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LAST SERMONS OF PAST PROPHETS

Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

Zechariah 1:5 "The prophets, do they live for ever?"
2 Samuel 23:1 "Now these be the last words of David."

"We are going to pass by this way but once. Help us until we have preached our last sermon, sung our last song or given expression to our last sigh, and to Thee we will ascribe the honor and praise forever. Amen." -- From a prayer by H. C. McBride at the General Holiness Assembly, Chicago, Illinois, May 3-13, 1901.

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INTRODUCTION

NO, THIS IS NOT A COLLECTION OF SERMONS, for though it relates to 61 different "Past Prophets" it contains only two "Last Sermons". It is, rather, for the most part, a compilation of sketches and statements concerning the time at which "The Last Sermon of Past Prophets" was preached, and most accounts also tell something of their triumphant passing. Most of the accounts come from Early Methodism, but a few came from more recent times.

EVERY PREACHER SHALL SOMEDAY PREACH HIS "LAST SERMON" -- St. Paul said in 1 Cor. 13:8 "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (cease)." Echoing this truth, in hdm0779, "The More Excellent Way," W. B. Walker wrote: "The minister may be educated and well prepared, and powerful in declaring the truth of God, but he shall preach his last sermon. But this love of which we speak shall never fail."

PAST PROPHETS ZEALOUS TO PREACH, READY TO DIE -- These accounts are of those who were sold out to spread the Gospel and who were ready to give an account of their stewardship whenever Jesus called. Such an one was William Black, "The Early Methodist apostle of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island." He was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, England, in 1760. His parents emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1775. In one of this zealous missionary's written prayers, he said to the Lord, "...Let me spend my latest breath in proclaiming

Thy love to the fallen sons of Adam. Gladly would I die as soon as my last message is delivered. Death is no terror to me; rather it appears infinitely desirable, when I feel Thy presence."

PAST PROPHETS WHO YET LIVE IN CHRIST'S PRESENCE -- These accounts are also about God-called, Spirit-filled preachers whose "Last End" after their "Last Sermon" was Eternal Life: Early Methodist Itinerant Peter Doub, in his last message to the North Carolina Conference the day before his death declared: "Tell my brethren of the Conference that if I am alive, I am working my way to the skies; if I am dead, I am alive." -- hdm0842, "Peter Doub, Sturdy Itinerant," by Marion Timothy Plyler and Alva Washington Plyler

THE ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE ACCOUNTS -- I have arranged these stories alphabetically by the last name of the "past prophet," rather than chronologically as to the date of their occurrence, or by an arrangement according to their preeminence in the Church. Thus it is, that the first account is that of Jimmie Aaron, whose ministry occurred in the 20th Century, and who was probably little-known, or unknown, to many who shall read this publication. Nevertheless, his account "fits in" well with all of the others.

It is hoped that the readers of this compilation will be inspired and blessed by these stories, and it is also hoped that through reading these brief accounts the reader will be encouraged to read the entire publication from which each was drawn -- all of which are published on HDM CDs. -- DVM

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Account 1

THE LAST SERMON OF JIMMIE LEE AARON
(First Bible Missionary Preacher Promoted to Glory)

This is from the October, 1956 issue of "The Missionary Revivalist."

Jimmie Lee Aaron, born September 17, 1934, reported for his Stewardship September 1, 1956 at 2:30 a. m. as the result of a car accident, northwest of Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

Jimmy was born near Duncan, Oklahoma and attended the Duncan School, graduating from High School in 1953. He attended Bethany Nazarene College, Bethany, Oklahoma, Trevecca Nazarene College, Nashville, Tennessee.

Jimmie was converted at a very early age and lived an exemplary Christian life even in his youth. At a later date he was sanctified wholly and answered the call to preach.

His ministry was not long, but he set an example of faithfulness, sincerity, and deep devotion. He preached his last message only a few hours before his death and reported to the Master from the roadway of life.

He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron of Duncan and two sisters, Mrs. Beryle Cooper and Carolyn Aaron, both of Duncan, Oklahoma.

(Editor's Note) The Church feels keenly the loss of Brother Aaron. He was one of the most promising young men of our church. He was to have been ordained at the first General Conference. He lived in constant victory and was a real blessing wherever he went. Our loss is heaven's gain. He was the first of the preachers from the Bible Missionary Church to be promoted to glory.

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Account 2

THE LAST SERMON OF JAMES OSGOOD ANDREW (M. E. and M. E. Church South Bishop)

This is from hdm0719, "Cyclopedia of Methodism," by Matthew Simpson.

James Osgood Andrew, a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was born in Wilkes Co., Ga., in 1794. He was a son of Rev. John Andrew, an itinerant Methodist preacher. He became a member of the church when thirteen years of age, was licensed to preach when eighteen, and was received into the South Carolina Conference immediately after, in 1812. From that period until 1832, he was constantly engaged in pastoral labor or in the duties of a presiding elder. He was an active, earnest, forcible, and emotional preacher, and won for himself a high position in the confidence and affections of the church. In 1832 he was elected and ordained bishop, and he traveled extensively throughout the entire church until the General Conference of 1844.

...Having adhered to the Southern church, [he] continued to travel throughout its bounds, and to act as bishop until 1866, when the General Conference relieved him from active duty. He attended the Alabama Conference in 1870, and his last sermon was preached in Felicity Street church, New Orleans, the Sunday night before his death. He died March 2, 1871, the month and day on which Wesley died eighty years before. His last words were to his children, grandchildren,

and the ministers present, "God bless you all, victory, victory!" As a preacher he was exceedingly effective, having a voice of great compass and power. He was devoted and ardent in his friendships was kind to the poor, and was a general favorite among his acquaintances. He was the author of several valuable works.

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Account 3

THE LAST SERMON OF FRANCIS ASBURY

This is from hdm0531, "Methodist Heroes of Other Days," by Samuel Gardiner Ayres.

Only the year before his translation he said: "My mind enjoys great peace, and divine consolation. My health is better, but whether health, life, or death, good is the will of the Lord. I will trust him and will praise him. He is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. Glory! Glory! Glory!" And this he said when he resigned to younger hands the burdens of his work, but he ceased not to toil until the last. He preached his last sermon in Richmond, Virginia, March 24, 1816, from the text: "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." He sat on a table prepared for him and preached for nearly an hour "with much feeling." He was carried from the church to his carriage. It is not the end of his journey, for he travels Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. He came to the home of Mr. George Arnold and rested on Saturday, and on Sunday, the 31st day of March, 1816, he took his last long journey to the land of rest.

His legacy was a great one -- a life filled with toil and sacrifice, not devoid of faults, 'tis true, but ever striving for the best. He traveled about one hundred and fifty thousand miles in the thirty-seven years of his life as bishop, preached more than nineteen thousand times, ordained, appointed, and loved one thousand ministers, served four generations of laymen, winning fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the kingdom of God. The number he won for the kingdom can never be told. He was the real founder of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, and to him and his care it owes more than we can record. His triumph never ends.

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This following material concerning THE LAST SERMON OF FRANCIS ASBURY is taken from hdm0009, "A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church by Nathan Bangs.

It appears, however, from the published notice of his death, that he persevered in his customary way, in his close carriage, to journey on through the country, until March 24, 1816, when he came to Richmond, Virginia, where he preached his last sermon. His text was Rom. ix, 28, "For he will finish his work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." This closed his pulpit work.

So feeble was he that his friends endeavored to dissuade him from making this effort. He, however, resisted their importunities by remarking that he must once more deliver his testimony in

that place. They therefore assisted him from his carriage -- for he was unable either to walk or stand -- to the pulpit, and seated him on a table which had been prepared for that purpose: and though his debility was such that he was obliged to make frequent pauses in the course of the sermon, yet the audience were much affected by the manner in which he delivered his last solemn message, but much more with his appearance, venerable with age, standing on the borders of eternity, pale and tremulous with debility, while the deep intonations of his commanding voice, rising with the grandeur of his subject, gave a solemnity to the whole scene of a most impressive character.

Having thus delivered his last testimony for God, he was assisted from the sanctuary to his carriage, in which he returned to his lodgings.

On Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, he moved on his way, and finally came to the house of his old friend, Mr. George Arnold, in Spottsylvania, Virginia. Here the unfavorable state of the weather and his increasing debility obliged him to stop. He had, indeed, flattered himself with living to meet the General Conference which was to assemble in Baltimore on the second day of the ensuing May; but he had approached the termination of his journeying in this world, and he humbly bowed to the decree of his heavenly Father in this as well as in all other things.

Here he passed a very restless night. In the morning, his friends, perceiving his great distress and increasing weakness, urged the propriety of calling in the aid of a physician. He gave them to understand that it would be of no use, saying, that before the physician could come to him his breath would be gone, and the doctor would only pronounce him dead. Being then asked if he had any thing to communicate, he replied, that as he had fully expressed his mind to Bishop McKendree in relation to the Church, he had nothing more to add.

About eleven o'clock on Sabbath morning he inquired if it were not time for meeting; but soon recollecting himself, he requested the family to be called together. This being done, brother Bond sung, prayed, and expounded the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse, during which the bishop appeared calm and much engaged in devotion. After these exercises were closed, they offered him a little barley wafer, but such was his weakness that he could not swallow it, and his power of utterance began to fail. On observing the anxiety of his beloved companion, who had attended him with such commendable assiduity for so long a time, he raised his dying hand, and at the same time looked at him joyfully. On being asked by brother Bond if he felt the Lord Jesus precious, exerting all his remaining strength in token of a complete victory, he raised both his hands.

In a few minutes after this, as he sat on his chair with his head reclining upon the hand of brother Bond, without a struggle, and with great composure, he breathed his last on Sabbath the 31st of March, 1816, in the seventy-first year of his age.

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Account 4

THE LAST SERMON OF NATHAN BANGS

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant, Leader, Writer, Holiness Advocate)

This is taken from hdm0189, "Life and Times of Nathan Bangs," by Abel Stevens.

Unlike most old men, he was, to the last, progressive in his views. He sympathized with all well-considered measures for the improvement of his Church. To him its history was all providential, and the very necessity of changes was the gracious summons of providence for it to arise and shine still brighter. He was especially zealous to promote the powers and activity of the laity in the affairs of his own denomination. His hearty, resolute love of his friends and his cause was one of the strongest, noblest traits of the venerable and war-worn hero. It made him as lovable as he was loving. His old age seemed to mellow rather than wither his generous dispositions. He was always deeply devout, but with advanced years he seemed to attain advanced heights of Christian experience and consolation. The Pauline doctrine of sanctification, as defined by Wesley, became, as we have seen, his habitual theme of interest and conversation. He seemed to take increasingly cheerful views of life, and of the prospects of the kingdom of God in the world, as he approached the end of his career. His last sermon was on the certain triumph of the Gospel. There was no querulousness in his temper, no repining in his conversation at the changes which were displacing him from public view, no invidious comparison of the present with former times.

His last sermon was preached at Seventeenth Street Methodist Episcopal Church; he sat at a table in the altar while delivering it. It was heard by nearly all the congregation; it required considerable effort of memory in the citation of statistical facts, but there was no faltering of even that faculty. The whole discourse was characterized by the warm, strong, demonstrative qualities of his earlier preaching.

His last illness was of six weeks and three days' duration. The greater part of the time his sufferings were acute. But his resignation and fortitude and patience never failed him... "One afternoon a friend, who spent much time with him and ministered to him in his sickness, entered his room. He exclaimed: 'O sister! what a manifestation I had yesterday afternoon. It was glorious. The presence of Jesus was in this room, and it was all light and luminous.' The next time this friend called he referred to the circumstance again. Raising both hands, he exclaimed: 'It has lighted up the entire way to heaven.' At another time, speaking to the same person, he said: 'That glorious manifestation was unlike anything I ever expected to witness in heaven above or earth beneath.' She asked, 'Tell me, doctor, what it was like.' 'Don't ask me,' he replied, 'for I could not find language to tell you; but it has brightened up everything. My way is clear into heaven. What infinite condescension! Boundless mercy! Jesus is very precious, unspeakably precious!'"

...In the midst of the assembled family, he expired without pain, without a groan, without convulsive motion, and probably without consciousness -- literally fell asleep -- the normal death of good old age, and a Christian exit -- one day after his eighty-fourth birthday.

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Account 5
THE LAST SERMON OF HENRY B. BASCOM
(Early M. E. Bishop)

This account is from hdm0244, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume IV, by Abel Stevens.

Along with these extraordinary men young Henry B. Bascom appeared in the Western itinerancy. Born in Pennsylvania in 1796, he removed to Kentucky, and thence to Ohio in 1812, and the same year became a class-leader and exhorter. The next year he joined the conference, and began the itinerant career, which soon rendered his fame national, as one of the most noted pulpit orators of the new world. Down to 1823 he filled laborious appointments in Ohio, Western Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. In the last year he was elected chaplain to Congress, through the influence of Henry Clay. At the close of the session of Congress "he spent some time in Baltimore and its neighborhood, and by the remarkable power and splendor of his preaching well-nigh entranced a large portion of the community. From Baltimore he proceeded to Philadelphia, and thence to Harrisburg, and, wherever he preached, attracted an immense throng of admiring hearers.

Having finished this eastern tour he obtained a transfer to the Pittsburgh Conference, and was stationed in the city of Pittsburgh. In his second year in this conference he was appointed the conference missionary. In 1827 he was elected president of Madison College, in Uniontown, Pa. He accepted the place, and, in his inaugural address, displayed a degree of rhetorical force and beauty that quite electrified his audience. In 1829 he resigned the presidency of Madison College, and accepted an agency for the American Colonization Society. In 1832 he was elected professor of Moral Science and Belles-lettres, in Augusta College, Kentucky. Here he remained about ten years. In 1838 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Conn.; and the same degree was subsequently confirmed by two or three other institutions.

He was a delegate in the General Conference of 1844, when the Church was divided, was prominently active in that event, and shared in the Southern Methodist Convention at Louisville in 1845, and also in the Southern General Conference of 1848, by which he was appointed editor of the Southern Methodist Quarterly Review. The General Conference of 1849 elected him bishop. On the last Sunday of July, 1850, he preached his last sermon in St. Louis; an effort of great eloquence, occupying two hours. In the ensuing September he died at Louisville, aged fifty-four years.

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Account 6

THE LAST SERMON OF JOSEPH BENSON

(Eminent Methodist Theologian -- Contemporary of Adam Clarke)

This is from hdm0093, "The Lives of Eminent Methodist Ministers," by P. Douglass Gorrie.

In 1818, Mr. Benson completed his Commentary on the Bible, which he had commenced eight years previously, and to finish which, and attend to his editorial, and other duties made it necessary for him to write day after day, from five o'clock in the morning until eleven at night, and

this too, at the age of more than seventy years. Besides which, he generally preached twice or thrice on the Sabbath, and walked from eight to twelve miles with a body somewhat enfeebled by disease.

On the 26th day of November, 1820, Mr. Benson preached his last sermon. He had been growing more and more infirm for some time, although able to attend to his editorial duties. But his work was now nearly done, and the father in Israel was about to take his departure to the land of spirits. During his last sickness of ten weeks, he preserved the utmost composure of mind and conversed frequently and freely on the subject of death, asserting the utmost confidence in Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour. A day or two before he died, he was visited by Dr. Clarke, and Rev. Jabez Bunting. The Doctor was very much affected at seeing him so much reduced, and said, "You know me, sir?" "O yes; it is Dr. Clarke." "Well, sir, you are not far from the kingdom of God." "I am not only not far from the kingdom of God, but I am sure of finding God in that kingdom," was the reply. He afterwards said to the Doctor, "I have no hope of being saved but by grace through faith," and to Mr. Bunting he remarked, "I have no sufficiency for anything good in myself," and on being asked if he now realized those truths he preached so often to others, he answered, "Yes O yes!"

On the 16th of February, 1821, Mr. Benson bade farewell to earth. He died without a struggle, or a groan, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and the fiftieth of his ministry in the Methodist connection.

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Account 7

THE LAST SERMON OF GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN (Missionary to Burma)

Below is a portion of hdm0092, "Hazarded Lives," by Edith P. Goodnow.

Mr. Boardman's strength was now rapidly going, and the Karens, anxious to have him make the visit he had promised them, yet concerned lest he tire himself too much by the trip, offered to carry him to the meeting place in a cot on their shoulders. Since he was now so weak it seemed impossible for him to go otherwise, he consented and the procession set out. Through the jungle they went -- the great band of redeemed Karens carrying their dying teacher in a cot on their shoulders -and over the almost impassable mountain ranges and through the deep valleys. Mrs. Boardman went too. She had let her husband go alone on all his pioneer trips and she had stayed at home alone and kept the mission station running smoothly, the schools open, the zayat functioning and had done all the one hundred and one other things that needed to be done. Now her husband needed her, and so she went with him. The Lord had also sent reinforcements and comfort just at the time most needed in the persons of two new missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. Mason, who arrived in Savoy just as the party was starting out. They went along also, and a tremendous introduction to their missionary labors it must have been for them. At last they reached the great pass in the mountains and there, as the Karens had promised, stood the zayat waiting for the teacher God had sent them, and soon the people were gathering from all directions to hear his last messages.

The zayat was a crude shelter for a dying man. The mountain fogs swirled through it by night, the piercing mountain winds blew through it by day, but Mr. Boardman was supremely happy. He said over and over, "If I live to see this one ingathering I may well exclaim with happy Simon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.

The Last Ingathering

He was sinking so fast, however, that it became plain he could not finish examining all who wished to be baptized. Thirty-four had been examined and approved, and they were straightway baptized in a nearby mountain stream by Mr. Mason. Twenty-six remained who promised to come to Savoy and be baptized within a few weeks. Then, after the evening meal, they gathered around the cot for one last message from their beloved teacher. That message has not come down to us, but it might well have been the words of John the beloved apostle, "Little children, love one another, for love is of God."

The next morning the procession started home, all hoping that Mr. Boardman might at least live to reach there. This was not to be, however, for about noon that day he died. He was barely thirty years old. His life was short in years, but great in achievement. He was buried in Savoy, and years later his son wrote this epitaph for his monument:

Sacred to the Memory of George Dana Boardman
American Missionary to Burma
Born Feb. 8, 1801
Died Feb. 11, 1831

His epitaph is written in the adjoining forests. On the reverse side of the monument are these words:

"Ask in the Christian villages of yonder mountains
Who taught you to abandon the worship of demons?
Who raised you from vice to morality?
Who brought you your Bibles, your Sabbaths,
and your words of prayer?
Let the reply be his eulogy."

