed, James O. Cromwell, Jeremiah Lambert, John Dickins, William Glendenning, Francis Poythress, Joseph Everett, William Black of N. S., William Phoebus, and Thomas Ware. It has been supposed, from their standing, and the proximity of their circuits, that the following also were present: Edward Dromgoole, Caleb B. Pedicord, Thomas S. Chew, Joseph Cromwell, John Major, Philip Cox, Samuel Rowe, William Partridge, Thomas Foster, George Mair, Samuel Dudley, Adam Cloud, Michael Ellis, James White, Jonathan Forrest, Joseph Wyatt, Philip Bruce, John Magary, William Thomas, John Baldwin, Woolman Hickson, Thomas Haskins, Ira Ellis, John Easter, Peter Moriarty, Enoch Matson, Lemuel Green, Thomas Curtis, William Jessup, Wilson Lee, Thomas Jackson, James Riggan, William Ringold, Isaac Smith, Matthew Greentree, William Lynch, Thomas Bowen, Moses Park, William Cannon, and Richard Swift. [5]

Of the personal appearance and character of the members it has been said that nothing arrested the attention of Dr. Coke more, as he looked over the assembly for the first time, than the generally youthful aspect of the preachers, though most of them, he says, bore the marks of severe toil and hard usage. Some of them had suffered imprisonment for conscience' sake, and others the maltreatment of their persons by infuriated mobs. "Leaving out Asbury and his English brethren, Whatcoat and Vasey, who were yet in the prime of life, the American preachers had still about them the prestige of a vigorous manhood. Few, if any of them, would now be called old men. Dromgoole, who joined the Conference in 1774, had traveled but ten years, and sat as senior among his brethren. John Cooper and William Glendenning were one year later, and then Francis Poythress and Freeborn Garrettson, who entered the Conference in 1776. After this we see the names of eleven, including John Dickins and Caleb B. Pedicord, who joined in 1777, and for 1778 and 1779 eight more. These fourteen preachers, with Dr. Coke, Bishop Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey, in all eighteen, constituted properly what might be called the age of the Conference, being men of experience, and well acquainted with the workings of Methodism. A few others had traveled four years, some three; a considerable number two years, and others even not more than ten months. Thus a large proportion of the members of that great council were young men, young, at least, in the work of the ministry; but many of them, doubtless, had old heads on young shoulders. With such master-spirits as Coke and Asbury, Whatcoat, Dromgoole, Poythress, Garrettson, and Dickins to direct and influence their deliberations, nothing was likely to be done, was done, but what was best for the whole Church. Their work of ten days has been before us for three fourths of a century, and speaks for itself; will continue to speak in all coming time as presenting one of the wisest and fairest monuments of human arrangement for the good of the race. The secret of their success was their oneness of spirit. Like the disciples in the Jerusalem chamber, 'they were all of one heart and of one mind.' Whoever looks at the system of rules or of government devised and sent forth by the General Conference of 1784 must concede to it a 'wholesidedness,' and unselfishness both as it regards the preachers themselves and the people under their care. Casting aside all precedents as unauthoritative in Church government, and looking to the examples of Christ and his apostles, they went straight on in the work of planning and executing, knowing at the time the obloquy and scorn with which they would be assailed from every quarter; and now that men have grown wiser in spite of themselves, the Methodists can look up in conscious manhood while pointing to the result, and say, 'Behold what God hath wrought.' "

In compliance with the call from Nova Scotia, Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were ordained elders for that province. Jeremiah Lambert was ordained to the same office for Antigua, in the West Indies. For the United States the elders were John Tunnell, William Gill, Le Roy Cole, Nelson Reed, John Haggerty, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, Henry Willis, James O'Kelly, and Beverly Allen. Tunnell, Willis, and Allen were not present, but received ordination after the session. John Dickins, Ignatius Pigman, and Caleb Boyer were chosen deacons. Boyer and Pigman were ordained in June following at the Conference in Baltimore.

Were these extraordinary proceedings in accordance with the intentions of Wesley? The question has been gravely asked, but never by any recognized Methodist authority on either side of the Atlantic. "Churchmen" have contended that Wesley designed merely to provide, for a temporary exigency in his American Societies, by an anomalous commission, vested in Coke and his associates; that his acts at Bristol were not considered by him "ordinations," and that Coke and Asbury transcended his designs in forming the "Methodist Episcopal Church." The historical facts of the case are so palpable and demonstrative that it is astonishing any such suspicion could for a moment be entertained. Wesley believed in the scriptural parity of bishops and presbyters, and the essential right of the latter to ordain. In his preparatory consultation with Coke he stated, as we have seen, this opinion, and referred to the ancient Alexandrian Church as presenting an example of it; and in his letter, by Coke, to the American Conference, he cites, in vindication of his proceedings, Lord King's "Primitive Church" as proving it; expressly using the word "ordination," and justifying his acts at Bristol "ordinations." Coke was already a presbyter of the Church of England; to what was he now ordained then, by Wesley, if not to the only remaining office of bishop?

