

The General Conference of 1804, and of the Annual Conferences of 1804-5-6-7

by Nathan Bangs

Nathan Bangs' sermon discusses the significant decisions and impacts of the General Conference of 1804 on the Methodist Church's governance and growth amidst challenges and revivals.

Scripture: Psalm 27:1, Isaiah 6:8, Philippians 1:21, 2 Timothy 4:7

Topics: "Church Growth", "Perseverance"

Description

The preacher, Bishop Asbury, faced challenges and hardships as he traveled extensively to attend seven conferences alone, covering thousands of miles in ten months. Despite wearisome days and lodging in taverns, he persevered in spreading the work of God throughout the continent. Methodism was introduced into new territories like Missouri and Savannah, where previous attempts had failed, resulting in the establishment of circuits and the growth of church members. The death of Bishop Whatcoat was mourned, highlighting his exemplary life of faith, charity, and devotion to God. The year also saw the rejection of a proposal for a General Conference to strengthen the episcopacy, and the withdrawal of preachers from the Church.

Transcript

The fourth regular General Conference assembled in the city of Baltimore, on the 7th day of May, 1804. There were present one hundred and twelve members, but as the seats of five were, on examination, declared vacant, because the persons were not legally there, the conference was composed of one hundred and seven members, namely, four from New England, three from the Western, five from South Carolina, seventeen from Virginia, twenty-nine from Baltimore, forty one from Philadelphia, and twelve from New York Conference.¹

Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat were present as presidents of the General Conference.

After being organized, a motion was made and carried, that the conference proceed in the onerous task of reading and revising, in consecutive order, the entire Discipline, requiring, as before, that no old rule should be abolished without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present; but a motion to require a vote of two thirds to establish a new rule was lost. The right of fixing the times for holding the annual conferences was invested in the bishops, provided they should allow each conference to sit at least one week, while the places were to be fixed by the conferences themselves.

The following provision was made in regard to presidents of conferences in the absence of a bishop: "But if there are two or more presiding elders belonging to one conference, the bishop or bishops may, by letter or otherwise, appoint the president; but if no appointment be made, or the presiding elder appointed do not attend, the conference shall, in either of these cases, elect the president, by ballot, without debate, from among the presiding elders."

To restrict the power of the presiding elders in the employment of preachers whose application to be received into the traveling ministry had been rejected by an annual conference, it was ordered that such should not be employed without the consent of the conference, "under certain conditions."

Provision was also made for the trial of a bishop in the interval of the General Conference, making it obligatory on the accusers to present their accusation in writing, a copy of which must be given to the accused himself. The bishops were, at this conference, prohibited from allowing any preacher to remain more than two years successively in any circuit or station. This has been a standing rule to the present time.

As the articles of religion were adopted under the reign of the "old confederation," the article respecting the government of the United States recognized the "Act of Confederation," as the general bond of union to the several states. At this conference the phraseology of that article was altered so as to recognize the Constitution of the United States as the supreme law of the land, and the federal union of the states as a to "sovereign and independent nation" which "ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction."

The rule which made expulsion from the Church a penalty for marrying unawakened persons, was so altered at this conference, as to require that such should be put back on trial, with an explanatory note, stating that they did not prohibit persons from uniting in matrimony with those who are not members of our Church, provided they have the form and are seeking the power of godliness.

The Book Concern, which had hitherto been carried on in the city of Philadelphia, was removed to the city of New York, and Ezekiel Cooper was reappointed editor and general book steward, and John Wilson his assistant.

A rule was passed recommending to the annual conferences to restrict our preachers from improper publications, making it obligatory on them to submit their manuscripts to the book committee at New York, or to their annual conference.

It was ordered that each quarterly meeting conference should appoint a secretary to take down its proceedings, in a book to be kept by one of the stewards of the circuit.

It was ordered at this conference that the Discipline should be divided into two parts, the first part to comprehend the spiritual, and the second the temporal economy; and the spiritual part was directed to be printed separately, more especially for the benefit of the colored members of the Church at the south.

It seems that in the address of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to our General Conference, they earnestly solicited the return of Dr. Coke, whose labors among them they highly appreciated, more particularly in the missionary department of their work. This subject was referred to a committee to consider and report thereon, and they finally agreed to the following, which was concurred in by the conference: --

"Dr. Coke shall have leave from this General Conference to return to Europe, agreeably to the request of the European Conferences, provided he shall hold himself subject to the call of three of our annual conferences to return when he is requested, but at farthest, that he shall return, if he lives, to the next General Conference."

In conformity to this resolution, the following letter was addressed to the British Conference: --

Very Dear and Respected Brethren: -- Your very kind and affectionate address, from your Manchester Conference, dated August 5, 1803, was presented to us by our mutual friend and brother, Dr. Coke. We always have received, and hope we ever shall receive such addresses from our European brethren, with the most cordial sentiments of Christian friendship; for it is our ardent wish that the European and American Methodists may improve and strengthen the bonds of Christian union, and, as far as possible, reciprocally build each other up in the great and glorious work, in which they are both so arduously employed. And we pray God, that our adorable Jehovah and Redeemer may graciously be pleased to prosper both you and us in the blessed work of proclaiming the honor of our God, and of saving the precious souls of mankind.

We truly rejoice in the information given us, that the gospel of Christ continues to prevail among you; and that the mission among the native Irish is marked with hopeful and flattering prospects. Also we are much pleased with the account of your prosperous mission in the principality of Wales, in the Welsh language. Whenever we hear of the prosperity of Zion and of the success of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, it gives us a pleasure far superior to our powers of expression: hence we are ready, upon such occasions, with overflowing hearts of love and gratitude, to proclaim with shouts of joy and gladness, 'Not unto us, not unto us; but unto the Lord' be more that human ascriptions of praise, of honor, and glory! May the united labors of your hands be prospered more and more!

We also feel peculiar satisfaction at the information of the union and harmony which subsist among you in doctrine and discipline and that you, our elder brethren, are steadfast and persevering in the divine articles of the essential divinity and efficacious atonement of Jesus Christ, and of all the benefits and privileges flowing from, and connected with the same; we cordially embrace the same important truths, and are determined to stand fast and immovable in the support of this essential foundation of all our hopes.

