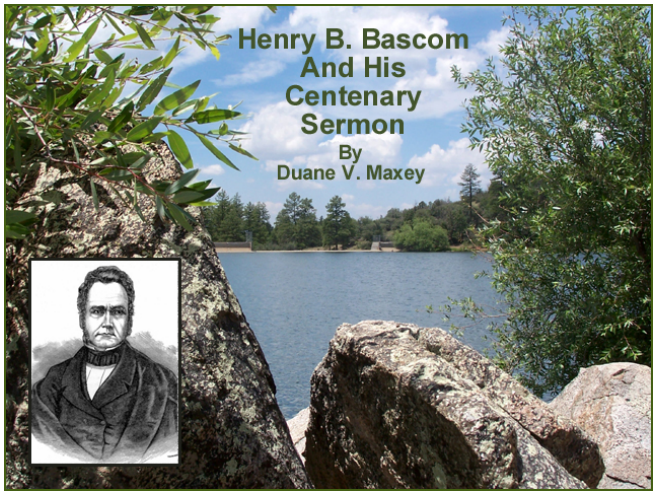
BASCOM AND HIS METHODIST CENTENARY ADDRESS

Compiled by Duane V. Maxey



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FILE INTRODUCTION

This file is a compilation consisting of excerpts about, and by, Henry B. Bascom, who at the time of his demise was a bishop in the M. E. Church, South. Parts 01--05 are excerpts about Bascom taken from various publications in the HDM Digital Library. Part 06 includes the Introduction to the book from which I also digitized Part 07, an address by Bascom in December of 1839 titled "Centenary Of Methodism." Parts 01--06 will give the reader much information about the man, while Part 07 presents a sample of his writing. -- Duane V. Maxey, Holiness Data Ministry, Surprise, Arizona, July 20, 2008.

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01 -- BASCOM DATES

Henry B. Bascom
Born: May 12, 1796
Entered Ministry: Ohio Conference, 1818
Ordained Bishop: 1850
Died: September 8, 1850

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02 -- BASCOM SKETCH BY JAMES B. FINLEY
From hdm0230 -- "Sketches Of Western Methodism" by James Bradley Finley

Bascom was emphatically a western man. Early taken to the head waters of the Allegheny, and reared amid the wild scenery of his forest home, his mind took its hue and coloring from those deep glens and craggy mountains; and the native bent which was given to his genius, from the sublime and picturesque scenes around him, grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength. But though reared in the west, and identified with its numerous interests, and its rapidly expanding prosperity, he was not contracted in his views. His mind seemed to have been framed upon the same grand scale, in which the Creator had constructed the broad prairies, and mighty rivers, and towering mountains of the west. The whole country, from where Atlantic surges wash the rocky, sterile shores of New England, to where the Pacific's blue waters lave the golden sands of California, was his home, and he embraced the whole in his broad catholic sympathies. With him there was no north, no south, no east, no west; and in this respect his mind had a Websterian cast -- massy, boundless in its sympathies and aims; or, like to that of the immortal Clay, whose friend he was during his whole life, he rose above all sectional views, soared beyond all sectional lines, and embraced his entire country in the arms of his benevolence.

As Webster, and Clay, and Calhoun were types of a race of statesmen, which have passed away from the political world, so may we say of a Fisk, Olin, and Bascom, they were types of a race of preachers, which, as the rare products of an age that is passing, may take a century to produce their like again. We would not be

sectarian, though we thus confine our comparison to the Methodist Church; and yet, for solid learning, deep piety, and sublime eloquence in the pulpit and on the platform, we know not their superiors in any age that is past, as exhibited in any of the Churches of the land. They may not have excelled in Biblical learning, or devoted piety, or pulpit eloquence, according to the standards of the great master minds of some other Churches, but, according to our judgment, none excelled them in a union of all these.

However pleasant and perhaps profitable it might be to indulge in such a train of thought, and pursue it so as to resolve, as far as possible, the distinguished traits which characterized these great minds into their elements, and thereby form an analysis for the study of the youth of the present day -- a model upon which future character might be constructed -- we must forego that pleasure, and proceed at once to the subject of our chapter.

There was something very remarkable in the youth of Bascom. Very soon after his conversion, which occurred at a camp meeting on Oil creek, he gave evidence, in the relation of his religious experience and prayers of a power and eloquence unusual to boys of his age. At one time he went from home to attend a quarterly meeting at Franklin. His singular appearance, with his fox-skin cap and rude backwoods dress, attracted the attention of every one present; but when, at love-feast, on Sabbath morning, he rose and spoke of his conversion and the love of a Savior, every heart was thrilled, and as the rough exterior sparkled with the light and fire of the soul within, the people wondered more at the boy than they had before been surprised at the rusticity of his appearance.

On Monday morning, Mr. William Connelley, who was a merchant in Franklin, took him to his store and gave him a new hat and some other articles to fit up his wardrobe. Mr. C. was subsequently, for several years, a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature, and from some cause or other lost His property and became poor. Traveling in the west, he stopped in Cincinnati, and being destitute of means, among strangers, he called upon Dr. Elliott, in Cincinnati, and asked for the loan of a few dollars to take him home. The doctor promptly took out his wallet and handed him all he desired, saying, "Take that, brother, and welcome, for giving young Bascom a hat."

Soon after his father removed to the wilds of the west, and settled on the banks of the Ohio, nearly opposite to where the city of Maysville now stands, where he engaged with his family in farming pursuits. Many years afterward, while a professor of moral science at Augusta, he often visited the residence of his father, several miles above, on the Ohio side of the river. Here he has been seen with his coat off, and with mattock in hand, grubbing out the roots and briers of the soil. One season he prepared the soil and tended twelve acres of corn, at the same time attending to all his duties in College.

In the year 1812, at a quarterly conference, held on the Scioto, not far from Portsmouth, in a stone house still standing, he was recommended to the Western conference, to be received into the traveling connection. That recommendation, written and signed by the Rev. Robert W. Finley, is now in the possession of Dr. Elliott, together with numerous other documents of olden time, pertaining to Methodism in the west.

His peculiar talents as a preacher were early developed. He seemed at once to rise to eminence as a pulpit orator. The graces of oratory, which others gain, like Demosthenes, by a severe and tedious process, with him were gifts of nature, and not the product of education. We are strongly inclined to the opinion that the proverb "poea nascitur, non fit," applies with equal force to orators, though perhaps not to the same degree. Such was the case, we believe, with Bascom; he was born an orator, and to have cast his genius in any model would have destroyed his power. God makes but few such men. Towering up like Himalaya, or sublimely grand like Niagara, they stand out apart from their species to excite our wonder.

We were forcibly struck with the saying of a grave divine, who had been listening with intense and thrilling interest to Bascom in one of his loftiest moods, and who, on being asked, after the sermon, what he thought of the man, replied, "I did not think of the man at all. My mind was wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the character of the God who created him." Exhibitions of greatness and power in nature invariably send us up to nature's God. We wondered not at the saying of this grave and talented divine. Similar impressions have doubtless been elicited from others. Who that witnesses the tempest careering in majesty and leveling forests in its course, but has his thoughts transferred to the awful Being who "rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm?" We once kneeled down on the verge of an overhanging cliff, and turned our ear to take in the full thunder of Niagara, as it rolled, a hundred feet below us, its everlasting bass, and such a sense of the majesty and power of God possessed us, as we were never conscious of before. We rose from our knees and shouted, "God!"

Father Taylor, of Boston, himself a child of nature, and boiling over with native eloquence and wit, was once listening to Bascom, as he was delivering one of his series of lectures on Infidelity, in Green-Street Church, New York. The old man eloquent stood by one of the pillars that support the gallery, and not far from the pulpit. As the lecturer proceeded, Father Taylor became more and more interested, and he was seen, unconsciously, to begin to raise his cane, elevating it gradually, as though he was indicating the orator's progress. There he stood, like a statue slightly inclined, drinking in every word till he heard the last, when, with his cane finally extended at arm's length above his head, he exclaimed, "Grand!"

Blessed with extraordinary powers, and a brilliant native genius, all that he needed was an appropriate direction, and a cultivation correspondent thereto; and we most firmly believe that, in the order of Providence, he was thrown into the very sphere of life where he was fitted to move, with as much adaptation, in regard to his

nature, as the planets are adapted to their appointed spheres. Had his genius been cramped by the laws of the schools, which are often about as useful in making an orator as a note-book would be to a nightingale, or as the laws of motion and sound would be to the dash and roar of Niagara, the thunder of whose anthem is the voice of nature, we might have had, and doubtless would have had, a Bascom polished with all the arts of elocution; but, like the nicely adjusted and exquisitely wrought automaton, there would have been a stiffness in his movements and although the precision which should mark them would indicate the wonderful power of art, still we would have had nothing but the mimic artificial man

Nature is the fountain from whence the orator must draw his inspiration, and the field whereon he must develop his powers. As the eagle, who soars away from the homes and the haunts of man, to bathe his undazzled eye in the sunbeam, and pillow his breast upon the storm, so the child of genius must become familiar with Nature in all her aspects. One of the most eloquent divines, of the same school of theology to which Bascom belonged, discourses thus on this subject: "The orator must be much at home, that is, he must study himself; his own nature, and powers, and states of mind; and he must be much abroad, that is, he must go out and study Nature in all her moods." It is said of Cole, the great artist, that he studied Nature instead of the great masters, and the result was, that he excelled all the artists of his day, in transferring natural scenery to the canvas. His "Garden of Eden," and "Voyage of Life," two of the greatest productions of his pencil, were conceived from nature. As all the lines of Nature are lines of beauty, so are all her movements, and he who would be truly effective and graceful as an orator must, follow no other copy.