Wesley precluded his brother, Charles Wesley, from the Bristol proceedings, because of his well-known prelatival prejudices; why such a precaution if these proceedings were merely what "Churchmen" allege them to have been? Presbyters were summoned to take part in these proceedings, according "to the usages of the Church of England" in ordinations; why, if they were not ordinations? Whatcoat and Vasey were consecrated by two separate acts, on two successive days, as deacons and elders; why these distinct ceremonies if they were merely endued with a nondescript commission? Would not one suffice if there were no reference to some established usage? and where is there any such usage in the Christian Church, aside from ordination? Wesley prepared, printed, and sent by Coke a Ritual, containing the forms of the English Church for the ordinations of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, to be used by the new American Church in its ministerial consecrations; why, if he designed no ordinations, no Episcopal regimen in the new Church? and why put them in permanent printed form if they were not designed to be permanent provisions? He changed the name of bishop to superintendent, of presbyter to elder, (synonymous titles in both instances,) but retained the name of deacon; why, if the change were not solely to avoid the adventitious and pretentious associations of the higher titles, while retaining their essential significance and the humbler title unchanged? [7]

The American Minutes, published a few months after the Baltimore General Conference, declared that "following the counsels of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal mode of Church government," the Conference had formed "an Episcopal Church." These Minutes were, soon afterward, under the eye of Wesley, and in 1786 the American Discipline, with similar

declarations, was reprinted, with the Liturgy prepared by Wesley, in London and under Wesley's care, but he never demurred at their language. [8] By July Coke himself was again in England, attending Wesley's Conference, and reporting his American proceedings; Charles Wesley attacked him and "his Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore." He defended himself through the press by asserting that "he had done nothing but under the direction of Mr. Wesley;" and the latter declared to his brother, "I believe Dr. Coke as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has done nothing rashly that I know." For four years the title "superintendent" was used by the American Methodists instead of that of "bishop," but the latter had been inserted in their Minutes, which say that "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal mode of government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal Church, making the Episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, or bishop, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers." The title was thus inserted in the very first Minutes issued after the Christmas Conference, issued in the year in which that Conference closed, and but a few months after its adjournment. [9] Wesley never objected to this incidental use of it. When, however, [8] the superintendents began personally to be called bishops, he wrote a letter to Asbury emphatically objecting to its use as a personal title. Upon this letter has been founded most of the misconstructions of his design in the organization of the American Church. It is, however, indisputably clear that it was not to their Episcopal function, but their personal Episcopal title that he objected; he wished not to see, associated with the function, the pretentious ecclesiastical dignities which had become identified with it in the High-Church fables and follies of his age. May it not then be asserted, as I have ventured to affirm, in the discussion of this subject in another work, that, looking at this series of arguments, the American Methodists will be acquitted of presumption when they assume that they may here make a triumphant stand, surrounded by evidence superabundant and impregnable. The ecclesiastical system under which it has pleased God to give them and their families spiritual shelter and fellowship with his saints, and whose efficiency has surprised the Christian world, is not, as their opponents would represent, an imposition of their preachers, and contrary to the wishes of Wesley, but was legitimately received from his hands as the providential founder of Methodism. If Wesley's strong repugnance to the mere name of bishop had been expressed, before its adoption by the American Church, it would probably not have been adopted. Still, the American Church was now a separate organization, and was at perfect liberty to dissent from Wesley on a matter of mere expediency. The Church thought it had good reasons to use the name. The American Methodists were mostly of English origin. The people of their country among whom Methodism was most successful were either from England or of immediate English descent, and had been educated to consider Episcopacy a wholesome and an apostolical government of the Church. They approved and had the office, why not, then, have the name? especially as, without the name, the office itself would be liable to lose, in the eyes of the people, its peculiar character, and thereby fail in that appeal to their long established opinions which Methodism had a right, both from principle and expediency, to make? The English Establishment having been dissolved in this country, and the Protestant Episcopalians not being yet organized on an independent basis, and the episcopal organization of the Methodists having preceded that of the Protestant Episcopalians, the Methodist Church had a clear right to present itself to the American public as competent to aid in supplying the place of the abolished Establishment, having the same essential principles without its peculiar defects. And may not the fact of the assumption of an episcopal character, nominally as well as really, by the American Methodists, be considered providential? Episcopacy, both in America and England, has reached an excess of presumption and arrogance. The moderate party, once declared by Bishop White, of

the Protestant Episcopal Church, to include a large majority of American Episcopalians, [10] has nearly disappeared. Was it not providential, under these circumstances, that a body of Christians should appear, exceeding every other in success, and nominally and practically bearing an Episcopal character, without any of its presumptuous pretensions? Amid the uncharitable assumptions of prelatical Episcopalians, the Methodist Episcopal Church stands forth a monument of the laborious and simple Episcopacy of the early ages; its success, as well as its humility, contrasting it with its more pretentious but feebler sister. It has thus practically vindicated Episcopacy as an expedient form of ecclesiastical government, and assuredly it needs vindication in these days. Such, then, is the evidence which should, with all men of self-respectful candor, conclude decisively the question of Wesley's design and agency in the organization of American Methodism.

[It is my hope that the reading of this history has been profitable. It has been a pleasure to search and compile these various narratives, seen through different eyes as the Church enjoyed her victories and prayed her way through troubled times. Jesus is coming back to receive a glorious church without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. May you and I be a part of the Church militant now, and the Church triumphant then. Finally, my brethren, farewell.-- Russell Gordon]

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THE END