The Lord has greatly prospered our labors in these United States. We have at present increased to considerably more than one hundred thousand members; and the work still goes on in a great and glorious manner. Our brethren are much in the spirit of active perseverance in this blessed work; and, by the blessing of God, our hearts are cemented together in love, and are bound in the ties of harmony and unity.

With respect to our much-esteemed friend, and beloved brother, Dr. Coke, he arrived among us last autumn, and was received by us with the sincerest sentiments of respect and affection. Since he came into these states, he has traveled about three thousand miles, visiting our principal societies, and preaching to crowded assemblies of our citizens. His time, we trust, has been profitably and acceptably spent among us, and we hope agreeably to himself. Your request for his return was taken into our most serious and solemn consideration; and, after a full and deliberate examination of the reasons which you assigned in favor of his return, we have concluded that there is a probability of his being more eminently useful at present, in the way you point out, than for us to retain him, especially as our beloved brother Asbury now enjoys better health than he did some years ago, and as we believe, with the assistance he

can receive from our esteemed brother Whatcoat, the work of superintending the Church and societies can be accomplished in the absence of Dr. Coke. We therefore have consented to the doctor's return to Europe, upon the express condition that he will return to us at any time, when three of our annual conferences shall call him, or at farthest, that he shall return to our next General Conference.

And now, dear brethren, we commend you to our common Lord, and to the word of his grace, hoping that you and we shall ever remain in the unity of the Spirit, and bonds of Christian and ministerial affection until we meet together around the throne of God. Pray for us. We are, very dear and much-respected brethren, truly and sincerely yours, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Signed by order, and in behalf of the General Conference,

"Francis Asbury, "Richard Whatcoat, "John Wilson, Secretary.

"Baltimore, May 23, 1804."

This year, for the first time, I find the boundaries of the several annual conferences fixed by the General Conference, and printed in the form of Discipline. They are as follows: --

The New England conference shall include the district of Maine, the Boston, New London, and Vermont districts.

The New York conference comprehends the New York, Pittsfield, Albany, and Upper Canada districts.

The Philadelphia conference shall include the remainder of the state of New York, all New Jersey, that part of Pennsylvania which lies on the east side of the Susquehanna River, except what belongs to the Susquehanna district, the state of Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and all the rest of the Peninsula.

The Baltimore conference shall include the remainder of Pennsylvania, the Western Shore of Maryland, the Northern Neck of Virginia, and the Greenbrier district.

The Virginia conference shall include all that part of Virginia which lies on the south side of the Rappahannock River and east of the Blue Ridge, and in that part of North Carolina which lies on the north side of Cape Fear River, except Washington, also the circuits which are situate on the branches of the Yadkin.

The South Carolina conference shall include the remainder of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

The Western conference shall include the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, and that part of Virginia which lies west of the great river Kanawha, with the Illinois and Natchez; provided, the bishops shall have authority to appoint other yearly conferences.

A bare inspection of the map of the United States will show the immense territory included in each of these conferences; and when it is recollected that the districts and circuits were proportionally large, it will be perceived that the preachers of those days were no "idle shepherds," but were emphatically laborers in this vast and fruitful field.

These, with the exception of some important verbal amendments, and some regulations in reference to the Book Concern, which will be noticed in another place, comprehended the doings of this conference. The conference closed its session in peace on the 23d of May, and the members returned to their itinerant labors with renewed ardor, determined to spend and be spent in the cause of Jesus Christ.

It appears from the records of those days, that the introduction of camp meetings added a new stimulus to the work of reformation, and put, as it were, new life and energy into the hearts of God's ministers and people. They were accordingly appointed in almost every part of our work, and were generally attended with most evident manifestations of the power and grace of God. It was estimated that about one thousand souls were brought from darkness to light, this year, at the various camp meetings which were held in the states of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York, besides those who were indirectly benefited by these meetings on their various circuits; for generally, the preachers and people returned from the camp meetings with their hearts fired and filled with the love of God, and were a means of carrying the sacred flame into their respective neighborhoods, where it was enkindled with fresh ardor, and burned with a steady blaze, consuming the sins of many a broken-hearted sinner.

But while these extraordinary meetings were exerting a hallowed influence upon the older states, and were therefore hailed particularly by the Methodists as instruments of great good to the souls of the people, those in Kentucky ran into such wild excesses in some instances, as to bring them into disrepute in the estimation of the more sober part of the community.

We have seen that some of the Presbyterian ministers were among the foremost in promoting these meetings, and in favoring the revivals which resulted from them. These, however, were opposed by many of their brethren, particularly those who held fast the doctrines of Calvinistic decrees, and blended with them the doctrine of irresistible grace, thereby aiding, indirectly, and without intending it, the fatalism of infidelity, within which the minds of many of the Kentuckians had been infected. Some of these ministers, in the judgment of those who have recorded the transactions of those days, were strangers to experimental religion, and therefore, when they undertook to instruct those awakened sinners who came to them for advice, they knew not how to meet their cases, nor how to adapt their instructions to the peculiar state of their minds. This created perplexity and confusion. Those whose souls were alive to God, by having received a baptism from above, were disgusted with the awkwardness of those spiritual advisers, and finally considered them to "physicians of no value." This led to disputings, and finally to a separation, which terminated in 1803 in the formation of what was called the "Springfield Presbytery." But these preachers, however sincere and fervent they might have been, did not surround themselves with those guards which are essential to the preservation of harmony, orthodoxy, and gospel order; and hence those who were licensed to preach by this presbytery, puffed up with their sudden elevation to office, and breathing in an atmosphere which inflated them with spiritual pride, threw off the restraints of a wholesome discipline, and soon proclaimed those destructive heresies which are subversive of all true religion. The Springfield Presbytery was dissolved in 1804, and some turned Quakers, and others ran into the wildest freaks of fanaticism. Hence originated those unseemly exercises so humiliating to recount, of jumping, dancing, jerking, barking, and rolling on the ground, by which these schismatics were at last distinguished and disgraced. And to finish the climax of absurdities, in the midst of this "confusion worse confounded," a company of Shaking Quaker preachers from the state of New York came among them with their new-fangled doctrines, and "drew away disciples" after them. Several of these dissentient ministers and quite a number of members were, by these means, drawn into this vortex of error and confusion.