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Account 8 THE LAST SERMON OF DAVID BRAINERD

This is taken from Brainerd in the Xtras Folder of the HDM CD, "The Life and Diary of David Brainerd, With Notes and Reflections."

The extraordinary frame he was in that evening could not be hid; "his mouth spake out of the abundance of his heart," expressing in a very affecting manner much the same things as are written in his diary; and among very many other extraordinary expressions; which he then uttered,

were such as these; "My heaven is to please God, and glorify him, and to give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory: that is the heaven I long for; that is my religion, and that is my happiness, and always was ever since I suppose I had any true religion: and all those that are of that religion shall meet me in heaven. -- I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there; but to love, and please, and glorify God is all. Had I a thousand souls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God; but I have nothing to give, when all is done. -- It is impossible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God: God himself could not make him happy any other way. I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels: all my desire is to glorify God. -- My heart goes out to the burying place; it seems to me a desirable place: but oh to glorify God! that is it; that is above all. -- It is a great comfort to me to think that I have done a little for God in the world: oh! it is but a very small matter; yet I have done a little; and I lament it that I have not done more for him. -- There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good and finishing God's work, doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world that can yield any satisfaction, besides living to God, pleasing him, and doing his whole will. -- My greatest joy and comfort has been to do something for promoting the interest of religion, and the souls of particular persons: and now in my illness, while I am full of pain and distress from day to day, all the comfort I have is in being able to do some little char (or small piece of work) for God; either by something that I say, or by writing, or some other way."

He intermingled with these and other like expressions, many pathetic counsels to those who were about him: particularly to my children and servants. He applied himself to some of my younger children at this time; calling them to him, and speaking to them one by one; setting before them in a very plain manner the nature and essence of true piety, and its great importance and necessity; earnestly warning them not to rest in any thing short of a true and thorough change of heart, and a life devoted to God. He counselled them not to be slack in the great business of religion, nor in the least to delay it; enforcing his counsels with this, that his words were the word of a dying man: said he, "I shall die here, and here I shall be buried, and here you will see my grave, and do you remember what I have said to you. I am going into eternity; and it is sweet to me to think of eternity: the endlessness of it makes it sweet: but oh, what shall I say to the eternity of the wicked! I cannot mention it, nor think of it; the thought is too dreadful. When you see my grave, then remember what I said to you while I was alive; then think with yourself, how the man who lies in that grave counselled and warned me to prepare for death."

His body seemed to be marvellously strengthened, through the inward vigour and refreshment of his mind; so that, although before he was so weak that he could hardly utter a sentence, yet now he continued his most affecting and profitable discourse to us for more than an hour, with scarce any intermission; and said of it, when he had done, "it was the last sermon that ever he should preach."

...At this time he also said, "I was born on a sabbath-day; and I have reason to think I was new-born on a sabbath-day; and I hope I shall die on this sabbath-day. I shall look upon it as a favour, if it may be the will of God that it should be so."

[However, that was not to be the case. David Brainerd] expired, on Friday, Oct. 9, 1747; when his soul, as we may well conclude, was received by his dear Lord and Master, as an

eminently faithful servant, into that state of perfection of holiness, and fruition of God, which he had so often and so ardently longed for; and was welcomed by the glorious assembly in the upper world, as one peculiarly fitted to join them in their blessed employ and enjoyment.

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Account 9

THE LAST SERMON OF PHINEAS FRANKLIN BRESEE

This is from hdm0091, "Phineas F. Bresee -- A Prince in Israel," by E. A. Girvin

His Last Sermon

In preparing his sermon for the General Assembly at Kansas City, the last he was permitted to attend, Dr. Bresee took the same text. "Be Still, and know that I am God," and wrote a new outline, in which, however, he incorporated nearly everything contained in the foregoing outline. He elaborated, changed the arrangement and order of thought, and enriched the illustrations. The sermon thus diligently and prayerfully prepared was never preached. I shall not set forth the full outline, but will simply give what was not included in the former outline, or was so changed as to be practically new. It is as follows:

Carlyle said: "As I get older, and I am now near the borders of eternity, there comes back to me with increasing force what I learned from the Catechism--that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever."

We are so taught as to be filled with misconceptions of Him. Heresy is rubbed into us from our childhood, and often preached into us, or at us, all through life. I well remember when I was a little child, these facts led me to wonder whether I could escape Him and the hell that I was to be punished in, if I were to crawl into the fire and burn myself up now and end the whole business

The Lord himself says to us, "Be still, and know that I am God." He speaks thus gently and earnestly to us amid the conventions and confusion of the world; amid the removal of things from their foundations; amid roaring, tumultuous seas; amid the overwhelmed and sinking mountains. Amid all this He hides away in a quiet, protected place, and says, "Be still, and know that I am God." He evidently desires us to see it, and know what an uncertain thing it all is. He may, and probably does, desire that we hear some voice of His in it all, and yet there is in it no clear, divine utterance. The clear utterance is not in the whirlwind or earthquake or fire. The clear utterance is the clear voice of God. There is a great utterance in Job. After describing one of the wildest of manifestations, he says, "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his way, but how small a whisper do we hear of him." All nature, all history, are but a small whisper of Him. To know Him, there must be direct manifestation and revelation to human consciousness.

There must be silence about us. Dr. McClarren, writing of Dr. Joseph Parker, in the days of his great power at the Temple, in London, and his magnificent work in so many ways, speaks of the necessity of his living much alone, isolated from society, giving himself to hearing the voices and seeing the visions of divine truth.

A Peculiar Necessity. This is a peculiar necessity. The voices of the world must not charm or confuse us. They must not fill our ears, or clutter our souls. There must be solitude unto God.

Silence here is unutterable desperation. The man who is declaring his determination, who is giving voice to his feelings, who can find words for his passion, who can give utterance to his intensity, is still dealing with surface conditions. There is passion too deep for utterance. The deepest depths are unmoved by surface currents. There is a silence that is meaningless. Silence from the very absence of thought or feeling or emotion. When feeling begins, there is usually an outcry; but when feeling gets deep, the outcry ceases. I have often marked this at the altar. You are at the end of things. You are through with arguments, through with appeals--simply gazing, with every power of the mind alert, with every avenue open. The eye is strained, the ear is open, the hand outstretched. I am in one mighty effort of discovery. I am looking for the unseen. I am open to visions of the infinite. I am stretching out my hand to feel the robes of divine personality. I hear Him say, "Be still, and know that I am God." From the depths of my soul I am gazing toward horizons. I am looking to the hills.

My mind is open to the avenues of His revelation. I look at the environments about me, the universe in which I find myself. I am as one awakened in a great palace. I walk up and down the halls. I open the doors and enter the great rooms. I look upon the magnificent pictures upon the walls, and the fine sculptuary in the niches. I roam through the great library. There are couches here and there, and I sit down to rest. I begin to wonder where the owner is. I admire the skill, the thought back of it all. I lie down and rest, and wake and wonder. My curiosity is excited, and I press on. The rooms are cleanly swept and everything is freshly dusted. I will find Him soon. I press on into the parlor--a book lies open upon the desk; He can not be far away. I come to the dining-room; the table is freshly spread with viands. I sit down and eat. So in this world: there is plan everywhere; marks of His skill everywhere; footprints everywhere; prepared food; lighted fires; handiwork, care, and planning everywhere.

The Ages. I turn my eyes out along the ages. Surely God is in His temple. I am unable to catch up with Him in Nature, but surely I will find Him among men. Man is His masterpiece in creation-- man, the thinker, the reasoner, the seeker after the cause of things, the moral being with a sense of right and wrong; man with the ages for the platform of his activities; man working out his destiny. Surely, here I will find God. I have sought Him there. I have walked slowly through a hundred generations. Men have told me of Him. Men have told me that He had been among them; that He veiled Himself in flame; that He hid Himself in light; how He manifested Himself in flesh; that they beheld His glory; how He spoke in terrifying tones and in gentle whispers which soothed and blessed; how He had overturned empires and kingdoms, and brought things to pass. But Him I found not. I have cried out with Job, "O, that I knew him!" and with David, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

Footsore, weary, and worn, I have sat down under the stars, with the shadows of the ages upon me, and closing my eyes, I have said: "O, where is He whom my soul desireth to know? May I not know Him in Agnosticism, the end, after all?" And I have heard clearly the voice, "Be still, and know that I am God."

In Spiritual Realms. It began to come in upon me that God is Spirit, that He will be found in spiritual realms, that He is to be known in the Spirit; that it is vain for me to search for Him among the mountains, or to march through the centuries to find Him; that, if I found Him, if I came to know Him, it would be in the depths of my own Spirit. It was then that I heard these words of revelation, "Be still, and know that I am God."

There is knowledge which does not come through the eye, or ear, or sense of touch; that does not come from sense or memory, or imagination, or conscience, or judgment. I do not say that it comes without them, or any one of them. But no one of them seems to be the real avenue of it.

There seems to be a direct way to human consciousness--a way by which the Spirit-man comes to know spiritual personalities. How much sensuous and mental faculties may be avenues, it is difficult to tell. How much a super-sensuous and intellectual avenue is opened up to the human spirit, may be difficult to tell. But that into our consciousness comes knowledge of Spirit personality-- other than self--there seems no room for doubt.

When the child Samuel heard again his name called, it was not the ear that caught and conveyed the sound. When Isaiah saw that vision and heard those words, there was something more and other than eyes and ears and sense of touch, which revealed it to his inner consciousness. The same was true when Moses stood on Sinai, or on Pisgah's brow, and saw the promised land; when John saw heavenly visions on the Isle of Patmos; and when Paul was lifted to the third heaven, and heard words that were unutterable.

An Open Vision. God has a way of manifesting Himself directly to the spirit of man. The pure in heart shall see God--not as a matter of the future; but the very condition of a pure heart is an open vision of Him.

The knowledge of Him is as mysterious as the way of knowing Him; it is even more so. How those who have known Him have tried to tell it! They have only been able to say, "The mystery so long hid, has been made known unto me by the Spirit."

The longing to know Him finds large expression. David cries out, "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Paul said, "I count all things but loss, that I might know him." Augustine said, "The heart is restless till it rests in Thee." Charles Wesley said, "In vain thou strugglest to get free, I never will unloose my hold."

But when men come to tell what the knowledge itself is, they are silent. John says of that supreme manifestation of Him, "We saw his glory." Paul says, "I heard." There are some things we know that we can give expression to, or describe. There are other things which we can only describe by telling their effect upon us. The knowledge of God seems to be of this class. When men undertake to tell us, they merely begin to describe how they themselves felt.

Job says: "I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself." Isaiah says "I saw the Lord." John Wesley says, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Charles Wesley says:

"'Tis love! 'tis love! Thou diedst for me!
I hear Thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Pure, universal love Thou art."

Samuel Medley said:

"O could I speak the matchless worth,
O could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Savior shine;
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,
And vie with Gabriel while he sings,
In notes almost divine."

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Account 10

THE LAST SERMON OF THOMAS COKE

This is from hdm0428, "History of Methodist Reform," Volume I, by Edward J. Drinkhouse.

He was authorized to take seven men, including one for southern Africa, and go to India. He at once made his additional preparations. The volunteers were James Lynch, John McKenny, William Ault, George Erskine, William M. Howard, Thomas H. Squance, Benjamin Clough, and the wives of Howard and Ault, and these with Coke, made the missionary company. They assembled at Portsmouth, well furnished, including a printing-press and type.

Coke rose with the occasion and all his Christian manliness asserted itself. He preached his last sermon at Portsmouth. A divine afflatus comes upon men in great emergencies, and their utterances are prophetic. "It is of little consequence," said he in it, "whether we take our flight from the land of our nativity, from the trackless ocean, or the shores of Ceylon!" The last sentence of the sermon was equally so, "God will give us our part in the first resurrection, that on us the second death may have no power." On the 30th of December, 1813, they set sail in a fleet of six Indiamen, more than twenty merchant vessels and three ships of war for convoy. On the 10th of February the wife of Ault, a delicate woman, died and was buried at sea. In the Indian Ocean Coke's health rapidly declined. He kept himself busy reading and writing in his cabin. He was on board one of the Indiamen with two of the missionaries. On the morning of the 3d of May his servant knocked at his cabin door, but received no response. He opened it and beheld the lifeless body of Coke stretched upon the floor. He must have died before midnight. It is supposed that he rose to call for help, when he was stricken with apoplexy. The news was signaled to the fleet. A coffin was made, and at five in the afternoon, with the usual impressive ceremonies, the body was borne to the leeward gangway, where it was covered with signal flags; the soldiers were drawn up in rank on the deck, the bell of the ship tolled, one of the missionaries read the burial service, and, at the moment the sun sank below the rim of the Indian Ocean, the coffin, laden with four cannon-balls, was cast into the deep. It was fitting thus that his requiem through the ages should be

sung by the waves of the sea as they wash the shores of all continents. He died in his sixty-seventh year.

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Account 11

THE LAST SERMON OF GEORGE GRIMSTON COOKMAN
(Alfred Cookman's Father -- Chaplain of the U.S. Congress)

This account is taken from hdm0680, "Alfred Cookman's Father, George Grimston Cookman," by Duane V. Maxey.

The disaster which removed Mr. Cookman from the scene of his usefulness and from the world was fast approaching. In the spring of 1841 he determined to visit England, and all his plans were accordingly made to sail from New York early in March.

"The session of Congress was about to close upon the administration of Mr. Van Buren. The inauguration of General Harrison was soon to take place. Mr. Cookman had all his arrangements made to visit England on the steamer President. The first dispatch from the new Administration was to be confided to his charge. The next Sabbath he was to take leave of the members of Congress in his farewell sermon. The day came. An hour before the usual time the crowd was seen filling the pavement of the avenue, and passing up the hill to Representative Hall, which was soon filled to overflowing, and hundreds, unable to get seats, went away disappointed. I obtained a seat early in front of the Clerk's desk. John Quincy Adams sat in the Speaker's chair, facing Mr. Cookman. The whole space on the rostrum and steps was filled with Senators and Representatives. The moment had come. Mr. Cookman, evidently much affected, kneeled in a thrilling prayer, and rose with his eyes blinded with tears. His voice faltered with suppressed emotion as he gave out the hymn,

"When marshaled on the mighty plain,
The glittering hosts bestud the sky,
One Star alone of all the train
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

"Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks,
From every host, from every gem;
But one alone the Saviour speaks,
It is the star of Bethlehem.

"Once on the raging seas I rode,
The storm was loud, the night was dark
The ocean yawned, and rudely blowed
The wind that tossed my foundering bark.'

"The hymn was sung by Mr. Cookman alone. I can yet, in imagination, hear his voice, as it filled the large hall, and the last sounds, with their echoes, died away in the dome.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'

"Mr. Cookman was more affected when he gave us the text than I had ever seen him before. He several times passed his handkerchief over his eyes before he began. The first sentences are fresh in my recollection:

"When Massillon, one of the greatest divines that France ever knew, was called to preach the funeral service of the departed king, in the Cathedral, at Paris, before the reigning king, the royal family, the chambers, and the grandees of France, he took with him to the sacred desk a little golden urn, containing a lock of hair of the late king. The immense congregation was seated, and the silence of death reigned. Massillon arose, held the little urn in his fingers, his hand resting upon the sacred cushion. All eyes were intently fixed upon him. Moments, minutes passed -- Massillon stood motionless, pale as a statue; the feeling became intense; many believed he was struck dumb before the august assembly; many sighed and groaned aloud; many eyes were suffused with tears, when the hand of Massillon was seen slowly raising the little golden urn, his eyes fixed upon the king. As his hand returned again to the cushion, the loud and solemn voice of Massillon was heard in every part of the Cathedral, 'God alone is great!' So I say to you today, my beloved hearers, there is no human greatness -- 'God alone is great!'

"The subject was on the day of judgment. I had heard it preached before many times, but never as I heard it then. The immense congregation was held almost breathless with the most beautiful and powerful sermon I ever heard. He spoke of the final separation on the great day of judgment, and fancied the anger of the Lord locking the door that led to the bottomless pit, stepping upon the ramparts, letting fall the key into the abyss below, and dropping the last tear over fallen and condemned man. He closed -- "I go to the land of my birth, to press once more to my heart my aged father and drop a tear on the grave of my sainted mother; farewell! -- farewell!" and he sank down overpowered to his seat, while the whole congregation responded with sympathizing tears."

A correspondent of the National Intelligencer, describing the same scene, after quoting Mr. Cookman's closing words, says:

"There was something prophetic, solemn, and deeply affecting in the tones and manner of the preacher ... All who had known him, or who had listened with wrapt attention to the eloquence which gushed from his lips, touched as with a living coal from the altar, were moved to tears, and seemed to feel as if they were taking in reality a last farewell of one who had given a new ardor to their piety, and thrown an additional interest into the sanctuary. The whole scene was in no ordinary degree grand, imposing, and affecting. The magnificent hall, a fit temple for the worship of the living God; the crowd that had assembled to hear the last sermon of the minister whose eloquence they so much admired; the attitude of the preacher, and the solemn and prophetic farewell, all conspired to excite feelings of the deepest solemnity and of the most intense interest."

Mr. Cookman spent a few weeks about Washington, completing his arrangements and taking leave of friends, and immediately after the first dispatch of the new Administration was prepared by Mr. Webster and committed to him, he left for New York. His last words to the gentleman so freely quoted from were, "May Heaven bless you, Mr. Smith; if ever I return you shall see me in the West." He spent Sunday, 7th of March, in Philadelphia, worshipping with and taking the communion at the hands of his friend, the Rev. Dr. Suddards, rector of Grace Protestant Episcopal Church. On Monday he went to New York, and on Tuesday evening preached his last sermon in the Vestry Street Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he was to become the pastor after his return from England. He had intended to go to Boston and there take one of the Cunard steamers, but at the solicitation of friends changed his mind, and embarked on the steam-ship President at New York on the 11th, for Liverpool. He left amid the tears and congratulations of friends. Neither the vessel nor any of her company was ever after heard from.

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This is material about "THE LAST SERMON OF GEORGE GRIMSTON COOKMAN" is taken from hdm0859, "Life Sketches of Alfred Cookman," by William McDonald.

