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HISTORY

OF

METHODIST REFORM

SYNOPTICAL OF GENERAL METHODISM

1703 TO 1898

WITH SPECIAL AND COMPREHENSIVE REFERENCE TO ITS MOST
SALIENT EXHIBITION IN THE HISTORY OF THE

METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

BY

EDWARD J. DRINKHOUSE, M.D., D.D.

(EIGHTEEN YEARS EDITOR OF "THE METHODIST PROTESTANT")

Ad astra per aspera

"Till it be proved that some special law of Christ hath forever annexed unto the clergy alone the power to make ecclesiastical laws, we are to hold it as a thing most consonant with equity and reason that no ecclesiastical laws be made in a Christian community without consent of the laity as well as the clergy."
— BISHOP HOOKER.

"He who has no right to the thing he possesses cannot prescribe or plead any length of time to make his possession lawful."
— DR. BARROW.

The equity of all history is: Hear the other side. — THE AUTHOR.

VOLUME I

THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION

OF THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

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PREFACE

THE writing of a History of the Methodist Protestant Church was first suggested to me by the Rev. W. C. Lipscomb in the autumn of 1877. Bassett's History had just been issued from the press. Written from the point of view of "The Methodist" (Protestant) Church of the North and West it was found quite unsatisfactory to the East and South, not so much from what it stated, as from what it failed to state. Hence this suggestion to me, then editor of *The Methodist Protestant*, Baltimore, Md. It was a surprise and not entertained. I had been a close student of Methodist history since 1850. More mature reflection led to the conclusion that it might be my providential task, if proper leisure and apt environment ever came to me. It led to a painstaking collection, often at considerable personal expense, of all the sources and authorities bearing upon general Methodism and of the Methodist Protestant Church in particular, through intervening years of exacting editorial toil down to 1892. Then came retirement from official position and leisure for the work. It has been diligently pursued through five years as an uncompensated labor of love and from a settled conviction that "the truth of history" demanded the work at my hands. The result is before the reader in these octavo volumes.

The Reform movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church during the decade of 1820-30, never contemplated a separate Church organization. This was made a necessity by the Expulsions of 1827-30, as a concerted action of the authorities of that Church. Nor for a decade of years after 1830, did the expelled and their seceding friends of governmental Reform in Methodism abandon the hope that their quondam associates would become amenable to reason and the sense of restitution on terms of reinstatement such as Christian manhood could accept. In consequence, inadequate care was taken to preserve historical documents and the local story of Reform movements. Apart from the records of its peri-

odical press no attempt was made to embody the facts until 1843, when a twelvemo volume was issued by Rev. James R. Williams, of Baltimore, Md., the cradle of Reform as it was of Methodism. It covered succinctly the period to 1842. The small edition was soon exhausted, but it was never republished, and fugitive copies are all that remain of this initial History. It was unsatisfactory to North Carolina and the circumjacent territory as dealing too sparsely with the movement in that section. Dr. J. T. Bellamy gathered material and wrote a History, but for unexpressed reasons during his last illness ordered his son to burn it. Rev. Dr. John Paris, also of North Carolina, in 1849, issued a twelvemo volume of more inclusive character and historical analysis. Like the History of Williams, it answered the demand of the period, but was never republished, and scattered copies only are to be found among our preachers and people. About 1855-60, Rev. Dr. Dennis B. Dorsey, Sr., then resident at Fairmont, W. Va. prepared a skeleton of a Church History and had largely filled it in, but his decease cut short the work and it never appeared. The Church had now grown in the West and North with a record of its own and on lines of separation from the adhering conferences, and a demand was made for a history from its point of view. It was furnished as already suggested by Rev. Dr. A. H. Bassett in a twelvemo volume, issued in 1877. It was afterward enlarged and amended, and for a score of years has been the dependence of the reunited Church. This triangular supply of data needed a central and unsectional array with the addition of a logical connection and philosophical treatment. It was this task the writer undertook under the extreme advantage of many years' residence in Baltimore, the Methodist centre of historic data. How well he has performed the work it will be for the reader to decide.

The sources and authorities cited in this History, with rare exceptions noted, are in the author's possession to be preserved intact, and held accessible for verification under any reasonable request, inasmuch as many of its allegations are at variance with the received historical statements; and a whole class of facts is disclosed heretofore minified or suppressed by, or unknown to, historical writers on both English and American Methodism. The writer has been careful of the ground so that a challenge is hereby recorded of successful contradiction of its averments as to matters of fact. His inferential positions may at times be strained or erroneous and these he submits to such controversial questioning as may be possible.

It is the custom of most historians to prefix to their work a bibliography of the sources and authorities consulted in its preparation. Such a compilation is not only helpful but necessary, when citations have been made without such references. In this work all citations are verified as to source and authority in the numerous foot-notes of the current narrative, so that a bibliography would be but a repetition of these titles. Sometimes the bibliography as a porch is more imposing than the structure, and carries the semblance at least of pedantry. Its absence in this work is not a loss.

The writer discovered when midway in his preparatory investigation that a History of the Methodist Protestant Church, logically stated and philosophically treated, could not be prepared without an enlargement of its original purview so inclusive as to comprehend at least synoptically the whole history of Methodism. The germinal principles incorporated in its Constitution and Discipline were disclosed in the governmental Reform movements during Wesley's life and since in English Methodism. And it is a remarkable fact that, without coöperation or knowledge of each other's movements, under the instigation of a common hierarchic rule, thoughtful Methodists both of the ministry and laity on either side of the ocean were working on independent lines to the same end of governmental Reform. The writer therefore found it necessary to give a broader title to his work as "The History of Methodist Reform," with his own denomination as the objective. The discriminating reader will discover that there was nothing new in the Methodist Reform movements from the tentative ones of Gatch, Dickins, O'Kelly and others in Virginia as early as 1778; of O'Kelly, M'Kendree, Rice Haggard, Hope Hull and others in 1792; the more effective ones of Snethen, Emory, Stockton and others in 1820-24; and later of Shinn, Jennings, Brown, Dorsey, McCaine and others for 1824-30. The objections they formulated and the protests they entered against the Paternal system of Asbury and the hierarchic features embodied by his pliant followers in the "Rules and Regulations" of the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1784, are all to be found in the seed of kindred objections and protests made by Wesleyan Methodist preachers and laymen from quite an early period of English Methodism down to the climacteric movement of 1849, which shook the parent body to its foundations.

Another great advantage of this historical method is, that it furnishes our own denominational readers succinctly all of

Methodist literature without recourse to historians and monographists whose coloring is unfavorable to liberal views. As common property it is, therefore, appropriated for information as to the rise and progress of doctrinal Methodism and its spiritual agencies, called "means of grace," touching which perfect unity has been preserved among our coreligionists the wide world over; as well as for contrast of governmental methods, equal prosperity attending diverse polities, and thus demonstrating that it was primarily due, not to any particular system, but to the doctrines and means of grace formulated by the Wesleys out of the Scriptures and the needs of the period. As collateral to this method and an irrefragable corollary from the facts of history, one of the fundamentals of this work is submitted as proven; to wit, that the dominant system on either shore of the Atlantic is responsible directly or indirectly for all the divisions of Methodism, and that in consequence organic unity is an impossibility, even if it could be shown politic, until the divisive elements in the dominating systems are eliminated.

These reasons must be the author's plea for occupying the entire first volume in what is really a preparation for the History of the Methodist Protestant Church. No apology is therefore offered for the extended space given to the vindication of the two men who have been most vilified and misrepresented, — Dr. Whitehead of the Wesleyan Methodists and James O'Kelly of the Asburyan Methodists. In both cases much new information is furnished; and while no effort is made to condone their errors of temperament and judgment, earnest, and it is believed successful, effort is made to rescue their memories from unmerited obloquy. It will also be discovered that nowhere in current Methodist history can such a running biography of Francis Asbury be found, portraying every side of his wonderful character and meting out with an even hand the merits and demerits of an unique system, of which he was the father, in emulation of the methods of John Wesley, the founder of it. Biographically it is believed that valuable new information is furnished, and fuller extracts made from Asbury's Journal than has been essayed by any other historiographer.

In discussing and narrating the so-called "Radical" controversy of 1820-30, the writer claims exceptional advantages, and if he has come short of the occasion, it has not been for want of a mass of material never before in large part at the disposal of a historian. He has endeavored, prayerfully and reflectively, at

every step to hold an even balance between the contending parties. It cannot, however, be reasonably expected that a History of the Methodist Protestant Church could or should be written by him from the point of view apologetic and excusatory of its historical foes. The defensive task has been abundantly performed by a large number of partial and able writers in England and America. It has never been performed on the behoof of Reformers in any such exhaustive pleas, unless the present work shall be accepted by impartial readers as equal to the subject. The writer believes indeed that nowhere else can such a collocation of records of those troublous times be found in continuity of presentation. But passing mention need be made of the class who ruefully deprecate the revival of "dead issues," as they call the contentions of this History. All history consists of dead issues, but it is the truth of them that demands their resurrection, and the vindication of the truth can never be untimely. If anywhere, after careful revision, he has been betrayed into sharpness of language or purposeful imputation of motive as to individuals, he will express regret and make amends if possible, or in palliation direct attention to the severity of average animadversions of the Reformers as found in the standard histories and fugitive monographs of Methodist literature. He has felt it, however, his first duty to set himself vigorously to the vindication of the fathers of American Methodist Reform, and to do this a restatement of the old controversy was inevitable.

In the progress of the work, in the second volume, he found himself confronted with two difficult performances. First, a determination to rescue from a swift-coming oblivion the Reformers of 1820-30. Many of them sleep in unmarked graves, and more of them have no historical embalmment. It has been a great labor to incorporate these biographical mentions, from a line or two to a page or more, as the judgment of the writer dictated or the material at command made possible. These interjections may seem to the critical reader to mar the flow of the narrative, but they often contain important facts, and no careful reader will pass them over. Many worthy men, for lack of obituary notice in the periodicals of the Church, or by inadvertent oversight, are no doubt unmentioned, despite the diligence of the writer to avoid such omissions. Then, in covering that section of the Church history from 1858 to 1877, marking the division and reunion of the denomination, that the author might be impartial, a Double history has been written. He has not knowingly omitted

any fact or argument for either side, and if his personal convictions anywhere appear, the feature is inseparable from an historical work, not a simple summary of naked figures and facts. The personal equation of a historian ought not, and indeed cannot, be excluded from his work. He has assurances from some who have read the History in manuscript, that this period will not prove unsatisfactory.

It was a part of the original design of the work to include in appendices brief histories of the several annual conferences, but it was found impracticable and was abandoned. The appendices which have been furnished are essential and invaluable, and the writer earnestly requests every reader and critic to make a careful perusal of them in their close connection with the running text, as indispensable to a right understanding of the subject. Brief histories of the Book Concerns as such, as well as of the official colleges — Adrian, Western Maryland, and Kansas University — have been omitted, for the reason that they have been largely incorporated in the running text, and more extended data are easily obtainable. The appendices for Ministerial Education, the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, the Foreign and the Home Missionary Boards, etc., have all been added to the first volume, though properly belonging to the second, in order that the relative size of the two books may in this way be preserved.

The principal claim of this History is, that it discloses and verifies a whole class of facts not heretofore given their proper accent by Methodist historians because not in alignment with the received opinions and traditional views of the great actors in the evangelistic movement, on both sides the ocean, called Methodism. It also places these received opinions and traditional views in other lights than those reflected by such historians, keeping in mind the great equity of all history: hear the other side.

Many portions of the first volume, dealing as it does with general Methodism, are rigidly condensed, while in the second volume the critical reader, especially if not denominationally connected with the Methodist Protestant Church, will discover minutiae of detail not always consonant with the dignity of history. Much of this period is within the memory of participants in it, and for the latter half within the personal recollection of the Author, so that many things are named by reason of an importance thus exaggerated.

The numerous illustrations were largely an afterthought, and are the best that could be secured at considerable expense and

much labor. The likenesses of early Reformers and some others are given with as much regard to sections and conferences as was possible. The writer regrets that no portrait of W. W. Hill, A. G. Brewer, Adjet McGuire, and others could be obtained. No living men appear for a reason that must be obvious, however worthy.

No pretension is made to literary style, and while indulgence is not asked of the critics as to fact and argument, forbearance is solicited when failure is exhibited in perspicuity or elegance of diction. The writer will find his reward if the readers shall discover that he is not without the "historic sense."

THE AUTHOR.

BALTIMORE, MD., November, 1898.

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HISTORY OF METHODIST REFORM

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The subject in purview—Roots of Methodist Protestant history—Paternalism of Wesley and Asbury—The growth of the system in England and America—Synoptical outline must cover Methodist Reform as necessary to a philosophical and logical treatment of the Methodist Protestant Church—Historical method of this work in a bird's-eye view—The Poll-Deed in England and the Episcopal organization in America exclusively clerical, responsible for all the divisions of Methodism—Fundamentals on which the conclusions of this History are based.

THE history of the Methodist Protestant Church finds its roots in the personal and paternal government instituted by John Wesley for the Methodist Societies of Great Britain and perpetuated, under his example, by Francis Asbury for the Methodist Societies of North America. It shall be my task to uncover these roots; mark the growth of the anomalous system under the Father and Founder of Methodism; show how it flowered and brought forth its legitimate fruitage in the Deed of Declaration,¹ which entailed its principles and sowed the seeds of frequent and disastrous divisions in the parent body, with a like result for American Methodism from the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In pursuance of this historical method and as germane to a history of the Methodist Protestant Church,—which will soon close the third quarter of a centennial existence as a standing Protest against ecclesiastical Paternalism,—as much of general Methodist narration in its origin and growth shall be given as will satisfy the reader without resort to other literary sources. It is a wide field. D'Aubigne, in his "History of the Reformation," has well

¹ Otherwise called the Poll-Deed, an act of Parliament which vested all the rights of property in chapels, etc., as well as the right of Conference appointment of the preachers, before held absolutely by John Wesley in person, in a close and self-perpetuating body of one hundred preachers named by him. The plan was devised by Dr. Coke and his attorneys acting for Mr. Wesley.

observed that "the encroachments of power form a large portion of all history; the resistance of those whose rights are invaded forms the other part; and the ecclesiastical power could not escape that intoxication which leads those who are lifted up to seek to raise themselves still higher. It felt all the influence of this general weakness of human nature." More forcibly still he declares, in the Preface to his masterful work, that "the History of the Reformation is altogether distinct from the History of Protestantism. The latter might claim the attention of Protestants; but the history of the Reformation is a book for all Christians, or, rather, for all mankind." And in accommodation of this language the writer affirms, in justification of the comprehensive character of this work, that the History of Methodist Reform which it outlines is something inseparable from and parallel with the History of the Methodist Protestant Church as its most salient expression. The latter might claim the attention of its members and adherents only; the former challenges the attention of all Methodists, or, rather, of the Christian world.

It is therefore the History of Methodist Reform that is here synoptically related, as it furnishes the only philosophical and logical basis for a specific History of the Methodist Protestant Church. It alone clothes its anatomical structure with fleshly symmetry. The parallel runs farther. Methodist Reform sustains the same relation to the parental Methodisms of Wesley and Asbury that the Reformation sustained to Romanism, while Protestantism sustains the same relation to doctrinal Romanism as Methodist Protestantism sustains to ecclesiastical Methodism. And the continued numerical inferiority of the one has its parallel in the continued numerical inferiority of the other. So that those who maintain the rightfulness of hierarchal Methodism on the score of its continued material and numerical superiority, must also maintain the rightfulness of hierarchal Romanism on the same score. There is no escape from the logical dilemma. D'Aubigne further affirms that "the Protestant Reformation was accomplished in the name of a spiritual principle." Methodist Reformation was accomplished in the name of an ecclesiastical principle. This principle is traced through the Methodisms of the world in these pages. Besides the bird's-eye view thus furnished, the method followed enables the writer to accomplish the double purpose of claiming for the Methodist Protestant Church all that is heroic in Wesleyan development as common property — its doctrinal teaching and means of grace — and of demonstrat-

ing that ecclesiastical paternalism is responsible for all the schism in the parent body subsequent to the Deed of Declaration as epochal of an organized departure from New Testament precedents. This review will be necessarily sketchy and condensed, but will be inclusive of everything material to the main purpose of disclosing the reasons for Wesley's paternal polity as it culminated in the Deed of Declaration; its destruction of English Methodist unity; the steady assertion of more scriptural and liberal principles by the English Reformers and their repeated excision by the Conference having its empire in property; the organized protest of the secedent bodies and their reflex influence in modifying exclusive ministerial rule until it is well established that full lay participation in governmental methods is a certain futurity of English Methodism.¹

The purview of this History suggests the same general course in the treatment of North American Methodism. Every great movement has its causative force, and the verdict of impartial history will be that, on the human side of it, Francis Asbury was that causative force in the Methodist Societies of this country. A born leader of men with a genius for control not inferior to John Wesley himself, he found on this side of the Atlantic a sphere for the exercise of his rule-loving propensities—a dominating passion which knew no subordination, except to his higher consecration to the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls.² By native predilection and educational direction he was a mon-

¹ Dr. Neely, fraternal messenger to the Wesleyan Conference of 1894, informs his readers through the *N. Y. Christian Advocate* that the Conference was composed of 250 ministers and 250 laymen, the Legal Hundred of course being the final legislative authority as legally settled by Wesley in the Deed of Declaration. These laymen, it must be observed, however, were only delegates, not representatives direct from the societies, but chosen by the Districts. What would be the amazement of Wesley and Coke could they revisit the "Conference" and find these laymen ensconced? Verily, the whirligig of time makes all things even.

² The Rev. Devereux Jarrett, rector of Bath Episcopal Church, Va., ardently coöperated with the Methodists in the early days, and was well acquainted with Asbury; held him in admiration, and on Jarrett's death Asbury preached a memorial sermon on his character and labors. Jarrett wrote his own life in a series of letters. One under date August 2, 1780, says: "Mr. Asbury is the most indefatigable man in his travels and variety of labors of any I am acquainted with, and though his strong passion for superiority and thirst for domination may contribute not a little to this, yet I hope he is chiefly influenced by more laudable motives." These pages will demonstrate that there was never a more impartial judgment pronounced. See Rev. Dr. John Atkinson's "History of the Origin of the Wesleyan Movement in America," etc., Jersey City, N. J., 1896, large 8vo, 458 pp., cloth. It is exhaustive of American Methodism prior to 1773, and is of original research. It will be cited hereafter. Present quotation on page 288.

archist in the State and a hierarchist in the Church. He cherished these views with a good conscience, and his selected readings, as we learn from his *Journal*, were all to the end of confirming him in his convictions. Evidently he made John Wesley his model. To be to American Methodism what he was to English Methodism was the goal of his life. Paternalism found its personification in him. It goes for the saying that no man comes to its successful and continuous exercise who has not large qualifications for it. The infant Society in America found in him a master spirit. His devotion and spirituality and love for souls were seen and read of all men and his striking personality asserted itself among his lay preacher peers almost without visible effort. He grew into their affections and confidence and that of the Society, and he ruled them by large consent irresponsibly; there being no one his equal in practical wisdom, in strategic ability, in arduous labors and single-eyed consecration. Nicholas Snethen, the ministerial father of Lay Representation for American Methodism, has aptly said of this juncture: "Though nothing, or next to nothing, was attempted in the way of instruction, so as to make the elder preachers the teachers of the younger ones; yet no preacher of any grade or station was ever left a day without a superior. The principles and germs of a hierarchy were thus incorporated in the very foundation of our primitive existence."¹ This hierarchy was a marvelous development. Under the inspiration of Asbury it grew with the growth of the American colonies in the Methodist Societies, though through all this period, say from 1770 to 1785, the doctrine of "passive obedience and non-resistance" in the State had been repelled by the colonies until it culminated in a revolution of blood and a finality of civil independence. Freedom from kings and bishops was the end attained by the inchoate States of the American Union, while the enthronement of kings and bishops was the inevitable outcome of the paternal system in the inchoate Methodist Church within the same territorial limits. Not a few of the preachers, especially among the native born, chafed under the Asburian rule from the beginning. It was utterly incongruous with the free air all about them, but they saw in their leader such an example of unfeigned piety and self-sacrifice that they submitted for the gospel's sake, a gospel of free grace and full

¹ Snethen on "Lay Representation," Baltimore, 1835, 12mo, 384 pp., for this and all other quotations from him in the course of this work, unless otherwise noted. The book is a summation of all he wrote upon this subject in the Reform periodicals of 1821-30.

salvation. If any openly demurred, it was sufficient answer that the plan was Wesleyan, it bore his credentials. Without abandoning the contention that the doctrines and means of grace peculiar to Methodism would have prevailed under the Divine blessing just as fully if it had been possible for Wesley and Asbury with their rule-loving natures to have administered a more liberal polity, it detracts nothing from the contention to admit that, accepting Abel Stevens's crystalline definition of Methodism, "A revival church in its spirit, a missionary church in its organization," the paternal government of both Wesley and Asbury, at least in the formative stages of the United Societies in Britain and America, was admirable and effective. But, as has been intimated, an intimation to be followed in due course by abundant proof, it was the ill-advised perpetuation of paternalism in the Deed of Declaration for the former, and the purposeful perpetuation of it in the hasty organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the latter, that made a Church for the ministry and not a ministry for the Church; the scriptural, rational, and natural order. It was the will and work practically of two men, — Thomas Coke, then but thirty-seven years of age, and Francis Asbury, but thirty-nine, and the acquiescence of fifty-nine other preachers out of the eighty-three then in the travelling connection, most of them mere striplings in age and experience; without consulting with the locality, now growing to the dignity of a third estate in Methodism, or of the whole body of the laity. It shall be my task to demonstrate that this second and aggravated departure from New Testament precedents of Church polity is directly responsible for the many divisions of American Methodism and the perpetual agitation against the exclusive rule of the ministerial class, who vested in themselves all legislative, judicial, and executive powers.

The conclusion is reached, then, that the Deed of Declaration was the cardinal error of English Methodism, in giving corporate form to an oligarchic entail of governmental power; and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church was the cardinal error of American Methodism, with a like result, greatly exaggerated. The astute Snethen has expressed this conclusion with nervous energy: "Every matter of fact evidence, every argument *a posteriori*, goes to demonstrate that paternal power, as soon as it ceases to be qualified by parental affection, begins to degenerate into tyranny, and therefore ought not to be perpetuated beyond the life of the real father himself." It may be conceded that

Mr. Wesley for the United Societies of Great Britain, and Mr. Asbury for the United Societies of North America, acting as he did by his authority as general assistant for several years, and then by assumption, up to the Christmas Conference of 1784, governed by a plan which was more efficient than any other could have been, in the circumstances. Snethen makes the same concession: "It is, indeed, beyond all doubt that any leader in Church or State, with absolute authority, can do more than if he were fettered by a system; and yet it is a universally admitted fact that no governments are so liable to sink under their own weight as absolute ones. The ancient Romans had their temporary dictators in the emergency of the State; but when the dictatorship became perpetual, their liberties were lost forever." The fact and philosophy just hinted shall receive fuller treatment in the course of this History; and, joining issue as it does with those who see in these cardinal errors the acme of wisdom, the fundamentals of the issue shall be staked upon a vindication of this conclusion.

In pursuance of this method, the Christmas Conference of 1784, with its outcome, shall receive thorough exposure. The chief actors in it, John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, each God-fearing and conscientious in his sphere, shall be brought upon the stage of scrutiny, and another attempt made to unravel one of the most perplexing mysteries of ecclesiastical history. Perhaps no three men ever figured in Church activities who were so utterly free from love of personal ease and worldly wealth, twin frailties of so many who are not thoroughly consecrated to Christ and his kingdom; and perhaps no three men ever developed a stronger dominating passion for leadership in the Church of God. The first stoutly adhered to his paternal views as he aged to senility, though broad reading and the force of the exigent made him willing, at times, to change his mind and his measures. The second cherished a life-long aspiration for hierarchal honors. Highly educated, and abundantly wealthy for his day, he was by far the weakest of his compeers in natural endowments and asserting personality; but what he lacked in virile strength he made up in insinuating diplomacy. The third was a rugged character, a self-made man, who followed his convictions unerringly under the severe limitations of preconceived opinions, combined with a generalship which developed a fine strategy, and made him in this respect the pronounced superior of his associates. A tripartite contention will be disclosed as a key to the mystery of otherwise unaccountable transactions of these three in dealing

with each other. Wesley, the father and founder of Methodism, and excusably jealous of his position, holding to a settled purpose that, during his lifetime, he should be respected as such by the Methodists, whether in Britain, in America, or the islands of the sea; Coke, the untiring go-between, prevailing on Wesley to take advanced steps in paternalism for America, and then exceeding his instructions, after his conference with Asbury, and finding himself at last foiled in his personal ends; Asbury, every inch worthy of all he claimed as leader in America, outwitting Coke and antagonizing Wesley unto final insubordination to his authority, because he was entirely too massive to be thrown from his equipoise by either of them. Quick to discern the whole situation, with its possibilities, after his interview with Coke, his opportunity had come to organize a Church after his own model, and, as he sincerely believed, to the glory of God. It was not to be lost; so, with unprecedented haste, the Christmas Conference was summoned to meet in Baltimore, and within a short week paternalism was enthroned, and the power of the keys was in his own steady grasp. Snethen says of this unseemly haste: "I never reflect upon the chapter of our history which related to the formation of our Church without feeling it in my heart, for the sake of those concerned, to wish that it were blotted out. It is a mortifying monument of the want of diplomatical ingenuity." There was, however, a deep method in it which will be disclosed when it is treated in detail. Around it, as the centre of a fray, have gathered its apologists and their opponents. The gist of the controversy was: Did, or did not, Mr. Wesley intend to organize a Church for the American Methodists, and "recommend the Episcopal form of government"? It will be shown to a moral certainty, as positive demonstration is impossible on either side, that he did neither. That the American Societies were so impressed by Coke and Asbury need not be questioned. The means employed to this end will be traversed when the ancient controversy is covered, and the reader left to determine on which side of this darkly drawn line the truth is found.

The period from 1784 to 1792 will be carefully considered, a period which marked the growth and consolidation of a Methodist hierarchy, under much agitation, and final upheaval in the secession of James O'Kelly and others, with more than one-fifth of the Methodist people. This secession disclosed to Asbury two weak places in the government, which a subsequent General Conference strengthened by enacting a rule for expulsion of members or

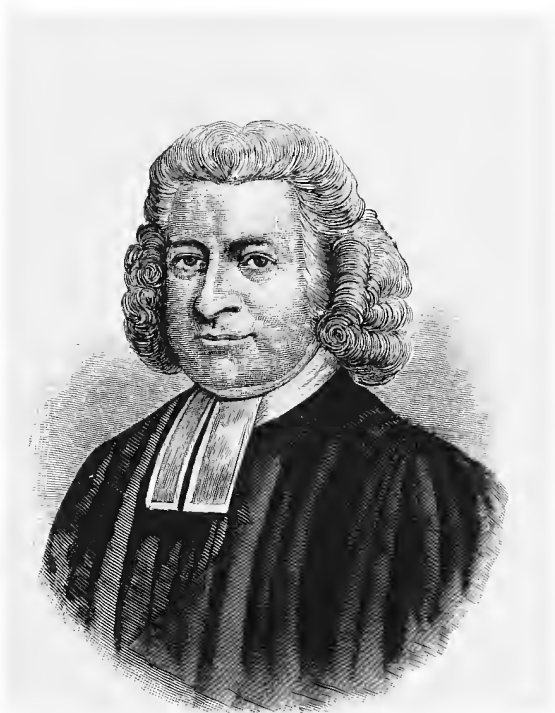
preachers for other reasons than immorality; namely, "sowing dissensions" and "inveighing against either our doctrine or discipline"; and the deed of settlement for church property placing the title in "the ministers and preachers of said church at their general conferences." The Council Plan of Asbury was intended to supersede the assembling of the preachers except in segregated annual conferences; the reasons for its miscarriage, with the outcome of a Delegated General Conference enacted in 1808, which was the first formal recognition of the voting power, or the right of suffrage, but confined exclusively to the ministers in Annual Conference. It will be shown that grave dissatisfaction existed all this time among the thoughtful laity because they were absolutely ignored as an estate in the Church, but who, for the most part, silently endured with patient acquiescence, for the sake of doctrines and means of grace which gave them soul liberty and spiritual peace. The same restive spirit found exhibition among the ministers in the right of appeal from the appointing power, O'Kelly's objective, and the election of presiding elders by the Annual Conferences, which had among its advocates a preponderance of the leading ministers from 1800 to 1820, when the measure was carried by a two-thirds majority in the General Conference of that memorable year. It brought with it, however, the amazing revelation of the superiority of the Episcopacy to the General Conference. The bishop-elect, Soule, entered his virtual veto, while the senior bishop, M'Kendree, solemnly protested; by indirection the resolution was suspended, and finally abandoned, and Episcopal prerogative reigned supreme, as exercised by Wesley and Asbury. It marked its culmination—it also marked its decadence.

A new epoch in the history of governmental Methodism dates from 1820. The effort of Bishop M'Kendree to secure the indorsement of the Annual Conferences for the reactionary step of Bishop Soule and himself opened the discussion of Episcopal prerogatives, and for the first time the intelligent laity of the Church looked more critically into the Discipline. In April, 1821, the *Wesleyan Repository* was issued from Trenton, N. J., by W. S. Stockton, a leading layman of the Church, and was continued for three years, its columns being open for the polemical study of Church polity; and lay participation in the discussion took tangible form. The synoptical review of this Introductory chapter is not the place for historical details. The General Conference of 1824 was a red-letter one, inasmuch

as it was called to answer the petitions of the laity for recognition. That answer was in turn an amazing revelation of exclusive claims for the ministry, and was intended to silence the membership, as the action of Soule and M'Kendree was intended to silence the ministry, as to the modification of the unlimited sway of Episcopal prerogatives. It gave birth to "The Mutual Rights of the Ministry and Laity of the Methodist Episcopal Church," a monthly publication issued from Baltimore; and of the Union Societies. The expulsions in various places for reading and circulating it and for being members of the Union Societies led to a crisis with the Reformers. The preliminary Convention of its friends in 1827; the delegated Convention of 1828; the formation of The Associated Methodist Churches, with its culmination in the Convention of 1830; the institution of The Methodist Protestant Church; its Constitution and Discipline; the growth of the infant Church under persecutions, and its subsequent history to the present time,—furnish the material for this work. As necessary to the vindication of its principles parallel notice will be taken of the revived agitation in the Methodist Episcopal Church; the modifications wrought at least in the administration of its Discipline by the prospering existence of its liberalizing offshoot; the gradual incorporation of lay delegation, if not of lay representation in the former; the inauguration of fraternity with its excised Branch; the arguments to be furnished that a voting, lay-representation Church has succeeded, other things being equal, as well as a non-voting, clerically governed Church; thus dissipating the fears and overthrowing the prognostications of those who had stigmatized Reformers as "the enemies of Methodism." Equal sincerity will be conceded to the staunch advocates of these diverse systems and an attempt made in these pages, while unflinchingly vindicating the men and measures of The Methodist Protestant Church, not to impugn the motives or question the honesty of those who stood as the champions of the mother Church as organized by the fathers. It shall be the aim to record and not make history, and as far as it is possible, without utterly obliterating the personality of the writer, to leave inferences to the reader.

If, as has been affirmed, "the most attractive phase in the history of each denomination is the season of its adversity," these pages will not lack for attraction. Within its purview, moreover, it shall be incumbent to preserve under proper limitation of space

the history of the initial Conferences, as well as to rescue from a rapidly coming oblivion by a brief biography, all the early participants in the Reform movements, with quadrennial statistics of church growth, thus to a given extent reversing the dictum of John Morley, the historian — “The interest of historic study lies in tracing the devious course of the sacred torch, as it shifts from bearer to bearer. It is not the bearers who are most interesting, but the torch.” The writer of these pages therefore realizes that, a large section of this work will have an unromantic side based upon the clear necessity of embalming records which of themselves make stimulating reading to those only who are willing to become close students of historic remains. With this synopsis of the general purpose the reader is invited to enter a wide field of Methodist study.



CHARLES WESLEY.

CHAPTER II

Charles Wesley—Birth, education, Episcopal bias—Visit to America with John—Return, and itinerates among the Societies—Differences with his brother over lay-preachers and separation from the National Church—Friendship with Whitefield—Leaves the itinerant plan—Final separation from his brother—Whitehead's "Life," from his Journal and other papers—Triumphant death.

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY are names immortal in the annals of Methodism. The former the exponent of its doctrines, the secret of its marvellous success, and the organizer of its primitive discipline, an accessory to that success. The latter was the complement of his brother as his most efficient helper and the author of its psalmody. They were sons of Rev. Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth, England, and of his wife, Susannah. It is not within the scope of this History to treat of the Wesley family. Those who are curious as to its genealogy will find it exhaustively presented in Whitehead's "Life,"¹ the source of all succeeding biographies, and in Clarke's "Memoirs of the Wesley Family,"² the concluding sentence of its 432 octavo pages, crystallizing a verdict which loses all extravagance under his illumination: "Such a family I have never read of, heard of, or known; since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."

Charles Wesley was the junior of his brother by over five years, and was born December 18, old style, 1708. It seems demanded

¹ Whitehead's "Life of the Wesleys," genuine edition, in distinction from a fraudulent one issued shortly after the author's death, by Coke and Moore and emasculated by them. A reprint of the genuine was issued by W. S. Stockton in Philadelphia, Pa., 1845, large 8vo, 548 pp., cloth, two volumes bound in one, treating of Charles and John Wesley respectively, Whitehead being the literary executor of both brothers. This edition was embellished with steel-plate portraits of the brothers, and an introduction defensive of the author by Rev. T. H. Stockton, from the traducements of his enemies. Another edition of the genuine had been issued a few years earlier in Boston, Mass.

² Dr. Adam Clarke's "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," reprint from the English edition, by Bangs and Mason, New York, 1824. One large octavo, and exhaustive of the family genealogy, etc.

in view of his conspicuous position in early Methodism and the scant reference accorded him in its annals generally, that a worthy place be given him in this outline.¹ His education was as thorough as his brother's, and his intellectual capacity in no wise inferior; his piety was as deep and his experience and grasp of evangelical doctrines as pronounced and comprehensive. The tutelage he received under his eldest brother, Samuel, gave him a high Church bias, which if it maintained his consistency, a quality his brother did not so fully esteem when it crossed his purpose, was the cause of the ultimate separation of the twain in their declining years of self-abnegating service in a common devotion to a spiritual kingdom without, and yet of the National Church. He accompanied John to America and shared in the hardships of the sojourn in Georgia. To this end he was ordained deacon and priest, and crossed the ocean as secretary to the governor, Oglethorpe; and also of Indian affairs. While detained at Cowes by contrary winds for six weeks, after sailing from Gravesend, October 22, 1735, he preached several times, "great crowds attended his ministry;" a foretoken of a popularity that followed him through life and made early Methodism a large debtor to his unremitting labors. Arriving at Savannah, John was stationed in the city and Charles at Frederica, an Indian station some miles distant. He soon became embroiled with the inhabitants by reason of his rigid discipline, strict preaching, and pure life, and they conspired against him either for the ruin of his reputation with the governor, or to take him off by violence. His health gave way under the climate and his persecutions; he resigned his position, shipped for England, but by stress of weather was driven to Boston and re-shipped for home, whither he arrived about thirteen months after his embarkation for America.²

His private Journal, which came into the hands of Whitehead, his literary executor, and whose life of Charles is the most authentic, if not comprehensive one, extant, furnishes details of

¹ Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," English edition, never reprinted in America, is an exception, as it is quite full but not so impartial as Whitehead's.

² John Wesley's "Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England," in the year 1777, London, printed at the Conference office, 1812, pamphlet, 16 pp. On page 3 he says: "In the year 1737,* my brother took ship in order to return from Georgia to England. But a violent storm drove him up to New England; and he was for some time detained at Boston. Even then he was surprised to hear the most serious people, and men of consequence, almost continually crying out, 'We must be independent; we shall never be well until we shake off the English yoke.' Thus early the American 'rebellion' began."

* He reached England December 3, 1736 (Whitehead, p. 97).

his acquaintance with Count Zinzendorf, head of the Moravian Church, and Peter Böhler, prominent in its ministry, and his experience of the "New birth," by spiritual regeneration with his brother John who had also returned to England, through their instrumentality. This experience led to the use of extempore prayer under special demand of public worship. A born poet, from his youth he was a singer in verse, and now his muse, under the inspiration of his new and rich communion with God, through a reconciled Saviour, as the fact was answered in his personal consciousness, incorporated his devotions in hymns whose spiritual fervor and musical rhythm have fired the hearts of evangelical Christians in every clime and for every age. Watts alone shares with him in this lyrical triumph, though John gave out fitful evidences of the same gift when he fully yielded to the afflatus. His public ministry was fruitful. A priest of the National Church without a settled parish, he preached wherever invited in the Church, having added extempore sermons to extempore prayers, to the prisoners in Newgate and other places, but always clad in his canonicals. He was arraigned before the Bishop of London, with his brother John, for preaching an absolute assurance of salvation. He was intimate with Whitefield, corrected his *Journal* for the press, and was urged by him to accept a college living at Oxford, the plan of an itinerant ministry not yet having developed. Following the example of Whitefield, he took to field preaching, and was rebuked by the archbishop for his irregularity. He preached to near ten thousand hearers by computation in Moorsfields and at Kensington common. He soon became thoroughly incorporated with his brother in itinerant preaching, meeting with like persecutions from the populace as, in public halls and open fields, he zealously proclaimed a full salvation for all men. Maxwell, the first of the lay-preachers, was also in the field, and he did not hesitate to yoke with him as such. The union with the Moravians in London had not yet been broken, and the Wesley brothers came under the regulations of the Methodo-Moravian societies. Dissensions came into the society of London by reason of the mystical tendencies of some of the Moravians, which John Wesley earnestly combated, and led to a final withdrawal from them. Another reason may have secretly operated to bring about this schism. Whitehead says: "Hitherto the government of the society has been vested wholly in the people. At their different meetings, they made such rules and orders as they thought necessary and proper, without paying

any particular deference to the ministers. In one or two instances, mentioned in these journals (Charles Wesley's), they threatened to expel Mr. Wesley himself when he did not conform to the rules they made. But on the 20th of April, this year (1740), it was agreed: "(1) That no order should be valid unless the minister be present at the making of it. (2) That whosoever denies the ordinances to be commands shall be expelled the society."¹ It was perhaps an instance of unbalanced government to the other extreme of the paternal system of John Wesley, when he was free to act out himself. In the meantime he labored in the societies, paralleling the zeal and fidelity of his brother, with much persecution and suffering. In the year 1744 there was much talk of the Pretender and a French invasion. Many thought it proper that John Wesley should draw up an Address of loyalty to the king in the name of the Methodist societies; and with that too ready acquiescence he exhibited in the matter of the American colonies, he drew it up, but it was not delivered, dissuaded probably by his ever cautious brother on the point of even seeming separation from the National Church. Charles wrote to his brother: "My objection to your Address in the name of the Methodists is, that it would constitute us a sect: at least it would seem to allow that we are a body distinct from the National Church, whereas we are only a sound part of the Church."²

In opening another paragraph of this epitomized account of Charles Wesley, it is pertinent to give place to Stevens's emphasis of two events: "Charles was the first of the brothers who received the name of Methodist, so was he the first to learn by experience the saving truth which Methodism was destined to witness to the world."³ His private Journal, which is followed by Whitehead, bating some breaks in its continuity, exhibits his daily labors itinerating among the United Societies, now under the acknowledged leadership of his brother John, and also discloses the differences in their temperament, modes of thought, and abiding convictions as to the lay-preachers, with his consistent adherence to the National Church, believing that the mission of Methodism was to reform it from within. His powers of endurance were not equal to his brother's, so that he was often indisposed from his exposures and persecutions. It is a part of this record that the Wesleys at times met with opposition

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Stockton's edition, Philadelphia, Vol. I. p. 146.