Another thing which added to the evils so much to be deprecated by every friend to gospel order, was the introduction, by some men of eminent talents, and considerable influence, of the Socinian and Arian heresies. These, indeed, were the precursors, in some measure, of the evils we have mentioned, and tended, by their soft and subtle speculations, gradually to sap the foundation of the Christian's hope, and to prepare the way for that wild confusion by which many minds became bewildered. These things, as before stated, tended to bring camp meetings into disrepute in Kentucky, and not a little to strengthen the cause of skepticism -- an infidelity to which many were strongly inclined, and which always battens itself upon the foibles and faults of religious professors -- a sort of food exactly suited to the vitiated and voracious appetite of an unbelieving multitude.

But while these things were transacting among those who slid off from the mountain of gospel truth, the Methodists generally, and most of the Presbyterians who had favored these revivals, descried the danger from afar, and gave the alarm to their people. The latter, however, separated themselves from both the old Presbyterians, who were supposed to be defective in experimental religion, and too tenacious of the peculiarities of Calvinism, and from those wild fanatics we have already described, and established a community of their own under the jurisdiction of what has been called "The Cumberland Presbytery."² These have continued to increase in numbers and respectability to the present time, and no doubt have exerted a salutary religious influence within the sphere of their labors.

The Methodists, however, adhered to their standards, and promoted the cause of the revivals without involving themselves in the responsibility of those wild rhapsodies and unseemly gesticulations which hung on the skirts of the camp and other meetings in Kentucky. The union which had subsisted between the different denominations became, from various causes, weaker and weaker, until finally each, arranging itself under its own standard, and using those religious appliances which were considered lawful and expedient, endeavored to promote the cause of piety in its own peculiar way, without improperly interfering with its neighbor. And although, from the causes we have enumerated, camp meetings became unsavory in most places in Kentucky, their birthplace, they traveled into the new state of Ohio, and there displayed the banners of the cross with all that vigor and success which had marked their progress in Kentucky and Tennessee, and also without suffering a deterioration from the wild excesses heretofore deprecated. What added to the beneficial influence of these meetings in Ohio, and tended to diffuse the spirit of reformation among the people in these new settlements, was, that many who had caught the sacred flame in Kentucky, from 1803 to 1806, as if impelled by an invisible power, emigrated to Ohio; and while the Church was being sifted in Kentucky, and under the searching operation of a gospel discipline, much of the chaff was winnowed out, these pious emigrants were preparing a habitation for themselves and their children in a more congenial soil, better suited, from various circumstances, for the cultivation and growth of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

This year William Burke was the presiding elder of the Ohio district, and he contributed much by his labors and sacrifices to extend the Redeemer's kingdom in that newly-settled country. While William McKendree continued his labors in Kentucky, and exerted all his powers to check the progress of fanaticism which he saw afflicting the Church, as well as to confirm the wavering and the doubting, Mr. Burke, aided by several young men of zeal and perseverance, was carrying the spiritual warfare into the enemy's territories in Ohio, and thus was preparing the way of the Lord in that rising part of our country.

This year a strong effort was made to introduce Methodism into the town of Marietta. In many places in the adjoining settlements it had taken firm hold of the hearts of the people, and several flourishing circuits had been formed; but as yet no impression had been made upon the inhabitants in Marietta, the oldest town in

the state, and in which the Congregationalists held the religious sway. This year a camp meeting was appointed by the Rev. George Askins, on the public land in the immediate vicinity of the village; but though it was rendered a blessing to the people of God who assembled from a distance, no permanent impression appeared to be made on those for whom it was chiefly intended, and the meeting broke up with little hopes in the hearts of the preachers. They all agreed, however, to pray for an outpouring of the Spirit upon that place. The next year, under the superintendence of the Rev. Messrs. Jacob Young and George C. Light, another meeting was appointed, which was attended with the most blessed results; and among others who were made partakers of the grace of life was a professed disciple of Thomas Paine, by the name of Jonas Johnson. The change wrought in him was great and visible; and, being a most charming singer, by the exercise of his gift and his general deportment, he exerted great influence over others, and was instrumental of much good. He committed his infidel books to the flame, substituting in their place the Bible and Hymn book, and other religious books, and opened his house as well as his heart to the messengers of salvation. A class was soon formed of happy believers, which continued to flourish and increase in strength and numbers, and to exert a hallowed influence for many years on the surrounding population; and the church in Marietta, though at times suffering from the disaffection of some of its members, stands among her sister churches in Ohio as one of the stars to enlighten the minds of those who "sit in the land and shadow of death."

While these things were going on in the western states the Lord was not unmindful of other parts of his vineyard. As has already been related, by means of camp meetings, which may be considered as ushering in a new era in the history of revivals of religion, the work of God spread rapidly in many parts of the older states. In addition to the general notice already taken of those, we may remark that this year there was an encouraging revival in the city of Philadelphia; not less than one hundred souls had been converted to God, and brought into the fold of Christ, under the labors of Joshua Wells and his colleagues.

In Bedford, Amherst, and Campbell counties in Virginia, and some other places, under the labors of Stith Mead, the Lord poured out his Spirit, and more than eleven hundred souls were brought into gospel liberty in about six months.

In the province of Maine there was a gracious work of God in several places. This began at the Conference which was held in the town of Buxton, upward of forty souls having been born unto God during the conference. In Beth and Readfield the work of God prevailed to a considerable extent. In Mississippi there was a number brought to the knowledge of the truth.

This year Benjamin Young was sent as a missionary to Illinois, which at that time contained but few inhabitants, and these chiefly descendants of the French, who first settled in Kaskaskia and Cahokia in 1720. But though thus early explored by the French, and settlements commenced, the progress of the population in Illinois was extremely slow, as it is said that in 1800 the whole number of inhabitants was only two hundred and fifteen, and the territory was not erected into an independent state until 1818. Since that time, however, it has filled up with inhabitants within a surprising rapidity. The missionary so far succeeded in his labors that there were returned, on the minutes for the next year, sixty-seven members.

