

# From the Beginning of 1785 to the End of 1786

by Nathan Bangs

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*The sermon recounts the establishment of Methodism in Nova Scotia and Charleston, South Carolina, and the challenges faced by the Methodist church in these areas.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:14, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 12:1, James 1:12, 1 Peter 4:19

**Topics:** "Church History", "Persevering Faith"

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## Description

Nathan Bangs preaches about the early Methodist preachers' efforts in spreading the Gospel to new territories like Nova Scotia, Kentucky, and Georgia, facing challenges such as opposition to pure doctrines and mental struggles. The sermon highlights the dedication and sacrifices made by these preachers, including Mr. Freeborn Garrettson and Mr. James O. Cromwell, who ventured to Nova Scotia to fulfill a request for religious instruction. It also mentions the introduction of Methodism in Charleston, South Carolina, by Bishop Asbury, Jesse Lee, and Henry Willis, facing opposition and division within the Methodist community. The sermon emphasizes the importance of perseverance, faith, and dedication in the face of challenges and setbacks.

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## Transcript

The important transactions we have detailed in the preceding chapter were found, upon experiment, to exert a beneficial influence upon the interests of true religion. And having closed the session in peace and with great unanimity of sentiment, the preachers went to their respective fields of labor with renewed courage and with great cheerfulness of mind.

Mr. Freeborn Garrettson and Mr. James O. Cromwell about the middle of February took their departure for Nova Scotia; and after enduring many perils on the voyage, arrived in safety at their destined sphere of labor.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, some members of the society had emigrated to that province of the British empire; and being in a destitute state as to religious instruction, they had sent an earnest request to Mr. Wesley to be supplied; and Dr. Coke had interested himself much in their behalf. Accordingly these brethren volunteered their services for this work. On their arrival they were cordially received at Halifax, where they landed. Here Mr. Garrettson found a few members of the society, some of whom had come from Europe, and some from the United States: and during his short continuance in this place, he preached several times with great satisfaction.

Some time before the arrival of these missionaries, Mr. William Black had been instrumental in doing much good to the souls of the people by preaching in various places, particularly in New Brunswick and Halifax. Mr. Black gave the right hand of fellowship to Mr. Garrettson, and he entered upon his work in this Country with that zeal by which he had been distinguished in the United States, and many sinners were awakened and converted to God, and several societies formed.

Here, however, as elsewhere, opposers of the pure doctrines of Christ were found, not only among the openly profane, but also among professors of godliness. Mr. Garrettson gives the following account of a people here called Allenites, taking their name from Mr. Allen, who was their principal leader: --

"Some of them," says Mr. Garrettson, "seem to have the fear of God; but in general they are as deluded a people as I ever saw. Almost all of them preach in public. I was conversing with one who seems to be a principal person among them. She said she believed death would slay more sins for her than were ever destroyed before. 'As for sin,' said she, 'it cannot hurt me: not even adultery, murder, swearing, drunkenness, nor any other sin, can break the union between me and Christ.' They have passed judgment upon us, that we are neither Christians nor called to preach.

"Thursday I preached at Mr. Woodworth's to a crowded audience. A little before preaching time, two old Calvinists came into my room to have a conversation with me before preaching. 'I understand,' said one of them, 'that you hold with falling from grace: I heard it, but did not know how to believe it, and should be glad to know whether you do deny the perseverance of the saints.' I answered, I do not, for my desire is that they should persevere: I do not hold with man's persevering in wickedness, neither do I believe that a man can have grace while he lives in sin. Let us take the Bible, and see what is said there. I read part of the 15th of John, and parts of several chapters in Hebrews, Romans, and Peter. Now, said I, this is the language of many other passages. We have no promise for any but such as do persevere to the end, and we have had many unhappy instances of men running well for a time, and then turning back: read the 18th chapter of Ezekiel. Now what harm can there be in enforcing our Lord's, the prophet's, and the apostles' exhortation? 'Very good,' said he. Why should we do it if there was no danger? and what harm can there be in the doctrine? Suppose you are a Christian, and your neighbor is one also; you believe in the unconditional perseverance of saints; he in the conditional: who, sir, is the safest? if you are right, surely he cannot fall. 'I never,' said he, 'saw so much in it before.' They stayed to hear the sermon, and afterward one said, 'I never heard these men before, but they are better than I thought.'

"Friday morning I set out for Granville. I had not got far before a man came running out. 'Sir,' said he; 'I like part of your doctrine well, but part I do not like.' What part don't you like? 'You say, sir, that a saint may fall.' Will you answer me one question, said I. Do you know that you were ever converted? 'I do,' said he. Pray tell me how matters are at present between God and your soul. 'Why,' said he, 'it is a winter state.' But, said I, are you not living in open sin against God? He paused awhile. I ask, said I, in the fear of God, and desire an answer in truth. 'I confess,' said he, 'I am living in sin.' And yet you do not believe in falling from grace! I believe it because you have fallen. This is what you call a winter state! I call it lying in the arms of the wicked one; and you may talk as you will about your past experience, but I would not give a straw for your chance of heaven, if you die in this state. You are reconciling Christ and Belial together. 'O,' said he, 'I shall be raised up at the last day.' You will, said I; but, unless you repent, it will be to be cast into the lake of fire. He seemed much affected, and left me.