² *Ibid.* p. 173.

³ "History of Methodism," Vol. I. p. 101.

from the Dissenters. Whitehead, moralizing upon a striking instance of the kind in the career of Charles, says: "What shall we say to these proceedings? There is no class of people who cry out so loudly against persecution as the Dissenters, when it happens to be their turn to be persecuted. The truth seems to be, that most denominations of Christians disavow and condemn persecution in theory, yet fall into the practice of it when power and opportunity occur."¹ He purchased a house in Dublin, and fitted it up for lodging and boarding for the preachers and himself, and as a preaching-place. He became intimate in a Mr. Gwynne's family in Wales, and out of it sprang a proposal of marriage to his daughter Sarah, which was consummated not long after and proved a happy union. He preached at the Marsh, near Dublin,— "The congregation last Sunday was computed to be ten thousand." He went back and forth into Ireland, Wales, and England. In his treatment of the lay-preachers, to whom he was friendly, if they exhibited gifts and grace, Whitehead takes occasion to give a personal estimate of one of the marked differences between the two brothers Wesley, which it will be well to remember in tracing their respective careers. "Mr. John Wesley's great weakness was a proneness to believe every one sincere in his profession of religion till he had the most positive, and perhaps repeated, proofs of his insincerity; and to believe their testimony of things as true, without making proper allowance for their ignorance. This exposed him to frequent imposition and mistake. The case was far otherwise with Mr. Charles; he quickly penetrated into a man's character, and it was not easy to impose upon him. He totally differed from his brother concerning the qualifications necessary for an itinerant preacher, and sometimes silenced a man whom his brother had admitted. The one looked at the harm an unqualified preacher might do many persons; the other, at the possible good he might do to some."² He had close fellowship with the Perronets, who figure so largely in primitive Methodism, and one of the brothers was his travelling companion for a full year.

The ordination of some of the lay-preachers became rife, and the agitation had gone so far as to produce a division in the important United Society of Leeds. Both the brothers resisted this innovation as totally subversive of the original constitution of the Societies, and it may be in place to state that this became the vexed question of both British and American Methodism.

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Vol. I. p. 191.

² *Ibid.* p. 211.

The result of its solution in favor of ordination will be fully treated in its current place. This and the Deed of Declaration were the causes of the after official estrangement of the brothers. Those who contended for ordination did so with the ulterior purpose of a separation from the National Church. Says Whitehead: "He was fully convinced that all attempts to form the people into an independent body originated in the pride and selfishness of some of the preachers, and would be injurious to the progress of the work. He saw, however, that under various pretences, the preachers would finally prevail and obtain their purpose, though not during the life of his brother. He was still comforted with the hope that, whenever such an event should take place, there would be found, perhaps, a third part of the people in the Societies who would have judgment and virtue enough left to withstand it, and continue the connection on the original plan. How far his expectations will be realized, time must discover."¹ It was never realized, the people having little voice under the paternal system of the Wesleys, while the spirit of separation was as rife with them as with many of the preachers. Largely, however, he had the eye of a seer.

1756-57 finds him still itinerating. In the latter year he made his last considerable journey from Manchester to Leeds. He afterward divided his labors between London and Bristol, having as quietly as possible dropped out of official relation, principally for the reasons that his inflexible opposition to separation made him enemies among the prominent preachers, and his high standard of qualification for lay-preachers united all the aspiring class against him; and they were not slow to whisper to John, ever ready to hear and believe reports, that Charles was being alienated from Methodism. Whitehead says: "Mr. Charles being fully aware of all this, and wishing to avoid a low and illiberal opposition, and especially occasions of frequent difference with his brother, thought it best to retire from a situation in which all his words and actions were artfully misconstrued and misrepresented; and from having any share in the government of the Societies, which he saw, or thought he saw, was approaching toward a system of human policy that in the end could not be carried on without sometimes having recourse to the arts of misrepresentation and deception. These he abhorred in all persons, but when practised under the mask of religion they always appeared to him more detestable."² Methodist annalists, because for the most part

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Vol. I. pp. 224, 225.

² *Ibid.* p. 225.

special champions of John Wesley and his peculiar methods, are severe in their animadversions of him for this step, but it cannot be denied that he preserved his logical consistency, which cannot be affirmed of his brother's ecclesiastical course. In 1758 he published his testimony on the subject of separation, the gist of it being John's twelve reasons for adhering to the National Church; for, strange as it may seem, to the close of his life John strenuously maintained that he would die a member of it and had no intention for himself or the Methodists to separate from it either in Britain or America.

For thirty more years Charles continued to preach for the Societies, and kept up an affectionate correspondence with his brother, protesting, however, with tongue and pen against the so-called ordinations for America in 1784; and when, in 1786, John ordained more of the English preachers, he republished their mutual protest against separation. John's logical divergence and change of mind and measures will be fully considered in their proper place, with such apology as himself and others have made for it. As the breach widened between the brothers on this subject,—never, however, affecting their personal relations,—Charles made final answer to John's determination to ordain. It betrays a tinge of sarcasm. "Stand to your proposal: let us 'agree to differ.' I leave America and Scotland to your latest thought and recognition: only observing now that you are exactly right: 'he did nothing before he asked me' (referring to John's plea that he had always consulted his brother). True, he asked your leave to ordain two more preachers, before he ordained them: but while your answer was coming to prohibit him, he took care to ordain them both. Therefore, his asking you was a mere compliment. This I should not mention, but out of concern for your authority. Keep it while you live; and after your death, *deter digniori*—or, rather, *dignioribus*. You cannot settle the succession: you cannot divine how God will settle it."¹

Reference has been made to Charles Wesley's intimacy with George Whitefield. It continued unbroken, though he was as fully an Arminian in his theology and preaching as his brother John. The latter made open proclamation against the Calvinistic theology, and as the head of the Methodists made the rupture between them with some tartness of language. Their sweet personal relations were afterward resumed, and Whitefield selected

¹ *Ibid.* p. 226.

him to preach his funeral sermon some time before his departure, and he fraternally complied.¹ Charles would probably have managed the controversy so as to prevent a separation, and as Whitefield, despite his peerless eloquence and unprecedented success in soul-winning, had little organizing capacity, a wiser course could have been pursued at least conjecturally. Lady Huntingdon, by her earnest sympathy and material support, gave all the body there was to the Calvinistic Methodists. The scope of this work will not allow more than this brief mention. His numerous biographers have done him ample justice. Like the Wesleys, he adhered to the National Church, as did his followers to the end, availing themselves of the ambiguity of its seventeenth article.

A brief paragraph in conclusion must dismiss Charles Wesley virtually from these pages. His withdrawal from active official connection with the United Societies laid him open to an imputation of his motives from not a few of the Conference zealots. They said it was due to a loss of zeal and true vital religion; and even Whitehead, a bosom friend and his literary executor, confesses that he was once of this opinion; "but I have since been more perfectly informed and better acquainted with the nature of his situation." There seems no foundation for such an imputation whatever. A family grew up around him, during these thirty years of retirement from the itinerant plan, and he had a weak body and poor state of health during most of his useful life. He died March 9, 1788, aged seventy-nine years and three months. He was buried at Marylebone churchyard at his own request, eight clergymen of the National Church acting as pall-bearers. A few days before his death he composed the following lines. They are tenderly pathetic, and comprised his whole experience of steadfast faith. None of his lines are more familiar, and they have proved a solace to many departing Methodist saints. Having been quiet and silent for some time, he called to his wife and bade her write as he should dictate. It was his swan song.

"In age and feebleness extreme,
 Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
 Jesus, my only hope thou art,
 Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
 O! could I catch a smile from thee,
 And drop into eternity!"

¹ A well-preserved copy of the original edition of this sermon is in my possession, London, 1770. It was found among the effects of the venerable John Chapel of Baltimore.



JOHN WESLEY.

CHAPTER III

John Wesley; birth, education, and training—Characteristic anecdote of him—Holy Club experience—Life in Georgia—The Moravians—Mixed society in London of Methodists and Moravians—The separation and the reasons for it—The Wesleys and Whitefield—First Methodist Societies—Lay-preachers—Classes—General Rules.

JOHN WESLEY was the second son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, and was born at Epworth rectory on the 17th of June, old style, 1703. The salient events of his early life shall be sketched, leaving the reader who wishes to peruse in detail to Whitehead, Moore, and Watson among the earlier biographers, followed by the candid Tyerman in England, and by the thorough Stevens in America.

The burning of the rectory when he was less than six years old, his imminent peril and wonderful deliverance, have furnished material for an exciting adventure, and a clear special providence is claimed for it. His mother took it closely to heart with a full persuasion that a divine mission was ordered for him. So assiduously was he cultivated in piety that at eight years of age he was esteemed worthy by his watchful parents to receive publicly the Church sacrament. He continued under his mother's exclusive tutorage until 1714. More than any of the children he inherited the strong traits of both his remarkable parents: the indomitable will and versatile mentality of the father reinforced by the positive character and religious consecration of the mother. At eleven years he was placed at the Charter House School in London under Dr. Walker, its eminent head master. He remained until he was seventeen years of age, when he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford. While at the Charter School he suffered much from the hazing of the elder boys, and this accounts in part for the following incident taken in full from *Zion's Advocate*.¹ Tyerman gives it with the original authority, but omits Tooke's inference.² The story runs that Tooke, then school usher, once broke in upon Wesley while delivering an oration to a number of

¹ "Mutual Rights," Vol. I. No. 21, July 6, 1829.

² Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," Harper and Brother, 1872, Vol. I. p. 20.

the smaller boys, and he was desired to follow him to the parlor, which he did with reluctance. Mr. Tooke then said to him, "I wonder that you, who are so much above the lower forms, should constantly associate with them, for you should affect the company of the bigger boys, your equals." Young Wesley boldly replied, "Better to rule in hell, than serve in heaven." Tooke dismissed his pupil with this observation to an under master, "That boy, though designed for the Church, will never get a living in it, for his ambitious soul will never acknowledge a superior, or be confined to a parish." Riggs, in his work entitled, "The Living Wesley," admits the association with the smaller boys as probable, but dismisses the story as an invention and embellishment added by the older school fellows. He gives no better reason for his opinion, however, than the slip in the quotation from Milton, insisting that young Wesley would have quoted accurately, — reign instead of rule, — but this change could easily have been made in the transmission typographically. This space is given to an immaterial matter as showing the disposition of partial biographers to suppress incidents lacking in the color they prefer, and to mark an early development of a dominating passion as the boy is seen to be the father of the man. The tradition is in no sense discreditable, and bears every token of verisimilitude in the light of his after career. At twenty-one years of age he had a classical education of the highest grade, while the constant correspondence of his devout and intelligent mother kept him in all the forms of outward religion as a reflex of an inward life as near to God as one intended for the Church, but a stranger to spiritual regeneration, could be. He made a study of Kempis's "Imitation" and Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying," and was not slow to see and feel that true religion is seated in the heart. He was ordained deacon September 19, 1725. Soon after he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College. He obtained his degree of A.M. on the 14th of February, 1727, his religious convictions deepening as his acquirements multiplied. On the 27th of September, 1728, he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Oxford.

A new epoch in his life approaches. After a journey to Lincolnshire he returned to Oxford in June, 1729, and entered upon his duties as tutor. A few years before, his brother Charles, through his advice, had become deeply serious, and soon gathered about him several other collegians of like spirit for study, meditation, and prayer. The little group were so methodical in the

disposal of their time as to be stigmatized by their fellows as Methodists, and as such they were widely known all over the university. When John Wesley joined them, "They gladly committed the direction of the whole to him; and from this time the society began to assume a more regular form."¹ This simple fact is another pointer to his born leadership of men. They entered upon charitable visitations to the prisoners and the sick, and won for themselves the enviable title of the Holy Club. The two brothers began the practice of conversing with each other solely in Latin, which they continued as a habit for more than fifty years. In 1731 combined opposition to the Club was inaugurated at the university, but it was borne with meekness and made no change in their ascetic habits. Much space is given by Whitehead to their severe spiritual exercises as they struggled together toward the light.

It may be useful in the matter of health and longevity to note that, about the year 1733, when Wesley was thirty years of age, his excessive labors and rigid abstemiousness greatly reduced him and he had frequent returns of blood spitting, and on the night of the 16th of July he had a hemorrhage that waked him from his sleep. But more prudent management under the advice of physicians overcame his tendency to pulmonary disease, and his almost constant outdoor life saved him to a rare old age, though twenty years afterward he had a severe return of consumptive tendencies. He paid little heed, however, to the first warning. Whitehead says of his life in Georgia, only five years later, but not in commendation, "He exposed himself with the utmost indifference to every change of climate, and to all kinds of weather. Snow and hail, storm and tempest, had no effect on his iron body. He frequently slept on the ground in summer, under the heavy dews of the night; and in winter with his hair and clothes frozen to the earth in the morning. He would wade through swamps, and swim over rivers in his clothes, and then travel on until they were dry, without any apparent injury to his health. On one of these occasions he concludes, that any person might undergo the same hardship without injury, if his constitution was not impaired by the softness of a genteel education. In all Mr. Wesley's writings I do not know such a flagrant instance of false reasoning as this: contrary to all the rules of logic, he draws a general conclusion from particular premises; but who is at all times in the

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Vol. I. p. 259.

full possession of all the powers of his mind?"¹ This impunity was apparent only, and it stands as an admonition to all concerned, an exception to general laws.

His father's health failing in 1734, strenuous efforts were made by him and the family to induce John to accept the rectorship of Epworth. A long correspondence ensued, during which his brother Samuel says, referring to his steady declination of the position, "After this declaration, I believe no one can move your mind but Him who made it." John closed the question by assigning twenty-six reasons he would be more useful with his pupils at Oxford and as the head of the Holy Club than to be shut up in a parish. His father died in April, 1735, and the living of Epworth was given away in May, so that he now considered himself as settled at Oxford.

Another change of scene takes place in the panorama of his life. The new colony of Georgia in America was in need of missionaries, not to the colony only, but to the Indians. Mr. Oglethorpe, the new governor, and others, pressed the Wesley brothers to accept. On the 14th of October, 1735, they set sail for America. Among the passengers were twenty-six German Moravians with Nitchman, their bishop. John Wesley at once began the study of the German that he might converse with these godly people. The ship was made a Bethel for these and the eighty English passengers. A severe tempest overtook them, imperilling their lives. The English were fearfully alarmed and rent the air with cries and screams—the Germans calmly sang their devotional hymns. John Wesley afterward asked one of them, "Was he not afraid?" He answered, "I thank God, no." I asked, "But were not your women and children afraid?" He replied mildly, "No, our women and children are not afraid to die." After more than three months' voyage they landed at Savannah. Shortly one of the resident Moravian pastors was introduced to him by Governor Oglethorpe and in the conversation Wesley was asked, "Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" He said, "I was surprised; I knew not what to answer." He was not yet a conscious child of God. The two brothers entered zealously upon their clerical work, John at Savannah and Charles at Frederica. "They had high notions of clerical authority . . . they stood firmly on little things as well as great, and held the reins of ecclesiastical discipline with

¹ Whitehead's "Life of John Wesley," Vol. II. p. 34.

a tightness unsuitable to infant colonists especially, and which tended to provoke resistance.”¹ Another adumbration of the personal government of the United Societies in the near future, and of the reason for the official separation of the brothers. The embroilments, intrigues, persecutions, sufferings, and hard-earned experiences of the Wesleys in Georgia command much space from their biographers, but it covers, perhaps, the least profitable portion of their lives. Charles returned to England after an absence of about thirteen months and was followed by John fourteen months later, reaching home February 3, 1738.

He returned to Oxford, the Spirit of God leading him step by step into the full assurance of faith enjoyed by the Moravians and already experienced by Charles. He kept up his preaching at Bristol and in London, meeting there Whitefield, on his return from America, and uniting again with the mixed society of Methodists and Moravians. He opened a correspondence with Moravians in Germany; met frequently with Peter Böhler; made a journey to Herrnhut, and had an interview with Count Zinzendorf at Marienborn; and at last came into the full liberty of the sons of God.

The Society at Fetter Lane, London, was the nucleus of the great after movement denominated from the stigma of the Holy Club, Methodism. It was organized May 1, 1738. Mr. Wesley distinguishes three periods for the origin: November, 1729, when four gathered at Oxford; at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at his house; and at Fetter Lane, May 1, 1738. But Whitehead contends that this is hardly accurate, and shows that the first United Society of Methodists dates from the separation of himself and others from the Fetter Lane organization, which was on July 20, 1740.² Innovations of doctrine were charged against the Moravian brethren of the Fetter Lane Society, though the Church as such was afterward vindicated from the errors charged. Mr. Wesley vainly expostulated with them and at his last meeting he concluded his exhortation in these words, “But as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment follow me. I then,” adds Mr. Wesley, “without saying any more, withdrew, as did eighteen or nineteen of society.”³ Some months prior to this a society had been formed by Wesley at the Foundry, and to these the seceding brethren from Fetter Lane

¹ Watson's "Life of John Wesley," American edition, 1831, p. 35.

² Whitehead's "Life," Vol. II. p. 48.

³ *Ibid.* p. 82.

joined themselves. Still earlier a society had been formed at Bristol, so that the question of priority has been largely discussed by Methodist annalists. Myles, in his "Chronological History," seems to settle the matter between Bristol and London in the undisputed statement that the "first preaching house was *built* at Bristol; the first which was *opened* was in London." The relevancy of the subject to our main purpose is in the effort of most of these annalists to minify Wesley's obligation to the Moravians and his connection practically with them, so far as they had organization in England, from about the date of his return from America in February, 1738, to July 20, 1740. Stevens gives larger space to it and his summation is just. First, his spiritual regeneration, a distinguishing experience in the after mission of Methodism. Second, kindred theological ideas as related to this spiritual life. Third, Zinzendorf's communities within the Established churches of the Continent for their reformation, as imitated by Wesley in his United Societies; and fourth, not a few details as to means of grace, love feasts, band meetings, and moral discipline.¹ Whitehead, however, brings to light the self-governing features of the Moravian society, which has been already suggested as a conjectural additional reason for Wesley's separation from them. The Rules of the Fetter Lane Society were made under the advice of Peter Böhler and are given in full by Whitehead. The fourteenth of these Rules is in these words, "That no particular person shall be allowed to act in anything, contrary to any order of this society; but that every one without distinction should submit to the determination of his brethren; and that, if any person or persons did not, after being thrice admonished, conform to the society, they should no longer be esteemed as members." On this rule Whitehead makes the following comment: "The fourteenth rule, to which the ministers were subject as well as the common members, was an excellent preservative against the abuse of power; and some of the others are good guards against the admission of improper members. It would have been happy for the Methodist societies if these rules had been preserved among them, and rigorously kept: the work would in that case have been more pure than it has been, and much confusion would have been prevented."² Again he says: "It was a rule of the society, 'that any person who desired or designed to take a journey, should first, if it were possible, have the approbation of the bands,' so entirely," he adds, "were the

¹ Stevens's "History," Vol. I. p. 108. ² Whitehead's "Life," Vol. II. p. 49.

ministers, at this time, under the direction of the people."¹ It was for utterances of opinions like these and the disclosure of kindred matters that brought Whitehead under the disfavor of the Conference leaders after Wesley's decease, specially Coke and Moore; a subject which shall receive full treatment in its current place, and an appendix furnished for the vindication of this remarkable man. Methodist historiographers, echoing each other generally, commend the separation from the Moravians, or United Brethren, as intrinsically wise and providentially ordered. It is open at least to question. Nothing doctrinally was gained and much ecclesiastically was lost. The merits of it cannot, however, be unfolded, as our limitations compel the dismissal of this phase of Methodist history.

The period from 1739 to 1744 was a formative one under the Wesleys and Whitefield. They traversed England, burning and shining lights. Their itinerating labors were crowned with unprecedented success in evangelizing the people. For a time the scattered converts took no organized form. Neither Charles Wesley nor Whitefield had the qualities of leadership exhibited by John Wesley, and which from the first gave him the right of way in the whole movement for spreading scriptural holiness over the land. He was, perhaps, unconscious of assuming this position. He simply acted out himself in following an indomitable will, chastened by divine grace. As converts to the doctrine multiplied they met for prayer and instruction, and, by an instinct of spiritual self-preservation, looked to John Wesley for fostering care. In the introduction to the "General Rules of the Society" he gives a brief account of the origin of the United Society. "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London and desired that I should spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; this was the rise of the United Society." "This," he says, "was soon after the consecration of the Foundry. Twelve came the first night, forty the next," and soon after a hundred, according to Jackson. The statement must not be taken, however, as inconsistent with the fact that a society had been formed before this in Bristol, and the first chapel of the Methodists built there. But the opening of the Foundry, November 11, 1738, has historical eminence; for after the separation from the Fetter Lane brethren it was the headquarters of Methodism in London. The year is also memorable from the formation of "Bands" in Bris-

¹ *Ibid.* p. 62.

tol, and the issuance by the Wesleys of their "Hymns and Sacred Poems," the beginning of its published psalmody.

Necessity was the mother of his invention, and he now appointed John Cinneck, a layman, to take charge of the Kingswood society; pray, expound Scripture, but not to preach, in his absence. Thomas Maxwell was assigned to some religious duties at the Foundry, and John Nelson began about this time to hold meetings at night, working at his trade of a stonemason by day. It marked the initiation of his lay ministry, and it became the backbone of Methodism both in England and America; for ordained ministers there were none but the Wesleys and Whitefield. Mention should also be made of Ingham, who was Wesley's companion in America and who formed many societies in Yorkshire. Howell Harris labored in Wales and John Bennet in Derbyshire. David Taylor, who was a servant to Lord Huntingdon, attracted great assemblies of the rustic people, being recognized by Lady Huntingdon, around her residence and elsewhere. Samuel Deacon became a distinguished preacher, raw from the harvest-field. In February, 1742, a meeting was held at Bristol for consultation over the debt upon the chapel, and it was agreed that every member of the society who was able should contribute a penny a week; that the whole society should be divided into classes of about twelve, and that one person in each class should be appointed to receive the contributions and pay over to the steward. "This," says Wesley, "was the origin of our classes in London (for the plan was extended to all the societies), for which I can never sufficiently praise God, the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest." Thus was laid the foundation of the financial system of Methodism and gave rise to the saying, "A penny a week and a shilling a quarter," as a minimum poll tax upon the membership; while the devotional feature, soon added, of each giving a weekly "experience" kept alive the personal religion of all in society. Wesley appointed the leaders, and, as the societies increased, in order that he might have a check upon improper persons and know by some token who belonged to the society, he issued tickets with a short Scripture verse with the date and name of the holder. Such a ticket was a passport to any of the classes, and was valid for three months. April 9, 1742, the first watch-night was held in London, the Friday night nearest the full moon either before or after was selected that those from any distance might have its light returning home.



SUSANNAH WESLEY.

The service was held from half-past eight to a little past midnight. The New Year's watch-night afterward took its place.

Wesley's lay helpers were "expounders" and "exhorters" only, but Maxwell, one of the most gifted, while in charge at the Foundry during his absence was led to "preach." Wesley heard of it at Bristol, and hurried back to arrest this irregularity. He first, however, consulted his widowed mother, who was living in the parsonage adjoining the Foundry, and she had heard Maxwell preach. She warned him not to interfere, "He is as surely called of God to preach as you are." Instead, therefore, of silencing Maxwell, he was himself silenced, and he became the first of a host of itinerant lay-preachers, the stalwart pioneers of a free grace and Spirit-witnessing gospel in England and America. Lady Huntingdon also added her approval after hearing Maxwell, and thus to two godly women Methodism is indebted for a return to New Testament methods. The sainted mother died July 23, 1742, her dying request being, "Children, when I am gone sing a psalm of praise to God." He and five of her daughters who stood around her bed complied with the request at the moment of her peaceful departure. His lay ministry of the itinerating class now numbered some twenty-three, besides local preachers. They were distributed among the societies, moving from place to place, Wesley in the lead supported by his brother Charles, in ever enlarging circuits. He revisited Epworth, and, being denied the use of the church of his father's long rectorship, he preached upon his tombstone to a vast audience, on one occasion for a week continuously. The United Societies had greatly multiplied, and chapels built at Bristol, London, Kingswood, and Newcastle. More clearly defined and uniform terms of membership seemed demanded, and a bond of union established between the numerous societies. The two brothers Wesley framed the memorable "General Rules of the Society." They are sufficiently familiar. They bear date May 1, 1743. The fearful scenes of riot and personal violence with marvellous deliverances through which the brothers passed and their lay helpers would make a volume. Satan and his emissaries were in extremity over the moral revolution being wrought among the colliers of Kingswood and the townfolk everywhere. The numbers now in Society cannot be ascertained, but in London alone there were over two thousand; while as the year 1743 closed there were forty-five itinerants in the field and many local preachers, all under the military-like direction of Wesley in storming the kingdom of darkness.

CHAPTER IV

The first "Conference" — Who were present — Extension of Methodism — Subsequent Conferences — Kingswood school — Wesley's loves and marriage — Break with his brother Charles — Personal authority and its effects upon the brothers — Apology for the course of John — Philosophy of the situation.

A NEW chapter in Methodist history opens. The first Conference was convened by Wesley at the Foundry, London, June 25, 1744. Some considerable difference of opinion obtains as to who were invited and who were present on the memorable occasion. Watson gives no intimation. Moore says generally, "He summoned annually a considerable number of the preachers." Whitehead records: "June 20th, he returned to London, where he met his brother, two or three other clergymen, and a few of the preachers, whom he had appointed to come from various parts to confer with them on the affairs of the society."¹ He italicizes the word confer, and it is significant as suggesting the official name of these after convocations. Stevens says, "He wrote letters to several clergymen and to his lay assistants, inviting them to meet him in London, and to give him their advice respecting the best method of carrying on the work of God."² He gives the names of the four clergymen of the National Church, who with the brothers Wesley, as good an authority as Jackson says, composed the first Wesleyan Conference. But Stevens gives the names of four of the lay-preachers who were also present, Maxwell, Richards, Bennet, and Downes. There is no evidence that more were either present or invited than is intimated in Stevens's statement.³ The Conference remained in

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. p. 111.

² "History of Methodism," Vol. I. p. 211.

³ Minute of the First Conference of 1744. "Q. Shall any of our lay brethren be present at this Conference? A. We agree to invite from time to time such as we think proper. Q. Which of them shall we invite to-day? A. The four mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, who were accordingly brought in." Found in "Chronological History of the People called Methodists of the Connection of the late John Wesley, from their Rise in the year 1729 to their last Conference in 1812," by William Myles. London, 3d edition, enlarged. Printed at the

session for five days and discussed a wide range of subjects; doctrine, teaching, discipline, and a seminary for laborers in the cause. The interview took the form of conversations, questions and answers, which were afterward published. The Plan of Appointments had not yet come into vogue; Wesley sent his workers at pleasure, and recalled them at will. The meeting adjourned without making provision for any future assembling, but they followed in order, and Wesley lived to attend and preside over forty-seven of these Conferences.

Methodism had now extended over England from Land's End to Newcastle, and the whole area was traversed by Wesley, superintending the work amid persecutions and sufferings shared fully by his brother and his devoted helpers. Some of them were impressed for the army, others met heroic deaths, either directly or indirectly, the result of their consecration to their divine Master and the cause of religion as represented by Methodism. The new religion broke out in the army of Flanders on the Continent. Some of the soldiers had taken it at home and now began to preach, and hundreds were converted, a moral miracle, as the depravity of this soldiery is perpetuated in the legend — "They swore like the army in Flanders." Not a few of these converts died in Christian triumph on the field of battle. Meanwhile, August 1, 1745, the second Conference was held at Bristol and continued two days, Whitehead says, "with as many of the preachers as could conveniently be present." It was much in character with the first meeting, and all that is known of it is preserved in the "Minutes of the Conversations" which were published together in 1747. England was threatened with an

Conference office, 14, City Road, 1813, 8vo, 487 pp., sheep. In Peabody Library, Baltimore, Md. It is noteworthy that the foregoing minute is not found in the "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. John Wesley and the Preachers in connection with him from the year 1744 to 1800." Leeds, England, 1803, 12mo, sheep." Also in the Peabody Library of Baltimore. In these Minutes the following does occur, and it never has been found by the writer reproduced anywhere else. It is important as showing the ascetic and celibate principles of Wesley in that day: "Touch not a woman, be as loving as you will, but the custom of the country is nothing to us."

The Bennet mentioned by Stevens, one of Wesley's helpers, made a copy of the minutes of the early conferences, which was kept in the family for several generations, but has been recently published by the Wesleyan Conference, 1897. He mentions as present at the Conference of 1744 only the following: John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Henry Piers, Samuel Taylor, and John Meriton. Evidently, others were present, and it detracts from the value of this historical "find," by John Bennet. See compend of the pamphlet in N. Y. *Christian Advocate* for December 9 and 16, 1897.

invasion by the Pretender, but amid the commotion Methodism grew and had its signal triumphs in divers places. Stevens says the third Conference was held on the 12th of May, 1745, but does not give the place, while by Moore and Whitehead it is not mentioned, probably because it was so lacking in importance that Wesley himself makes no reference to it in his Journal. The fourth Conference was held, according to Whitehead, from June 15th to 20th, 1747, and the place is given as the Foundry by Stevens. It was numerically the largest held. At the session of 1745 Marmaduke Gwynne, a layman, attended by invitation, and at that of 1746, the question was propounded: Who are proper persons to attend any Conference? And the answer was, besides the preachers conveniently at hand, the most prudent and devoted of the Band leaders of the town where the session was held, and any pious and judicious stranger who might be in the town should be invited.¹ It will be seen from the dates, that an annual feature had not been adopted; the Conferences met when and where Wesley thought it expedient to call one.

On the 2d of June, 1748, the fifth was held at Tower-Hill chapel, London, and it was not reconvened until November 16, 1749, in London. On the 8th of March, 1750, the seventh was held; but there are no traces of its minutes, and from this time to 1765 there are records of but two. A little more than a decade had elapsed since the first as an epoch of Methodism. Meantime, Wesley's views from reflection and reading had undergone considerable change as to Episcopacy, and doctrinal points were more clearly settled. Quarterly meetings were held for the circuits, books were distributed by the preachers as colporteurs, and Wesley concluded his "Christian Library" in fifty volumes. It was little more than a careful compilation of other books, and occasion will occur in the future for larger reference to a prevailing practice of plagiarizing by leading men of literary reputation. A lay ministry had accomplished a wonderful work throughout the British Islands. In fine, Wesleyan Methodism had taken on an organic form, though adhering to the National Church. The Kingswood school was opened in 1748. Wesley's marriage with Miss Grace Murray had miscarried through the interference of his brother Charles. It is alleged she was engaged to one of the helpers, Bennet, and to whom she was married, much to Wesley's disappointment, soon after. Wesley remembered this interference of his brother and it marked the interruption of the harmony which for

¹ Stevens's "History of Methodism," Vol. I. p. 315.

twenty years had existed between them. It may be in place here for the simple mention of his entanglement with Miss Hopkey of Savannah while he was yet in Georgia. It was broken off for reasons touching which his biographers greatly differ, but it was among the causes that hastened his return to England. Some years before his marriage he had written a tract favoring celibacy as more conducive to spiritual life, but he had evidently made no resolution not to marry. He formed the acquaintance of Mrs. Vizelle, a young widow of independent fortune with accomplishments, and a professor of religion withal. He took care that her fortune should be settled upon herself, and that it should be agreed that he was not to surcease in his labors and travels as superintendent of the United Societies. But it proved an ill-starred marriage. She soon tired of itinerating with him, and in her efforts to overrule him for a location in the ministry she became abusive and violent in her treatment, and finally left him with word that she never expected to return. Wesley makes the characteristic record — "I have not left her; I have not put her away; I will not call her back." In 1781, some thirty years afterward, she died, leaving her fortune to an only son by a former marriage and a ring to Wesley. Grace Bennet long survived her husband, who became a dissenting minister; and late in life an interview at her request took place between her and Wesley in the presence of a mutual friend. It was a tender interview; they parted, and Wesley was never afterward heard to allude to her.

As might be expected Wesley had not only his fightings without but his troubles within the Societies. There were signs of disaffection, and the preachers were restive under the yoke of the brothers, and their dependence upon the National Church. He freely unburdened his mind to Edward Perronet, and Tyerman cites from their correspondence fragments of John's dissatisfaction. "Charles and you behave as I want you to do. But you cannot or will not preach where I desire. Others can and will preach where I desire; but they do not behave as I want them to do. I have a fine time between the one and the other. . . . I have not one preacher with me, and not six in England, whose wills are broken enough to serve me as sons in the Gospel."¹ He seemed to forget that he was dealing with free-born Englishmen, and that: —

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. II. p. 85.

More perplexing than these things, the ostensible division of authority with his brother Charles in some things did not work well. In November, 1751, they met at Shoreham and in the presence of Perronet talked it over with much candor and love. An agreement was drawn up defining their respective rights with the lay-preachers. Whitehead says John signed them with reluctance, but nothing came of it as a settlement. "Mr. Wesley would not submit to any control in admitting preachers into the connection, in appointing them to the different circuits, or in governing the societies. It appears to me that after the first difference with his brother, who disappointed his intended marriage, he made up his mind not to suffer either a superior, or an equal in these respects. From that time he seemed determined to be *aut Caesar aut nihil*."¹ Moore says this imputation of Whitehead was based on a "heathenish principle," and finds a motive and apology for John's breaking the engagement in that he found Charles "was unable to execute so large an engagement with efficiency."² This was probably so, if competing with him in laborious travel is made a factor, but the truth after all is found in Whitehead's deduction: in such a work there could not be two masters. And so it proved. Charles, in despair of sharing in the substance of official authority, determined that he could not be his brother's shadow and retired; though for thirty years after he did all in his power to help the societies, and in all emergencies threw himself into the breach, as during his brother's serious illness in the autumn of 1753, when the consumptive symptoms returned and Wesley in anticipation of a fatal termination wrote his own epitaph.

Our limitations will not allow even a sketch of the introduction of Methodism in Ireland from 1747; except to embalm the names of John Smith, Robert Swindells, and Thomas Walsh of his lay-preachers as well as Christopher Hopper, John Jane, and Duncan Wright. In 1754 Wesley read with deep interest the Life of Baxter and was moved to record his sympathy with the Dissenters in their persecutions by the clergy of the National Church; and this led Whitehead to philosophize as follows: "It is natural to observe here what the history of mankind uniformly shows, that, where the people have no balance of power in the government of the Church or of religious societies, to be used as a check against any undue influence of their teachers, the ministers, or preachers of the Gospel, become in the end haughty, tyrannical, and intoler-

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Vol. II. p. 167.

² Moore's "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. p. 150.

ant; and their councils, assemblies, or conferences degenerate into mere combinations against the natural rights and liberties of those over whom they assume any authority."¹ The language is prophetic as to Methodism and its peculiar *régime* and prejudiced the Conference party against him, provoking the open opposition of Dr. Coke and Henry Moore. It may be fairly offset by the following judicious observation of Stevens, "Discipline and authority such as Wesley alone among the founders seemed capable of establishing, were necessary for an enduring organization of the various crude elements which Methodism gathered from the degraded masses of the English populace."² As much has already been conceded in these pages at least as to the clerical leaders of the great religious revival. Of the three preëminent ones he alone possessed in a large degree the organizing faculty. But it must be observed that nearly all the factions in early Methodism with which he had to contend were fomented by inferior men among the ambitious preachers.

It is safe to conjecture that Wesley could have strengthened himself against all of this class if he had taken more account of the laity in his councils. It has been found that, in the Conferences he assembled from 1744 to 1765 and onward, he invited of the preachers whom he would, and allowed a sitting to any prominent Band leader or member in the place of its meeting of his selection also. But down to his decease, in 1791, they figure but furtively in any of these consultations. The whole history of Methodism proves how loyal they have been to the preachers and how conservative of the methods adopted. What an opportunity it was for a scriptural beginning according to New Testament precedents. What if he had invited a few prominent laymen of the Societies in London, Bristol, Newcastle, and Leeds, and so in an enlarging circle as the societies multiplied and the preachers increased? They would probably have added little light in doctrinal and speculative discussions which occupied so much of the time of these early Conferences, but as to discipline and local needs, the Kingswood school and the temporalities generally, would they not have been helpful? Was it because he had broken away from the Moravian regulations with their apostolical example of consulting the brethren in all emergencies at Fetter Lane? If these things occurred to him, they were dismissed as trammels upon his administration. He was providentially directed. Plainly he was

¹ Whitehead's "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. p. 173.