This year, also, Nathan Bangs [the author of this work -- DVM] solicited and obtained the appointment of a missionary to a new settlement on the River Thames,³ in Upper Canada. This place had long been on his mind as a promising field for missionary labor, and he had frequently offered himself to explore it in the name of the Lord, but his presiding elder objected, on account of the feeble state of his health and the unhealthiness of the climate.⁴

While at the conference in New York this year, he made known his desires and impressions to Bishop Asbury, and he appointed him a missionary to that place. He accordingly left the city of New York in the latter part of the month of June, went into Upper Canada by the way of Kingston, thence up the country along the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario to the Long Point circuit, and thence on through Oxford to the town of Delaware, on the River Thames. Here he lodged for the night in the last log hut in the settlement, and the next morning, as the day began to dawn, he arose and took his departure, and after traveling through a wilderness of forty-five miles, guided only by marked trees, he arrived at a solitary log house about sunset, weary, hungry, and thirsty, where he was entertained with the best the house could afford, which was some Indian pudding and milk for supper, and a bundle of straw for this bed. The next day, about twelve o'clock, he arrived at an Indian village on the north bank of the River Thames, the inhabitants of which were under the instructions of two Moravian missionaries. While there the Indians were called together for worship, which was performed in a very simple manner, by reading a short discourse, and singing a few verses of a hymn. The missionaries and the Indians treated him with great respect and affection, and seemed to rejoice in the prospect of having the gospel preached to the white settlements on the banks of the river below.

About 3 o'clock, P. M., he arrived at the first house in the settlement, when the following conversation took place between the missionary and a man whom he saw in the yard before the house. After the introductory salutation, the missionary inquired, "Do you want the gospel preached here?" After some deliberation, it was answered, "Yes, that we do. Do you preach the gospel?" "That is my occupation." "Alight from your horse, then, and come in, will you?" "I have come a great distance to preach the gospel to the people here, and it is now Saturday afternoon, tomorrow is the Sabbath, and I must have a house to preach in before I get off from my horse." After a few moments of consideration, he replied, "I have a house for you to preach in, provender for your horse, and food and lodging for yourself; and you shall be welcome to them all if you will dismount and come in." Thanking him for his kind offer, the missionary dismounted and entered the hospitable mansion in the name of the Lord, saying, 'Peace be to this house'. A young man mounted this horse and rode ten miles down the river, inviting the people to attend meeting at that house the next morning at ten o'clock, A. M.

At the time appointed the house was filled. When the missionary rose up, he told the people that whenever a stranger makes his appearance in a place the people are generally anxious to know who he is, whence he came, where he is going, and what his errand is among them. "In these things," said he, "I will satisfy you in few words." He then gave them a short account of his birth and education, of his conversion and call to the ministry, and the motives which induced him to come among them, and concluded in the following manner: "I am a Methodist preacher, and my manner of worship is to stand up and sing, and kneel in prayer; then I stand up and take a text and preach, while the people sit on their seats. As many of you as see fit to join me in this method, you can do so; but if not, you can choose your own method." When he gave out his hymn, they all arose, every man, woman, and child. When he kneeled in prayer, they all, without exception, kneeled down. They then took their seats, and he stood up and gave out his text, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" and he preached, as he thinks, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Having concluded his discourse, he explained to his audience his manner of preaching, by itinerating through the country, his doctrine, and how supported, &c. He then said, "All you who wish to hear any more such preaching, rise up" -- when every man, woman, and child stood up. He then told them they might expect preaching there again in two weeks.

Such a commencement, in a strange place, he considered as a token for good. He then sent on appointments through the settlements along down the river, which he filled in a manner similar to the above, and was everywhere received with great cordiality. He proceeded down the shore of Lake St. Clair, visited Sandwich, on the Canada side of the outlet of the lake, crossed over to Detroit,⁵ and preached in the council-house, thence to Fort Malden, and down the shore of Lake Erie, in a settlement made up of Americans, English, Scotch, Irish, and Dutch emigrants. The people everywhere flocked together to hear the word.

A more destitute place he had never found. Young people had arrived to the age of sixteen who had never heard a gospel sermon, and he found a Methodist family who had lived in that county for seven years without hearing a sermon preached. But although the people generally were extremely ignorant of spiritual things, and very loose in their morals, they seemed ripe for the gospel, and hence received and treated God's messenger with great attention and kindness. He continued among them about three months, when he left them for the Niagara circuit, intending to return again soon, but was prevented. He was succeeded the next year by William Case, who was instrumental of great good to the souls of the people. Societies and a regular circuit were formed, which have continued to flourish and increase to the present time.

Forty-eight preachers located this year,⁶ two were expelled, and four, namely, William Ormond, Nathan Jarrett, Rezin Cash, and David Brown, had died; having fulfilled their ministry with fidelity, they ended their lives and labors in peace.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 89,603; Last Year: 81,617; Increase: 7,986 -- Colored This Year: 23,531; Last Year: 22,453; Increase: 1,078 -- Total This Year: 113,134; Last Year: 104,070 -- Increase: 9,064 -- Preachers This Year: 400; Last Year: 383; Increase: 17.

1805

There were seven annual conferences held this year; and the minutes were so arranged that the stations of the preachers, as well as the questions and answers, were printed under their respective conferences, so that it might be seen, at one view, what was the relative strength of each section of the work.

Nothing out of the ordinary course of things occurred this year. The work of God went gradually on, and much good was accomplished by means of the ministry of the word in various parts of the country. The camp meetings spread more and more in the middle and northern states, and they were generally attended with increasing interest; many, from the novelty of their character being induced to attend, who might otherwise never have heard the sound of the gospel; and not a few of these were brought to serious and solemn thought.

This year, for the first time, a camp meeting was held on the Bay of Quinte circuit in Upper Canada, which was attended by the writer, being the first he ever witnessed. It was held in an open field, and the exercises were accompanied by a mighty display of the awakening and converting, as well as sanctifying grace of God. On the third day of the meeting such awful sensations were produced under the preaching, that many stout-hearted sinners were bowed before the Lord, while the people of God were "filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory." A great revival of religion was the consequence of this blessed meeting, particularly in the Bay of Quinte and Augusta circuits, which eventuated in the conversion of hundreds of precious souls.