"January 19th, I preached opposite Granville, to a number of serious hearers, and was invited home to dinner by an old gentleman, who, soon after we were seated at table, said, 'I understand you preach

perfection.' I do, said I, and have done so for a number of years; and shall do so as long as I find the doctrine in the Bible. 'Why, sir,' said he, 'Paul was not perfect: he complains of a thorn in the side.' The heart is the place for sin, said I, and not the side. He then mentioned several other passages of Scripture which he thought were opposed to holiness of heart, which I explained to him. Pray, said I, let us come to the point at once. Do you believe that an unholy creature can enter into heaven? 'No.' Pray, when is sin to be destroyed? 'At death.' You must then hold with death as being part of a saviour, or with a purgatory after death, or you must come to perfection on this side the grave. He sat amazed, and seemed to give up the argument. We rose from the table. I went to prayer; then went on my journey, and preached at six o'clock in the court house. When I left the old man, he desired me to make his house my home. I left Fletcher's Checks with him. Shortly after, I received a few lines from him to this effect: -- 'I believe you to be a servant of God. I hope the Lord will bless you, and those that sent you here. I want to see you at my house at every opportunity. I thank you for the book.' "

Mr. Garrettson, in another place, gives the following summary of their leading absurdities: -- "1. They think they can tell whether a person is a Christian at first sight. 2. They say that we are leading people blindfolded to hell. 3. They are, they say, as sure of heaven as if they were already there, for sin cannot hurt them." "I never met with such a people in my life. There are about fifty of them in Liverpool."

Soon after his arrival, Mr. Garrettson received a letter from Mr. Wesley, of which the following is an extract: --

"I am glad brother Cromwell and you have undertaken that labor of love, the visiting Nova Scotia, and doubt not but you act in full concert with the little handful who were almost alone till you came. It will be the wisest way to make all those who desire to join together thoroughly acquainted with the whole Methodist plan, and to accustom them, from the very beginning, to the accurate observance of all our rules. Let none of them rest in being half Christians. Whatever they do, let them do it with their might, and it will be well, as soon as any of them find peace with God, to exhort them to go on to perfection. The more explicitly and strongly you press all believers to aspire after full sanctification as attainable now by simple faith, the more the whole work of God will prosper.

"I do not expect any great matters from the bishop. I doubt his eye is not single, and if it be not, he will do little good to you or any one else. It may be a comfort to you that you have no need of him: you want nothing which he can give.

"It is a noble proposal of brother Marchington; but; doubt it will not take place. You do not know the of the English Methodists. They do not roll in money like many of the American Methodists. It is with the utmost difficulty that we can raise five or six hundred pounds a year to supply our contingent expenses, so that it is entirely impracticable to raise five hundred pounds among them to build houses in America. It is true, they might do much; but it is a sad observation, they that have most money have usually least grace. The peace of God be with all your spirits.

I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"J. Wesley."

As the societies in this province did not long remain connected with the church in the United States, for we find them on the British Minutes for 1787, it is thought most advisable to complete the notice of the work there in this place. It appears from the Life of Mr. Garrettson that he continued his labors in this province,

traveling from place to place, and often exposed to many temporal hardships and privations, until April 10th, 1787, when he embarked for the United States, leaving behind him, as evidences of his fidelity and success in his Master's work, about six hundred members in the societies. While in this country, Mr. Garrettson says, --

"I traversed the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with my knapsack on my back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness, when it was not expedient to take a horse; and I had often to wade through morasses half leg deep in mud and water, frequently satisfying my hunger with a piece of bread and pork from my knapsack, quenching my thirst from a brook, and resting my weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. Thanks be to God! he compensated me for all my toil, for many precious souls were awakened and converted to God."

This extract will show the manner in which the early Methodist preachers, in imitation of their divine Lord, "went about doing good."

This year, also, Methodism was introduced into the city of Charleston, South Carolina. In the latter part of February, Bishop Asbury, Jesse Lee, and Henry Willis set off on a visit to this place. Mr. Willis preceded the others, and gave out their appointments; and after preaching in sundry places on their way, they arrived in Charleston on Saturday, February 26th, and on Sabbath morning Mr. Lee preached in an old meeting-house belonging to the Baptists, which had been procured for that purpose. While here they lodged with Mr. Edgar Wells, a respectable merchant, who, though a man of the world, courteously entertained the messengers of the Lord. On their arrival he was preparing to attend the theater, but his plans of amusement were abandoned, and the worship of God was set up in his family. The consequence was, that he became awakened to a sense of his sinfulness, and, after a struggle for about ten days, was brought into gospel liberty.

This was the commencement of Methodism in this place; for although Mr. Wesley visited Charleston in 1736, and Mr. Pillmore in 1773, their visits were but transient, and left no permanent impression upon the minds of the people. After preaching a few times, Mr. Lee left the city with a view to labor in other places, but Bishop Asbury remained until the 9th of March, preaching every evening, and sometimes in the morning, to the people, explaining to them "the essential doctrines" of Methodism; and he says, "I loved and pitied the people, and left some under gracious impressions."

Though it will be anticipating the chronological order of the history a little, I think it best to give the following account, taken chiefly from that furnished by the Rev. James O. (now Bishop) Andrew, for the Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review.

It seems that, on the departure of Bishop Asbury, Mr. Willis was left in charge of the work. Being a man of general intelligence, of deep piety, and of amiable manners, and devoting himself entirely to his work, he made a favorable impression upon many minds, and soon succeeded in forming a small society. Being informed that they could no longer occupy the old house in which they had hitherto convened, and the private house kindly offered them by Mrs. Stoll soon becoming too small to contain the increased number of hearers, they began to think seriously of building a house of worship, and soon commenced the work. While this was in progress they continued their meetings in an unfinished house which had been offered them by a friend. This house, begun in 1786, and completed in 1787, was situated in Cumberland Street, and has been the spiritual birthplace of many souls. Bishop Asbury visited the place in 1786, and again in 1787, when he met Dr. Coke, who had recently arrived from England. "Here," he says, "we have a

spacious house prepared for us; and the congregations are crowded and solemn."