² "History of Methodism," Vol. I. p. 392.

so convinced. But doubts will arise when it is considered that it has no countenance in the methods of the primitive churches under the guidance of the Apostles, and it was the fruitful source of numerous divisions in the United Societies after his decease. If the Deed of Declaration had included one hundred laymen as well as a hundred preachers; eminently prudent, as it was to hold property, a pure temporality; it is not too much to declare in the light of all the facts of history that Methodism, the world over, would have been as fully a unit of organization, as it is of doctrine and means of grace. The proofs of this postulate will appear in the current places. There is no key, however, to the anomalous conditions, unless it be found in the dictum of Tyerman which is freely accepted: "Wesley was not a designing man; cunning he had none; he was a man of one idea; his sole aim was to save souls. This was the philosophy of his life. All his actions had reference to this. He had no preconceived plans; and hence it is needless to speculate about his motives. The man is best known by what he *did*; not by what philosophers may suspect he *thought*."¹ His parental relation to his helpers and the societies determined the bias of his actions, and under its moulding influence there was no need that he should preconceive plans. In him resided the motive power of the whole, and it needed no invention to adjust the subordinate parts; wheel came to wheel and cog to cog by a kind of natural selection. And it is not easy to criticise it on the score of efficiency alone, and the system can be freely condoned during the life of Wesley. Criticism holds only as to the trend of such a system as developed in the fundamental error of its entailment by the Deed of Declaration.

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Preface Vol. I. p. 5.

CHAPTER V

Wesley's effort to unite with him the evangelical clergy of the National Church — Its failure — Twenty-second Conference at Manchester, 1765 — "Feoffees," or trustees of chapels; property question — General Booth's Salvation Army and its property tenure akin to Wesley's, and open to abuse — Prediction fulfilled — Wesley seeks a closer union with Whitefield — Wesley's objection to the Leeds' chapel deed — Explains the origin of his power — The first missionary collection at Newcastle, 1767 — Perfection theory — Appeal from America, 1769 — Steps in anticipation of the Deed of Declaration — Led into it by Dr. Coke — Characteristics of Wesley — America in the minutes, 1770 — Calvinistic discussion revived — Asbury and Wright to America, 1771 — Joseph Benson — Women preachers.

1740-65. About a quarter of a century had now elapsed since the Fetter Lane separation and the independent career of Wesley as the organizer of United Societies, within, but not of, the National Church. In 1764 he made an earnest effort to unite with him in his single-eyed work of spreading scriptural holiness over the land all the evangelical clergymen. To this end he addressed a circular to thirty-four of them, including such notable persons as Romaine, Newton, Shirley, Stillingfleet, Fletcher, Venn, Burnet, and Berridge. Three only condescended to answer. Had he succeeded it would have bound the Societies more closely to the National Church and greatly strengthened him in his efforts to resist the growing clamor for ordination and separation. It threw him back upon his lay-preachers and such clergymen as were willing to continue their coöperation. Wesley was now sixty-two years of age, and there remained to him another quarter of a century of life. A few chapters will cover its salient events. The twenty-second Conference was held at Manchester, August 20, 1765. There were now twenty-five circuits in England, nearly a fourth of them in Yorkshire; four circuits in Scotland, two in Wales, and eight in Ireland. These were served by ninety-two itinerants, twelve of whom were admitted at this Conference.

Twelve pounds, or about \$60, was the salary of the preachers. About \$500 were collected for the Kingswood school, and the subscriptions in the classes amounted to some \$3500, of which

\$3000 was devoted to chapel debts, \$150 to law expenses, and about \$500 divided among preachers in want.

When the Bristol chapel was built, in 1739, Wesley had appointed "eleven feoffees," or trustees, to relieve him in directing the work and the financial responsibility. But friends in London, Whitefield in particular, objected, insisting that "he do everything in his own name." Among the reasons they gave, and which were decisive with Wesley, Stevens thus expresses: "That such feoffees would always have it in their power to control him, and if he preached not as they liked to turn him out of the house he had built." "In this manner," Stevens continues, "was it that the property of all his chapels became vested solely in himself during the early part of his career; a responsibility which was necessary in his peculiar circumstances; which he never abused, and which he transferred, in prospect of his death, by a 'deed of settlement' to his Legal Conference. Decisions in the Court of Chancery, made under this document, have given security to the property, and stability to the whole economy of Wesleyan Methodism down to our day."¹ When this famous Deed of Declaration comes under review this question will be considered more fully. Suffice it to say, as a running comment now, that there can be no dispute that this class and exclusive method of holding church property by the founder of Methodism, and the Legal Hundred after him, had the merit of giving security to the property, and stability to the economy. The same may be said with even more pronounced emphasis of the tenure by which all church property is held in the Roman Catholic Church. The entail is through the bishop of the diocese, and the archbishop and the cardinal, and ultimately in the Pope. In its incipient stage the same process is going on in the now world-wide Salvation Army. Under General William Booth it is known that for a period, movements of the officers, and the rank and file under them, were by his orders after a council with those nearest him in authority; but he quietly assumed, as the Army grew and military power concentrated, to discard the councils, and he now issues his orders independently. The garrisons and barracks, the press plant, and valuables of every kind are deeded to him, and it is safe to predict that after his decease serious trouble will originate from this cause with possible disintegration.²

¹ Stevens's "History of Methodism," Vol. I. p. 128.

² This was written in 1894, or about four years ago, and already the inevitable has come to pass. Arbitrary and absolute power vested in the "General" as he

In vain do you look for New Testament precedents for thus securing property and stability. Parallels in civil government are not wanting in the czars and emperors and kings. If it could be shown that security of property and stability of government cannot otherwise be obtained, there might be some color of excuse for a proceeding so violative of the methods of the primitive Church under the Apostles and of that principle of common law that property should vest in those who have created it. The strongest objection is yet to be mentioned: it preordains opportunity for abuse without possibility of redress and without limit as to its flagrancy. History is full of such abuse. That Wesley did not abuse it may be freely admitted as a fact, and something could be allowed him in "his peculiar circumstances"; but when he "transferred it" to the Legal Hundred the moral right is challenged and its expediency questioned. Empire follows property, as shall be farther exhibited.

Some modification was made by Wesley; for ten years after the Bristol chapel case, Stevens says: "In 1749 the chapels had been legally settled upon trustees. A person was now appointed to examine their deeds, and see that vacancies among their trustees were filled." He evidently means that for local convenience trustees held the chapels formally, but it did not affect Wesley's power of entail.

The Manchester Conference, though the most important in twenty-five years, receives but scant notice from Whitehead, and the same may be said of Moore. In the latter case it can be accounted for from the fact that his "Life of Wesley" is almost a literal transcript of Whitehead's "Life." He purloined whole pages, but never mentions Whitehead's name except to discredit him or to make a point emphatic. Stevens and Tyerman furnish what facts are available. The Conference continued four days. None of the historians gives the numbers in society at this date.

aged rendered him more exacting and impatient of contradiction. Under this military system, his son, Ballington, and accomplished wife, were put in charge of the American forces, and after nine years of successful labor, without warning, peremptory orders were sent him by the father from India to return to England and turn over his command with the property to his successor. He complied under protest, withdrew from the Army, and organized the American Volunteers out of sympathizing comrades and others. The merits of the case between father and son the world will never understand, though each has set forth his case in the public press. The son announces the breach as final, so the Salvation Army has its first secession, the fruit of arbitrary power; it is not the last. The history of such power in Wesley and Asbury will repeat itself in General Booth.

It now assumed business shape. The theological and ecclesiastical questions were mostly settled for the nonce. For the first time a roster of the preachers and of the circuits is published, and a Plan of Appointments, with minute rules of discipline for both the societies and the preachers. Superannuated preachers are first named, with a plan for their relief. The certificate, or ticket of transfer of members from one society to another, became an established custom. The phrases "brother" and "sister" were allowed "*prudently.*" Tobacco and drams were not to be touched by the preachers on "any pretence," and were denounced among the people. Men and women were to sit apart, and no backs were to be put to the chapel seats. Breaking bread in the love-feasts was discountenanced as "a silly custom invented by James Wheatley." No preacher was to print anything without Wesley's approbation. Fasting and family prayer were urged, and economy enjoined in the households. Wesley, the God-fearing man of ascetic habits, narrowly looked into everything, and one cannot but admire his intense earnestness for the welfare of both the bodies and souls of his "sons in the Gospel" and the flock over which he was made a watchman.

1766 was also an eventful year in Methodism. Wesley's plan for a union with the evangelical clergy of the National Church having failed, he seems to have looked with a more favorable eye upon the Calvinistic Methodists. A closer union took place with Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon. August 21, 1766, he wrote: "This morning I and my brother spent two blessed hours with George Whitefield. The threefold cord we trust will never more be broken. On Tuesday next my brother is to preach in Lady Huntingdon's chapel at Bath. That, and all her chapels, are now put into the hands of us three."¹ It was just after the twenty-third Conference, held at Leeds, August 12. In the early part of this year, when he had reached Liverpool in his annual itinerary, he examined the new trust deed of Pitt Street chapel, and was much displeased. There is such a charming simplicity and innocence in the way this "autocrat of the Methodists," as Tyerman titles him, states his objections that they must be rehearsed in full. "(1) It takes up three large skins of parchment, and so could not cost less than ten guineas; whereas our own deed, transcribed by a friend, would not cost six shillings. (2) It is verbose beyond all sense and reason; and withal so ambiguously worded that one passage only might find matter for a suit of ten

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. II. p. 556.



GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

or twelve years in chancery. (3) It everywhere calls the house of God a meeting-house, a name which I particularly object to. (4) It leaves no power either to the assistant or me, so much as to place or displace a steward. (5) Neither I, nor all the Conference, has power to send the same preacher two years together. To crown all, (6) If a preacher is not appointed at the Conference, the trustees and the congregation are to choose one by most votes! Can any one wonder I dislike this deed, which tears the Methodist discipline up by the roots?"¹ Ah me, empire by property creates friction. Thoughtful laymen who contributed their money to build chapels, being loyal to doctrine and discipline, could not see why they must resign all control over it to the Conference deed. The fact was, as disclosed by this rebellious deed at Leeds and the admission of Watson, that "some began to wish a larger share in the government";² the yeast of dissatisfaction with the paternal system was fermenting in the Methodist mass.

At the Leeds Conference forty circuits were reported, and for the first time the minutes show an attempt to furnish a census of the societies, but it is too imperfect to give an aggregate of the members. The debts on the chapels and preachers' houses had increased to £11,383. "We shall be utterly ruined," said Wesley, "if we go on at this rate." It was found expedient, officially, to assert that they were not Dissenters, and the preachers were directed not to hold their services so as to interfere with the Church worship. Separation from the National Church was one of the great topics discussed and negatively determined. The Wesleys had but one dictum, which John expressed in an apothegm, "Whoever separate from the Church separate from the Methodists." Tyerman gives evidence that Charles attended this Conference, and deems it important as a fact by reason of this discussion and also of John's administrative power, and a "thorough reform of the preachers." It appears there were Methodist "radicals" in those days, and the murmurings against unnamable authority, as exercised by Wesley, grew so loud that he felt constrained to make a defence. It is an elaborate paper given by Tyerman in full,³ but not noticed by Moore, though he copied from Whitehead, who also gives it nearly in full. Watson has scant reference and Stevens contents himself with a dozen

¹ Rev. Luke Tyerman, here and elsewhere quoted from his "Life of Wesley," was a Wesleyan preacher and a warm partisan of the British Conference, but he was a candid historian. See Vol. II. p. 556, American edition.

² "Life of Wesley," American edition, 1831, p. 183.

³ "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. pp. 557-559.

lines, and they do not give the pith of it. A paraphrase is the best the limits will allow. "But what *power* is this, which *you* exercise over all the Methodists in Great Britain and Ireland? The answer is, that in 1738 persons came to him in London asking him to advise and pray with them, . . . here commenced my power, to appoint, when and where and how they should meet — and to remove the unfaithful — and this power remains the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, twelve hundred, or twelve thousand." He rehearses how he came to appoint stewards and of removing them, another phase of power. Then certain brethren as lay-preachers desired to help him and he durst not refuse their assistance, "and here commenced my power to appoint each of these where, when, and how to labor; that is, while he chose to continue with me," — the case continued the same when the number of preachers increased. He recites that in 1744 he called together the first Conference of a select few. "They did not desire this meeting, but I did." Afterward, when the number of preachers increased, he invited more to attend Conference: "I sent for them to *advise*, not to *govern* me. Neither did I, at any of those times, divest myself of any of that power above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine." "But several gentlemen are much offended at my having so *much* power." "My answer to them is this: I did not seek any part of this power — I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden; which God lays upon me; but if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I can transfer this burden, who *can* and *will* do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both you and them." "But some of your helpers say, 'This is shackling free-born Englishmen,' and demand a *free* conference, that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer it is possible that something of this kind after my death may take place; but not while I live — every preacher and every member may leave me when he pleases; but when he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first." "But this is arbitrary power; this is no less than making yourself a pope." "If it is meant that I exercise the power singly, it is true, but if by arbitrary is meant unjust, unreasonable, or tyrannical, then it is not true." He disclaims being a pope, and contends that the charge is injurious to him and mischievous to the people — "to whom they really owe more, for exercising this very power, than for all my preaching put together. Because

preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the preachers and all the people is a burden indeed!" This is his vindication. You need not too carefully analyze it. Hampson, in his History, who had been checked by Wesley, says, "He never thought his authority secure, but when exerted to the utmost. The love of power was the chief misery of his life, the source of infinite disgusts, and the most frequent cause of the defection of his friends." Tyerman says, of his defence, "He assigns reasons for it, and unless he is suspected of insincerity—a thing of which he was almost incapable—all must give him credit for being actuated by high and conscientious motives. The wisdom of acting as he did is a fair subject for discussion; but the purity of his intention can hardly be questioned."¹ In this calm judgment the unbiassed will readily concur. As a parent he exercised supervision and discipline, and for the United Societies it was best, everything considered, while he lived. The fundamental error was in his attempt to entail parental power. If, as a matter of fact, its exercise during his life preserved the union of the societies, it was the direct cause of the destruction of that unity after his decease through its exercise by the Legal Hundred and their successors, as shall be shown in the sequel of English Methodist history.

At this Conference of 1766 a heart-searching scrutiny was made of the societies. Wesley gave his opinion in no flattering terms of the average Methodist at this period.² He lectured the preachers severely, but not unjustly. Preaching was not enough—they must visit from house to house and instruct and reprove, or "the Methodists will be no better than other people," as was charged. It was one of the most important he ever held. A new impulse was given the entire work. Wesley entered upon his travels and labors with redoubled zeal, were that possible, and his helpers everywhere were stirred to a higher consecration. He came into the possession of \$1000 by the will of a Miss Lewen, one of the converts who died early; but it was speedily distributed among the poor. He could resist no appeal, and his hand was always open while a shilling remained. Withal no man was more loved and more hated than he. He was assailed on every side, maligned and traduced by tongue and pen.

The Conference year of 1767 is notable for the fact that Wesley lifted the first missionary collection at Newcastle, August 8, and not at Leeds in 1769, as is supposed. He had, however, more

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. II. pp. 579, 580.

² *Ibid.* p. 580.

faith in consecrated men who would volunteer for missionary work abroad than in money as an agency.¹ The Methodist work was pushed by the trio now in full fellowship, — the two Wesleys and Whitefield. Persecutions waxed hotter, and many were the narrow escapes from open violence and sudden death of these fervent evangelists. About the only doctrinal bone of contention remaining was the Christian perfection theory; the practice was under limitation. There were zealots for the former who constantly misrepresented Wesley's views, and he was kept busy correcting and enforcing what he did believe.

But as this is about the only doctrinal point of difference of interpretation, unity in this regard having been marvellously preserved throughout its whole history in every land, this sketch takes no note of the intellectual and experiential side of this great revival of genuine religion. It is elaborately treated by Whitehead, Moore, Watson, Stevens, and Tyerman. On the 18th of August, the twenty-fourth Conference was held at London. For the first time a complete statistical table of members was furnished, showing an aggregate of 25,911.

There were forty-one circuits and 104 itinerants. Francis Asbury was received at this Conference, a fact worthy of note as the future will show. There were eighty-four chapels in England, one in Wales, two in Scotland, and thirteen in Ireland, with an aggregate debt of £12,000. Subscriptions were taken to cancel it, and the effort was pressed with all the authority and system of Wesley until within a few years the debt was reduced to £7728.

1768 Wesley made his first will, differing very much from his last, in 1789. He also made a second visit to the sainted Fletcher, who so nobly coöperated with him and the lay-preachers throughout life, and whom Wesley nominated by correspondence with him as his successor, an appointment he would no doubt have pressed, but for Fletcher's decease, though he never gave the least encouragement to it personally. And this is all the mention the space will allow of one of the purest, wisest, and most judicious men that ever lived to honor God. On the 16th of August, the twenty-fifth Conference was convened at Bristol. The increase of members was but 430, and Wesley was dissatisfied, as well he might be. It was attributed to the fact that most of the preachers were partly secularized in trades and artisanship, and so not their time only, but their minds, were divided. Steps were taken

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. II. pp. 606, 607.

to remedy the evil as far as possible. The increased circulation of books was also urged to counteract the declension in some places.

August 1, 1769, the twenty-sixth Conference began at Leeds. There was a gain of six circuits and of 922 members. An appeal came from America for helpers, and Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor responded and were accepted. A collection of seventy pounds was made, fifty for the new chapel in New York and twenty for their travelling expenses to the distant land. Wesley was now sixty-six years old. He began to concern himself seriously about the successorship—heart and mind were intent upon preserving the unity of his preachers and his people after his death. It may be admitted, according to the favorite phrasing of most of his biographers, that, as a rule, he had no preconceived plans; but in this matter he exhibited an anxiety which could not be fathered upon Providence, or referred to any thing but the delusive necessity all autocratic minds see, for a perpetuation of the absorbing idea of their personal leadership. Running before Providence, he finally settled it in a way that ultimated in the converse of his purpose; it destroyed the unity of both his preachers and “the people called Methodists.” His distraction was great, for though he presented a plan at this Conference curiously involved and complicated, he held it in suspense for years, then brought it up again at the Conferences of 1773, 1774, and 1775, when it was signed by all the preachers present, 101.¹ In 1784 it was superseded by the Deed of Declaration when he was eighty-one years of age.

Meantime a pious, educated, wealthy, versatile, consecrated, and diplomatic character had come into Methodism, and, more than any other man, Wesley excepted and Asbury not considered, moulded its structure both in England and America. That character was Thomas Coke. But for him, probably the advice of his brother Charles would have prevailed, when he wrote to John on this very subject: “You cannot settle the succession. You cannot divine how God will settle it.” Had Providence been allowed to settle it, Providence would have followed its own precedents for church government in the New Testament, and thus settled, it would have been settled right. An earnest appeal had been made to him by the few preachers doing missionary work in America, to pay them a visit, and Wesley was strongly inclined to comply; but he long hesitated, and finally abandoned the idea. Whitehead

¹ Tyerman's “Life,” Vol. III. pp. 49, 50, is found the full text of this plan.

gives his dominating reason for not going, characteristic of Wesley. "Being one day asked in company if he intended to go to America, he answered, 'If I go to America, I must do a thing which I hate as I hate the devil.' 'What is that, sir?' said one present. 'I must keep a secret,' he replied, meaning that he would have to conceal it from the societies, which were strongly opposed to his going. And this incident authenticates his brother's declaration, 'But you expect he will keep his own secrets! Let me whisper into your ear; he never could do it since he was born. It is a gift which God has not given him.'"¹ His nature was open and ingenuous. Those who travelled with him had free access to his letters. The representations made him by others, if reputable persons, he never questioned. He had a childlike confidence in the sincerity of others, and thus was moved to action, often unconsciously to himself, by the influences prompting it. The trait is noteworthy as furnishing a key to some of the pregnant events of his life, fraught with consequences of deepest moment, acts of which he repented with tears when it was too late to amend them. He was incapable of guile or malice, and he easily condoned the conduct of those who at times misled him.

The twenty-seventh Conference was held in London, August 7, 1770. There were fifty circuits, a gain of four; the last is significant—"Fiftieth, America, Joseph Pilmoor, Richard Boardman, Robert Williams, John King." There was a gain of 1143 members. There were forty-three preachers' wives to be provided for out of something over one hundred, thus inroads were made upon a celibate ministry. The support was extremely meagre: £64 for the preacher, £12 for his wife, £8 for each child, but for the children, the boys only until they were eight years old, when they were to be sent to the Kingswood school, and girls until they were fourteen. This Conference was memorable for inciting the warmest controversy of a doctrinal kind that ever raged in the societies. A minute of the Conference a little incautiously worded revived the Calvinistic discussion. Wesley himself had grown tired of disputations of the kind, but the points involved were vigorously taken up, with Shirley, Toplady, and Hill on the one side and Fletcher and Olivers on the other. It produced the celebrated and imperishable "Checks to Antinomianism" by Fletcher, who proved himself more than a match for all his opponents. His work is a

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. pp. 212, 227.

splendid specimen of Christian controversial writing. It settled the theological character of Methodism as emphatically Arminian. The controversy ran through several years, and Wesley, goaded by constant misrepresentations of the minute of 1770, printed an exposition of its true meaning for circulation among the preachers.

Trouble occurred in Dublin, a dispute regarding the authority of the preachers and the leaders respectively, thus showing that the hierarchal system of wheels within wheels, after all, does not work without serious friction. It possesses the one advantage of the power to crush, generally, it must be admitted, the wrongdoers, but always liable to grind the innocent without adequate provision for redress. Wesley wrote, "In the Methodist discipline the wheels regularly stand thus: the assistants, the preachers, the stewards, the leaders, the people."¹ The pyramid stood on its apex. This fact focalized the whole difference, which is seen to agitate the societies twenty years before his death; directly or indirectly to disrupt it afterward, and to lead in America to numerous divisions, and an agitation which cannot cease in the nature of the case until the pyramid stands on its base—the people. Wesley makes the following entry in his *Journal*: "1771, June 28th—this day I entered the sixty-ninth year of my age. I am still a wonder to myself. My voice and strength are the same as at nine and twenty. This also hath God wrought."² He rises before you a sublime, historical figure unparalleled by any other of his class. He ascends on eagles' wings, preaching, travelling, and writing as never before. His sun of life was westering for a rich and mellow setting. A halo seemed to settle about his head, which gave the only sign of his advancing years in its almond blossoms, so that wherever he went veneration fell upon the people, and the preachers were awed to stillness in his presence.

The twenty-eighth session of Conference began at Bristol, August 8, 1771. The call from America for more laborers was responded to by five—two were sent, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. A name famous in Methodism appears upon the roll for the first time, Joseph Benson. He lived to be twice President of the Wesleyan Conference, and from 1803 to his death in 1821, editor of the *Methodist Magazine* and author of an elaborate commentary. In this year Miss Bosanquet, the future wife of Fletcher, wrote Wesley for advice as to female preaching, and in

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. II. p. 109.

² "Journal," Vol. II. p. 355, American edition, 1831.

his answer he rests the case in her admitted extraordinary call, which he conceded also to his lay-preachers, and thus began in Methodism an important movement for woman's emancipation from old traditions, the end of which is not yet, much as has been gradually conceded in the 120 odd years to this date.

CHAPTER VI

The last score years of Wesley's life—Leeds Conference of 1772—Accepts a chaise for his travels—Attacks the principle that the people are "the source of power"—Finds irregularities in his book business, the germ of "Book Concerns"—The Conference of 1774; "concord" by acquiescence in his will—His change of opinion as to the colonies in America—Dr. Coke comes upon the scene; divergent estimates of his biographers; pen-portrait; dominating passion, ambition—City Road chapel—Wesley bends to appointments to save a break with the societies—M'Nab and the Bath trouble—The ordination question culminates and Charles Wesley retires—Whitehead aspersed—Birstal property question.

1771-91. A score of years to Wesley's earthly end. He was rounding out his sixty-ninth year. In 1772 he read a pamphlet on the slave-trade by Anthony Benezet, a French Protestant, who, after an education in England, became a Quaker in Philadelphia, Penn., U.S.A., and he was so impressed by it that he concentrated his protest in the words, "that execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the slave-trade," a declaration which is often misquoted and sometimes misapplied. Spending most of the winter, as was his habit, in London, he made an annual tour among the societies. His friends saw that his amazing physical energy began to fail, and by subscription secured him a carriage and horses, which he relayed at periods, and which enabled him not only to keep up his practice of reading while travelling, but of writing as well, to which he inured himself. His northern tour of this year covered seven months' absence from London. He reached Leeds in time for the annual Conference, August 4, being the twenty-ninth. The gain of members was 1646. Wesley preached a sermon to an immense congregation, in a field back of the chapel, on the rise and growth of Methodism. Taking up his travels again at Bristol, Tyerman writes, "He visited the whole society from house to house, taking them from west to east." He was indeed a father among his children. He travelled and preached and wrote incessantly this year, suffering most of the time acutely with a hydrocele; once, his chaise breaking down, he took to horseback and rode to an appointment twenty-two miles. Nothing could balk him.

His publications this year were numerous, and among them two political tracts,—“Thoughts upon Liberty” and “Thoughts upon the Origin of Power.” In the latter he combats the theory that the people of a nation are “the origin of power.” In this it is seen how he scouted the democratic doctrine of the New Testament, the sovereignty of the churches, and it accounts for his method of paternal control of the societies, as has been shown; the pyramid standing upon its apex. He attacks the origin of power in the people with taunts and withering sarcasm; these, perhaps, in lieu of argument; for the only one he offers is the illogical one, that the theory cannot be sound and its practice possible unless carried to its logical ultimate, and every man, woman, and child be made a voter for constituting parliamentary and governmental cabinets.¹ To-day, in England, his tract would be estimated a rank heresy by suffrage-exercising Englishmen, while in America, the people are the very foundation of the Republic. But Wesley was neither the first nor the last to demonstrate the unwisdom of political preachers, for he blundered in every instance: his Address to the King during the Pretender excitement in the realm, these tracts, and his subsequent “Calm Address to the American Colonies,” which he appropriated from Dr. Johnson’s diatribe, and when detected, frankly admitted, and was condoned by Johnson, who quizzically approved the enlarged circulation it gave his philippic.

The thirtieth Conference was held in London, August 3, 1773. Scant notice is taken of these Conferences by most of the historians. Tyerman is far more satisfactory, because he had access to materials not obtainable until his later day. In this way he furnishes opportunity for reflection upon Wesley’s monopolization of the printing and publishing business, as well as “the care of all the churches,” which Paul found his sufficient burden. Not often does a clergyman carry a business head upon his shoulders, and Methodism is about the only Protestant organization in either hemisphere which relegates temporalities as well as everything else to its ministry. During this year Wesley found that there must be something wrong with his book business. An account of stock was taken, and the inventory rendered showed that he was in debt to printers and binders £500, and yet had books on hand whose gross value was near £11,000. Some took up the suspicion that his wife by means of false keys had obtained access to the book steward’s cash and helped herself,

¹ Tyerman’s “Life,” Vol. III. p. 145.

but there was no conclusive proof. His book steward, Samuel Franks, a man of great probity, failing to unravel the mystery, fell into insanity and hanged himself. The discrepancy remained unsolved; the possessor of a large amount of property, Wesley was yet seriously in debt. The precedent thus established and entailed upon the Legal Hundred was the paternal origin of future "Book Concerns" in England and America, and one of the boastings of the parent bodies. In the sequel of this History it will be shown a grave error of economic judgment and of calamitous denominational strife.

On the 9th of August, 1774, the thirty-first Conference was held at Bristol. The membership reported was 35,612, showing a gain this year of 2340. Among the names received at this Conference were James Rodgers and Samuel Bradford, both eminent in after years, the latter esteemed as "the Demosthenes of Methodism." Dr. Adam Clarke, speaking of his eloquence, says, "I have never heard his equal,"—and he had heard Whitefield. The former, a successful preacher, the husband of the saintly Hester Ann Rodgers, he suffered much from persecutions, attended Wesley in his last journey, and was at his bedside when he departed. Wesley was averse to having his portrait taken, more because of the sittings required and loss of time, as he esteemed it, than any other reason. But two or three pictures of him were taken, of which Tyerman gives excellent copies. This year he was prevailed on to allow a cast of his face to be taken. The Conference of 1774 was largely occupied with temporal matters. A Miss March, writing of it August 23, says among other things, "The preachers said there was much concord among them, and one of them observed Mr. Wesley seemed to do all the business himself."¹ The method of the Conferences was for Wesley to ask questions and solicit opinions in answer, but there were no votes taken; Wesley decided, and that ended it; and this method was perpetuated after his demise and came over into American Methodism. No doubt it expedited business, but what of its reflex influence? They sat with closed doors, the people were excluded; and as for the preachers under such a training, all individuality was lost; they gave up everything to the presiding genius; happily their veneration for and confidence in him were such, and he proved himself so worthy of both, that as a rule "concord" reigned. As was inevitable, however, under the system cliques formed under the leadership of the most self-

¹ *Ibid.* p. 177.

asserting of the preachers as his death was foreshadowed, and the question who should be greatest distracted the Wesleyan Conference for years afterward. Wesley kept on writing and publishing extensively during this year.

1775 saw the English crown and the American colonies in conflict. The revolt was raised in the latter against the principle of taxation without representation. This was the occasion of Wesley's "Calm Address to the American Colonies," which was a pure abridgment of Dr. Johnson's "Taxation no Tyranny," yet Wesley signed it "By the Rev. John Wesley, M.A." Prior to reading Johnson his sympathies were with the colonies, and five years before, in the incipency of the Revolution, he published a pamphlet to this end. He was bitterly attacked for his change of views. Tyerman naively suggests: "Wesley had a perfect right to change his opinions, but when a man like Wesley does that, he can hardly expect to escape unfriendly criticism. The world dislikes changelings and hesitates to trust them."¹ A wider application of this truth will be made in the body of this History. Fletcher and Olivers came to his defence against a host of pamphleteers who lampooned and maligned him. But he needed no defence as to his motives, whatever might be said of his judgment in the matter. In June of this year Wesley had a violent illness of fever, and for three days his life was despaired of; indeed, the rumor obtained that he had died, but he marvelously recovered and lived for fifteen years longer. The thirty-second Conference was held at Leeds, August 1, 1775, and was largely attended, and rigid inquiry was made into the qualifications of the preachers.² The membership had increased 2533. Daniel M'Allum was in the plan of appointments. He labored mostly in Scotland and continued in the field for near sixty years. He merits this passing mention. Also John Valton, a great revivalist and a man of mark for near twenty years.

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 187.

² The *London Methodist Recorder* of Jan. 6, 1898, organ of the Wesleyan Methodists, publishes a letter of Rev. John Fletcher to John Wesley under date of Aug. 1, 1775, or the same day of this Leeds Conference. The letter was found recently among some old papers of the Book Room. It outlines a plan for a closer union of the Societies with the Church of England with great particularity. The problem with those who have magnified the importance of this discovery is why Wesley preserved it, and yet makes no reference to it in any connection. The simple reason appears to be that the suggestions made were not new to Wesley. Those who will take the pains to compare this letter with facts already stated in this History as to Wesley's tentation in 1764 to enlist the clergy of the Established Church in his work, and its almost utter failure, and his embodiment of a Plan



THOMAS COKE.

The thirty-third Conference was held in London, August 6, 1776. The total membership was 39,826, including the American societies at the census of the previous year. Fletcher's health failed, and Wesley invited him to travel with him, which he did for some time, and lived nine years longer. He spent three years in Switzerland, and on returning to England married Miss Bosanquet, memorable name in Methodism, and he died August 14, 1785. But as Fletcher had failed him it is a coincidence at least that in the same year he formed the acquaintance of Thomas Coke, than whom no man, Fletcher excepted, had such an influence over him for the remainder of his life. Wesley was now seventy-three years old. Coke was a young man of twenty-nine. No character in Methodism is so difficult to mensurate, and none as to whom there is so wide a divergence of opinion as to his merits and demerits, which were so striking that admission of his faults and frailties is about the only point upon which his critics agree and the one salient and redeeming feature of his eventful life,—the missionary of Methodism by eminence for the whole world.

The key to this divergence of opinion is not hard to find. Impartial biography seems an impossibility, as human nature is constituted. This declaration is made because of the fact that there lies before the writer Whitehead's "Life of the Wesleys," in which Dr. Coke is painted by a man whose opportunities for correct estimate are unsurpassed, except by Samuel Drew, Coke's literary executor, whose biography of Coke is also before me. Whitehead's work betrays a coloring biassed by his party affiliations among the cliques into which the Conference divided, after Wesley's demise. It was the party of the people and of liberal administration. Wesley's Journal reflected his view of Coke as influenced by consecrated motives, while condoning his ambition and the indirections he resorted to in order to satisfy it. Watson's "Life," through deficiency of information in part, is the apologist of Coke. Moore's "Life of Wesley" is severely par-

submitted to the Conference of 1669, and for years after up to this Leeds Conference of 1775, will find that nearly all the points made in this letter of Fletcher's are set forth in Wesley's plan. It came too late for Wesley. The only thing it shows is Fletcher's stanch adherence to the National Church, and his determination not to concur in any scheme of "ordination" for any of Wesley's helpers until this last resort to secure it from the National Church on the Plan suggested in this letter should be tried and proved abortive. Wesley did not make the effort, and it cannot be shown that Fletcher was ever a party to the subsequent ordinations of 1784, and later. He proposed to Fletcher to be his personal "successor," but he never entertained it.

tisan, as a leader of the Coke clique in the Wesleyan Conference, and bitterly prejudiced against Whitehead and his views. Bangs's and Stevens's Histories are under the constraint of preconceived theories and confessional prejudices, and, as such, see Coke in the most favorable light only. Lastly, Tyerman's "Life," the most exhaustive, impartial, and latest of the group, is honest and fair-minded. A strong Conference man, he yet tells all he knows of both Wesley and Coke. The telling excluded his work from republication by the Methodist Episcopal Book Concern,¹ though ever ready to furnish a market for Methodist literature of trans-Atlantic origin. The reprint is by the Harper Brothers, New York, 1872, and even this independent firm did not venture to issue it without, for business policy, adding an Appendix: Stevens's defence of Wesley's ordination of Dr. Coke and of his participation in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which differs so widely from Tyerman's account, and, as the writer believes, the truth of history.

A prayerful determination to avoid, if possible, extremes, and to strike the golden mean of this bewildering maze of facts and opinions, shall control the writer, as Thomas Coke will hereafter be brought so frequently under review in these pages. Suffice it at present for his introduction, to say that he was born at Brecon, Wales, September 9, 1747. His father was an eminent and wealthy surgeon, and Thomas was an only child. He was frivolous in his youth, and inclined to infidelity. At sixteen he was removed to Oxford, and entered at Jesus College in that University. Through reading Sherlock he was made a nominal Christian. At the age of twenty-one he was chosen councilman for Brecon, and soon after elected chief magistrate. As his full intention was to enter holy orders, his secular offices secured him flattering prospects of rapid advancement in the National Church. The prebend of the cathedral at Worcester was his objective. "Deluded with the prospects of sudden elevation in the Church, the visionary phantom continued to dance before him till his serious impressions began to fade . . . he hastened to obtain episcopal orders that no impediment might obstruct his course or intercept the bounty of his friends. Several years had now

¹ Since the foregoing was written, in an interview with my friend, Rev. Dr. John Lanahan of Baltimore, who was at the time assistant Book Agent in New York, he assured me that there was nothing personal in their failure to republish Tyerman—they were surpassed by the Harpers. Evidently, however, there must have been strong prejudice against the work among Methodists, or the Appendix to it would not have been printed as a salvo.

elapsed since the first intimations had been given him that brought on the ambitious delirium with which he was still enslaved." These are the words of Drew, his biographer,¹ and furnish a key to the weak side of his character. It was the one frailty of his nature, and was the hidden human spring to the activities of a marvellously consecrated life. He took out his degree of Doctor of Civil Laws on the 17th of June, 1775. "His understanding, though naturally good, was not to be ranked among the higher orders of human intellect. It was comprehensive, but not profound, and was better calculated to produce respect than to excite amusement." "Dr. Coke was low in stature, and as he advanced in age was inclined to corpulency; but he was finely proportioned, and exhibited a pleasing figure. His skin was remarkably fair; his eyes were dark, lively, and piercing. . . . His face was particularly handsome. A peculiar freshness, through every stage of life, distinguished his countenance, which was generally animated with an engaging smile; . . . his voice was soft, engaging, and melodious; . . . to his enthusiastic admirers he seemed to want nothing but wings to become an angel."² Disappointment of his aspirations led him to a more serious frame of mind, and, on hearing Thomas Maxwell, already mentioned in these pages, preach, he was aroused to his spiritual need, and this and other instrumentalities finally led him to an experience of saving grace. He had accepted the curacy of South Petherton, and now began to preach a zealous Arminian doctrine, receiving therefor the admonition of the Bishop of Bath; he was dismissed by his rector, and threatened by the mob. Finally he was driven out of Petherton, the bells were rung, and cider distributed for free drinks over their deliverance from a "Methodist curate." Wesley met him while in Somersetshire, and thus writes: "Here I found Dr. Coke, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him, and a union began then which I trust shall never end."³

The thirty-fourth Conference met at Bristol, August 5, 1777. Fletcher was there, stimulating by his saintly presence, and Coke was also there, having cast in his lot with Wesley, but his name does not appear in the minutes until the following year, when he was assigned to London. The historians are in a great muddle over this interval and the reasons for it. It was conjectured that

¹ "Life of Coke," American edition, 1837, p. 22.

² *Ibid.* p. 370.

³ Wesley's "Journal," Vol. II. p. 459.

Wesley wanted to keep his eye upon him as a convert, that he might not promote him rashly. Others indignantly deny it. He travelled part of the time with Wesley and devoted himself to a thorough acquaintance with the discipline of the United Societies. He threw the whole force of his impetuous nature into whatever enterprise he undertook. An informal session of Conference was held in Ireland early in 1778 in order to suppress a strong tendency to separation from the National Church because of maltreatment of the Irish Methodists, but Wesley stood firm against it, and the uprising was quelled.