Bascom has been heard to say, in reference to the composition of his sermons, that a room was so contracted it had an influence upon his thoughts, and he could only think freely and grandly when out in the midst of nature, beneath her boundless skies and extended landscapes. It is said that an Indian mound, in Kentucky, is pointed out to the traveler as the spot whereon he composed some of his greatest sermons.

It is seldom we see the blessings of poverty, and yet we believe that the very curse pronounced on man in Eden, has been attended with the greatest blessings, and has wrought out the most incalculable good to man. Bascom's father was poor, and in addition to this he had a large family to maintain by the sweat of his face. Had he been rich, the probability is that young Henry would have been sent to college, and then the idea of his being an itinerant preacher would have never been conceived. Having received but a limited education, at the early age of sixteen he entered the itinerancy as freshman, in one of nature's colleges, in western Virginia.

The records of the Church show us, that he was received into the ranks of the itinerancy in the year 1814, and went through his preparatory course in the wilds of Ohio, as the colleague of the Rev. Alexander Cummins; and after having completed his academical curriculum, he was sent out alone, the following year, to the wilder

regions of western Virginia, to travel the Wyandotte circuit. We have already spoken of the grand and gloomy scenery embraced in this extensive circuit. Here he was subjected to all sorts of privation, toils, and hardship, but he endured all as a good soldier; and it was here, ascending the towering heights, or urging his way through the deep mountain gorges, or plunging into the rapid rivers and breasting their swelling tides, that his character as a preacher was developed. Frequently did he have to travel forty miles a day, through the unbroken solitudes of the wilderness, without rest, without food, and at night, in some lone cabin, would he pour out his full heart, in strains of Gospel eloquence, upon the rude and simple hearted backwoods hunters, collected from different and distant points to hear him.

On one of his solitary journeys he was followed for several miles by a large panther, which threatened at every moment to spring upon him, and from which he was only rescued by reaching, at nightfall, the cabin of a settler. Here, when he had a few hours for rest, would he retire to the woods as his study, and amid the rocks and grand old trees, all standing as nature made them, untouched by the hand of man, he would prepare his sermons. This he would do by walking back and forth, forming his plans, selecting his words, constructing his sentences, and uttering them; which being done, he would lay them up in the capacious storehouse of his memory, to be brought therefrom at his bidding, with all the rapidity of thought We believe that this custom, adopted from necessity in the woods -- for in a region infested with rattlesnakes and panthers, it would not be safe to sit or recline -- he transferred to the parlor and the garden, in towns and cities.

At one time he ventured to recline, with his Bible, beneath the towering, outspreading branches of an oak, at one of his distant appointments, near the head waters of Elk river. He possessed, to a great degree, the power of abstraction, and it was not long till his soul was intently engaged in taking full draughts from the fountain of inspiration. In the midst of his spirit reverie he was aroused by the cry of a hunter, in tremulous tones, telling him, at the peril of his life, to lie still till he fired. Quickly glancing his eye in the direction from whence the voice came, he saw his friend, with his rifle elevated, and pointing toward the branches of the tree under which he was lying. Familiar as he was with backwoods life, Bascom saw that some terrible danger was hovering over him, and without the least perceptible motion of his body, he turned his gaze upward, when he saw on the branch of the tree, just over him, and not more than twenty feet distant, a huge panther, drawn up and just ready for a spring. It was a fearful, awful moment. The least motion on his part would have been the signal for a spring, and his fate would have been sealed forever. In that awful moment, when death seemed inevitable, with a self control and a courage truly wonderful, he continued perfectly quiet, till the keen crack of the rifle was heard, and the ferocious beast, pierced by the unerring aim of the backwoods hunter, fell lifeless by his side.

At another time, while traveling this same circuit, he stopped, on his way to an appointment, at a log-cabin, recently erected by the road-side. Stopping for rest and refreshment, not long after dinner was ready, and he sat down with the family

to dine. A lovely little child, about three years of age, which had attracted his attention by its innocent mirth and its gentleness, was playing before the door, while the family were engaged around the homely repast, when suddenly a heart-piercing cry was heard.

"My child! my child!" screamed the mother, and quick as thought all rushed to the door.

Father of mercies! what a sight was presented to that fond mother. A terrible panther had sprung upon that unconscious child and was ascending a tree with it in his mouth.

"The gun! the gun! quick, for God's sake, the gun!" frantically exclaimed the father.

But Bascom had seized it from the rack, and was already in quick pursuit. He fired, and the ball pierced the panther, and brought him to the ground with its victim; but, alas life had fled. Thus amid such wild scenes and daring adventures, the first years of our young itinerant's life were passed.

When the fame of the eloquent young preacher first reached our cars, we were traveling on the West Wheeling circuit, in another part of the conference. Though rumor spoke, with glowing tongue, of his matchless and enchanting power in the pulpit, and we were prepared, as we often have been before, by such exaggerated descriptions, to be disappointed when we should have the opportunity of hearing him, yet, when that the came, which it did at conference, where He was literally surrounded with a battery of critics' eyes, in the persons of preachers, we were ready to say, after a long-drawn breath, when he had ended a most intensely-thrilling discourse, in the language of the Queen of Sheba, on her visit to Solomon, "The half had not been told us.,' Those who never heard him till after his soul had been caged in the cramped and narrow cell of scholastic study, and shorn of its freshness, strength, and power, by inhaling the atmosphere of a pent-up city life, can have but a faint conception of what he was, when he communed with nature and nature's God, and breathed the pure air of the mountain, in the bright and palmy days of his itinerant life. In the expressive language of one who was intimately acquainted with him, "Those who heard him then will never forget the feelings that he produced. The deep, thrilling tones or a voice then unimpaired by hardship and overexertion, now melting into the soft, melodious accents of love, and now bursting forth in thundering denunciations of the world's ungodliness, never failed to stamp upon the hearts of his hearers impressions lasting as life itself. At one moment his audience, moved by the charming pictures of his pencil, would be all radiant with smiles; at another, the pathetic, touching, and heart-moving scenes, which he would describe, would force tears of sympathy down the cheeks of the most obdurate; and then, in an instant, by the magic of his burning eloquence, he would make the whole congregation tremble, so wondrous, so real,

so terrible was his Rembrandt-sketch of the doom of the impenitent. He controlled his audience at will.

Perfectly familiar with all the motives of the human mind, and all the impulses of the heart, he could cause his hearers to smile with joy, or weep with penitence, or tremble with remorse, at pleasure. No man possessed a more fruitful imagination. His descriptions fairly glittered with poetic gems. Touched by his master hand, every picture of life assumed the charm and glow of beauty, or glared with the most hideous deformity, just as it suited his purpose. I well remember a discourse on the vanities of life, delivered by him some years ago; and never did all the charms and attractions of this world appear so little and so worthless to me as on that occasion. His description of the dalliances of the world, the siren whisperings of Ambition, and the luring charms of Pleasure, surpassed in beauty and power any thing I remember to have heard from the lips of man. His power as an orator was, no doubt, greatly aided by his fine person, his open, manly, honest expression of countenance, and his keen, piercing black eye. That eye none could describe. A venerable citizen, who knew him well, has often told me that, while Dr. Bascom was preaching, he could never 'unfix' his gaze from that earnest, soul-penetrating eye. 'Why,' said he, 'whenever he was denouncing any mean passion, or secret, ungodly propensity, his dark, keen eye seemed to look right through me, and say to my self-condemned spirit, ' "Thou art the man."'

He possessed that indescribable power, that magnetic charm, if we may so term it, with which all true orators are gifted, and which never fails to move the souls of men. What he described was real, and men saw it and felt it as a thing of life. A deep, earnest soul, and resolute and brave, was Henry B. Bascom. We will relate an incident as illustrative of his character, which occurred when he was connected with Augusta College. He had crossed the river to attend a meeting. During his discourse in the evening, he took occasion to come down with terrific, scathing denunciation, upon the profane swearer. It is said that whatever citadel of vice or infidelity he attacked, so direct and powerful was his artillery, that he left nothing but the smoldering ruins. It being necessary for him to recross the river that night, it was agreed by a number of rough boatmen, who were writhing under his sermon, that they would ferry him over and retaliate upon him for his severity. Bascom entered the skiff, and they started from the shore. They had not proceeded far till they commenced a concert of oaths, horrid enough to make the cheek of darkness itself turn pale. There sat the preacher, wrapped up in his cloak, in the stern of the boat, apparently unconscious of what was transpiring. They became enraged at his stoicism, and raved and cursed like fiends from perdition, who had graduated in the dialect of the dammed. When they were nearing the Kentucky shore, one of them asked him if he was not a preacher. To this he responded in the affirmative.