Being thus furnished with a convenient house of worship, and the word and ordinances of the gospel, the work of God prospered more than it had done heretofore. It did not, however, go on without opposition. In addition to what arose from the natural enmity of the human heart when it comes in contact with the pure doctrines and precepts of Christianity, Methodism received a wound in Charleston from one of its professed friends and public advocates. In 1787, the Rev. Beverly Allen was placed in charge; as an elder, of the society in this place. He was a man of great popularity as a preacher, had married into a respectable family, and acquired much influence in the community. This unhappy man fell from his steadfastness, and in his fall inflicted a wound upon the cause from which it did not recover for a long time. This, together with the difficulties which arose from the state of slavery as it existed in all the southern states, made the situation of a Methodist minister extremely unpleasant, especially when it is considered that the mistaken but well-meant zeal of Dr. Coke, in his open opposition to slavery, tended much to irritate the public mind on that subject. The cause, however, gradually gained ground, and was acquiring the public confidence, until the year 1791, when the church was convulsed by the conduct of the Rev. William Hamett, who formed a division, put himself at the head of a party, and fulminated his anathemas at the head of Bishop Asbury and others.

Mr. Hamett, also, unfortunately for the cause against which he arrayed himself, was a man of popular talents and gentlemanly manners, and had acquired considerable influence in the community, and hence the facility with which he accomplished his design. Bishop Asbury, alluding to the secession of Mr. Hamett, says, "He had three grand objections to us, 1. The American preachers and people insulted him. 2. His name was not printed on our minutes. 3. The Nota Bene minute was directed against him." "We are considered by him as seceders from Methodism! because we do not wear gowns and powder, and because we did not pay sufficient respect to Mr. Wesley." This was the pretense; but it is manifest that Mr. Hamett, who had recently arrived from the West Indies, was not willing to submit to the authority of the conference, and to Bishop Asbury.

The minute to which Mr. Asbury alludes, was in these words: -- "Mark well! Our brethren and friends are desired to be more cautious how they receive strange preachers, especially to preach; unless their names are in the minutes, or they can show a parchment or certificate from a presiding elder, or some elder in the district they may say they come from." This, however, instead of being directed against Mr. Hamett, who was a regular preacher from the European connection, was designed to guard the people against those impostors who endeavored to palm themselves upon the public as Methodist preachers. The accusations which Mr. H. preferred against Bishop Asbury were amply refuted; and that apostolic man lived to witness the clouds of reproach thus raised against him dispersed by the bright rays from the sun of truth. Mr. H., however, succeeded in establishing himself at the head of a party, built him a house of worship in the city of Charleston, and his society were distinguished by the name of "Primitive Methodists." Though many of his mistaken followers returned afterward to the church they had left, and some joined other communions, he remained at the head of a small sect until his death, when Trinity Church, as it was called, passed into the hands of the Protestant Episcopalians, and finally it reverted back, by an amicable arrangement between the parties, to the Methodist Episcopal Church, where it remains to the present day. I shall not anticipate farther the order of events, but notice other particulars in their proper place.

Mr. Asbury having been elected and consecrated to the office of general superintendent, entered immediately upon his great work, traveling from place to place, preaching to the people, and making collections for the college, which had been recently commenced.

In mentioning the college, I am reminded of the necessity of giving an account of this institution, as it belongs most properly to this period of our history. Soon after the arrival of Dr. Coke in 1784, he and Mr. Asbury entered into a consultation respecting the expediency of establishing a literary institution for the education of the sons of our preachers and others who might wish to share in its benefits. Bishop Asbury tells us that he desired a school, but as Dr. Coke pleaded for a college, the conference, when the subject was submitted to them, decided in favor of Dr. Coke's plan, and measures were adopted to carry it into effect. As all these things belong to the history of the times, and will show the views by which the projectors of this institution were actuated, I think it proper to give the whole plan, as it was published by the superintendents immediately on the adjournment of the Christmas conference.

"The Plan for erecting a College, intended to advocate religion in America, to be presented to the principal members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The college is built at Abingdon in Maryland, on a healthy spot, enjoying a fine air and very extensive prospect. It is to receive for education and board the sons of the elders and preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers and of other friends. It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the college will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board: the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, clothed gratis. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service. A teacher of the languages, with an assistant, will be provided, as also an English master, to teach with the utmost propriety both to read and speak the English language: nor shall any other branch of literature be omitted which may be thought necessary for any of the students. Above all, especial care shall be taken that due attention be paid to the religion and morals of the children, and to the exclusion of all such as continue of an ungovernable temper. The college will be under the presidentship of the bishops of our Church for the time being; and is to be supported by yearly collections throughout our circuits, and any endowments which our friends may think proper to give and bequeath.

"Three objects of considerable magnitude we have in view in the instituting of this college.

"The first is a provision for the sons of our married ministers and preachers.

"The wisdom and love of God hath now thrust out a large number of laborers into his harvest: men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God, by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things are willing to minister to them of their temporal things; so that they have food to eat and raiment to put on, and are content therewith.

"A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married preachers.

"Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this is one motive that induces us to lay before our friends the intent of the college, that these little ones may have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body.

"In this view our college will become one of the noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the institution! Is it fit that the children of those who leave wife and all that is dear to save souls from death, should want what is needful either for soul or body? Ought not we to supply what the parent cannot,

because of his labors in the gospel? How excellent will be the effect of this institution! The preacher, eased of this weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his labor. And perhaps many of these children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall rest from their labors.

"The second object we have in view is the education and support of poor orphans; and surely we need not enumerate the many happy consequences arising from such a charity. Innumerable blessings concenter in it; not only the immediate relief of the objects of our charity, but the ability given them, under the providence of God, to provide for themselves through the remainder of their lives.

The last, though not perhaps the least object in view, is the establishment of a seminary for the children of our competent friends, where learning and religion may go hand in hand; where every advantage may be obtained which may promote the prosperity of the present life, without endangering the morals and religion of the children through those temptations to which they are too much exposed in most of the public schools. This is an object of importance indeed: and here all the tenderest feelings of the parent's heart range on our side.