In the state of New York, among others, Croton had been selected as a suitable place for camp meetings, and for many years was considered as a hallowed spot on which the people of God from the city of New York, and the neighboring circuits, assembled for the worship and service of the triune God. And here many sinners have been born of the Spirit, who perhaps, otherwise might never have heard the joyful sound of salvation. It has, however, latterly been abandoned for another place.

This year the Church was called to mourn over the demise of some of her most eminent and useful ministers.

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

He preached his last sermon on New Year's day, in 1804. Its powerful and searching appeals were made a blessing to many; and long did some of the inhabitants of Natchez, which was the principal center of his labors in the west, remember his fervent prayers and faithful admonitions, particularly of those which accompanied this his last effort for their salvation. Being greatly esteemed by the people of God, as well as honored by all who could estimate true worth of character, they mourned over his departure from among them, as one mourneth over a son that served him. But while they beheld his calmness of spirit amid the sufferings of his body, his meekness, patience, and resignation to the divine will, as death approached, as well as the firm hope of everlasting life with which he anticipated his dissolution, they saw such indubitable evidences of the reality and excellence of Christianity, that they could but mingle with their sorrows the rejoicings of such as have hope in God. Infidelity itself shrunk from an inspection of his life, and recoiled at a view of that death which, though dark and gloomy in itself, was surrounded with so brilliant a light as to render the path into the other world luminous and inviting.

Such was Tobias Gibson -- such were his labors and sufferings -- such his deep devotion to the cause of Christ -- and such the peaceful and triumphant manner of his death -- that he has left a name and character behind him which "shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

Nicholas Watters was another of those burning and shining lights which, after having enlightened the world for a season, was this year extinguished by death. He was the brother of William Watters, the first Methodist preacher raised in America, and entered the itinerating ministry very soon after his younger brother. They were natives of Maryland, and after traveling and preaching with great acceptance in various parts of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, on the 10th of August, 1804, he ended his life and labors in peace, in the city of Charleston, South Carolina.

Wilson Lee also exchanged the labors of an itinerant minister for the crown of glory prepared for the faithful. He entered the traveling connection in 1784, and soon went into the western country, where he continued in the exercise of his ministry, exposed to all the hardships incident to an itinerating life in new settlements, until 1792, when he returned to the older states, and was stationed on Salem circuit, New Jersey. From 1801 to 1803 he filled the office of presiding elder in the Baltimore district. In 1804 he found himself unable longer to do the duties of an efficient preacher, and was accordingly returned on the superannuated list. In the month of April of this year, while at prayer by the bed of a sick person, he had a

sudden discharge of blood from the lungs; and from that time he lingered along the shores of immortality until October 11, 1804, when he died full of the hope of immortality, at the house of Walter Worthington, Ann Arundel county, in the state of Maryland.

Wilson Lee has been considered among the most laborious, successful, and self-denying of our early ministers. Though naturally of a slender constitution, he hazarded the hardships of an itinerating life in the western country, and exhibited there all that self-devotion, hardy enterprise, and untiring zeal in the cause of God, which distinguished those men of God who planted the standard of the cross among the early settlers of Tennessee and Kentucky. As he rode from one settlement to another, and from fort to fort, he was often exposed to the ferocious savages of the wilderness, as well as to hunger and thirst, to tiresome days and sleepless nights. But his unquenchable thirst for the salvation of souls, his strong faith in God, and his burning zeal to advance his holy cause, compelled him on in spite of all opposition, amid those "perils in the wilderness," rejoicing in being counted worthy to suffer a little in the cause of Christ. Here he spent the best of his days, and exhausted his strength in striving to win souls to Jesus Christ and when he returned to his brethren in the older settlements, with a constitution shattered by the intensity of his labors, it was only to share with them in pursuing the path of obedience to his divine Master, and filling up what remained of the afflictions of Christ. Professing the justifying and sanctifying grace of God, he bore all things with patience, exhibiting in his spirit an example of meekness and gentleness, in his personal appearance of neatness and plainness, and in all his deportment modesty united with a firmness of purpose in carrying into execution the discipline of the Church. He, indeed, left nothing he could do undone which he deemed essential to provoke the cause of God. But his ever active mind, his persevering industry in his Master's work, operated so powerfully upon the material vehicle, that "the weary wheels of life stood still," while in the meridian of his life and usefulness. He left, however, a name behind him, which was long remembered with affection and veneration by those of his contemporaries who survived him, and an example of devotedness to the cause of God which has stimulated many laborers to activity and diligence in cultivating their Master's vineyard.

Benjamin Jones, John Durbin, and Daniel Ryan, of each of whom it is said that he filled up his days in unselfishness, took their departure to a better world in the course of last year.

Two preachers, namely, Cyrus Stebbins and Roger Searl, withdrew from the connection, and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 95,629; Last Year: 89,603; Increase: 6,026 -- Colored This Year: 24,316; Last Year: 23,531; Increase: 785 -- Total This Year: 119,945; Last Year: 113,134 -- Increase: 6,811 -- Preachers This Year: 433; Last Year: 400; Increase: 33.

1806

The seven annual conferences were held this year in the usual manner.

This year a paper was submitted to the annual conferences, beginning with the Baltimore conference, by Bishop Asbury, in favor of calling a General Conference, of seven delegates from each annual conference, to meet in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1807, for the purpose of strengthening the episcopacy. This paper was referred to a committee, to consider and report thereon, and all the conferences, except Virginia, reported in favor of the proposition, and elected their delegates accordingly. The report set forth that, in consequence of the declining health of Bishop Whatcoat, who was then supposed to be near his end, the great extension of our work over the continent, and the debilitated state

of Bishop Asbury's health, it had become necessary to strengthen the episcopacy, and likewise to provide for a more permanent mode of church government. The report, therefore, recommended that each of the seven annual conferences should elect seven delegates to meet in the city of Baltimore the succeeding May, and that, when so met, they should have power to elect one bishop or more, and also to provide for a future delegated General Conference, whose powers should be defined and limited by constitutional restrictions; for hitherto the General Conference possessed unlimited powers over our entire economy, could alter, abolish, or add to any article of religion or any rule of Discipline. As this depository of power was considered too great for the safety of the Church and the security of its government and doctrine; and as the assembling of all the elders, few or many, at the option of each annual conference, made the representation very unequal; and moreover, if all came who had a right to a seat, involved a great amount of expense, time, and money, Bishop Asbury was exceedingly desirous, before he should depart hence, to provide a remedy for these evils; and this desire was strengthened and excited to action at this time by the concurrent views and wishes of most of the oldest preachers in the conferences.