One year later, 1841, his father's chaplaincy closed, and he arranged to visit England, and thought at first to take Alfred with him, but subsequently changed his purpose, Alfred saying, "I will stay with my mother, and help her take care of the children." His father's fame was commensurate with the American Republic, but that brilliant orb was soon to set at noonday. Among his last words to his children, as they sat by the fireside, were these, "Now, boys, if your father sinks in the ocean, his soul will go direct to God, and you will meet him in heaven." He preached his last sermon in the Vestry Street Methodist Church, New York City, Monday, March 9th, where he was to be stationed on his return. He had intended to take a Cunard steamer from Boston, but was induced to change his mind, and embarked on board the steamship President, March 11th, and, as we have before said, neither steamer nor passengers were ever after heard from. No voice from the sea ever came to tell the story of their end. There were many conjectures, but no facts upon which to base them. Both sides of the Atlantic felt deeply the terrible shock. The sorrow which fell upon the Cookman home can be better imagined than described. Day after day, and week after week, the suspense was heart-rending. Mrs. Cookman could not give up hope, but as time passed on and no tidings from the sea came, it was hope against hope. Alfred was the eldest of a family of six, and they looked to him for consolation. The mother was in the agonies of despair. It seemed at times as though her mind could not stand the fearful pressure. Hopes so bright, prospects of usefulness and domestic bliss so inspiring to her enthusiastic heart, to be blighted in a day, and a darkness that could be more than felt succeed so suddenly, seemed utterly unbearable. The deepest gloom seemed to rest upon her for at least two years. She could not endure to hear her husband's name pronounced in her presence without the deepest sorrow, so that it was carefully avoided. Alfred was but thirteen years of age, but his composure in the presence of his afflicted, heartbroken mother was remarkable for one of his years. He used to say in after years, "How I did dread to return home from the post-office to meet my dear mother without a letter, and see her disappointment!"

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Account 12

THE LAST SERMON OF ALFRED COOKMAN

(Saintly Holiness Advocate -- Jan. 4, 1828-Nov. 13, 1871)

This is from hdm0602, "The Life of Alfred Cookman," by Henry B. Ridgaway.

On Sunday, the 22d of October [1871], he performed his last public services. He had said many times when in health, "I would like to die, if it is God's will, with my armor on, and preach by my death as well as by my life." He often spoke of the Rev. Dudley Tyng, with whom he was intimately associated in Philadelphia, and said, "It was glorious to die as he did, for his dying testimony was yet echoing through the world." He even said he "would prefer to die in the pulpit." His wish, though not literally, was about to be substantially gratified. His work and his life were to end together. His death was to be the most effective sermon of his whole career -- a fitting vindication and illustration of the power of the doctrines he had preached and lived -- a death which, for its singular spiritual glory, is destined to be spoken of while the annals of Christian saints shall be read, and which for its wondrous force will be quoted and dwelt upon as a divine inspiration while there shall be a Church to cherish the memory of the good, or a trembling believer who shall need cheer amid the stern struggles of life and death.

In the morning he preached from Mark iv., 25, "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" -- a very solemn and effective sermon. In the afternoon he visited the Sabbath School, as was his custom, and shook hands with every teacher and scholar. Toward evening he complained of not feeling well, and Mrs. Cookman was very anxious to get some one to fill his pulpit for the evening service. But he would not consent, saying, "I think I have a message from God for this people; I shall preach from 'the faded leaf.'" As he arose to announce his text, he held in his hand a faded leaf, saying "this is my text, 'We all do fade as a leaf.'" Several persons remarked afterward to his wife that "he looked like one transfigured." A lady said to her husband, "She did not think that Fletcher could have looked more seraphic." As he finished his sermon his feet gave way, and passing from the pulpit he handed the leaf to a friend, saying, "The leaf and the preacher are very much alike -- fading." He limped home, and when his wife received him in the parlor he was almost distracted with pain. As he was assisted to his chamber he remarked to her, "I have preached my own experience tonight, 'fading as a leaf.'"

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The following concerning Alfred Cookman's triumphant passing is taken from hdm0269, "SWEEPING THROUGH THE GATES," compiled by Duane V. Maxey

He left his pulpit for his chamber, where he lingered for three weeks, suffering all that the mortal could well endure. But during every hour of that time, while his very breath was turned to moans, and anguish throbbed in almost every vein, he was filled with a glory like that which beamed from the face of Stephen. In the midst of his severest paroxysms of suffering he praised God with joyful lip. He remarked to the writer, "If Jesus should enter my room and ask, 'Will you have life or death?' I would say, 'Blessed Jesus, I have no choice, do as it pleases thee.' Oh, I am so sweetly washed in the blood of the Lamb!"

To his aged mother he said, "To you, my dear mother, more than to any other one, save the Lord Jesus, am I indebted for all that I am. Your words, your prayers, your holy example, your counsels, have done more than anything else to make me all that I am as a Christian, and a Christian minister." On Monday, the 13th of November, his symptoms became more alarming. And yet very little doubt was entertained by his friends of his recovery. But about eight o'clock in the evening, by the rupture of a blood vessel in the head, he became unconscious, in which state he continued until midnight, when the wheels of life stood still, and the mortal career of Alfred Cookman was ended.

Just before the loss of consciousness, feeling that he was nearing the gates of the Golden City, and that the chariot was moving with more than mortal swiftness, he exclaimed, "I am sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."

These were his last words, on earth, -- words which will be repeated by the lovers of Jesus so long as the blood cleanses.

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Account 13

THE LAST SERMON OF JOSEPH COWNLEY (Early English Methodist Itinerant)

This is from hdm0365, "The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," Volume 2, by Thomas Jackson.

In the former part of 1792 it was evident to many of his friends, that he was ripening for eternity. The concerns of his everlasting state absorbed all his soul. In prayer with his family and friends, the tears flowed from his eyes, and his approaches to the throne of grace indicated the closest union with God. Indeed, life had no ties to retain him. He had outlived his first, and many of his warmest, friends; for most of those who had shared his friendship, and divided his love, he had seen carried to the grave. In the decline of life there is something melancholy in the loss of our earliest intimates, with whom our weaknesses were familiar, and our thoughts ripened through experience into knowledge; whose hopes and fears, and general character, resembled our own. But to him, futurity had prospects in reserve: though a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Perronet, had left him, yet it was not a separation for ever. "This mortal being only can decay;" and the hopes of a blessed reunion cheered the approach of dissolution.

After the London Conference, he continued as usual his visits to the neighboring societies. In September, on his return from Hallington to Prudhoe, he caught cold, which brought on the complaint in his stomach. He preached in the greatest agonies of pain, both there and at Ovington. His last sermon was from Psalm cv. 3, "Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord;" and with this, on the Lord's day, September 23d, concluded the labors of near half a century. The following day he returned to Newcastle, and the surgeon of the family was sent for, but prescribed without effect. On my return from the country that evening, I found Mr. Cownley to all appearance approaching his dissolution. We proposed sending for a physician, which, at first, Mr. Cownley

opposed, saying, "No: my heavenly Father, He is the best Physician; He is my only Physician." He then said, "Lord, after all that I have done, I am the chief of sinners." Soon after, I observed to him, that the blood of the Redeemer was precious in our dying moments: he replied, "O, precious! O, precious! What should I do but for that?" Dr. Clarke then arrived, and, seeing him in the extreme of pain, said, "Do not be afraid." Mr. Cownley answered, "The fear of death, sir, has long since been removed! I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid lest I should become impatient under this affliction."

...October 8th, the day of his death, I sat with him for several hours. He conversed on a variety of subjects, with a vivacity that I have but seldom witnessed in his liveliest moments. A little after four o'clock I left him to fulfill an engagement with a friend: with difficulty I gained his consent, but promised to return immediately after preaching. It was the last farewell; and little did I think it was our final separation. Just as the service in the chapel was finished I received the message of his danger, and arrived in time to see his left eye close, and to feel the flutter of an expiring pulse. A few minutes after eight Mr. Cownley sat down to supper. His daughter Mary had withdrawn into an adjoining apartment: she heard a noise, returned, but he was speechless. The family were alarmed, his friends and the physician sent for, but all in vain.

"Death broke at once the vital chain,
And forced the soul the nearest way."

He reclined his head on the chair, and, without a struggle or a groan, expired.

"He's gone, --
Lost for a while, and numbered with the dead;
But there's a day when I shall meet my friend:
Meet him, O transport! and together spend
Eternity itself, where pleasures cannot end."

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Account 14
THE LAST SERMON OF AARON L. CULVER
(M. E. Itinerant in the Last Part of the 19th Century)

This is from hdm 1566, "Last Words and Old-Time Memories," by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis.

In sermonizing he ever had an eye to immediate results. Brother Culver was mighty in prayer. We can not forget the hour at Poughkeepsie when he cried, "Lord, drive the devil out! out!! out!!!" and scoffers fled from the church, pale and trembling, and where a work of grace broke out that eight which never ceased until one hundred souls were "born again;" nor can we fail to remember that morning petition at Cold Spring for the healing of Mrs. Dalzell, who mended from that hour, though for fourteen months she had not left her bed; nor that plea to Heaven which once made his study at Poughkeepsie a transfiguration mount, when some lay like dead men. Brother Culver was never in robust health. In the fall of 1876 he preached his last sermon to his weeping

people at Cold Springs. He was weak and pale. His text was, " If ye loved me ye would rejoice, I said unto you, I go unto my Father." A fitting passage for one who stood with one foot on the earth and the other on the step of the chariot, about to enter it and mount the skies. In December, 1876, he wrote from Columbia, S. C., where He had gone to spend the winter: "I have but little ecstasy, but great peace; my Patmos consists in being touched by said, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last.' " After returning from the South he failed rapidly, but was ever triumphant in Christ. He said, "After an experience of twenty-four years, the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient. He saves me. There is no question about that. I realize the truth of the words, 'kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.'" On Sunday evening, October 11th, he rounded the cape, dropped the anchor, and so a world, heretofore silent and formless, burst upon his vision...

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Account 15

THE LAST SERMON OF ALEXANDER CUMMINS

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm0230, "Sketches of Western Methodism," by James Bradley Finley.

"Alexander Cummins was a man of a sound mind and good judgment, particularly in spiritual matters. He took considerable pains to improve his mind by reading and a close application to study. As a man and acquaintance, he was kind, and agreeable, and very much respected. As a husband, he was affectionate and provident. As a parent, he was tender, yet strict and particular. As a Christian, he was humble, pious, devout, sober, and cheerful. As a minister, he was regular, zealous, acceptable, and useful. His language was good; his sermons, in the general, pointed and weighty. His talents were not the most brilliant, but his greatness consisted in variety and goodness. And such was his zeal, variety, and usefulness, that few, if any, were more acceptable or popular. His success has been more than ordinary. I have been informed that many were converted during the first years of his ministry. The first information I ever received concerning him was just after he had left his third circuit. I formed an acquaintance in several neighborhoods in that circuit, in which his zeal and usefulness were much spoken of; and when I traveled that circuit nine years afterward, I found several of his spiritual children, who were still pressing through difficulties on their journey to the promised land.

My acquaintance with him commenced in the latter end of the year 1815, at which time we were appointed to labor together on the Miami circuit. I was young and inexperienced, but in him I found a father, an instructor, and a firm friend. Long shall I remember the good advice and many instructions I received, and the pious examples set before me by the beloved minister whose funeral sermon I preach. He labored that year with diligence, zeal, and success. His zeal, piety, and usefulness while stationed in Cincinnati the two following years, I need scarcely mention; you, my brethren, are his record; you call to recollection his piety, his devotion, his fervor, his diligence, his watchfulness, his anxiety, his pathetic sermons, his fervent prayers. You call to recollection the happy hours you enjoyed under his ministry; and many of you, I presume, consider him as the instrument of your conversion. You knew him as your spiritual parent under God, and will have cause to praise God forever that you have had the privilege of sitting under his ministry.

The three years he labored as a presiding elder in Kentucky, he was acceptable and useful, highly esteemed by preachers and people. His rides were long, and, in some parts, rough and mountainous, and his labors so abundant as to exhaust his debilitated system. The district he has traveled the two past years is also large and very laborious. He, however, performed his duties acceptably and usefully, but with great pain, often traveling and preaching when he ought to have had rest, particularly the last six months. I have already said considerable concerning our departed brother; but I can not forbear mentioning his wisdom and firmness as a governor in the Church. It was here he excelled; here his true greatness appeared. He was not one of those hasty, rash sort of men, but firm and fixed. His weakly constitution, which was severely racked with incessant labor; was often attacked with wasting disease; but he bore all with Christian patience. About six months before his death he was severely afflicted with the measles; but, by the Divine blessing, he partially recovered, and entered again upon his work. And I think it probable that his exertion, before he was fully restored to health, was one cause of bringing on the disease which terminated his earthly career. He visited the circuit of which I had charge but a short time before he was taken with his last sickness, and seemed equally diligent and fervent as formerly, though hardly able to be about. He left our camp meeting on Sabbath evening, and came home. On the following Friday, rode out to Mechanicsburg, about eighteen miles from this place, [Cincinnati,] to attend a quarterly meeting. On Saturday he preached his last sermon, with his usual zeal and pathos, on 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.' That night he was attacked with the disease which terminated in his death. He was brought home in a wagon, and laid on his bed, where he remained for eight weeks, a man of sufferings, racked with pain and scorched with fever; but he bore all without murmuring. he was grateful for every kindness shown him, and appeared calm, resigned, and patient. He said, indeed, but little about dying; nor did he praise God aloud as some have done. It was not his usual way when in health; but what he did say was satisfactory. To one friend he said that he had no anxiety about living, but should be willing to live till he could settle up his temporal business, if it was the will of the Lord, because he could do it better than others, and thereby prevent trouble after his death ; but he was, nevertheless, willing to resign all into the hands of the Lord. I visited him one week before his death for the first time, and several times afterward. On one of my visits I talked to him respecting the state of his mind. He seemed composed and resigned, and said he felt that his peace was made with God. The brother who attended on him asked him, a few hours before his death, if he was sensible that he would soon go. He said, 'Yes, I shall soon be in eternity.' The brother asked him if he had any doubts or fears. He said, 'Not any; my way is clear.' his departure was on the 27th day of September, 1828, a little before seven o'clock in the evening. Thus lived and thus died our beloved brother Cummins, a pattern of piety, a waymark to heaven. We do not mean to say that he had no failings; but we say they were comparatively few. He now rests from his labors and his works follow him."

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Account 16

THE LAST SERMON OF LORENZO DOW

(Eccentric But Effective Early Holiness Advocate)

This is from hdm1600, "Sketches of the Founders of the Methodist Protestant Church, and Its Bibliography," by T. H. Colhouer.

In 1834, Lorenzo Dow, preached his last sermon here, in his [Thomas H. Stockton's] pulpit in Georgetown, D. C.: was taken sick, and died in the house of one of his members, and Mr. Stockton performed the funeral obsequies of this good, but wonderfully eccentric man.

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Account 17

THE LAST SERMON OF NATHAN EMERY

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm0230, "Sketches of Western Methodism," by James Bradley Finley.

Nathan Emery was born in the town of Minot, Cumberland county, Maine, on the 5th of August, 1780. He was blessed with a pious mother, and, through her godly admonitions and holy example, lasting religious impressions were made upon his young and tender heart. In the year 1794, the region of country where he lived was visited by a Methodist preacher, and his father's house became a preaching-place, a Bethel in the wilderness, where the man of God lifted up his voice in exhortation and prayer. How many will thank God in the day of eternity for that system of itinerancy which sent the feet of messengers of glad tidings over the mountains and through the vales, over the plains and along the rivers, to visit the destitute regions and offer the inhabitants the blessings of salvation! Under the ministrations of these Gospel heralds, young Emery became an early convert to Christ, and enrolled himself among the people of God. At the age of sixteen he was appointed leader of a class, and in this capacity he served the Church with all fidelity till he was called, in the providence of God, to a more extended field of labor and usefulness....

For a period of more than twenty years Nathan Emery labored with great acceptability and usefulness in the itinerant field, filling several of the more important stations in the New England conference. Excessive labors, however, broke down his constitution, and he became so much enfeebled that it was necessary for him to superannuate, which he did in the year 1821. In the year 1828 he was employed by the presiding elder of Lancaster district, Rev. David Young, to travel the Columbus circuit as a supply, Samuel Hamilton being his colleague. At the expiration of this year, finding that he would be able to do effective service again in the itinerant ranks, he was readmitted as a member of the Ohio conference, and stationed at Zanesville...

After father Emery had finished his two years on the station, he was sent to Cincinnati, in company with ourself, E. W. Sehon, and S. A. Latta, where he labored with his accustomed zeal and success... In the year 1836 he was, at the urgent solicitation of the Directors of the Ohio Penitentiary, appointed as chaplain to said institution. In this new field, all the sympathies of his benevolent nature were taxed to their utmost. He was untiring in imparting instruction, admonition, and comfort to those who, by violation of the laws of the land, had excluded themselves from society. His efforts to reform hardened criminals was not without its effect. Many an obdurate heart was made to feel the force of a kindness and sympathy to which for years they had been strangers, and many an eye, which had been as a sealed fountain, was made, like the smitten rock in the desert, to gush forth with penitential tears. All criminals incarcerated within the gloomy walls of a prison are not, as some would suppose, lost to hope and heaven. Many that we

ourselves know have been truly converted, and have given evidence thereof in the fruits of righteousness, years after they have served out their time in the penitentiary. No man, with a cold, unsympathetic heart, should ever have any control in the instruction or government of a prison, as the discipline there is designed to be, under the regulation of our laws, of a reformatory character.

In the year 1837 he was appointed to Delaware circuit, at the close of which, from old age and feebleness, he was obliged to desist from labor, and take a superannuated relation, in which he continued till the day of his death. On all his fields of labor in the Ohio conference, he was in toils more abundant, ever active and zealous in his Master's service. No one ever knew father Emery either unemployed or triflingly employed. He was fully impressed with the idea that he had one great work to perform, and he was straitened till that work was accomplished. His whole study seemed to be to finish the work which had been assigned him, that in the end he might testify rejoicingly the grace of God.

The period at last came which was to terminate his labors in the kingdom and patience of Jesus. For some time before his death he had been in feeble and declining health, yet he still continued his labors both on the farm and in the pulpit up to the very close of life. On Sabbath, May 20, 1849, he preached, and gave out an appointment for the succeeding Sabbath; but it was his last sermon. The following Tuesday he was suddenly and violently attacked with inflammation of the bowels, from which he suffered most intensely; but he was enabled to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." Sabbath at length came, the day on which he had announced in his congregation, Providence permitting, he would preach; but instead of going into the sanctuary below to warn sinners, and comfort mourners, and build up believers, just about the time he should have ascended the pulpit he entered the sanctuary above, the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to wave that palm, and sing that song, and wear that crown we have so often heard him glowingly describe in his happiest hours.

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Account 18

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN FLETCHER (Saintly Opponent of Antinomianism)

This is from hdm0004, "The Life of John Fletcher" by an anonymous "Friend Of Sabbath-Schools."