The thirty-fifth Conference was held August 4, 1778, at Leeds. Sixty circuits were reported, and an aggregate membership of 47,057, including 6968 in America. The salient events of the year were the dedication of the new chapel in City Road as a substitute for the old Foundry, which had been used for thirty-five years. It cost about £6000 and contributions were received from the Methodists of the United Kingdom to pay for it. It was a fine edifice for that day and is still the focal point of London Methodism. It was proposed to make it so respectable as well, that the Lord Mayor might attend and other dignitaries. To this end it was suggested that the pulpit should have an exclusive supply; the two Wesleys, Coke, and John Richardson were the sabbatic preachers to the tabooing of the lay-preachers, however eminent and eloquent, as Pawson, Jaco, Rankin, Tennent, Olivers, and others. Charles Wesley was persistent as a high churchman, but after much contention the lay-preachers prevailed; and this, Whitehead declares, was the beginning of a decadence of John Wesley's absolute authority over the preachers. Watson thinks it only modified its exercise, as Wesley was politic enough to bend, if he could do it without seeming to break. It was intimated that at this time there was a combination of preachers against Wesley's authority, but they made Charles and his churchism the foil, and, if so, it lends probability to Whitehead's assertion. Wesley was now seventy-five years old, and innovations began to creep into his methods; besides, he was violently attacked again by pamphleteers in the grossest manner. At this Conference of 1778 others than preachers were allowed to be present, among them Thomas Thompson, Esq., afterward member of Parliament. The foreign missionary field for Methodism enlarged. A mission to Africa was discussed, but deferred, while the work in Antigua, West Indies, under Mr. Gilbert, was prospering. Laymen of some of the prominent

societies expressed a choice of preachers as a supply, and often won their point. In March of this year Wesley wrote while at Bristol, "This year I myself (which I have seldom done) chose the preachers for Bristol." He came into intimate relations with Mr. Creighton of the National Church, of whom future mention will be made in the so-called "ordination" of Dr. Coke. Wesley projected the *Arminian Magazine* this year, which has continued to be published without interruption to this day, making it the oldest religious magazine in the world.

The thirty-sixth Conference was held in London, August 3, 1779. One hundred and sixty-seven preachers received appointments. Henry Moore was admitted, a name eminent in Wesleyan Methodism. He took a prominent part in Ireland, as he was born in Dublin, 1751; was one of Wesley's trustees of his literary remains; was the last survivor of men Wesley ordained, and after spending near seventy years in the ministry died aged ninety-three years, a venerable patriarch. Alexander M'Nab was one of Wesley's most eloquent and successful preachers. During this year at Bath a serious trouble occurred. Wesley had appointed Edward Smith, a Church of England clergyman, to preach every Sunday night at Bath, thus overriding, as M'Nab thought, the lay-preachers, and he so vehemently opposed it that a division occurred in the society. Wesley and his brother endeavored to compose the dispute, but without avail. He read to the society a declaration of his absolute power to appoint when and where the preachers should officiate, and soon after notified M'Nab that he must submit or "he could not receive him as one of our preachers." It was a bold act of discipline, and its wisdom is questioned by Tyerman and others on solid ground. In the expulsion of M'Nab, Wesley was influenced by his brother, Dr. Coke, and the Rev. Mr. Collins. Through Pawson and the London preachers Wesley reviewed his act, and M'Nab was restored at the succeeding Conference. Charles was much displeased and wrote his brother a fretful letter. He esteemed it the entering wedge to insubordination and final separation from the National Church, an offence he could not brook.

The thirty-seventh Conference convened at Bristol, August 1, 1780. The increasing size of the body and the multiplication of business led to the resolve that from nine to ten days should be allowed each session. The number of preachers appointed was 171. Aggregate membership, 43,830, an increase for the past decade of 14,651, or about thirty-five per centum. Wesley in-

dulged prophetic hopes of future enlargement. Quoting Luther, that "a revival of religion seldom continues above thirty years," he looked upon one already fifty years continued and waxing stronger with its age. At seventy-seven Wesley still led the sacramental host with marvellous health and unyielding vigor. Charles Wesley was present at this Conference. Separation from the Church was again discussed, and he foresaw that the trend of his brother and the Conference was in that direction, so he sorrowfully retired, to meet them no more. In America the societies had increased, and this intensified the ordination question. Wesley having read Lord King's account of the Primitive Church, became satisfied that bishops and presbyters were essentially one in order, a conclusion he was assisted to reach by his environments.

The necessity for some action for the American societies was greater. Rectors of the inchoate Protestant Episcopal Church were few and far between over a vast territory, and, as in England, not above reproach in their moral conduct. There were now eight thousand Methodists in America, and they were practically without the ordinances. Dissatisfaction and disaffection obtained, and open revolt, despite the restraining power of Asbury, now Wesley's General Assistant. A pronounced hierarchist, his reading was not Lord King, but Bishop Potter, an uncompromising high churchman, true to "apostolical succession." Asbury studied Potter and spent not a little time in transcribing, as his Journal states, his strongest points.¹ But more of this in its proper connection. Wesley hesitated, as well he might. An expedient remained, and he adopted it: secure, if possible, an ordained clergyman of the National Church for the American societies. He wrote a long letter to Bishop Lowth of London, the very day after the adjournment of the Bristol Conference, soliciting the appointment of such a clerical helper, but he was refused.² About this time, also, Dr. Coke discerned heresy in Joseph Benson and arraigned him for Arianism, but the charge came to nothing, Coke thus exhibiting, as Tyerman pithily puts it, "a fussy officiousness which scarcely redounded to his honor." One of the legislative acts of this Conference was to enforce the rule that men and women should sit apart, which had been violated at Bristol. Wesley went so far as to resolve that he would not preach to such a congregation, so wedded was he to trivial forms of his

¹ Asbury's "Journal," edition 1852, Vol. I. pp. 369, 370.

² Full text of this letter in Whitehead and Tyerman.

discipline, for the apparent reason only that it was his. Among the publications of Wesley, this year, was "A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists," 12mo, 520 pages, which has continued to be used by the English Methodists, with slight alterations, to this day.

As Whitehead makes no note of the Conferences from 1780 to 1784, neither do any other Methodist historians, Moore, Watson, nor Stevens. Whitehead is the fountainhead. As a rule when he is silent all others are dumb of information. Tyerman alone supplies the hiatus. These facts make opportune mention that Stevens in a foot-note on page 208 of his "History of Methodism," Vol. II., invidiously suggests, "Whitehead's 'Life of Wesley' should not be consulted by any whose acquaintance with other contemporary authorities is not thorough enough to enable them to correct that author's immoderate prejudices." In the analysis of the biographers of Wesley already made in this work, it is conceded that Whitehead exhibits party bias, but as to "contemporary authorities," as just exposed, they had no information he did not supply of any moment; and they used it with "immoderate prejudices." The impartial reader need but consult together Whitehead and Moore.

The thirty-eighth Conference assembled August 5, 1781, at Leeds, and was memorable for the notable presence of eighteen clergymen, so largely had Wesley been reënfined from the National Church, while those preaching an evangelical doctrine in the Church were estimated at about eighty, set over against two or three when Wesley and Whitefield entered upon their soul-saving crusade. Coke and Fletcher were present, and there were about eleven hundred communicants. Wesley writes, August 6, the day before the Conference assembled: "I desired Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and four more of our brethren, to meet every evening, that we might consult together on any difficulty that occurred. On August 7, our Conference began, at which were present about seventy preachers, whom I had severally invited to come and assist me with their advice in carrying on the great work of God." Tyerman gives as the controlling reason for so sparse a gathering of the preachers — not one-half of them — that the society in Leeds could not entertain any more. There being more married preachers than preachers' houses in the connection, it was ordered at this Conference that no more married men be received except of necessity. These facts give us a clear insight into Wesley's methods at this time. The preachers were his

"sons in the gospel," to go and come at his bidding, and the people, his and their spiritual children, always in nonage, and so not officially consulted. It provoked at times scenes like the following at this Leeds Conference. Dr. Hey, a principal member at Leeds, a prominent physician and correspondent of the eminent Dr. Priestley, and a Methodist for seven and twenty years, intimated to Wesley that he desired to address the Conference and offer some suggestions and advice, declaring that if they were rejected he could no longer be a member of the Methodist society. Wesley allowed him to begin to read a paper, the gist of which was a complaint that the preachers were assuming a Dissenter attitude toward the National Church; but, as he read, the signs of dissatisfaction were so displayed that Wesley politely stopped the reading. Hey left the society. Early in this year the Oldham Street chapel, Manchester, was dedicated by Wesley. Next to City Road, it was the most pretentious house of the Methodists, and Tyerman mentions that Mrs. Bennett, a relative of John Morley, was "the first female class leader in Manchester." The relation gave her official standing in the quarterly meeting and so with others. After thirty years of matrimonial misery, Wesley's wife died in October of this year. He writes, October 8, "This evening she was buried, but I was not informed of it till a day or two after."¹ Throughout this year he was always on the wing, and yet managed to write and publish extensively.

The thirty-ninth Conference met in August, 1782, in London. The serious question discussed was the case of the Birstal chapel. Originally built by John Nelson in 1751, it became necessary to rebuild in 1782. The deed gave a reserve right after the death of the two Wesleys and Grimshaw, to select their own preacher. The new deed was in substance the same, and Wesley now refused to sign it, claiming property right for the Conference in his name absolutely over all the chapels. Like a shuttlecock in the game of battledore the controversy raged; propositions and counter propositions were submitted. Dr. Coke took part, probably at Wesley's prompting, and his letters to the trustees exhibit that insinuating diplomacy running through his whole future history. After a year or more the matter was settled; the trustees, pushed financially to meet a debt of £350, yielded the point on a pledge from Wesley that he would raise the money for them. Tyer-

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III., for the facts of this paragraph.

man says of it, — note that he was a strong but candid Conference partisan, — “Wesley committed a mistake; but be it borne in mind that he was now an old man of nearly eighty, and that Alexander Mather, and Thomas Briscoe, the superintendents of the Leeds and Bristol circuits, were participators in his folly.”¹

Thus early in the history of Methodism was the issue joined of empire by property, resumed from time to time, and made one of the fundamentals in the Reform controversy in American Methodism in 1827–30. When it comes for consideration the merits of the question shall be reviewed exhaustively. Suffice it to observe that the gist of it at Birstal and ever afterward was, Which is antecedently more probable, that the people will depart from Methodist usages and doctrines, or that the preachers will depart? The contention of Wesley and his coadjutors was that the people could not be trusted to control their own property. The contention of the people was, that after Wesley’s decease it was a necessary security, to mention no other grounds, that the preachers would not use the advantage against the people. The citation just made from Tyerman is pregnant of consequences, soon to be realized, in the one sentence, “He was now an old man of nearly eighty,” as accounting in part for the uncompromising attitude he assumed in the Birstal matter, as he was influenced, maybe unconsciously to himself, by his familiars and confidants. Not Coke only, but Charles Wesley, took part in the Birstal contention. It is interesting to note that he cites from one of the letters of the nineteen trustees the following just observation, “The civil and religious rights of mankind have seldom been promoted by the assemblies of ecclesiastics of any denomination; and they never will be, unless they are composed of men devoted to God, and dead to all allurements of ease, and avarice, and ambition.”² Charles Wesley admits its truth in his reply, but hopes that the Methodist Conferences will always be of the character depicted, as a reason for their yielding. Elizabeth Wallbridge must be mentioned, as in this year she was converted under the ministry of James Crabb, a Methodist preacher, and she became a member of society and continued such to her death

¹ “Life of Wesley,” Vol. III. p. 376.

² Tyerman’s “Life,” Vol. III. p. 377. The writer’s copy is from the library of the late well-known Rev. Anthony Atwood of the Philadelphia Conference M. E. Church. It is filled with pencil checks and marginal notes. Opposite this quotation is found the indorsement, “Ever so.”

in 1801. She was the original of Leigh Richmond's "Dairyman's Daughter," of which millions of copies have been published in thirty languages, but he omits to name her Methodist faith and associations. Wesley continued his unremitting labors, travelling, writing, and publishing. Coke or Moore or Bradburn shared his conveyance frequently, as he was now an old man.

CHAPTER VII

Wesley at eighty — The Birstal matter again — Wesley jealous of his authority — 1784, the “climacteric year of Methodism” because of the ordinations and separation — Coke’s assumptions of authority — Sunday-schools and Wesley — “The People called Methodists” — Coke and the Deed of Declaration — Tyerman on the Legal Hundred — Two objections to the Deed — Review of its provisions — Asbury and the ordinations — Fletcher no party to it — Coke’s letter and its overpersuasion — Subsequent ordinations by Wesley — Tyerman on Wesley’s inconsistency, viz., ordaining and yet a Churchman — The “Sunday Service for the American Methodists.”

1783, and Wesley at eighty years of age. He had more invitations now to preach in National churches than he could accept. A wonderful change in forty years, yet, from the point of view of the clergy, the fact that he and his were not excised is a striking proof of the conservative character of that Church, imitated by its congener, the Protestant Episcopal Church of North America. He was as ardent a Churchman as ever. He was taken dangerously ill in March, and on convalescing wrote a most tender letter to Hester Ann Rodgers, rehearsing a dream he had of his own funeral. Yet on June 11, he set out for Holland, with companions, taking as interpreter, Jonathan Ferguson, son of a preacher who had removed to Holland. He returned to London July 4. The fortieth Conference began July 29. The Birstal matter led to the following minute: “What can be done to get all our preaching houses settled on the Conference plan? Let Dr. Coke visit the societies throughout England as far as is necessary to the accomplishment of this end.” So strong was the sense of the injustice of this plan that the recalcitrants were not confined to Birstal. Kingswood school was also giving trouble. The membership of the societies was 45,955, not including 13,740 in America, and near 2000 in Antigua, West Indies. William Black was also laboring successfully in Nova Scotia. At this Conference Wesley was again taken seriously ill, but, after eighteen days of suspense he recovered, and was soon active as ever, keeping in touch with every interest, and guarding his authoritative control of preachers and societies as though dissolution and disaster

impended should he relax in the slightest minutiae of discipline. The mind was autocratic, and the danger was in his mind. It was, indeed, the only safeguard in such an anomalous and unbalanced government. Since the plan for transmitting his authority of 1770-75 had overpassed, the same subject was now the burden of his thoughts. He continued to write and publish, the *Arminian Magazine*, the medium for the sermons which he now matured.

1784 has been denominated by Whitehead "the grand climactic year of Methodism." He refers to the ordinations by Wesley and the Deed of Declaration. In this sense his characterization is just. A staunch advocate of its "original constitution," as he calls it, adhesion to the National Church, in the forlorn hope that reform of it could still be secured from within, he saw in the ordinations and the Deed of Declaration inevitable separation after Wesley's decease. He also saw the factions into which the Conference was dividing in a strife for leadership, and no provision being made for a popular or people's check upon these factions, he prophesied corruption, and final dissolution of the societies. Right in the abstract, he proved to be wrong in the concrete, inasmuch as he took no sufficient account of that empire of property, its cohesive power in holding together a powerful party, which the Deed of Declaration securely entrenched. Now in his eightieth year, Wesley claimed an octogenarian vigor as surprising to himself as it was to his friends. Setting out in March, he made a seven months' journey throughout England and Scotland. The Irish Conference he gave largely over to Dr. Coke. Apropos, Drew, his biographer, says: "As the doctor, in his occasional visits, sometimes acted as Mr. Wesley's more immediate representative, it was not unfrequently his lot to introduce regulations into the societies with which many were dissatisfied. His power was rather discretionary than precisely definite; and in several instances he was accused of proceeding beyond the bounds of delegated authority. . . . With difficulties of this nature the Doctor was somewhat compelled to contend; while the part which he actually bore in the dubious transactions rendered his means of defence more perplexing than the charges were serious which he undertook to obviate; and this ultimately exposed his conduct to suspicions which it was not easy for him to repel."¹ The reader will not fail to carefully note these reflections, by a bosom friend of Dr. Coke's and a Conference partisan, as their application will be

¹ Drew's "Life of Coke," edition 1837, pp. 43, 44.

seen often in the progress of this History. It is applied by Drew particularly to his alleged dominating influence in the preparation of the Deed of Declaration. Before it shall pass in thorough review as it came before the Conference, a few things need mention.

In his eighty-first year Wesley mellowed and ripened for his saintly garnerage. Nothing could be sweeter than his tender consideration for the children who thronged about him as he walked the streets and ministered in the chapels. The snowy locks, the freshness of his countenance, and his benignant smile won them to him, and scenes are narrated by his biographers of interviews with the children most pathetic and instructive. Guileless as a child himself, he was more than ever unsuspecting of the suggestions of those about him. In his travels he came to Otley, and preached at Bingley church, where a Sunday-school of 240 had been gathered. He remarks of it, "Who knows but that some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?" It is his first notice of Sunday-schools. They were beginning to attract public attention. Miss Ball had such a school at High Wycombe, and Miss Cooke, a Methodist, was the first to suggest to Robert Raikes the idea of instituting a school at Gloucester, which he did June 5, 1784, and ever since his name has been associated with them as the originator. The whole town of Leeds was divided into sections where reading, writing, and religion were taught the children, and then they were conducted to their respective churches. Wesley earnestly fostered the plan.

The forty-first Conference began at Leeds, July 27, 1784. It was a gracious season as well as one of "long debate," sixteen or seventeen hundred partaking of the Lord's Supper. "August 3 our Conference concluded in much love," and Wesley adds, with unaccustomed sarcasm—"to the great disappointment of all." This is from his Journal, which gives no hint that the "long debate" was on the Deed of Declaration; but Tyerman shows from the *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, pp. 12, 13, that it was the subject. Wesley preached not less than eight times during these seven days. Mention has been made of the prominent features of the early deed of settlement for the chapels. At the instance of Wesley, Dr. Coke ferreted out the fact that it was imperfect in that it gave no legal definition of the term occurring in it, "Conference of the People called Methodists,"¹ as the Conference was

¹ There never was a greater misnomer, and it is remarkable that it should have been selected by Wesley who absolutely repudiated the people as a factor in his governmental scheme. Whitehead criticises it severely in the Deed of Declara-

not an incorporated body. A strong probability is established that Dr. Coke was principal in the preparation of the new deed. It is well known that Wesley had a repugnance to legal forms and was impatient of their details. Indeed, Whitehead declares that: "Neither the design of it nor the words of the several clauses are to be imputed to Mr. Wesley. So far was he from forming any design of a deed of this kind, that I have good evidence to assert it was some time before he could be prevailed upon to comply with the proposal: and as in most cases where he followed the same guide, he soon found reason to repent. That Mr. Wesley did actually repent of signing this deed is pretty evident from the following letter which he wrote about a year afterward, and committed to a friend to deliver to the Conference at their first meeting after his decease."¹ The "guide" referred to was undoubtedly Dr. Coke. These confident assertions of Whitehead should be taken with some allowance, but not more than the opposite as made by Coke and Moore. The letter referred to Dr. Whitehead gives, and it indicates not so much repentance for the Deed of Declaration as grave fears based upon the jealousies he saw spring up among the preachers in the year when the letter was written to the Legal Hundred. If he harbored regrets for the act it was too late to amend and he did the only thing remaining: dictate this letter, which as a voice from his grave he hoped would restrain the factions.

Whitehead gives nearly in full this famous Deed, and it is copied by Moore and also Tyerman. It contains sixteen articles, and those interested in the text can find it in the references given. It entailed upon 100 out of 192 preachers then in the Conference all Wesley's personal authority, and legal power over the chapels for ever. It was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery, and has repeatedly been declared binding by the English courts. It is sharply criticised by Whitehead, but some of his exceptions are immaterial. Moore comes to its defence, and Coke was so severely charged with complicity as to call for an address to the societies explanatory of his connection with it. By its admirers it has been called the Magna Charta of English Methodism.

tion, while Moore as severely replies by the weak argument that it occurred of necessity in the Deed of Declaration inasmuch as that instrument was intended to legalize that very title in the original chapel deeds to Wesley, as though Whitehead could mean that it was subject to criticism as occurring in the Declaration, but not in the Deeds. His criticism, justly made, was of the title itself. It was one of the paradoxes of the autocratic mind of Wesley.

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Vol. II. pp. 250-254.

Tyerman analyzes the choice of Wesley of the one hundred and shows some strangely invidious discriminations. They were made by a man eighty-one years of age, who, when the storm broke upon him from the excluded, five of whom, the two Hampsons, father and son, Joseph Pilmoor, William Eels, and John Atlay, had issued an appeal to the societies against the discriminations and were arraigned at the Conference of 1785, claimed that if mistakes had been made by him in the selections he was alone responsible, and they must be attributed, not to his will, but to his judgment. It resulted in the loss of these five, and some thirty others of the excluded sooner or later withdrew. It was the first evil effect of entailed Paternalism. Tyerman says: "It was a deed investing a hundred Methodist preachers with the unexampled power of determining, irrespective of trustees, societies, and congregations, who shall be the official ministers in the thousands of chapels occupied by Methodist societies at home and abroad, throughout the United Kingdom, and throughout the world. We purposely refrain from raising the question about the kind of church government involved in this great settlement." In common, however, with the annalists having Conference bias, he concedes that without this deed, "the Methodist itinerancy must have ceased, and Methodism itself have been broken up into congregational churches." His final word is: "The reader must form his own opinion. Comment would be easy, but we purposely refrain."¹

The writer would improve the opportunity thus suggested and offers as facts in bar of this concession two objections: first, that the whole history of Methodism as a missionary organization shows that it had its itinerant feature conserved more by the laity than by the ministry. The Deed made it imperative that no preacher should be continued in any circuit or station longer than three years. Yet Watson, one of the most prominent of the Conference preachers and writers, a little later, in his biography of Wesley, makes his only exception to the Deed against this provision.² Both in England and America this "restrictive rule" as it came to be known, has met in the vast preponderance of cases its most persistent opponents not from the churches but from the preachers. The Birstal chapel case already noted turned largely on the action of the trustees reserving to themselves not so much the power to continue beyond the restricted time a pastor, but the right to

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. pp. 417-426.

² Watson's "Life," edition 1831, p. 141.

change at their own option, as often as deemed expedient. If, as already suggested, one hundred laymen had been added to the one hundred preachers as a body corporate, a conservative element would have been introduced insuring the itinerant plan and the unity of the societies Coke had proposed; Tyerman declares that the whole body of the preachers should have been incorporated, a plan he indorses, and this would have saved the Conference from much damaging agitation, discontent, and secession; but Wesley says he thought first of committing the matter to a dozen of the preachers, and appears to have fallen upon the hundred plan as a compromise, giving no better reason for it than the expense of assembling all the Conference annually and their absence from the fields of labor, as he sets forth in his "Thoughts upon some Late Occurrences," published in vindication of his action in the spring of 1785. He also felicitates himself on it as "such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure."¹ The second and more serious objection to the Deed of Declaration is its entailment of Paternalism as a system of government in the kingdom of God. Almost anything may be allowed Wesley during his life-tenure of absolute rule, and investment in himself of property. If not the wisest procedure that might have been adopted, for the nonce it was the most efficient, and the purity of his personal character was a guard against abuse. But the Deed, in its sixteen articles, is a curious melange. It provides for the act of the majority being the act of the whole, provided not less than forty are present; and of the election by the one hundred of a President annually. The first business is the filling of vacancies out of the members of the Conference by this close corporation of the Legal Hundred. It was a wide modification of his views of the successorship when he purposed that Fletcher should wear his mantle. It recognized suffrage at least within the hundred, while it secured Paternalism in their choice of a personal head. It is futile, however, to consider all that can be said for and against its provisions. It has the virtue, if such it can be called, of securing a self-perpetuating machine with unlimited powers, with its foundation in property. It has the vice as an active principle of securing directly or indirectly the destruction of Methodist English unity, the very thing which its Founder was most anxious to avoid. One admission must be made: this and other mischievous resultants, if foreseen by others, could not have been by Wesley, as he was not making provision for a Church. The marvel cannot be suppressed that, if he studied New Testa-

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. pp. 425, 426.

ment precedents, he adopted not one of them. Their use did not come within his purview. Here let the question rest until in the sequel of this sketchy history of English Methodism the evidence shall develop, as heretofore promised, that this entailed Paternalism sowed the seeds and brought forth the fruit of constantly recurring agitation and disaffection within the Wesleyan Conference, with repeated divisions in the United Societies — now a misnomer — by the exclusion of Reformers under the ninth article of the Deed: "That the Conference may and shall expel any member thereof, or any person admitted into connection therewith, for any cause which to the Conference may seem necessary."

1784 was, indeed, a "climacteric year for Methodism," — a phrase originating with Whitehead, and not with Southey, as Stevens seems to intimate, — not for the Deed of Declaration only, but for the ordinations of Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey for America. Its exhaustive presentation would be proper at this period, and this is the method of Stevens and others; but as it necessarily recurs in association with the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference of 1784, and as much additional light was thrown upon these ordinations by Alexander McCaine during the Reform controversy of 1824–30, reënforced since then by other discovered facts and arguments, except as it relates to its effects upon British Methodism, the consideration will be deferred, to avoid so much anticipation as would be requisite.

Suffice it to recite the main facts. It must be remembered that this was an age of prelatical pretensions. Ordination, instead of being that simple New Testament setting apart by laying on of hands, a custom borrowed from the Old Testament method of reverential blessing, with no priestly entail whatever, came to be an essential of hierarchal exclusiveness, as it grew in its departures from New Testament ideals, from the third century onward. Deacons were ordained as an order in the ministry, and Elders as a superior grade, and Bishops as transcending both, and then Archbishops in the ascending gradation, ultimating in the crowned and infallible Pope, an incarnation of ecclesiastical Paternalism. Apostolical Succession was the established dogma of the National Church of England. It was firmly held by Charles Wesley to his decease. John Wesley, when about forty years of age, by extending his reading and laying himself open, by the modifying force of his environments, to intellectual conviction, became satisfied from Lord King's "Account of the Primitive Church," that

there was no authority for an order of Bishops from the Scriptures. Subsequently Bishop Stillingfleet's "Irenicum" convinced him that the Apostolical Succession was "a fable which no man ever did or could prove." But he remained a staunch Churchman to the end, not accepting the logical results of such conclusions. He therefore insisted that the members of his United Societies should go to the National Church for the ordinances, and steadily refused, until late in life, to relieve any of his lay-preachers of this disability. He resisted, with all his effective authority, the clamors of both his people and his preachers, fortifying his conduct with the one reason: the Church kirks were near enough to his societies for practical purposes.

The circumstances were widely different in America. The English helpers he had sent over were mostly of the same opinion, and Asbury, his General Assistant, was an emphatic believer in Apostolic Succession, as has been already found. But at the close of the Revolutionary War the established Episcopal Church in America had been so scattered and peeled that, for hundreds of miles together, her deserted kirks had no rectors, so that not their own people only, but the Methodists, now fifteen thousand strong, were absolutely without the ordinances: their children remained unbaptized, and the Lord's Supper was never administered except under rebellion against Asbury's authority. Appreciating the urgency of the situation, and having good reasons to know that if much longer delayed he would be completely overborne, he wrote beseechingly to Wesley to come over himself, or send a National Church clergyman to relieve the difficulty. He could not go himself — his age forbade it. He applied to Bishop Lowth, setting forth the need for an ordained clergyman to be sent to America, but he was refused. He was in a strait betwixt two. Should he send himself a clergyman, or permit the authority of Asbury, and through him of himself, to decay? He anxiously consulted Fletcher and others of his confidants, hoping for directive, favorable advice to the purpose which was crystallizing in his own mind; but they, with one consent, disapproved of his assuming the episcopal prerogative of ordination, as understood in the National Church — any other they did not understand at all.¹ In this emergency he thought of Coke, who largely shared

¹ Stevens, in his "History of Methodism," Vol. II. pp. 213, 214, intimates that Fletcher approved the ordinations. "Wesley," he says, "did not yield till urged by his most revered counsellors. Fletcher, of Madeley, was one of these." Again, "Fletcher was present with Wesley and Coke at the Leeds Conference, and there

his confidence. He was a presbyter of the National Church, equal with himself in this respect. He was fully qualified by education, and his administration of the Irish Conference, now for some time committed to him by Wesley, all conspired in favor of this choice. He appears to have given him some intimation of his purpose. Drew says he did it in February, 1784. He would send him as a General Superintendent — a word-coinage of his own — not, perhaps, to supersede Asbury, but to ordain some of the American preachers, and give the societies the ordinances. Asbury had written his last urgent letter under date of March 20, 1784, calling for Wesley to come or to send a minister. Dr. Coke eagerly fell in with the suggestion to send him. He saw in it an opportunity to gratify the pet ambition of his life. April 17, 1784, he writes to Wesley from near Dublin, and in this and a subsequent letter his diplomacy is exhibited. The first of them is a manuscript letter, which came into the possession of Tyerman, and is cited by no other previous author in consequence. As it is the writer's opinion that this letter, and one under date of August 9, 1784, furnish the key to the strange inconsistency of Wesley's conduct in the ordination of Dr. Coke, the full text is here given: —

HONOURED AND VERY DEAR SIR, — I intended to trouble you no more about my going to America; but your observations incline me to address you again on the subject.

If some one in whom you could place the fullest confidence, and whom you think likely to have sufficient influence and prudence, and delicacy of conduct for the purpose, were to go over and return, you would then have a source of sufficient information to determine on any point or propositions. I may be destitute of the last mentioned essential qualification (to the former

with his assistance the question was brought to an issue." Neither Wesley, nor Moore, nor Drew, nor Watson, nor Tyerman, and lastly, though first in order of time, nor Whitehead supports this view. Whitehead says, Vol. II. p. 255, that Fletcher advised that "a bishop should be prevailed upon, if possible, to ordain them (Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey), and then Mr. Wesley "might appoint them to such offices in the societies as he thought proper, and give them letters testimonial of the appointments he had given them." And Coke, in his letter of August 9, 1784, makes plain that this was as far as Fletcher ever went. Coke says, "And afterward (the ordinations) according to Mr. Fletcher's advice, give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us." Wesley could not get a bishop to ordain them, and when he did it himself there is not a scintilla of proof that Fletcher approved the act. At the Leeds Conference he was a peacemaker, and probably saved the Conference from disruption on account of these ordinations, but he was too consistent a Churchman to countenance ordination, except by a third-order bishop. If anything be wanting to clinch the position here taken, it is furnished by Rev. James Creighton, who participated in the setting apart service of Coke and company, in a letter

I lay claim without reserve); otherwise my taking such a voyage might be inexpedient.¹

By this means you might have fuller information concerning the state of the country and the societies than epistolary correspondence can give you; and there might be a cement of union, remaining after your death, between the societies and preachers of the two countries. If the awful event of your decease should happen before my removal to the world of spirits, it is almost certain, that I should have business enough, of indispensable importance, on my hands in these kingdoms.

I am, Sir, your most dutiful and affectionate son,

THOMAS COKE.²

Tyerman says, and what he says is enough for the present: "This is a curiously expressed letter; but if it means anything, it means, that if Wesley would be good enough to think and say, that Coke had 'suffieient influence and prudence and delicacy of conduct,' he was willing to become Wesley's envoy to the American Methodists."

Matters rested in this shape, so far as information is obtainable, until the Leeds Conference which met July 25, ensuing. The question was then referred to a select committee of Wesley's appointment. Pawson, one of the prominent preachers, was a member and present when it met. Wesley revealed his plan to ordain Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey, for America. Pawson says, in his manuscript memoir of Dr. Whitehead: "The preachers were astonished when this was mentioned, and, to a man, opposed it. But I plainly saw that it would be done, as Mr. Wesley's mind appeared to be quite made up."³ Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey, when the Plan of Appointments was read, were announced for America. If Wesley had any hesitation as to Coke, already a presbyter and therefore as fully qualified to ordain Wesley as Wesley was to ordain Coke in the Churchman sense, it was turned into decision when, only six days after the Conference adjourned, Dr. Coke, fully intent upon his ulterior purpose, wrote him the

addressed to Mr. Samuel Bradburn, printed in London in 1793, two years after Wesley's death, in which he says, "You take notice of a meeting which Mr. Wesley had with some clergymen at Leeds in August, 1784, at which he consulted them concerning the ordination of preachers for America. Mr. Fletcher was present, and I believe Mr. Seldon, and two or three others. They did not approve of the scheme because it seemed inconsistent with Mr. Wesley's former professions respecting the Church. Upon this the meeting was abruptly broken up by Mr. Wesley's going out." See McCaine's "Letters on the M. E. Church," pamphlet, 1850, pp. 64, 65.

¹ *In*-expedient; *in* supplied, an evident misprint in Tyerman.

² "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 428.

³ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. p. 438.

following letter, marked in every line of it with the most ingenious diplomaey, and plausible as, it was, no doubt, sincere. The text must be given in full, as this second letter with the first already given focalize light upon the mystery of this hybrid ordination. It is as follows:—

AUGUST 9, 1784.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR, — The more maturely I consider the subject, the more expedient it appears to me that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you, by the imposition of your hands; and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey for the following reasons: 1. It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches. 2. I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale. Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed that he would not receive any person deputed by you with any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him, or words which evidently implied so much. I do not find any, the least degree, of prejudice in my mind against Mr. Asbury, on the contrary a very great love and esteem, and am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but rather to lie at his feet in all things. But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me often, and it is well to provide against all events, and an authority formally received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people, and my exercising the office of ordination without that formal authority may be disputed, if there be any opposition on any account; I would therefore earnestly wish you would exercise that power in this instance, which I have not the shadow of a doubt but God hath invested you with for the good of our connexion. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will in any degree use the power you are pleased to invest me with, further than I believe is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. 3. In respect of my brethren (bros. Whatcoat and Vasey), it is very uncertain indeed whether any of the clergy mentioned by brother Rankin will stir a step in the work, except Mr. Jarrett; and it is by no means certain that even he will choose to join me in ordaining; and propriety and universal practice make it expedient that I should have two presbyters with me in this work. In short, it appears to me that everything should be prepared, and every thing proper be done, that can possibly be done this side the water. You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house, in your chamber; and afterwards (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey, I can bring Mr. C. down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect to brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known or not known; if not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

Your most dutiful,

T. COKE.

A full analysis of this remarkable letter must be left for the period of the American Christmas Conference and the disclosure of 1820-30 in the Reform controversy. The only point to be substantiated at present is the affirmation that Wesley did not intend the anomalous ordination of Dr. Coke until the receipt of this last letter. The evidence already offered is conclusive that the hesitation in the whole matter was not with Coke but with Wesley. Moore says indeed: "Mr. Wesley then considered the subject, and informed Dr. Coke of his design of drawing up a plan of church government, and of establishing an ordination for his American societies. But cautious of entering on any new plan, he afterward suspended the execution of his purpose, and weighed the whole for upward of a year."¹ Drew says: "When the Conference at Leeds in 1784 ended, Mr. Wesley repaired to Bristol, and Dr. Coke to London, to make arrangements for his departure. He had, however, not been long in London, before he received a letter from Mr. Wesley requesting him to repair immediately to Bristol to receive fuller powers; and to bring Rev. Mr. Creighton with him."² Tyerman says of Coke's letter: "Would it not seem from this, that Wesley had no idea of ordaining any one himself; but that he intended Coke, who, as a presbyter of the same church, had coequal power, to go out to America for that purpose? There can be no question, that there is force in Dr. Whitehead's critique, that, 'Dr. Coke had the same right to ordain Wesley as Wesley had to ordain Coke.' Wesley, we think, never intended doing this; but at Coke's request he acquiesced."³ In due season the evidence shall be made overwhelming that in this transaction Dr. Coke with Wesley successfully played the role of "the little magician," as some one has ycleped him. He tried it subsequently with Asbury, but that keen-sighted man proved himself more than a match for both Wesley and Coke. Tyerman adduces a fact which no other historian mentions, and which he thinks may have influenced Wesley finally in this matter of ordination. A controversy arose in regard to one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels, a complication growing out of the Calvinistic Methodists' relation to the

¹ Moore's "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. pp. 272, 273, edition 1825.

² Drew's "Life," p. 73.

³ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. pp. 430, 431. "He had not been long in London." Even so: for only six days after Conference adjourned he wrote Wesley his letter of August 9, which antedated that of Wesley to him. It accomplished its purpose — Wesley yielded to his persuasions, and, as will be seen, carried out his suggestions to the smallest details as to the ordinations.



COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

National Church; and after litigation the case was so decided that clergymen who had heretofore held service were deterred for fear of persecution for preaching in a place not episcopally consecrated. The upshot was that Messrs. Wills and Taylor, clergymen, formally seceded from the National Church, and it was the first that took place. The object of these withdrawals was to enable these clergymen to ordain some of Lady Huntingdon's preachers, which was accordingly done on March 9, 1783. Six young men were set apart. Wesley knew of these things but kept quiet, not knowing but the same legal and ecclesiastical proceedings might be instituted against him. Wesley ordained Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey, when, where, how, and to what, with the testimonial he gave Coke, and the letter he wrote the American brethren, and all associated facts, shall be reviewed later.

Suffice it to say that, when the secret work became known, as it did speedily, the Conference preachers were highly indignant, and there was great commotion. One of the preachers wrote, "I wish they had been asleep when they began this business of ordination; it is neither *episcopal* nor *presbyterian*; but a mere hodge-podge of inconsistencies."¹ It must be noted that there is a wide difference between the ordination of Dr. Coke, whatever Wesley intended by it, and the ordination of Whatcoat and Vasey. With Wesley's modified views as a presbyter he felt qualified to ordain deacons and presbyters though illogical in an Episcopalian, who if anything must be a believer in three orders of the ministry with the ordaining power restricted to the bishops; so that, having made the ecclesiastical plunge, he proceeded as necessity called for it, to set aside others of his helpers. In Scotland there was as strong need as in America, the clergymen of the National Church forbidding the ordinances to Methodists. So, in 1785, he ordained Pawson, Hanby, and Taylor for Scotland. In 1786 he added to the number, Keigley and Atmore for Scotland, Warrener for Antigua, West Indies, and Hammett for Newfoundland. A year later five others were ordained. In 1788, when Wesley was in Scotland, Barber and Cownley were set apart; and at the ensuing Conference seven others, including Alexander Mather, who was ordained not deacon and presbyter only, but *superintendent* for Scotland, this case also to be more fully considered in its logical connection. In 1789 Wesley ordained Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin, names conspicuous in Methodism on both sides of the

¹ Whitehead's "Life," Vol. II. p. 258.

ocean. Tyerman says he thinks these complete the list of Wesley's ordinations.

