

From the Conference of 1773 to the Commencement of the War in 1776

by Nathan Bangs

The sermon describes the significance of the conference of 1773 and its impact on the spread of Methodism in America, highlighting the importance of discipline and the revival of godliness in Virginia.

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:7, Matthew 5:9, Acts 2:4, Romans 12:18, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:2, Colossians 3:14, 1 Timothy 2:1, James 3:18, 1 Peter 3:11

Topics: "Revival History", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

Nathan Bangs preaches about the remarkable revival of religion in America from 1773 to 1776, highlighting the powerful work of God in transforming sinners into pious believers. The work spread through various counties, leading to the conversion of many souls and the establishment of new societies. Despite suspicions and opposition, the preachers remained focused on the work of God, emphasizing the importance of unity, peace-making, and purity in the midst of political tensions and hostilities.

Transcript

From the conference of 1773 to the commencement of the war in 1776

We have seen that up to this period no regular conference had been held, but that the business had been transacted at their quarterly meetings. On the arrival of Mr. Rankin with powers to act as general assistant, a conference was convened in the city of Philadelphia, July 4, 1773. This being the first regular conference ever held in America, I think it proper to give the entire minutes as they were taken down and afterward published.

"The following queries were proposed to every preacher: --

"1. Ought not the authority of Mr. Wesley and that conference to extend to the preachers and people in America, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland?

Answer Yes.

2. Ought not the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, as contained in the minutes, to be the sole rule of our conduct, who labor in the connection with Mr. Wesley, in America?

Answer Yes.

3. If so, does it not follow, that if any preachers deviate from the minutes, we can have no fellowship with them till they change their conduct?

Answer Yes.

The following rules were agreed to by all the preachers present: --

Every preacher who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley and the brethren who labor in America, is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper.

All the people among whom we labor to be earnestly exhorted to attend the Church, and to receive the ordinances there; but in a particular manner to press the people in Maryland and Virginia to the observance of this minute.

No person or persons to be admitted into our love-feasts oftener than twice or thrice, unless they become members; and none to be admitted to the society meetings more than thrice.

None of the preachers in America to reprint any of Mr. Wesley's books, without his authority (when it can be gotten) and the consent of their brethren.

Robert Williams to sell the books he has already printed, but to print no more, unless under the above restrictions.

Every preacher who acts as an assistant, to send an account of the work once in six months to the general assistant.

Question 1. How are the preachers stationed?

Answer New York, Thomas Rankin, to change in four months [with Shadford]; Philadelphia, George Shadford, to change four months [with Rankin]; New Jersey, John King, William Watters; Baltimore, Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, Abraham Whitworth, Joseph Yearbry; Norfolk, Richard Wright; Petersburg, Robert Williams.

Question 2. What numbers are there in the society?

Answer New York, 180; Philadelphia, 180; New Jersey, 200; Maryland, 500; Virginia, 100; [Total] 1160; (Preachers 10.)

It is highly probable that some of the preachers had manifested an unwillingness to submit entirely to the authority of Mr. Wesley in all matters, and hence the reason and seasonableness of the above minute in respect to yielding obedience to his authority. That Mr. Strawbridge and some others had evinced a disposition so far to depart from Wesleyan Methodism as to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, we know; and that it required all the authority of Mr. Asbury to restrain them from this practice heretofore, is evident from a former quotation from his Journal. To prevent a repetition of this disorderly practice, it seems the above prohibitory rule was adopted in reference to this subject.

In the above stations we find the name of William Watters, who was the first American preacher who joined the itinerancy, and he continued a laborious and successful laborer in his Master's work until the

day of his death.