"Why, then," said he, " don't you reprove us for our swearing?'

"You may swear till you break your necks, for aught that I care," replied Bascom, fully conscious of their design to abuse and insult him.

One, who in later years heard Bascom, said of him as a preacher, "His delivery, naturally most eloquent, was injured, strangely as the assertion may sound, by being made to conform exactly to the matter delivered. It was his writing, in other words, that marred his delivery. Had he always spoken without writing, and formed the habit of easy, correct, extempore elocution, he would have been almost any thing that eloquence could have demanded." Had this friend known him in his early days, and been permitted to have heard him, he never would have spoken thus, because Bascom had formed the very "habit" of which he speaks, and had attained the high position for eloquence which such a habit secured. This criticism serves as an illustration of what we have already said; namely, that the systems of the schools, which, unfortunately, controlled him in after life, was what, to a great extent, destroyed his power as an orator. it was, in truth, "writing that marred his speaking;" but, notwithstanding all these disabilities, we aver that he had no superior in the world.

Other speakers may have excelled in the beautiful, or the pathetic, or the fanciful, but for sublimity and grandeur, either as it regarded matter or manner, we confidently believe he was without a rival. We have heard him when it was painful to listen; when the souls of his vast auditory, wrought up to the highest intensity by his awfully-sublime descriptions, seemed ready to burst with emotion. Nor yet was he wanting in the beautiful. We have been borne away by his eloquence, as on beds of violets, to soft Elysian bowers, and have almost breathed the air and heard the songs of heaven. But we have a word more in regard to the knowledge and eloquence which is to be derived from the study of nature. In this age, when books and colleges are flooding the land, it would be well for us to call ourselves back a little to the study of nature, where we find

"Books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones."

An eloquent divine, at the head of one of our colleges, says, "How much better this unwritten knowledge than all written: it is unerring, adapted to each case. It was an experiment of modern times to restore a sick body by transfusing the blood of a healthy one into its veins; but it was unsuccessful, because the transfused current was not in a proper relation to the vessels which received it: it irritated and bloated the sinking system. Too much of our learning is of this kind -- a transfusion of thought into channels unadapted to it, which only vitiates and puffs them up. The sick soul, like the sick body, must restore itself; its vital organs must be aroused to vigorous action before its streams can be enriched and purified.

"We in this land should be the last to complain of barrenness of mind; for the new world is around us. Alas! alas! we are thrashing over and over again the old world's dry straw instead of thrusting the sickle into the new world's green and

waving harvest. These cloud-capt hills are strewn all over with legends ready to be bound into the bundles of Homeric odes and epics. These venerable woods stand thick with God's own thoughts; they leap by us in every deer that crosses our path, and fall upon us in every descending leaf. New forms of human love, and sympathy, and sin, and suffering, look out from those cabin windows and burning brush-heaps, from yonder cane-brakes and the far-off wigwams. We have book-teachers enough. O for more bookless ones!"

We have absolutely been sickened at the stereotype process by which preachers have been made in our colleges. They are the merest casts from some model teacher, and every thing about them is an imitation; their very tone of voice and manner of delivery, to the pointing of a finger, or the shake of the head, and even the alamode of their dress and walk are all the most servile imitation. Nature is smothered to death, and buried beyond the hope of a resurrection. And yet we would not eschew books nor colleges. God forbid! We want them all, but we want natural men, whose flash and thunder in the pulpit come from the Bible and the great battery of nature. Though Bascom, in later years, had lost, to some considerable extent, the power of

"Sending his soul with every lance he threw"

yet he never lost the power to charm, and he never preached to an audience but that

"Their listening powers
Were awed, and every thought in silence hung,
In wondering expectation."

What Grattan said of the Irish orator, may with equal appropriateness be said of Bascom: "When young, his eloquence was ocean in a storm; when old, it was ocean in a calm; but whether calm or storm, the same great element, the sublimest and most magnificent phenomenon in creation."

But there were other traits of character, concerning which we must be permitted to allude in our sketch. Stern and sedate, as one might think, wrapped up in the solitude of his own thoughts and feelings, he possessed a heart filled with the kindliest sympathies. He was quite as ready to

"Feel another's woe,"

and to hide another's faults, as many who have considered him selfish and indifferent. It is not always those who have the most feeling that give evidence of it in their manner. Some hearts are like fountains on the surface, always seen -- open to the gaze of all --others are like fountains hidden among the rocks, yet clear, transparent, full, and free. A frown may sometimes be on the brow, and the tearless eye indicate no feeling, when the heart is ready to break with tenderness; and then,

again, we have seen smiles spread over the countenance, when stormy passions raged within. God looks at the heart and we are to judge no man from appearance.

Indeed, one of Bascom's faults, if it were a fault, was almost invariably to take the part of the oppressed, or to choose the weaker side of almost any question, without duly weighing the merits thereof. His error, however, in this respect, was pardonable. To pursue a man to "the bitter end," because of a difference of opinion, and, with bigotry and prejudice, question his motives and condemn his actions, was never the character of Bascom. He was above it, as far as the towering Alps, which bathes its pure summit in the light of heaven, is above the clouds and mists that creep along its sides and encircle its base, and we pity the man who could pursue so noble a spirit, or breathe an unworthy suspicion over his memory.

But he was independent; and we hesitate not to say, that, had it not been for his rare and commanding talents, he never would have been regarded, by the majority of the Church, as sufficiently safe to have been entrusted with any prominent ecclesiastical position. Never was man, from the very commencement of his ministerial career, through all its periods, down to the very close almost of his eventful life, more stoutly, bitterly, pertinaciously opposed, than was Bascom. Providence itself seemed to frown upon him, as he struggled with the hardest fortune all through life. But why was this? We have thought his mighty spirit required such severe discipline to school it for heaven. Like Schiller, he literally passed through storm, and tempest, and fire, to heaven, and yet, like Elijah and Daniel, he went unscathed. He rose, however, despite of all opposing obstacles, to the highest summit of human greatness, and to the occupancy of the most distinguished posts of honor and trust in the gift of that branch of the Church to which he belonged. From a President of Madison College, and professor, in Augusta, he was promoted to the Presidency of Transylvania University. When the literary department of that institution ceased, he was elected editor of the Southern Quarterly Review, and finally a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, which distinguished office he held when he died.

Much might be said of this great man in Israel, who has been taken from our midst. We are sorry we could not do the subject more justice. Had it not been that our sketches of western preachers would have been incomplete without a notice of one who grew up in our midst, and filled the country with his fame, we would not have undertaken it. What we have written is almost entirely from personal recollection, not having a single scrap of material within our reach. We are aware that his life has been written and published, but, with all our efforts, we have not been able to procure a copy; and we had delayed writing this sketch till this late hour in the composition of our book, hoping to have some data from which to draw, to enable us to give a more satisfactory outline of the life and character of that wonderful man but we have been disappointed. We hope our readers will regard it as a slight tribute to the memory of one whom we regarded as the greatest of American pulpit orators.

He is gone. Our Bascom is no more. The light that shone, kindled from God's altar, in that intellect, which was clear as an angel's, has not gone out; it has only ceased to shed its radiance and glory upon the earthly sphere. In yonder heaven, undimmed, it shines forever.

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03 -- BASCOM SKETCH BY ABEL STEVENS
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, an 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.

In person he was a model of physical dignity and beauty; tall, well-proportioned, with perfectly symmetrical features, black and dazzling eyes, and a forehead expanded and lofty, "a very throne of intellect." He was fastidious in his apparel, reticent in his manners, and habitually seemed morbidly self-conscious. He published a volume of sermons; but they give no explanation of his peculiar eloquence, and will hardly bear critical examination. He was self-educated, and though very thoroughly so, escaped not the usual defects of self-training. His style was elaborate, abounded in new coined words, and was sometimes grandiloquent; his imagination was exuberant, too often excessive; his argumentation complicated, his thoughts abrupt and fragmentary. His sermons were brilliant mosaics, apparently composed of passages which had been laboriously prepared, at long intervals, and without much relation to the discourse as a whole. They lacked simplicity; were artificial, without the facility or ease which characterizes the mastery of art by disguising its labor. But, in spite of his defects, his power has seldom been rivaled in the American pulpit; he was a wonder of genius to the people, and drew them in multitudes which no temple could accommodate.