For a short time previous to his last illness, he was deeply impressed with the brevity of life and the nearness of eternity. He was much engaged in prayer that he might do and suffer all the will of God. Although thus impressed with the weight of eternal things, yet he showed an unusual cheerfulness and liveliness in every part of his work, and seemed to increase in bodily vigor as well as in spiritual strength. Having fought the good fight of faith, he was now approaching the end of his course with joy and triumph.

On Thursday, August 4, he was occupied in his usual parish duties, from three in the afternoon until nine in the evening. He remarked on his return home, that he had taken cold. On Friday and Saturday he was unwell but much engaged in prayer.

Saturday evening he was much worse and had considerable fever. Believing it to be his duty to attend the usual services on the next Sabbath, he would listen to no persuasion to relinquish his purpose. When a neighboring clergyman offered to supply his place, Mr. Fletcher assured him with a holy confidence, that God would sufficiently strengthen him to go through the duties of the day.

Sunday 7. He attended the church, and opened the reading service with apparent strength; but he had not proceeded far, when his countenance changed, his voice faltered, and he with difficulty kept himself from fainting. He was solicited to desist, but as if conscious he was engaged in his last public work, he mildly refused, and struggling against an almost insupportable languor, he constrained himself to continue the service. The windows being opened, he appeared to be a little refreshed, and began to preach with a strength and recollection that surprised all present. The subject of his discourse was, the mercy of God; and while he expatiated on its unsearchable extent, its eternal duration, and its astonishing effects, he appeared to be carried above all the infirmities of humanity. On this solemn occasion there was something in his appearance and manner that gave the word an irresistible influence. An awful concern was awakened through the whole assembly, and almost every heart was greatly affected.

After sermon, being about to administer the Lord's Supper, he walked up to the communion table uttering these words, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim before the mercy seat." The scene now became almost insupportable. Groans were heard and tears were seen on every side. In performing this service he was exhausted several times, and sunk down on the communion table; still he resumed his sacred work, and with his dying hands cheerfully distributed the symbols of a dying Saviour's love. During the administration of this ordinance, he gave out several verses of hymns, and delivered many affectionate exhortations to his people, calling upon them to celebrate the mercy of God in songs of adoration and praise. And having finished the services, which had lasted nearly four hours, he was supported from the altar to his chamber: after laying some time in a swoon he came to, but never walked out again.

After having slept some time, on awaking, he very pleasantly said to Mrs. Fletcher, "Now my dear, thou seest I am no worse for doing the Lord's work. He never fails me when I trust in him." He continued in a most delightful frame of mind through the evening. At night his fever returned, but it was not violent, and yet his strength decreased very fast.

On Monday and Tuesday he lay on a couch in his study. He possessed the same cheerful, happy frame of mind that he had enjoyed for a length of time. Mrs. Fletcher asked him, "Have you any conviction that God is about to take you?" He replied, "No; only I see death so inexpressibly near, that we both seem to stand on the verge of eternity."

Wednesday, he observed to Mrs. Fletcher, that he had received such a manifestation of the meaning of those words, "God is love," as he could never express. "It fills my heart," said he. "Shout! Shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" He had now arrived at that desirable point where the last rapturous discoveries are made to the souls of dying saints. Roused as it were by the shouts of angels and kindled into a rapture by the visions of glory, he broke out into this song of holy triumph... the moment drew nigh when earth was to be swallowed

up of life. All was silent -- when the messenger arrived and performed his commission with so much stillness and secrecy, that the moment of its completion could not be determined. His lips ceased to move -- the purple current ceased to flow -- the wheels of life stood still -- his warfare was accomplished, and his happy spirit took its everlasting flight.

Such was the death of this eminently holy, laborious, and useful pastor. He died in the vicarage at Madeley, on the evening of Sunday, August 14, 1786, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

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Account 19

THE LAST SERMON OF FREEBORN GARRETTSON

(Mighty American Methodist Evangelist During the Revolutionary War)

This is from hdm0013, "The Life of Freeborn Garrettson," by Nathan Bangs.

On the 17th of August, 1827, after dining with his family with great cheerfulness, and commending them to God in prayer, Mr. Garrettson left home for the city of New York. On his arrival in the city he preached his last sermon in the Duane Street church, on the words of St. Peter, "But grow in grace," and then administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to a large number of communicants. It was remarked by some who were present on that occasion, that Mr. Garrettson preached with unusual warmth and energy, a divine unction attending the word. Thus this venerable servant of God closed his public labors in pressing upon his brethren the necessity of going forward in the "work of faith and labor of love," and in participating with them in "drinking of the fruit of the vine," in anticipation of drinking it anew with them in the kingdom of God.

Soon after, he was violently seized with a disease called the strangury. Dr. Mott, a surgeon of established reputation in the city of New York, was immediately called; but though his applications afforded a temporary relief, the disease was so obstinately fixed as to resist the power of all attempts to arrest its progress. To Mrs. Garrettson and his daughter the mournful tidings of his illness were speedily conveyed, and they hastened to the city to comfort him, and if possible to administer relief. But the hand of death had arrested him. I was absent from the city at the time he was taken ill. On my return, hearing of his illness and the nature of his disorder, it immediately came to my mind that "this sickness was unto death." As soon as convenient I repaired to the chamber where he was confined, and had a long conversation with him. He seemed to entertain but slender hopes of recovery, and observed, that should the disease be so far removed as to permit him to live a little longer, he should be a prisoner all his days. Though on the first approach of the disease, which was of a most painful character, he manifested some little restlessness, as if nature struggled involuntarily to free itself from suffering, he soon bowed in humble submission to the divine will, and evinced an unshaken confidence in the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the conversation to which I have alluded, he unbosomed himself with great freedom, rehearsed the goodness of God, which had been so abundantly manifested to him through every period of his life; at the same time, as was usual with him, expressed himself in terms of the deepest self-abasement. At one time he would express his admiration of the perfections of God, as

manifested in creation, and more especially in the grand system of redemption, and then cry out with holy rapture, "I am filled with the perfect love of God." With much feeling and emphasis he said, "My hope is all founded in the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus; in this hope I enjoy unspeakable consolation." In this way he lingered, sometimes suffering exquisitely, for about five weeks. He did, indeed, pass through the furnace, but he came forth not only unhurt, but abundantly refined; and he died as he had lived, a witness of perfect love. Redemption was the theme of his contemplation through his sickness. Toward the last he became eager to depart -- to go home.

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Account 20

THE LAST SERMON OF PHILIP GATCH

(Second American-Born Methodist Circuit-Rider)

This is from hdm0011, "A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume III, by Nathan Bangs

Among those whose deaths are recorded this year, we find the name of Philip Gatch, who joined the traveling ministry in 1773, under the superintendence of Thomas Rankin, when there were but ten traveling preachers in America. He outlived all his contemporaries, and maintained an unblemished reputation to the last, though he desisted from the labors of an itinerant preacher from the year 1787 until toward the close of his life, when he was readmitted in the relation of a superannuated preacher. In this relation he died on Sabbath evening, the twenty-eighth day of December, 1835, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. On the day of his eighty-fourth year he preached his last sermon, and finally closed his life in great peace of mind, and no doubt rests from his labors.

In the early days of his ministry he endured sometimes "a great fight of affliction," having to contend with the common prejudices of the day against Methodist preachers, and with the troubles originating from the war of the Revolution. He, however, kept "his soul in patience," and manfully buffeted the waves of persecution which sometimes raged around him, though he did not wholly escape their fury. At one time he fell into the hands of a mob, who, while endeavoring to cover him with tar, cruelly drew some of it across his naked eye-ball, which came near destroying the use of his eye; but he still persevered in his work, "as seeing Him who is invisible," and who upholds and rewards his faithful servants in the midst of their labors and sufferings. Want of health compelled him to desist from the work of a traveling preacher, and in 1798 he removed into the Northwestern territory, now state of Ohio, and settled on the Little Miami, a few miles from Cincinnati. The country was then new, Cincinnati being only an inconsiderable village, and Methodism scarcely known to its inhabitants. Here he became actively and usefully engaged as a local preacher, and was much respected as a citizen, contributing greatly, by his active exertions and example of piety and diligence, to advance the cause of religion and morals.

Not willing that he should die in obscurity, unwept and forgotten, his brethren of the Ohio conference readmitted him into their fellowship as a worn-out veteran of the cross, and he ended his days in the sight of his brethren, beloved and respected as "an old disciple" of his Lord and Master.

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Account 21

THE LAST SERMON OF TOBIAS GIBSON

(Late 18th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This first account is from hdm0244, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume IV, by Abel Stevens.

Tobias Gibson was worthy of the pioneer mission, and was soon worthily to fall a martyr to his heroism, but not without opening the way, never to be closed, for the southwestern triumphs of the Church. He was a saintly man, of vigorous intellect, "greatly given to reading, meditation, and prayer;" very "affectionate and agreeable" in his manners. He was born in Liberty County, Georgia, in 1771, where he owned a valuable patrimony, which he forsook for the gospel. Joining the itinerancy in his twenty-second year, he traveled for eight years large circuits, mostly in the far South, but one of them, as early as 1795, among the Holston Mountains. We have heretofore seen him encountering with Asbury formidable hardships. In 1799 he volunteered to go to the distant southern banks of the Mississippi, though he was already broken in health by excessive labors and privations. With the approval of Asbury he started alone, and made his way on horseback to the Cumberland River, in Kentucky, traveling hundreds of miles through the wilderness, mostly along Indian trails. At the Cumberland he sold his horse, bought a canoe, and, putting his saddle-bags and a few other effects upon it, paddled down the river into the Ohio, and thence, six or eight hundred miles, down the Mississippi to his destination, where he immediately began his labors, eighteen years before the Mississippi Territory became a state of the Union.

Four times he went through the wilderness, six hundred miles, among "Indian nations and guides," to the Cumberland, for the purpose of obtaining additional laborers from the Western Conference. In 1803 he presented himself before that body a broken-down hero, and, though needing recruits themselves, they spared him Moses Floyd, for the solitary veteran had gathered more than fourscore (87) members at Natchez, and the whole country was ready for the gospel. By the next Conference there were more than a hundred Methodists reported from it, and Hezekiah Harriman and Abraham Amos were sent to aid the two evangelists; but the apostle of the little band was about to fall at his post; he had over-worked. Harriman made his way thither through "thirteen days and twelve nights' toil in the wilderness," and soon witnessed a "revival" and formed the Washington Circuit; but he wrote back that Gibson was sinking; "his legs were swelled up to his knees," he had "violent cough," and had not been able to preach for months. "Tell my dear brethren, the young preachers," adds Harriman, "not to be afraid of this place, for God is here, and souls have been converted this winter in public and private, and others are inquiring the way to heaven. Here are also a great many souls that must die like heathens, except they are visited by faithful ministers of the gospel. My hope revives that God will pour his Spirit on us more abundantly, and that our brethren will come and help us." Twenty days later Harriman wrote, "Brother Gibson has gone to his long home." He preached his last sermon on New Year's Day, 1804, "and it was profitable to many souls." After having suffered for three years with consumption, he "was seized with fever and vomited blood." He died in Claiborne County, on the 5th of April, 1804. He had "continued to labor in the vineyard of the Lord as long as he was able

to preach or pray," and declared to his fellow-laborer that "he was not afraid to meet death," and "wished for the hour."

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This is account of "THE LAST SERMON OF TOBIAS GIBSON" is from hdm0009, "A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume II, by Nathan Bangs.

Of Tobias Gibson, who first carried the gospel to the inhabitants of Mississippi, we have already spoken. He is represented as a modest, unassuming man, deep in Christian experience, and most indefatigable in his labors. His ardent thirst for the salvation of souls often led him to those exertions which were too much for his physical strength; and these together with his frequent exposures in the midst of the western wildernesses, to cold and hunger, and to sleepless nights on the ground, laid the foundation for those infirmities which, finally prostrated his feeble frame and brought him to a premature grave.

He preached his last sermon on New Year's day, in 1804. Its powerful and searching appeals were made a blessing to many; and long did some of the inhabitants of Natchez, which was the principal center of his labors in the west, remember his fervent prayers and faithful admonitions, particularly of those which accompanied this his last effort for their salvation.

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Account 22

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN B. HAGANY
(19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm0769, "Cyclopedia of Methodism," by Matthew Simpson.

John B. Hagany, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was the son of a local preacher, and was born at Wilmington, Del., Aug. 26, 1808. He joined the church in 1828, and entered the Philadelphia Conference in 1831. He continued in active ministerial service in the Philadelphia, New York, and New York East Conferences until his death, in 1865, or during a period of thirty-four years. He was a vigorous, attractive, and instructive preacher, and a writer of force, of exquisite polish, humor, and pathos. He was thoroughly read in the English classics, was an accomplished scholar in several branches of learning, and was an enthusiastic admirer and student of Mr. Wesley's works. He preached his last sermon at the Thirtieth Street church, New York, of which he was then the pastor, on the 25th of June, 1865, upon the death of the righteous. He intended to continue the theme in the evening, but was prevented by sickness. He was not confined to the house, but visited Dr. Wakely, at Yonkers, the next Tuesday. On Wednesday, June 28, while reading in Mr. Wesley's "Journal," he called the attention of his wife to a passage and began to read aloud, when he was seized with a spasm and almost instantly expired.

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Account 23

THE LAST SERMON OF FLETCHER HARRIS
(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm1566, "Last Words and Old-Time Memories," by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis.

Fletcher Harris was a native of Granville County, North Carolina. His parents were respectable and pious, and taught him in early life the genuine principles of Christianity. In September, 1811, at a camp-meeting, he sought and found the "pearl of great price." It is stated by those who attended his bed of languishing, that, blessed with the prospect of opening glory, he would shout aloud the praises of God. A few days prior to his death, being supported in his bed, he preached to those present his last sermon, taking for his text, 'Receive us, we have wronged no man,' immediately after which he shook hands with all around, bidding them an affectionate farewell. He then said, "Glory to God, Jesus smiles and bids me come. Victory, victory!" A friend present said, "Brother Harris, this is not dying." "No," said he, "it is living forever!" Then, turning to his weeping brother, he said, "Tell the preachers at conference that I died in the triumphs of faith; that my last doctrine is, free salvation."

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Account 24
THE LAST SERMON OF CHRISTOPHER HOPPER
(Late 18th Century English Methodist Itinerant)

This is from hdm0344, "The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," Volume 1, by Thomas Jackson.

He preached his last sermon about a week before his confinement, from John xvi. 33: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." It was attended with a peculiar blessing to many; and he delivered it with an uncommon degree of energy.

In the beginning of December, 1801, while cutting a loaf of bread, his arm suddenly fell, and it was supposed that he had dislocated his shoulder. His pain was very great; and from that time he was confined to the house. He had also another complaint of a very painful nature, supposed to have been the effects of his incessant labors and sufferings in the early part of his life. This, in conjunction with the violent pain in his arm and shoulder, caused him to consume away like a garment fretted by the moth; and he was, for some weeks before his death, reduced almost to a skeleton. In the beginning of February he was confined to his room, and soon after to his bed. He bore his afflictions with invincible patience and Christian fortitude... The enemy was never permitted in the least to disturb him. His old, faithful friend, George Eskrick, sat up with him every other night, and sometimes two nights together, and was a witness of his holy resignation to the will of his heavenly Father.

"On Thursday, February 25th," says Mr. Atmore, "I went to Bolton, to see Mr. Hopper. When I entered the room, he was in a doze; but as soon as he awoke, he gave me his hand, and, with great affection, said, 'O, my dear friend, how glad I am to see you! Providence has sent you.

You and I have often met; and this will be our last meeting on earth. But we shall meet in our Father's house above.' He then desired his niece to bring his own drawer. He took from thence several papers; and, after looking at them for some time, he said, 'I commit these papers to you: here is an account of my poor, insignificant life and labors, and a sermon I preached on the only foundation God has laid in Zion for poor sinners to build their hopes of salvation upon. On this foundation all my hopes are founded now; and it does support me! I have not a doubt, -- no, not the shadow of a doubt; and as for the enemy, I know not what is become of him. I have neither seen him, nor heard of him, for some time. I think he has quitted the field.' He then put the papers into my hand, and said, 'If you think they will be of any use to the church and the world, take them, make them your own; revise, make what alterations you please, and send them forth in the name of the Lord.'"

The last day or two he lay quite composed; he spoke very little, but was frequently engaged in earnest, fervent prayer, often saying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." On Friday evening, March 5th, 1802, he entered into his Master's joy, in the eightieth year of his age.

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Account 25

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN S. INSKIP

(Middle 19th Century M. E. Leader of the Great National Campmeetings)

This account is taken from hdm0131, "Life of Rev. John S. Inskip," by William McDonald and John E. Searles.

Mr. and Mrs. Inskip had been solicited by Rev. J. S. Lane, of Waynesburg, Pa., where some fifty years before, Mr. Inskip had commenced his ministerial life, to spend a Sabbath with that church. His going seemed providentially delayed until Oct. 21, 1882. It proved to be his last appearance in the pulpit.

Mr. Lane gives the following account of the visit. Speaking of the Saturday evening before the Sabbath, he says: "He was as elastic and playful in spirit as a boy. My son, having attained his twenty-first year, received a birthday present. Bro. Inskip made the presentation speech -- a speech wishing with humor and flowing with pathos. Always gifted in prayer, but on Saturday night, around the family altar, the fire and fervor of the Lord God of Elijah fell upon him. Every one bending about that altar was mentioned with a particularity and tenderness most touching, and when he came to petition for God's benediction on the coming Sabbath, certainly the glory of his coming translation must have mantled him. My soul was melted with the pathos, and my mind almost bewildered with the grandeur, of his thought and language.

"Sabbath, the twenty-first, all the Presbyterian churches in the city were closed, the pastors being away attending Synod. The morning was dark and lowering, but no rain fell during the entire day. A consecration meeting at 9 A. M., assisted in preparing the people for the grand results of the day. The church was crowded from gallery to pulpit -- altar, aisles, and vestibule. Promptly at 10:30, Mr. Inskip arose and read the 775th hymn: 'Awake, Jerusalem, Awake!' He took for his text, Psa. xciii. 53: 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever.' Holiness, his favorite theme, was

the subject of the sermon. His plan of presentation was most happily adapted to his promiscuous audience. As he swept on in his sermon, smiles frequently rippled over the congregation, tears filled many eyes, hearty responses attested that the mighty archer was not drawing his bow at a venture. The great preacher was at his best. He held the people in his grasp, and at the close of the sermon, not less than a hundred rose as seekers of holiness.