It seems that, notwithstanding the vigilance of Mr. Asbury in correcting those abuses which had arisen from the laxity with which discipline had been administered, many disorders still existed for which an adequate remedy had not been provided. These things had been communicated to Mr. Wesley, and he therefore clothed Mr. Rankin with powers superior to any which had been vested in his predecessors in office, in the faithful exercise of which he set himself to purifying the societies from corrupt members, and restoring things to order. It was soon found that the discharge of this duty, however painful, instead of abridging the influence of ministerial labor, greatly extended it, and exerted a most salutary effect upon the societies. Speaking of the comfort he derived from the arrival of Mr. Rankin, Mr. Asbury says, "Though he will not be admired as a preacher, yet as a disciplinarian he will fill his place."

Having thus adopted the Wesleyan plan of stationing the preachers, and each man going to his work in the name of the Lord, the cause of reformation began to spread more extensively than heretofore; new societies were formed in many places, the circuits were enlarged, and a more regular administration of discipline secured. On the eastern shore of Maryland, particularly in the county of Kent, there was a considerable revival of religion, by which many souls were brought to the "knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins." A class was formed at New Rochelle, about twenty miles from the city of New York. In Baltimore also there was an enlargement of the work, more especially at Fell's Point, where they commenced building a house of worship, which was the first erected in the city of Baltimore. Though Mr. Asbury was appointed to Baltimore, he by no means confined his labor to that place, but traveled extensively through various parts of Maryland, preaching every day, forming those who had been awakened to a sense of their sin and danger into classes, that they might the more easily help each other to work out their salvation. In consequence of these labors, the work of religion spread among the people.

In the city of New York, it appears that Mr. Rankin met with some opposition in his endeavors to reduce the classes to order and regularity; but his steady perseverance overcame the obstacles thrown in his way, so that he succeeded in his pious designs. He also, as the general assistant, traveled as extensively as practicable, that he might take a general oversight of the work, and see that the rules by which they professed to be governed were suitably enforced.

In the beginning of 1774, the foundation of a house of worship was laid in Baltimore, known by the name of Light Street church, and another in Kent county, about nine miles below Chestertown, called the Kent meeting-house. This latter house was not erected without considerable opposition. After the frame was prepared for raising, some wicked persons came in the night and broke the rafters; but the workmen soon repaired the loss, the house was finished, and the work of the Lord prospered abundantly.

1774. On the 25th of May, of this year, the second conference was held in the city of Philadelphia. From the minutes it appears that seven preachers, namely, William Duke, John Wade, Daniel Ruff, Edward Drumgole, Isaac Rollins, Robert Lindsay, and Samuel Spragg were admitted on trial; and William Watters, Abraham Whitworth, Joseph Yearbry, Philip Gatch, and Philip Ebert were admitted into full connection; most of these, it seems, had been raised up in America during the past two years, for we find no mention of any of their names, except William Watters, Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yearbry, among the stations the preceding year. This year, it seems, they adopted the practice introduced into the conferences by Mr. Wesley and which has ever since been followed in this country, namely, that of examining the preachers' characters before the conference; for we find the following question and answer: -- "Quest. Are there any objections to any of the preachers? Answer They were examined one by one."

The following are the stations and numbers, and the rules which were agreed upon.

New York, Francis Asbury, to change in three months [with Rankin]; Philadelphia, Thomas Rankin, to change in three months [with Asbury]; Trenton, William Watters; Greenwich, Philip Ebert; Chester, Daniel Ruff, Joseph Yearbry, to change with Wm. Watters and P. Ebert; Kent, Abraham Whitworth; Baltimore, George Shadford, Edward Drumgole, Richard Webster, Robert Lindsay; Frederick, Philip Gatch, William Duke; Norfolk, John King; Brunswick, John Wade, Isaac Rollins, Samuel Spragg.

All the preachers to change at the end of six months.

Question 6. What numbers are there in society?

Answer New York 222; Philadelphia 204; New Jersey 257; Chester 36; Baltimore 738; Frederick 175; Norfolk 73; Brunswick 218; Kent 150; [Total] 2073; (Preachers 17.)

This conference agreed to the following particulars: --

Every preacher who is received into full connection is to have the use and property of his horse, which any of the circuits may furnish him with.

Every preacher to be allowed six pounds Pennsylvania currency per quarter, and his traveling charges besides.