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04 -- BASCOM SKETCH BY JAMES MCGEE
From hdm0839 -- "The March Of Methodism" by James McGee

Henry B. Bascom. "Born in Pennsylvania in 1796, 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." In 1823 he was elected chaplain to Congress; in 1827 he was called to the presidency of Madison College, Pennsylvania, and subsequently held many positions of importance in connection with Church institutions. He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1844, when the Church was divided, and joined in the organization of the Church, South, of which he was made a bishop in 1849. He died September 8, 1850, "worn out with toil."

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05 -- BASCOM SKETCH BY MATTHEW SIMPSON
From hdm0720 -- "Cyclopedia Of Methodism -- Letter-B" by Matthew Simpson

0218 -- BASCOM, Henry B., D.D., one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, was born in Hancock, N. Y., May 27,1796, and died at Louisville, Ky., Sept. 8,1850. He united with the Methodist Episcopal Church in Western Pennsylvania in 1811, and was licensed to preach and received on trial in the Ohio Conference in 1813. He soon became famous as a pulpit orator. He was

elected chaplain to Congress in 1823; in 1827 was elected President of Madison College, Pa., which position he filled until 1829, when he became the agent of the American Colonization Society. He was elected in 1832 as Professor of Moral Science, in Augusta College, Ky., and in 1842 He became the president of Transylvania University. He was a delegate to every General Conference from 1828 to 1844; and in 1845 he adhered to the Church South. He was editor of the Southern Quarterly Review from 1846 to 1850, when He was elected bishop, at the General Conference of the M. E. Church South at St. Louis. At one period He was perhaps the most popular pulpit orator in the United States. His sermons, though long, did not weary the people. They were evidently prepared with great care. As is often the case, in reading his sermons we miss the brilliancy and vivacity of the living speaker. He wrote the famous "protest of the minority" in the General Conference of 1844 , and the "report on organization" at the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, in 1845. Among other works, he published an elaborate volume in defense of the Southern Church, entitled "Methodism and Slavery." He was a man of remarkably fine personal appearance, and had a voice of great compass and power.

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06 -- INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKS OF BASCOM

This file will conclude with Henry B. Bascom's brief address on the "Centenary Of Methodism," the only item from his Posthumous Works that I have elected to digitize, due in part to the poor OCR renderings of the printed text. However, because the Introduction to that volume by Thomas N. Ralston contains a number of remarks about Bascom, I have decided to include it below in this compilation. The Introduction to the Posthumous Works of Henry B. Bascom will also give the reader of this file an overview of the writings of Bascom. Perhaps a number of readers will recognize the Editor of the book and author of the Introduction, Thomas N. Ralston, from his authorship of "Elements Of Divinity," which volume is also included in the HDM Library as hdm2285. -- Duane V. Maxey

INTRODUCTION

In introducing to the reading public the Posthumous Works of the late Bishop Bascom, some remarks by way of preface will naturally be expected from the editor. To prepare for any literary work of value or importance, an appropriate preface, at once concise and perspicuous, minute and comprehensive, is justly considered a task of difficult performance. But when called upon to prepare for the press, and introduce to the public, the posthumous works of one so eminent and distinguished as the late Bishop Bascom, we must be allowed to invoke a generous indulgence; fur we feel deeply impressed with a sense of the delicacy and responsibility of our position. To meet the expectations and secure the approbation of all, even of such as feel a deep interest in the subject, we know to be impossible. A conscious assurance, however, that so far as we have progressed in our labors, we have

spared no pains to perform the task assigned us to the best of our ability under the circumstances, while it allows us, with becoming diffidence, to submit to public scrutiny the performance of our work, at the same time leaves us without any disquieting apprehensions as to the result.

Our engagement in this labor was not a matter of our own seeking. When first solicited to undertake it by the respected widow of the late Bishop Bascom, we for a time declined, naming several other individuals whom we recommended as more suitable persons; but when the request was still urged upon us, and especially when it had been sanctioned and approved by resolution of the late General Conference, at Columbus, Georgia, we addressed ourself to the task before us without hesitation or delay.

It is a remarkable fact, that notwithstanding the great fame of Dr. Bascom as an orator, comparatively little had ever been published from his pen up to the time of his death. This resulted ill part from his peculiar nervousness of sensibility, combined with the exquisite delicacy and refinement of his taste. Such was the acuteness of his sensibility, that he instinctively shrunk from submitting his productions to the scrutiny of public criticism, so long as he could see anything in them in the slightest degree defective, or falling short of the most complete finish. And such were the keenness of his perception, and the rigid exquisiteness of his taste, that he could scarcely ever persuade himself that any of his productions were wrought up to that state of finish and degree of perfection, which met his own ideal of what was requisite and proper. However severe the process of refinement, his acute sensibility could always detect too much of alloy yet mixed with the pure gold, to allow him to be willing to send it forth for general circulation. Hence, although ever and anon, during the course of his brilliant career, he was called upon both by distinguished individuals and reputable associations, for copies of his sermons and addresses for publication, he almost invariably declined. Except in shape of conference documents, when he acted as chairman of committees, or was called upon under imperative circumstances, he seldom or never appeared before the public in print, with his own consent. Perhaps these conference papers, one inaugural address, his articles in the Quarterly, his small volume on "Methodism and Slavery," and one volume of sermons published a short time before his death, comprise about the whole of his published writings. His conference documents, however, were numerous and able. It is notorious, that for a long period it seldom occurred, whether in his annual or the general conference, that an elaborate report was demanded on an important and delicate question, when Dr. Bascom was not put forward as chairman of the committee. Witness his famous report on the "Westmoreland Case," at the General Conference in Baltimore, in 1840; his immortal "Protest," in New York, in 1844, and his report as chairman of the committee on "Organization," at the Louisville Convention, in 1845; his "Review" of the "Reply" to the "Protest," and other papers that might be named. These documents, however, were sufficiently numerous and extensive to evince that their author was not only the accomplished pulpit Orator that public fame had enrolled him, but also the profound thinker and the masterly logician.

The great fame of Dr. Bascom as an orator and public lecturer, and the admiration with which entranced thousands hung upon his pulpit eloquence, may readily account for the eager anxiety which had possessed the public mind, years before his death, for the publication of his sermons and addresses. And what contributed no little to the fanning of the flame of this anxiety, was the peculiar character of his oratory. His mode of thought and style of diction were both unique. He neither laid down his propositions and principles, and arrayed his arguments and illustrations, according to the regular, systematic, and measured order of the schools, nor shaped his sentences, or rounded his periods, molded his metaphors, or chiseled his figures, according to any studied, staid, minute regard for the punctilious rules of the rhetorician. Fired by the heat of his own genius, and soaring aloft on the proud wing of his own glowing imagination, the strait-laced formula of the mere schoolman, and the petite niceties of the mere logomachist, like the buzzing of an insect amid the rushing of a tornado, were overshadowed and obliterated amid the lightning-glance of his thought, and the earthquake-power of his argument! In his oratory there was a startling vividness, -- a magnificent grandeur that enchained and transported his auditory, -- that so captivated the mind, and enkindled the imagination, with the scenes of beauty and the visions of sublimity, which, by the magic influence of his pencil, were bursting to view in successive flashes upon the canvass, as to leave the mind almost overwhelmed and paralyzed by the force of the shock! And when it was over, so overpowering had been the influence of these sublime panoramic exhibitions, that each successive one had almost obliterated the memory of its predecessor, leaving the mind in a state of electrified excitement of anxiety to recall the bright visions that bad passed before it, but without the power to perform the task. Hence, the general wish, under such circumstances, that would naturally arise for the publication of those masterly productions. Sermons and addresses, possessed of such thrilling interest and matchless power in their delivery, we wish to have before us in print, that we may pause and gaze at leisure upon their beauties, and dwell upon their excellencies, -- treasure them up in our minds, and preserve them for future meditation and profit.

Such being the character of his oratory, it is not surprising that the publication of a volume of his sermons, a few years ago, should have excited so general an interest; and that the work should have commanded so rapid and so extensive a circulation. Multiplied thousands, who had been charmed and edified by the delivery of these discourses, were now impatient to re-enjoy an intellectual and spiritual repast, the memory of which, in by-gone years, they cherished with so much pleasure. The general impression had gone abroad, too, that the volume published was soon to be succeeded by others of a similar character. Expectation to this effect was rife, and the public anxiety had been excited on the subject, at the time Dr. Bascom was set apart to the Episcopacy, in 1850. But in a few months after this event, amid the strength and vigor of his laborious and brilliant career, he fell in death, and that eloquent voice was silenced on earth forever. In his death the church lost one of her ablest ministers, -- the pulpit, the cause of virtue and religion,

one of its mightiest champions. But he died in peace, expressing his unshaken confidence in "Almighty Goodness," for salvation.