"But the expense of such an undertaking will be very large; and the best means we could think of at our late conference to accomplish our design was, to desire the assistance of all those in every place who wish well to the work of God: who long to see sinners converted to God, and the kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

"All who are thus minded, and more especially our own friends who form our congregations, have an opportunity now of showing their love to the gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that ever was set on foot in this country. Do what you can to comfort the parents who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good paymaster. And you know, in doing this you lend unto the Lord: in due time he shall repay you.

"The students will be instructed in English, Latin, Greek, logic, rhetoric, history, geography, natural philosophy, and astronomy. To these languages and sciences shall be added, when the finances of our college will admit of it, the Hebrew, French, and German languages.

"But our first object shall be, to answer the design of Christian education, by forming the minds of the youth, through divine aid, to wisdom and holiness; by instilling into their tender minds the principles of true religion; speculative, experimental, and practical, and training them in the ancient way, that they may be rational, Scriptural Christians. For this purpose we shall expect and enjoin it, not only on the president and tutors, but also upon our elders, deacons, and preachers, to embrace every opportunity of instructing the students in the great branches of the Christian religion.

"And this is one principal reason why we do not admit students indiscriminately into our college. For we are persuaded that the promiscuous admission of all sorts of youth into a seminary of learning is pregnant with many bad consequences. For are the students likely (suppose they possessed it) to retain much religion in a college where all that offer are admitted, however corrupted already in principle as well as practice? And what wonder, when (as too frequently it happens) the parents themselves have no more religion than their offspring?

"For the same reason we have consented to receive children of seven years of age, as we wish to have the opportunity of 'teaching their young ideas how to shoot,' and gradually forming their minds, though the

divine blessing, almost from their infancy, to holiness and heavenly wisdom as well as human learning. And we may add, that we are thoroughly convinced, with the great Milton, (to whose admirable treatise on education we refer you,) that it is highly expedient for every youth to begin and finish his education at the same place: that nothing can be more irrational and absurd than to break this off in the middle, and to begin it again at a different place, and perhaps in a quite different manner. And on this account we earnestly desire that the parents and others who may be concerned, will maturely consider the last observation, and not send their children to our seminary if they are not to complete their education there, or at least make some considerable proficiency in the languages, and in the arts and sciences.

"It is also our particular desire, that all who shall be educated in our college may be kept at the utmost distance, as from vice in general, so in particular from softness and effeminacy of manners.

"We shall therefore inflexibly insist on their rising early in the morning; and we are convinced by constant observation and experience, that this is of vast importance both to body and mind. It is of admirable use either for preserving a good, or improving a bad constitution. It is of peculiar service in all nervous complaints, both in preventing and in removing them. And by thus strengthening the various organs of the body, it enables the mind to put forth its utmost exertions.

"On the same principle we prohibit play in the strongest terms: and in this we have the two greatest writers on the subject that perhaps any age has produced (Mr. Locke and Mr. Rousseau) of our sentiments for though the latter was essentially mistaken in his religious system, yet his wisdom in other respects, and extensive genius, are indisputably acknowledged. The employments, therefore, which we have chosen for the recreation of the students are such as are of greatest public utility, agriculture and architecture; studies more especially necessary for a new-settled country and of consequence the instructing of our youth in all the practical branches of those important arts will be an effectual method of rendering them more useful to their country. Agreeably to this idea, the greatest statesman that perhaps ever shone in the annals of history, Peter, the Russian emperor, who was deservedly styled the Great, disdained not to stoop to the employment of a ship carpenter. Nor was it rare, during the purest times of the Roman republic, to see the conquerors of nations and deliverer, of their country return with all simplicity and cheerfulness to the exercise of the plow. In conformity to this sentiment, one of the completest poetic pieces of antiquity (the Georgic of Virgil is written on the subject of husbandry; by the perusal of which, and submission to the above regulations, the students may delightfully unite the theory and the practice together. We say delightfully, for we do not entertain the most distant thought of turning these employments into drudgery or slavery, but into pleasing recreations for the mind and body.

"In teaching the languages, care shall be taken to read those authors, and those only, who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues. And the utmost caution shall be used that nothing immodest be found in any of our books.

"But this is not all. We shall take care that our books be not only inoffensive but useful; that they contain as much strong sense, and as much genuine morality as possible. As far, therefore, as is consistent with the foregoing observations, a choice and universal library shall be provided for the use of the students.

"Our annual subscription is intended for the support of the charitable part of the institution. We have in the former part of this address enlarged so fully on the nature and excellency of the charity, that no more need be said. The relieving our traveling ministers and preachers, by educating, boarding, and clothing their sons, is a charity of the most noble and extensive kind, not only toward the immediate subjects of it, but

also toward the public in general; enabling those 'flames of fire,' who might otherwise be obliged to confine themselves to an exceedingly contracted sphere of action for the support of their families, to carry the savor of the gospel to the remotest corners of these United States.

"The four guineas a year for tuition, we are persuaded, cannot be lowered, if we give the students that finished education which we are determined they shall have. And though our principal object is to instruct them in the doctrines, spirit, and practice of Christianity, yet we trust that our college will in time send forth men that will be blessings to their country in every laudable office and employment of life, thereby uniting the two greatest ornaments of intelligent beings, which are too often separated, deep learning and genuine religion.

"The rules and regulations with which you are here presented, have been weighed and digested in our conference: but we also submit them to your judgment, as we shall be truly thankful for your advice, as well as your prayers for the success of the college, even where the circumstances of things will not render it expedient to you to favor us with your charity. And we shall esteem ourselves happy, if we be favored with any new light, whether from the members of our own Church or of any other, whereby they may be abridged, enlarged, or in any other way improved, that the institution may be as near perfection as possible.