The correspondence that ensued between Wesley and his brother Charles anent these things in 1785 is tender, but decisive. Reference has already been made to it. Tyerman says of it: "Wesley failed to grapple with his brother's question; or rather, he declined. Charles's point evidently was the same as Lord Mansfield's — 'Ordination was separation.' No doubt this was strictly accurate. Wesley was too keen-sighted not to see it; but he was too much of a churchman to acknowledge it. He felt himself unable to reply to his brother's argument; and therefore really did not attempt to reply at all."¹ It helped on the divisions which occurred after his decease, provoked by the Deed of Declaration. Ordination and the administration of the ordinances were not assented to. Pawson says: "Had the preachers after his death only acted upon his plan, and quietly granted the people who desired the sacraments that privilege, no division would have taken place."² He, however, was one of the ordained and strongly prejudiced in favor of all Wesley did, and stands alone among the preachers in the opinion that Wesley meant to ordain bishops when he laid hands on Coke and Mather — "In order therefore to preserve all that was valuable in the Church of England, among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke bishops. These he undoubtedly designed should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester conference of 1791."² But the English preachers would not have it, so that it was not until 1795 that the administration of the ordinances was authorized by the Wesleyan Conference, and it was not until 1836 that ordination by imposition of hands was enacted and became the "standing rule and usage in future years." Let Tyerman as the most impartial of Wesley's biographers close the case for the nonce. Logically, the ordinations made Wesley a Dissenter: "Wesley refuses to acknowledge this; but feeling the impossibility of the thing, he declined to attempt refuting it. With great inconsistency, he still persisted in calling himself a member of the Church of England; and, as will be seen, to the day of his death told the Methodists, that if they left the Church they would leave him. All things considered this is not surprising; but it was absurd. Great allowance must be made for Wesley; but to reconcile Wesley's practice and profession in this matter, during the last seven years of his eventful life, is simply impossible."

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 447.

² *Ibid.* p. 443.

The year 1784 was not memorable except for these dual events just considered. Wesley continued his unexampled labors for a man of eighty-one, travelling, preaching, writing, and publishing. Among the last was "The Sunday Service for the Methodists in America," or his abridgment of the Prayer Book which Coke carried with him to America in the printed sheets, perhaps, as more portable for a long sea-voyage. It plays a most important part in the Wesley-Coke entanglement, as will be seen in the future.

CHAPTER VIII

Wesley at eighty-two a marvel of activity — Ordination of Mather the same as the ordination of Coke, nothing more — Rare London pamphlet giving curious revelations of Wesley — Deductions from it — Perronet and Fletcher — Deed of Declaration causes secessions — Methodist laity conservative — Dr. Coke, father of missions — Wesley ordains as an illogical Churchman — Charles Wesley's death — Coke and service during Church hours — Farewell to Ireland — Wesley's old age — An autocrat to the last — Blind to judicial distinctions — Last Journal entry — The preachers outwit Wesley — He never abused his power; the error in trying to entail it — His last testimony against separation from the Church.

1785, and Wesley at eighty-two, finds him spending five days of January walking the streets of London in slush and snow, begging £200 for the poor and visiting the destitute in their own houses. He met the London classes and received the weekly contributions, out of which he paid himself his quarter's salary of £15. He also preached in some of the National churches, invitations being now plentiful.

He was a marvel of activity and consecration. He wrote a letter to Mr. Stretton of Newfoundland, February 25, in which he says, "Last autumn Dr. Coke sailed from England, and is now visiting the flock in the midland provinces of America, and setting them on the New Testament plan, to which they all willingly and joyfully conform."¹ Coke had carried a letter to them from him for public use, in which he declares that the Revolutionary War had set them free from "the State and the English hierarchy; we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church."² Explaining his ordination of Mather as a *Superintendent* for Scotland he wrote: "After Dr. Coke's return from America, many of our friends begged that I would consider the case of Scotland . . . I at length consented to take the same steps for Scotland which I had done with regard to America. But this is not separation from the Church . . . Whatever then is done in America or Scotland, is not separation from the Church of England." Dear old man!

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. p. 458.

² *Ibid.* p. 436.

Guileless, ingenuous, unsuspecting, unmindful now that in these things he should be logically consistent, it was his idea of a "New Testament plan" to preserve his primacy over the world's Methodists, appointing Superintendents for sections not convenient for him to supervise personally, as in America and Scotland, to which Ireland would probably have been added but for the fact that Coke, the most available man for the position, and who held the Conference Presidency by Wesley's appointment for a series of years, was made his choice for America. It did not enter into his dream, even, that what he did would or could be perverted into the organization of a Church independent of him, either in Scotland or America.¹ How the "joint superintendents" for America became bishops in due time, and how an Episcopal Church was organized, is a tale that will be worth the telling in its proper place.

At the previous Conference he had assigned William Moore to Plymouth. He was one of the dissatisfied with the Deed of Declaration and broke away from Wesley's authority and severed

¹ Letter to Thomas Coke and Henry Moore, occasioned by their proposal of publishing "The Life of John Wesley, A. M.," in opposition to that advertised by Rev. John Whitehead, M. D. Also an "Appeal to the People called Methodists on the Same Subject, by an Old Member of the Society," etc. London, pamphlet, 56 pp.

A copy of this rare document is in the Baltimore Methodist Historical Rooms. Among other things contained in it is a letter from John Wesley, not found, so far I know, in any of the histories of Methodism extant. It is addressed to an anonymous friend on the probability of division after his death despite the Deed of Declaration. In the course of it Wesley says: "I have long foreseen that a division must necessarily ensue from causes so various, unavoidable, and certain, that I have long since given over all thought and hopes of settling it on a permanent foundation." He recognizes the struggle of the preachers for power and preëminence as one cause, but says he could not settle upon an individual successor who could exercise his own absolute control, and adds — "which I have hitherto exercised, and I am determined I will maintain so long as I live — never will I hear a rival near my throne." Another cause, he says, will be the inadequacy of funds to carry on the work — "money is as much the sinews of religion as of military power." But he adds, "This no way concerns me; I have attained the object of my views by establishing a name that will not soon perish from the face of the earth; I have founded a sect which will boast my name long after my discipline and doctrines are forgotten."

This letter is subscribed, "I am, etc., J. W., City Road, Thursday morning."

As the Deed of Declaration was signed in 1784, allusions in this letter would assign it a date only a few years before his death. In its naive confession that he felt his earthly reward of a life of labor and sacrifice to be in the perpetuation of his name in connection with Methodism, may be found the private reason he did not avail of the offer of Bishop Seabury, who, while in England and Scotland in 1784 seeking ordination for the American Protestant Episcopal Church, sought to obtain an interview with Wesley as to the American Methodists, but did not succeed owing to Wesley's engagements on the wing. But he knew of Seabury's

the society in Plymouth. He was a man, says Tyerman, of "education, courage, and Christian zeal." He hired a room, drew off some forty of the society, and formed one of his own. Wesley was sent for, and, with the advantage of empire in property, soon settled matters to his satisfaction. It was naughty in Moore, but a peace measure as the Deed was intended to be is not always measured by peace. Wesley visited Ireland, and in two months entered and preached in fifty or sixty towns about fourscore sermons. He passed his eighty-second birthday on the 28th of June, and finds himself in such health that he says, "I dare not impute this to natural causes; it is the will of God." He held the Irish Conference on July 10, Coke being absent on his mission. He is delighted with the Irish preachers and pays them the high compliment, "I think number for number they exceed their fellow-laborers in England." He was constantly forming new friends, but the old ones were rapidly dropping away. This year Vincent Perronet and John Fletcher died. The former was in the ninety-second year of his age, and died while Wesley was in Ireland, on the 9th of May. Charles Wesley buried him and preached his funeral sermon. Wesley was in the west of England when Fletcher died, August 14, 1785, and so could not attend his funeral. Next to the Wesleys and Whitefield, Methodism is most indebted to Fletcher. But for his almost angelic influence at the previous Conference of 1784, during the debate on the Deed of Declaration and the Ordination questions, serious results might have followed, menacing the very existence of the Conference and the societies. His life was saintly and his death triumphant.

The forty-second Conference convened at City Road in London, July 26. Wesley says: "Our Conference began; at which about seventy preachers were present, whom I had invited by name. One consequence of this was, that we had no contention or altercation at all; but everything proposed was calmly considered and

presence in England and the mission on which he came; so that he was not anxious for an interview with him. Having failed to induce the Bishop of London to ordain one of his preachers, who, Kewley* declares, was to come in that case to America in the capacity of chaplain in Lord Cornwallis's army, he abandoned farther quest in that direction, for the specific reason stated by himself, that if the Episcopal Bishops ordained, they would also "expect to govern," the American Methodist preachers. Thus he would have been robbed of his name as head of the Americans also. It makes the foregoing letter quadrate with these and other facts of his life.

* See Appendix to Dr. Kewley's "Inquiry into the Validity of Methodist Episcopacy," etc., Wilmington, 1807. A copy in writer's possession.

determined as we judged would be most for the glory of God.”¹ Seventy preachers out of nearly two hundred. There is a charming simplicity in his record of the result; as though seventy out of two hundred, and they invited by name, could disagree to anything he proposed! Nevertheless, the Deed of Declaration was again brought up, and seventy preachers, all who were present, signed documents that they approved the Deed. Eight preachers left the connection, including Moore and the two Hampsons, without dispute among the ablest and hitherto truest men of the Conference. It was the beginning of other secessions on the same account. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua appeared in the minutes. Once more itinerating, when he reached Bristol he heard a report that he was about to leave the National Church, and felt called upon to make a public denial. “I openly declared in the evening that I had no more thought of separating from the Church than I had forty years ago.”² Among the notable publications of this year under Methodist auspices was a twelve-page pamphlet with the title “Free Thoughts Concerning Separation of the People called Methodists from the Church of England, Addressed to the Preachers in the Methodist Connexion by a Layman of the Methodist Society.” It was a strong argument against separation, and is cited in proof that the Methodist laity, in the Wesleyan and Asburyan forms of it specially, have ever been most conservative; and yet, strange to say, under the polity of both these eminent leaders, the laity were shut out from all participation in the government, the position being practically in regard to the people, that they were best qualified to exercise the trinity of virtues: Pray, Pay, and Obey. The concession made in these pages that the paternal system of Wesley—and it may be extended to Asbury—during his life was, all things considered, the most efficient, and for the time allowable, and if its advocates please, even providential, must be qualified by its trend in establishing a precedent for a class hierarchal of preachers exclusively. It is worth while to retrace our steps a few weeks to July 14, the second Sunday before the Conference met, to record one of the most interesting events in Wesley’s life. He preached the next morning at five o’clock to the Methodist children in City Road chapel. It was crowded with children. Tyerman says, “When, either before or since, was there such a congregation at such an hour?”³ It was one of the hygienic

¹ Wesley’s “Journal,” p. 622. ² Tyerman’s “Life,” Vol. III. pp. 464-468.

³ Tyerman’s “Life,” Vol. III. pp. 464-468.

fallacies of Wesley that not himself only, but all his helpers, should preach at five o'clock in the morning. He believed it was one of the principal reasons his own health was so marvelously preserved, therefore everybody to be healthy must preach at five in the morning. There was much rebellion both by preachers and the people against a rule, serviceable for exceptions under which it was created, but unreasonable as a perpetual and arbitrary regulation. Preachers were disciplined for not observing this iron rule.

1786 and Wesley at eighty-three. From the opening of it to the forty-third Conference, July 25, at Bristol, his labors continued to be signalized by remarkable occurrences of which Tyerman gives details found in no other biography. At the Conference the question of separation from the Church was again mooted. Dr. Coke was the leader, "who had returned from his *episcopal* tour in the United States."¹ The underscored word is by its author. Charles Wesley was present for the last time and uttered but one single word, an emphatic "No" when Dr. Coke in his separation speech affirmed that nearly all the converted clergymen in the kingdom were Calvinists. Sitting with closed doors was relaxed at this Conference to the extent of a single session. "On Thursday in the afternoon, we permitted any of the society to be present."² Despite the discussion on separation, Wesley says in his Journal: "Great had been the expectation of many, that we should have had warm debates, but by the mercy of God we had none at all."² A lover of peace, if matters moved smoothly in the channels he appointed, nothing is more common for no mention to be made at all of discussions or denials, if he thought that best. The total membership for the world was reported at 81,010.

It is a pleasure to introduce Dr. Coke in a shining light. He must be esteemed the father and founder of the Methodist Missionary Society, its lifelong advocate, and most laborious evangel. It had been inaugurated at the Conference of 1785. Before leaving for America Dr. Coke drew up a Plan and made a report which he referred to Fletcher. Its title is "A Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathen." He never relaxed his efforts in this direction, and spent much of his independent fortune—he claimed to have an income of £1200 a year, an inheritance from his wealthy father as an only child—in it, and found his grave in the Indian Ocean, when

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. p. 478.

² Wesley's "Journal," p. 640.



JOHN FLETCHER.

sixty-seven years of age, in pursuance of his burning zeal in the cause. The mission to India had to be postponed, but other points nearer home and in America were pressed, and collections taken as a part of the regular work of Methodist preachers.

Passing mention must be made of Wesley's immense correspondence throughout his long life. It is simply past comprehension how he managed to do all he did. In the autumn of this year he undertook to write a "Life of Fletcher." He says: "To this I dedicated all the time I could spare till November, from five in the morning till eight at night. These are my studying hours. I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes." Tyerman breaks out: "We should think not! Fifteen hours a day of unintermitting labor in the case of a man eighty-three years of age!" He writes: "In general my health has been better for the last ten years, than it ever has been for ten years together since I was born. . . . All my pains and aches have forsaken me, and I am a stranger even to weariness of any kind." Impressed himself, he strongly exhorted the people to make their wills. He finished his "Life of Fletcher," a twelvemo. of 227 pages, a year's work itself for an ordinary man; but he published nothing else save the *Arminian Magazine*, 688 pages, much of it his own composition. An extract shows that he had drifted away from all narrow views of what constituted a church: "Two or three Christian brethren united together are a church in the narrowest sense . . . the catholic or universal church is all the persons in the universe whom God hath called out of the world, etc. . . . the part inhabiting any one kingdom may be called a *national church*, etc."¹

1787 and Wesley at eighty-four. He kept on ordaining, as has been shown, and he kept on resisting with all his power those, either among the preachers or the people, who were agitating for separation, thus persevering to the end in his illogical position as an Episcopalian. He wrote: "They that are enemies to the

¹ In his "Notes on the New Testament" his unbiassed deliverances as to the Primitive Church, both as to its officers and its laity, are utterly at variance with his ecclesiastical notions as a Presbyter of the National Church, and as the Primate of the Methodists. Commenting on the second and third verses of 6th of Acts, he says: "In the first church the primary business of apostles, evangelists, and bishops was to preach the word of God; the secondary to take a kind of paternal care (the church being then like a family) for the food, especially of the poor, the strangers, and the widows. Afterwards the deacons of both sexes were constituted for this latter business. And whatever time they had to spare from this they employed in works of spiritual mercy. But their proper office was to take care of the poor. And when some of them afterward preached the gospel they

Church are enemies to *me*. I still think, when the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them." The poor of London and elsewhere were much upon his heart, and he spent days begging for money to relieve them. At Bristol he was grieved to discover that out of a membership of sixteen hundred only a dozen hearers formed the five o'clock morning service. He admonished them on their indolence, and during his stay the number rose to some three hundred, but even the fame and authority of Wesley could not bring them out at this unreasonable hour as a permanent service. He meets with Howard the philanthropist, kindred spirits. He held his Irish Conference.

The forty-fourth Conference was held at Manchester, July 31. The statistics of every class showed great improvement. At this Conference he ordained Mather, Rankin, and Moore, not by joining with him in the service two of his own ordained preachers, but two presbyters of the National Church. Did he by this express doubt of his own ordinations even of presbyters, or did he do it to keep in all things as near the Church as possible? Probably the latter; but at his age and the mixed nature of the whole ordaining business, it is impossible to affirm. Stevens says: "The reordination of Mather as a bishop was significant." It was indeed, and when a man has committed himself to a strained view of a transaction, he easily juggles with words. Party bias in Methodism insists that superintendent and bishop, as Wesley understood it, are one and the same. The sequel of these pages will show that nothing is more untrue. Wesley makes no mention at all of this Conference in his Journal. Thomas Taylor, in charge at Leeds, only fifty miles from Manchester, and one of the hundred named in the Deed of Declaration, was not invited to the Conference for the only apparent reason, — he was in favor of separation. He loudly complains in his manuscript Journal: "Mr. Wesley has sent his special summons to each preacher whom he wished to attend Conference, and has expressly forbidden any one else to go. I am unbidden, and think I am ill used. . . . I'll venture to go, let the consequences

did this not in virtue of the deaconship, but of another commission, that of evangelists, which they probably received, not before, but after, they were appointed deacons. And it is not unlikely that others were appointed deacons, or stewards, in their room, when any of these commenced evangelists. . . . It would have been happy for the church had its ordinary ministers in every age taken the same care to act in concert with the people committed to their charge, which the apostles themselves, extraordinary as their office was, did on this and other occasions." This is sound Methodist Protestant doctrine, but not sound Methodist Episcopal.

be what they may." He had ordained Pawson for Scotland several years before who went to his work putting on bands and gowns, and Wesley addressed him as "Reverend." He was brought back to England, and now he was compelled to doff his canonicals and be addressed as "Mr." He was indignant, but submitted; his piety was greater than his love for sacerdotal robes. He wrote to a bosom friend: "Even the Pope himself never acted such a part as this. What an astonishing degree of power does our aged friend and father exercise."¹ These things give us an inkling of the kind of peace the Deed of Declaration and the Ordinations engendered. Yet never was Methodism more prosperous. The net increase for the year in England alone was near four thousand. The doctrines and means of grace were more and more potent, under the blessing of the Lord, with the people. There are not wanting those who couple Wesley's discipline and major proceedings as the cause. It is submitted that proceedings that bring not peace but a sword cannot minister to real prosperity. The Sunday-school work was magnified and the children taught to sing, and their presence in the chapel services vastly improved the singing. Wesley was delighted. William Bramwell, Richard Reece, Joseph Entwistle, and Pearl Dickinson are names now appearing, and immortal in Methodism. All his preachers were now *licensed* to save them from the Conventicle Act; but it widened a breach with the National Church and made ultimate separation inevitable. Wesley had ceased to publish except in the *Arminian Magazine*. Dr. Coke, and principally, Mr. Bradford were now his travelling companions. Everywhere he was received with worshipful respect. His flowing snow-white hair, his ruddy countenance, his searching eyes, which had lost none of their brightness, made him an angel visitant.

The forty-fifth Conference was held in London, July 29, 1788. The prosperity was unabated. Among those received at this conference was John Hickling, who survived till 1859, aged ninety-three, the last of Wesley's "Helpers." He had preached more than seventy years, and at the time of his death was announced for six special occasions. Wesley had passed his eighty-fifth birthday with unusual incidents, and the year was marked with many events of a striking character, which may be found in Tyerman's "Life," but cannot be reproduced under limit of space. March 29 of this year Charles Wesley died. Wesley was at Macclesfield and could not get to London in time

¹ Tyerman alone furnishes the foregoing facts.

for the funeral. Charles had left instructions to be buried in "consecrated ground" and by clergymen of the National Church. Wesley was much grieved, for he wished him to be buried near him in City Road chapel ground. He intended to write his brother's Life, but he could not find the time. Dr. Whitehead, by special request of the family, performed acceptably and successfully the task, having access to his Journal and all his private papers. On Christmas day of this year Wesley preached at City Road chapel, and on the last Sunday in the year at All Hallows church. His attendant while putting on his gown was addressed by Wesley. "Sir, it is above fifty years since I first preached in this church. . . . I came without a sermon. A woman who stood by noticing my concern said, on learning the cause of my confusion, 'Cannot you trust God for a sermon?'" It had such an effect on him that he ascended the pulpit and preached extempore. . . . "I have never since taken a written sermon with me into the pulpit."

1789, and Wesley at eighty-six. In January he sat for a picture by Romney, and he compliments him, "He struck off an exact likeness at once and did more in an hour than Sir Joshua did in ten." His sight and other faculties showed signs of decay, but in March he started on a five months' preaching tour over the kingdom. At Dublin chapel he called on William Myles, his assistant at this place, to aid him in administering the Lord's Supper, and he was not yet ordained. It gave great offence, and a controversy raged for three months over it in the *Daily Dublin Evening Post*. It was pronounced "the greatest innovation that had been witnessed for fifty years." His reason for this step can be conjectured only. Under Dr. Coke's management the Dublin Methodists had service during the Church hours, to keep them from wandering from their own service at other hours, a practice Coke determined must be stopped. It led to farther controversy, and Wesley endeavored to justify Coke, though it was a thing he so often condemned. Notwithstanding these divarications of his own he stickled and insisted that other rules should be obeyed to the letter. At Dewsbury the year before his book steward, Atlay, led a rebellion against his power to appoint exclusively the preacher. Atlay and the chapel were both lost to the connection. Now at Shields the same disaffection appeared. Wesley wrote a peremptory letter to the three circuit preachers, that they demand a settlement of the deed on the Conference plan within three weeks, and if within another week it was not com-

plied with they were to withdraw and not preach in it. In a postscript he says: "I am at a point. I will be trifled with no longer." He was seriously sick during this period—diabetes threatened, but under treatment from his faithful and confidential physician, Dr. Whitehead, it abated, though he suffered more or less with it to his decease. His buoyant spirits at this time were remarked by many. He held his Irish Conference, now numbering some sixty, of whom forty or more were present. He compliments them in the strongest terms, and they have never ceased to be worthy of it. On the Conference Sunday Wesley and his preachers attended service at St. Patrick's, and heard the dean preach, "a serious, useful sermon." The Irish preachers were to a man true to the Church. On the 12th of July he bid adieu to Ireland forever. The scene of parting was most affecting.—"Not a few fell on the old man's neck and kissed him." About this time in a private letter occurs the sentence, "Dr. Coke made two or three little alterations in the prayer-book without my knowledge."¹ It is quoted as a pointer for future use.

On the 28th of July, 1789, the forty-sixth session of Conference began in Leeds. Two hundred and eighty-eight preachers received appointments. The societies continued to grow. Circuits and missions, 109, not including Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and the numbers in society 74,254. What may be called the Conference sermon was preached by a local preacher, James Hamilton, M.D., perhaps the only instance of the kind in English Methodism. It was an able discourse, met with Wesley's approbation, was printed and widely circulated. About 130 preachers were present, according to Atmore, and of these 115 signed a paper favoring the settlement of the chapels according to the Conference plan, and among them, Tyerman says, William Thom, Henry Taylor, and Alexander Kilham, who were afterward distinguished as Methodist Reformers. Separation from the Church was again discussed as it was at every Conference, and decided unanimously against it. It was resolved that no books should be published without Wesley's sanction, and those to be printed at his press in London and sold by his book steward. Now and for some time before his sermons indicate his growing fears for the Methodists by becoming rich. He saw only the baleful effects, but what would Methodism be to-day but for its consecrated rich men?

1790. Tyerman says: "Wesley's career is drawing to a close.

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III., for the foregoing facts.

He himself was on the 'Delectable mountains,' basking in the sheen of the celestial city, but all around him, or rather beneath him, was darkness and confusion." The French Revolution impended and England was filled with its alarms and doctrinal divisions. January 1, Wesley wrote: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot: my eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labor; I can preach and write still."¹ He staunchly holds to every autocratic principle of his discipline. January 13, he writes to John Mason, the assistant at St. Austell circuit: "As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. . . . We are no republicans and never intend to be. It would be better for these, that are so minded, to go quietly away."² Historically this is of moment, as the sequel of this work will show, that the principle here reaffirmed should be coupled with another laid down in the Dewsbury chapel case already adverted to; in this, however, the affirmation is a fallacy to be hereafter exposed:—"With respect to Dewsbury House, there never was any dispute *about the property of preaching houses*; that was an artful misrepresentation; but merely the *appointing of preachers* to them." Again, "Observe, here is no dispute about the right of houses at all. I have no right to any preaching house in England. What I claim is a right of stationing the preachers."³ Yet the Deed of Declaration already entered in the High Court of Chancery was enacted principally because all the Methodist chapels and other property in the connection were vested in Wesley in their legal titles, and so remained until after his decease the Deed became operative and entailed the title in the Legal Hundred. Arbitrary power blinds the eyes to judicial distinction. The sentiments severally quoted furnish the keys which were availed of by his successors both in England and America.

On Sunday, February 28, he preached to enormous congregations, at City Road, West Street, and Brentford, and then was off on his annual long journey to the north. He published a circular of his route that all persons might know his whereabouts. The labors were herculean for a man of eighty-seven. Another quotation from a letter of April 4, 1790, will be of use in future

¹ Wesley's "Journal," Vol. II. p. 735.

² *Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p. 251.

³ *Ibid.* 1790.

references: "I did not approve of Dr. Coke's making collections in your or any other circuit. I told him so, and am not well pleased with his doing it. It was very ill done."¹ This and other citations would seem to confirm Whitehead's declaration as to Dr. Coke: "That Mr. Wesley should suffer himself to be so far influenced in a matter of the utmost importance, both to his own character and the societies, by a man of whose judgment in advising, and talent in conducting, any affair he had no very high opinion is truly astonishing."² He was commenting directly upon Coke's letter to Wesley which decided the American ordinations. It will be seen that it was easy for Wesley to condone the faults and even misdoings of his familiars, and give at times very opposite testimony in far apart letters touching them. The ingratiations of Coke with Wesley found the way to this charity of his nature. He and Moore were often in these closing years his travelling companions, while the faithful Joseph Bradburn rarely left him. He was now on his last long itinerary over the kingdom. The incidents as given by Tyerman are touching and marvellous. Tottering up the pulpit stairs at Bradford, the whole congregation burst into tears. While the crowd was assembling at the door, a woman by the name of Wilson mockingly exclaimed, "They are waiting for their God;" no sooner was the sentence uttered than she fell senseless to the ground, and the day following she expired. He was attended by cavalades of preachers and others escorting him from town to town. On his birthday he wrote: "Monday, June 28th. — This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six (sixty-eight?) years I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated; but last August I found almost a sudden change. My eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me. My strength likewise quite forsook me; and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to feet; only it seems nature is exhausted; and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till 'the weary springs of life stand still at last.'"³ The health of Adam Clarke seemed failing and he wrote him solicitous letters.

He kept not only a Journal almost to the very last, but an account of his income and expenditures. The last entry is in a hand difficult to decipher — "N. B. For upward of eighty-six (sixty-eight?) years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. p. 605. ² Whitehead's "Life," Vol. II. p. 256.

³ Wesley's "Journal," Vol. II. p. 743.

not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction, that I save all I can, and give all I can, that is all I have. John Wesley. July 16, 1790." The profits of his publishing house were large, but his income from the society small, though he was not unfrequently made the almoner of others. He told Samuel Bradburn in 1787 that he never gave away less than a thousand pounds a year out of his own pocket. He died as he had lived, without a purse, save the publishing house, and that he bequeathed to the Conference for "carrying on the work of God by itinerant preachers." His Will was largely a trust deed, in which Coke, Whitehead, Mather, and Moore are oftenest named. Whitehead's "Life" gives the Will in full. The forty-seventh Conference, and the last Wesley attended, was convened at Bristol, July 27, 1790. Three hundred and thirteen were recorded on the roll of appointments. The three financial returns, not including salaries, reached £2828. The membership was 76,968, an increase for the year of 2714. The membership in the United States was 57,631, so rapidly was it gaining on that of Great Britain. The last decade of Wesley's life witnessed an increase of more than double the united results of the forty years preceding, says Tyerman. The legislation of the Conference was confined to preachers and the preaching houses. Among the other points insisted on by Wesley and embodied now in a disciplinary rubric, was that no preacher should preach more than twice the same day. Mather, Pawson, Thompson, and others objected. Wesley reasoned the matter, insisting that his own example could not be cited against him as he knew better how to husband his strength than other men, and closed the discussion with the declaration, "And the custom shall not be continued." It has been already found that Whitehead, speaking for Charles Wesley, expressed the opinion that his brother's government of the societies was "approaching a system of human policy that in the end could not be carried on without sometimes having recourse to the arts of misrepresentation and deception." It was a singular prescience, for the incident just referred to ended by the preachers deceiving him after all, by altering the minute when it was sent to the press thus, "No preacher shall preach three times the same day *to the same congregation.*"¹ It is needless to pass a judgment upon the conduct of the preachers. It was highly disingenuous; but it has been the legitimate fruit of Paternalism in Methodist government in both England and America to this day.

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III. pp. 619, 620.

Those whose predilections and education lead them to applaud and advocate such a system have no words but of unstinted commendation. Stevens, reviewing at the close of this Conference, indulges in such reflections as follows. No individual life was more complete in its results. His popular power was wide as any prelate in the land or even the Sovereign himself. His power could now, in any necessity, reach almost any part of the three kingdoms by the systematic apparatus of Methodism. Through his "assistants," and by them to the 300 preachers, and the 1200 local preachers, by these to the 4000 stewards and class leaders, and by these to 70,000 members. "Such a power, created by himself without prestige, but now wielded with a prestige which secured grateful and almost implicit obedience from his people, would have been perilous in the hands of a weak or selfish man, but in what one historical respect did he abuse it?"¹ It may be answered without qualification: knowingly, in none. As the Father of the Methodists, seeing that constitutionally and educationally he was an autocrat and could not govern otherwise than he did, it may be freely allowed him; and so no doubt his preachers thought in the main; and hence their allegiance: but what parent can transmit his authority to a son? Would it not be "perilous," and sure to distract the household? One of the postulates of this History is, that the fundamental error of Wesley began with the Deed of Declaration, entailing to 100 preachers of 300, to the exclusion of 1200 local preachers, many of them the peers in every respect of the itinerant, and of 70,000 people, all his rights proprietary in chapels and all his personal conferential authority.

October 6, at Winchelsea, Wesley preached for the last time in the open air beneath an ash tree in the churchyard, known afterward as "Wesley's tree." He continued to preach, kept on with the *Arminian Magazine*, and published a translation of the New Testament with an Analysis of the several books and chapters. He bore testimony against the vexed question of separation, "I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and that none who regard my judgment and advice will ever separate from it." In his last printed sermon, on Faith, he has glimpses of the eternal world. In six weeks he had triumphantly entered it.

¹ Stevens's "History of Methodism," Vol. II. pp. 322, 323.

CHAPTER IX

Methodism in other regions — Closing days of Wesley, 1791 — Letters to Ezekiel Cooper and others — Last sermon — Illness and Dr. Whitehead — Religious experience — Buried by torchlight at five in the morning of March 9 — Pictures of Wesley by Whitehead, Haweis, Tyerman — Eulogies by Whitehead, Tyerman, and Macaulay — A lost chapter recovered as to his obsequies — Whitehead's sermon given only in full in Stockton's "Whitehead's Life of Wesley" — Secret reasons of Whitehead's persecution by the Conference party — His full vindication in Appendix A.

DID the design of this work permit, it would be intensely interesting to follow Methodism as a missionary organization in the British Islands, France, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, West Indies, and Africa. Stevens is the best authority here. Dr. Coke is a leading spirit, braving the perils and hardships of the ocean, despising personal ease, and pouring out his wealth without stint in the work of spreading the gospel under Methodistic auspices. Duncan Wright, Duncan M'Allum, Nathaniel Gilbert, a layman who was converted in England and returning to his West Indies' home at Antigua, established Methodism in his own house, afterward fostered by Coke and Hammett. Brackenbury, another layman, operated in the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, as he could speak Norman French, and also Mahy, De Quetteville, De Jersey, and Toase, to France. John Crook, a local preacher of Liverpool, gave Methodism to the Isle of Man. He is one of the heroes of Wesley. Smyth, a Methodist clergyman, followed up the work. Pierre Le Sueur, Coughland, John Fenton, Captain Webb, afterward notable in American Methodism, Jasper Winscombe, and Alexander Kilham, who was a servant in the employ of Brackenbury, a wealthy layman, took part in the evangelization of Jersey. Adam Clarke also did much faithful labor in the islands, specially Alderney. Elizabeth Wallbridge, the original of the "Dairyman's Daughter," will forever perpetuate Wesleyan piety in the Isle of Wight. Joseph Sutcliffe for the Scilly Islands, William Black for Nova Scotia, with Freeborn Garrettson, an American, as also James O. Crom-

well, did wonders as pioneers in these distant northlands. John M'Geary must not go unmentioned in the same connection. On the 24th of September, 1786, Dr. Coke, with Hammett, who will be mentioned later in other associations, Warrener, and Clark embarked from England for Nova Scotia, but terrible storms and a leaking ship drove them for refuge to the West Indies, where they reënforced Gilbert in his lay Methodistic society at Antigua. They visited and formed societies in other islands. Harry, an American slave who had been brought to these islands, is immortal in Methodism, as Harry of St. Eustatius, to distinguish him from "Black Harry," Asbury's travelling companion and eloquent preacher. Coke made voyages to the West Indies in 1788, 1790, and 1792, and made martyr-like sacrifices in establishing the Methodist faith. Near six thousand members were reported before Wesley's death. In far-off Africa Wesley heard of a society organized at Sierra Leone of 223 negroes. In this instance Stevens does not name the missionaries, a regrettable fact.

The closing days of Wesley. He continued to write letters early in 1791, to Dr. Clarke, Thomas Taylor, Miss Bolton, and Miss Cambridge, pious young Methodists; John Booth, Thomas Roberts, Mrs. Susannah Knapp, and Ezekiel Cooper, then a young American preacher of great ability, who lived a celibate and died leaving a large fortune to his relatives in 1847, the oldest Methodist preacher in the world. His letter to Cooper bears date February 1, 1791, only four weeks before his decease. It contains his dying legacy to the American preachers, and is significant as declaring his ruling passion to die Primate of all the Methodists in his societies the world over. It holds a clear intimation that if, even at this late date, he fully comprehended the nature of the American "separation" at the Christmas conference of 1784, he did not recommend or indorse it. The legacy is in these emphatic words: "See that you never give place to one thought of separation from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people, in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue:—

'Though mountains rise and oceans roll,
To sever us in vain.'

Under date of February 14, he wrote to Wilberforce encouraging him in his parliamentary labors to abolish the slave-trade and slavery under British dominion. He continued to visit among his friends, and, though rapidly failing, as all observed,

he preached at Chelsea February 18, at City Road February 22, and on the 23d, accompanied by Rodgers, rode eighteen miles to Leatherhead, to visit a magistrate, and in whose dining room he preached from "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." It was his last sermon. He was brought back to City Road parsonage and requested to be left alone for half an hour. At the end of the time Joseph Bradburn, his faithful attendant, found him so indisposed that he sent for his physician, Dr. Whitehead, to whom the dying patriarch said, "Doctor, they are more afraid than hurt." This was Friday, February 25. On the 26th he spent the day in drowsiness and sleep. Sunday, 27th, he seemed better, got up and sat in his chair, looked cheerful, and repeated: —

"Till glad I lay this body down
Thy servant Lord attend;
And oh! my life of mercy crown,
With a triumphant end."

Afterward he remarked with emphasis, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Miss Wesley, his niece, and Miss Ritchie prayed with him. "When at Bristol," said he, alluding to his illness in 1753, "my words were: —

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'

Miss Ritchie asked, "Is that your language now?" "Yes," said he, "Christ is all! He is all!" On Monday, February 28, his weakness so increased that Dr. Whitehead wished for assistance, but Wesley replied: "Dr. Whitehead knows my constitution better than any one. I am quite satisfied and will have no one else." The day was spent in sleep; but he muttered at times scripture verses. Tuesday, March 1, after a restless night, he began singing: —

"All glory to God in the sky."

He said soon after, "I will get up," and while his friends were preparing his clothes, he broke out singing: —

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath."

Once more seated in his chair, he began to sing again, his last song on earth: —

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree."

Put back to bed, he said, "Pray and praise!" He saluted each one present and said, "Farewell, farewell." Summoning his failing strength, he said, "The best of all is God is with us!" Scores of times he repeated, "I'll praise, I'll praise." Wednesday, March 2, Joseph Bradburn prayed with him; it was a few minutes before ten o'clock. There were around his bed his niece, Miss Wesley; one of his executors, Mr. Horton; his medical attendant, Dr. Whitehead; his book steward, George Whitfield; the present occupants of his house, James and Hester Ann Rodgers, and their little boy; and his friends and visitors, Robert Carr Brackenbury and Elizabeth Ritchie,—eleven persons altogether. "Farewell!" cried Wesley,—the last word he uttered; and then as Joseph Bradburn, the devoted, was saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; and this heir of glory shall come in," Wesley gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren and without a sigh or a groan was gone. It was about ten o'clock, A.M., Wednesday, March 2, 1791.

As soon as he was dead, those present gathered about his couch and sang:—

"Waiting to receive thy Spirit
Lo! the Saviour stands above;
Shows the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love."

They knelt down and prayed that the mantle of the ascended Elijah might rest upon his followers. His remains were kept for one week, for which his chroniclers, not even Tyerman, give no reason. The day before his burial, the body, clad in his gown, cassock, and band, lay in state in the City Road chapel. He had directed in his Will that six poor men should be his bearers, and be compensated with one pound each. While dying, he said, "Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen; and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the chapel." Great crowds flocked to see his remains, to look for the last time upon that placid and venerable face. So intense indeed was the excitement that it was found expedient to conceal the time of his burial, and at the early hour of five—his favorite preaching hour—of the morning of the 9th of March, by torchlight, his coffin was interred in its grave prepared in the graveyard of City Road chapel, John Richardson, one of his old preachers, reading the service so impressively at the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our deceased *father*," at

the substituted word those present burst out into loud weeping. Tyerman mentions the singular fact that those present were given, "a biscuit, in an envelope, engraven with a beautifully executed portrait of the departed, dressed in canonicals, surmounted with a halo and a crown." That grave has been the Mecca of godly Methodists for more than a century.

Pen-pictures of Wesley agree substantially as to his physique. Whitehead, quoting from one of the contemporary writers, says: "His stature was low; his habit of body in every period of life the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise; and, notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, and his appearance until within a few years of his death vigorous and muscular. His face for an old man was one of the finest we have ever seen. A clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his years, and impressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure."¹ Haweis says, "John Wesley was of inferior size, his visage marked with intelligence, singularly neat and plain in his dress, a little cast in his eye, observable on particular occasions; upright, graceful, and remarkably active."² Tyerman says, "In person Wesley was rather below the middle size, but beautifully proportioned, without an atom of superfluous flesh, yet muscular and strong; with a forehead clear and smooth, a bright and penetrating eye, and a lovely face, which retained the freshness of its complexion to the latest period of his life."³ He mentions himself that his standard weight through life was 120 pounds. The late venerable John Chappell, one of the expelled Reformers of Baltimore, and until his decease prominent in the Methodist Protestant Church, St. John's station, and who often heard Wesley preach while he was a young Methodist in London, used to relate, that at the communion, himself below the medium size, standing at the chancel, with Wesley standing inside a step higher, the top of his head was on a line with Chappell's. Procerity is no bar to any other form of greatness. The eulogistic tributes passed upon Wesley are exhaustive of language without exaggeration. There is none finer than Whitehead's, from whom most other biographers copy, often without credit, notably Moore.