"At 7 P. M. the house was packed. Mr. Inskip on his throne of power, gave out the 518th hymn The second hymn, the last he ever read in the pulpit, was the 503d, the last line of which is, 'And I am white as snow.' He announced his text, 2 Thess. ii. 13: 'God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' He preached one hour and a half. It was a Manheim Camp-meeting in a church. Including his explanations and exhortations, he spoke two solid hours. Half way down the church, men and women were kneeling, seeking pardon, or purity, or some special blessing of God. In the glad exultation of the hour, lifting his strong voice, which appeared entirely unimpaired by the strain put upon it, he exclaimed: 'I feel competent to twenty years of work yet.' At a late hour the vast congregation retired to their homes; and notwithstanding his extraordinary labors through the day, he was bright and buoyant on his arrival at the parsonage; ate heartily, engaged in sprightly conversation; joined in prayer, retired in good cheer, slept soundly awoke early, took breakfast before daylight, and left for Philadelphia by the first train. It was one of the greatest days in the whole history of the Waynesburg Church."

With the close of that day, there dropped from the hand of John S. Inskip, the trumpet which had sounded the gospel of full salvation more frequently and effectually for the the last twenty years, than by any other man. His work was done, and he almost; "ceased at once to work and live."

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Account 26

THE LAST SERMON OF SAM P. JONES -- The Sermon Itself
(Widely-Known 19th Century M. E. Evangelist)

This is from hdm0499, "Gems of Truth," by W. G. Ketcheson. It is ironic, that shortly after Sam Jones delivered his last sermon, in which he spoke so much about death, he himself died.

This is a remarkable sermon by the lawyer-evangelist, and said to be the best sermon of his life. It was delivered on a Sunday evening, just before his own sudden death, which took place on a train that night going to his next appointment. The reader can easily see that a part of this sermon was his own funeral sermon, but he was unconscious of this fact:

"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. 29:1)

The bare announcement of this text is enough to bring every one of us to our feet with this question: Unto whom does God speak these fearful words? Unto whom does God address Himself in that fearful language? There are in this audience hundreds of people who ought to remain

standing and announce another fact, and that is, 'Surely He means me, for I have been often warned, I have often been reproved, and have often heard His Word. Surely He means me.' I announce strictly a fact when I say there have been more sudden deaths in the last twelve months of this world's history than any year since the evening and the morning of the first day of this world's life. More men in the last twelve months have suddenly gone into the presence of God than in any twelve months in all the world's history. You can hardly pick up a leading daily newspaper in the United States that there are not from fifty to five hundred persons that have been swept away suddenly and have come into the presence of God by earthquake, by fire, by tidal waves, by accidents on railroads, by storms at sea, by apoplexy, or paralysis, by heart failure; day by day the register has gone away up; and mark my words, just as God gives the warning to men, so is that proportion of sudden death multiplied in all the earth. More men have hardened their hearts and more men have been swept into the presence of God, and as you hear me tonight I shall recall illustrations of their fearful facts that lie back in my brain and which have been gathered from all parts of the country.

I want to say to you that I have preached to thousands and tens of thousands of people who have been swept suddenly and awfully into the presence of God soon after my voice died out in their ears. I was preaching at a memorable meeting at Nashville, Tennessee, some years ago. On the second Tuesday night Captain Ryan, a man who owned most of the steamboats along the river, came forward and asked to be prayed for. Shortly one of the pastors walked to my side and said, 'Mr. Jones, that man Captain Ryan is the most wicked man in this city and a very great sinner.' That night Captain Ryan was converted, and he walked up to me after the service and said, 'I want you to come to my house and I want you to see my wife and children.' I answered, 'I cannot come before a certain date.' He said, 'I will come for you on that day.' On the morning of the day arranged he was at the service, and after the service we got into a buggy and rode up to his splendid home. When we got out of the buggy he introduced me to the mayor of the city and three of the captains of boats which he himself owned, also two lawyers and other influential men of Nashville.

Presently Mr. Ryan's wife walked in and I was introduced to her, and after a few moments of conversation, she said, 'Now, gentlemen, dinner is ready.' As we crossed the hall into the large dining room the captain took my arm. 'Mr. Jones,' he said, 'not one of these four men is religious, and I want every last one of them brought to Christ.' He put me at the head of the table. The mayor of the city sat directly on my right and at his side was one of the captains; immediately on the left side were the other two captains -- four great big stalwart men. I addressed my conversation right to those four men. Christianity and the question of religion I pressed on them with all the force I could, incidentally mentioning the fact that within twelve months there would be sudden deaths among those sitting at the table.

After the meal was over we parted, and not one of the four men was a Christian or came to the meetings. I had not been away from Nashville three months before the steamboat captain who sat next to the mayor on my right hand side walked up to his home one day, and when his feet struck the front porch of his home he fell with a heavy thud, and was dead when his wife and children reached him. Not three months more had passed when the man who sat on my left stepped onto his boat just as the boat started to move off. He fell on his face and never spoke another word. Not two months more had passed when Captain Ryan sent me a newspaper from Nashville in

which I noticed that the steamship captain who sat second to my left went suddenly into the presence of God. A few days later I saw where the mayor of the city had been hunting and while loading his gun the gun went off, putting the whole load of shot into his head. He fell forward and never breathed again. Before I had been away from that town twelve months, those four stalwart men had all been suddenly called into the presence of God.

'He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

I was preaching at a Tennessee camp meeting a few years ago and we were having great crowds there. On a certain day a young man who had been in the back of the tent standing up while I was preaching (and I was 'saying things' that night) turned on his foot with an oath on his lips and said, 'I have had enough of that.' He went out and went towards the railroad station. There was a freight train passing at that time, which was going about eight or ten miles an hour. That young man grabbed at the side irons on the side of the train, lost his grip and rolled under the wheels, and was in the presence of God almost before I was done speaking.

I was preaching at Gainesville, Mississippi, some three or four years ago. There were only a few days left in the meeting, and I said to the men who were helping: 'Let us all get down to work.' Next morning Pastor Brown came up to me and said that he had passed two saloon-keepers on the street that morning as he was coming down, and had asked them to close up their saloons and come down to hear Sam Jones. They said, 'Does Sam Jones think that we can close up our business and go down to hear a man like him?' I mentioned this incident in the meeting and said those two saloon-keepers of that town cursed on the street, and said they could not close up their places of business to hear the Word of God. I said, 'I have seen doors closed with black crepe tied on the door knob; they had better look out.'

The next morning after I left Gainesville one of the saloon-keepers who had said this went downtown in the early morning to open his saloon; and just as he unlocked the door and pushed it open, he fell in the doorway and lay there dead when the first policeman came around on his beat that morning. Dead before his wife and children could say, 'Good-bye!' Mr. Brown sent me a marked copy of a paper a few days later which said that the other saloon-keeper went to his home and fell on the floor as he was going in, and was dead when his wife got to him. There was crepe on the doors of those two saloons; and mark my words, there are men in this town that are cursing the meeting and cursing on the street, who will be suddenly struck down. I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but you will have deaths in this town that will startle it before the last day of this very month. Mark that! God hath said it. There are people in this town that are turning against God and despising His mercy, some of them in the last sixty days of their lives; and every time you turn your back on God and walk off from His mercy you are refusing the greatest offer that man can ever have.

'He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

Years ago a corps of civil engineers came to a little town in a valley in Pennsylvania and went up into the mountains and examined the dam which controlled the waters of the stream which

flowed down into the valley. They came back to the valley and said to the people of the town, 'The dam is unsafe. The people in the valley are in constant danger.' The people said to them, 'You can't scare us.' That fall the men came back to the valley and examined the dam again and said to the people in the valley, 'We warn you people again, you are in danger every hour.' They laughed at them again. The men went up again in the spring and warned the people a third time, but the people said, 'That is a chance. We have been hearing that so many times that it does not scare us.'

It was not fifteen days later that a boy on horseback came galloping into the valley and shouting, 'Run for your lives! The dam has gone and the water is coming!' The people only laughed at him; but he did not wait to see the results. He went on down the valley still shouting the warning. In a very few minutes the dirty water came with a frontage a half mile wide and forty feet deep; and in less than thirty minutes after the water struck the town, Johnstown was in ruins with more than thirty-seven hundred people swept into the presence of God. You have been reproved many a time yourself, and frightened many a time; and you sit out there and say, 'Get me by frightening me if you can.' But on God's judgment day you will run and call for the rocks and mountains to hide you from God's just fire. God gets closest to the man who is honest with his own soul and feels his need of salvation. God help you to pray about this.

'He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

It is an awful thing to die, anyway; but how awful it is to die without a moment to pray, without a moment to counsel the wife, without a moment to talk with the children; but to be struck down suddenly!

I don't know when I shall die or where I may go down, whether in a railroad wreck or in a storm at sea. I might drop with heart failure; I don't know how I shall die, but I know I prefer to die easily. I know I deserve to die suddenly. I may be taken with a stroke of paralysis and would have to be carried to the train and from the depot up to the old home, into the room where I have sat and talked hours at night with my wife and children. I would suffer and linger there for days, talking to them about the responsibilities that would rest upon them when I was gone, about right living; and, when the last day would come and the last night was at hand, and the doctor had packed up his stuff and gone, wife and children would stand around my couch and I would bid them live good lives; at the last moment I would turn to my wife and speak the last words of my heart to her and bid her be faithful to the end; I would kiss them all good-night and go home as happy as any schoolboy ever went home from school. But to die suddenly and without preparation, without a word of counsel to the wife, without a word of comfort to the children, without a moment to utter anything in this world! 'Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground?' God help me to go home easily!

'Suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.' Have we courage to do what our convictions tell us to do? Come on now and give your hand, and let us pray for you. Amen."

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Account 27

THE LAST SERMON OF SAMUEL ASHTON KEEN

(Godly Holiness Advocate of the late 19th Century)

The paragraph below is from hdm0108, "Memorial Papers, The Record of a Spirit-filled Life," by Mary P. Keen, wife of S. A. Keen.

Two other books came from his pen, but were not published until after his decease, though he had contemplated their publication, and had made partial arrangements for the same. These, "Salvation Papers" and "Pentecostal Sanctification," differ somewhat from the others in that, while they retain the same simplicity of style, they, especially the latter, enter more deeply into the philosophy of experience, and as we read and reread them, we are persuaded that the author's estimate was just when he considered them the choicest of his writings. And why should they not be such? Any of his friends who had known him for a number of years could not but be impressed, not only with his deepening spirituality, but also with the very marked, steady, and rapid development of his mental powers, and this to the very last. We recall very clearly the words uttered only two nights before he took his flight, "If the Lord will give me about two hours respite from pain tomorrow, I think I can finish my last article for the 'Divine Life.' " His desire was granted, and that article is the closing chapter of "Pentecostal Sanctification." Read it in the light of this fact, and see if it is not a fitting last message from one who had devoted his life to the one thing of helping souls to Jesus. It would seem that no sincere soul could fail in its efforts to believe if it would follow the instructions here given.

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Account 28

THE LAST SERMON OF LOUIS HENRY KING

(Early BMC Preacher -- Brother of Paul King)

This is taken from hdm1569, "The Missionary Revivalist, August, 1958."

Louis Henry King was born in Pittsburgh, Penna. January 1, 1913 and departed this life June 20, 1958, having lived 45 years 6 months and 19 days. On June 24, 1939 he was united in marriage to Miss Armelia Strimel. To this union was born two boys and one girl. Louis W., Vernon D. and Dorothy M. Brother King leaves to mourn his passing, his wife and children and three brothers, Robert, Paul and David King, also his four sisters, Mrs. Thelma Walker, Mrs. Ruth Munn, Mrs. Dorothy Jones and Mrs. Grace Evans, and many other relatives and a host of friends.

Early in life he was gloriously saved and sanctified and called into the ministry. He was a faithful minister of the gospel and a successful pastor. He served in the following pastorates, New Galilee, Pa., Canonsburg, Pa., Orbasonia, Pa., Waycross, Georgia, Alum Creek, W. Va., Paden City, West Va., Alexandria, La., Shreveport, La. and Corrapolis, Pa. where he was serving when he passed to his reward. He was a member of the Advisory Board of the Tri-State District Conference of the Bible Missionary Church and served many years as Vice President of the Tri-State Holiness Association which sponsors Clinton Camp.

He was a true husband, a loving father, and a loyal friend. He preached his last sermon, Sunday night June 15th. Some of the members said that they never heard him preach better than in that last message.

Rev. Elbert Dodd, General Moderator of the Bible Missionary Church preached the funeral message and was assisted by Rev. Alvin Cottle a member of the Tri-State District Advisory Board and by Rev. N. M. Douglass, President of the Tri-State Holiness Association, and Brother Albert Cain, secretary of the Tri-State Holiness Association.

Brother Dodd preached from John 14:2 "I Go to Prepare a Place for You." The presence of God was so real that some said they felt like shouting. Honorary Pallbearers were: N. M. Douglass, A. L. Cain, Paul King, Milton C. Stroupe. Active Pallbearers were: Rev. H. E. Schmul, Rev. Joseph Huffman, Rev. Walter Hobbs, P. W. Cain, C. W. Swaney, and Walter Reitz. These all are members of the Tri-State Holiness Association. Please continue to pray for Sister King and the family.

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Account 29

THE LAST SERMON OF BENJAMIN LAKIN
(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm0230, "Sketches of Western Methodism," by James Bradley Finley.

While he was in the relation of a worn-out preacher he never had a dumb Sabbath, [a Sunday that he did not preach] always having his appointments ahead, except when quarterly or camp meetings would intervene. He was always on hand at these, and would preach and labor with all his remaining strength. Great success attended his labors, and he was universally accepted and beloved as a minister of Jesus. We knew him well, and loved him as a father in the Gospel with a pure heart fervently. His visits to our family, once a year, were looked for with great solicitude, and he was made a blessing to all the children. Father Lakin did not suffer his calm, benignant features, in his last days, to be wrinkled with a sour godliness. There was no howling or whining about every thing going wrong in the Church and among the preachers. He had a contempt for croakers, and would look up and, thank God for a good conservative progress in all the departments or Methodism. Quiet, and peaceful, and glorious, as when the descending sun throws his last rays on a receding world, tinging the trees and mountains with his mellow light, did this venerable servant or the cross pass down to the grave. He preached his last sermon in McKendree Chapel, Brown county, Ohio, on the 28th day of January, 1848. On Tuesday he returned home to Point Pleasant. The next two days he complained some of indisposition, but on Friday he started on horseback his usual mode of traveling to quarterly meeting, at Felicity, O. After riding six miles he reached the house of sister Richards, in usual health, and enjoying a very happy frame of mind. He conversed freely and cheerfully with the family till about seven o'clock, when looking at his watch he stepped out of the room door and fell. The family, supposing he had fainted, used all the means in their power to revive him; but his work was done, and his happy Spirit had fled to the mansions above. Thus, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the fifty-fourth of his ministry, this devoted, self sacrificing preacher of the Gospel "Ceased at once to work and live."

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Account 30

THE LAST SERMON OF JESSE LEE

(Established New England Methodism -- First Historian of the M. E. Church)

This is from hdm0010 "A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume III, by Nathan Bangs.

Among those who had entered their rest the past year was the Rev. Jesse Lee. He was born in Prince George's county, in the state of Virginia, in 1758. His parents were respectable, and they gave him that sort of education which it was common in those days to bestow on boys not destined for any learned profession. In the fifteenth year of his age he was happily brought to the knowledge of the truth, and made a partaker of the pardoning mercy of God. In the year 1783, one year before the organization of our Church, he entered the traveling ministry, and continued in it with great zeal and much success till his death, which happened on the 12th of August, 1816.

As the preceding pages of this History have recorded much respecting his early labors in the cause of Christ, particularly in New England, it is not necessary to recapitulate them in this place. The last station he filled was Annapolis, the metropolis of Maryland. While here he attended a camp meeting near Hillsborough, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where he preached twice with great acceptance and power; and in the evening of the day on which he preached his last sermon he was seized with a chill and fever, from which he never recovered. During this time he frequently expressed himself in terms of unshaken confidence in his God, and on one occasion shouted aloud, Glory! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Jesus reigns!"

On the same evening he spoke for nearly twenty minutes with great deliberation, requesting, among other things, that a letter should be written to his brother, to let him know that he died happy in the Lord, and also that he was fully satisfied with the kind treatment he had received from brother Sellers, at whose house he died.

It seems that there had existed between Jesse Lee and Bishop McKendree some difficulty, by which a degree of alienation of affection had taken place, much to the grief of their mutual friends. Before, however, the former closed his eyes in death, he said to a friend of both, "Give my respects to Bishop McKendree, and tell him that I die in love with all the preachers; that I love him; and that he lives in my heart." With these sentiments of brotherly love in his heart, and a consciousness of the peace of God overflowing his soul, this veteran of the cross and minister of Christ fell asleep in Jesus, at about half past seven o'clock in the evening of the twelfth of September, 1816, aged fifty-eight years, having been in the itinerant ministry about thirty-three years.

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Account 31

THE LAST SERMON OF THOMAS LEE
(18th Century English Methodist Itinerant)

This is from hdm0378, "The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," Volume 4, by Thomas Jackson, and is under the heading: A short Account of the Death of Mr. Thomas Lee: in a Letter to the Rev. John Wesley; written by Mrs. Lee.

Rev. Sir,

My dear husband's last illness began with a pain in his foot, which soon went up into his leg. When he mentioned it, we thought it was the rheumatism, and applied many things to warm it. By these means it seemingly got better. After some time it ascended into his thigh, and became very exquisite. On the morning before he died, the violence of the pain abated a little; but in the afternoon grew worse again, yet we had no apprehension of his death.

The evening before he died, he expressed great resignation to the will of the Lord: though, as he said, the pains drank up his spirits. He said, "I am the Lord's; and I feel that I am united to Him; and I know I shall be with Him for ever!"

He preached twice the Sunday before he died; although he went to the preaching-house on crutches, and sat all the time he preached. His first text that day was, "All flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof is as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." His last text was, "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord," &c. In this sermon he said, "Perhaps this will be my last sermon:" and truly the power of the Lord was solemnly felt by most present. And, as if he saw his end was near, he gave out a funeral hymn. And when he came to those words,--

"By faith we already behold
That lovely Jerusalem here;
Her walls are of jasper and gold,
As crystal her buildings are clear; "

he seemed to be quite transported at the thought of meeting Jesus.

The night in which he died, I went to bed as usual. But before I slept, the pain flew up to his heart. On this I arose, and called in George Eskrick. We raised him up, and put something in his mouth, which came out again. He was so sensible, as to take my handkerchief to wipe it up. We laid him down again. He sobbed several times, looked up once, and smiled; closed his eyes, and gently fell asleep.