General Rules concerning the College A president and two tutors shall be provided for the present. The students shall consist of The sons of traveling preachers. The sons of annual subscribers, the children recommended by those annual subscribers who have none of their own, and the sons of members of our society. Orphans. But, The sons of annual subscribers shall have the preference to any others, except those of the traveling preachers. An annual subscriber who has no sons of his own shall have a right to recommend a child; and such child so recommended shall have the preference to any other, except the sons of traveling preachers and annual subscribers.

As many of the students as possible shall be lodged and boarded in the town of Abingdon, among our pious friends; but those who cannot be so lodged and boarded shall be provided for in the college. The price of education shall be four guineas. The sons of the traveling preachers shall be boarded, educated, and clothed gratis, except those whose parents, according to the judgment of the conference, are of ability to defray the expense. "6. The orphans shall be boarded, educated, and clothed gratis.

No traveling preacher shall have the liberty of keeping his son on the foundation any longer than he travels, unless he be superannuated, or disabled by want of health. No traveling preacher, till he has been received into full connection, shall have a right to place his son on the foundation of this institution. No student shall be received into the college under the age of seven years. Rules for the Economy of the College and Students The students shall rise at five o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, at the ringing of the college bell.

All the students, whether they lodge in or out of the college, shall assemble together in the college at six o'clock, for public prayer, except in cases of sickness; and on any omission shall be responsible to the president. From morning prayer till seven, they shall be allowed to recreate themselves as is hereafter directed. At seven they shall breakfast. From eight till twelve they are to be closely kept to their respective studies. From twelve to three they are to employ themselves in recreation and dining: dinner to be ready at one o'clock.

From three till six they are again to be kept closely to their studies. At six they shall sup. At seven there shall be public prayer. From evening prayer till bedtime, they shall be allowed recreation. They shall be all in bed at nine o'clock, without fail. Their recreations shall be gardening, walking, riding, and bathing, without doors; and the carpenter's, joiner's, cabinetmaker's, or turner's business, within doors. A large plot of land, of at least three acres, shall be appropriated for a garden, and a person skilled in gardening be appointed to overlook the students when employed in that recreation.

A convenient bath shall be made for bathing. A master, or some proper person by him appointed, shall be always present at the time of bathing. Only one shall bathe at a time; and no one shall remain in the water above a minute. No student shall be allowed to bathe in the river. A Taberna Lignaria shall be provided on the premises, with all proper instruments and materials, and a skillful person be employed to overlook the students at this recreation. The students shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls play.

Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety; for those who play when they are young will play when they are old. Each student shall have a bed to himself, whether he boards in or out of the college. The students shall lie on mattresses, not on feather beds, because we believe the mattresses to be more healthy. The president and tutors shall strictly examine, from time to time, whether our friends who board the students comply with these rules as far as they concern them.

A skillful physician shall be engaged to attend the student on every emergency, that the parents may be fully assured that proper care shall be taken of the health of their children, without any expense to them. The bishops shall examine, by themselves or their delegates, into the progress of all the students in learning, every half year, or oftener if possible. The elders, deacons, and preachers, as often as they visit Abingdon, shall examine the students concerning their knowledge of God and religion.

The students shall be divided into proper classes for that purpose. A pupil who has a total incapacity to attain learning, shall, after sufficient trial, be returned to his parents. If a student be convicted of any open sin, he shall, for the first offense, be reprov'd in private; for second offense, he shall be reprov'd in public; and for the third offense, he shall be punished at the discretion of the president; if incorrigible, he shall be expelled. But if the sin be exceedingly gross, and a bishop see it necessary, he may be expelled for the first, second, or third offense.

Idleness, or any other fault, may be punished with confinement, according to the discretion of the president. A convenient room shall be set apart as a place of confinement. The president shall be the judge of all crimes and punishments, in the absence of the bishops. But the president shall have no power to expel a student without the advice and consent of three of the trustees, but a bishop shall have that power." The site selected for the college buildings, which was on a rising ground in the town of Abingdon, about twenty-five miles from Baltimore, is thus described by Dr. Coke: --

The situation delights me more than ever. There is not, I believe, a point of it, from whence the eye has not a view of at least twenty miles; and in some parts the prospect extends even to fifty miles in length. The water part forms one of the most beautiful views in the United States; the Chesapeake Bay in all its grandeur, with a fine navigable river, the Susquehanna, which empties itself into it, lying exposed to view through a great extent of country."

It was on this spot that a noble brick building was erected, one hundred and eight feet in length, and forty in breadth; and the house was conveniently divided for lodging the students, and for recitation rooms, &c. Through the solicitations of Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, nearly five thousand dollars had been secured

by subscriptions and donations, when they commenced building; and before the rooms were entirely finished a school was opened with a few scholars. On the 8th, 9th, and 10th days of December, 1787, the college was opened with religious exercises, and Bishop Asbury preached a sermon on each day, the dedication sermon being delivered on Sabbath, from 2 Kings iv, 40, "O, thou man of God, there is death in the pot." Whether the selection of this text was ominous or not of the fate of the institution, after being in successful operation for about ten years, it was consumed by fire. Bishop Asbury makes the following remarks on being notified of the destruction of the buildings: --

"We have now a second and confirmed account that Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of ten thousand pounds in about ten years! The foundation was laid 1785, and it was born December 7, 1795. Its enemies may rejoice, and its friends need not mourn. Would any man give me ten thousand pounds a year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it."

It seems to have been the opinion of Bishop Asbury, that this destruction of the college buildings was an indication of divine Providence that it was no part of the duty of the Methodist Episcopal Church to engage in founding and raising up colleges. It appears to us, however, that on the same principle of reasoning, we should refuse to build a church, or a dwelling house, or even to embark in any business, which might be injured by the elements. Job's repeated losses were permitted to try his patience, and this might have been permitted for a similar effect on the church.

