

From the Close of the General Conference of 1792 to the Close of the Annual Conferences of 1796

by Nathan Bangs

The sermon describes the progress of Methodism in America from 1793 to 1794, highlighting the challenges faced by the movement, the labors of Bishop Asbury, and the growth of Methodism despite opposition.

Scripture: Psalm 116:15, Matthew 5:16, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Philippians 2:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 1 Timothy 4:12, 2 Timothy 4:7, Hebrews 6:10, James 5:16, 1 Peter 5:6

Topics: "Faith Examples", "Gods Grace"

Description

Nathan Bangs preaches about the remarkable lives and impactful ministries of Benjamin Abbott and Francis Acuff, two humble yet powerful servants of God who dedicated their lives to spreading the gospel and saving souls. Benjamin Abbott, though illiterate, possessed a deep spiritual insight and fervent prayer life that brought about powerful manifestations of God's presence in his preaching and ministry, leading many to repentance and conversion. Francis Acuff, though young and only in the ministry for a short time, left a lasting legacy in the west through his talents, labors, and unwavering dedication to the work of God. Their lives serve as examples of faith, humility, and the transformative power of God's grace.

Transcript

We have hitherto traced the progress of Methodism in this country, from its small beginning in 1766 to the close of the first General Conference in 1792. Though it had difficulties, both internal and external, to contend with, it won its way through every opposition, maintaining the purity of its character, and exerting its hallowing influence on society, in the meantime molding itself into a more compact form and firmer consistency, until, we have seen, it was organized in One Supreme judicatory to which its destinies, under God, were committed. I shall now proceed to narrate, as accurately as possible, its subsequent progress, both in its general councils and in its various ramifications over this extended continent.

1793

Though the labors of the conference, detailed in the former chapter, were great, and the subjects of deliberation elicited very considerable controversy, yet the preachers generally departed to their respective spheres of labor with promptness and cheerfulness; and the people, with the exception of those

who were poisoned with the O'Kelleyan schism, manifested great satisfaction at what had been done. It was, indeed, manifest to all impartial men that the members of this conference "sought not their own" glory, temporal aggrandizement, ease, or pleasure, but the glory of God and the good of mankind.

This year there were no less than nineteen conferences held in different parts of the country, for the convenience of the preachers and people, and it was upward of eleven months from the time of the first to the last, -- the times and places of which, not affording much matter of general interest, I think not necessary now or hereafter to specify. In these several conferences the following twelve circuits were added: -- Swanino, in Virginia; Haw River, in North Carolina; Hinkstone, in the West; Washington, Maryland; Freehold, New Jersey; Herkimer and Seneca Lake, New York; Tolland and New London, Connecticut; Province of Maine, Maine; Prince George, in Maryland; Savannah, in Georgia.

An effort was made this year for the erection of district schools, in imitation of the Kingswood School, established by Mr. Wesley, in England; and an address was drawn up by Bishop Asbury to the members of the Church, with a view to call their attention to the importance of this subject. Several such were accordingly commenced soon after; but whether for want of skill in their management, or patronage from the people, or more probably from both of these causes, they lingered for a short time, and then ceased to exist. These failures in an attempt to impart the benefits of a Christian education made an impression upon the mind of the good bishop and others that the Methodists were not called to attend to these things and hence for several years they were suffered to sleep. This subject has, however, more latterly awakened a very general interest in the Church, and the cause of education has been prosecuted with vigor and success, as will be noticed in the proper place.

After the adjournment of the conference, Bishop Asbury commenced his tour of the continent by traveling through the southern states, and thence west over the Allegheny Mountains into Tennessee and Kentucky, contending with almost all sorts of difficulties, and yet everywhere scattering the seeds of eternal life. From the west he returned and visited the northern and eastern states, and on arriving at the city of New York, he says, after mentioning that he had been much afflicted in body, particularly with an inflammatory rheumatism in his feet, --

"I have found, by secret search, that I have not preached sanctification as I should have done. If I am restored, this shall be my theme more pointedly than ever, God being my helper. I have been sick upward of four months, during which time I have attended to my business, and rode, I suppose, not less than three thousand miles."

In this journey he had the satisfaction to behold, in many places, a revival of the work of God, which, amid the gloom occasioned by his debility, the roughness of the roads, and the coarseness of his fare, particularly in the new countries, made him "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." While a foundation was laying for an extensive work of God in the western states, New England began more fully to "stretch out her hands to God." This year there were two districts in New England, one of which was under the charge of the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, and the other the Rev. George Roberts, both of whom were able ministers of the New Testament; and the Rev. Jesse Lee, who had opened a way for the spread of Methodism in this country, was stationed in the province of Maine, and Lynn. Through their labors, and those preachers who were associated together under their direction, several new circuits were formed in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and many societies were established.

But this work did not go on without opposition. Though the civil regulations of the country did not allow the standing order to interpose their authority to prevent the Methodists from preaching, yet they were not allowed the full exercise of their ministry, particularly as respects uniting people in matrimony. Hence Mr. Roberts was prosecuted and fined for performing the marriage ceremony. As, however, this sort of persecution was becoming unpopular among the people, the more they were oppressed in this way, "the more they prospered," until finally all those legal barriers were removed out of the way, and the Methodists, as well as others, are protected in all their rights and privileges.

Though it will be anticipating the chronological order of the history a little, yet I think it will give the reader a more intelligible idea of the progress of the work in this country, to connect a few particulars in this place. This year the New London circuit was formed. Though as early as 1789 preaching commenced in this city, yet no regular class was formed until the year 1793 and that consisted of fifty members. And it was not until 1798 that they succeeded in building a house of worship in New London, which was dedicated to God on the 22d of July of that year.

Warren circuit, in Rhode Island, which included Warren, Newport, Providence, Cranston, and several places in Massachusetts, appears on the minutes of this year; and the first Methodist church which was built in Rhode Island was in the town of Warren; and the first sermon was preached in it Sept. 24, 1794.

As perfect religious freedom was secured to the people by the original charter granted to the state of Rhode Island, and of course no form of Christianity was established by law, the Methodists met with less opposition there than they did in some other portions of New England.