For every assistant to make a general collection at Easter, in the circuits where they labor; to be applied to the sinking of the debts on the houses, and relieving the preachers in want.

Wherever Thomas Rankin spends his time, he is to be assisted by those circuits."

From this, it appears that the number had increased 913, being nearly double to what they were the year before; and that they had seven additional preachers. This shows the beneficial influence of enforcing a Scriptural discipline, and adopting an extended method of preaching the gospel by a regular itinerancy.

In the beginning of this year, Messrs. Boardman and Pillmore left the continent for England; the former, who had endeared himself much to the people by his indefatigable labors and Christian deportment, never to return; the latter, Mr. Pillmore, soon after came back, was admitted and ordained as a minister in the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which he lived respected and beloved as a useful minister until his death. Mr. Boardman lived about eight years after his return to Europe, and then died in peace, leaving behind him a name that is "like precious ointment poured forth." It seems that Mr. Strawbridge did not continue in the regular itinerancy, as we do not find his name in the minutes of conference; the probability is, that he became disaffected on account of the opposition manifested to his administering the ordinances, to which he adhered with great pertinacity.

The Journal of Mr. Asbury for this year shows the steady manner in which he pursued his work. So far from confining himself to the cities of New York and Baltimore, in each of which he was stationed for six months, he traversed the country between the two places, as well as north and south of each; and he everywhere found multitudes who flocked to hear the word, and not a few received it with joy, and were formed into classes under the general rules. His example provoked others to like diligence, though some manifested a reluctance to leave the comforts of a city life for the more fatiguing labors of a country itinerant. The blessed effects of these labors were soon apparent. Among others who contributed largely

to the extension of this work, we must not forget to record the labors of Robert Williams, of whom Mr. Asbury says in his Journal, "He is a singular man, but honest in his intentions, and sincerely engaged for the prosperity of the work." In the same connection he says, "I met brother W. from Virginia, who gave me a great account of the work of God in these parts; five or six hundred souls justified by faith, and five or six circuits formed, so that we now have fourteen circuits in America, and about twenty-two preachers are required to supply them."

It seems that in the early part of this year, Mr. Williams penetrated into Virginia, and finally succeeded in extending the work from Petersburg south, over the Roanoke River, some distance into South Carolina; and from the conference three preachers, John King, John Wade, and Isaac Rollins, were sent to his help. Toward the close of the year, a most remarkable revival of godliness was the effect of their united labors, which terminated as above related by Mr. Asbury.

Such were the indefatigable labors of Mr. Asbury, his constant preaching, his exposures by day and night, that he finally sunk under them, and was obliged to take to his bed, and submit to medical treatment. So feeble was he, that he says, for nine days he was not able even to write in his Journal. "My friends," says he, "were very kind, and expecting my death, they affectionately lamented over me." The Lord, however, blessed the means prescribed for his recovery, so that in about three weeks from the time of his confinement, he was able to resume those labors in which his soul delighted. The latter part of this year he spent in Baltimore and the adjoining settlements, in all which places he enjoyed much of the presence of God, and often witnessed the displays of his power in the awakening and conversion of sinners.

1775. -- On the 17th of May of this year, the third conference was held in the city of Philadelphia. Of this conference, Mr. Asbury says that it sat from Wednesday to Friday, "with great harmony and sweetness of temper." This record to the good temper exemplified in the conference is made with a view to show that, notwithstanding some difficulties had occurred between Mr. Rankin and Mr. Asbury, they were not of that serious nature which went to interrupt the harmony of their counsels. To a difference of judgment between them, Mr. Asbury alludes in several places, by which it appears that, in his opinion, Mr. Rankin assumed too much authority over the preachers and people.