But although Bishop Asbury was dispirited in respect to building colleges, Dr. Coke, encouraged by the generosity of a number of wealthy friends in the vicinity of Abingdon, who sympathized with the sufferers, and also felt a deep interest in the cause of education, determined to make another effort. To aid him in his design, a number of friends in the city of Baltimore, after consulting together, immediately subscribed about four thousand five hundred dollars toward erecting a new building on the same premises. Ascertaining, however, that there was a large building in Baltimore which would answer the purpose, they purchased the premises for the sum of about twenty two thousand dollars. The ground and building thus purchased being more than was needed for the college, the brethren in Baltimore determined to erect a new church on a part of the premises. This was accordingly done, and the church and college were fitted up for use, and the college was opened with a fair prospect of success, even more promising than what had appeared in Cokesbury College; but unhappily a similar fate awaited it.

Through the imprudence of a few boys who had been making a bonfire with some shavings in an adjoining house, the flames were communicated to the house in which they were assembled, and thence to the church and college, which were, after ineffectual attempts to extinguish the flames, entirely consumed. Thus were the hopes of the friends of education again blasted by the sudden destruction of these buildings, by which the Methodists lost not less than forty-four thousand dollars, and the cause of learning was abandoned in despair by the Methodist Episcopal Church for a number of years. Other denominations, however, in the city of Baltimore, sympathized with the Methodists in the loss of their church, and offered their churches for them to assemble in until they could repair their own. This generous offer was thankfully accepted, and they occupied these houses until they succeeded in erecting another.

Having thus traced the commencement and termination of this laudable effort to diffuse a knowledge of literature and science among the people, we will now return to notice the progress of the general work. Immediately after the adjournment of the conference in Baltimore, Dr. Coke returned to Europe. The doctor's talents as a preacher, his Christian and gentlemanly deportment, and the disinterested zeal he had manifested for the welfare of Methodism in these United States, gained for him a great reputation

among the people generally, and gave him an influence of a commanding character; and his enjoyments among his brethren would have been unalloyed had he not given offense, particularly to the people of Virginia, by his pointed, and, as he himself afterward acknowledged, imprudent manner of preaching against slavery. He was, however, rescued from the violence of a mob who had assembled for the purpose of wreaking their vengeance upon him, by the timely and resolute interference of a Christian magistrate and a military officer, and Dr. Coke was permitted to pursue his way unmolested.

It seems that heretofore there had been held only one regular conference in a year; for though some of the preachers had assembled in separate places for the dispatch of their local affairs, the regular conference was considered one and indivisible as to all matters of a general character; but as the work enlarged, new circuits formed, and additional laborers entered the field, and these scattered over such a large surface of country, it became inconvenient for all the preachers to assemble together in one place; hence this year there were held three conferences; one at Green Hills, in North Carolina, April 20th; another at Mr. Mason's, Brunswick county, Virginia, May 1st; and another at Baltimore on the 1st day of June. But though the business was transacted in three separate conferences, their doings appeared in the minutes as one because nothing, except the stationing the preachers, was considered binding which was done in one conference unless approved by all the rest.

The following seven new circuits were added to the list this year: Georgia, in the state of Georgia; Charleston, Georgetown, and Broad River, in South Carolina; New River, in North Carolina; Lancaster, in Virginia; and St. Mary's, in Maryland. The stations in Nova Scotia, before mentioned, and Antigua, in the West Indies, were also returned on the minutes. There were very considerable revivals of religion this year in the south and north, but the greatest work was on the eastern shore of Maryland, and in some parts of New Jersey; so that the increase of members was three thousand and twelve, and of preachers twenty-one: the whole number of members being eighteen thousand -- preachers one hundred and four.

The origin of the presiding elder's office may be traced to this year, though those who had charge of several circuits were not so denominated in the minutes until 1789. The office originated in this way: at the organization of the Church in 1784, but twelve out of the whole number of preachers were elected and ordained elders, and hence many of the circuits were destitute of any officer who was authorized to administer the ordinances, as a deacon could only assist at the celebration of the Lord's supper. To remedy this defect, and to supply the people with the ordinances regularly, several circuits were linked together, and put under the charge of an elder, whose duty it was to visit each circuit quarterly, preach to the people, hold love-feasts, and administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

As the Church had now become regularly organized, and the several offices provided for as they have continued with but little variation to the present time, perhaps this may be the most suitable place to give a short analysis of the several parts of the entire economy, as provided for in the Discipline, that the reader may have the whole before him at one view.

There is the society, which includes all the members of the church attached to any particular place. The classes, which originally consisted of about twelve persons in each, but unhappily have often increased to from twenty to forty, who meet together weekly for mutual edification. The class leader has charge of a class, and it is his duty to see each person in his class once a week, to inquire how their souls prosper, and to receive what they are willing to give for the support of the church and poor.

The stewards, who are chosen by the quarterly conference, on the nomination of the ruling preacher, have charge of all the money collected for the support of the ministry, the poor, and for sacramental occasions, and disburse it as the Discipline directs. The trustees have charge of the church property, to hold it in trust for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church. These are elected by the people, in those states where the laws so provide, in other places as the Discipline directs.

There are the exhorters, who receive their license from the quarterly-meeting conference, and have the privilege of holding meetings for exhortation and prayer. A preacher is one that holds a license, and is authorized to preach, but not to baptize or administer the Lord's supper. He may be either a traveling or local preacher. A local preacher generally follows some secular employment for a livelihood, and preaches on Sabbath and at other times occasionally, without any temporal emolument.

A traveling preacher devotes himself entirely to the work of the ministry, and is supported by the people among whom he labors. All these, after being recommended by the class to which each respectively belong, or by a leaders' meeting, receive their license from a quarterly meeting conference, signed by a presiding elder. A deacon holds a parchment from a bishop, and is authorized, in addition to discharging the duties of a preacher, to solemnize matrimony, to bury the dead, to baptize, and to assist the elder in administering the Lord's supper.