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. p. 298.

² "History of the Church of Christ," London, 1800, Vol. II. p. 274.

³ "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 656.

Stevens is elaborate, covering about sixty twelvemo pages of his history. It is able and apologetic. Tyerman, for condensation and eloquence, is not surpassed: "He stands alone; he had no successor; no one like him went before; no contemporary was a coequal. There was a wholeness about the man, such as is rarely seen. His physique, his genius, his wit, his penetration, his judgment, his memory, his beneficence, his religion, his diligence, his conversation, his courteousness, his manners, and his dress made him as perfect as we ever expect man to be on this side of heaven." The panegyric of Macaulay, the civilian, must close our allusions: "He was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu; and who devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."

There are some lost chapters in Methodism. More recent investigators are recovering them to the completeness of historic data. It is necessary to recover one of these chapters in connection with the immediate obsequies of Wesley. After his decease the preachers of London, at a meeting called to consider the situation and make preparation for the funeral, unanimously selected Dr. John Whitehead to deliver the oration or sermon. Whitehead modestly refers to it in these words, found in the genuine edition of his "Life of Wesley," page 281. "March 9 was the day appointed for his interment. The preachers then in London, to my utter astonishment, insisted that I should deliver the funeral discourse; and the executors afterward approved of the appointment. The intention was to carry the corpse into the chapel, and place it in a raised situation before the pulpit during the service. But the crowds which came to see the body while it lay in the coffin, both in the private house, and especially in the chapel, the day before the funeral, were so great that his friends were apprehensive of a tumult, if they should proceed on the plan first intended. It was therefore resolved the evening before to bury him between five and six in the morning. Though the time of notice to his friends was short, and the design itself was spoken of with great caution, yet a considerable number of persons attended at that early hour. The late Mr. Richardson, who now lies with him in the same vault, read the funeral service in a manner which made it peculiarly affecting. The discourse, which was afterward printed; was delivered in the chapel at the hour appointed in the forenoon to an astonishing multitude of

people; among whom were many ministers of the gospel, both of the Establishment and the Dissenters. The audience was still and solemn as night; and all seemed to carry away with them enlarged views of Mr. Wesley's character, and serious impressions of the importance of religion, and the utility of Methodism."

These interesting facts are referred to by Watson only of all his biographers, and he quotes Whitehead's account. Moore and Stevens and Tyerman give no hint of this important section of the obsequies. It may be found in full in Stockton's reprint of Whitehead's "Life of Wesley." It is elaborate, and so masterful that the reader will confirm the judgment of the London preachers in his selection for this responsible task. The text is 2 Samuel iii. 38: "Know ye not that there is a prince, etc." It occupies near sixteen octavo pages in minion type, and must have occupied at least two hours in its delivery. It is divided into four parts, considering respectively Wesley as a man of learning and intellect; his religious sentiments, exhaustively treated; his labors as a minister of the gospel; and his experience with him as his chosen physician in his dying days. The time absolutely necessary for the preparation of such a discourse may have been among the reasons for delaying the obsequies for a full week. Dr. Whitehead had been appointed by Wesley's Will, conjointly with Dr. Coke and Henry Moore, one of his literary executors, and at a formal meeting held in London of all the executors, the preachers representing the Conference, and other friends as representing the societies at large, for the purpose of selecting a biographer, on motion of Mr. Rodgers, the superintendent of the London circuit within which Dr. Whitehead resided and labored, he was unanimously selected to write the Life of Wesley, and the ensuing Conference of 1791 approved the selection, and added a farther distinction of making him, though but a local preacher at this time, a member of the Book Committee. He had also been selected previously as the literary executor of Charles Wesley by his widow and near friends, so that all the data, papers, letters, etc., essential to a thorough performance of such an onerous task were put into his possession. He accepted the trust. How well he performed it the genuine edition of his "Life of Charles and John Wesley," preserved in two editions of it for American Methodists, attests. Strenuous efforts were made in England to suppress it, and bury the author in oblivion if not disgrace, so soon as it was found by Coke, Moore, and the Conference party that it was to be an independent and not a

partisan work from their point of view. Whitehead was a Dissenter in his principles, though in his "Life of the Wesleys" he adheres to Charles's opinions as to the inconsistency of John's departure from Episcopalianism in the Deed of Declaration and the American Ordinations. He was for the most part of the Methodist locality, and an advocate of popular government for the Methodist people. Such principles and views were a red flag to the bovine nature of the opposition now entrenched in the Legal Hundred, and buttressed by all the property of the United Societies. The bitter and unrelenting controversy which raged around Dr. Whitehead and his friends made them the centre of a strife, the inevitable outcome of the Deed and the Ordinations, which has not ceased in its remoter murmurings to this day in British Methodism. The reputation of this man merits the fullest vindication possible, without assuming that he was free from faults, contradictions, and frailties in common with his aspersers. It will be found in Appendix A of this volume.

CHAPTER X

Wesley's death inauspicious for the times — The Poll-Deed in conflict with popular sentiment in the political world — Disfavor of entailed Paternalism — Coke's return to England and his hopes of leadership — His character analyzed — Fermentation over the Legal Hundred — Distraction instead of peace in its wake — Alexander Kilham; agitation under him — Laymen aroused by him — His trial and expulsion; principles involved — Coke's attempt to Episcopalize the Conuection; its failure then and ever since — Rev. William Guirey and his exposures as to the Coke-Lichfield secret conference — Demand of the Society trustees — Concessions — The New Connexion Methodists; organization and history — Rev. Joseph Barker; a sketch of this infidel lecturer; his retraction, etc. — The New Connexion Society made a theory a demonstration; individual force against automatic Paternalism — The forerunner of the Methodist Protestant Church in America.

WESLEY'S death could not have been more inauspicious for the civil and political environments of Methodism. The Deed of Declaration, which now became operative,—a legal instrument entailing to 100 preachers out of 300, empire by property over their less favored brethren, 1200 local preachers and 70,000 free-born Methodist Britons, conjointly with the absolute power of conferential control and administration,—was to be subjected to a crucial test. It resolved itself into the question: Can Paternalism as a system of government be transmitted to sons thus arbitrarily selected by the Father and Founder? The answer can be impartially delivered by the historical results of the entailing instrument only. It will be biassed by the point of view of the observer, and its wisdom or unwisdom thus determined. Abstractly there was but little in civil or ecclesiastical history, aside from the precedents of the primitive Christian Church, which had been utterly ignored in the rise and progress of the Hierarchy, in contravention. It was therefore inauspicious for Methodism, thus entailed in its polity, to be tried amid the distraction and division of sentiment which obtained all over England, from the peers of the realm to the peasants in their poverty, as to the merits of the French Revolution. Primarily it was an uprising of the repressed and oppressed people against the transmission of Paternalism, both in Church and State. Its tocsin was Liberty, but under

designing leadership it soon degenerated with the masses into license, which in its insane fury revelled in bloodshed and developed a blind and malicious Individualism more to be dreaded than the Paternalism it dethroned. Its principles were nevertheless so strikingly true in the abstract as to win their way triumphantly at the last, so that liberty-loving Englishmen espoused them, and it brought on the age of pamphleteering, and the British Islands were flooded with the discussion on both sides. For the first time popular gatherings in England discussed the issues, and, as might be expected, the Methodists were not idle spectators. Not a few of them, both preachers and people, espoused liberal principles. The American Revolution, — a revolt against the dictum: non-resistance and passive obedience to the monarchical claim of taxation without representation, — and its result in the independence of the colonies, was a thing of recent memory. On its merits the English people were likewise not a little differenced in opinion. Thus saturated, it is no marvel that religious society felt the influence of the liberalizing movement, and it aroused the conservative and non-progressive elements to stern resistance. The Deed of Declaration was in their favor, and so far as the British Methodists were concerned those who held the keys of power set themselves in opposition to all innovations on Wesley's plan. But the sands cannot prevent the rising of the sea. The outcome will show that the opening statement of this chapter was true; the times could not have been more inauspicious for the Deed of Declaration as a peace measure among Methodists. Stevens's opening chapter for this period admits in most eloquent sentences the inauspiciousness, but for opposite reasons. The bias of his point of view leads to a denunciation of the French Revolution as a refutation of the political apothegm that revolutions never go backwards. It serves his argument in a contrast he institutes with England securing her Constitution by reformation, seemingly overlooking the revolution of Magna Charta, seminal of all her liberty; and the world will be slow to admit that the principles of the French Revolution, maugre its horror and blood, were a retrograde movement for popular enfranchisement. He sees in the agitations of the times only the discipline of adversity, and a derivation of strength for English institutions and Methodistic preservation through the Deed of Declaration. If indeed history is philosophy teaching by example, the example cited, it is confidently affirmed, cannot be claimed as demonstrating the wisdom of entailed Paternalism.

Stevens mentions as standard-bearers whom Wesley had left, Coke, Benson, Moore, Hopper, Mather, Taylor, Creighton, Dickenson, Brackenbury, Pawson, Bradburn, Bramwell, Olivers, Adam Clarke, Reece, Entwistle, and scores of others. Properly enough, he names first Dr. Thomas Coke. He had gone again to America, one of a number of voyages he made to the far-off Republic, in October, 1790. Wesley died March 2, 1791, and the news reached Coke while travelling with Asbury at Port Royal, Va., April 29, and not the 20th, as Drew states it. In proof Asbury's *Journal* says: "Friday, 29th April. The solemn news reached our ears that the public papers had announced the death of that dear man of God, Rev. John Wesley. . . . Brother Coke was sunk in spirit and wished to hasten home immediately. . . . Dr. Coke, accompanied by Brother C—— and Dr. G——, set out for Baltimore in order to get the most speedy passage to England; leaving me to fill the appointments, . . . at Alexandria Dr. Coke had certain information of Mr. Wesley's death."¹ Stevens says he reached England May 14, 1791, but Drew, his biographer, says he embarked from Newcastle, Del., in America, May 14, for London direct. Drew is not reliable as to dates, but Stevens gives no proof that he is right, so that the exact date of Coke's arrival is uncertain, but it is not material. Stevens, commenting, quizzically adds, "He quickly perceived the public danger, by the 'severe and irritating trials' which he met from some of his ministerial colaborers, who unfavorably suspected the motive of his sudden return."² He is borrowing from Drew, and what he says is, remembering that he is always partial to Coke, "The supposed occasion of Dr. Coke's arrival in England at this particular crisis of the Methodistic connection, though pleasing to some, was by no means gratifying to all the preachers; . . . the wounds which were inflicted by his associates at home were in a measure healed by the balm which grew in the western world."³ Why his return should make such a sensation is thus adroitly parried.

An explanation might have been ventured; he was one of Wesley's literary executors, etc., but it is evident that something else could be said, but is not. Drew knew what it was, and Stevens is not so dull that he fails to see it, and after the manner of historians who have a preconceived theory to maintain, he

¹ Asbury's "Journal," Vol. II. p. 115.

² "History of Methodism," Vol. III. p. 25.

³ Drew's "Life of Coke," pp. 232, 233.

ventures a general remark as a justification for the skip-over, "It would be neither interesting nor relevant to record the details of the internal strifes of Methodism which followed the death of Wesley." Entwistle, one of the standard-bearers Wesley left, lets out the secret. The same week of Wesley's death he wrote: "My soul trembles for the ark of the Lord. There are men of so many different judgments in our Connection, all of whom now claim an equal authority, especially the senior preachers, that I fear we may have divisions."¹ Not a few of them had special and positive reasons for fearing Dr., now Bishop Coke, the title having been assumed by him and Asbury some four years prior in America, but never worn in England, where it was most distasteful to the Conference preachers. In his piety, evangelical spirit, self-sacrifice, and entire consecration to Methodist religion they had unqualified confidence; but his overweening ambition to succeed Wesley as primate of the Methodists he could not conceal,—it thoroughly dominated the human side of him. In many elements he was the best qualified among them all, and he was conscious of it. He was now all the more anxious by reason of the fact that his bishopward ambition had been thwarted by Asbury by his superior tactics and force of character, and he had been compelled to step down from the equality of even a "joint superintendent," as Wesley intended him to be in America.

In that tentative letter to Wesley of April 17, 1784, from which citation has already been made, he says, "If the awful event of your decease should happen before my removal to the world of spirits, it is almost certain that I should have business enough, of indispensable importance, on my hands in these kingdoms." When Wesley appointed him, as Superintendent, to America, he expected him to remain there; no other supposition is congruous with the purpose of it. And it must be assumed that Dr. Coke expected himself to remain in America; but six months' traveling with Asbury taught him that there could be no primacy for him in that land. He returned in June, 1785, and from that time to Wesley's death he flitted from shore to shore washed by the broad Atlantic a number of times. As has already been found, he was Wesley's appointee as President of the Irish Conference, a position in which he was very popular, and efficient as well, for a series of years. During Wesley's life he presided alternately with him, and after his death for twenty-two succes-

¹ Stevens's "History of Methodism," Vol. III. p. 15.

sive years he was President, except four times. No man had so successfully ingratiated himself into the confidence and affection of Wesley, though he knew his weaknesses and often rebuked and corrected him. About a year after he was received, Wesley wrote of him to Walter Churchy, a legal friend, "He has hitherto behaved exceeding well, and seems to be aware of his grand enemy — applause."¹ He was also rash, impetuous, and meddlesome; it was his nature. In the matter of the Dublin Methodists, who were in the habit of attending Dissenting service at Church hours, he ordered changes without Wesley's knowledge or consent. Tyerman says of this episode, "Coke's assumption to act as Wesley's vicar gave great offence, and the new arrangement had to be abandoned."² It had overridden Henry Moore's authority as assistant on Dublin circuit, and Wesley wrote him an appealing letter under date, "Leeds, May 6th, 1788. The Doctor is too warm. He ought to have had more regard for so respectable a body of men as applied to him."³ He countermanded Coke's order in the same letter. The reader is requested to note these estimates of Coke, and the evidence from under Wesley's own hand, supported by abundant contemporary opinion, as future use will be made of them in an important connection. Too much significance, therefore, cannot be attached to Coke's precipitate return to England. He honestly believed that he was in the succession, and he sincerely hoped he would be named by the Conference for Wesley's chair.

The fermentation throughout the United Societies was extreme. The Deed of Declaration was attacked with severity by nearly all not included in its provisions, and popular liberty was rife in civil England and could not be tabooed in ecclesiastical England. Paine's "Rights of Man" was the opposite of Wesley's "Thoughts on the Origin of Power," as it grounded authority in the will of the people, and was as influential for human progress as his "Age of Reason" was mischievous to all religion, though it was designed as an antidote to hierarchal priestly rule and the superstitions of Romish doctrine. These were the causes of the fermentation in the Methodist societies. The Legal Hundred of the Poll-Deed were secure enough, and men seldom voluntarily part with power once secured. Two hundred out of three hundred preachers were excluded. If the one hundred were content, conceding that Wesley had the right to make any selection he

¹ Wesley's "Works," Vol. XII. p. 406.

² "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 542.

³ *Ibid.* p. 543.

liked, it is equally true that those rejected had the same right to grumble and dissent, and they did it.

Antecedently one would surmise that his selection would be made by seniority, seeing he had determined to limit the number; but among the seniors rejected, as Tyerman shows,¹ were John Hampson, 31 years in conference; Thomas Lee, 36; John Atley, 21; Joseph Thompson, 25; John Poole, 25; William Ashman, 19; Jonathan Hern, 15; Williams Eels, 12; Thomas Mitchell, 36; Joseph Pilmoor, 19; Thomas Wride, 15; Thomas Johnson, 31, and others; while among the included were, Joshua Keighley, 3; Joseph Cole, 3; Jonathan Cousins, 3; William Green, 3; Joseph Taylor, 6; William Hoskins, 1; William Myles, 6; William Simpson, 4; James Wray, 2; and Henry Foster, 3. An apologist will at once say he wanted some young men as representatives. If so, having rejected Hampson, it would have been a kindly thing to have named his son, six years in conference; but he rejected him with his father. On what apparent principle, then, did he act? He sifted out all the suspects. All who entertained liberal principles, and all whom he suspected of disloyalty to any part of his plan for perpetuating Methodism as he understood it. Hampson was a republican in politics,—it was sufficient to exclude him; and so through the list of conference names. In this, from Wesley's point of view, he did just what any other man would have done in like circumstances and imbued with the same purpose. He intended his Poll-Deed to be a cohesive, peace measure,—a band that would hold together the people and the preachers. Future investigations will show that it held together the Legal Hundred and their successors, thus perpetuating a Wesleyan party through the power of property to this day; but it was the direct incentive of perpetual strife, distraction, and division among the excluded preachers and people.

William Thompson was a leading man among those named by Wesley, cautious and far-seeing. He took in the salient points of the almost tumultuous situation after the Father and Founder's death, and within a month he issued a private circular addressed to "the preachers in general and the assistants in particular." It set forth the dangers impending to Methodism, declared the impossibility of a personal substitute for Wesley, and proposed that vacancies in the corporate body of the Legal Hundred should be filled by seniority, a president, secretary, and stewards to be elected for one year, a member designated to preside at the Irish

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 422.

Conference, the whole work to be districted, and committees authorized to manage their affairs in the intervals of Conference. It was intended as a compromise measure, and was favorably received by the Wesley party. Private meetings of leading preachers were held at Halifax and at Leeds a few weeks after. The preachers in Bristol and vicinity approved, as did also those of Wales, and Adam Clarke influenced those of Dublin to the same purpose. These private meetings were an interesting object lesson to the 1200 local preachers and the 70,000 members who had no part or lot in the disposal of the authoritative remains. Stevens says: "The lay members of the societies, unwilling that their pastors should have the exclusive control of the question, were soon in motion. An important convention of Cornish Methodists was held in Redruth on the 14th of June, and sent to every preacher of the Conference a private account of its proceedings, which virtually pronounced the Halifax circular defective in the most essential points, and proposed revolutionary changes respecting the appointment of leaders, local stewards, circuit stewards, the admission and expulsion of members and preachers, the alteration of circuits, and even the powers of the annual Conference that Wesley himself had fixed by his Deed of Declaration.

Meanwhile the officers of the Birmingham societies met, and issued a printed circular opposed to all these changes, and to any important modification of the economy of the body as left by Wesley. Stevens says: "The diversified opinions of the Connection were, in fine, resolving themselves into three classes, and giving rise to as many parties, composed respectively of men who, from their attachment to the Establishment, wished no change unless it might be greater subordination to the National Church by the abandonment of the sacraments in those cases where Wesley had admitted them; of such as wished to maintain Wesley's plan intact, with official provisions which might be requisite to administer it; and such as desired revolutionary changes, with a more equal distribution of powers among laymen and preachers."¹ This is a fair statement of the situation, and his chapter upon the period intervening from Wesley's death to the ensuing Conference of 1791 is a sad commentary upon its truth, and in demonstration of the utter failure of the Poll-Deed to accomplish what its author intended. Meetings and counter-meetings of preachers and laymen distinctively, like Jews and

¹ "History of Methodism," Vol. III. pp. 25, 26.

Samaritans, were held throughout the societies. Leading members of the Conference, and even those who had been named as the Legal Hundred, differed as to expediency and polity. The ordinations and the sacraments were the bones of contention, but beneath it all, as is seen, the unbalanced government Wesley left could not be brooked by the laity, while the locality were eager to secure some more pronounced recognition. A preference is given to Stevens's account, as he cannot be suspected of a leaning towards the dissentients and the disaffected. Indeed, he construes this hurly-burly of discontent and dissensions and expulsions and secessions into a providential moral discipline necessary to prepare the Legal successors of power and property for a prosperous career. It is an easy philosophy of the situation to be accepted by those who can so view it.

“Early in this controversy a man of great energy, and destined to become historically distinguished as the founder of a Methodist sect, began a course of persistent agitation on the subject by printed pamphlets.” In this way Stevens formally introduces Alexander Kilham. He gives full space and treatment to his biography, but it cannot be followed under the limitation of the objective of this History. He was born at Epworth, July 10, 1762, and at eighteen years of age was converted among the Methodists. He was of impetuous, resolute temper, and accompanied Brackenbury, an irregular itinerant of wealth and social position, as his servant, and shared with him in the preaching during the Channel Islands' labors for Methodism. He was received by Wesley as a regular itinerant in 1785. He was a Dissenter in his principles from the beginning, and three years before Wesley's death designed to petition the Conference, “Let us have the liberty of Englishmen, and to give the Lord's Supper to our societies.” He was a stranger to the thrall of sacerdotalism; and better would it have been for the unity and success, great as the latter has been, of Methodism the world over, if the whole hierarchal figment of a divine touch — a tactual succession of preaching grace — had been thrown to the winds and the simple New Testament practice followed of self-government for local churches; preachers called of God, and elected by the people, with an instalment of laying on of hands of other preachers; an itineracy of evangelists, with the apostles as exceptional rulers of the Church, whose special functions ceased with their death. There are but two consistent systems of Church government, — the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian. It will be seen in the

sequel how the Wesleyan Conference came at last to the former as a system essentially, and thus swung away from the National Church and Wesley's preference; and how the American Methodists were organized as an Episcopal Church through the preference of Coke and Asbury, despite the same natural tendency to Presbyterianism in the people,—a government analogous both with the New Testament ideal and the civil *régime* under which they lived. Kilham was of heroic mould and met the violence of mobs as he afterward met his opponents polemically. Rough-hewn and rugged both in physique and intellect, and an untamed eloquence which frequently bore his audiences away with him, he comes conspicuously into notice from the fact that in May eighteen laymen of Hull issued a protest against the allowance of the sacrament in Methodist chapels, and to the same effect in other places, while counter-declarations were frequent from many towns and often from the same societies. The Hull petition aroused the lion in him, and he wrote a reply which he signed anonymously. It produced great excitement, for he had put the case of the popular rights of the people against the National Church so forcibly that it rallied as a party those who were of his way of thinking, and engendered the resentment of the opposite party.

Amid the turmoil, the forty-eighth Conference met at Manchester, July 26, 1791. It was attended by over three hundred preachers, being the whole body, with few exceptions, as there was now no discriminating selection as under Wesley's reign. It remained in session thirteen days. Perhaps the same number of preachers never before met with so devout a spirit, and in sentiment so divided. William Thompson was elected President; it was the first exercise of the voting privilege for such a purpose. He was an Irishman of sixty years of age, cool, conservative, and in his opinions of church government moderate, so that all parties regarded him as a safe man. Dr. Coke was elected Secretary. He was a ready scribe, and the Conference by this act showed their respect for him personally, but cooled the ardor with which he was generally charged as an aspirant for headship. Organized, the first act was to receive from Joseph Bradburn, Wesley's travelling companion, and to whom he had intrusted it, the letter already adverted to, he wrote the body as a posthumous legacy. It was addressed to the Legal Hundred, and besought them to take no advantage of their position as discriminating in the appointments and to preserve the order he had left them. It

had a moving effect upon the Conference, and they resolved to follow the advice of their sainted father and founder. The suggestions of Thompson for districting the work, etc., were adopted. Seventeen districts in England, five in Ireland, two in Scotland, and one in Wales. The preachers within these bounds were to elect a chairman and a committee of their number, who were to prepare a plan of appointments, the whole to be submitted to the annual Conference when it assembled. They determined that the appointments should be restricted to two years and not three, as Wesley proposed, but with a proviso, that in case of revivals it might be extended. One from each district was to meet the delegate of the British Conference two days before the Irish Conference for the same purpose. Thus was inaugurated the "Stationing Committee." All the preachers were heard through their chairman of the district, and the final "plan of appointments" was submitted to the Conference for adoption or to be referred back and amended. It included the preachers' right of appeal. Coke was designated to preside at the Irish Conference. The statistical returns showed the year to have been prosperous; fifteen candidates were put on a probationary list, a new feature of business, as they were not immediately needed in the work. The Wesleyan Conference of 1791 adjourned without division, and in much outward peace.

No sooner, however, were the preachers back to their appointments than the old controversy broke out afresh, each party contending that the resolve of the Conference "to follow strictly Mr. Wesley's plan" meant that their plan should prevail. Kilham was a leader in the renewed polemical fray, and pamphlets and circulars filled the air with dissentient views. He did not mince his language, for he wrote like a mountain torrent. Strong men of the Conference sided with him and others against him, and another year was spent in jangling over the sacraments, preaching in Church hours, etc. The forty-ninth Conference met in London, July 31, 1792. Alexander Mather, who had been preaching thirty-five years, and had been set apart by Wesley as a "Superintendent" for Scotland — a fact of which little account was taken by the preachers after his return to England, as the "bishop" fiction was scouted by them — was elected President and Dr. Coke Secretary. The controversy opened in the Conference, and Kilham was censured by a formal vote for the violent language of his pamphlet. On the merits of the question itself they were "profoundly embarrassed by its difficulties, and unable

to reach its solution by discussion, so an extraordinary measure was proposed by Pawson as the only means of concluding the debate, and as affording a common ground of mutual concession, at least till time should bring them nearer to unanimity. They resolved to determine it for the present by lot, 'for or against 'the sacraments this year.'" Dr. Clarke drew the lot, and it was against it. All were either satisfied or submitted. The act met with severe animadversions afterward, and the fact that the following Conference showed a decrease in members was construed unfavorably. "The Conference sent an address to the societies on the course it had taken. It was the first address to them ever issued by that body." Perhaps it was not so much a condescension to the laity thus to confer with them, as it was an expedient to keep them in sympathy with the Conference. It was progress, however, in the direction of equal rights. The body seemed bent on a surcease of paternalism, so they "ordained that the same person should not be chosen President of the Conference more than once in eight years, and also that the President's power should cease so soon as the Conference ended." The last provision directly contravened the provision of Wesley's Deed, which declared that the President should continue in office "until the election of another President at the next or other subsequent year." Stevens says of this act, "It was doubtless an inadvertence,"¹ but he gives no evidence, and the fact that at the ensuing Conference it was not amended is in proof that it was intended. The paternalism of Wesley was so extreme that they swung in departure from it to the other segment of the circle. Radicalism was at work. "Regulations were adopted requiring all the preachers of any district, who should be present at the Conferences, to meet, after the appointments were settled, and choose their district chairman; also authorizing the chairman to call district meetings at the demand of preachers or people, for the purpose of trying complaints against any preachers; and making the chairman himself subject to trial and suspension, or deposition from the chair, or from the office of superintendent, by the district meeting to be called by a circuit superintendent, should the chairman be charged with any crime, misdemeanor, or a refusal to call a district meeting when there were sufficient reasons for it."¹ All these were advances for liberal government. There was a net increase of the home work of 1659 members. The Conference of 1792 adjourned with solemn vows and

¹ "History of Methodism," Vol. III. pp. 42, 43.

covenanting, but the "lot" decision did not settle the sacramental questions. Pawson, Adam Clarke, and other leaders were restive, the latter declaring that "he would have liberty of conscience if he had to go to the ends of the earth for it." The controversy raged through the year; Kilham, as usual, was in the van of it. He issued another circular under an assumed name, and submitted a new system for the government of the Connection, which more than ever set at odds the progressive and the conservative forces of the societies and Conference.

The fiftieth Conference met at Leeds, July 29, 1793. John Pawson was elected President and Dr. Coke Secretary. The discussion came on and ended in a compromise that, "in places where the members were unanimous in their desire to have the sacraments administered by their own preachers, it should be conceded; that all distinctions between ordained and unordained preachers should cease; that being received into full membership by the Conference, and appointed by them to administer the ordinances, should be considered a sufficient ordination, without the imposition of hands."¹ The vote was eighty-six to forty-eight in favor, so at one fell swoop they wiped out the fictions of Churchism. The spirit of the Conference was excellent, and more unanimity than ever before since Wesley's departure was exhibited. Kilham, who had been sent to Scotland the previous year, did not attend the session, but so soon as he heard of its action he issued other circulars, "detesting some of the steps that had been taken respecting the sacraments." But he was also engaged in a noble fight against horse-racing and theatres, so that his time and attention were divided. Pawson, the President who had been ordained by Wesley for Scotland, as has been seen, and put on bands and gowns while ministering, recoiled from the radical steps of the Conference, and led a party of which Coke and Mather and others of their way of thinking were confederate. In the latter part of the year he wrote, "At present we really have no government," and proposed a revamp of Wesley's plan, as Pawson construed it. The gist of it he set forth in these words: "In order therefore to preserve all that was valuable in the Church of England among the Methodists, he ordained Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke bishops. These he undoubtedly designed should ordain others. Mr. Mather told us so at the Manchester Conference; but we did not then understand him. I see no way of coming to any good settlement, but on the plan I mentioned

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 46-51.

before. I sincerely wish that Dr. Coke and Mr. Mather may be allowed to be what they are — bishops. We must have ordination among us at any rate.”¹

Dr. Coke had in the meantime made another tour upon the American continent and looked after his missionary interests in the West Indies. He returned again to England in June, 1793. Once more on British soil, he conferred with his friends, and now reappears as the “little magician.” The suggestions of Pawson, Stevens concedes, “probably originated with Coke.” He farther informs that: “Mather, Taylor, Pawson, Bradburn, Rodgers, Moore, Adam Clarke, and Coke met for consultation on the subject at Lichfield, a town in which there were no Methodists, and where they supposed their interview would not be attended with any excitement. Coke addressed them on the agitated state of the Connection, and the perils which menaced it; he referred to the success of Methodism in the New World under its Episcopal organization, and the relief which Wesley’s establishment there of this form of government (?) had given to a similar controversy. He offered ordination to the brethren who were present. . . . Most of the meeting approved his proposition; but Moore, who had been ordained by Wesley, very wisely suggested that they should confine their proceedings to the discussion of its practicability, and defer its decision to the next Conference. He, however, pronounced the measure a scriptural and suitable expedient for the government of any Christian Church. Mather concurred with Moore. They adjourned after adopting a series of resolutions, which were to be submitted with all their signatures to the Annual Conference.”² A parenthetic interrogation is inserted by the writer in this statement at one point in bar of its truth. Tyerman says of this critical episode in English Methodism: “In 1794” (neither Stevens nor Tyerman gives the precise date, but the Pawson letter was written “in the latter part of 1793,” and the Lichfield meeting no doubt took place early in 1794, and so the events dovetail) “he (Coke) secretly summoned a meeting at Lichfield of the most influential of the English preachers, and passed a resolution that the Conference should appoint an order of bishops to ordain deacons and elders, he himself of course expecting to be a member of the prelatical brotherhood.”³ Drew, Coke’s biographer, makes no mention of this transaction; possibly Coke thought it discreet

¹ Stevens’s “History of Methodism,” Vol. III. p. 51.

² *Ibid.* p. 52.

³ “Life of Wesley,” Vol. III. p. 434.

not to leave any note of it among his posthumous papers. It recalls the vaticination of that far-seeing and character-reading man of God, Charles Wesley. August 14, 1785, he wrote his brother one of his most beseeching letters against ordination. The paragraph most pertinent to the present purpose reads: "But when once you began ordaining in America, I knew, and you knew, that your preachers here would never rest till you ordained them. You told me they would separate by and by. The doctor (Coke) tells us the same. His Methodist episcopal church in America was intended to beget a Methodist episcopal church here. You know he comes armed with your authority to make us all Dissenters. One of your sons assured me that not a preacher in London would refuse orders from the doctor."¹ So, if he finally failed to have a Methodist episcopal church in England (to follow Charles Wesley's capitalizing of the title) it was not for the lack of honest intention and sincere preference as well as consummate ecclesiastical intriguing and a wily diplomacy with his brethren.

Nothing more unfortunate could have happened to the Connection than this Lichfield meeting. Again let Stevens tell the story. "This private consultation, so cautiously conducted, did not escape public animadversion. Its very cautiousness excited suspicion."² Kilham referred to it as a conspiracy to place pre-

¹ Tyerman's "Life," Vol. III, p. 444.

² "The History of Episcopacy from its Rise to the Present Day." In four parts. By William Guirey, minister of the Gospel. 12mo, 381 pp., pasteboard. A copy in the library of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md., which the writer has thoroughly examined. Before quoting from it, it is proper to give a statement as to Guirey, as other quotations will be made from this work in treating of American Methodism. He says that he embraced religion under Dr. Wrangle, of the Reformed Church of Sweden, who held a successful meeting in Philadelphia, but subsequently returned to Sweden, leaving his converts without a shepherd. He names himself and six others as welcoming Captain Webb when he first came to Philadelphia to preach, and this seems to have marked his connection with the Methodists. He was a "trial" member of Conference in 1795-96, and travelled in Virginia. In 1797 his name disappears. He sympathized with, and soon became associated with, O'Kelly, and was one of the most prominent of his preachers, finally, fraternizing with one section of the "Christian Church," he separated from O'Kelly on a doctrinal difference, which will be exposed in the American history of 1792-1803. His "History of Episcopacy" bears no imprint either of the publisher or of the date of publication, but it exhibits internal evidence that it was written and issued before 1800. He furnishes some specific information anent this Lichfield secret meeting of 1791, of Coke, Taylor, Clarke, Rodgers, Bradburn, and Moore. It was held at a tavern. "An accidental traveller discovered their meeting and spoiled their intended secrecy. 'Tis said they attracted the attention and suspicion of the persons at the inn, and that if they continued their meetings any longer the magistrates would have interfered on the

tentious prelates over the people. . . . The public excitement became again intense, as the session of the Conference approached. A new element of discord appeared. The conservatives included most of the trustees of chapels, as these were generally chosen from the most wealthy members of the society, and were therefore most likely to be influenced by their social position in favor of the National Church. They were indeed the 'High-Church' lay aristocracy of Methodism, distinguishable as such from the mass of the people, who demanded the sacraments, and from the ultra-democratic party represented by Kilham. By extensive consultations and correspondence they prepared to exert their influence, if not their official power, against all liberal changes. They met by delegation at Bristol, before the session of the Conference there. They claimed a larger control than had been conceded them over the affairs of the societies, and particularly the right of a veto on the sacraments in the chapels. They denounced the meeting at Lichfield, demanded that the preachers should abandon all ecclesiastical titles, cease to administer the sacraments, abjure ordination, and divide more equally with the trustees the administration of the affairs of the Church."¹ Two comments only on this statement seem called for: the insistence that laymen are always conservative, and therefore to be trusted and not mistrusted by the preachers, and if Stevens tells the story correctly, how it stands in proof of the venturesome suggestion that if Wesley had added one hundred of them to the Legal Conference his plan of perpetuation might have succeeded. The Deed of

suspicion of their being engaged in seditious consultation," p. 189. Taylor afterward exposed the meeting in a letter of April 29, 1794, which he gives, see pp. 189-190. Their principal deliberation was to form a kind of Episcopacy, Superintendents of Districts, etc. Sometimes Guirey dips his pen in gall as the following sentence in continuation, "This induced that little man Coke (who runs with the hare and holds with the hounds) to write the following lines to Mr. Kilham (the Kilham controversy occurred soon after, and was violently opposed openly by Coke) — Hitherto we have been, since the death of Mr. Wesley, the most perfect aristocracy existing, perhaps, on the earth. The people have no power, we the whole in the fullest sense which can be conceived. If there be any change in favor of religious liberty, the people certainly should have some place." Signed and dated, "Angrim, April 29, 1795, Thomas Coke." Another of the Wesleyan preachers of that time, and who subsequently came to America and wrote "The Portraiture of Wesleyan Methodism," New York, 12mo, 1813, by Jonathan Crowther, defensive of it, wrote to Kilham on the same subject of Episcopacy, "I told them plainly at the district meeting last week that I would as soon see the devil at the head of the connection as seven bishops." Written from Plymouth Dock, February 26, 1796. See pp. 199, 200. Letter-writing is a serious and tricky business when freely indulged by inconsistent men.

¹ "History of Methodism," Vol. III. p. 53.

Settlement, sometimes so called, would then, indeed, have settled something. It is also difficult to see, in the light of the facts, how he can make a distinction between "the mass of the people who demanded the sacraments, and the ultra-democratic party represented by Kilham." The same demand was a chief plank in his platform, and the sequel will show that the people were with him.

In the face of this new demand for an enlargement of lay-participation in the administration of the societies, the fifty-first Conference met at Bristol, June 28, 1794. Thomas Hanby was elected President. He had travelled forty years and was eminently fit for the post, devout, quiet, and yet courageous. Dr. Coke was elected Secretary. A representation of the delegated trustees attended, and the Conference at once, as the urgent business of the session, entered into negotiations with them. It must have been a formidable movement, or this deference would not have been paid it. Stevens's slur is hardly called for, if substantially true, that they were the High Church aristocrats of the societies. Their principal contentions at least were tantamount to the claims of the "mass of the people" and the "ultra-democratic party of Kilham." Through respective committees the parties met, and a compromise was effected. First, the Conference voted against the Lichfield resolutions, and so relegated to the rear the Coke party and their Episcopal Church. It never successfully revived in British or Irish Methodism. The temporal and the spiritual concerns of the societies were separated, the latter put under the control of the laity and the former under that of the ministry. The power of the keys was severely limited, in that it was determined that "No trustee, however accused, or defective in conforming to the established rules of the Society, shall be removed from it, unless his crime or breach of rules be proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders."¹ The sacraments were allowed to be administered wherever the society preferred. A list of such was published in the minutes and numbered forty-eight. Dr. Coke was appointed to attend the next Irish Conference, reported disaffection not proving true. It was a prosperous year despite the disputations and broils. A net increase of 8343 in the British Islands.

One cannot but pause and inquire as to the source of this prosperity in such circumstances. It is the fancy of those who espouse the governmental Parentalism of Methodism, both in Wesley and Asbury, to attribute a special providential blessing

¹ Stevens's "History of Methodism," Vol. III. p. 55.

upon it,— God was in the machinery as much as in the doctrine and the means of grace. But the spectacle just presented is a Methodism prospering amid almost revolutionary inroads upon Parentalism, and Providence seems to smile upon it. The truth is, the vitality and power were in the doctrines and the means of grace, the unifying feature of Methodism the world over. Atmore, one of the leading preachers, says of this Conference, "It was the most painful I ever attended." He refers to the severe disputations, while the concessions made did not pacify, but were merely concessions to the liberal party. Extremes beget extremes. The conservatives, perceiving that what they had yielded had no effect, retracted, and soon the societies were again thrown into "one continued scene of turmoil and strife" down to the Conference of 1795. It broke out in Bristol, where the trustees were opposed to the Conference measures to pacify. The preachers took sides, and the conflict raged. Henry Moore was in charge at Bristol, and, armed with the authority of the Legal Hundred, he took steps that eventuated in a division. A new chapel was built. Finally Thompson devised a Plan of Pacification for the whole Connection, which was approved by the contending parties and the matter referred to the ensuing Conference. Kilham waded into the fray up to his lips. He issued pamphlet after pamphlet, dealing in invective and scolding the conservatives without stint. They were signed under pseudonyms and scattered broadcast.