No sooner had the general shock occasioned by his death subsided, than the greatest anxiety was manifested for the publication of the manuscripts of the eloquent Bascom, which were supposed to be numerous and valuable. At the first cursory examination of his papers by one or two of his special friends, it was supposed, and the impression went abroad, that there was but little to be found in a state of preparation, or that could, in a suitable manner, be prepared for the press. This was matter of deep and general regret, for it was known to some of his friends at least, that he had frequently spoken of his manuscripts, to the amount of several volumes, as being nearly as well prepared for the press as he expected ever to be able to render them. And especially, was it known, that among other lectures and addresses, on philosophical and other subjects, he had frequently referred to his "Lectures on the Relative Claims of Christianity and Infidelity," (which he had delivered in several of the principal cities of the United States,) as the master production of his life.

It was not long, however, before it was ascertained, on further and more careful examination, that the first impression as to the extent of his available manuscripts, was, fortunately, erroneous. As well as we can now judge, there will be about three volumes of his posthumous works, the size of the published volume of his sermons. These will consist of sermons, and lectures and addresses, on philosophical and other important subjects. -- Among these, are his celebrated Lectures on Infidelity, which are embraced in the present issue.

It may be due to the public as well as ourself, to give some idea of the condition in which we find these manuscripts, and the amount and difficulty of the labor devolving upon the editor. Suffice it then to say, that the manuscripts, so far as form is concerned, are none of them found in a state of complete preparation for the press. The substance or matter has doubtless received the finishing touch of the author. That is, the maturest thoughts, and the most elaborated conclusions of his mind are here presented. They are, however, in such a state, that every line and word must be rewritten in extenso. They are found in the author's own peculiar, small, (and to one not familiar with it,) exceedingly difficult hand; and the pages are so crowded with corrections, erasures, interlineations, and reinterlineations, that to decipher and transcribe them correctly, great care and painstaking are requisite. Besides, as the general rule, the division into paragraphs and the punctuation are to be attributed to the editor. As to the punctuation, however, in some instances, we have not taken the liberty to change it, even when we considered it variant from the best established rules of the art; for the simple reason, that it accords better with the author's peculiar manner; and where we do not consider it radically erroneous, we choose to let it stand, as more expressive of his own mode of thought, and peculiarly emphatic style of expression. In some instances, we have taken the liberty of dividing a very long sentence into two or more shorter ones. This is sometimes effected merely by a change of punctuation, and in other cases, by a

transposition of some of the adjuncts, or a change of connective particles. But in all cases, we have been careful to preserve the identity of the sense and style; and shall retain the original manuscript, as our security against any charge of inattention or unfaithfulness in the work assigned us.

It will readily occur to the reader, that in the matter of deciding what ought, and what ought not to be published, a task of delicacy, and one for the performance of which, a maturity and discretion of judgment, beyond what we have any right to claim, are requisite. But on this, as on other points, we have acted in view of our best light, and reserve all further defence till occasion may demand it.

A brief notice of the contents of the present volume, may not be out of place. It opens with five Lectures on the "Relative Claims of Christianity and Infidelity." These, we find in the manuscript, in the form of three lectures, but as it could be done without any violence to the connection, for the sake of ease and convenience to the reader, we have divided them into five lectures. When we reflect on the number and variety of the points of controversy mooted between the friends and opponents of Christianity, it cannot be expected that in a single volume, much less in five lectures comprising but a fraction of a volume, every point connected with this subject, considered by some of importance, should be embraced. To spread so brief an argument over so wide a surface, would be so to dilute it, as to render it comparatively nugatory and useless. Our author has pursued a wiser method. He has, with remarkable discrimination and sagacity, selected a few prominent points in the controversy,-points that are radical, and upon which the whole question must obviously turn, and the settling of which must necessarily settle the whole matter. Here, he has taken his position in first principles. He has planted himself on universally admitted truths, -- on incontrovertible facts, and with great care, and masterly dearness and force, has advanced, step by step, diving profoundly into the depths of things, planting himself; at every movement of the foot, on solid rock, and rearing around him on every hand as he advances, a wall of adamant, impregnable to the assaults of every assailant, and erecting upon it his own death-dealing artillery, charged with the thunder and lightning of invincible truth and all-conquering demonstration, utterly scattering the hosts, and demolishing the entrenchments of infidelity! He has commenced his argument by appealing to undeniable facts, admitted alike by the Infidel and the Christian; and from these, he reasons upward and onward, in a concatenated chain of argument, elaborating in a manner the most profound and masterly, each successive process of his reasoning, compelling infidelity to travel with him, every step he takes, till he reaches his final and triumphant conclusion, or renounce common sense itself! Without aiming, in this introduction, at anything like an analysis of his argument, we give it as our judgment, that Dr. Bascom has seized upon the strongest point in the controversy, and has conducted the argument in a manner more thorough and convincing, than we have anywhere else seen the same argument presented. Indeed, so far at least as the elaboration of the argument is concerned, we consider his course remarkable, as well for its originality of method, as the clearness and solidity of its logic. It were saying too ninth, to pronounce these lectures against

Infidelity faultless, but to pronounce them unanswerable, and to hazard the opinion, that none of us shall live to witness an attempt to answer them, is only to award the meed of intrinsic merit. If our illustrious author, by his eloquent sermons and addresses, has arisen to the highest pinnacle of fame as a Christian orator, these lectures alone, must enroll him with the most profound philosophical thinkers, and the ablest logical reasoners of the age.

The "Address on Agriculture" in this volume, is remarkable, both as it regards the profound maturer in which the author conducts his investigation of this interesting theme, and the laborious care with which he has culled and collected facts for the establishment and illustration of his principles. Some of his positions will doubtless be controverted, but no one can read the lecture without being instructed and interested with the fund of information, the grasp of thought, and the beauty of diction it exhibits.

Passing over the "Address on Temperance," the "Centennial of Methodism," the "Inaugural Address" at Madison College, and various other Addresses in this volume, all in character with the author's finest productions, we call attention especially to the famous "Address on the Claims of Africa." This Address, substantially the same as we have it now before us, was delivered in 1833, in many of the principal cities and towns of the United States, when Dr. Bascom was traveling as Agent of the "American Colonization Society." The matchless beauty and eloquence of this appeal in behalf of Africa, is yet vivid in the memory of thousands, who heard it as it rolled in peals of burning pathos from the lips of the orator, and who will hail its publication as the revival of scenes of impassioned delight in by-gone years. Its power and sublimity are better felt than described, nor shall we impair it by any attempt of the kind. Some will, perhaps, consider portions of it too highly painted, but the coloring was in the theme itself, and the orator, with his enlarged views and philanthropic soul, could neither be true to himself or the cause he pleaded, by adopting a tamer manner, or painting in colors less deep and glowing. Not many months since, a celebrated politician of our country advanced the idea, in an address in favor of African colonization, that it would not be unconstitutional for Congress to appropriate money to aid the cause of African colonization; -- several of our public journals applauded this politician, and gave him credit, as the first who had dared publicly to advocate this principle. Read the address of Dr. Bascom, and you will find that in 1833, he publicly contended for, and elaborately argued out the same principle! Was he not ahead of the times, by more than a quarter of a century?

One whose life has been mainly devoted to literary, scientific, or professional pursuits, may naturally be expected to infuse into his works his own peculiar spirit and character. This was emphatically the ease in regard to Dr. Bascom. By perusing the detail of his life, and the record of his acts and doings, we see the external man, -- we survey the outer court; But by retiring with him to his closet, and perusing his works, we gain a more intimate fellowship, -- we enter the inner temple of his soul, and read the thoughts, and catch the emotions of his heart.

The writings of Dr. Bascom, though not sufficient to impart to the reader who never heard him, an adequate view of his eloquence and power as a pulpit orator, are well calculated to reflect the character of his mind. They lead us to the sanctum of his silent musings, -- they admit us to intimate fellowship and communion with his intellectual and spiritual nature, -- they vividly impress us with an idea of his mental habits -- his modes of thought, and texture of soul. To such as have known him in life, and been familiar with him in social intercourse, the perusal of his writings, now that we can no longer look upon his manly form, or listen to his eloquent voice, is well calculated to present to the imagination a vivid picture of Bascom as he was. Tracing the lines as they dropped from his pen, we almost see him ensconced in his studio -- we mark the movement of the intense thought as it stirs the brain within, and sits enthroned upon the speaking countenance, and seem to be seated in his presence, and holding a personal interview with his lofty spirit. His style may not be deemed faultless. An exuberance of language, and an inattention to the minor niceties of composition essential to the smoothly rounded period, may, in the critic's eye, constitute a defect; but this blemish is amply atoned for by more important excellencies. His writings exhibit a distinctness of perception, a clearness of discrimination, a depth and grasp of thought, and a connected chain of sound, logical, consequential reasoning, seldom equaled. His taste for the beautiful, the harmonious, the grand, the sublime, was exquisite. His love for the good, the true, the noble, the pure, was intense. Higher aims than mere niceties of composition, engrossed his thoughts -- more lofty aspirations inflamed his genius. He reveled in me region, of thought -- thought intense, profound, vast, important. This was the shining gold he coveted; and his main object, as it regards style, was, so to clothe his thoughts in language, as to impart to others a clear, forcible, and vivid impression of what he saw and felt. This was the secret of his power as an orator. He perceived clearly. No man labored more intensely than he, to rid his subject of all obscurity and confusion. His mind instinctively abhorred all ambiguity. He would submit to nothing that lacked definitiveness. And having gained a clear and distinct perception of truth, ardent and intense as were his feelings, he could not but perceive and feel forcibly, and perceiving and feeling thus himself, he labored to impart to others his own views and emotions. In a word, his aim was to imbue others with his own soul of thought and emotion. Hence, his style, though frequently diffuse and exuberant, was always perspicuous, always animated, always vivid and impressive. But we will no longer detain the reader. He is impatient to peruse the volume. We therefore retire from view, and allow him to examine and judge for himself.