It is proper to remark that this plan was concurred in, and the delegates were elected by all the annual conferences, until it was submitted to the Virginia conference, where, being warmly opposed by the Rev. Jesse Lee, who had great influence in that conference, a majority voted against its adoption, and so the whole plan was abandoned for the present -- for it was the understanding that, unless all the conferences concurred in the measure, it should not be carried into effect. This defeat of a favorite project, so feasible in itself, and apparently so necessary to the prosperity of the Church and the perpetuity of her institutions, was a source of great grief to Bishop Asbury, as well as of regret to those who had concurred in his views.

After the return of Dr. Coke to Europe, he saw fit to change his relation from a single to a married life. He had married a Christian lady of a large fortune, of deep piety, and of ardent devotion to the cause of God, which she evinced after her marriage by cheerfully consecrating her income to advance the missionary cause, in which she found her husband, Dr. Coke, so deeply and zealously engaged. This fact he thought proper to communicate to his American brethren, together with a proposition to become a resident in America, on the condition that the continent should be divided into two parts, one of which to be under his superintendency, and the other under the superintendency of Bishop Asbury. This proposition was submitted to the several annual conferences, and an answer was returned to the doctor congratulating him on his happy marriage, but declining to accept of his proposal for a division of the work in this country according to his request, referring, however, the final decision of the question to the next General Conference.

This year Methodism was introduced into some parts of Louisiana. This territory had been recently purchased by the United States from the French government for the sum of fifteen millions of dollars, and was admitted into the Union in 1811. The country was originally settled by the Spaniards and French, the descendants of whom, to distinguish them from other white inhabitants who have emigrated to the country, are called Creoles. In a large portion of the country the French language and manners prevailed, and their religious faith and practice were regulated by the Roman Catholic Church; but as the country is fast filling up by Anglo-Americans, and has been for some time connected with the Union as an integral part of the great American family, the language, manners, and institutions of Louisiana are becoming more and more conformed to those generally prevailing in other sections of the republic.

At the time, however, of which we now speak, there were comparatively but few American settlers in the country, and these were scattered thinly in the wilderness or mingled among the French and Spanish inhabitants. As to true religion, it was a stranger to most of the people. Those who made any profession at

all were chiefly of the Roman Catholic communion, and these were exceedingly loose in their morals, and much given up to sports and plays. The Sabbath was neglected as a day of sacred rest, or only attended to as a religious festival, alternately for devotional exercises and profane revelry. This being the general state of society as formed by the Creoles of the country, it could not be otherwise expected than that the emigrants who settled among them should gradually assimilate to their manners, modes of thinking and acting. Hence it is stated that profaneness of almost all sorts prevailed to an alarming extent, when, in 1806, the Rev. Elisha W. Bowman made his entrance among them as a messenger of the cross of Christ.

The Mississippi district was this year under the presiding eldership of the Rev. Learner Blackman, whose charge included Natchez, Wilkinson, Claiborne, Ochitta, and Appalouzas circuits, to the last of which Mr. Bowman was sent, with a view, if practicable, to form societies and establish regular preaching. He penetrated into some of the English settlements on the banks of the Mississippi River, amid many privations and hardships, and in some places was received by the people with gladness, while in others both himself and his message were rejected. He succeeded, however, in collecting congregations, and in forming a regular circuit, and a few classes, made up principally of members who had removed from the older states, who were happily reclaimed from their backslidden state by his instrumentality. The Rev. Thomas Lasley labored on the Ochitta circuit, which he found in a similar condition, in respect to religion and morals, to that of Appalouzas. The success with which they cultivated this distant and wild field of labor may be estimated from the fact that they returned forty members of the Church, and that they opened the way for the successful prosecution of the work by those who succeeded them, though it was some time before Methodism gained much influence in that part of the country.

This year a new district was formed, called the Lower Canada district, which included Montreal, Quebec, and Ottawa. I have before spoken of Montreal and Ottawa. Nathan Bangs [the author of this history -- DVM] volunteered his services for Quebec. After spending a few weeks in Montreal, to supply them until their preacher, Samuel Coate, arrived, he sailed down the River St. Lawrence for Quebec, and arrived there on Saturday morning. Having a few letters of introduction, he delivered them, and by great exertions succeeded in hiring a room and getting it seated that day, and he preached his first sermon on the Sabbath morning following to a tolerable congregation.

The majority of the people in Quebec were French Roman Catholics, bigotedly attached to all their peculiarities, and, of course, opposed to all Protestant innovations. The next in number and influence were the members of the Church of England, and next to them the Church of Scotland, all manifesting a deadly opposition to Methodism. He found, however, a few who received him cordially, though with much timidity. Among others he called on a Scotch missionary by the name of Dick, who had succeeded in collecting a small congregation, and was treated by him with much affection and respect.

It would doubtless be uninteresting to the reader to enter into a detail of the difficulties with which he had to contend, the mental trials he underwent in trying to plant the gospel in that hardened place, with but small means of support,⁷ and few to countenance his undertaking. For a while the congregation was respectable, as to numbers, but they soon dwindled down to not more than a dozen steady hearers, and not more than three or four of these seemed to be under religious impressions. He has frequently held a prayer meeting with only one besides himself, when each would pray and then dismiss the meeting, though inwardly conscious of the divine approbation, yet with but faint hopes of success. He, however, formed a small society, which, under more faithful and skillful laborers, has since increased to a considerable number, and Methodism has now a firm standing in Quebec.

An attempt was also made this year to establish a mission for the benefit of the French Catholic population of Lower Canada, and William Snyder, who understood and could preach in the French language, was appointed to this service. He entered upon his work in a French settlement, in the vicinity of Ottawa River, and for a time was cordially received and listened to with much attention, so that great hopes were entertained of a successful issue of his labors. Having occasion, however, to be absent from his field of labor for a few weeks, the parish priest took the opportunity to go among the people and warn them of the danger of hearing the "Protestant heretic," threatening them with excommunication -- which, in their estimation, was a sure prelude to damnation -- if they did not desist. This so wrought upon their fears, that, upon the return of brother Snyder, not a soul dared to hear him or to receive him into his house. He was, therefore, reluctantly compelled to abandon the enterprise in despair, nor has any thing been done effectually for those people since. The charms of Roman Catholicism still hold them in bondage to their priests.