The fifty-second Annual Conference was at Manchester, July 27, 1795. Joseph Bradford was elected President, and Dr. Coke, as usual, Secretary. Never before had it met under such prayerful anxiety. A whole day was spent in devotions. A delegated meeting of trustees was held at the same time in Manchester, and Stevens says: "It was an imposing assembly, both by its numbers and the respectability of many of its members. Thomas Thompson, a man of commanding influence, was their president." A committee of nine was appointed, composed of the president, Pawson, Mather, Coke, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Moore, and Adam Clarke. It was found to be about equally divided in sentiment on the pending questions. For six nights the committee met, and finally Thompson's Plan of Pacification, after some amendments, was adopted, referred to the Conference, and agreed to by the preachers and most of the trustees. Its principal features Stevens cites briefly: "The sacraments, the burial of the dead, and divine service in 'Church hours' must be deter-

mined, thereafter, in any society, by a majority of its trustees, stewards, and leaders, the consent of the Conference being also necessary; that the Lord's Supper must not be administered in the chapels on Sundays on which it is administered in the National Churches; that it must be administered according to the National ritual; that the Liturgy, Wesley's abridgment of it, or at least the lessons appointed by the calendar, must be used wherever, in England, divine service should be performed on Sundays in Church hours; that the appointment of preachers shall remain solely with the Conference, and no exclusion of them from the pulpits by trustees be allowed; and that preachers shall be subject to trial, under accusation, at the instance of a majority of the trustees, or stewards and leaders, before a meeting of the preachers of the district and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, and can be removed from the circuit if found guilty."¹ The Conference adjourned with mutual congratulations. The net increase was 6188. Three hundred and ninety-one preachers were on the roll. The Plan of Pacification had a tranquillizing effect, but did not arrest the discussion. Kilham was not satisfied,—he could not be with any half measures. He issued a pamphlet signed with his own name: "Progress of Liberty among the People called Methodists." It outlined a "Constitution" for the Connection, which meant a revolution of its government. Coke, Adam Clarke, and Richard Reece demanded that he be brought to trial. Kilham defied them. If he pushed matters to an extreme,—and in view of the concessions already made this must be admitted,—it will be presently seen that the Conference also pushed matters to an extreme by his expulsion.

The fifty-third Annual Conference assembled in London, July 25, 1796. Thomas Taylor, a Conference hero, was elected President, and Dr. Coke Secretary. The notable event was the trial of Kilham. Taylor, just elected president, Bradburn, Crowther, and other leaders who had been in full sympathy with his ideas, now forsook him in his extreme measures, as they explained. Taking Stevens's account of it, as not being colored in favor of Kilham, the trial is summarized as follows: "On the first day Mather arose and asked, 'Is Mr. Alexander Kilham here?' The reply being in the affirmative, he resumed, 'Before we proceed to business I wish, by permission of the President, to put a few questions to Mr. Kilham.' The request being granted, Mather

¹ "History of Methodism," Vol. III. p. 61.

asked him, 'How long is it since you were received into full connection?' 'Eleven years.' 'Who received you?' 'Mr. Wesley.' 'Did he not at the same time give you a copy of the large Minutes with these words written on them, and signed by himself: "As long as you walk by these rules we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer?"' 'He did so.' 'Do you retract that agreement or covenant?' 'I desire time to consider that question.' It was unanimously conceded, and he retired until the next morning, when he presented a paper repeating the charges contained in the pamphlets, but not replying to those brought against him by the Conference, nor answering Mather's question. Before his paper was read the Conference resolved to abide by the large Minutes of the Manchester Conference, or Mr. Wesley's Plan as contained therein, both with respect to doctrine and discipline. Kilham voted for this pledge." Stevens is a little obscure here, whether he means that Kilham voted for the pledge when made in 1791, which he certainly did, or that he voted for it now in its reaffirmation; for he was immediately asked after his paper was read if he fully concurred with them respecting the rules of the Minutes, and he replied, "I agree to them as far as they are agreeable with the Scripture;" to which vague answer Moore replied, "We all agree with the Koran of Mohammed with the same limitations, namely, as far as it is agreeable with the Scripture, but we agree to these rules because we believe them to be agreeable with Scripture." Kilham offered no reply. The Secretary, Dr. Coke, then cited passages from Kilham's various publications as charges which he made against the preachers and the church government; respecting the former, he gave vague answers, and to the latter he raised objections in accordance with his own more liberal political sentiments; after long discussion he was desired to withdraw, and the Conference, having considered the case, ordered, "That any letters sent in Mr. Kilham's favor should be read, but that no letters against him, in reference to the new rules or plans which he desired to introduce, should be read." This has the appearance of being so ultra-fair to Kilham as to cast suspicion upon it. "The charges of the pamphlets against the preachers were then read over, and pronounced 'unproved and slanderous.'" It was voted that, "Whereas Mr. Kilham has brought charges against Mr. Wesley and the body of the preachers, of a slanderous and criminal nature, which charges he declared he could prove, and which, upon examination, he could not prove even one of them, and also considering

the disunion and strife which has been occasioned in many of the societies, we adjudge him to be unworthy of being a member of the Methodist Connection." This decision was unanimous. Stevens gives as his authority for these proceedings a letter in Henry Moore's "Life," p. 144. Kilham's biographer gives quite another coloring to it, as might be expected. The Conference sent out a "Circular" to the societies, giving a statement of the trial, which lasted three days. About a week after, and before the Conference adjourned, Kilham wrote the body, affirming that, if he was in error, he would submit to its counsels, and protesting his regard for the Connection, adding, "It is probable that before another Conference our views on these subjects will be the same." The Conference interpreted this as a disposition to return and conform to its requirements, and appointed a committee of Mather, Pawson, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Bradford, and Moore to confer with him. He refused, however, to sanction the Plan of Pacification, and the Conference finally voted that, "He could have no place in the Connection while he continued in his present opinions." The Conference did not exceed its authority in this act. The sixteenth section of the Deed of Declaration, heretofore cited, gives it power to expel for any cause deemed by it sufficient. The seeming unanimity of the Conference is in proof of the cohesive power of entailed church property. It was a serious thing openly to dissent. The effect of it was a reaction on the part of the ruling majority against the concessions made, of which a farther test took place at the ensuing Annual Conference, the fifty-fourth, which met at Leeds, August 1, 1797.

The Plan of Pacification did not pacify, and the old issues were discussed in the principal societies through the year, and another meeting of delegated trustees, to the number of sixty-seven,¹ assembled in the same town just before the Conference. An evidence of the Conference reaction is exhibited in the election of Dr. Coke as President. Samuel Bradburn was made Secretary. The previous year there had been a net increase of 6977; this year the net increase was 4293. The assembled trustees were conferred with, and some modifications of the Plan of Pacification made in the line of a completion of the plan. The Conference addressed a circular to the societies, in which it says, "Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different

¹ Smith says 200 from every section, and this is confirmed by other authorities.

public meetings.”¹ The reactionists took alarm. Moore declared that “they were sapping the ecclesiastical foundations of Methodism and was strongly tempted to retire from it in despair.” A proposition was made to fortify the executive power of the Conference after these great modifications. Coke, Mather, and Moore spoke strongly in favor of what they called “Wesley’s plan, which was to appoint twelve ministers or bishops, two of whom should be in Scotland, three in Ireland, and seven in England. The suggestion was promptly resisted.”¹ It was a death-stroke to the aspirations of Coke, and sealed the record that the British Conference would not have any form of an Episcopacy, firmly as it held to the powers entailed to it by Wesley. They have maintained it to this day, though there have not been wanting men like Dixon² in later years, and even as late as the second Pan-Methodist Conference of 1891, a few who gave out hankering after they returned home for the Methodist Episcopal system. Stevens also says that this Conference of 1797 sent an address to the American General Conference, in which they reverently give thanks for the preservation of the body and their covenant to keep the “rules of doctrine and discipline,” etc. It is a fact that such an address was sent, and it is also a fact that despite Dr. Coke’s presidency the Conference would not allow the title “the Methodist Episcopal Church,” but addressed it instead “To Mr. Francis Asbury, and all the conferences of the people called Methodists in America.”³ If it is either a marked discourtesy or a purposeful correction to answer any address otherwise than as claimed by the addresser, then this discourtesy or correction was frequently made, as will be evidenced later in this History. Stevens also says of these last modifications, “The changes admitted were purely ecclesiastical; they touched not directly the moral discipline of Methodism.” The sentences are pregnant. Well would it have been for American Methodism if the same liberality had been exhibited in the days of O’Kelly and of the Reformers of 1820–30. All either asked was ecclesiastical changes. The “moral discipline” is a catchphrase, and occasion will offer for its analysis and interpretation, specially by its wrongful application in 1820–30.

Another effect of the expulsion of Kilham was the organization of the “New Connexion Methodists.” After his separation from

¹ “History of Methodism,” Vol. III. pp. 74, 75.

² Dixon’s “Methodism in its Origin,” New York edition, 1853.

³ English Methodist Minutes for 1797.

the Wesleyan Conference his indomitable energy and pious zeal sent him up and down the British Islands, everywhere arousing "the people called Methodists" to an assertion of their equality of representation in all the departments of church work. His residence in Scotland had imbued him with the Presbyterian polity as most scriptural, and he was bold in its advocacy. The Dissenters opened their houses of worship to him, while the Wesleyans shut him out. It divided societies and made parties everywhere. The Conference leaders set themselves against him with all their power and influence. Kilham was now reënforced by William Thom and others of the preachers, who established at Leeds, the very headquarters of Methodism in Yorkshire, a periodical organ, called *The Monitor*. In the thick of his aggressive fight, his devoted and saintly wife died a triumphant death, and it was noised abroad, much to his advantage, so small are the circumstances sometimes that further allied ideas. He preached three times on the day of her interment. One hundred and sixty-seven leaders and other Wesleyans of Leeds espoused his opinions and issued a defensive address. It spread to other towns, and the agitation shook the old Connection to its foundations. Smith says: "There is a great appearance of disunion in the body now. How these things will terminate God only knows. We are like chaos. But He can bring order out of confusion." The unwisdom of Kilham's expulsion was thus demonstrated, but it was too late to recall it; and the success of the movement he and his coadjutors inaugurated was in proof that the principles for which they contended were not inconsistent with Methodism, and that no such disaster, as was firmly believed and honestly declared by the Conference party, would have ensued if it had acceded to this popular demand.

Let a friendly pen tell the history briefly. It is from Rev. J. C. Watts, D.D. (an honorary degree conferred by Western Maryland College of the Methodist Protestant Church), in a symposium in the *New York Independent* of March 5, 1891, on the Centenary of Wesley's death. The New Connexion Methodists, or the New Itineracy, as it was first called, was organized by a Conference held at Leeds in 1797, of which William Thom, a Wesleyan minister of twenty-three years' standing, was elected President and Alexander Kilham, of eleven years' standing, Secretary. "the former the Nestor, and the latter the Achilles,¹ of the great struggle for popular rights which then ensued." The

¹ And like Achilles, vulnerable only in his heel.

Conference started with seven ministers and 5000 members. The foundation principle of the organization is thus formulated: "That the Church itself is entitled, either collectively in the persons of its members, or representatively by persons chosen out of and by itself, to a voice and influence in all acts of legislation and government." "Its notable characteristic is *equipoise of power*, cleric and laic; and this is demonstrated in the regulations that all committees, district meetings, and conferences shall be composed of ministers and laymen in equal numbers." "In the Conference no pastoral questions are reserved for the ministers; and in ministerial discipline laymen sit with ministers on the tribunal." "The legal instrument of incorporation guarantees the privilege to revise its rules every seven years, yet no revolutionary change has ever been made; no doctrine has ever been altered; no important rule has ever been revoked; no Methodistic institution has ever been abolished; neither the position of the ministry, nor the rights of the laity, have ever been assailed."

"In 1848 a serious defection took place. The Rev. Joseph Barker adopted and propagated Socinian doctrines, which soon degenerated into open infidelity, and he was expelled after much agitation; he was a man of popular eloquence and personal influence, and the loss of 5000 members was involved, directly and indirectly, in his exclusion." The writer adds a brief to this history. After traversing the United States in infidel lecturing, often in challenged debate, he returned to England, retracted his errors, repented, confessed, and died in the faith of his earlier years. After the Connexion recovered from the shock of his expulsion, it devoted itself to ministerial training, to evangelistic work at home, and to missionary enterprise abroad. It has prosecuted four missions proper: in Ireland, where returns have fluctuated greatly, owing to losses by emigration to the United States and British dependencies; in Canada, where a mission was established in 1837, and prospered to 30,000 adherents, now coalesced with the "Methodist Church of Canada," — "upon a platform in which every essential principle of the New Connexion was adopted and recognized, and is now a magnificent demonstration of the successful application of those principles on a large scale;" in China, where it has all the requisite appointments for the work and some 2000 Chinese converts; in Australia, where good work was done for a time, but, the China mission taxing all the resources of the Connexion, they were advised to identify themselves with other Methodist communities in that quarter.

Statistically, this branch of Methodism reports 202 ministers, 1249 local preachers, 515 churches, and nearly 35,000 communicants, 467 Sunday-schools, 11,345 teachers, and 88,761 scholars; \$30,000 raised for the mission in China, and an equal amount for Connectional funds independent of the sums raised for the education of the ministry, the erection of chapels and schools, and the defrayment of all other local expenses. The cost of the Connectional College at Ranmore has been about \$100,000, and the total value of Connectional trust property is estimated at \$4,900,000. These figures are for 1891. Its principal strength is in England. Its numerical increase has not been so great as is wished. "The reason of this is not that its polity was mistaken, but that its policy was at fault." Dr. Watts thinks they should have paid more attention to home extension, while they rather consumed their resources in foreign work; but if a mistake, it could not be more commendable. It stands to-day a model Methodist denomination, refuting all the antecedent predictions of failure, inadequacy, dangerous experimenting, lack of personal force and collective power. It has a ministry the peer of any in the Methodist world for piety, education, and culture; a laity unsurpassed for zeal and liberality. It made of a theory a demonstration. It developed an individuality in its ministry and laity the guarantee of personal force and the converse of that automatic movement, the resultant of centralizing power, which absorbs the individual in the organization. It was the forerunner of the Methodist Protestant Church in America, begotten of birth-throes notably akin to it.

CHAPTER XI

Heroes of early Methodism common property — Power of the Poll-Deed in quelling and preventing liberal sentiments — The noble dead of this period — Coke's letter to the Bishop of London, 1799 — Failure of the plan — Committee of Privileges of 1803 — Lay-delegation *vs.* lay-representation — Foreign Mission work of the Conference and Dr. Coke its exponent — Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton — Great revivals — Jonathan Seville; no other form of Christianity ever developed such characters — Prosperity of the Connection — "Providential" favor; but equally so with the Reform bodies.

IT will relieve the mental strain of these seven years of internal strife to turn reflection upon the bead-roll of moral heroes and spiritual giants who came into view during this eventful period. They belong alike to a common Methodism. Aside from their individual biographies, where published, the deft and graceful pen of Stevens has pictured them for the admiration of the religious world and the imitation of all who would do and dare and die for Christly service and scriptural doctrine. Limitation forbids anything but glimpses of these sainted men as they pass in review. Richard Treffry was received during this stormy period. He was an able theologian, and his standard Lives of Benson and his son and namesake, Richard, are valuable works. For near fifty years he was a devoted and successful preacher and died in the triumphs of faith. James Townley was received in 1796. He was a biblical scholar and for a number of years one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan General Missions. He was elected President of the Conference, and ranks with Benson, Clarke, and Watson. He suffered much in his last days, but overcame all through the blood of the Lamb. Richard Watson was placed on the roll also in 1796. He was morally great and intellectually gigantic. He succeeded Coke in the management of the Foreign Missions. He became one of the greatest preachers of his day, and his vigorous intellect was fruitful in his imperishable "Theological Institutes" and "Bible Dictionary." English Methodism never produced a nobler character. Richard Newton, Jabez Bunting, Daniel Isaac, and Gideon Ouseley were among those who entered upon the stage of itinerant and laborious life.



RICHARD WATSON.
Methodist Theologian.

The first rose to commanding eminence and the second was a conspicuous figure, often elected to the Presidency, with a magnetic, awesome presence which subdued the average preacher in Conference discussion; esteemed arbitrary, he moved a majestic councillor among his brethren and did more than any other man, despite this overbearing reputation, to bring the laity into official Conference recognition.

While the Conference bloomed with this promise many of the veterans were passing away. In the seven years thirty-four obituaries are recorded. As was the custom from Wesley's time a few lines often dismissed a half-century laborer of eminent usefulness and pronounced ability. "These all died in faith." Let me link together the names of Hester Ann Rodgers, Mary Fletcher, Elizabeth Fry,¹ Sarah Crosby, Ann Cutler, and Dinah Evans, for the sisterhood of Methodism has never been a whit less noble than its brotherhood, and was honored in these days with official position, so that largely the controversy of to-day is but a return to ancient usage. Benson was a mighty preacher in these times, and Adam Clarke, as revivalist and writer, won a high place among his peers. His Commentary is an imperishable monument. He was instrumental in the conversion of Joseph Butterworth, afterwards member of Parliament and the associate of Wilberforce, and enrolled with Thornton, Buxton, and Thompson as leading laymen. William Bramwell is a name known to the sacred biography of Methodism. "At one time," says Stevens, "he sympathized much with Kilham, in his projects of 'reform,' but his deep piety saved him." Comment is forborne. Extraordinary scenes attended his revivals. Samuel Hick, the "Village Blacksmith," is a memorable name in the ranks of the local preachers. His career, as depicted by Stevens and by his biographer, reads like a romance. He died in his seventy-first year in triumph, having spent more than fifty years in labor as a blacksmith and service as a Methodist preacher and exhorter. Under such auspices the United Societies increased in these seven years from 76,968 to 108,261. The itinerant ministry increased from 313 to 399, and during the same time some 250 new chapels were erected.²

The eight Conferences from 1798 to 1806, being respectively the fifty-fifth to the sixty-third, were presided over in order by

¹ She was a Friend, but her work and piety identified her with these Methodist women.

² Myles's "Chronological History of Methodists," Chap. II.

Benson, Bradburn, Wood, Pawson, Taylor, Bradford, Moore, and Coke. The excision of Kilham, the retirement of Thom and others from the Conference to join him, and the secession of five thousand members left the old Conference in a condition of acquiescence in the dominant party, the Legal Hundred and their supporters. There is no question that not a few of them were in earnest sympathy with a more liberal form of government. Indeed, so widespread was the espousal of such sentiments that, but for the Poll-Deed and its intrenchment of property power with the minority, the insistence of the advocates of liberal views and the force of their logic would have prevailed. It happened, as it always will in like controversial issues, that social ties, personal pecuniary support for dependent families, the risk involved in a system yet in theory, the recusance of the timid, and the uncertainties that loom up in such a venture quelled disaffection and, at least outwardly, tranquillized the main body of Methodists. It must also be remembered that, besides the coign of vantage enjoyed by the adherents, their convictions were quite as intense, so that any innovation on the plan of Wesley meant destruction to the itinerancy and the decay of Methodism. He had so proclaimed years before his departure. The title of all property must vest in the Conference; there must be an absolute and unquestioning obedience to its behests in all matters, specially that of the appointments, or ruin impended to the societies despite the vitality of its doctrines and the piety of its members. The potential element was the machinery. That nothing of the kind happened in the New Connexion body and the other offshoots in England, in the Methodist Protestant Church and other offshoots in America, served to dispel the illusion, and demonstrate that, when leaders are wedded to power, they are blind and deaf, not to the logic of theory only, but to the logic of facts as well. Much had been conceded, however, as has been found, and more probably would have been but for the imperatives of the Poll-Deed, thus evidencing the truth of one of the fundamentals, that it was responsible, directly or indirectly, for all the divisions in English Methodism.

At least two important events took place between 1798 and 1806 in the Wesleyan Conference history, which must receive passing notice as outcroppings of the quiet struggle which still went on between the men of extreme views within it. On the 29th of March, 1799, Dr. Coke, having conferred with his confidential friends, and secured their approval, wrote to the Bishop

of London one of those remarkable letters which remind us how thoroughly hierarchal he was in his convictions of church polity, and how little value he attached to his third ordination by Wesley. The full text is found in Drew's biography of Coke, pages 284-286. See Appendix B. The address is of the highest consideration for his Lordship and the deepest humility for himself. The gist of it is the necessity, as he saw it, of "securing the great body of Methodists in connection with the late John Wesley to the Church of England." Various considerations are urged. The increasing number of the Methodists, their dissatisfaction with receiving the ordinances from clergy not spotless in their moral reputation, yet friends of the liturgy and the episcopacy. He asks for ordination at the hands of the Bishop of a sufficient number of the preachers to administer the ordinances, or universal separation will take place from the Established Church. Dr. Coke feels sure that he commands the situation as to the Conference. At the same time his confessions are naïve and diplomatic. He had become, he says, "warped in his attachments to the Church of England, in consequence of my visiting the states of America, but, like a bow too much bent, I have again returned. But I return with a full conviction that our numerous societies in America would have been a regular Presbyterian church, if Mr. Wesley and myself had not taken the steps which we judged necessary to adopt." He suggests an interview with the Bishop, etc. In a short time he received an answer to the effect that he would turn it over and consult the archbishops. In a few weeks the Archbishop of Canterbury gave final answer, which was a simple rebuke to Coke for insinuating that any of the clergy were immoral, with his regrets that he had nothing to suggest. The correspondence never came formally to the notice of the Conference. Much of the zest of Dr. Coke's movements in directions like this depended on secrecy, the assumption of responsibility: he loved to surprise his friends by discoveries of his adroitness; but every one of his ventures ignobly failed except his organization of the Methodist Societies in America as an Episcopal Church, of an anomalous type, with the aid and concurrence of Francis Asbury. The methods then employed will receive full attention in regular course.

The Wesleyan Conference of 1803 was notable for the first appointment of the Committee of Privileges. As Methodism spread in the English realm and ramified through the colonies, there was frequent interference by the civil authority with the

missions and the rights of worship among Dissenters, with whom the Methodists were politically classed. It was found necessary to protect the rights of the denomination from encroachment. The first Committee of Privileges consisted of Dr. Coke and Benson, with six of the principal laymen.

Stevens gives the names of three, Butterworth and Bulmer of London, and Thomas Thomson of Hull. A general solicitor was also appointed. The committee was named annually and was to be consulted before resort to lawsuits should be made. This preponderance of laymen was the result of Bunting's effort to bring this element, so long repudiated and neglected of recognition, to the front. Stevens, commenting on this advance in liberal principles, says, "The innovation was destined to go on peacefully, but successfully, until Wesleyan Methodism should virtually have the fact, without the theory, of lay-representation." The expression is vague with a confusion of terms. It is understandable how a theory may exist without the fact, but the fact can obtain only by the materializing of the theory. What was conceded by the Conference was a lay-delegation. A lay-representation can only be by the election of such by the same class. It is this differentiation that constituted the very ideal of representative Methodism. It has not lay-delegates selected by the suffrages of another class, the ministers; but it has lay-representatives elected by the suffrages of their own class. This essential difference remains in the Methodisms the world over. Neither in Wesleyan Methodism, nor in the Episcopal Methodisms, north and south in America, notwithstanding the advances made, is there lay-representation, and they simply juggle with words, or labor under a confusion of ideas who make the contention for them.¹ Not until lay-representation is a fact in these parent bodies will the mission of the liberal Methodisms on this line be accomplished. At the Conference of 1803 the question "Should women be allowed to preach?" was revived. Without denying the right, restrictions were placed upon them which guarded the privilege from possible abuse.

The mission work of the Conference from 1799 onward received increasing attention. In its management and enlargement Dr. Coke shines with zealous splendor. In meeting his personal

¹ "The History of Methodism in the United States," by James M. Buckley. Two volumes, small quarto. The Christian Literature Company, New York, 1896. Illustrated and embellished. A notable instance of this confusion of ideas is found on page 211 of the second volume as well as a misunderstanding of Sneathen's meaning as cited.

expenses and in liberal contributions to this cause he expended all of his private fortune of £1200 or \$6000 a year. In labors he was abundant, in sufferings he endured hardness. He was practically the originator of the West India missions. After thirteen years, from 1799, 11,000 communicants were reported with 50,000 or 60,000 islanders under instruction. In 1801 he was appointed treasurer of the Mission Fund. He overlooked the work in Ireland and Wales. In 1804 the first missionary committee was appointed, Coke's single agency not being sufficient to compass it, unflagging as he was in his efforts and attentions. The collections were made permanent and annual. Coke was made superintendent of all the missions. The financial support of the ministry, a kindred interest, received special consideration. Laymen like Butterworth, Bulmer, Marriott, and others devised The Preachers' Friend Society. It was begun, says Myles, "without solicitation from the preachers, and has been attended with the happiest effects."

During the eight years under consideration, the obituary column of the Conference was greatly enlarged. The notices, as was the vogue from Wesley's time, were short and pithy. William Hunter departed in 1798, in his seventy-fourth year. He was a favorite with Wesley. His labors were marked with success and his departure singularly triumphant. In 1799 William Thompson was sainted after forty years' labor. His death was painful, but victorious. In the seven years' controversy he was the balance-wheel of the Conference. Also, John Murlin and Thomas Olivers had deceased. The former, a gritty Methodist preacher, the latter an able controvertist with a genius for poetry and music. A number of his lyrics will never cease to be sung while Methodism and piety live. Alexander Mather passed away in 1800. He had been ordained by Wesley superintendent for Scotland with probably the same form and with the same purpose as he had ordained Coke superintendent for America jointly with Francis Asbury, but he did not carry a bishop's bee in his bonnet, and even opposed Coke's episcopal scheme at the Lichfield meeting, though a superintendency he believed both wise and expedient. He was universally respected, and died after much suffering the death of the righteous. He received the longest obituary notice ever inserted in the minutes to this time. In 1802 Christopher Hopper, a noble veteran, was added to the eminent dead. Many others, old and young, died in the faith, whose record is on high, if well-nigh forgotten among men. During these eight years no

less than 213 were received by the Conference, an average of twenty-six for each year, as Stevens summarizes. Edward Hare was entered upon the roll in 1798, and after twenty years' service died in the flush of manhood. He was esteemed the ablest controvertist of English Methodism. 1799 two names were added to the probationary list of the Conference which shine as bright particular stars in its firmament: Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton. The former was a prince in Israel, a master spirit, of marvellous personal magnetism and authoritative force for nearly sixty years. He was the first man elected by the Legal Hundred to fill a vacancy, was made Secretary of the Conference ten times, and President four times. After the death of Coke he was the chief representative of Methodist missions. He was President of the Theological Institution for a series of years. While he was intensely conservative, he did more than any other man to bring the laymen into recognition through much opposition from the elders of the Conference. He was a master debater, and when he rose, after all had expended their logic, he swept away the cobwebs and brought into such powerful relief the salient points as to carry the body with him almost invariably. His literary abilities were of a high order. Stevens says, "Adam Clarke excelled him in learning, Newton in popular eloquence, Watson in theological analysis and sublime and speculative thought, but he surpassed them all in counsel, in administrative talent, in varied practical ability." His leadership was supreme. Robert Newton was of fine physique, commanding a musical voice, deeply spiritual, he swayed his audiences with an air of sanctity and power difficult to describe. He was the popular platform speaker of his day in Methodism. For forty years he was known all over England by the crowds that gathered when he preached or delivered addresses. He labored nearly fifty-five years and died in triumph. Add Watson and Clarke, and you have a quartette who brought Methodism into singular eminence. Other historic names may be added — Joshua Marsden, Daniel Isaac, Thomas Jackson, and Gideon Ouseley. Great revivals took place, some of extraordinary power. On the Penzance circuit more than two thousand were added in the course of a year. Stevens says: "Kilham's secession had devastated some of the societies on Nottingham circuit. They had lost a chapel and three hundred members in that town. A new edifice was erected in 1798, and Bramwell's ministrations the next year repaired the entire loss of members." This really means that another form of Metho-

dism was demonstrating its right to exist and was prospering under the same doctrines and means of grace.

Smith relates that during 1805 there was a most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit on Bradford circuit. There were immediate conversions under almost every sermon preached. For nearly three months the doors of the chapel were seldom closed, day or night. The house was filled by anxious, worshipping crowds by turns as room could be made for them. Love-feasts were held in the open air. About nine hundred persons were received during the year. Some of the lay-preachers were prominent in these revivals. William Dawson, a Yorkshire man, and typical of his class, had a career of marvellous power and usefulness. Jonathan Seville was another of these immortal names. He was a poor cripple, cruelly treated by his trade-master in his youth; he survived to be a shining light among the lowly. His more than abject slavery is a sad commentary on indigent life at a period when Wilberforce and others were pleading the cause of the black slave in British colonies. Stevens's depiction of his treatment makes the blood run cold, and much deserved space is given to his memory. He developed into a genius, a marvel of piety and intellect whose name is as ointment poured forth in a large section of rural England. Perhaps no other form of Christianity ever created such characters. The societies under the Wesleyan Conference increased at an average of four thousand a year for this period. Much importance is attached to this prosperity by those who see a smiling Providence in it over the Wesley régime now so largely amended, as has been seen; but the Providence thus rightly recognized did not discriminate, but favored the New Connexion Methodists, with whom extensive revivals also occurred and strong personalities were developed not inferior to the best of the old Connection. It contributed to the history of a common Methodism much that will never die.

CHAPTER XII

The decade of 1805-15—Extorted modifications of the Poll-Deed—Dr. Coke and Foreign Missions—Committee of Privileges acts—Revivals and their leaders—Lorenzo Dow; sketch of his history—English camp-meetings under Clowes and the Bournes; Conference opposition—Expulsions of the leaders—Origin of the Primitive Methodists in 1810—History of this organization as the second liberal Methodism in England—Another fruit of the Deed of Declaration as enforced by the Conference, and of entailed Paternalism—Marvelous success of the new movement under liberal principles.

THE next decade, from 1805 to 1815, will furnish material for another chapter of English Methodism. The minutes do not record any special changes in the polity of the Conference, except such modifications as were found expedient and quietly incorporated through the influence of the New Connexion system which was growing side by side with its parent. Wesley would hardly have recognized the system he enforced and which he endeavored to entail by the Poll-Deed, so radical were the changes made in deference to popular demand and the superior forecast of such men as Bunting. This freedom, the equality of personal rights guaranteed under the British Constitution, exerted its reflex influence upon the minds of Methodists, and the fallacy that church government to be effective must be something different from constitutional civil government, the precedents of the New Testament being ignored, could not be concealed under the plea of Wesley's name as an excuse and justification of arbitrary methods. Even the loyal Wesleyan preacher did his own thinking, and learned that personal rights must be extorted either by the method of reform or revolution. One of these quiet movements within the Conference in 1814, brought about another modification of the Deed of Declaration more in consonance with these personal rights of Christian manhood. That instrument restricted the election of a President and Secretary, annually, to the Legal Hundred. It was a spectacle of class, close-corporation government when a Conference of 850 ministers and preachers sat in their seats awaiting the choice of 100 of their number as to who should preside over them. It



ADAM CLARKE.
Methodist Commentator.

could not be perpetuated, and a less autocratic mind than Wesley's would have foreseen it. The pressure upon the Legal Hundred wrought the change, but like all bodies, time immemorial, who hold securely vested powers, they doled out concession in scant measure. It was conceded that preachers of fourteen years' standing might vote for President and Secretary, but the election to be subject to the separate vote of the Legal Hundred, thus circumventing the Poll-Deed, and all vacancies in the Legal Hundred were to be filled three out of four by themselves by the old rule of seniority, but the fourth by ballot without restriction as to age. Stevens suggests that the change was made that Bunting might be elevated. This desire was likely a factor in the modifications. There were a few cogs less in the revolving wheel of exclusive authority. The liberty-loving English preacher breathed a little freer. It served to quiet that discontent which a parental or oligarchic system is sure to foment perpetually.

Dr. Coke (for as such he was always known, and never in England as superintendent or bishop) lost no opportunity to further missions in Methodism. He kept the foreign work well in hand, constantly devising new plans for its extension and prompting liberality by his own generous contributions. He also formed a plan for Home missions which was adopted by the Conference in 1806. It is claimed by Smith as the beginning of modern Home missions and the claim is well established. It has been a useful auxiliary in all the Methodisms ever since. As a kindred work, the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized, and immediately English Methodists espoused it and were conspicuous in its furtherance, such laymen as Lundius and Butterworth prompting it, and Adam Clarke lent his invaluable services as a translator of the Scriptures into Oriental languages.

In 1810 it became apparent that the Committee of Privileges would have responsible work on its hands from the increased disposition manifested of political interference with the Dissenters of every name. It was enlarged, the laymen being conceded a majority representation. The National Church was growing intensely jealous of the growth and power of the non-conformists, it was even intimated by the traducers that the Methodists were aiming at a revolution of the supreme government of the country. A bill was introduced into Parliament which, if it had passed, would have struck down the dearest rights of all the dissenting organizations. Even Wilberforce

favored it, so intense was the prejudice of Churchmen against Dissenters. It aroused the Methodists, New Connexion and Wesleyan Conference alike, who joined forces with the other Dissenters. Thomas Thompson, who was a member of the House of Commons, did yeoman service, and the obnoxious bill was finally defeated. Then an attempt was made to severely interpret the Act of Toleration, but it resulted in sweeping away the "Five Mile Act" and the "Conventicle Act" together, thus securing liberty of worship for all alike. During this decade the Connection increased ninety thousand, an average gain of nine thousand a year. The obituary column was enriched with the names of not a few of the veterans, John Crook, John Pawson, Thomas Rutherford, John Baxter, and in the closing year, as a cap-sheaf to this stack of the sainted, the name of Thomas Coke.

The revivals of the period were numerous and extraordinary, specially among the Home missionaries, who labored hard and suffered much toiling among the coal miners and lowly peasantry. The names of Entwistle, Farrar, Patrington, Welwick, Burton, Pidsea, Ottringham, and Roos, Joseph Marsh, John Hughes, Owen Davies, and William Bramwell, the last a burning torch, an evangelistic flame. In Cornwall, William Carvosso merits distinct mention as a type of the fervent and successful class leader. His biography has been published, covering sixty years of humble piety and exceptional usefulness. Mary Fletcher and Lady Mary Fitzgerald closed careers of memorable piety and activity. Among the useful laymen who were evolved out of this revival period were William Clowes and Hugh and James Bourne of Staffordshire. Their names are coupled with an epoch in the history of the Wesleyan Conference. The movement calls for the introduction of Lorenzo Dow, who became an American itinerant under Asbury in the latter years of the last century and traversed a large circuit in Vermont and other arduous fields. He was cast in an eccentric mould, an original genius, of some mentality and unquestioned piety. He followed his impressions at whatever cost of time and labor and suffering. One of these impressions led him at the close of the century to abandon his home field and make his way to Ireland by the way of Canada, embarking in a leaking canoe with a brush sail down the Missisquoi river, that he might preach to the Irish papists. He thus became an independent itinerant, whose fame covers the Methodist world which he compassed in his travels. His pub-

lished writings, mostly against Calvinism, form a large volume, and thousands claimed him as the instrument of their conversion. He found a congenial companion, his other self in everything, in Peggy, his wife, for a number of years. He closed his remarkable career in Georgetown, D. C., at the home of George W. Haller, a sympathizing Methodist Protestant friend, in 1834, dying peacefully, aged fifty-six years. He was buried by personal friends, after a funeral sermon by Rev. T. H. Stockton, in the Holmead graveyard, and a suitable slab of marble recorded his memory. After the cemetery was removed, on the solicitation of some kind Methodists, the philanthropist W. W. Corcoran of Washington had his remains transferred to an eligible lot in Oak Hill Cemetery, Georgetown, D. C., and covered with the antique slab lettered more than fifty years before. During his visit to Ireland he labored hard and was favorably received by the common people. He returned to the United States and travelled widely as an independent itinerant, and in 1807 returned to Britain, visiting Staffordshire. He suggested to the zealous people under Clowes and the Bournes the plan of the American camp-meeting, then in successful operation in the rural districts of America, and officially recognized by Asbury and promoted by Sneathen, one of the originators, borrowing the hint from some Kentucky Presbyterians, who, like these English lay-preachers, departed from church "order," and, being persuaded that they were right and favored of God, persevered and were expelled the regular Presbyterian Church, forming the Cumberland Presbyterian Church under a modified Calvinism.

The English camp-meetings were very popular and successful, and the religious excitement of the early Methodists was revived in their conduct. They were criticised and attacked by the Conference preachers. Hugh Bourne vindicated them in a pamphlet, and counter publications were issued. It came before the Conference, and the regulars in authority pronounced that they were "highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief, and we disclaim connection with them." Hugh Bourne, who was a chapel trustee and not a local preacher, but full of zeal and courage, travelled to and fro over several counties besides Staffordshire, arousing the people and holding during the clement season the camp-meetings. To be recalcitrant to authority, even to quarterly meeting authority among Methodists, is to commit unpardonable offence. It is an adage with some people, that the worst use you can make of a man is to

hang him. All history has proven that the worst use you can make of a Methodist, either minister or layman, is to expel him for other cause than immorality. A year after, Clowes raised his flag on Mow Hill for the first English camp-meeting and the circumjacent people flocked to it, and, in 1808, Hugh Bourne was expelled the Wesleyan connection by the Burslem quarterly meeting. Two years after, Clowes, who continued to use the camp-meeting, met with a like fate. He at once gave up his temporal business and entered upon a crusade of defence and missionary labor. Thus was organized, by the necessity of their situation, the Primitive Methodists in 1810.¹ Stevens dismisses his account of the movement without one word of disparagement, all the more creditable to him as it was a palpable case of mal-administration. At least indirectly the Deed of Declaration is again responsible for a schism in Methodism by its sixteenth section, which invests the Wesleyan preachers of the Conference with power to expel from the visible Church of God for any reason deemed sufficient, other than immorality. Thus martyrs for opinions' sake are made, and their figurative blood becomes the seed of secession and new church organizations.