T. N. Ralston.
Lexington, Ky., October, 1854.

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07 -- CENTENARY OF METHODISM
By Henry B. Bascom

A Brief Address
Delivered On December 25, 1839

Taken From:
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Of The
Rev. Henry B. Bascom
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CENTENARY OF METHODISM
By Henry B. Bascom

The object of our meeting this morning is special and peculiar. It is in commemoration of the past, and at the same time, with no less reference to the future. One hundred years since, in 1739, the great Methodist body had its first organization, among a select few of the alumni, and amid the academic halls and groves of the mother-university of England: This then, is the first centennial year of our existence, and we would cherish and distinguish, it accordingly. Again, on this day fifty-five years ago [1784], the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, was organized in the city of Baltimore, by an authorized deputation from Mr. Wesley, and the European body in connection with him; and hence, we have deemed this day of the year peculiarly appropriate for our celebration.

We repeat, therefore, we meet in commemoration of the Origin of Wesleyan Methodism. And in doing so, we unite with our trans-Atlantic brethren of the great Methodist family, and all other divisions of it throughout the world. In order, however, that the heart may engage in the celebration upon which we are entering, it is necessary that the judgment approve. And that this may be so, it is further necessary, that we be definitely informed of the objects and interests involved. And to effect this, so far as any present may need information, we submit a brief statement; glancing, comprehensively, at the whole subject. Not indeed, in the shape of a formal address -- not with anything like the formality of a speech, but

with the brevity of narration and argument belonging to a mere preface or introduction, to be followed by appeals of a somewhat different character, but perhaps, much more interesting to your feelings.

That the centennial year of our denominational existence, should become memorable in our calendar, is, to say the least, natural and befitting. Events infinitely less useful and illustrious than the birth of Wesleyan Methodism, annually become the subjects of periodical or occasional celebration, in this, and every other country; and the effect may be considered as decidedly beneficial, and worthy of commendation. Numerous examples and precedents of Divine appointment, as well as secular ones, originating in the prudential discernment of the wise and good, might be instanced, but the limits of a sketch forbid. The Jubilee-reverence of a great event -- the birth of a great people -- the hundredth birthday anniversary of the great Wesleyan family, now spread out upon the length and breadth of the earth, cannot fail to exert a salutary influence upon the character and fortunes of the disciples and friends of a system that can never be reviewed without admiration, and that we are anxious to perpetuate by all the means in our power. We take it for granted, that your views and feelings have already done the subject justice, in the main, if not in detail. Bear in mind then, that we meet to discharge a debt, both of gratitude and service. We would erect a monument for the past, and an altar for the future! It is a covenant dedication, by which we consecrate ourselves to the cause of God and virtue, personal and relative, including person, substance, and influence, now and forever. The question presented by the occasion is, "What has Methodism effected for us?" And another question, coincidentally, yet irresistibly suggested, at the same time, is, -- What in return should we do for Methodism? The principle of appeal, is that of relative justice. If nothing has been done for you, you owe nothing, nor do we ask it, of you. But on the other hand, if much has been done for you, we ask for a corresponding return, Even Judaism annually tithed one-tenth for the benefit of others. Methodism is a system of unsalaried, gratuitous labor. Its founder gave away his entire income for sixty years; and it remains to be seen, what we intend to do in the premises. The pecuniary bounty bestowed by the Methodists, in this great centennial solemnity, has been, and is to be presented by the donors, as a thank-offering to the Great Head of the church for the benefit of every kindred, through the instrumentality of Wesleyan Methodism, as the distinctive denomination of the faith and practice of the body. We acknowledge a debt of gratitude, and we would discharge it, not only by thankfulness for the glory of the past, but by the contribution of means to augment the glory of the future, that we may secure to those who succeed us, the blessings and advantages bequeathed us by our predecessors.

Methodism is to be regarded as a modification of Christianity. In substance, exhibiting nothing new, or diverse from it; and only to be looked upon as a distinct system, in view of its model manifestation as an organic economy, wielded solely for the moral welfare of mankind; and only operating other results, as subservient to this. It is a revival, -- (at least, we so regard it,) a restoration of primitive Christianity, disabused of a cumbrous load of surreptitious accompaniment and

machinery, not belonging to its nature, and immensely detrimental to its interests. It is to be looked upon, simply, as an exposition, and practical illustration of the religion of the Bible. All its authority, sanctity, and usefulness is derived thence. There is, no system, of government; legislation, law, policy or philosophy, which which it symbolizes. The Bible, and the salvation of men, the Christian revelation, and the present and immortal welfare of those to whom it is addressed, constitute its point of departure, and the goal of its termination. It has never confederated -- it has never been embroiled with any other system. Take the two great bodies -- British and American -- the one will be found loyal and the other patriotic. And take the representatives of these bodies in every part of the world, and you will find them neutral in everything affecting "the rights of Cæsar." They have been in the English Parliament, and American Congress, for fifty years, without ever attempting to influence legislation or policy, in anything affecting themselves. We only ask, for the system, thee it may be judged by its fruits.

Conceiving of Methodism as a revival of Christianity, in its primitive power and simplicity, the time of its introduction was both remarkable and appropriate; as a revolution of the kind was never more needed, in the history, of the church or world. The former was corrupt and sensual in its ministers and members, beyond all Protestant example. With a few honorable exceptions, (comparatively) a licentious priesthood mingled with the mass of vicious population about them, in all the overt excesses: of immoral indulgence, such as gaming, profaneness, sports of the turf and chase, and other kindred irregularities, equally debasing. The world, as distinguished from the church, in England of which we are speaking particularly, was every where hastening to cast off the restraints of religion and morality, and holding up their sanctions as objects of derision, or vulgar contempt. And to facilitate such a result, the godless philosophy and infidel speculations of Hobbes, Tindal, Toland, Collins, Woolston, Chubb, Blunt, Morgan, Shaftsbury, and Mandeville -- followed by Bolingbroke and Voltaire, and a host of infidels upon the continent, had flooded the nation with opinions and parties, utterly subversive of every thing valuable in religion, or wholesome in morals, But at the very moment when this state of things was at the acme of its rifeness and virulence, John Wesley, descended of a long line of worthy ancestors, was in course of training at Epworth and Oxford, as if brought forward by special Divine interference to arrest and counteract the abuse of Christianity within the Church, and its denial without. And thus, the providence and grace of God synchronized with events -- the moral wants and necessities of the times, in producing the revolution we ave met to celebrate in this day's exercises.

Methodism had its birth on classic ground -- in a university, then as now, the first in the world, at the very meridian of the Elizabethan -- the Augustan age of English literature, and intellectual distinction. Our providential leader was no obscure fanatic, appealing to the lower passions, and baser interests of mankind. A distinguished scholar of the ripest attainments -- a clergyman of the English Establishment -- a bold and fearless defender of the rights of private judgment -- a severe and masterly disputant -- indefatigable in labor, and reproachless in

character, he presented himself in the attitude o a liberal, but unyielding reformer -- the builder up of a new order of things. It was "Athanasius against the world!" The field of battle was a fair one, and long and perseveringly was it fought. Wesley, however, under God, was destined to triumph, and become the father of a great people, of which we form an integral part, and here present ourselves as witnesses.