A few months before, he told me he had never such a view of God's love towards him as he had that morning in prayer. The following words were then made a great blessing to him: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." From that time I believe he never had a shadow of doubt on his mind concerning his eternal welfare.

I am, Rev. Sir,
Yours affectionately,
Mary Lee Bolton,
September 9th, 1786

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Account 32
THE LAST SERMON OF NOAH LEVINGS
(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm1566, "Last Words and Old-Time Memories," by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis.

Noah Levings was born in New York. He was admitted to the traveling connection in 1818. In 1844 he was elected financial secretary of the American Bible Society, and in the fall traveled southward through Clarksville, Memphis, and Jackson, Mississippi, traveling over rough roads and dismal swamps to Vicksburg during which tour he preached eighteen sermons, delivered nine public addresses, and traveled four thousand miles. He preached his last sermon in Natchez. Being exhausted by travel, he started homeward. He arrived at Cincinnati on the 3d of January, and was conveyed to the residence of Mr. S. H. Burton, where he expired January 9, aged fifty-two years.

During his sickness he said, "The Lord Jesus is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. I die in no other faith than the faith of the gospel, and that as taught by the Methodist Episcopal Church." On one occasion, while sitting up, and leaning against the bed, Mr. Burton placed a large Bible to support his head, that he might breathe easily. When fixing his eye on the title as printed on the back of the cover he exclaimed, "Oh, thou blessed book! Thou lamp to my feet and light to my path, thou guide of my youth, directory of my manhood, and support of my declining years, how cheerless would this world be were it not for thy divine revelations and Christian experience." At another time he said, "Pray for me, my dear brethren, that I may have strong faith in the hour of trial. My religious states have been adjusted to a life of health more than one of sickness, but God, my Redeemer, will order all things well. I have been sifting the motives of my entire life down to the very bottom, and can not discover anything there that dying I would wish otherwise. But my imperfections, oh, my imperfections! I have nothing whereon to rely but the merits of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I feel he died for me."

On Monday his will was written, as dictated by himself. After signing it he exclaimed, "Thank God, one foot is in the Jordan, and I shall soon cross over."

At another time he said, "I am not able to converse much, but I can still say, glory to God! All is clear. I have a clear sky." To Bishop Morris he said, "Tell the members of my conference, I die in Christ. I die in hopes of the gospel. Tell them I have a firm, unshaken confidence in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation, and only foundation of my life; and relying on that foundation, all before me is light and joyful and glorious." At the close of a short prayer then offered, as we knelt around his bed, that he might be favored with a safe and easy

passage to the promised rest in Heaven, he responded, "Amen! Amen! Amen! Glory to God!" Subsequently he conversed but little. Being asked if he wanted anything he replied, "The will of the Lord be done." When a friend asked him if he wished to say anything he responded, "Live for God."

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Account 33

THE LAST SERMON OF ALEXANDER MCCAINE
(Early 19th Century Methodist Itinerant From Ireland)

This is from hdm0725, "History of Methodist Reform," Volume II, by Edward J. Drinkhouse.

Rev. Alexander McCaine departed this life at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. James M. Brett, in Augusta, Ga., on Sabbath morning, June 1, 1856, in the eighty-ninth year of his age, being born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1768. He was educated for the Roman Catholic priesthood [192] early in life. He emigrated to this country in the twentieth year of his age, reaching Charleston, S. C., in 1878. Here he came under the ministry of Rev. William Hammett, heretofore mentioned, one of Dr. Coke's missionaries, and experienced a change of heart, Methodistically understood, and henceforth devoted himself to its ministry. Asbury became acquainted with him, and, struck with his superior education and attainments, eagerly put him forward; but it was not until ten years later that he was received into the Conference, in 1797. These pages have already exhibited how large a place he occupied in his affection and confidence. In 1806 he retired from the itinerancy, having been Asbury's traveling companion for a year or two meantime, in order that he might educate his family; but, in 1815, having lost his wife, he reentered the itinerancy on the urgency of Asbury offering him choice of stations; and so continued until 1821, when he finally retired, residing in Baltimore and devoting himself to school teaching.

It was not until past eighty years of age that he finally retired from the field as writer and critic, spending his closing years quietly with his devoted daughter... Nine weeks prior to his death he began to fail, experiencing something of an apoplectic attack; but he rallied, and a few days after preached his last sermon. He then took to his bed, and for a month or more comforted his friends with his pious confidence, often repeating those spiritual hymns: "Vital spark of heavenly flame," "Not a cloud doth arise," "Jesus can make a dying bed." To an inquiry of his daughter if he knew her, he answered, "I shall know you forever." Hearing him, as he sank into death, say, as she thought, "happy!" she asked him if that was the word, to which he nodded assent. At intervals she caught from his lips: "hope -- home -- golden city." June 3, 1856, his obsequies took place in St. James Methodist Episcopal church, South.

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Account 34

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN MCCLASKEY
(Late 18th Century-Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This account is from hdm0226, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume III, by Abel Stevens.

John McClaskey's name has repeatedly appeared in our narrative. During these times he was leader, as presiding elder, of a host of powerful men on the Philadelphia and New Jersey districts, the latter including all the state and a part of that of New York. He also occupied the stations of Baltimore and Philadelphia at intervals of this period. He was one of the Methodistic apostles of his day. He was born in Ireland in 1756, came to America when about sixteen years old, and settled in Salem, N.J., was converted in 1782, and shortly after began to exhort, and, later, to preach "with uncommon success." Full of zeal and Irish ardor, he joined the itinerant band in 1785, and the next year was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference. Down to 1790 he labored in New Jersey, and, with Abbott and others, extended the Church over most of the state. He continued to be one of the most prominent evangelists of the middle states till 1814, when his health failed, and he fell, with a triumphant death, at the head of the Chesapeake District. His last sermon, preached at Church Hill, Queen Anne Circuit, was from Isaiah lxi, 1-3, and was peculiarly solemn and powerful. After suffering severely he died at Chestertown, Md., on the second of September, 1814. In his last sufferings he was heard often to sing

"Surely Thou wilt not long delay;
I hear his Spirit cry,
'Arise, my love, make haste away,
Go, get thee up, and die.'

He held a high rank among the many gifted preachers which Ireland has given to American Methodism, and was a natural orator, with a fervid imagination, a warm heart, and a singular readiness of speech. "He had but to open his mouth," says one of his contemporaries, "and right words and right thoughts flowed forth unbidden."

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Account 35

THE LAST SERMON OF MAY (TIDWELL) MCKAY
(Nazarene Missionary to India -- Sister of W. M. Tidwell)

This account is from hdm0092, "Hazarded Lives," by Edith P. Goodnow.

Two months later on November 29, 1935, Mrs. McKay and little John T. were almost instantly killed in an automobile accident. Less than a week before Brother and Sister McKay and Brother Beals had finished doing the preaching in the Basim Campmeeting. Mrs. McKay's voice had given out part way through the meeting and she did not recover it enough to preach again before the last Sunday night of the camp. Brother Beals says, "Little did we dream then that it was her last message to us. God blessed her wonderfully as she preached to the people and numbers of souls found Christ at the altar."

They were on their way back to Basim from Buldana, where they had gone to spend Thanksgiving with Brother and Sister Ralph Cook and the Beals. On their way back to Basim they

stopped in Chikhli a few minutes to see Miss Margaret Stewart and to attend to some business, then left about ten-thirty. They had gone only about fourteen miles from Chikhli when a front tire blew out, and before Mr. McKay, who was driving the car, could regain control, they crashed head-on into an acacia tree by the roadside. Mrs. McKay and little John T. were thrown from the car by the tremendous impact. Buddie died almost instantly and Mrs. McKay a few minutes later. Mr. McKay was seriously, though not critically injured.

None of our Nazarene missionaries there in India at the time will ever forget the shock of that news. Looking back later the other missionaries remembered presentiments they had passed over lightly at the time. Coming home from the hills in July, four months before the tragedy, the McKays had purchased a small red bicycle for Buddy which was to be carefully hidden away as a Christmas surprise. A few weeks later Miss Stewart happened to be in Basim and looking out the window saw little Buddy just outside busily learning to ride the little red bicycle. His mother exclaimed, "I just couldn't wait till Christmas to give it to him. What if something happens to him before Christmas? Then he would never get to enjoy his bicycle. Somehow I just couldn't withhold it from him."

At another time they were all talking of heaven and Miss Stewart heard little Buddy say, "Mummie, I don't ever want to go to heaven and leave you here. Let's go to heaven together. Wouldn't that be nice if we could both go together?" Smilingly his mummie agreed that it would be ideal indeed if they could both go to heaven together.

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Account 36
THE LAST SERMON OF JOSEPH G. MCKEEHAN
(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm 0805, "History of the Old Baltimore Conference," by James Edward Armstrong.

Joseph G. McKeehan was born near Abbottstown, Pa., March 23, 1810; was converted in his twentieth year and admitted on trial in 1836. He was twenty-nine years in the active work and twenty years on the retired list. As a preacher he was thoroughly scriptural, sound in doctrine, earnest, tender and often tearful in delivery. As a man he was unselfish in his nature and gentle in spirit. Said his son: "I have never heard father say an improper word or knew him to do a wrong act." The last sermon he ever preached was from the text: "Because I live ye shall live also." His death was sudden.

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Account 37
THE LAST SERMON OF WILLIAM MCKENDREE
(Early 19th Century, First American-born M. E. Bishop)

This is from hdm0699, "Centenary Cameos 1784 -- 1884," by Osie P. Fitzgerald.

He was elected to the office of bishop May 12, 1808. The election took place under the emotion excited by a sermon preached by him that was "like the sudden bursting of a cloud surcharged with water." Asbury, who was present, was heard to say that the sermon would make him a bishop -- a result we may believe that was not unwelcome to him. During the period of twenty-seven years he filled this office his history is so identified with the history of the Church that the one could not be written without including the other. With Asbury he led the rapidly increasing hosts of Methodism until the death of the first great itinerant bishop laid upon his strong shoulders the burden of undisputed leadership. The Church grew and prospered, and he grew in the love and reverence of the people until he was everywhere greeted by them as a father.

He made his last appearance in the General Conference in 1832. "Leaning on his staff -- his once tall and manly form now bent with age and infirmity, his eyes suffused with tears his voice faltering with emotion, he exclaimed: 'Let all things be done without strife or vainglory, and try to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace! My brethren and children, love one another.' Then spreading forth his trembling hands, and raising his eyes to heaven, he pronounced, in faltering and affectionate accents, the apostolic benediction. Slowly and sadly he left the house to return no more."

He preached his last sermon in Nashville, Tenn., November 23, 1834, in "McKendree Church." At his brother's residence, in Sumner county, he died March 5, 1835. With almost his latest breath he said, "All is well," and the chariot of God bore him over the everlasting hills.

Nearly six feet high, erect, well-proportioned, with forehead high and broad, full, dark, expressive eyes, complexion of singular purity, all his features finely molded and harmonious; clad in a round-breasted coat, white neck-tie, a white, broad-brimmed hat; with a voice soft yet penetrating, strangely persuasive and musical -- that is one picture of William McKendree, the first native-born American Methodist bishop, the consecrated believer, the inspired preacher, the wise legislator, the efficient administrator. There is another -- the man of God on his knees with his open Bible before him, his rapt face illumined with the light reflected from Immanuel's face.

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The following account of THE LAST SERMON OF WILLIAM MCKENDREE is taken from hdm0093, "The Lives of Eminent Methodist Ministers," by P. Douglass Gorrie.

Bishop McKendree's last sermon was preached in Nashville, Tennessee, on the 23d of November, 1834. On the 5th of March following, this truly apostolic bishop breathed his last. His dying words were: "All is well for time or for eternity. I live by faith in the Son of God. For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

"Not a cloud doth arise to darken my skies,
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes."

In this peaceful and triumphant state, the weary pilgrim closed his eyes on all things terrestrial, after a toilsome journey of seventy eight years through this vale of tears.

"Farewell, my friends, adieu, adieu,
I can no longer stay with you;
My glittering crown appears in view.
All is, well! All is well!

"Bright angels are from glory come,
They're round my bed, they're in my room;
They wait to want my Spirit home,
All is well! All is well"

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Account 38

THE LAST SERMON OF NATHANIEL B. MILLS

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm 0805, "History of the Old Baltimore Conference," by James Edward Armstrong.

Nathaniel B. Mills was born in Newcastle County, Delaware, February 23, 1766; died February 20, 1845; converted in his seventeenth year, and received on trial in 1787. His travels and work extended to New York and Connecticut in his earliest ministry, and in after years over the entire territory of the Conference. He was placed on the superannuated list in 1835, but ceased not to preach with untiring constancy till the last Sabbath of his life. His last sermon on that morning was from Judges, 5:31 "So let all thine enemies be scattered, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might." On the following Thursday he led the devotion in family worship; then ceased at once "to work and live." Pure in purpose and innocent in life, he was not free from human infirmities, yet these were hidden by the brightness of a holy life. He was a sound, practical preacher, of the primitive school of Methodist itinerants.

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Account 39

THE LAST SERMON OF WILLIAM B. MITCHELL

(Mid-19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm 1566, "Last Words and Old-Time Memories," by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis.

William B. Mitchell died October 27, 1858, aged forty-three years. He was converted in his fifteenth year. He was licensed to preach, October 18, 1845. On Thursday evening previous to his death he preached his last sermon from the text, "If thou hadst known even then at least in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thy eyes." On Friday he was taken dangerously ill, and on Monday it became apparent that he must die. He received the intelligence from his wife with great composure and said, "All is well." My God is reconciled, his

pardoning voice I hear; he owns me for his child, I can no longer fear." To Brother Mooney, who entered this room, he said, "I shall get to heaven before you, after all," alluding, doubtless, to a conversation, held in days gone by. "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory! " Oh, how precious are the sweet promises of the Bible. Oh, how good; how sweet!" Throwing up his arms he exclaimed, "Glory! glory!" and then gazing upward said, 'I see a light ahead."

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Account 40

THE LAST SERMON OF DANIEL OSTRANDER

(Late 18th Century-Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This account is from hdm0226, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume III, by Abel Stevens.

Daniel Ostrander was converted in his sixteenth year, and from that date devoted his life wholly to God. He entered upon his ministerial travels in 1793... His firm integrity, sound judgment, and solid piety won the confidence of his brethren. He identified himself with all the interests of the Church, as a faithful and wise steward. Always at his post, and prompt to serve, whether on a circuit, in a station, in quarterly meetings, in annual or General Conferences, and on all suitable occasions, his clear voice, his manly eloquence, his decision of mind, his sound arguments and manly zeal, all showed that he preferred Jerusalem above his chief joy; yet it was in the pulpit that his pre-eminence shone the brightest -- so warm in delivery, sound in doctrine, clear in preaching, pungent in warning, heavenly in comforting, and gracious in encouraging, that hard must have been the heart in his audience that could sit unmoved, or go away unprofited, for a divine unction gave power to the word. Yes, we have heard him preach, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, till the shouts of saints and the cries of penitents mingled, completely drowned the highest strains of his stentorian voice. Such was Daniel Ostrander. Firmly, faithfully, and wisely did he hold on to the plow, nor look back till he was called to his heavenly rest.

In the New York Conference of 1843 he appeared for the last time among his ministerial brethren. His fifty years' effective work was done. He preached, occasionally, on Sabbaths, until his final sickness; and on the 29th of August, 1848, at a camp-meeting near Newburgh, delivered his last sermon, from Psalm cxlvi, 8: 'The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind,' etc. It is said to have been an able discourse, and one of his happiest efforts.

Through the whole of the summer he seemed to be ripening for heaven, and soon after this last message his health failed. When asked if Christ was still precious, with his last and utmost effort he cried, 'Yes!' and peacefully fell asleep in Jesus. So lived, so labored, and so died Daniel Ostrander, literally worn out in the best cause -- his life, from sixteen years of age to seventy-two, a living sacrifice to God. Thousands will rise up in the last day and call him blessed.

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Account 41

THE LAST SERMON OF EPHENETUS OWEN

(Early Free Methodist Preacher)

This is from hdm1618, "History of the Free Methodist Church of North America," by Wilson Thomas Hogue.

At the same time that Dr. Bowen united with the Susquehanna Conference another veteran minister of the Methodist Church also cast in his lot with that body. That minister was the Rev. Epenetus Owen. Though past middle age, he was still sufficiently strong so that he rendered more than twenty years of effective service to the Church. He was somewhat tall, with slightly stooping shoulders, and a prominent countenance, which beamed goodness from its every feature. He was intellectual, spiritual, genial to all, characterized by a quaint and unstudied humor in ordinary conversation, and even in his preaching, which made him very interesting to converse with or to listen to, and ever gave a pleasing originality to his public discourses.

"His sermons were always evangelical, awakening, interesting, instructive and edifying. His services were sought for by our best appointments, and his labors were always successful." He was of that amiable, quiet, and peaceable disposition that enabled him to make warm friends everywhere; and yet withal he was a man of positive and strong convictions, and also of the courage to avow them and to stand by them with the firmness of Gibraltar. But, strong as he was in his convictions, it was hard for those who differed from him to quarrel with him.

Mr. Owen was an admirable writer, as well as an able and eloquent preacher. He corresponded frequently for the columns of the Church periodicals, and was elected editor of the Free Methodist at the General Conference of 1882, but resigned the position in the afternoon of the same day. He was also the author of "Things New and Old," and "Struck by Lightning," two volumes that proved a blessing to many souls.

He several times represented his Conference at the General Conference, and always with ability and dignity.

He had preached the Gospel at the time of his death about fifty-two years, having preached his semi-centennial sermon at Conference in Rome, New York, September, 1888, and his last sermon at the Susquehanna Annual Conference at Binghamton, New York, September 6, 1889. He died of pneumonia, terminating in consumption, at Spring Hill, Pennsylvania, where he had gone to visit his brother, January 10, 1890.

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Account 42

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN PAWSON

(One of Wesley's Most Staunch Advocates of Entire Sanctification)

This is from hdm0378, "The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers," Volume 4, by Thomas Jackson.

The last sermon he preached was in Wakefield, on the 3d of February, 1806, from Mark lii. 35: Whosoever shall do the will of God," &c. He had for some time complained of indisposition, and now expressed himself as incapable of further labor in the ministry. On Thursday, the 6th of February, he was for the first time confined to his room, being now attacked by an inflammation in his bowels. From this period, he appeared to be fast approaching to the borders of the grave. This was to him a source of consolation, and he frequently declared, that when his pain was most acute, his confidence in God was strongest.