In consequence of this assumption of power, Mr. Rankin exposed himself to the censures of many of his brethren, and to the remonstrances of Mr. Asbury, as it tended, in his opinion, to alienate the affections of the people from their preachers. These things laid the foundation for those complaints against Mr. Asbury which were transmitted to Mr. Wesley, and afterward became the cause of much of that uneasiness which will be noticed hereafter. Such errors of judgment may very well exist among the best of men, without at all detracting from their moral worth or Christian character, and may even be overruled by our heavenly Father for the general good of his church. The sternness of character manifested by Mr. Rankin, while it sustained him in the rigorous exercise of discipline, was not so exactly suited to the genius of the American people as was the more gentle yet equally firm disposition of Mr. Asbury.

The numbers returned in society were 3,148, by which it appears that the increase had been 1,075. Strong symptoms of a war between the colonies and the mother country now began to be manifested in different parts of the American settlements, by which the minds of the people were much agitated on political subjects; and as all the leading Methodist preachers were from England, no little suspicion, however groundless, was entertained respecting the purity of their motives. That most of these were strongly biased in favor of their mother country seems reasonable to suppose; nor are they to be blamed for this feeling, when we consider how natural it is for all men to feel an attachment for the land of their nativity.

These suspicions, however, though not yet exemplified in any open acts of hostility, tended in some places to circumscribe the usefulness of the preacher, and to make those of them who came from England turn their attention toward home.

Notwithstanding these unpropitious circumstances, the conference proceeded in their customary work, passing a resolution to raise a yearly collection for general purposes, and making out the stations of the preachers, which were now increased to nineteen in number, distributed among the several circuits. Among other things which they did, was passing the following resolution, which shows their apprehensions respecting the political state of the country, and their pious concern for the prosperity of the work of God. They appointed "a general fast for the prosperity of the work, and for the peace of America, on Tuesday the 18th of July."

This year, Mr. Asbury was appointed to labor in Norfolk, state of Virginia, where, he says, he found "about thirty persons in society, but they had no class meetings," and were therefore in rather a disorderly state. Finding nothing better for a "preaching house than an old shattered building, which had formerly been a play-house," after laboring a few days alternately in Norfolk and Portsmouth, he persuaded the brethren to issue a subscription paper for building a house of worship, which, however, went tardily on for the present. As usual, Mr. Asbury omitted no opportunity of doing good to the souls of the people; and for this purpose he made frequent excursions into the country, where he generally found a people willing to hear the word of reconciliation. Having been invited to visit Brunswick circuit, where the Lord was pouring out his Spirit upon the labors of Mr. Shadford, on the 2d of November he arrived there, and says, "God is at work in this part of the country, and my soul catches the holy fire." On meeting with Mr. Shadford, he says, "My spirit is much united to him, and our meeting was like that of David and Jonathan."

There was indeed a remarkable revival of the work of God in this part of the country, chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Shadford. Trembling and shaking would seize upon sinners under the word, and in some instances they were so affected as to fall lifeless upon the floor or upon the ground. These were strange appearances in this country, and some, of course, looked on with astonishment at these manifest displays of the power and grace of God. The consequence of this great and extensive revival was an addition to the societies of upward of 1800 members.

Mr. Robert Williams, who was among the first Methodist preachers that visited Virginia, had married, and located at a place between Norfolk and Suffolk, where he ended his days in peace, on the 26th September 1775. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Asbury, who says of him, that he "has been a very useful man, and the Lord gave him many seals to his ministry. Perhaps no man in America has been an instrument of awakening so many souls as God has awakened by him."

As the revival above spoken of was one of the first of the kind in this part of the country, and was, in many respects, very remarkable in its character, I think it proper to give here an account of it as I find it inserted in Mr. Asbury's Journal. The writer of this account was the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, a minister of the English Church, who participated largely in that revival, and contributed by his labors to its advancement, by favoring the Methodist preachers, and administering the ordinances to such as desired them. Had all the clergy of that day manifested a kindred spirit, how much more extensively would the work have prevailed!