In Provincetown, on Cape Cod, which was first included in the minutes of 1795, there were some incidents attending the introduction of Methodism which, as they show the fruits of the carnal mind on the one hand, and the good providence of God on the other, may be worthy of record. It seems that a few in this place were brought under serious impressions, and began to hold meetings among themselves before they were visited by any preacher, and they had therefore no one competent to instruct and guide them. In this way they endeavored to strengthen each other's hands for some time, being much despised and persecuted by those who "knew not what spirit they were of;" until one of our preachers, who was on his passage from New York to St. John's, in New Brunswick, meeting with contrary winds, the vessel in which he sailed was compelled to anchor in the harbor of Provincetown. On going ashore, the preacher soon found these young converts, and at their invitation gave them a sermon. After staying with them a few days, and preaching several times, he left them with directions where they might apply for Methodist preachers. They accordingly sent to Boston for help, and were soon supplied.

In consequence of these movements, when the Methodist preachers first visited the place, they were cordially received, treated with great kindness, and many attended their meetings. A society was soon formed, and several sinners awakened and converted to God, and added to the society. Their number daily increasing, they commenced building a house of worship. This provoked opposition, and the "sons of Belial" assembled in the night, took the greater part of the timber, which had been brought from a distance, at a considerable expense, threw it from the brow of a hill into the valley, cut it to pieces and built a pen with it, -- then taking a sailor's old hat, coat, and trousers, stuffed them so as to make them resemble a man, fastened the image on the top of the pen, and tarred and feathered it. This shameful conduct, so far from intimidating the brethren, or discouraging them in their efforts to erect a house for the worship of God, only served to stimulate them to renewed diligence; and by the month of January they had their house ready for use, and accordingly took possession of it in the name of the Lord.

James O'Kelley, Rice Haggard, John Robertson, and John Allen, were returned in the minutes this year as withdrawn. Eighteen were located, and one, James Bell, was expelled. Benjamin Carter and John Sproul had died, both in peace.

In making the above record, we cannot but notice the number of locations which took place in those early days of the Church, and which, indeed, continued to be numerous for many years thereafter. That this practice has had an unfavorable effect upon the interests of the Church, by depriving it of some of its tried and experienced ministers, must be evident to all; for though many of those who located retained their piety, and also their usefulness to some extent, yet it is manifest that their ministerial labors were very much contracted, and their usefulness proportionally circumscribed. These locations, however, were owing, in some measure at least, to the scanty support which was made for men of families, and the great difficulty of contending, under those circumstances, with the hardships of an itinerant life, particularly in the new countries. Hence the temptations which were held out to locate that they might provide a livelihood for their growing families. If the Methodist Episcopal Church has erred in any one thing more than another, it has been in neglecting to make that provision for its ministers which they needed, and which the gospel authorizes them to receive. A remedy for this evil is to be found in that spirit of liberality which Christianity inculcates, and which is essential to the existence and usefulness of a gospel ministry.

The effect of the labors of this year may be seen in the following statement: --

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 51,416; Last Year: 52,109; Decrease: 693 -- Colored This Year: 16,227; Last Year: 13,871; Increase: 2,356 -- Total This Year: 67,643; Last Year: 65,980 -- Increase: 1,663 -- Preachers This Year: 269; Last Year: 266; Increase: 3.

The reader will perceive that though there was an increase of 1,663 in the total number, there was a decrease of 693 among the white members. The effects of the O'Kelleyan secession began to be felt, particularly in Virginia, and some parts of North Carolina.

1794

The number of annual conferences was reduced this year to fourteen, as some of the preachers had complained of there being so many at such short distances, among other reasons, because it prevented the minutes from being printed until near the end of the year. This inconvenience, however, should have been submitted to rather than to have made it necessary for the preachers to assemble from such a vast distance, at the expense of so much time and money, as many of them did when, afterward, the number of conferences was reduced to seven. At these conferences the following new circuits were returned in the minutes: -- Federal, in Maryland; Carlisle, in Pennsylvania; Leesburgh and Pendleton, in Virginia; Black Swamp, in South Carolina; New Hampshire, in New Hampshire; Marblehead, Orange, and Fitchburg, in Mass.; and Vermont, in Vermont; Oswegochee, in Upper Canada, was divided into two.

In some of the southern states, Methodism was doomed to much suffering, arising out of the disputes and divisions occasioned by the O'Kelleyan secession, which has been already detailed. But while these things were transacting in those parts, to the grief of many pious hearts, the cause of Christ, through the labors of his faithful servants, was extending in more favored portions of our country. We have before seen, that as early as 1786, the Methodist preachers had penetrated the Western wilderness beyond the Allegheny mountains, and that they had gradually extended their labors from year to year, being led on and encouraged in their work both by the example and precept of Bishop Asbury, who was generally in the foremost ranks when danger and hardship were to be encountered and endured. This year a conference

was appointed to be held in Kentucky, on the 15th of April, and the bishop set off to meet his brethren at that place. On the 20th of January he reached the city of Charleston, S. C., where he found himself so unwell, that he was obliged to relinquish his intended journey to the west; and that the reader may see for himself the manner in which this apostolic man employed his time, the extent of his labors in the cause of God, and the privations to which he was often subjected, we will endeavor to follow him in some of his journeyings this year. After mentioning the kindness and hospitality with which he had been treated in his affliction, while at Charleston, he says, --

"I have written largely to the west, and declined visiting those parts this year. The American Alps, the deep snows, the great rains, swimming the creeks and rivers, riding in the night, sleeping on the earthen floors, more or less of which I must experience, if I go to the western country, might, at this time, cost me my life. I have only been able to preach four times in three weeks. I have had sweet peace at times since I have been here; the love of meetings, especially those for prayer, the increase of hearers, the attention of the people, my own better feelings, and the increasing hope of good that prevails among the preachers, lead me to think that the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor perish."

He remained in Charleston, employing his time in the best manner he could, while endeavoring to recruit his exhausted strength, until February 28th, when he set off on a tour through different parts of the southern country, visiting the churches, and setting things in order. On the 20th of March, he says, --

"I directed my course, in company with my faithful fellow-laborer, Tobias Gibson, up the Catawba, settled mostly by the Dutch. A barren spot for religion. Having rode in pain twenty-four miles, we came, weary and hungry, to O_____'s tavern, and were glad to take what came to hand. Four miles forward we came to Homes' Ford, upon Catawba river, where we could neither get a canoe nor guide. We entered the water in an improper place, and were soon among the rocks and in the whirlpools. My head swam, and my horse was affrighted. The water was to my knees, and it was with difficulty we retreated to the same shore. We then called to a man on the other side, who came and piloted us across, for which I paid him well. My horse being afraid to take the water a second time, brother Gibson crossed and sent me his, and our guide took mine across. We went on, but our troubles were not at an end; night came on and it was very dark. It rained heavily, with powerful lightning and thunder. We could not find the path that turned out to Connell's.' In this situation we continued until midnight or past. At last we found a path which we followed until we came to dear old father Harper's plantation; we made for the house, and called; he answered, but wondered who it could be; he inquired whence we came; I told him we would tell him when we came in; for it was raining so powerfully that we had not much time to talk. When I came dripping into the house, he cried, 'God bless your soul, is it brother Asbury? Wife, get up.' "

After such a salutation they felt themselves at home, though much fatigued from their exposure and long ride.