On Tuesday, the 25th, to the astonishment of all, he came down stairs without assistance, and, with uncommon earnestness, exhorted those ministers who were present to insist especially on the necessity of enjoying the witness of the Spirit, and holiness of heart; and then declared, that the only foundation of his hope was the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus. On the same day he said to those around, "All will be well soon I can speak of my funeral as cheerfully as of my wedding." In a conversation he had with a friend, on the necessity of doing all things to the glory of God, he declared that he had never purchased a single article since his conversion, but with an eye to eternity, and said, "I have nothing to do: all is ready."

Wednesday, 26th. -- Having, in the year 1800, under an apprehension that his time would not be long on earth, drawn up a letter of advice to his brethren, to be communicated to them after his death, he, on this day, with great solemnity, put it into the hands of a friend, with an earnest request that it might be read to them at the ensuing Conference, as containing his dying testimony and advice. [4] And, when several friends were present, after expressing, in the most elevated and forcible language, his glorious prospects into eternity, he began to pray with the utmost fervency; for the Conference, that they might abide by their original doctrines; also; in a most affecting manner, for his wife, that the Lord would enable her cheerfully to resign him into His hands, and support her through this trying scene; and then for every individual present. Though exceedingly weak, he, after this, at the request of Mrs. Pawson, with perfect recollection and presence of mind, baptized a child belonging to a particular friend: this was an affecting sight, and a most solemn season.

On Thursday, the 27th, to Mr. Smith, from Birstal, he said, "Give my love to the congregation, and tell them I am going to my precious Savior; the heaven of heavens is open to my view; I have nothing on my mind; I have nothing to do but die. I have long been sailing to this fair haven. Sometimes the seas have been rough and tempestuous: Satan has often tried to raise a storm, if possible, to upset my little bark; but this he could not effect. No, no; now Satan hath no business with me; he appears to have quitted the field, and given it up as a lost case." At another time he spoke to this effect:-- "All the powers of darkness will never be able to extinguish the flame of Divine love that burns within." Soon afterwards he said, "It is enough; Christ died for me; I am mounting up to the throne of God." Then he broke out into the most rapturous strains of praise; and, clasping his hands, said, "I know I am dying; but my deathbed is a bed of roses; I have no thorns planted upon my dying pillow."

On Friday, 28th, being told that he would fatigue himself by speaking too much, he exclaimed, "I spend my breath as freely as I received it." One of his friends reminding him, he had not now to seek the Lord, he replied, "No: I have not to seek the Lord, nor has He to seek me." Some wine and water being offered to him, he (though scarcely able) took it into his own hand, and

then, in the most solemn and affecting manner, administered to himself the sacrament. This was indeed a blessed and profitable season to all present.

On Saturday, March 1st, about one o'clock in the morning, he spoke of death with the greatest cheerfulness, and, feeling at his pulse, wondered that he should delay his coming:-- "I have no dread; all is prepared; death is welcome." A few hours after this, he again committed his wife into the hands of God, telling her she would soon follow, and that the Lord would be her refuge and strength. Feeling himself exceedingly weak, he said, "I am on the verge of eternity;" and with his utmost remaining strength exclaimed, "Victory, victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb! Let my soul now take its everlasting flight." After this he sung the following verse from one of his favorite hymns:

"O! could we but our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise;
And see the Canaan that we love,
With unclouded eyes!

"Doubts, gloomy doubts! where are they? I know nothing of gloomy doubts; I have none. Where are they gone?" A friend replied, "I suppose they are fallen at the foot of the cross, where Bunyan's Pilgrim lost his burden." "O!" said our reverend father, "but I am now upon the Delectable Mountains; and with the Shepherd's spying-glass I view the heavenly country." At this time there appeared a favorable change in his complaint, Which continued about ten days; during which period, through extreme debility, he was incapable of speaking much; but what he said was strongly expressive of his happy state. "I have," said he, at one time, "neither pain, sickness, sorrow, nor a wish to live or die. All is well.

"My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below.'

Yes, heaven already is begun, everlasting life is won, is won, is won! I die a safe, easy, happy death. Thou, my God, art present; I know, I feel Thou art. Precious Jesus! Glory, glory be to God!"

Sunday; 16th. -- Having passed through a very painful night, he said he thought two more such would carry him off; but added, "All is well; my life is hid with Christ in God: and you, my dear partner, will soon follow me." He then, with peculiar energy, spoke the following lines:--

Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
O the pain, the bliss of dying!"

Monday, 17th. -- Being asked if he wanted anything, he replied, "I want nothing but my blessed Jesus, and death. But I have Him now: thanks be to God, Christ is mine. I am dying, but I shall live for ever. Christ is all in all to me: death is indeed desirable; but all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come." One present said, "You will have a blessed change." "Yes," said he, "I know I shall." To one who came to see him, he said, "My kind friend, I

am drawing fast to a conclusion. O, my Jesus, it is all light and glory! I am completely happy; completely happy."

On Tuesday, the 18th, suffering much from difficulty of breathing, he said, "Dying work is hard work: but now my strength fails, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; yes, for ever and ever. Christ is my Savior, my All. Help me to render unto Thee the praise so justly due to Thine excellent name for the support I feel. Thou dost not suffer me to faint: no;

"From Zion's top the breezes blow,
Refreshing all the vales below.' "

About eleven o'clock at night he began to be much worse; respiration was exceedingly difficult, and he appeared to suffer much pain.

Early on Wednesday morning, he said to his nephew and fellow-laborer, who sat by his bed-side, "I feel I am dying, but must get up and die in my chair." Soon after he was seated, he said, "Now kneel down, both of you, and pray that I may be released, if it be the will of God." After they had prayed, he took hold of the hand of each of them, and gave them his dying blessing. He then lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Soon after he was again put into bed, and said, "My God! my God! my God !" These were the last words he distinctly uttered. He was now incapable of speaking, and sunk very fast, but was perfectly sensible to the end. He died about twenty minutes past nine o'clock in the morning, apparently without any struggle or pain, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and forty-fourth of his ministry; leaving a most glorious testimony, that he was gone to be for ever with the Lord.

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Account 43

THE LAST SERMON OF JESSE RICHARDSON

(Late 18th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm 1566, "Last Words and Old-Time Memories," by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis.

Jesse Richardson was born in Virginia, April 24, 1765. He was converted May 27, 1785, and soon after began to call sinners to repentance. In May, 1788, he was admitted on trial in the traveling connection. After traveling five years with great usefulness his health failed, and he was compelled to desist.

He preached his last sermon from the words, "Whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." He was very happy. A few weeks later he was attacked with a disease of the lungs which caused his death. During his illness he manifested a meek resignation to the will of his Creator. He said, "I have the best truth of the Bible to die on, -- the divinity of Christ. I have faith in this. All is consoling to me beyond the tomb." At another time he said, "I have nothing to fear. I believe in the Godhead of Christ, have preached it, lived on it, and now die on it, -- glad to rest my everlasting all on the divinity of my Redeemer."

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Account 44

THE LAST SERMON OF ROBERT RICHFORD ROBERTS

(Late 18th-Century-Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant and Bishop)

This is taken from, hdm0604, "The Life of Robert Richford Roberts," abridged and edited by Duane V. Maxey.

He rallied from this attack, and by Sunday was able to go to the village church. The building was but a block and a half away. There had been a heavy snow the latter part of the week, and the preacher in charge was not able to get through the drifts to Lawrenceport. After waiting a while with the congregation, Bishop Roberts ascended the pulpit and took the service. He led the singing of Charles Wesley's hymn:

O for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free.

After this he prayed. When he arose to preach, he read the sixth Beatitude. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It was the same theme he had used at Bedford the Sunday previous, but he had taken a different text.

This was the last sermon he ever preached. How significant that he chose the same theme for his last two messages. He spoke from the fullness of heavenly love abiding in his own heart.

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Account 45

THE LAST SERMON OF SOLOMON SHARP

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This account is from hdm0226, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume III, by Abel Stevens.

Solomon Sharp, whose name is still familiar through out the Churches of the Middle States, was one of the conspicuous itinerants of these times, traveling important circuits in Delaware, large districts in New Jersey, and closing the period in Philadelphia. He was a native of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, where his parents had been pioneer Methodists. In 1791, when about twenty years old, he began to travel, "under the presiding elder;" the next year he was admitted to the Conference, and continued in the service, occupying almost all important appointments in New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Delaware, down to 1835, when he was reported superannuated. The next year he died at Smyrna, Del. His last sermon, preached a short time previously, was on the text, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God." After closing the discourse, in which he had treated with much interest of the final rest of saints, he was heard to exclaim, "Now I

feel that my work is done!" He was found dead in his bed. The Minutes testify that, "as a Christian he was irrefragable, and as a preacher his talents were of an extraordinary character."

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Account 46

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN N. SHORT
(Early Nazarene Leader)

The source of this account is hdm0221, "Twelve Early Nazarene Leaders, Out Under The Stars," by Basil Miller.

"He was a born leader," declares his daughter, "showed tolerance, was sympathetic and understanding. I have heard people say that they could come to him with their problems as they could with but few pastors." And when he grew older his sermons were still evangelistic, and rang with glorious enthusiasm. He carried his age gracefully. To the end he was a student of the Bible and was often in prayer. When he would wake up at night in later years, he spent those hours in tearful prayer for his congregation, interspersing his prayers with whole chapters recited from the Bible and the hymns he had learned to love as a youth.

In the last sermon he preached before going to sleep on the bosom of the Master he kept crying, "Don't miss it; don't miss it!" He seemed to realize that heaven was but a step away, and in going he wanted to take others with him.

Quietly he passed away on April 12, 1922, in the city of Cambridge, surrounded by friends unto whom he had administered so many years.

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Account 47

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN SMITH
(?Possibly An English Methodist Itinerant?)

This is from hdm0513, "The Callused Knees, or A Man Sent From God Whose Name Was John," by George Brubaker Kulp.

Several circumstances conspired to render the last six months of Mr. Smith's life a season of severe trial. Pain, his natural fortitude might have enabled him to endure; but, to be cut off from his beloved occupation and to have to contemplate the anxiety of a beloved wife, was indeed sorrow. Disease made progress, and nothing seemed to repel it. His aged father said, "Oh, how glad I should be to die for thee." But now the good man must endure his own suffering and privation. On Sunday, May 1st, he went from his bed to the pulpit and once more labored to enforce that text on which he had so often preached, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." (Ezek. 36:26, 27.) It was with the utmost difficulty that

he proceeded with his discourse; and, at its conclusion, he told the congregation that he felt so ill as to be quite incapable of addressing them in the evening. He then closed the service, and retired from the pulpit. This was his last sermon...

Mr. Smith's experience, during his last affliction, appears to have been marked by considerable variety. He had no fears of death, no apprehensions of eternity; but he had seasons of strong conflict...

Mr. H. Beeson, an attached and kind friend of Mr. Smith, was one of those who watched with him during some of the last nights of his life. In a conversation with Mr. Beeson upon the various orders of intellect, he said of himself, "I am a minister of the Spirit. Soul-saving is my business. God has given me a heart for it. I will go on in His name, and believe for effects." Of his labors in the Lincoln circuit, he remarked, "I was always anxious to get as much business done as possible; so I worked while God was working, and His arm was made bare in many places." He added, "I ought to have given over preaching three months before I did;" and, after some further observations on the same subject, he broke forth, "Hallelujah to the blessed Jesus! I have not had one pain too much, -- not one stroke too heavy. God can do without me."

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Account 48

THE LAST SERMON OF THOMAS STRINGFIELD

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm0699, "Centenary Cameos 1784-1884," by Osie P. Fitzgerald.

He was born in 1796 near where now stands the town of Bowling Green, Kentucky. His parents were Methodists, and their home-life was such as to commend their religion to their children. Next to his mother his sister Delilah was his good angel. She daily took him with her to secret prayer. It is a picture upon which to linger -- the fair-faced, loving, saintly girl and the impulsive, active, manly boy with clasped hands kneeling side by side at the feet of God. The habit of daily secret prayer thus formed, he maintained through life, and we cannot doubt that under God it was a potent factor in giving unity, consistency, and power to his Christian life. The family was visited by the strong and fervent Methodist preachers who at that time gave tone to Methodism in that garden-spot of Kentucky. It is not strange that the quick-witted, ardent-tempered boy was converted when he was only eight years old.

He was admitted into the Tennessee Annual Conference November 10, 1816... Soldier-blood was in his veins. His father was a Revolutionary soldier, and was at the battle of King's Mountain, one of the band of immortal patriot-heroes who, in that bloody fight, struck the enemy a stunning blow, and turned the tide of war. He was a hearty friend and a fearless antagonist. His mother had some of the same martial metal in her composition, though it was tempered by womanly grace and tenderness. From both his parents he inherited a courage that was uncalculating and dauntless. He always took sides quickly, following his honest impulses and clear convictions. He might be rash, but never cowardly. If any cause he loved was imperiled, or if any truth dear to him was assailed, he did not ask what were the odds for or against it, but threw

himself at once into the fight. And once in he fought it out. He was a volunteer soldier, but went in for the whole war, as sure to hold out as he was quick to start. With his hot blood there was also a clear head and a strong will. Daring, aggressive, yet unselfish and true-hearted to the core, he was a pioneer and path-finder in Methodist journalism and a valiant champion of Methodism at a time when only brave men were willing to enter the field and only strong men were able to keep it. He blazed the ways that others have since opened more fully, and fought battles and gained victories that make it less needful for us to fight now. His knightly figure stands out boldly among the heroes who bore in triumph the Methodist colors in the militant period of the Church, and will hold its loving and admiring gaze as long as the breezes blow or the sunshine rests upon the Holston hills...

He died at Strawberry Plains, East Tennessee, June 12, 1858. His path had been rough toward the end of his journey. But his consecration had been complete, and so was the victory of his faith. In the world he had tribulation, but in Jesus peace. The text of his last sermon was from 2 Corinthians i. 12: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." It was the triumphant challenge of a great soul in the retrospect of the earthly life and on the border of eternity.

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Account 49

THE LAST SERMON OF SAMUEL H. THOMPSON

(Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This comes from hdm01557, "Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher.

Samuel H. Thompson was born in Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, March 16, 1786. In his eighteenth year he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, as a seeker of religion. For two years he sought an experimental knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins; and while engaged in secret prayer, a peaceful answer was granted to him, though not such an evidence of pardon as he desired; but shortly afterward, during family prayer, he obtained a clear evidence of the regeneration of his fallen nature, and immediately commenced exhorting his associates to seek God, and was licensed to preach. In the fall of 1810 he was received on trial as a traveling preacher, in the Western conference, held at Cincinnati, which was then the only conference west of the mountains...

Brother Thompson labored hard, and suffered much, for more than thirty years. His field of labor for those years embraced large portions of Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas states, much of which was new and on the outskirts of civilization, destitute of means of comfortable support. In these respects his zeal, like a quenchless fire, urged him on night and day, over desert wastes, towering mountains, rapid rivers. He often suffered hunger and almost nakedness in quest of lost and wandering sinners to bring them back to God, and thousands now in heaven will praise God forever that this self-sacrificing Methodist preacher taught them the way to life in their mud hovels and smoky cabins. The last year of his eventful life his health almost entirely gave way, and while confined to his bed, from which he never rose, such

was his ardent thirst for the salvation of souls, that he requested to call in the neighbors, and to be propped up in his bed, and to preach one more sermon to them before he left for heaven. His desire was granted; the room was crowded, and such a sermon hardly ever fell from the lips of mortal man. The power of God fell on the congregation; they wept aloud, and fell in every direction, and many will date their start for heaven to that sermon. And now, having delivered his last message, he said, "My work is done, and I am ready to go at my Master's bidding."

During the few lingering moments that he remained he gave unmistakable evidence that he was at peace with God, and all mankind, and that he had a complete victory over the fear of death. He continued in this heavenly frame of mind till he sweetly fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, and quietly breathed his last and went up to glory.

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Account 50

THE LAST SERMON OF WILLIAM MOSES TIDWELL

Writer and Highly Successful Nazarene Pastor and BMC Pastor

This is taken from hdm0079, "W. M. Tidwell -- A Life That Counted," by Joseph Eugene Cook.

It was while preaching on Sunday morning, January 30, 1966, that he suffered a stroke from which he never recovered. Mr. Douglas Thompson, close friend and spiritual benefactor of "Brother Tidwell's" ministry, tells of hearing him preach his last sermon. "It was obvious to all he was not feeling well. Brother Rosa cautioned him about trying to preach, but he insisted on taking his "turn" in preaching. He read from the book of Matthew, chapter twenty six, verses thirty six through forty six, taking for a text verse thirty nine, 'And he went a little further ...,' his subject being, 'Jesus Went A Little Further.' In his unique manner he would ask the congregation if they had been misunderstood, mistreated or despised. Enlarging upon each of these words, he would end with 'Jesus went a little further.' And even in the Garden where he went to pray, while the Disciples slept, 'Jesus went a little further' -- in life. He preached good but near the close began to weaken. His speech thickened and it was difficult to understand his words. With legs trembling, he held on to the pulpit. I hastened to his side as he and the pulpit were about to go over. Catching him under the arm pits, I held him up until Brother Rosa and Brother George Knowles came, then the three of us carried him out to the vestibule of the church to await transportation to the hospital. While we were waiting, Brother Tidwell began to weep. I had never seen him weep like this. He kept asking me personally, 'Douglas, son, did ... did they get it? Do .. do you think they got my little message?' I assured him they did. That seemed to comfort him some. To me, it was one of the most important, unforgettable messages I ever heard Brother Tidwell preach, and I have heard him preach quite a few messages. That was the last time Brother Tidwell ever preached."

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Account 51

THE LAST SERMON OF AN UNNAMED MAN OF GOD

(An Early M. E. Local Preacher From Ireland)

This is from hdm0616, "The Life and Times of Elijah Hedding," By Davis W. Clark, and it is given by Bishop Hedding:

"In the extreme north part of this circuit," he continues, "was a brother at whose house I used to preach, who was converted in Ireland under the ministry of the Rev. John Wesley. He brought with him to this new settlement the true spirit of Christianity, and most of his family were partakers of like precious faith. I have heard from his own lips his testimony in regard to the power of saving grace; and heard him say that for forty years there had not been a moment that he doubted if he should die at any time he should go straight home to heaven. This experience was fully corroborated in his life, his daily walk, and conversation. A few years after his settlement in this country he was licensed as a local preacher, and continued such to the end of his life. The last sermon he preached was at one of the two meeting houses mentioned. I have been credibly informed that at this time, while preaching this sermon, he told the congregation he was preaching for the last time -- his work was done! God was about to give him a release, and call him home. His sermon was preached with unction; he and the people shouting aloud the praises of the Redeemer. After he had finished his discourse he left the pulpit, seated himself in a chair in the altar, and calmly resigned his spirit to God.