A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN VIRGINIA. IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

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

what I have received from men on whose judgment and veracity I can fully depend.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"In the year 1772, the revival was more considerable, and extended itself in some places for fifty or sixty miles around. It increased still more in the following year, and several sinners were truly converted to God. In spring, 1774, it was more remarkable than ever. The word preached was attended with such energy that many were pierced to the heart. Tears fell plentifully from the eyes of the hearers, and some were constrained to cry out. A goodly number were gathered in this year, both in my parish and in many of the neighboring counties. I formed several societies out of those which were convinced or converted; and I found it a happy means of building up those that had believed, and preventing the rest from losing their convictions.

In the counties of Sussex and Brunswick, the work from the year 1773 was chiefly carried on by the labors of the people called Methodists. The first of them who appeared in these parts was Mr. R. W., who, you

know, was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the gospel: he was greatly blessed in detecting the hypocrite, razing false foundations, and stirring believers up to press after a present salvation from the remains of sin. He came to my house in the month of March, in the year 1773. The next year others of his brethren came, who gathered many societies both in this neighborhood, and in other places, as far as North Carolina. They now began to ride the circuit, and to take care of the societies already formed, which was rendered a happy means both of deepening and spreading the work of God.

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

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

"During this whole winter, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out in a manner we had not seen before. In almost every assembly might be seen signal instances of divine power, more especially in the meetings of the classes. Here many old stout-hearted sinners felt the force of truth, and their eyes were open to discover their guilt and danger. The shaking among the dry bones was increased from week to week: nay, sometimes ten or twelve have been deeply convinced of sin in one day. Some of these were in great distress, and when they were questioned concerning the state of their souls, were scarce able to make any reply but by weeping and falling on their knees, before all the class, and earnestly soliciting the prayers of God's people. And from time to time he has answered these petitions, set the captives at liberty, and enabled them to praise a pardoning God in the midst of his people. Numbers of old and gray-headed, of middle-aged persons, of youth, yea, of little children, were the subjects of this work. Several of the latter we have seen painfully concerned for the wickedness of their lives, and the corruption of their nature. We have instances of this sort from eight or nine years old. Some of these children are exceeding happy in the love of God; and they speak of the whole process of the work of God, of their convictions, the time when, and the manner how they obtained deliverance, with such clearness as might convince an atheist that this

is nothing else but the great power of God.

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

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

"The second day of the quarterly meeting a love-feast was held. As soon as it began, the power of the Lord came down on the assembly like a rushing mighty wind; and it seemed as if the whole house was filled with the presence of God. A flame kindled and ran from heart to heart. Many were deeply convinced of sin; many mourners were filled with consolation: and many believers were so overwhelmed with love that they could not doubt but God had enabled them to love him with all their heart.

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

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

One of the doctrines, as you know, which we particularly insist upon, is that of a present salvation; a salvation not only from the guilt and power, but also from the root of sin; a cleansing from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of God; a going on to perfection, which we sometimes define by loving God with all our hearts. Several who had believed were deeply sensible of their want of this. I have seen both men and women, who had long been happy in a sense of God's

pardoning love, as much convicted on account of the remains of sin in their hearts, and as much distressed for a total deliverance from them, as ever I saw any for justification. Their whole cry was,

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

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

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

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

"To the Rev. Mr. M'R.

"May 3, 1776.

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

" 'May 3, 1776

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

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

" 'May 7, 1776

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" 'July 29, 1776

" 'Rev Sir, -- With unspeakable pleasure I acquaint you of the glorious revival of religion in our parts. It broke out at our last quarterly meeting, and has since wonderfully spread throughout the circuit. The time seems to be coming when we shall not need to teach every man his neighbor to know the Lord: for they daily know him from the least to the greatest, from little children to men of fourscore. Above seven years have I been exhorting my neighbors; but very few would hear. Now, blessed be God, there are few that will not hear. It is no strange thing for two or three to find the Lord at a class meeting: and at a Sunday meeting, although there was no preacher, ten, fifteen, yea, nearly twenty have been converted. At a place near me, thirty have found the Lord within eight days. It is common with us for men and women to fall down as dead under an exhortation, but many more under prayer, perhaps twenty a time. And some that have not fallen to the earth have shown the same distress, wringing their hands, smiting their breasts, and begging all to pray for them. With these the work is generally quick; some getting through in less than a week, some in two or three days; some in one, two, or three hours. Nay, we have an instance of one that was so indifferent as to leave her brethren at prayers and go to bed. But all at once she screamed out under a sense of her lost estate, and in less than fifteen minutes rejoiced in God her Saviour. And, blessed be God, many of these retain a sense of his favor. Many, who a few weeks ago were despisers and scoffers, are now happy in the Lord. Many old Christians, who were always full of doubts and fears, now walk in the light of his countenance. Some have a clear witness in themselves that they have given their whole hearts to God. O may God carry on his work among us, until we are all swallowed up in love!