In Massachusetts also, and in the province of Maine, the work so extended that New Bedford, Northfield, Centreharbor, Durham, and Vassalborough circuits were formed, while the work in many places on the older circuits was going forward with encouraging prosperity. Monongahela, Lycoming, and Staunton circuits, within the bounds of the Baltimore conference, were this year added to the list, which shows that the good work was still extending in the frontier settlements.

But the most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit was among the people on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and in some parts of Virginia, chiefly through the agency of a camp meeting which was held on the Eastern Shore at which, during the five days and nights it continued, it is stated that not less than one thousand souls were converted. This had been a favored place for Methodism from the time of its introduction; and this great work gave it a new impulse, and added fresh vigor to the souls of God's ministers and people. Religion, indeed, prospered generally throughout the bounds of the conferences, as may be seen from the increase of church members.

Bishop Asbury, though deprived of the aid of his devoted colleague in consequence of sickness, attended to his duties with his usual diligence, and was much cheered with the prospects which loomed up before him in various parts of the work, more especially by the agency of the camp meetings, many of which he attended, and entered into their exercises with all the ardor of a youthful minister. We find him this year in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, traversing the new settlements, and encouraging his brethren and sons in the ministry, by his presence and example. Being in the state of Kentucky during one of their camp meetings, he says, "I ventured on the camp ground again, and preached at eight o'clock. I was weak and unwell, but was divinely assisted while enlarging on Philip. i, 1. May this weighty subject rest on the minds of the preachers, and on none more than the heart of the speaker!"

After speaking of the Western conference, he says, "The brethren were in want, and could not suit themselves; so I parted with my watch, my coat, and my shirt." This was an instance of generosity rarely to be met with, and shows the deep interest he felt for his suffering fellow-laborers in that rugged field.

Finishing his work in this part of his charge, he recrossed the Mountains, in doing which, he says, "One of the descents is like the roof of a house for nearly a mile. I rode, I walked, I sweat, I trembled, and my old knees failed. Here are gullies, and rocks, and precipices; nevertheless, the way is as good as the path over the Table Mountain -- bad is the best." He passed on through North and South Carolina, and in the city of Charleston he rested for a few days from his toils, though he says that he was "neither unemployed nor triflingly," but was happy in the midst of his friends, and surrounded by all the comforts which kindness

could bestow." "If we call," he remarks, "for social prayer seven times a day, there are none to complain; the house is our own, and profane people board not with us. My time is spent in reading, writing, and receiving all who come, whites and Africans" -- "God the Lord is here." What a contrast between his external comforts here, and those which he enjoyed in many other places! But while he could say in every place, "God the lord is here," he could not be otherwise than happy and contented inwardly.

Among the deaths of preachers which occurred this year was that of Bishop Whatcoat, who departed this life at the house of Richard Bassett, Esq., ex-governor of the state of Delaware, on the 5th of July, 1806, in the seventy-first year of his age. Of his early life, conversion, and call to the ministry, we have already spoken, when giving an account of his election and consecration to the episcopal office. From that important period of his life, he gave "full proof of his ministry," fulfilling his high trust with fidelity, honored and beloved by all who knew him.

From the time of his entrance upon his work as an itinerant superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, until he was disabled by sickness and debility, he traveled regularly through his vast diocese, which extended over the entire continent, preaching almost every day to the people, visiting the annual conferences, sometimes in company with his venerable colleague, Bishop Asbury, and sometimes alone, discharging his responsible duties with marked satisfaction to all concerned. A complication of painful diseases arrested his career of usefulness, and compelled him to remit those public labors in which his soul had so long delighted. For thirteen weeks he bore, with the most exemplary patience, and devout resignation to the divine will, the excruciating pains with which his body was afflicted, expressing, in the midst of them all, his faith in Christ and his firm hope of everlasting life, and finally triumphed over the "last enemy," being "more than a conqueror through Him who loved him."

Bishop Asbury, some time after Bishop Whatcoat's death, visiting the place of his sepulcher, at the Wesley Chapel, in Dover, Del., preached his funeral sermon from 2 Tim, iii, 10, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." In the course of his sermon he remarked, in substance, "I have known Richard Whatcoat, from the time I was fourteen years of age to sixty-two years most intimately, and have tried him most accurately in respect to the soundness of his faith, on the doctrines of human depravity, the complete and general atonement of Jesus Christ, the insufficiency of either moral or ceremonial righteousness for justification, in opposition to faith alone in the merit and righteousness of Christ, and the doctrine of regeneration and sanctification. I have also known his manner of life, at all times and places, before the people, both as a Christian and a minister; his long-suffering, for he was a man of great affliction, both of body and mind, having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors." And from this intimate acquaintance with the man and his work, the bishop declares, that such was his unabated charity, his ardent love to God and man, his patience and resignation amid the unavoidable ills of life, that he always exemplified the tempers and conduct of a most devoted servant of God, and of an exemplary Christian minister.

As he had lived for God alone, and had assiduously consecrated all his time and powers to the service of his church, so he had neither time nor inclination to "lay up treasures upon earth" -- hence it is stated that he died with less property than was sufficient to defray the expenses of his funeral. He could therefore say more in truth than most of the pretended successors of St. Peter, who is claimed by some as the first link in the episcopal succession, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have," "my soul and body's powers," I cheerfully consecrate to the service of God and man.