After some farther remarks expressive of his thankfulness to God for the sweet peace of mind he enjoyed amid his physical sufferings and toilsome labors, he says, "This campaign has made me groan, being burdened." -- "I have provided brothers G. And L. for the westward. I wrote a plan for stationing, and desired the preachers to be, as I am, in the work. I have no interest, no passions, in their appointments; my only aim is to care and provide for the flock of Christ." -- "I feel that my sufferings have been good preaching to me -- especially in crossing the waters. I am solemnly moved in not visiting my Holstein and Kentucky brethren. It may be their interest to desire the preservation of my life. While living I may supply them with preachers, and with men and money. I feel resolved to be wholly the Lord's. Weak as I am, I

have done nothing, I am nothing, only for Christ."

From this part of the country he came north, through Virginia, and on to Baltimore, where he took sweet counsel in the midst of his old friends. Thence he passed on through Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, visiting all the principal cities and towns on his way, attending conferences and preaching to the people, and passed into the New England states. The following are some of his pointed remarks upon the state of things in this country: --

"Ah! here are walls of prejudice, but God can break them down. Out of fifteen United States, thirteen are free; but two are fettered with ecclesiastical chains -- taxed to support ministers, who are chosen by a small committee, and settled for life.¹ My simple prophecy is, that this must come to an end with the present century.² The Rhode Islanders began in time and are free. Hail, sons of liberty! Who first began the war?" (of the Revolution, doubtless is meant.) "Were it not Connecticut and Massachusetts? And priests are now saddled upon them. O what a happy people would these be, if they were not thus priest-ridden.³ It is well for me that I am not stretching along, while my body is so weak, and the heat so intense." "I heard -- read a most severe letter from a citizen of Vermont to the clergy and Christians of Connecticut, striking at the foundation and principle of the hierarchy and the policy of Yale College, and the independent order. It was expressive of the determination of the Vermonters to continue free from ecclesiastical fetters, to follow the Bible, equal liberty to all denominations of Christians. If so, why may not the Methodists, who have been repeatedly solicited; visit these people also?"

These extracts show, in a striking manner, the immense labors performed by this primitive bishop, in the name of Jesus Christ. Nor was he alone in these labors. His example provoked others to follow in the footsteps, who, though they were not called to travel so extensively, were equally assiduous, and alike successful in their endeavors to plant the standard of Jesus Christ in various parts of this continent. Among others we may mention a William Watters, the first Methodist preacher raised up in America, who traversed the western wilds, and labored in the woods of Kentucky; a Garrettson, who opened the way into the interior of New York state, and penetrated even to Vermont; a Lee, who led the way into New England, and laid the foundation for that work of God there which has since reared itself in beauty and glory, amid "fightings without and fears within;" a Roberts and a Cooper, who followed in the track marked out for them by Lee, and nobly stood their ground amid storms of reproach, and labors more abundant." These leaders of "God's sacramental host" being aided by their associates, all zealous for God and for the salvation of souls, were scattering the "good seed of the kingdom" in every direction, and we who have followed them have had the happiness of seeing it "take root and bear fruit," in some places thirty, in others sixty, and in some a hundred fold.

In the preceding extract from Bishop Asbury's Journal, we have seen that he alludes to Vermont, to which they had been solicited to send preachers. It is well known that in this state there were no legal barriers in the way of any denomination of Christians, but that all were permitted the free and unrestrained exercise of their peculiarities. Although as early as 1788 Mr. Garrettson had visited the southern borders of the state, and preached in a few places, it was not until this year that any of our preachers obtained a permanent foothold here; but this year, Joshua Hull was sent to Vermont, and his labors were made a blessing to many. Since that time the cause of Methodism has advanced rapidly among the people in almost every part of the state, to the reformation and salvation of thousands of souls.

This year also Methodism was introduced into the province of Maine, by the indefatigable labors of Jesse Lee. In Portland he preached in the Congregational church, and then passed on through Freeport and

Bath, crossed the Kennebeck river, and went as far as the town of Penobscot. In most of the places he was cordially received, and succeeded in forming a regular circuit, and this laid a foundation for the permanent establishment of Methodism in Maine. He gives the following account of his first visit to Portsmouth: --

"Sunday the 8th of September, I went to hear Mr. Watters in the forenoon and in the afternoon. After he was done, I went with some friends to the court-house, but the great men would not let us go into the house to preach, so I got on the step of the door of the court-house and began. When I commenced I had about a dozen people, but they soon began to flock together, and I had some hundreds of them to hear me before I had done. They stood in different parts of the streets. I found much freedom in speaking, and the word reached many of the hearts of the hearers, who were as solemn and attentive as though they had been in a meeting house."

It may be remarked that the settlements along the Penobscot river at that time had been newly formed, and were destitute of settled pastors; hence the people were much gratified with the visit of Mr. Lee, and those who succeeded him; and though he had to contend with many difficulties, as a stranger bearing a message differing in so many particulars from what they had been accustomed to hear, yet God gave him favor in the eyes of the people, and strength to persevere in his good work, until he had opened a way for the establishment of regular preaching in that destitute part of the country.

New Hampshire was also visited about this time. John Hill was the first Methodist preacher sent into that state but with what success I cannot tell, as we do not find any members returned on the minutes in that state for this year. At the several annual conferences for this year, the following resolutions were passed: --

"It is most earnestly recommended by the conferences, that the last Friday in February, 1795, be set part throughout the United States, by the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as a day of solemn fasting and prayer, and that all worldly concerns be laid aside.

"It is also recommended by said conferences, that the last Thursday in October be set apart as a day of solemn and general thanksgiving, and that all servile labor be laid aside, and those days be observed with all the solemnity of a Sabbath."