It is his duty also to seek after the sick and poor, and administer to their comfort. An elder, besides doing the duties above enumerated, has full authority to administer all the ordinances of God's house. These generally, whenever a sufficient number can be had, have the charge of circuits, and the administration of the several parts of the discipline of the church. A presiding elder has charge of several circuits, called collectively a district. It is his duty to visit each circuit once a quarter, to preach, and administer the ordinances, to call together the traveling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders of the circuit for a quarterly conference, and in the absence of a bishop, to receive, try, suspend, or expel preachers, as the Discipline directs.

He is appointed to his charge by the bishop. A bishop is elected by the General Conference, and is amenable to that body for his official and moral conduct. It is his duty to travel through the work at large, to superintend the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church, to preside in the annual and the general conferences, to ordain such as are elected by an annual conference to the office of deacons or elders, and to appoint the preachers to their stations. A leaders' meeting is composed of all the class leaders in any one circuit or station, in which the preacher in charge presides.

Here the weekly class collections are paid into the hands of the stewards, and inquiry is made into the state of the classes, delinquents reported, and the sick and poor inquired after. A quarterly meeting conference is composed of all the traveling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders belonging to any particular station or circuit, in which the presiding elder presides, or in his absence the preacher in charge. Here exhorters and local preachers are licensed, and preachers recommended to an annual conference to be received into the traveling ministry; and likewise appeals are heard from any member of the church, who may appeal from the decision of a committee.

An annual conference is composed of all the traveling preachers, deacons, and elders within a specified district of country. These are executive and judicial bodies, acting under rules prescribed by the General Conference. Here the characters and conduct of all the traveling preachers within the bounds of the conference are examined yearly; applicants for admission into the traveling ministry, if accounted

worthy, are received, continued on trial, or dropped, as the case may be: appeals from local preachers which may be presented, are heard and decided; and those who are eligible to deacon's or elder's orders are elected.

An annual conference possesses original jurisdiction over all its members, and may therefore try, acquit, suspend, expel, or locate any of them, as the Discipline in such cases provides. For the specific duties of an annual conference, see Discipline, p.28. The General Conference assembles quadrennially, and is composed of a certain number of delegates, elected by the annual conferences. It has power to revise any part of the Discipline, not prohibited by the restrictive regulations, (which will be more particularly noticed hereafter,) to elect the book agents and editors, and the bishops; to hear and determine appeals of preachers from the decisions of annual conferences; to review the acts of those conferences generally; to examine into the general administration of the bishops for the four preceding years; and, if accused, to try, censure, acquit, or condemn a bishop.

This is the highest judicatory of the Church. That the reader may have a complete view of our entire economy, so far as it was organized at the time of which we now speak, it is necessary to notice one more usage, and that is, the holding of love-feasts. Those who are acquainted with the history of the primitive church, know perfectly well that they had what were called Agape, (Agapa,) or feasts of charity, in which they ate and drank together, in token of their love and fellowship to and with each other, and in which they bound themselves not to betray one another into the hands of their enemies.

In imitation of these primitive feasts of charity, Mr. Wesley established his love-feasts, and they have been continued to the present time in the Church. Without pretending that every minutia observed in these social meetings has an exact archetype in those primitive assemblies, it is sufficient that they resemble them in the main particulars. Here believers only, and those who profess to be seeking redemption in the blood of Christ, are admitted, generally on the presentation of a printed ticket, which is a certificate of membership in the Church.

After singing an appropriate hymn, and prayer, a small piece of bread and a little water are taken by each person as a token of Christian fellowship, and then some time, usually about one hour, is spent for each one who chooses to relate his or her experience and enjoyment of divine things. A collection is then made for the benefit of the poor, when the assembly is dismissed, after singing and prayer, by the benediction. These meetings have been found peculiarly profitable to the souls of God's people.

There is one other item in the economy of our Church which ought to be mentioned in this connection, and that is the salary of the ministry, and the mode in which it is raised. At the time of which we are now speaking, the allowance of a single traveling preacher was sixty-four dollars per annum, and his traveling expenses, and double that sum to one who was married. Out of this amount he had to furnish himself with clothes, horse, and traveling apparatus, his board being included among his traveling or extra expenses.

This was raised by the voluntary contributions of the people in weekly class, and quarterly collections a yearly fifth collection was made in all the congregations, and with the small avails arising from the sale of books, was brought to the annual conference, and appropriated to make up the deficiencies of those who did not receive their full allowance on the circuits, and for the widows and worn-out preachers.

Having given this outline of our economy, the reader will be able to understand the meaning of such technical phrases as quarterly, annual, and general conference, society and class meeting, love-feasts, exhorter, preacher, deacon, elder, and bishop, whenever they occur, without further explanation.

This year, for the first time, the minutes contained, in connection with the names of those preachers who had died in the work during the preceding year, short sketches of their character. As, however, the insertion of these sketches would swell this history beyond its destined bulk, the most of them will be abridged, reserving however the privilege of extending such as were the most eminent for their labors and success in the work. The following record concerning the deaths of preachers is found in the minutes of this year: --

Caleb B. Peddicord, a man of sorrows, and like his Master, acquainted with grief; but a man dead to the world, and much devoted to God.

George Mair, a man of affliction, but of great patience and resignation, and of an excellent understanding.

Samuel Rowe, James Martin, and James Morris, were located; and Le Roy Cole was expelled.

Numbers in Society: Members this year, 18,000, last year 14,988; Preachers this year, 104, last year, 83; Increase in Members, 3,612; Increase in Preachers, 21.

1786. There were three conferences held this year; one at Salisbury, in North Carolina, on the 21st of February; another at Jones's chapel in Virginia, on the 18th of April; and the third at Baltimore, on the 8th day of May. Five new circuits were added to the list, namely, Santee and Peedee, in North Carolina, Newark in New Jersey, and Kentucky, in the state of Kentucky.