These remarks of themselves sufficiently indicate the character of the deceased, without saying any thing more; yet it may be proper to add that though we do not claim for him deep erudition nor extensive science, he was profoundly learned in the sacred Scriptures, thoroughly acquainted with Wesleyan theology, and well versed in all the varying systems of divinity with which the Christian world has been loaded, and could therefore "rightly divide the word of truth, giving to every one his portion of meat in due season." For gravity of deportment, meekness of spirit, deadness to the world, and deep devotion to God, perhaps he was not excelled, if indeed equaled by any of his contemporaries or successors. "Sober without sadness, and cheerful without levity," says the record of his death, he was equally removed from the severe austerity of the gloomy monk, and the lightness of the facetious and empty-brained witling. His words were weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and when uttered, either in the way of rebuke, admonition, or instruction, they were calculated to "minister grace to the hearer." It is said, that on a particular occasion, when in company with Bishop Asbury, the latter was complaining loudly of the perpetual annoyance of so much useless company: Bishop Whatcoat, with great modesty and meekness, mildly remarked, "O bishop, how much worse should we feel were we entirely neglected!" The former bowed an acquiescence to the remark, and acknowledged his obligations to his amiable colleague for the seasonableness of the reproof, but much more for the manner in which it was administered -- an occurrence alike creditable to them both.

His preaching is said to have been generally attended with a remarkable unction from the holy One. Hence those who sat under his word, if they were believers in Christ, felt that it was good to be there, for his doctrine distilled as the dew upon the tender herb, and as the rain upon the mown grass. One who had heard him remarked, that though he could not follow him in all his researches -- intimating that he went beyond his depth in some of his thoughts -- yet he felt that he was listening to a messenger of God, not only from the solemnity of his manner, but also from the "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," which so manifestly accompanied his word. The softness of his persuasions won upon the affections of the heart, while the rich flow of gospel truth which dropped from his lips enlightened the understanding.

Such was Bishop Whatcoat. And while we justly attribute to him those qualities which constitute an "able minister of the New Testament," we present, as the distinguishing trait of his character, a meekness and modesty of spirit which, united with a simplicity of intention and gravity of deportment, commended him to all as a pattern worthy of their imitation. So dear is he in the recollection of those who, from personal intercourse, best knew and appreciated his worth, that I have heard many such say, that they would give much could they possess themselves of a correct resemblance of him upon canvass. But as he has left no such likeness of himself behind, we must be content with offering this feeble tribute of respect to his memory, and then strive so to imitate his virtues that we may at last see him as he is, and unite with him in ascribing "honor and dominion to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

Benjamin Iliff also, after traveling about four years, in which he won the confidence and affection of all who knew him, was taken from his labors to his rest in heaven, bidding adieu to his friends with these words, "I have lost sight of the world. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Two, namely, Ralph Williston, and Comfort C. Smith, withdrew from the Church; the former connected himself first with the Lutheran, and then with the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was settled for some time in the city of New York, whence he removed to the south.

One, Sylvester Foster, was expelled, forty-eight were located, ten returned supernumerary, and six superannuated.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 103,313; Last Year: 95,629; Increase: 7,684 -- Colored This Year: 27,257; Last Year: 24,316; Increase: 2,941 -- Total This Year: 130,570; Last Year: 119,945 -- Increase: 10,625 -- Preachers This Year: 452; Last Year: 433; Increase: 19.

1807

Seven conferences were held this year, at which Bishop Asbury, being deprived of the services of his colleague, Bishop Whatcoat, was obliged to attend alone, and to discharge the duties devolving upon the episcopal office. Speaking of this hard toil, after traveling through Vermont, New Hampshire, and part of Massachusetts, he exclaims, "Must I walk through the seven conferences, and travel six thousand miles in ten months?" This, however, by the blessing of God, he was enabled to do, though it cost him many a wearisome day, in clambering the mountains, and crossing the valleys, in his journey from one extreme part of the continent to the other. In these journeyings he was frequently compelled to lodge in taverns; but, whatever might be the character of the house or the people, he always made it a point to propose prayer in every place where he stopped, though it might be only for a breakfast or dinner, and seldom was he denied this privilege. In this way he performed the work of a missionary, in the most emphatical sense of that word. But that which he considered more than a compensation for all labors and sacrifices -- sacrifices to which few modern missionaries submit, was the consolation of religion in his own heart, and the spread of the work of God in almost every part of the continent.

This year John Travis was sent to form a new circuit in the new territory of Missouri. Missouri at that time was considered a part of Louisiana, and the first settlers were chiefly of the Roman Catholic persuasion; but the tide of emigration, which was then setting toward the west with a strong current, was rolling the inhabitants from the older states into that country with great rapidity, and every year with increasing numbers. Though this territory was not admitted into the Union until 1820, yet at this time there were in it not less than 16,000 inhabitants, about one-fifth of whom were slaves. Though on the western bank of the Mississippi River the land is low and swampy, and of course untenable and unhealthy, yet beyond this the lands rise in beautiful undulations, and when brought under cultivation, proved to be rich and fertile, and therefore invited the industrious husbandman to take up his residence on them.

Though the population was sparse, the roads bad, and the people generally averse to the self-denying truths of the gospel, Mr. Travis succeeded in attracting the attention of some to the things of religion, and he returned the next year, as the fruit of his labor, fifty-six members of the Church; and the work of God has continued to spread through that southwestern section of country, keeping pace with the extension of the settlements as they gradually penetrated farther and still farther into the woods and prairies of Missouri.

Notwithstanding Savannah, the chief city in the state of Georgia, was visited by that distinguished servant of God, the Rev. John Wesley, as early as 1736, in the very infancy of the colony, yet it seems that no effectual efforts had been made since his departure amid the unmerited reproach heaped upon him by his enemies, to plant Methodism in that place until this year. Wesley left the town in 1737, and in 1740 Whitefield, who succeeded Wesley, founded his orphan house, which remains only to tell the benevolence of its founder in connection with the failure of his project -- for it has long since crumbled to ruins -- but it appears that during the seventy years of interval from the time that Wesley left those ungrateful people, no opening was presented for the establishment of Methodism, until 1807.

It is true that, as early as 1790, Hope Hull was sent to Savannah, and he preached a few times in a chair-maker's shop belonging to a Mr. Lowry; but such was the opposition manifested toward him that he was assailed with mob violence, and his success was small and the prospects very discouraging. He was followed, in 1796, by Jonathan Jackson and Josiah Randle, but they left the place without making any permanent impression. In 1800 John Garvin made an ineffectual attempt to collect a society in Savannah, and though he succeeded, with many difficulties, in inducing a few to attend his meetings for a season, yet he also abandoned the place in despair. The next attempt

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