What the world has long agreed to call Methodism, viewed as a structure, is of providential origin and growth. In its founder, as a whole, it was not the result of design; but, as is often the case, accidental development carried with it more than the force of design, and no preconcerted plan, under the circumstances, could have succeeded so well. All this was seen by those interested, if not by others, and (regarded as Providential) was readily and gladly submitted to. In this way, it not infrequently happens, that a single occurrence or event decides and forms a character, and a single character subdues or controls a nation or kingdom. Often, in this way, has a single voice or pen shaken dynasties, and moulded the fortunes of empire. And of this class in the moral world, were Luther and Wesley. And the revolution effected by the one, in relation to papal Rome, was scarcely greater than that effected by the other, in relation to modern Protestant Christendom. Both were distinguished reformers, and the leaders in great moral revolutions, unique in kind, and unprecedented in the history of the world. Popery attempted to counteract the Reformation, by the institution of the order of Jesuits, but with what signal want of success, we need not say. Protestant establishments, at first, essayed the overthrow of Methodism, by the hue and cry of disparagement, and by persecution, -- but failing in this, are now rather tamely attempting to rival her, by imitating her plans and modes of operation, under various names and guises. The struggle was fearful and protracted, involving grave and important elements and interests. As Tertullian says, it was a controversy in which "no wind blew, but what was cold and keen." But finally, the energies and developments of the system, successively broke upon the lethargy of an enslaved church and sensual world, with a momentum not to be resisted.

One of the great and most obvious distinctions of Methodism, as such, and which distinguishes it from every other church and polity, is, that it has from the first assumed, that to be reformed and saved, men must be sought. In this respect, it is to all intents and purposes aggressive. Not waiting (as is the wont of others) for men, places, and localities, to call, and invite, -- but to go, see, and inquire. The "waste and the solitary places," as well as "the city full," are startled by its trumpet notes, without any previous negotiation or understanding, and in this respect, at least, we have a revival of apostolic practice, not to be met with, unless in excepted cases, in any other church. The effect has been unrivaled success. Success without a parallel, except in the instance of their great prototypes, -- the apostles themselves. Nearly eight hundred thousand living converts, and more than three millions of stated hearers, in this country alone, beside those who have died and gone to their final account, will explain our meaning. Wesley and his coadjutors were first styled Methodists. And subsequently, all his societies, as raised and organized by him, were called the "United Societies." He gave them an absolutely

connectional, instead of a congregational character, both as it regards organic form, and modes of operation. And with very slight modification, this grand feature distinguishes the whole body to the present day. They are emphatically ONE, with the great Wesleyan features indelibly impressed upon them, the world over.

We have spoken of your indebtedness to Methodism. Do any doubt their obligations, but let them review their whole lives, and especially, their contact with Methodism. What knowledge, what varied information have they gained from the pulpits, the presses, and Complicated labors and instrumentalities of Methodism! What moral impressions, religious views, sentiments, and feelings, have they imbibed and received from the same prolific source! What vices have been restrained, what follies checked, what aspirations and ambition awakened and excited! What healthful hopes, and salient fears has it given birth to! What share of time and attention has been called off from vicious and degrading pursuits, while worthier thoughts and actions have been the result! What might, what would you have been, but for all these? If not directly, and immeasurably benefited yourselves, look at the influence of the system upon others nearly allied to you, and in whom you are deeply interested! See them reformed, and elevated, as it regards character and rank in society, and now ministering to the happiness of those they formerly injured and disgraced! Look about you in the world, and see the amount of ignorance and vice, bigotry and illiberality, general dissoluteness of morals, and inattention to religion, everywhere removed or reduced, by the aggressive movements, and moral revolutions effected by Methodism! Look at all this, and if you see not grounds of obligation, then, with you -- with such, we have nothing to do, and we gladly turn to others. Take our own country for illustration, and let it be at once deprived of nine thousand ministers, with more than half a million of members, throw down and abandon more than thirty thousand churches, chapels, and preaching houses, let twenty effective presses be destroyed, demolish as many colleges and universities, and then say what the effect would be! And in the proportion that moral desolation would ensue, you are bound to admit your obligations to that form of Christianity we are now considering.

We have seen that it is to Mr. Wesley we are indebted for that peculiar and admirable form of Christianity, which we meet to distinguish, both by religious acknowledgments, offered to Heaven, and benevolent demonstrations, in relation to man. Upon the character of Wesley, we can barely touch. Brought up at the feet of a female Gamaliel, never, perhaps, excelled among the daughters of Eve, admirably trained and drilled by the talent and example of the Father, and the masterly tact and discretion of the Mother, early placed at school with the best of masters, passing his university course, not only with credit, but distinction, -- from his Alma Mater, especially, as the best Grecian in it, early brought to a knowledge of the truth, and burning with zeal for the salvation of others -- of all, -- refusing a local cure, and the trammels of an exclusive establishment, and jealous hierarchy, he is thrown by Providence, upon the bosom of the world, to battle with his enemies, and champion this own cause, as best he may! Trusting in God, and relying upon moral resources alone, he went forward, not knowing whither he was going, or what

awaited him! Thousands, however, soon flocked about him, reformed in morals, and devout in life. And in this way, most unexpectedly, Wesley became the leader of a Christian Israel, of which we now rejoice to form a part. Deeply imbued with the literature of all ages and languages, profoundly versed in the schools Of classic and ecclesiastical antiquity, and his labors and efforts signally crowned with the extraordinary blessing of God, every year marked the increase of his success, and attested the impotence of opposition. With the Bible always before him, he was emphatically, homo unius libri -- a man of one book. All his steps and all his studies, tended to this, and evinced the truth of his profession.

As it regards his talent and fitness for government and control, as the father and founder of a numerous people, he seemed born to command and govern, both by ascendancy of intellect, and the moral force and grandeur, both of character and action. Thus armed and furnished -- with means and weapons sanctioned by Heaven, without the fierceness of Luther, or the ferocity of Knox, but rather the learning of Erastus, and the mildness of Melancthon, he addressed himself to the comprehensive purpose of evangelizing the world. In his search after primitive Christianity, he disdained no aids, however humble and unimposing. For his first correct views on this subject, he was providentially indebted to the mountains and forests of Moravia, from whence he met with Christian teachers, on his way to America. About this time it was, that he anxiously felt after, and haply found what he had so long been in search of -- personal assurances of justification by faith, and the renewal of the heart in the image of God. The entireness of his consecration to God, and the service of mankind, subsequently, has been matter of commendation, in the better part of the church of God, for the last hundred years. On the subject of the variety of his labors, the rapidity of his movements, and his matchless skill as leader, all may be said in one word -- he was the Napoleon of the church. For thus viewed, he belonged to the Church and the world, and not to a party. This, however, was but a general right of property in him, and it is preeminently true, that he has bequeathed an eternal inheritance to those who follow in his steps, -- to you; and it is this fact we would, if possible, bring before you in living picture.

There is another topic not to be overlooked, although we can give it but a single glance. It is the organic construction of the principal division of the Wesleyan ministry; -- not as local, but traveling, combining, at the same time, the functions both of the missionary and the pastor. It was the plan of the apostles and evangelists. This itinerant system is a moral lever, annually achieving results produced by no other means in Christendom. It is now no longer an experiment. Its capabilities ave unprecedented, bearing upon all men and all means, wherever it has been subjected to trial. We appeal to past history. What was Methodism one hundred years ago? Seventy-five? Fifty? Twenty-five? What is it now? Look at it, existing in the meditations of a single mind; then in the concurrent opinions of a few! Look at the classic band at Oxford! -- The first group of penitents at Fetter Lane! Another and another appears! We may not note them! Finally, Methodism finds its first temple in Moorfield foundery; erected for the destruction of men's bodies, but now consecrated to the salvation of their souls. The next appears in

Bristol; but here we pause. -- The kingdom was soon dotted with them. They multiplied in every direction; and were crowded with worshippers, until "one became a thousand," and "a little one a nation!" So that the celebrated Dr. Southey said, twenty years ago, that they were in England, even at that time, "imperium in imperio," -- a distinct and independent people. And since that period they have more than doubled their numbers, and especially their means of influence and usefulness.

Within the comprehension of its range, Methodism includes all the elements, the means and appliances which can be brought to bear upon the welfare of the human mind, whether in its moral or civic relations. It covers the entire ground of religion and morals: of social order and various accomplishment. It is applicable to all men, and all their sin and folly, as well as virtue and worth. It appeals to all human interests, whether of time or eternity. Looking upon it as the most effective dispensation of truth, committed by the Great Head to any section of the church, we cannot but regard its destinies as transcendent in interest, and well worthy the Centennial Monument, to which the attention of the church has been so generally attracted. The diffusion of Christianity, and the consequent extension of holiness and happiness, is the grand function of Methodism; and has been from the beginning; and in this respect it continues to unfold its energies with unrelaxed rigor and force. At this very moment it is preaching the gospel in thirty different languages, with nearly a dozes presses employed in heathen lands in the circulation of the Scriptures, and tracts, and publications expository of their more obvious and important contents. Take into the account too, that, in all the countries, centers, and capitals of civilization and taste, where the English language is spoken, she is exerting her share of influence, as well as in heathen lands, and at every annual numbering, is seen marshaling her militant hosts upon a thousand different shores! Allow us to add, by the way, that a large portion of the grand moral machinery of Christendom, has been put in motion since the great Wesleyan reformation; -- such as Bible, Missionary, and Tract societies. How far traceable, under God, to this cause, let all judge for themselves. George the Third of England, gave it as his deliberate opinion, that Wesley and his coadjutors had done more for the interests of religion and morals, than all the other subjects of the establishment in his kingdom put together. A distinguished prelate of the church of England said that Baxter's "Reformed Pastor," was a book no clergyman in the kingdom could read without blushing, save one -- and that was John Wesley! And this general result connected with Wesley and his associates, has, no doubt, been mainly owing to the fervor and simplicity the force of thought and eloquence of feeling, with which they have insisted upon the great practical truths and doctrines of the Bible; everywhere giving to the world, in the language of Dr. Chalmers, "the Methodism of its actual contents." Most of the facts to which we have asked your attention, are matters of public notoriety, and are rapidly becoming incorporated with our common history and literature. Methodism has done nothing in a corner. No bushel has concealed her light. Nothing bidden or exclusive belongs m the system. She has been examined by the ablest censors; she has been questioned by torture. Talent and abuse, sneer and banter have been arrayed against her! She has been

arraigned by hierarchies, and king's have been her jurors! How she has passed the ordeal, you can all judge for yourselves. Wherever she is found, she holds herself accountable to the country, the age and the world.