They furthermore said, "The bishops and conferences desire that the preachers generally change every six months, by the order of the presiding elder, whenever it can be made convenient."

No less than twenty-eight preachers took a location this year, either in consequence of "weakness of body or family concerns." Two, Jeremiah Cosdon and Jethro Johnson, withdrew from the connection; and four were "dismissed for improper conduct." Four had died, namely, Philip Cox, Henry Birchett, James Wilson, and John Wayne.

Of Philip Cox, who was an Englishman by birth, it is stated that he had been sixteen years in the ministry, during which time he had traveled extensively in several of the states, and preached the gospel with considerable success. He was a man of sound judgment, of quick apprehension, and a great lover of union, and often prayed and preached to the admiration of his hearers. He was among the pioneers of the western wilds, where he labored assiduously and strove to do good by the circulation of religious books. On his return from the west he was seized with a complaint which soon put a period to his existence. Though in his last moments, through the violence of his disease, he was, for the most part of the time,

delirious, yet he gave evidence to his friends that he died in peace.

Henry Birchett fell a martyr to his work, after having been in the traveling ministry only between five and six years. He was a native of Brunswick county, Virginia. He volunteered his services for four years in the dangerous stations of Kentucky and Cumberland, and wore himself out in preaching the gospel in these new countries. His name, therefore, stands enrolled among those worthy and self-denying men who hazarded their all for the sake of carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to the poor and the destitute, exposed in hunger, cold, and nakedness, and to the degradations of savages: for such was the state of things in Kentucky and other places where he traveled, that often even the necessities of life could not be had, nor the wildernesses traversed without the danger of being intercepted by savage foes. But the meekness, love, prayers, sermons, and sufferings in the cause of Christ of Henry Birchett, will not be forgotten by the sons and daughters of Kentucky, who have reaped spiritual benefit from the work which was commenced by his labors and sacrifices, and has been since carried forward by his successors in the ministry.

Of James Wilson and John Wayne, it is said that, after the former had labored in the ministry about six, and the latter about four years, with general acceptance, they both died in peace.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 52,794; Last Year: 51,416; Increase: 1,378 -- Colored This Year: 13,814; Last Year: 16,227; Decrease: 2,413 -- Total This Year: 66,608; Last Year: 67,643 -- Decrease: 1,035 -- Preachers This Year: 301; Last Year: 269; Increase: 32.

1795

The number of annual conferences was reduced this year to seven, greatly to the inconvenience of the preachers, and it is believed to the detriment of the work of God. This diminution in the number of the conferences was made in consequence of the general opposition of the preachers to having so many, by which they thought the powers of the conferences were abridged, and those of the bishop proportionally augmented; and hence, to take away all such ground of fear, the bishops yielded to the wishes of their brethren, notwithstanding they were satisfied that, otherwise, it was not for the best.

Some idea may be formed of the extent of the annual conferences at this time, when it is considered that the New York conference comprehended within its bounds most of the state of New York, the whole of New England, and the province of Upper Canada; out of which have been since formed, the New England, Maine, New Hampshire, Troy, Oneida, Black River, and part of Genesee and the Canada conferences; and the other conferences were proportionally great in extent. Some of the circuits at that time included a larger extent of territory than districts do now, -- a four weeks' circuit often being not less than four hundred miles in circumference, and including from twenty to forty appointments in thirty days. Such were the labors of the Methodist ministry in those days.

In consequence of reducing the number of annual conferences to seven, some of the preachers, who labored in the frontier circuits, had to come from two to four hundred miles to attend the conferences, which obliged them to leave their regular work from three to six weeks, during which time the people were unsupplied with the word and ordinances of the gospel. This, in addition to the expense of time and money consumed in traveling such a distance, was an evil of no small magnitude, and against which, a remedy has been since wisely provided in an increase of the number of the annual conferences.

But the reduction in the number of conferences diminished naught from the labors of the superintendent, nor of those preachers who were fighting the battle, of the Lord in different parts of the great field in which they were employed. The former made his usual tour of the continent, extending his labors this year into the state of Vermont, where he preached in the woods in the town of Bennington, to a congregation made up, he says, of Deists, Universalists, and other sinners, some of whom seemed to be melted to tenderness under the word.

About this time the minds of many people were corrupted by the deistical writings of Thomas Paine, whose effusions against the Bible were received with greater avidity by Americans on account of the eminent services he had rendered to his country during the war of the Revolution. But Thomas Paine as a politician and Thomas Paine as a theologian were very different men. His book, however, against the Bible, was published by the booksellers; which, together with others of a kindred character, were widely circulated, and they were exerting a most deleterious influence upon the minds of many of our citizens, and threatened to poison the fountains of knowledge with their pestiferous contents. It could hardly be otherwise, under these circumstances, than that immorality should abound, and the "love of many wax cold." And the unrestrained freedom of the press, together with the laxity with which the laws against vice were administered, threatened to deluge the country with ungodliness. To impress upon all, and more especially upon the members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the necessity of a more thorough and extensive reformation among all orders of people, a "GENERAL FAST" was recommended by the several annual conferences, in the following address to the people of their charge: --

"It is recommended by the general traveling ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that the first Friday in March, 1796, should be held as a most solemn day of fasting, humiliation, prayer, and supplication. It is desired that it should be attended to in all our societies and congregations, with Sabbatical strictness -- that we should bewail our manifold sins and iniquities -- our growing idolatry, which is covetousness and the prevailing love of the world -- our shameful breach of promises, and irreligious habits of making contracts, even without the intention of honest heathens to fulfill them -- our superstition, the trusting in ceremonial and legal righteousness; and substituting means and opinions for religion -- the profanation of the name of the Lord -- the contempt of the Sabbath, even by those who acknowledge the obligation we are under to keep it holy, for many make no distinction between this and a common day, and others make a very bad distinction, by sleeping, walking, visiting, talking about the world, and taking their pleasure; too many also, in many parts of the country, profane the sacred day, by running their land and water stages, wagons, &c., -- disobedience to parents, various debaucheries, drunkenness, and such like -- to lament the deep-rooted vassalage that still reigneth in many parts of these free, independent United States -- to call upon the Lord to direct our rulers and teach our senators wisdom -- that tho lord would teach our people a just and lawful submission to their rulers -- that America may not commit abominations with other corrupt nations of the earth, and partake of their sins and their plagues -- that the gospel may be preached with more purity, and be heard with more affection -- that He would stop the growing infidelity of this age, by calling out men who shall preach and live the gospel -- that the professors may believe the truths, feel the power, partake of the blessings, breathe the spirit, and obey the precepts of this glorious gospel dispensation -- that Africans and Indians may help to fill the pure church of God."