T. S.'

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

" 'July 29, 1776

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Upon the whole, this has been a great, a deep, a swift, an extensively glorious work. Both the nature and manner of it have been nearly the same, wherever its benign influence reached. Where the greatest work was, where the greatest number of souls have been convinced and converted to God, there have been the most outcries, tremblings, convulsions, and all sorts of external signs. I took all the pains I could that these might be kept within bounds, that our good might not be evil spoken of. This I did, not by openly inveighing against them in the public assembly, but by private advices to local preachers and others, as opportunity would permit. This method had its desired effect, without putting a sword into the hands of the wicked. Wherever the contrary method has been taken, where these things have been publicly opposed, when they have been spoken against in promiscuous congregations, the effect has always been this: the men of the world have been highly gratified, and the children of God deeply wounded. The former have plumed

themselves as though they were the men who kept within due bounds, and those that had 'made so much ado about religion,' were no better than hot-brained enthusiasts. I cannot but think this has a great tendency to hinder the work of God. Indeed, if we thought that God wrought every thing irresistibly, we should not fear this. But we know the contrary: we know that as some things promote, so others hinder his work. I grant means should be used to prevent all indecency; but they should be used with great caution and tenderness, that the cure may be effected, if possible, without damping the work of God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following letter, which relates to the same work, was written some time after.

"To The Rev. Mr. Wesley

"June 24, 1778

"Rev. and Dear Sir, -- You have the narrative of the Rev. Mr. J. I send this as a supplement to it.

"At our little conference held in Philadelphia, May 1775, Mr. S. was appointed assistant for Brunswick circuit, in Virginia. He found there about eight hundred joined together, but in a very confused manner. Many of them did not understand the nature of meeting in class; and many of the classes had no leader. He resolved to begin in good earnest; and the preachers with him were like-minded. Their constant custom was, as soon as preaching was over, to speak to all the members of the society, one by one. If the society was large, one preacher spoke to a part, and he that came next, to the rest. By this means they learned more of our doctrine and discipline in a year than in double the time before. The fruit soon appeared the congregations swiftly increased, and many were pricked to the heart. Many that were a little affected desired to see the nature of meeting in class: and while one was speaking, either to those that were groaning for redemption, or those who had found peace with God, these were frequently cut to the heart, and sometimes enabled on the spot to praise a pardoning God. Nay, sometimes four, five, or six found peace with God before the meeting was over.

"The work of God thus increasing on every side, more preachers were soon wanting: and God raised up several young men, who were exceedingly useful as local preachers.

"After Mr. S. had been about eight months in the circuit, Mr. J. desired his parish might be included in it, that all who chose it might have the privilege of meeting in class, and being members of the society. He soon saw the salutary effects. Many that had but small desires before began to be much alarmed, and labored earnestly after eternal life. In a little time numbers were deeply awakened, and many tasted of the pardoning love of God. In a few months Mr. J. saw more fruit of his labors than he had done for many years. And he went on with the preachers hand in hand, both in doctrine and discipline.

"When Mr. S. took an account of the societies, before he came to the conference in 1776, they contained two thousand six hundred and sixty-four persons; to whom eighteen hundred were added in one year. Above a thousand of these had found peace with God; many of whom thirsted for all the mind that was in Christ. And divers believed God had 'circumcised their heart to love him with all their heart, and with all their soul.'