With the origin, character, toils, and struggles, you should connect the triumphs or Methodism. More than a million of disciples within her fold, tells the tale, in brief. But with a membership numbering one million and more, we are to include friends and adherents, amounting to at least six millions in addition. So that, at least, seven millions, to classify them as we do society in general, among the most enlightened and influential of the civilized word, may be regarded as in the interest, and promoting the objects of that peculiar modification of Christianity, called Methodism. These are all, in their spheres and places, contributing their dividend to the grand moral result. -- But especially, the ministry, annually appointed and removable, by the executive organs of the church. And while we would not disparage others, we took upon them as the moral engineers of the world, found upon the highways of truth and duty, leading from earth to heaven. They are found in either hemispheric -- every zone, and nearly every degree of latitude and longitude throughout the circling earth, in all its length and breadth. We find them upon the Thames and the Gambia -- in the West India Archipelago and South America -- in New Zealand and Botany Bay -- at Calcutta and the Cape of Good Hope -- at Madras and Malta -- Ceylon and Madagascar. At Fiji and Vavow, and throughout the Polynesian Isles. You will find them throughout all the densely populated kingdoms of Europe, from the Island-Mother of our own country, to where once stood the primeval forests of the Goth and the Vandal! They are found alike in the palaces of kings, the halls of legislation, and the temples of science; -- in the homesteads of competence and industry, and in the huts and hovels of the poor and the lowly!

But let us not lose sight of ourselves. We have seen the obligations of others, what are ours? What has been accomplished in this country in seventy years? We need not be minute. They have spread from the Atlantic border to the shores of the Pacific -- from the Bay of Hudson to the Capes of Florida; and from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi! The American branch, like the European, is annually numbering its increase by thousands. The present year, will give us a net increase of some fifty thousand members. But let us look at the West, particularly. Select ten points, upon any section of western territory, and who first carried the gospel to those? An average moderate estimate is, that in nine instances in ten, throughout the whole West, it was done by the Methodists. With very few exceptions, they have pioneered the whole evangelization of this entire country. -- And do you owe them nothing in return? Do you owe the cause nothing? Will you not contribute your influence and your bounty, to enhance and extend instrumentalities, which by the blessing of God, have been rendered so subservient, not only to your earthly and eternal interests, but to those of thousands beside, to say nothing of the common welfare -- the hope and promise of your rising country!

You have the premises, in outline. What conclusions shall we reach? I know of no logic that would make these plainer, or give them additional force. I leave it to your conscience and convictions, and the record must tell the rest. When our descendants shall inquire, in 1939,* what example we set them, I cannot now say with what emotions, whether of joy or shame, they will turn from the record, which the church has ordered to be preserved among its archives, and thus handed down to posterity!

[Bascom looked ahead in this statement from 1839 to 1939 -- 100 years into the future. As I create this file in 2008 it is approaching 169 years beyond the date of this address in December of 1839. -- DVM]

One word more and we have done. The pecuniary contributions connected with the centenary are all sacredly applied to religious purposes. The objects proposed by the Kentucky conference, are first, Missions, -- secondly, Education -- thirdly, a permanent fund for the support of those ministers of the church, (their wives, widows, and children) who have worn themselves out in its service, and either rest in their graves, or are the subjects of physical disability and superannuation. Such then, are the purposes to be met and answered by the centennial thank-offerings of the church.

We have seen that Methodism is essentially missionary in origin, constitution, and action. One hundred and five years since, Wesley himself was a foreign missionary among the aborigines of this country. It belongs to the very genius of Methodism, when the gospel is to be taken to any point, domestic or foreign, for its ministers not to inquire, by whom it can be sent? But to be themselves ready to take it. Their practical motto is, not to send, but go themselves. And this is absolutely true of the whole itinerant college -- the advanced militant corps of the church, in every age and division of its organization. But m addition to this, our regular missions, in the common acceptation of the term, are more numerous, more expansive as it regards territory, and return a much larger number of converts, than those of any other religious body in the world; and it is to the support of these, we appropriate one-third of the centennial fund.

Education is an interest about which we need not enlarge. Our academies, colleges, and universities, are the objects of appropriation. And as it regards us, our own college is the only object. The several dividends are to be funded, and the interest only used. If, as a church, we would keep up with the advance of the age, we must sustain a competent number of effective literary institutions, elevating their character, and multiplying their number from time to time. Three or four millions of the rising generation have been handed over to us, by providence, to educate and train for life and usefulness, and if we fail to perform the duty, the loss and injury of the church must be irretrievable. If other interests have so much engaged us, heretofore, as to lead us to neglect this great collateral one, it behooves us to make the necessary atonement, by showing the world that we were only waiting until we became able and ready. Now it behooves us to organize

formidably, and proceed to action. It is as difficult to retain as to make conquests, and this is strikingly applicable to us, in our peculiar position as a church and people. The literature of a highly civilized country, wields an immeasurable influence; and unless it be found, in due proportion, in the hands of a church, that church instantly loses its influence, in the ratio of such deficiency. To keep, even our present ground, -- to retain our present conquests, it is indispensable that the interests of education be duly consulted.

In England and this country, contributions have been made by individuals, in behalf of themselves and families, of from one to fourteen thousand dollars! Largely over a million of dollars has been contributed in the British connection, and although we are to be distanced, we trust we shall not be beggared by the comparison. Several hundred thousand dollars have been already contributed, and we trust much more is yet to be; and that at the next centennial meeting of the church, our children's children will have occasion to speak well of what their fathers did at this!

The subject is now before you. We have spoken plainly, but we trust not arrogantly. We glory in the subject of this celebration, but we would not boast. We would not detract from the claims of others. They are doing much good, and we bid them "God speed." Sincerely do we wish how much good they may do. It will be seen by all, however, that our business connects us with a review of Methodism, not other forms of Christianity, however respectable, or extensively useful they may be. To return then, and in conclusion we take the economy anti the effects of Methodism, and we are perfectly satisfied beyond all speculation, that no merely human cause or causes, can be regarded as adequate to the production of such results. The induction leads us to seek a higher agency; and we are compelled to refer the propagation and success, not less than the origin of Methodism, to the grace and providence of God. The first century of Methodism is gone by, and we have to ask ourselves, "What hath God wrought?" This, we have seen. Now let us ask, what he intends to effect, probably, by our instrumentality, if we meet our own obligations, and the claims of others? We conjure you by the mercies of God, and the wants of your kind, not to wrong yourselves! Let not the curse of the needy rest upon your habitations, give your memory to scorn, or fall like blight upon your graves! Yet again, look at the living hosts of Methodism, congregated on occasion of the first centenary of our ecclesiastical existence, and emulously hasten to identify yourselves with them in the noble sacrifice of doing good.

The term of human life allows us to celebrate but one centennial meeting. If we have anything to do then, specially identifying ourselves with the centenary of Methodism, it must be done now or never! The centennial altar is before you, hallowed by a thousand clustering, endearing recollections! Approach it with adoring gratitude for the past, unrestricted consecration as it regards the present, and with delighted, believing anticipation connected with the future! Let us suitably commemorate the Divine goodness, now and heretofore extended to us, and trust that goodness in all time to come! Let us do, and having done our duty, address

ourselves with deeper cave and higher joy, to the widening interests and anxieties of coming life! Let the heart's ambition rejoice in the friendship of Heaven and the welfare of others, and be satisfied! And in this way, a life of vicissitude and toil, will close in the hopes of a tranquil death, and the promised rewards of immortality! But should we fail to do our duty, and prove faithless to the high trust reposed in us, the work we celebrate will still go on, and the cause we plead, continue to advance in unobstructed triumph! And when summoned to our final audit, when the lightning of heaven shall scorch the world, and its thunder rock it into ruins, the book of God's remembrance, containing the registry, shall show that that which we refused to do, had been done by others!

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THE END