At the same time, with a view to manifest their gratitude for what God had done, and for the many temporal and spiritual mercies vouchsafed unto the people, a day of "GENERAL THANKSGIVING," was also recommended in the words following:--

"It is recommended, by the general ministry, to all our dearly beloved brethren and sisters that compose our societies and sacred assemblies, to observe the last Thursday in October, 1796, as a day of holy gratitude and thanksgiving -- to lay aside the cares of the world, and to spend the day in acts of devotional gratitude -- as a society, to give glory to God for his late goodness to the ancient parent society from whom we are derived: that they have been honored with the conversion of hundreds and thousands within these two years last past -- for such a signal display of his power in the Methodist society, within the space of twenty-six years, through the continent of America, as may be seen in the volume of our annual minutes, published in 1795 -- for the late glorious and powerful work we have had in Virginia and Maryland, and which still continues in an eminent and special manner, in some parts of our American connection -- for the many faithful public witnesses which have been raised up, and that so few, (comparatively speaking,) have dishonored their holy calling -- that we have had so many drawn from the depths of sin and misery, to the heights of love and holiness among the subjects of grace; numbers of whom are now living, and others have died in the full and glorious triumph of faith -- to take into remembrance the goodness and wisdom of God displayed toward America, by making it an asylum for those who are distressed in Europe with war and want, and oppressed with ecclesiastic and civil tyranny; the merciful termination of our various wars; the pacifications of the savage tribes; and the rapid settlement and wonderful population of the continent; that we have been able to feed so many thousands, at home and abroad; that we have had such faithful, wise, and skillful rulers; that we have such good constitutions formed for the respective states -- for the general union and government, that this may be kept pure and permanent -- for the admirable Revolution obtained and established at so small a price of blood and treasure -- that religious establishments by law are condemned and exploded in almost every spot of this extensive empire. And for African liberty; we feel gratitude that many thousands of these poor people are free and pious."

The work of God spread this year in several parts of New England, more particularly in the province of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and also in the northern and western parts of the state of New York. But nothing occurred in this department worthy of special notice.

No less than thirty-two preachers located this year, three withdrew from the church, and five had died.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 48,121; Last Year: 52,794; Decrease: 4,673 -- Colored This Year: 12,170; Last Year: 13,814; Decrease: 1,644 -- Total This Year: 60,291; Last Year: 66,608 -- Decrease: 6,317 -- Preachers This Year: 313; Last Year: 301; Increase: 12.

This great decrease was owing, in a great measure, to the O'Kelleyan division, which was now at its height, and was spreading desolation in many of the societies in Virginia, and also in some parts of North Carolina.

1796

There were seven annual conferences held this year: and the following new circuits were added: Shelby and Logan; in the Western Conference; Bath and Kennebec, in the province of Maine; Cape May, in New Jersey; Chesterfield, in New Hampshire and Vershire, in Vermont.

This year a conference was held at Green Briar, in the upper part of Virginia, which Bishop Asbury attended; after which he set off on another tour over the mountains and through the valleys.

"Frequently," he says, "we were in danger of being plucked from our horses by the boughs of the trees under which we rode. About seven o'clock, after crossing six mountains and many rocky creeks and fords

of Elk and Monongahela rivers, we made the Valley of Distress, called by the natives of Tyger's Valley. We had a comfortable lodging at Mr. White's. And here I must acknowledge the kindness and decency of the family, and their readiness to duty, sacred and civil. Thence we hastened on at the rate of forty-two miles a day." -- "After encountering many difficulties, known only to God and ourselves, we came to Morgantown. I doubt whether I shall ever request any person to come and meet me at the levels of Green Briar, or to accompany me across the mountains again, as brother D. Hitt has done. O! how checkered is life! How thankful ought I to be that I am here safe, with life and limbs, in peace and plenty, at kind brother S____'s."

After performing this fatiguing journey, visiting various places and preaching to the people, he once more found himself in more comfortable quarters in the older states, where he persevered with his wonted designs in the grand work to which he had been called, and in which his soul delighted. After arriving at Baltimore, he takes a "review of his journey for some months past," which, as it will give the reader some idea of the manner in which the bishop employed his time, we will present in his own words.

"From the best judgment I can form, the distance" (I have traveled) "is as follows: -- from Baltimore to Charleston, S. C., one thousand miles; thence up the state of South Carolina two hundred miles; from the center to the west of Georgia two hundred miles; through North Carolina one hundred miles; through the state of Tennessee one hundred miles; through the west of Virginia three hundred miles; through Pennsylvania and the west of Maryland, and down to Baltimore, four hundred miles." And the reader will recollect that these journeys were performed generally on horseback, sometimes through creeks, morasses, and over high mountains, often lodging in log cabins, or on the ground, with coarse fare, and in the meantime preaching usually every day. It is true that in the older settlements he was not only cordially received and treated with great hospitality, but was blessed with an abundance of temporal comforts. And the above is but a fair specimen of the mode of life pursued by most of the Methodist preachers of that day, with this exception only, that they did not travel so extensively as Bishop Asbury did.

The work of God spread this year in some parts of New England, particularly in the province of Maine, and in the states of New Hampshire and Vermont. Alluding to these things, while on his visit to that part of the country, Bishop Asbury remarks: --

"This day I was led out greatly for New England. I believe God will work among this people. Perhaps they have not had such a time here for many years. The power of God was present, and some felt as at heaven's gate. Two or three women spoke as on the borders of eternity, and within sight of glory."

It may be proper to remark here, that Bishop Asbury, wherever he was, did not content himself simply with preaching to the people, but if time permitted, met the classes, explained to them the discipline, and attended to all the duties of a pastor. Thus, speaking of being in the city of New York, he says that he "preached morning, afternoon, and evening, alternately in each of the three churches then in the city, besides meeting six classes in the course of the day."

In meeting the society, I observed to them, that they knew but little of my life and labors, unless in the pulpit, family, or class meeting," -- intimating that it was impossible for them to have any adequate idea of his general labors and sufferings through the country.