"This revival of religion spread through fourteen counties in Virginia, and through Bute and Halifax counties in North Carolina. At the same time we had a blessed outpouring of the Spirit in several counties bordering upon Maryland.

"Our conference was held at Baltimore Town, on the 22d of May. Here I received a letter from Mr. J., part of which I insert.

" 'May 11, 1776

" 'I praise God for his goodness, in so plentifully pouring out of his Spirit on men, women, and children. I believe threescore, in and near my parish, have believed, through grace, since the quarterly meeting. Such a work I never saw with my eyes. Sometimes twelve, sometimes fifteen, find the Lord at one class-meeting. I am just returned from meeting two classes. Much of the power of God was in each. -- My dear partner is now happy in God her Saviour. I clap my hands exulting, and praise God. Blessed be the Lord, that ever he sent you and your brethren into this part of his vineyard! Many children, from eight to twelve years old, are now under strong convictions; and some of them are savingly converted to God. I was much comforted this morning at the W. O. Chapel. The people there are of a truly teachable spirit; those particularly who profess to have obtained the pure love of God, They are as little children. When you consider how the work is spreading on every side, you will readily excuse me from being at your conference.' "

Such a work as this, perhaps unexampled in the history of these provinces, at such a time, when they were upon the eve of a bloody contest, was matter of great encouragement to all concerned, as well as of lively gratitude to Almighty God. In the course of the summer, Mr. Rankin paid a visit to this part of the country. Being somewhat stern in his manners, and not accustomed to witness such awful displays of the power of God, he made an effort to still the people; and though he succeeded, in some measure, while in his presence, yet no sooner had he withdrawn from among them, than they broke forth in loud cries for mercy, while others shouted aloud the praises of God; and although some tincture of enthusiasm appeared among the young converts, in giving vent to the joys of their first love, it is evident that in general it was a genuine work of God, as was afterward manifested by its fruits.

The following appears to be Mr. Rankin's own account of these wonderful things: --

"Sunday 30. I was comforted by the sight of my dear brother S. But I was weak in body through riding so far in extreme heat, and much exercised in mind and did not know how I should be able to go through the

labor of the day. We went to the chapel at ten, where I had liberty of mind and strength of body beyond my expectation. After preaching I met the society, and was more relieved both in body and mind. At four in the afternoon I preached again, from 'I set before thee an open door, and none can shut it.' I had gone through about two-thirds of my discourse, and was bringing the words home to the present now, when such power descended that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God. The chapel was full of white and black, and many were without that could not get in. Look wherever we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes, and faces bathed in tears; and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God and the Lord Jesus Christ. My voice was drowned amid the groans and prayers of the congregation. I then sat down in the pulpit; and both Mr. S. and I were so filled with the divine presence that we could only say, This is none other than the house of God! this is the gate of heaven! Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven, wives their husbands: parents their children, and children their parents: brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. In short, those who were happy in God themselves were for bringing all their friends to him in their arms. This mighty effusion of the Spirit continued for above an hour: in which time many were awakened, some found peace with God, and others his pure love. We attempted to speak or sing again and again: but no sooner we began than our voices were drowned. It was with much difficulty that we at last persuaded the people, as night drew on, to retire to their own homes.

"Tuesday, July 2. I rode with Mr. S. to Mr. J.'s who, with Mrs. I., received us with open arms. I preached the next day, not far from his house, to a deeply attentive congregation. Many were much affected at the preaching; but far more at the meeting of the society. Mr. J. himself was constrained to praise God aloud for his great love to him and to his people.

"Sunday 7. I preached at W.'s chapel, about twenty miles from Mr. J.'s. I intended to preach near the house, under the shade of some large trees. But the rain made it impracticable. The house was greatly crowded, and four or five hundred stood at the doors and windows, and listened with unabated attention. I preached from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones: "And there was a great shaking." I was obliged to stop again and again, and beg of the people to compose themselves. But they could not: some on their knees, and some on their faces, were crying mightily to God all the time I was preaching. Hundreds of Negroes were among them, with the tears streaming down their faces. The same power we found in meeting the society, and many were enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable. In the cool of the evening I preached out of doors, and many found an uncommon blessing.