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Account 52

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN WALKER
(Early 19th Century M. E. Local Preacher)

This is from hdm 1566, "Last Words and Old-Time Memories," by Maxwell Pierson Gaddis.

John Walker was born in Burlington County, New Jersey, and died April 5, 1849, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. He was converted to God at Mt. Holly, when nineteen years old. At the age of twenty-one he was licensed as a local preacher, and was received on probation in the Philadelphia Conference in 1802. In the spring of 1835 he took a supernumerary relation, and spent the remainder of his days in Clarksborough.

A volume might be written concerning the excellences of our departed father. As a man he was universally beloved; as a Christian his piety was deep and genuine. He possessed much of the spirit of the beloved John, whose name he bore. As a preacher his preaching was plain, simple, and unadorned. "Jesus and the resurrection," was his constant theme. As a minister of the New Testament he was successful in winning souls. He was in labors more abundant not only in days of health and strength, but in old age and infirmities. He did not think because he was a supernumerary that his work was done. Two days after preaching his last sermon he received a fall, from the effects of which he never recovered. From that time he was helpless. His sufferings were great, but he bore them with Christian patience and submission. His last days were peaceful, and his death honorable to the religion he professed. Like Paul, he looked back upon his life with pleasure, and forward with joy, exclaiming, "I am now ready to be offered," etc.

The past, the present, and the future all smiled upon him. His departure was like the setting sun. To him death had no sting, the grave no terrors, and eternity no darkness. On the Saturday before his death (after which time he spoke out little) he said to Brother Day that his "sufferings were great, but they would soon be over." He said, "Oh, how gladly would I exchange time for eternity!" On being asked what word he wished to send to the preachers at conference he replied, with peculiar emphasis, "Tell them I am going to heaven; that I have no doubt of it -- no, not a doubt of it. I am going to heaven."

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Account 53

THE LAST SERMON OF ROBERT HOPKINS WARREN (Free Methodist Bishop)

This is from hdm0618, "Master Workmen," by Richard R. Blews.

Scarcely had R. H. Warren been elected bishop when illness began to develop upon him, yet heroically and uncomplainingly he carried on.

After three years of happy service in his new field, he received his call for promotion. With eagerness he had taken up his administrative duties as chairman of the Commission on Christian Education and as president of the Y. P. M. S. (now the F. M. Y.) Council when "God's hand touched him and he slept."

He had held four conferences in the cycle of 1938 when he was stricken at the close of the Michigan Conference. A special anointing was upon him as he delivered his last message Sunday morning at Spring Arbor. It was fitting that his closing sermon should be on the theme, "The things that remain." In the words of Rev. F. L. Baker, "His last sermon preached Sunday morning at the conference at Spring Arbor, Michigan, will be remembered by many who wept and rejoiced as the bishop made us to see the stability of God's throne, His Word, and His power to save, cleanse and keep to the end."

While walking with his son, Frank, a short time before his death he said, "I'll not be able to leave you children very much in the way of material things." The quick reply of the son was, "Father, you will leave us far more than paltry dollars."

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Account 54

THE LAST SERMON OF JAMES WATTS (Early 19th Century M. E. Itinerant)

This is from hdm 0805, "History of the Old Baltimore Conference," by James Edward Armstrong.

James Watts was born in Greenbrier County, Virginia, in 1782, converted at the age of fourteen and admitted into the Conference in 1804. His first year was spent on Prince George and Stafford Circuits. In 1805 he was appointed to Ohio Circuit, traveling thither a hundred miles with Bishop Whatcoat. He says "I found him an excellent man, and strove to profit by his example." At his campmeeting he met Bishop Asbury. The next year his colleague on the Erie Circuit was Robert R. Roberts. They preached in the neighborhood of Lake Erie. Nathaniel B. Mills was sent to aid them after their first Quarterly Meeting. The privations and labors of Watts rank him among the pioneer heroes of Methodism. On one occasion he had to move at the eve of winter and had his house to build. At the first Quarterly Meeting he received twenty-five cents, and at the second he received between eleven and twelve dollars. After traversing the whole extent of territory from Lake Erie on the north to the Chesapeake Bay on the south for forty-eight years with constancy and unwavering fidelity, he was granted a superannuated relation. His last sermon was on Easter Sunday, from Psa. CXXXVIII 7: "Though I walk through the midst of trouble thou wilt revive me." His illness continued but six days. As death approached he called his family together and gave them his counsel. His last words were: "God is a refuge in time of trouble," and raising his hands in triumph, he added: "He is my strength; all is well, Glory! Glory."

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Account 55

THE LAST SERMON OF CAPTAIN THOMAS WEBB
(Zealous 18th Century Apostle of American Methodism)

This is from, hdm0211, "Captain Thomas Webb, The First Apostle of American Methodism," by Duane V. Maxey

His Final Return to England in about 1775

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.

On his return to England he secured a home for his family in Portland, on the heights of Bristol, but still traveled, and preached extensively in chapels, in market-places, and in the open air, attended by immense congregations. "How did he live the remainder of his life?" asks a British itinerant who knew him through most of his career; and he answers: "We add with pleasure that to him the promise was sure, 'He that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger.' Having escaped so many dangers and deaths, he believed, like Jacob, that his 'Goel,' the good angel of the Lord, had redeemed him from all mischief. To the end of his days he was persuaded that a ministering spirit, a guardian angel, had, through divine mercy attended him all the way in his diversified pilgrimage. He left everywhere a high example of persevering diligence and zeal. 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." In 1792 he was liberal and active in erecting the Portland Church at Bristol, "one of the most elegant chapels," says a Wesleyan author, "in the Methodist connection, if not in the kingdom." He preached his last sermon in it.

His Final Days and Death in 1796

Captain Webb died suddenly on December 20, 1796 when he was about 72 years of age. "He appeared," says the same authority, "to have had a presentiment for some time of his approaching dissolution, and shortly before his death he spoke to an intimate friend of the place and manner of his interment, observing: "I should prefer a triumphant death; but I may be taken away suddenly. However, I know I am happy in the Lord, and shall be with him whenever he calls me hence, and that is sufficient." In the autobiography of one of the leading contemporary preachers we read: "Dec. 8th, 1796. I spent a profitable hour with that excellent man, Captain Webb, of Bristol. He is indeed truly devoted to God, and has maintained a consistent profession for many years. He is now in his seventy-second year and as active as many who have only attained their fiftieth. He gives to the cause of God and to the poor of Christ's flock the greater part of his income. He is waiting with cheerful anticipation for his great and full reward. He bids fair to go to the grave like a shock of corn, fully ripe."

Again we read: "Wednesday, Dec. 21st. Last night, about eleven o'clock, Captain Webb suddenly entered into the joy of his Lord. He partook of his supper, and retired to rest about ten o'clock in his usual health. In less than an hour his spirit left the tenement of clay to enter the realms of eternal bliss. He professed to have had some presentiment that he should change worlds during the present year, and that his departure would be sudden."

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Account 56

THE LAST SERMON OF JOHN WESLEY (18th Century Founder of Methodism)

This is from hdm0428, "History of Methodist Reform," Volume I, by Edward J. Drinkhouse.

He continued to visit among his friends, and, though rapidly failing, as all observed, he preached at Chelsea February 15, at City Road February 22, and on the 23d, accompanied by Rodgers, rode eighteen miles to Leatherhead, to visit a magistrate, and in whose dining room he preached from "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." It was his last sermon. He was brought back to City Road parsonage and requested to be left alone for half an hour. At the end of the time Joseph Bradburn, his faithful attendant, found him so indisposed that he sent for his physician, Dr. Whitehead, to whom the dying patriarch said, "Doctor, they are more afraid than hurt." This was Friday, February 25. On the 26th he spent the day in drowsiness and sleep. Sunday, 27th, he seemed better, got up and sat in his chair, looked cheerful, and repeated:

"Till glad I lay this body down
Thy servant Lord attend;
And oh! my life of mercy crown,
With a triumphant end."

Afterward he remarked with emphasis, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Miss Wesley, his niece, and Miss Ritchie prayed with him. "When at Bristol," said he, alluding to his illness in 1753, "my words were:

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

Miss Ritchie asked, "Is that your language now?" "Yes," said he, "Christ is all! He is all!" On Monday, February 28, his weakness so increased that Dr. Whitehead wished for assistance, but Wesley replied: "Dr. Whitehead knows my constitution better than any one. I am quite satisfied and will have no one else." The day was spent in sleep; but he muttered at times scripture verses. Tuesday, March 1, after a restless night, he began singing:--

"All glory to God in the sky."

He said soon after, "I will get up," and while his friends were preparing his clothes, he broke out singing:--

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath."

Once more seated in his chair, he began to sing again, his last song on earth:

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree."

Put back to bed, he said, "Pray and praise!" He saluted each one present and said, "Farewell, farewell." Summoning his failing strength, he said, "The best of all is God is with us!" Scores of times he repeated, "I'll praise, I'll praise." Wednesday, March 2, Joseph Bradburn prayed with him; it was a few minutes before ten o'clock. There were around his bed his niece, Miss Wesley; one of his executors, Mr. Horton; his medical attendant, Dr. Whitehead; his book steward, George Whitefield; the present occupants of his house, James and Hester Ann Rodgers, and their little boy; and his friends and visitors, Robert Carr Brackenbury and Elizabeth Ritchie, -- eleven persons altogether. "Farewell!" cried Wesley, -- the last word he uttered; and then as Joseph Bradburn, the devoted, was saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; and this heir of glory shall come in," Wesley gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren and without a sigh or a groan was gone. It was about ten o'clock, A.M., Wednesday, March 2, 1791.

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Account 57

THE LAST SERMON OF RICHARD WHATCOAT

(Third M. E. Bishop with Asbury -- Example of Perfect Love)

This is derived from, "Richard Whatcoat, An Example of Perfect Love," compiled by Duane V. Maxey. In my estimation, Bishop Whatcoat was one of the best examples of Perfect Love, if not THE best example of this aspect of entire sanctification, in Early American Methodism. On one occasion of which I read, and perhaps on a number of other such occasions, with a few words "like apples of gold in pitchers of silver," Richard Whatcoat gently and sweetly pointed Bishop Asbury toward a better attitude following a negative encounter. Each had their own strong and weak points, but of the two, I suspect that Whatcoat best reflected the love of God at all times. -- DVM

At the General Conference of 1800, Bishop Asburys health was so poor that an additional superintendent was needed, and Bishop Whatcoat was elected, the votes being very nearly equally divided between him and Jesse Lee. A very great revival followed this session of the General Conference, and Bishop Whatcoat was one of the leading instruments connected with it. He traveled sometimes in company with Bishop Asbury, and sometimes separate, from New England to Georgia; but, suffering from debility, his labors were for a time confined to the Middle States in 1806 he met the Baltimore Conference in company with Bishop Asbury, and at the adjournment of Conference traveled through the Eastern Shore of Maryland towards Philadelphia. His last sermon was preached in Milford, Delaware, on the 8th of April. The next day, while traveling, he was taken severely ill, but succeeded in reaching Dover, where he found a home with the Hon. Richard Basset, and received every attention which hospitality and kindness could render. He lingered for thirteen weeks, and died in peace and confidence on July 5, 1806. His remains were deposited under the altar of Wesley chapel in the outskirts of Dover. A marble slab, with an inscription, was placed on the left of the pulpit. As a preacher his discourses were plain, instructive, and highly spiritual. As the presiding officer he combined simplicity and dignity. In his private life he was remarkable for his entire devotion to the cause of God. Laban Clark said of him, "I think I may safely say if I ever knew one who came up to St. James' description of a perfect man, one who bridled his tongue and kept in subjection his whole body, that man was Bishop Whatcoat."

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Account 58

THE LAST SERMON OF EBENEZER WHITE

(Early M. E. Itinerant)

This account is from hdm0244, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume IV, by Abel Stevens.

Ebenezer White, of Massachusetts, an eminent itinerant of Genesee Conference, where "he labored, traveling through storms, heat, and cold, when his infirmities indicated dissolution near;" when "not able to preach standing on his feet, he stood on his knees" proclaiming the word of God with power. He died suddenly, without a farewell word, except the text of his last sermon, which was, "There remaineth a rest for the people of God."

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Account 59

THE LAST SERMON OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD

(Flaming 18th Century Methodist Evangelist)

This is from hdm0469, "Gold From God's Mint," by Edward A. Fergerson.

While in our meeting at Lynn, Mass., this winter (Dec. 30, 1910), we had the privilege of visiting the Rev. George Whitefield's tomb at Newburyport, Mass.

The Old South Church, founded by him in the early years of his ministry in this country, still stands at it did when it rang with the voice of the mighty preacher. The audience room downstairs has been altered somewhat, but the gallery has remained untouched to this day. We saw his Bible and where it was marked at the last text from which he ever preached.

His last sermon was preached at Exeter, New Hampshire, Sept. 12, 1770. This was on Saturday night, and after preaching he rode on horse back to Newburyport, was stricken with asthma in the night and died on Sunday morning as the sun rose.

The crypt is directly underneath the pulpit. We descended the stairs and entered the new tomb that has lately been built and viewed what is left of the mortal remains of this mighty prince of public preachers. The bones are well preserved, though the original coffin is well-nigh gone. While kneeling at its side, we remembered, in reading his life of strenuous labors, how for years he swung across the Atlantic, through England and America, and pressed the battle to the last and died in the harness, a most victorious and triumphant death.

The following is an exact copy of the inscription on his cenotaph, that stands within ten feet of the pulpit:

"This cenotaph is erected with affectionate veneration to the memory of the Rev. George Whitefield, born at Gloucester, England, Dec. 16, 1714; educated at Oxford University; ordained, 1736.

"In a ministry of thirty-four years, he crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, and preached more than 18,000 sermons. As a soldier of the cross, humble, devout, ardent, he put on the whole armor of God, preferring the honor of Christ to his own interest, repose, reputation, or life. As a Christian orator, his deep piety, disinterested zeal and vivid imagination gave unexampled energy to his look, action and utterance; bold, fervent, pungent and popular in his eloquence, no other uninspired man ever preached to so large assemblies or enforced the simple truths of the Gospel by motives so persuasive and awful, and with an influence so powerful, to the hearts of his hearers.

"He died of asthma, Sept. 13, 1770; suddenly exchanging his life of unparalleled labors for his eternal rest."

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This account concerning "THE LAST SERMON OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD" comes from hdm0216, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Volume 1, by Abel Stevens.

Arriving in Philadelphia he hailed Wesley's itinerant's and "gave them his blessing: it has never failed them." His soul had always, since his conversion, glowed with a divine fire, but it now seemed to kindle into flame. No edifices could contain his congregations; he preached every day. He made a tour of five hundred miles up the Hudson, proclaiming his message at Albany, Schenectady, Great Barrington. "O what new scenes of usefulness are opening in various parts of this world!" he wrote as he returned. "I heard afterward that the word ran and was glorified. Grace! grace!" He had penetrated nearly to the northwestern frontiers. "He saw the gates of the Northwest opening, those great gates through which the nations have since been passing, as in grand procession, but he was not to enter there; the everlasting gates were opening for him, and he was hastening toward them." He passed to Boston, to Newburyport, to Portsmouth, still preaching daily. Seized with illness, he turned back; at Exeter he mounted a hogshead [a large barrel -- DVM] and preached his final sermon to an immense assembly. "His emotions carried him away, and he prolonged his discourse through two hours. It was an effort of stupendous eloquence -- his last field triumph -- the last of that series of mighty sermons which had been resounding like trumpet blasts for thirty years over England and America."

He hastened, exhausted, to Newburyport; the people gathered about his lodging in throngs to see and hear him once more; they pressed into the entry of the house. Taking a candle, he attempted to ascend to his chamber, but pausing on the stairs, he addressed them. "He had preached his last sermon; this was to be his last exhortation. It would seem that some pensive misgiving, some vague presentiment, touched his soul with the apprehension that the moments were too precious to be lost in rest. He lingered on the stairway, while the crowd gazed up at him with tearful eyes, as Elisha at the ascending prophet. his voice, never perhaps surpassed in its music and pathos, flowed on until the candle which he held in his hand burned away and went out in its socket. The next morning he was not, for God had taken him."

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Account 60

THE LAST SERMON OF ROY TILMAN WILLIAMS
(Early Nazarene General Superintendent)

Found in hdm0852, "Influence of the Country Church," by C. T. Corbett.

Florida, with its ever inviting vast coastline along the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, is a land of a thousand charms. This land of beauty of the semi-tropics flourishes with its many flowers and citrus fruits, and varieties of pines, palms, and banyan trees. Long hanging moss drapes the branches of live oak trees.

In this state with its wonderful climate Dr. R. T. Williams presided at his last assembly after being general superintendent for thirty years. The Nazarenes at Lakeland in October, 1945 listened to this pulpiteer as he preached his last message on earth from the subject, "Lifting Up Christ."

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Account 61

THE LAST SERMON OF WILLIAM HENRY WINANS

(Young 19th Century Methodist Preacher)

This is taken from hdm0033, "William Henry Winans, A Young Wesleyan Preacher," by Conrad Van Dusen.

On Christmas Day [1865] he seems to have indulged a hope that his health would be restored: It was considerably improved, and though he appeared to feel pretty well, his friends could see he was failing. His zeal carried him much beyond his bodily strength. His physical frame was evidently giving way, but he continued to visit and preach with unabated zeal. It was more than his meat and drink to labor for the salvation of souls. He made an extra effort, and again visited and preached to his friends at Mount Elgin, where his example and labors will be long remembered. In Ingersoll his last sermon was like thunderbolts thrown among the people, and his words seemed as if coined in the heart of an angel, and rolled from the mouth of Gabriel's trumpet. The whole congregation were moved to tears, and rocked as by an earthquake. It appeared to many as if they were in the suburbs of heaven, for the Lord of hosts was present, and caused a letting down of glory in their midst. It was the last sermon he ever preached, and some who heard him thought it was the best.

In him was fully exemplified the following lines which he had often sung:

"Happy if with my last breath,
I may but gasp his Name!
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb!"

Just at that moment the messenger arrived to "bid him come," and with the last remains of his wasted strength he exclaimed, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" At that moment the curtain of life dropped, and, without a groan or struggle, on, the 30th day of May, 1866, he sweetly slept in Jesus.

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THE END