This year that eminent servant of God, Benjamin Abbott, took his departure to another world. And as his life and labors made a powerful impression upon the community, and tended greatly to enlarge the work of God wherever he traveled, it seems suitable that a more particular account should be given of him than of

some others.

He was born in the state of Pennsylvania, in the year 1732, and, grew to manhood "without hope and without God in the world," and so continued until the fortieth year of his age, when it pleased God to bring him to a knowledge of the truth by the instrumentality of Methodist preaching. Soon after his conversion he gave evidence of his call to the gospel ministry, and he entered upon this work with an ardor of mind which plainly evinced that he was moving in the order of God, and it may be truly said that "signs and wonders were wrought" by his instrumentality. For several years he labored merely as a local preacher, supporting himself and family by the labor of his hands. He continued in this way greatly pleased in his efforts to bring sinners to the knowledge of Christ, until April, 1789, when he joined the traveling ministry, and was stationed in Dutchess circuit, in the state of New York. From this time till disabled by infirmities, he continued traveling and preaching through various parts of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware states, edifying the church by his example and labors, and he was an instrument in the hand of God of the awakening and conversion of thousands of souls. As some portions of his life were attended with remarkable interpositions of divine Providence and peculiar manifestations of the grace of God, I think it will be both pleasing and profitable to the reader to present a few of the instances in this place. While laboring in the state of Delaware, he gives the following account:

"Next day I set out for my appointment, but being a stranger, I stopped at a house to inquire the way, and the man told me he was just going to that place, for there was to be a Methodist preacher there that day; and our preacher, said he, is to be there to trap him in his discourse, and if you will wait a few minutes until a neighbor of mine comes, I will go with you. In a few minutes the man came, who, it seems, was a constable. So we set off; and they soon fell into conversation about the preacher, having no idea of my being the man, as I never wore black, or any kind of garb that indicated my being a preacher, and so I rode unsuspected.

The constable being a very profane man, he swore by all the gods he had, good and bad, that he would lose his right arm from his body if the Methodist preacher did not go to jail that day. This was the theme of their discourse. My mind was greatly exercised on the occasion, and what added, as it were, double weight, I was a stranger in a strange place, where I knew no one. When we arrived at the place appointed, I saw about two hundred horses hitched. I also hitched mine, and retired into the woods, where I prayed and covenanted with God on my knees, that if he stood by me in this emergency, I would be more for him, though grace, than ever I had been.

I then arose and went to my horse, with a perfect resignation to the will of God, whether to death or to jail. I took my saddlebags and went to the house; the man took me into a private room, and desired I would preach in favor of the war, as I was in a Presbyterian settlement. I replied, I should preach as God should direct me. He appeared very uneasy and left me, and just before preaching, he came in again and renewed his request that I would preach up for war; I replied as before, and then followed him out among the people, where he made proclamation as follows: -- Gentlemen, this house is my own, and no gentleman shall be interrupted in my house in time of his discourse, but after he has done you may do as you please.

Thank God, said I softly, that I have liberty once more to warn sinners before I die. I then took my stand, and the house was so crowded that no one could sit down. Some hundreds were round about the door. I stood about two or three feet from the constable who had sworn so bitterly. When he saw that I was the man he had so abused on the way, with so many threats and oaths, his countenance fell and he turned

pale. I gave out a hymn, but no one offered to sing; I sung four lines, and kneeled down and prayed.

When I arose, I preached with great liberty. I felt such power from God rest upon me, that I was above the fear of either men or devils, not regarding whether death or a jail should be my lot. Looking forward I saw a decent looking man trembling, and tears flowed in abundance, which I soon discovered was the case with many others. After preaching, I told them I expected they wanted to know by what authority I had come into that country to preach. I then told them my conviction and conversion, the place of my nativity and place of residence; also, my call to the ministry, and that seven years I had labored in God's vineyard; that I spent my own money and found and wore my own clothes, and that it was the love that I had for their precious souls, for whom Christ died, that had induced me to come among them at the risk of my life; and then exhorted them to fly to Jesus, the ark of safety -- that all things were ready -- to seek, and they should find, to knock, and it should be opened unto them.

By this time the people were generally melted into tears. I then concluded, and told them on that day two weeks they might expect preaching again. I mounted my horse and set out with a friendly Quaker for a pilot. We had not rode above fifty yards, when I heard one hallooing after us. I looked back, and saw about fifty running after us. I then concluded that to jail I must go. We stopped, and when they came up, I crave your name, said one, -- I told him, and so we parted. He was a justice of the peace, and was the person I had taken notice of in time of preaching, and observed him to be in great anxiety of mind.

No one offered me any violence; but they committed the next preacher, on that day two weeks, to the common jail. I went home with the kind Quaker, where I tarried all night. I found that himself and wife were under serious impressions, and had had Methodist preaching at their house."

Though Mr. Wesley gives several accounts in his Journals of some persons being so affected under his preaching as to fall helpless to the floor or on the ground, yet such things had not been common in this country. It is true that in the great revival which took place in Virginia in the early days of Methodism, several such instances are recorded. But under the powerful preaching of Mr. Abbott many examples of a partial suspension of the animal functions occurred, as the following extract will show: --

"Next day I went on to my appointment, where we had a large congregation: I preached with life and power, and God attended the word with the energy of his Spirit. A Quaker girl was powerfully wrought upon, so that every joint in her shook, and she would have fallen to the floor, but four or five took and carried her out of the door; when she had recovered a little she went to a neighbor's house and told him that she had seen the dreadfulest old man the she ever saw in all her life, and that he almost scared her to death, for his eyes looked like two balls of fire, and that she expected every minute he would jump at her. But, said the neighbor, I know the old man, and he would not hurt nor touch you. I went on, and the power of the Lord continued among us in such a manner that many fell to the floor, and others cried aloud for mercy. One young woman to exhort the people; I stopped preaching, which I always judged was best, in similar instances, and let God send by whom he will send: she went on for some time with great life and power, and then cried out, Let us pray; we all kneeled down, and she prayed with life and liberty, until she was spent and so forbore. A preacher being present, I called on him, and he went to prayer, and while he was praying three were set at liberty; and, after him, myself and others prayed and several received justifying faith. The shout continued for the space of three or four hours. After meeting broke up, I thought it was not necessary to meet the class, as we had such a powerful time, and it had lasted so long already. The young woman who had given the exhortation and prayed, took five others with her, and retired to the barn to pray for the mourners, who went with them, where they continued until late in the evening, and

three souls were set at liberty; another, as she was returning home, in sore distress fell on her face in the woods, where she continued in prayer until God set her soul at liberty to rejoice in his love. An old Presbyterian woman requested me to call at her house on the ensuing day, as she wanted to discourse with me on religion; I did call, and she received me very kindly, and then related her conviction and conversion, and added, that some years after, God had sealed her his to the day of eternity; and, said she, neither our preachers or people will believe me, when I tell them how happy I am. I then endeavored to explain to her the nature of sanctification, and what it was, and asked her if we should pray together; she replied, With all my heart. After prayer I departed in peace, having no doubt but what God had sanctified her soul and body. She was the first Presbyterian that I ever had met with, that would acknowledge sanctification in its proper sense.