As this is the first mention of Kentucky in our minutes, and as I have given a sketch of the first settlements and general condition of the thirteen original States, it seems proper to give some account of this, and also of the other new states, in the order in which they were visited by the Methodist ministry. For though Kentucky was not received as a member of the American confederacy [Union] until the year 1792, yet as this [1786] was the year it was first entered by a Methodist preacher, this seems to be the most suitable time and place to notice these things.

In 1775, Colonel Daniel Boone, one of the most famous of American pioneers, first penetrated into the woods of Kentucky, which was then a part of Virginia. His reports of the fertility of the soil, and of the facilities for forming settlements, soon induced other hardy adventurers from Virginia to join him; and thus a way was opened for the cultivation of this wilderness, which, after the war of the revolution had closed, was so rapidly settled, that in 1792 it was formed into an independent government, and received as one of the states of the Union.

The character of the first settlers, being principally from Virginia, partook of that chivalry and hospitality for which the Virginians are distinguished, though as to religion and morals much could not be then said in their favor. At the time of which we now speak, there were but few inhabitants, probably not over twenty thousand, in the whole territory, and these were found in scattered groups through the country.

The settlements were first visited by the Baptist preachers; but though they exerted some influence among the people in favor of religion, yet it appears from the history of those times, that their general neglect of the Sabbath, their intermeddling much with politics, and their strong bias for Antinomian doctrines, prevented them from doing the good they otherwise might have done. In 1784, a Presbyterian minister settled at Harrodsburgh, in Mercer county, and in the same year a seceder took charge of a congregation in Lexington.

But, as in many other instances we have mentioned, the pioneers of Methodism in this country were some local preachers, who went there for the purpose of bettering their worldly condition, at the same time carrying their religion with them. The author of Short Sketches of the Work of God in the Western Country, from whom much of this account is taken, relates, that about this time (1784) a local preacher by the name of Tucker, while on his way to that country in company with some of his friends and connections, who were removing with him to Kentucky, in descending the Ohio River in a boat, was attacked by some hostile Indians, and the preacher received a mortal wound, when he fell on his knees and died shouting praises to God. Before he fell, however, by his bravery and presence of mind he rescued the boat and his companions, among whom were several women and children, from destruction.

This year Messrs. James Haw and Benjamin Ogden were sent to Kentucky; and though their labors were blessed in this new country to the souls of the people, they both soon after departed from the work, being seduced by James O'Kelly and his party.

At the conference in Virginia a proposal was made for some preachers to volunteer their services for the state of Georgia, and several offered themselves for this new field of labor. Two of those who offered themselves, namely, Thomas Humphries and John Major, were accepted, and they went to their work in the name of the Lord, and were made a blessing to many. They formed a circuit along the settlements on the banks of the Savannah River, around by Little River, including the town of Washington. During the year they formed several societies, containing, upward of four hundred members -- so greatly did God bless their labors. Mr. Major continued in the state of Georgia about two years, where he ended his labors and life in great peace.

Mr. Asbury, as the general superintendent, besides attending the conferences, which indeed was but a small part of his labor, traveled extensively through the bounds of the work, exposed often to many hardships and privations, but everywhere treated by the people of God as a messenger of peace and salvation. We find in his Journal for this year that he traversed the country from New York through the middle states to Virginia, and thence to North and South Carolina, preaching generally every day, and meeting the societies. While in Maryland, he received information that on Talbot circuit not less than five hundred souls had joined the Church, half of whom had professed justifying faith, and more than one hundred of the old professors gave evidence of enjoying "perfect love." Indeed, the work of God abundantly prospered this year in various parts of the country, so that the good effects of the late organization were generally felt and acknowledged, and in no department more than in the energy diffused through all its members by the general superintendency in the hands of such a man as Bishop Asbury. His influence was felt throughout the entire work.

Two preachers had died, namely, --

Jeremiah Lambert, who had been six years in the work, of whom it is said, that he was "a man of sound judgment good gifts, of genuine piety, and very useful" as a preacher, much esteemed in life and lamented in his death.

James Thomas, a pious young man, of good gifts, useful and acceptable, blameless in his life, and much resigned in death. James Hinton, Edward Drumgole, William Glendenning, and William Ringold desisted from traveling.

As the case of William Glendenning was somewhat singular, a few particulars respecting him may not be uninteresting. It seems that when a proposal was made for preachers to go to Nova Scotia, he was

requested to volunteer in this service, to which, as he himself acknowledges, he objected with improper warmth, and thereby, as he supposed, grieved the Spirit, and soon fell into a state of mental darkness, and finally into an alienation of mind. On his being proposed for the elder's office, he was rejected, as he says, "because I wanted gifts." He then says, "While Mr. Asbury was at prayer, I felt all light of divine mercy, as in a moment, take its flight from me. My soul then sunk into the depths of misery and despair." After this he wandered about from place to place, until, in 1792, he wrote to the conference, requesting to be readmitted into the traveling ministry but his request was not granted, because it was believed that he labored under mental derangement.

The numbers in society this year stood as follows: (white,) 18,791, (colored,) 1,890 -- total, 20,681: last year, 18,000 -- increase, 2,681. Preachers this year, 117: last year, 104 -- increase, 13.

It will be perceived from the above that a considerable number of colored persons had been received into the Church, and were so returned in the minutes of conference. Hence it appears that at an early period of the Methodist ministry in this country, it had turned its attention to this part of the population. Under the active labors of Dr. Coke, missions had already been established in the West Indies which promised much success, and 1,000 of the above number were in the Island of Antigua. These missions, however, were soon after taken under the care of the British conference, and have ever since been prosecuted by the Wesleyan Methodists with perseverance and success.

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