"Every day the ensuing week I preached to large and attentive congregations. Indeed the weather was violently hot, and the fatigue of riding, and preaching so often, was great. But God made up all this to me by his comfortable presence. Thursday 11, I preached to a large congregation at the preaching house near Mr. J.'s. After preaching at several places on Friday and Saturday, on Sunday, 14, I came to Mr. B.'s, where I preached and met the society. The congregation was, as before, abundantly larger than the chapel could contain. And we had almost such a day as fourteen days ago: only attended with a more deep and solemn work. What a work is God working in this corner of Mr. J.'s parish! It seemed as if all the country for nine or ten miles around were ready to turn to God.

"In the evening I rode to Mr. S.'s, and found a whole family fearing and loving God. Mr. S., a sensible and judicious man, had been for many years a justice of the peace. By hearing the truth as it is in Jesus, he and his wife first, and then all his children, had attained that peace that passeth all understanding. He observed, 'How amazing the change was which had been lately wrought in the place where he lived! That before the Methodists came into these parts, when he was called by his office to attend the court, there

was nothing but drunkenness, cursing, swearing, and fighting most of the time the court sat: whereas now nothing is heard but prayer and praise, and conversing about God, and the things of God.'

"Monday 15. I rode toward North Carolina. In every place the congregations were large, and received the word with all readiness of mind. I know not that I have spent such a week since I came to America. I saw everywhere such a simplicity in the people, with such a vehement thirst after the word of God, that I frequently preached and continued in prayer till I was hardly able to stand. Indeed there was no getting away from them while I was able to speak one sentence for God.

"Sunday 21. I preached at Roanoke chapel, to more than double of what the house would contain. In general, the white people were within the chapel, and the black people without. The windows being all open, every one could hear, and hundreds felt the word of God. Many were bathed in tears, and others rejoicing with joy unspeakable. When the society met, many could not refrain from praising God aloud. I preached to a large company in the afternoon, and concluded the day with prayer and thanksgiving.

"Tuesday 23. I crossed the Roanoke River, and preached at a chapel in North Carolina. And I preached every day to very large and deeply attentive congregations: although not without much labor and pain, through the extreme heat of the weather.

On Tuesday 30 was our quarterly meeting. I scarce ever remember such a season. No chapel or preaching house in Virginia would have contained one-third of the congregation. Our friends, knowing this, had contrived to shade with boughs of trees a space that would contain two or three thousand persons. Under this, wholly screened from the rays of the sun, we held our general love-feast. It began between eight and nine on Wednesday morning, and continued till noon. Many testified that they had 'redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins.' And many were enabled to declare that it had 'cleansed them from all sin.' So clear, so full, so strong was their testimony, that while some were speaking their experience hundreds were in tears, and others vehemently crying to God for pardon or holiness.

About eight our watch-night began. Mr. J. preached an excellent sermon: the rest of the preachers exhorted and prayed with divine energy. Surely, for the work wrought on these two days, many will praise God to all eternity. T. R."

We have alluded to the suspicions which had been awakened in the minds of some respecting the designs of the English preachers. Mr. Wesley, who was ever alive to every thing which would seem to have a bearing upon the work of God, foreseeing the difficulties which would be likely to arise in America, on account of the approaching hostilities, thus addressed them in a letter dated,

"London, March 1, 1775.

"My Dear Brethren, -- You were never in your lives in so critical a situation as you are at this time. It is your part to be peace-makers: to be loving and tender to all; but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side. Keep yourselves pure; do all you can to help and soften all; but beware how you adopt another's jar.

"See that you act in full union with each other: this is of the utmost

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/nathan-bangs/from-the-conference-of-1773-to-the-commencement-of-the-war-in-1776/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net