"I went to my next appointment, where I had put brother G. D., who professed sanctification, class leader, and the Lord attended his words with power. This had brought the man of the house where the class met into doubts, whether the work was of God or the devil; for the people had frequently fallen, both under his prayer and exhortation. Soon as I came to the house he related how great his exercises had been respecting the work. One day, said he, I thought I would go down to my stack yard, which stood some distance from the house, and there pray to God to discover the reality of it to me; and on my way thither, as I sat on a fence, I thought I saw a man sitting on the next pannel [sic]; I got off and went down to the stacks, and the man went with me, side by side, and when I kneeled down to pray, the man stood right before me. I prayed until my shirt was wet on my back, entreating God that he would give me some token, whereby I might know whether the work was of him or not. The man who stood before me said, Blessed are those that are pure in heart. I then arose to see whether he was a man or not, and went to put my hand upon him, and he said, Touch me not! I then turned myself round another way, and he stood right before me again, and said several other words which I do not relate, and then vanished, or ascended, as in a flame of fire. Now, said I, do you doubt about the matter, whether the work is of God or not? No, said he, I have no doubts about it, for God has sent his angel to confirm me. I then went and preached, -- the Lord was present. We had a glorious time, and several fell to the floor; we had a precious time also in class, and two joined Society.

"Next day I went to my appointment, and found a large congregation. I preached, and the power of the Lord attended the word. One young man sprang from the bench and called aloud for mercy, then fell on his knees and prayed fervently. I stopped preaching, and when he was done, I went to prayer with him, and after me several others; many wept, some cried aloud for mercy, and others fell to the floor. When I dismissed the people to meet class, I invited the young man in. Here we had a precious season among the dear people of God, and some mourners were set at liberty." * * * * *

"I went home with brother M., and next day preached in a crowded house, with liberty: the power of the Lord arrested a young Quaker, and he fell to the floor as if he had been shot: his mother being present, cried out, My son is dead! My son is dead! I replied, Mammy, your son is not dead; look to yourself, mammy, your son is not dead; and in a few minutes we had a number slain before the Lord. An old Quaker man stood with tears in his eyes; I said to him, Daddy, look to yourself; this was the way with you, when you had the life and power of God among you. Read Sewel's history of the people called Quakers, and you will find there that John Audland, a young man, was preaching in a field near Bristol, and the people fell to the ground before him, and cried out under the mighty power of God. The man of the house brought the book, and read the passage before the congregation, and he then acknowledged it to be the work of the Lord. I attempted to meet the class, but did not speak to above two or three, when the people

fell before the Lord, as men slain in battle, and we had the shout of a king in the camp of Jesus: two or three professed that God had sanctified their souls. The young Quaker and several others professed that God had set their souls at liberty; several joined society, and we had a precious time. When I went on that circuit, there were about six or seven in society at that place, and when I left it there were about thirty-six, six or seven of whom had been Quakers. At this place, our meetings were generally so powerful that I never regularly met the class during the time I was on the circuit for we always had the shout of a king in the camp of Jesus -- glory to God!"

These instances serve to show the power and authority by which Benjamin Abbott spoke in the name of the Lord; and though there might have been some human weakness mingling with these signal displays of the power of God, yet it is manifest that in most cases the work was genuine, as appeared by its fruits; for "by their fruits ye shall know them."

The writer of his life gives the following very affecting account of an incident which strikingly exemplifies the tenderness of his conscience and the humility of his mind: --

On his way to a quarterly meeting, about the first of February, 1795, the presiding elder mentioned to him, that the people there thought he had power by faith to open or shut the gates of heaven. Mr. Abbott said to me, when conversing on this subject, 'It went through my soul like a dagger: I was grieved, for I saw that the idea led to idolatry, in ascribing to a poor mortal the power which is due to God only. I felt as if my usefulness were at an end; although I did not discover to brother W____, the presiding elder, how exceedingly I was hurt, nor was he, I believe, sensible of it.' They attended the quarterly meeting in great harmony, and the Master of assemblies was present to the joy and consolation of many. At night Mr. Abbott was taken very ill, and never was able to attend a circuit as a traveling preacher, or scarcely ever to preach afterward; so that his usefulness, indeed, was, in one sense, at an end."

The labors of Mr. Abbott were unremitting and most arduous, so that it may be said he literally wore himself out in the service of his divine Master. The last public service he performed was at the funeral of Mrs. Paul, in the town of Salem, N. J., in the month of April, 1796, and as it was attended with a remarkable incident, evincing the blessed results of ministerial faithfulness, I will give it in the words of the biographer. It is as follows: --

"At the funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Morford, he arose and gave an exhortation, and particularly addressed himself to Mr. W., a man whom he had loved as himself, and who had, through the subtlety of Satan, departed from better knowledge. In his exhortation he called to mind the happy hours he had spent under his roof; how much he (Mr. W.) had done for the cause of God; and how often they had rejoiced together as fellow-laborers in Christ Jesus; and then warned him in the most solemn manner of his impending danger, in the love and fear of God, until tears flowed, his strength failed, and he was unable to speak any longer.

"While the interment of the corpse took place, Mr. Abbott retired to a friend's house, unable to attend it. After the interment, Mr. W. addressed the audience on the occasion, and appeared angry, apprehending that he had been ill used. I spoke to him on the occasion, and endeavored to reason the case with him; but to very little purpose, for he apprehended that I had been the instigator of the supposed affront, and appeared as much offended with me as with Mr. Abbott. After my return from the interment, I went and informed Mr. Abbott of the matter: 'Why,' said he, 'if I were able to take my horse and go and see him, I should not have made use of that opportunity; but as I am not able to go and see him, I was convinced

that if I let that opportunity pass, I should never have another; and I thought it my duty to speak as I did: therefore I leave the event to God. I am sure that it cannot hurt him, or do him any injury; for a man that is posting in the broad way to damnation, cannot be easily worsted. O!' said he, 'I have seen the time that we have rejoiced together as fellow-laborers in Christ, and it grieves my soul to see that the devil has got the advantage of him!' On Mr. W.'s return home, he wrote a letter to Mr. Abbott on the occasion, justifying himself and his conduct. However, the Spirit of God fastened it on him, as a nail in a sure place; for at our first quarterly meeting held at Salem, after Mr. Abbott's death, in the love feast, Mr. W. arose and openly declared that God had healed all his backslidings, and that he had made his servant, Father Abbott, an instrument in his divine hand to bring about his restoration."

After lingering along the shores of time for several months, he finally closed his life in triumph on the 34th day of August, 1796, aged about sixty-four years. The following is an account of the closing scene of his life: --

"My brother went to see him, and found him very poorly, to whom he said, 'Brother Ffirth [sic], I am going to die, and tomorrow you must go to Philadelphia, for brother McClaskey to come and preach my funeral sermon:' to which my brother replied, 'Father Abbott, you may continue for some time yet, as the time of your death is uncertain.' 'No,' said he, 'I shall die before you would get back from Philadelphia, unless you should travel in the night.' My brother replied, 'It will not answer to go before your decease.' 'Why,' said he, 'I shall die, and I do not wish my body to be kept until it is offensive: you know the weather is warm and the distance is considerable.' 'That is true,' replied my brother, 'but if I were to go to Philadelphia for brother McClaskey, to preach your funeral sermon, and you were not dead, the friends would laugh at me, and he would not come.' 'Ah!' said he, 'it may be so; I never thought or that; perhaps it will be best to stay until I am dead.'

"Next day, observing a visible alteration in him, my brother concluded to tarry with him until his exit: during the day he continued in a rack of excruciating pain, which he bore with Christian patience and resignation. He was happy in God, and rejoiced at his approaching dissolution; and seemed much engaged in his soul with God. He appeared to possess his rational faculties to his last moments; and for some time previous thereunto he was delivered from that excruciating pain, to the joy of his friends; his countenance continued joyful, heavenly, and serene. His last sentence, that was intelligibly articulated, was, 'Glory to God! I see heaven sweetly opened before me!'

"After this, his speech so much failed that he could not be distinctly understood, only now and then a word, as, 'See! -- see! -- glory! -- glory!' &c."

Mr. Abbott was, in many respects, a remarkable man; not, indeed, on account of his intellectual or literary attainments, for he was extremely illiterate, and of very limited information. Were we, therefore, to measure his standard of excellence as a preacher by the usual rules by which it is determined, he would sink perhaps below mediocrity; for such was his deficiency in respect to his knowledge even of his vernacular tongue that he could scarcely express himself grammatically on any subject; yet with all these defects, he had drunk so deeply at the fountain of spiritual life, had made himself so thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and had such an accurate knowledge of the human heart, and was, moreover, so deeply impressed by the Holy Spirit that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance, that whenever he spoke in the name of the Lord there was an "unction from the Holy One" attending his word, which made it manifest to all that he was sent from heaven to beseech mankind to be reconciled to God.

Though a Boanerges or son of thunder in the pulpit, especially in his appeals to the impenitent, yet in private circles, in conversation with his friends, and in his addresses to mourning penitents, he was all love and meekness, manifesting the simplicity and docility of a child. But that which distinguished him most eminently among his fellows was the power which he seemed to have with God in prayer. Perhaps he seldom entered the pulpit, or appeared before a congregation as God's messenger, without previously "wrestling in the strength of mighty prayer," and God did indeed "reward him openly." Many were the instances in which his heavenly Father answered his "strong cries and tears," while pouring out the desire of his heart before him in prayer. And let it be recollected that such prayer, which takes hold on God, always supposes the exercise of strong faith in Jesus Christ, that faith which says, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me."

Such was Benjamin Abbott. And though we cannot enroll him among those who have distinguished themselves by scientific research, or deep theological knowledge, yet we may inscribe upon his tombstone, "Here lies a man whom God delighted to honor as the instrument of saving many sinners from the error of their ways." Through his energetic labors an impulse was given to the work of God in this country which has been felt through all our borders from that day to this; and hence his name may be fitly associated with those who were honored of God in building up our Zion as on a hill, from which light has been reflected on thousands who have been brought under its holy and happy influence.

Another distinguished, though humble and unpretending servant of God was taken this year from the militant to the church triumphant. Francis Acuff, born in Virginia, and brought up in Tennessee, has left a name in the west which will be remembered with grateful recollections while Methodism shall continue to live and flourish in that country. He resided in Holstein, Tennessee; and though only three years in the traveling ministry, yet such were his talents and indefatigable labors in the work, that he won the confidence and affection of the people for whose salvation he devoted his strength; they lamented over his untimely grave as over the remains of a departed friend. He had only attained to the twenty-fifth year of his age when he was cut down as a flower, in the morning, and taken to ripen in the paradise of God.

As an instance of the strong attachment which was felt by those who were best acquainted with this man of God, I will give the following anecdote on the authority of the author of "Short Sketches of Revivals of Religion in the Western Country." An Englishman by the name of William Jones, on his arrival in Virginia, was sold for his passage. He served his time, four years, with fidelity, conducted himself with propriety, and was finally brought to the knowledge of the truth by means of Methodist preaching. As he had been greatly blessed under the preaching of Mr. Acuff, when he heard of his death, Billy, as he was called, determined to visit his grave. Though he had to travel a long distance through the wilderness, in which he had heard that the Indians often killed people by the way, yet his great desire to visit the grave of his friend and pastor impelled him forward, believing that the Lord in whom he trusted was able to protect him from savage cruelty, and provide for his wants. "When I came to the rivers," said he, "I would wade them, or if there were ferries they would take me over, and when I was hungry the travelers would give me a morsel of bread. When I came to Mr. Greene's, in Madison county, I inquired for our dear brother Acuff's grave. The people looked astonished, but directed me to it. I went to it, felt my soul happy, kneeled down, shouted over it, and praised the Lord!" Such a mark of strong affection in a simple follower of Jesus Christ speaks volumes in favor of the man over whose grave those grateful recollections were so piously indulged.

Another of

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