A glance at the history of the Primitive Methodists. For the data recurrence is made to the symposium in the New York *Independent* of March, 1891, on the Centenary of Methodism. The sketch is furnished by Rev. D. Hallam, then President of the Primitive Conference. Hugh Bourne in his conduct of the prayer-meetings in Staffordshire closed them at an early hour on the principle that the wage-earner needed rest, but in the white heat of their spiritual quickening the spirit of complaint burst out, and one Daniel Shubotham declared, almost prophetically, "You shall have a meeting upon Mow, some Sunday, and have a whole day's praying, and then you'll be satisfied." And so it proved, as already discovered.

The meeting was held May 31, 1807, by Hugh Bourne and his associates. Four preaching stands were surrounded by thousands of hearers. Two other such meetings were held, and in August one at Norton-in-the-Moors. Between the first and the fourth meeting the Wesleyan Conference met and decided against the camp-meetings. At the Norton meeting neither Shubotham nor Clowes appeared — they bowed their heads to the storm of ecclesiastical authority. Even Hugh Bourne wavered, but rose to the occasion, and the meeting was held. His expulsion followed

¹ "History," by Hugh Bourne, near Tunstall, England, 1823, 12mo, 68 pp.

within a year without notice of charge or trial. He paid up his class money and retired peacefully. Three years later, William Clowes was denied his ticket of membership because he attended the camp-meetings and would not promise to desist. The excluded had formed no idea of a new Church, they were simply intent upon saving the souls of the people. Ten such converts, at a place called Stanley, met in fellowship and were offered as a class to the Methodist circuit, but were rejected because connected with the Bournes. It was of the first importance that nursery provision should be made for those who were thus converted. In May, 1810, that class organized in March became the nucleus of a new organization. In 1812 the first preachers' plan was issued, the name Primitive Methodists adopted, and a separate existence and work were fairly begun. It did not set out as did the New Connexion Methodists, with any considerable secessions from the old societies. "Many long years of pioneering followed. Men like John Oxtoby, John Flesher, William Harland, Thomas Dawson, John Petty, W. G. Belham, John Ride, Thomas Russell, Joseph Spoor, and a host of others went forth with meagre, often empty, purses, but hearts full of enthusiasm for Christ; and this new electric force exerted its transforming power over the moral and spiritual life of the nation, from the miners of Northumberland to those of Cornwall. There are many chapters of heroism in this long period of pioneer labor; not a few have been told, but many are unrecorded, for the workers were mostly modest men who praised not themselves." They soon felt the need of a Book Room and a literature of their own. The second Annual Assembly, which was in 1821, established a Book Room at Bemersley, under the management of the two brothers, Hugh and James Bourne. Twenty years afterward it was removed to London, and for many years has done a flourishing business. In 1890 it issued 102,580 copies of its magazines, and 1513 of its *Quarterly Review*. For ten years past it has made an annual grant to the Superannuated Preachers' Fund, varying from £3200 to £4400, with grants of smaller sums for other connective interests.

In 1825 a General Missionary Committee was formed, but did not become effective until 1843. It has done much in fostering struggling interests in the rural districts of England, in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Missions were established in various parts of Africa, the laborers enduring much suffering, imprisonment, and death. The large cities and towns of England were more recently brought under the Missionary Committee, and

fresh ground broken. The work of alleviating the distressed and gathering in the poor is one of the brightest chapters in the denominational history. The revenue at the disposal of the Missionary Committee in 1890 was £18,456. In Great Britain and Ireland it employs 72 missionaries, with a church membership of 6538; in the Australian colonies, 41, and 2184 members; in Africa, 7 European missionaries, 2 native assistants, 4 native teachers, and 1 native artisan assistant, with 44 white and 486 colored members. A college for training young ministers was opened at Sunderland in 1868, under Rev. W. Antliff, D.D., and after serving a good purpose for some years was removed to larger and more respectable buildings in Manchester. The Connection has also two educational colleges for boys, York and Birmingham, which are successful. The Orphan Home is the latest and most popular of its institutions. Its premises at Arlesford, near Winchester, are free of debt. The Connection has its own insurance company to protect its property against loss from fire; its general Chapel Fund to relieve distressed chapels; its Chapel Aid Association to assist trustees in cancelling debts; its Metropolitan and Chapel and School Building Fund, to meet the increased needs of London; its Sunday-school Union; its Superannuated and Widows' and Orphans' Fund. Temperance is interwoven with the very texture of its church life. As early as 1840 it shut out fermented wines from its sacramental occasions, and its chapels are always open for promoting the cause. It has found its sphere as an organization among the workmen of England, as did the Wesleys and Whitefield, and its success is due, Thomas Burt, member of Parliament, has declared, to the fact that "it represented the democratic and progressive side of religion." "In its highest court, the Conference, the ministry is represented by one-third, and the laity by two-thirds of the delegates, while the same proportion is maintained in district meetings. Elsewhere there is no recognition of this proportionate representation. The democratic element is seen in the fact that the occupancy of the chair in every court, from the Conference to the leaders' meeting, is not claimed as the right of any minister, but is determined by vote, and may be occupied by laymen. The conservative element is found in there being no direct representation of the membership in the higher circuit courts, thus causing the official element to be the ruling element in a circuit. This combination of opposites has, however, worked well and satisfactorily." In Eastern and Western North America they have two

Conferences with 5639 members, 61 ministers, 171 local preachers, 99 Sabbath-schools, 1354 teachers and officers, 96 churches, 38 parsonages, with a probable value of church property of \$231,565. They are not under the Presidency of the English Conference, and recent suggestions have been made of their organic union with the Methodist Protestant Church. They had in Canada, when the union of the Methodist bodies took place under one "Methodist Church," 8223 members, 99 ministers, 246 local preachers, 237 churches, 169 Sabbath-schools, 1253 teachers, and 9343 scholars. This union cost them no sacrifice of fundamental principles, as it is a lay-representation, voting Church with an elective, limited superintendency. In the British Islands the statistical returns are for 1890: 193,658 members, 1049 travelling preachers, 16,315 local preachers, 10,563 class leaders, 4234 Sabbath-schools, 61,724 teachers, 431,868 scholars, 4460 connectional chapels, 1398 other chapels and halls, 580,746 hearers, and estimated value of church property, £3,291,192.

This brief history is a demonstration of the fallacy of all arguments in favor of the oligarchic system of government for Methodism as essential to its conservation and success. Numerically, other things being equal and length of organization specially considered, the Primitive Methodists have exceeded the parent body by a decided percentage. If in pecuniary values they are not on an equal footing, the poor class of people from whom they have so largely drawn their recruits must be the explanation, while in liberality their superiority must be confessed. In allegiance to the doctrines and means of grace of Wesleyan Methodism they are not excelled. And yet to this day they are subjected to disparagement and obloquy, in common with other dissenting Methodist churches, from those in the parent bodies of England and America who make for themselves exclusive Wesleyan claims as "the temple of the Lord." A late instance of the kind was during the second Methodist Ecumenical Conference in Washington, D. C., in 1891, which the writer witnessed, when Farmer-Atkinson, member of Parliament and delegate from the Wesleyan Conference, in open debate so wantonly insulted the representatives of the Primitive Methodists that they appealed for protection to the chair and threatened to withdraw from the Conference unless the offensive allusion was withdrawn. The matter was subsequently satisfactorily adjusted. Such a personal departure from Christian civility and gentlemanly courtesy would not deserve record, save that it was typical of kindred slurs and

minifications, which unfortunately abound in most of the standard histories and current monographs of the Wesley-Asbury Methodisms, when allusions are made to other and more liberal Branches. With not a few who thus offend, it is simply crass ignorance, and it would be a relief if as good an excuse could always be framed for them.

CHAPTER XIII

The heroes of Methodism common property — The decade from 1815 to 1825; the Wesleyan system essentially Presbyterian in England — Efficiency of the hierarchy not denied — Dr. John Emory's visit to the British Conference — Their foreign missionary movement under Dr. Coke — Coke and Asbury in contrast — Sketch of Coke's career — Letter to Wilberforce and the bishopric of India; analysis of it — Coke's last mission to India; his associates; death and burial at sea — The Irish Primitive Methodists of 1814 — Its growth under Averell, and its gradual decay — Notable Irish preachers.

As the purpose of this review of English Methodism in its various branches and phases is to bring into relief the facts and data which will substantiate the fundamental as set forth at the close of the first chapter, namely, that the Deed of Declaration which imposed an oligarchy upon Wesleyan Methodism was directly or indirectly responsible for all the divisions in the parent body on governmental lines, while the world over unity has been preserved in its doctrines and means of grace, it will not be expected that the history of the Wesleyan Conference shall be outlined except in the most cursory manner. The grand results of its inspirational truths as set forth by the Wesleys; its means of grace as calculated to keep alive the flame of experiential religion; the deeds of heroism it provoked in its preachers and people; the infallible sign of its apostolical genius in its foreign missionary propagandism; its ever burning zeal and open-handed liberality, — all these belong to a common Methodism and as such are appropriated as germane to this historic plan. Those who would have fuller details are referred to Stevens's "History of Methodism" and Grindrod's, or Smith's, "History of Wesleyan Methodism."

The decade from 1815 to 1825 is pregnant with events marking the rapid growth at home and abroad of the parent body with its occasional wise concessions to the laity in its polity, thereby distinguishing it from the iron-clad policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America in its dealings with Reformers and their measures. Indeed, though claiming the closest affiliation and kinship, there are but few points of agreement of the two systems.

Except in its entail of property rights and the absence of lay-representation as differenced from lay-delegation, Wesleyan Methodism is essentially Presbyterian, and so akin with the structure of the Methodist Protestant Church, while Episcopal Methodism in both its divisions is hierarchal, and so akin with the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Let it be observed, once for all, that in these pages no contention is made that this polity is not efficient, and, in given circumstances, more efficient than its more liberal associates in evangelism. What is claimed is that the hierarchy is anti-scriptural, finding no support in New Testament precedents under critical interpretation, and utterly incongruous with the brotherhood of Christians as defined by the Master, and the necessary equality of brotherhood, man with man generically understood, not to speak of natural rights, as inhering in the individual as defined under civil republican codes. It is claimed, that if violations of these rights are allowable and justifiable on the score of the efficiency of a hierarchy, then logical consistency demands that there is no place for such advocates to stop, short of its paragon, the Pope, and his train of subordinates drawing the people after them: "Behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven." Ignorance is not pleaded for the fact that hierarchism is disclaimed by the officialism of the Methodist Episcopal Church in emergencies, and under the exactions of criticism. Its true genius will come under review at a later period. The objection lodged against it is, that to the degree of its hierarchal complexion, however neutral the colors as to administration under the modifying influence of surrounding ecclesiasticisms, its law-structure classes it as a hierarchy, and this is inconsistent with the basic principles of the primitive Church and apostolical methods. It is efficient and potential, and those who are wedded to it have their rights of preference, and a hail of "God-speed" is sincerely sent them and exultation indulged with them over the magnificent results which the old glorious doctrines have achieved under it throughout the world.

During this decade of Wesleyan Conference history, like tall oaks amid the smaller growths of the forest, stood Newton and Watson and Clarke and Bunting, while Bramwell and Dawson and Seville and Hicks and Carvosso, in humbler spheres, gave proofs of the power of a heart religion in winning men to Christ. Reference has already been made to these stalwart leaders, each

supreme in his sphere. The Conference itineracy, or restrictive rule, was three years, one year more than prescribed by the Deed of Declaration, and its virtual extension beyond three, was a necessity pressing upon the ever growing connection. Evasion of the spirit of the law was the consequence. Newton spent thirty-five years on five circuits, being transferred from one to the other and back again in technical obedience to the three-year rule. Twenty years of his ministerial life were spent in London and Manchester. Bunting spent the whole of this decade in London; during one year he was President and during three, editor at its Book Room. Like Newton, he was also incessantly engaged in special missions in the counties. Adam Clarke's failing health compelled a virtual location. In 1815 he purchased a rural home near Liverpool. There he pursued his learned labors and preached as opportunity allowed. Among those whose names and deeds will not die were John Smith and Hodgson Casson. The shifts of the Conference in evading the restrictive rule that foremost men might be utilized where most needed, is an adverse commentary upon the unwisdom of irrevocable and inflexible legislation binding upon a new generation amid new environments. It will receive frequent illustration in the course of this History.

It seems in order in connection with the English restrictive rule to take brief notice of the fraternal visit of Rev. Dr. John Emory of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the Wesleyan Conference in 1820. He will be a conspicuous figure in American Methodism. His visit to the British Conference was the first of such interchanges. He was charged with an adjustment of the Canadian question, a contention between the missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church and those of the English Conference. He was cordially received, and made the most of the occasion. He was struck at the Conference session with the essential and radical differences of the mode of appointments as modified since Wesley's time. Stevens says: "The discussion of the appointments was a novel fact to the visitor, and in contrast with the American usage. A list prepared by a committee before the meeting of Conference was reported to it and published throughout the country, and preachers and people had opportunity of petitioning or remonstrating."¹ "This," Emory remarks, "is often done in strong terms and gives not a little trouble; a preacher of any standing is seldom sent where he is not willing

¹ "History of Methodism," Vol. III. p. 306.

to go." During his Address to the Conference, he ventured upon a laudation of the Episcopal system which he represented. It was not altogether palatable, and, despite his presence and the courtesy due him, was thought too pronounced to be passed uncriticised, and open exceptions were made to what appeared invidious comparisons of the two systems. Clarke and Watson came to the rescue and made eulogistic remarks upon the American Episcopacy as "of a truly apostolic and primitive character." He was delighted with his reception, and made a most favorable impression by his eloquent preaching and social intercourse, for he was a scholarly Christian and a courteous gentleman. The almost inspired vaticination he made in his address as an expression of human forecast deserves embalment here. He said: "We hope the time is not far distant when we shall join hands on the Asiatic shores of the Pacific Ocean. We are constantly advancing in our labors toward the West and you are extending to the East, not only on the continent, but over the islands of the sea. Is it chimerical, then, to suppose that at some future day we shall have compassed the earth and girded it round with glorious bands of gospel truth? Oh, no; faith says it shall be done." And it has been done. The sun in his course is now followed by Methodist evangelism around the world.

This leads to consideration, briefly, of the missionary movements of the Wesleyan Conference for this decade. From the beginning it was a characteristic; for a heart religion cannot be content with a concealment of its treasure. If the Great Commission had not been uttered, it must "go into all the world" and tell the marvellous story. Methodism stood for universal evangelization, and it has proven true to it to this day. Beginning in the West Indies, under that devoted layman Gilbert, in 1760, and in Nova Scotia, by Coughlin, in 1765, it came to America in 1760-66, through Strawbridge and Embury, local preachers. Dr. Coke, the personification of missionary zeal and activity, projected a mission for Asia as early as 1786; also in the Dutch, Swedish, and French islands. Notably, at St. Eustatius, for which Coke ventured to ordain William Mahy in 1791, the only ordination he ever attempted out of America, and for which he was severely rebuked by the Wesleyan Conference of 1792, so little virtue and authority did they attach to Wesley's third ordination of Coke and others; but nothing dampened his ardor for the cause of missions, neither rebuke nor rebuff nor failure could deter him from pushing the work. In 1796 a small

colony was despatched by him to Africa, but it failed. It was fitting that this man should wind up his eventful career by becoming a missionary himself and dying in pursuit of his great India mission.

His most successful labors were in the West Indies. Here he fairly revels amid spiritual trophies and aggressive conquest. In his "History of the West Indies" he gives the religious experience of the blacks, so genuine in spirit and so devoted in life. He bears testimony to their wonderful fidelity to their masters amid uprisings and plots. Restrictive legislation was attempted in Jamaica, but an appeal to the Home government thwarted the design. Wilberforce's great Emancipation Act was pressing to a successful issue, and in 1807 it was proclaimed for all England's dependencies, dating from the 1st day of August, 1834, \$100,000,000 being paid to the masters for this species of property. Neither Coke nor the Conference behind him gave any countenance to inflammatory appeals or indiscreet measures by the missionaries. Stevens quotes from the official instructions: "Promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves without in the least degree, in public or in private, interfering with their civil condition." He italicizes a sentence of his own: "No Methodist slave was ever proved guilty of incendiarism or rebellion for more than seventy years, namely, from 1760 to 1834." In 1791 there were Methodists in West Indies: 12 missionaries and 5645 members; when Coke died, 1814, 31 missionaries and 17,000 members; in 1839, 83 missionaries and 42,928 members.

The crowning incidents of Dr. Coke's career are at hand, and it is fitting to notice some of them before tracing his final missionary efforts for Methodism and the world. From about 1796 to 1804, when he retired from the American continent to visit it no more, an interesting correspondence was kept up between Asbury, Coke, and the Wesleyan Conference as to the respective claims of the two countries to the services of Coke. From the time Asbury met him at Barratt's chapel in Delaware, and embraced him in the pulpit, in November, 1784, this keen-sighted and discerning man had measured his co-superintendent in all the strong and weak points of his character. From that period until his superior strategy and prudential wisdom had won from Coke all the coöperation needful for his own preconceived plans of Episcopal organization for America, and then allowed his personal mistakes of an official nature to limit his influence with

the American Methodists until he withdrew, having been shorn of the prerogatives Wesley designed him to wear jointly with Asbury, their personal relations were often strained, as will be seen when this period is under direct examination. In his declining years and as the infirmities of the body grew upon him, Asbury turned to his old friend and helpful ally in the one questionable transaction of their respective lives: the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference of 1784, in that phase of it only which connects John Wesley as an authority for it or as recommending it in his instructions to Coke, either written or verbal. It was a just if not a generous impulse that would win him back to America. Stevens does not notice this correspondence, but Drew furnishes snatches of it with one full letter.¹ Asbury knew the worth of Coke and now wished his aid; and for 1803-04 outlined an itinerary of five thousand miles among the Conferences for him, but he pursued it but in part. The letter in its full text referred to is found in Drew's "Life of Coke," pp. 299, 300. It is subscribed, "Signed by order and in the behalf of the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat." The significant fact is not noted by other historians, that in this correspondence under official seal the foregoing subscription is never acknowledged; neither the title, bishop, nor the name, Methodist Episcopal Church, occurs in it. Dr. Coke before leaving America, finally, in 1804, preached, by invitation, in the Capitol of the United States before the assembled Congress an eloquent discourse.

Arrived in England, Dr. Coke, now about sixty years of age, gave himself up to the great missionary operations of the Wesleyan Conference. A missionary was sent to Gibraltar in 1804, and another, on the decease of the first, in 1808. In 1805 he married Miss Penelope Smith, a maiden lady of piety and wealth, but of delicate constitution. It was Coke's first marriage. She lived but six years. Coke found in her a congenial spirit, and their united means made their liberality lavish. He contracted a second marriage in December, 1811, with Miss Loxdale, an elderly maiden. December 5, 1812, she died. Meantime he was

¹ This whole correspondence has been exhumed by Alexander McCaine, as well as letters of Coke to McCaine subsequently which give the inwardness of the transaction; and an *exposé* will be made in its proper connection. See McCaine's "Letters on the Methodist Episcopal Church," 8vo, 206 pp.: Boston, Olive Branch Office, 1850.

busy in the Master's work, much upon the wing, while carrying out the literary labors of his life: the great Commentary which the Conference imposed upon him as a task, and his "System of Philosophy," and his "Recent Occurrences in Europe." It is an open secret since his death that nearly all this labor was performed by Samuel Drew under compensation, and is so acknowledged by him, though he seems to feel it an obligation to carry the details of it as secret to his grave. It would have been better for the memory of both if the whole truth of a simple business transaction had been told. It is known that the Commentary was plagiarized almost bodily from the work of the unfortunate Dr. Dodd, though it bears Dr. Coke's name on the title-page as author. It has been found, however, that it was an age of easy manners as to literary purloining. John Wesley was not free from it, Henry Moore was conspicuously guilty, and Coke notorious. Later on, Watson and Adam Clarke redeemed Methodist literature from the stigma. Dr. Coke was his own publisher, and, like Wesley, betrayed his ignorance of business methods, and was fleeced by selfish friends until he surrendered his whole copyright to the Conference for a nominal sum before he set sail for India.

Bereft of his last companion, approaching his seventieth year, much of the missionary work of the Conference now consolidated and settled on a secure basis; as he saw the sun of his life nearing its setting, he turned his face resolutely toward its rising in the east. A mission to India had long been a favorite idea with him, and he had secured much useful information bearing upon it. He appeared before the Conference of 1813, and Stevens says, "pleading even with tears to be sent himself as a missionary to Asia." No one may doubt the perfect sincerity of this proposal, separated from all other considerations, for he gave proof of the singleness of his purpose by his final arrangements for the India mission. It will not be forgotten, however, that he was an extreme Churchman, and at heart attached no importance to his third ordination by Wesley. An aspiration to the bishopric he believed legitimate, nor did he doubt his qualifications for it. The expiring embers of an almost extinguished ambition flamed up once more only to die into the white ashes of a hopeless desire. He had learned that the British Foreign Office proposed to send a Bishop to India that this great empire of the Crown might have the benefits a National Church is supposed to confer upon a country; but he had also learned through Wilberforce that

Parliament was "set against granting any countenance to Dis-senters or Methodists in favor of sending missionaries to India." But Dr. Coke could not be deterred by such trifles. He pressed his application. He wrote to the Earl of Liverpool, but received no answer. He next addressed Wilberforce, then in the bloom of his Parliamentary career, a letter characteristic of him. It is not given by Stevens except such fragments as answered the bias of his "History" in favor of all that Coke did and apologetic of his "imprudence" and "weaknesses," as his apologist calls his proposals to Wilberforce. Drew, his biographer, does not refer to it at all, though a copy must have been found among Coke's papers, unless, like his letter to the Earl of Liverpool, he would have had to make the confession, "I have either mislaid the copy of it, or destroyed it at the time, for fear of its falling into improper hands." It was the misfortune of Dr. Coke in this as in kindred previous transactions — his letter to Bishop White of America suggesting his ordination as a true Bishop, and the union of the American Societies with the Protestant Episcopal Church, as another example — to make the conditions with his correspondents, "burn this letter," or "let this be kept secret." Nothing of the kind can be found in all the correspondence of the Wesleys, of Whitefield, or of Asbury. It is not forgotten that charity demands that of two constructions of another's language or motive the extenuating one should be followed, or, as Stevens puts it as to the letter to Wilberforce, "his life and character forbid any ungenerous interpretation of the correspondence."

Church historians are squeamishly sensitive to the charge of ambition against their favorites, as though it could have no excusable place in the career of a Christian man. An American statesman has aptly said, "When you eliminate ambition from the human soul, you shut out the visions that entice men upward." This letter to Wilberforce did not see the light until the Correspondence of that eminent British statesman was published, and it must stand upon its own merits.¹ The full text of it is given in Appendix B. A digest of it may be given. It was written at Leeds, April 14, 1813. The opening paragraph makes it plain that Coke entered upon it with some misgivings lest its exposure should involve him with the British Methodists in an inconsistency that could not be explained. Two sentences must be set over against each other; to wit, "Could I but close my life in being the means of raising a spiritual church in India, it would

¹ Wilberforce's "Correspondence," Vol. II. p. 114.

satisfy the utmost ambition of my soul here below." "I am not conscious, my dear, respected sir, that the least degree of ambition influences me in this business." He can be spared at home in the Wesleyan body, and India furnishes an "extensive sphere for preaching the gospel." The gist of it is, "I enlarged on the earnest desire I had of closing my life in India — observing that if his Royal Highness the Prince Regent and the Government should think proper to appoint me their Bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and most gratefully accept their offer." "I should, in case of my appointment to the Episcopacy of India, return most fully and faithfully into the bosom of the Church, and do everything in my power to promote its interests." "I sincerely believe that my strong inclination to spend the remainder of my life in India originated in the Divine Will, whilst I am called upon to use secondary means to obtain the end." This opens to us his heart and explains his theory of Providence — a persuasion that God was in it and a farther persuasion that to be Bishop of India would command him influence that would further his work. He needs no apology by his friends, — he needs only the frank treatment he does not receive at their hands. He thinks a hot climate would peculiarly agree with him, as he judges from his experience in the West Indies; but his physicians did not think so as to India, and his bosom friend, Drew, expostulated with him; but he overruled all their arguments and entreaties. Two or three times in the course of the letter he prays Wilberforce not to expose him, as it might affect his usefulness among the Methodists if his purpose to abandon them utterly and return to the National Church, if they would make him Bishop of India, should become known. "If Mr. — were acquainted with the steps I am taking, he would, I am nearly sure, call immediately a meeting of our 'Committee of Privileges,' and the consequences might be unfavorable to my influence, etc." Stevens, in a foot-note upon the whole matter, sums it up in a sentence, "The whole case is highly creditable to the heart, however it may detract from the head of Coke." A careful reader will not fail to peruse the full-text letter as given in the Appendix.

Wilberforce gave him no encouragement — indeed, there is no evidence that his proposal was ever officially considered; he was simply tabooed. He kept the secret himself and his friends of the National Church were too magnanimous to disclose it; so when it came before the Conference a few months later in the

form of a mission to India, it simply startled by its gigantic character. Benson said with vehemence, "it will ruin Methodism." The number of men called for, and the initial expenses, and the chance of failure were more than the denomination could stand. The opposition greatly afflicted Dr. Coke; he spent a night in tears over it. He returned to the Conference, eloquently defended the plan, and offered as a guarantee to lay down \$30,000 himself toward it. Strong men came to his relief and the measure was carried. He was authorized to take seven men, including one for southern Africa, and go to India. He at once made his additional preparations. The volunteers were James Lynch, John M'Kenny, William Ault, George Erskine, William M. Howard, Thomas H. Squance, Benjamin Clough, and the wives of Howard and Ault, and these with Coke, made the missionary company. They assembled at Portsmouth, well furnished, including a printing-press and type.

Coke rose with the occasion and all his Christian manliness asserted itself. He preached his last sermon at Portsmouth. A divine afflatus comes upon men in great emergencies, and their utterances are prophetic. "It is of little consequence," said he in it, "whether we take our flight from the land of our nativity, from the trackless ocean, or the shores of Ceylon!" The last sentence of the sermon was equally so, "God will give us our part in the first resurrection, that on us the second death may have no power." On the 30th of December, 1813, they set sail in a fleet of six Indiamen, more than twenty merchant vessels and three ships of war for convoy. On the 10th of February the wife of Ault, a delicate woman, died and was buried at sea. In the Indian Ocean Coke's health rapidly declined. He kept himself busy reading and writing in his cabin. He was on board one of the Indiamen with two of the missionaries. On the morning of the 3d of May his servant knocked at his cabin door, but received no response. He opened it and beheld the lifeless body of Coke stretched upon the floor. He must have died before midnight. It is supposed that he rose to call for help, when he was stricken with apoplexy. The news was signalled to the fleet. A coffin was made, and at five in the afternoon, with the usual impressive ceremonies, the body was borne to the leeward gangway, where it was covered with signal flags; the soldiers were drawn up in rank on the deck, the bell of the ship tolled, one of the missionaries read the burial service, and, at the moment the sun sank below the rim of the Indian Ocean, the coffin, laden

with four cannon-balls, was cast into the deep. It was fitting thus that his requiem through the ages should be sung by the waves of the sea as they wash the shores of all continents. He died in his sixty-seventh year.

A pen-picture of his personal appearance has already been furnished from Drew. An appropriate motto for his life would be, "In labors more abundant." He crossed the ocean eighteen times when it meant peril and suffering of an extreme nature, the voyages in that age covering from forty to eighty or more days. When on shore, both in England and America, he was indefatigable and unceasing in work, so that neither Whitefield, nor Wesley, nor Asbury, considering years of service, was more diligent and devoted to the cause of the Master. His biography by Drew is a noble tribute, but unreliable as to dates, inasmuch as his papers which were left with Drew were not chronologically arranged, and a number of errors, specially in the matter of the Address to Washington, which is so associated with 1785 when it took place in 1789, as to produce an anachronism which in a later controversy was seriously misleading, as will be seen. Etheridge has furnished a Memoir, and numerous monographs have done all that generous eulogy could do in his honor. Asbury, who read him between the lines as well as through them, and whose superior tact and diplomatic genius used him to further his own convictions of hierarchal churchism; who repelled him or attracted him as the positive or negative poles of his own magnetic nature elected, — when he heard of his departure left in his Journal a sincere, if extravagant, estimate of him: "The greatest man of the last century as a minister of Christ in zeal and labors and services."¹

This decade of the Wesleyan Conference history must take note of the secession and organization of the Primitive Methodists of Ireland. As early as 1814 there was dissatisfaction in the Irish Wesleyan Conference over the Plan of Pacification which had been adopted. The sacramental controversy continued to disturb them. Adam Averell, a clergyman of the National Church, early espoused the views of the Methodists under Coke and others and united with the Irish Conference. He was socially well connected and a man of large influence and devoted piety, with peculiar views of the relation the Methodists should sustain to the National Church, holding to Wesley's original plan. As the President of the Irish Conference he was alarmed in 1814 at

¹ Asbury's "Journal," Vol. III. p. 452.

the petitions from trustees and others for the administration of the sacraments by their own preachers. The Irish Conference adopted the English plan, but, to conciliate the opponents, postponed its operation for a year. In 1816 Adam Clarke was President and succeeded in having passed a Plan of Pacification. But the opponents were many and influential, and they set themselves in array against it. A war of pamphlets came on. Seventy-five hundred members united in a schism. Twenty-six chapels were wrested from the old connection. Lawsuits followed, and the cases decided under Wesley's Deed of Declaration against the seceders. Averell was applied to by the dissentients to organize them more effectively. He consented, and addressed a circular to the Irish preachers, but only one responded. The contention raged and bad feeling was engendered on both sides. A Convention was held in Dublin, January 5, 1818, and the "General Principles of the Methodist Constitution" were adopted. Another was held at Clones on the 27th of the same month, and ratified the Principles, and again at Dublin the succeeding month, and so were organized the Primitive Methodists of Ireland, which both by its abnormal history and its ecclesiastical plan differed essentially from the English Primitives. They consider themselves a Society and not a Church, and like all secedent bodies adopted the features of lay-delegation fully in their constitution with a liberal polity. In 1819 they reported 53 preaching places; in 1836 these had increased to 107. They established a bi-monthly magazine and a Book Room, and formed a Home Missionary Society. In 1819 they reported more than 12,000 members. In 1830 their increase was but 2000. In 1839 they reported 16,000. In 1861 they reported but 14,247 members, 85 ministers, and 61 circuits. Tyerman calls it "A senseless schism." Perhaps it was. Numerically they have decreased, and in the absence of data the causes cannot be declared. They were not represented in the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in London, September, 1881. There was no response from them in the Centenary of Wesley's death, 1891. In common with the Irish Conference they no doubt suffered from the unparalleled emigration to America during the earlier, and even later years. Averell lived until 1847, and Stevens pays a high tribute to his worth and records his triumphant death. The Irish Conference largely recovered from the shock of this controversy and have maintained the high character Wesley gave them. Ouseley, Graham, Reilly, Hamilton are names, and specially Thomas

Waugh, their "Bunting," which shine in the constellations of Methodism. James Morgan, Richard Boardman, Andrew Blair, James M'Mullin, William Robertson, William Peacock, Thomas Edwards, John M'Adams, Thomas Johnston, George Brown, Samuel Steele, John Hamilton, James M'Gee, Walter Griffith, Thomas Barber, Matthew Langtree, Matthew Tobias, and William Stewart — all were heroes, and did much for the revival of Protestantism in Ireland. An Irish Methodist carries his credentials with him over the world for Christly fidelity and witty instruction. They have furnished its ministry on both sides of the ocean with brilliant orators and successful revivalists.

CHAPTER XIV

1825 to 1839, the centenary of English Methodism—Its hierarchal system compared with liberal forms—Stevens's astronomical figure defective—Perpetual warfare of the two systems in both Church and State—Ultimate result not problematical—The English Conference propagandism—The defection under Dr. Warren; merits of the case—Policy of expelling first, and then granting concessions accounted for—Early American fraternal delegates to the Wesleyan Conference—Growth of the body—Thomas Vasey; a sketch—The centenary of Methodism celebrated on both continents—Clerical pretensions of English preachers; examples—Priesthood of the people claimed for the Parent Methodisms; how not illustrated—What a hundred years of protest has accomplished.

THE division of Stevens is so good a one that it may be followed for the next period, or from 1825 to 1839, the centenary year of English Methodism. He extols the Wesleyan system, or what remained after the numerous and quite radical emendations of it in some matters, in a trend to a more liberal polity, and he uses a scientific figure for illustration, which unhappily proves too much as a parallel. The Wesleyan polity of the Conference, he says, underwent no material revision in this period except in a single instance. It will be seen that it was a very important instance. Then he eulogizes it: "It was found to be thoroughly organized, and effective for the great moral ends of the denomination. Disturbances under it could arise only from such cases of personal discontent, ambition, or caprice as must attend the best devised schemes of government; but it proved itself capable, by the regularity and energy of its operation, of readily expelling all causes of serious discord; for, with a centripetal force which gave it unity and power, it had also a centrifugal tendency, which, while continually enlarging its range, speedily threw off incompatible men and measures." Nothing could be more apt as an illustration of the oligarchic system, but it is untrue to the law of nature, the principle of magnetic gravitation. In the starry heavens and the solar systems the centripetal force holds all the planets of the system to its central sun, and thus secures unity and power; but its centrifugal force is intended by an exact balance of attraction to hold the planets in their orbits at their

respective distances from the sun. It is never exercised to "throw off" planets of the system. It represents exactly the civil code of a well-balanced republic, like that of the American Union, in secular government, or of the New Connexion Methodists of England, or the Methodist Protestant Church of America, in ecclesiastical government. An autocratic or oligarchic system would promote its own destruction but for this power, found in this case in its confederal authority based upon proprietary rights, both elements of expulsive energy. It has been described as a great iron wheel, of wheels within wheels, which work smoothly enough, cog fitting to cog, until a foreign substance comes between, and then they crush and throw off the incompatible matter. It is effective and potential, it may be emphasized, but at what cost let the divisions in Wesleyan and Asburyan Methodism record. This whole History will be a frequently recurring illustration, while the successes of Church polity, which are true exponents of the balance of the spheres, centripetal and centrifugal working in coördination, stand as evidential beyond question that the paternal, autocratic, aristocratic, or oligarchic systems were never either necessary or expedient to the highest development of doctrinal, operative Methodism.

The respective theories are working out along their own lines in the history of the world. The civil governments are thus demarkated: czars and emperors and kings in civilized communities, and despots among the barbarous peoples, in all gradations of the paternal idea. Akin to these are the Church governments,—the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church (national in England, but a sect among sects in America), the Methodist Episcopal Churches of various names and degrees of episcopacy,—all expressions of the same paternal idea. Over against these are the republics of ancient and modern times, notably in the van the United States of America, which is beckoning the oppressed peoples of all lands, either to share individually in its blessings of civil equality, or educating them to throw off the galling yokes of anti-republican systems. Over against these also are the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, both Calvinistic and Arminian doctrinally, but agreed that the New Testament methods of the primitive Church are to be accepted as the model for Christ's visible Church in all ages. The conflict between these, it is confessed, is not an equal one; like the forces of good and evil, the preponderance is with the ideally wrong and the practically evil.

It is consonant with the depravity of human nature. There is something in it that loves lordship. It has been forcibly expressed in vulgar phrase, "Every man has a pope in his belly." Even the oppressed take the cue, and in their station begin to oppress others. The acute Snethen has luminously set it forth, "One of the deplorable effects of power is, that those who feel oppressed by it without resisting it have a strong propensity generated by it to oppress others." It must be confessed that the ideally true can only prevail among men as intelligence and virtue make them self-governing. In the measure this is not the case men must be governed by others through brute force or arbitrary authority. There can be no question, however, on which side final victory lies in this irrepressible conflict. God reigns above and Christ is to be King of this world. His ideal kingdom is to become actual. Beginning in the hearts of men, it rules by love, and so supersedes the restraints of law. "All ye are brethren" holds the germinal truth for all ultimate governments in State and Church. For the former it is found in constitutional monarchies like England, and constitutional republics like the United States. In the latter it is found under Presbyterian and Congregational *régimes*. The fatal and sufficient objection to all hierarchal systems, however attempered and limited, is that their trend is in the wrong direction, and should be discouraged to the point of opposition by every friend of civil and religious liberty. These positions are held to be logically irrefutable and practically established. No claim that under arbitrary and irresponsible rule there is greater efficiency, potentiality with numerical and material extension, even if shown to be true, can be allowed. The republics in State and Church are demonstrating that it is not true. Limiting the demonstration to the objective of this History,—the Methodist Protestant Church,—this review of English Methodism and this formulation of principles is part of the task which, if successfully accomplished, will vindicate its fathers and founders with its right to exist and to perpetuate itself.

Eminent men presided over the Wesleyan Conference during these fourteen years: Watson, Stephens, Bunting twice, Townley, Morley, Marsden, Newton, Treffry, Taylor, Reece, Grindrod, Jackson, and Lessey. Stevens says, "Foreign, universal propagandism has now become the characteristic idea of the denomination." And it was so. Missionaries were sent into most parts of the world. It sent out ten, twenty, and thirty missionaries

in a year. The work was systematized through the Board of Managers, composed of the most distinguished of ministers and laymen; of the latter may be named Thomas Thompson, James Wood, Thomas Farmer, Thomas and William Merriott, Launcelot Haslope, George and James Heald, Thomas Allen, and Joseph Butterworth. Its Mission House became tantamount in importance with its Publishing House. Twenty-five thousand pounds were contributed by the people for its erection and the building of a mission ship for the South Sea Islands. For the Home work various funds were organized, to which the Methodist people contributed their wealth. The Superannuates were better cared for, and most of these measures are to be traced to the lay co-operation, which Bunting advised, defended, and successfully established in the face of the old party of preachers, who still held that the trinity of lay virtues, as already set forth, was to pray, pay, and obey, as Wesley also held for his Societies. If he had ever seriously contemplated a Church for the Methodists in either England or America, he would probably have found a place for laymen, taking his cue from the National Church at home and its congener in America, in both of which, despite extreme conservativeness, in their lower houses of legislation there is full lay representation and coöperation. Higher education, both for the preachers and the children of the people, was pressed, and schools established at various points. This very educational movement was, directly or indirectly, the occasion, if not the cause, of that serious disturbance which eventuated in expulsion and secession and the organization of another branch of Methodism, and also of important revision of the Wesleyan polity, "the one single exception for this period," as Stevens notes it.

He says of this defection: "Not a little agitation accompanied the initiation of this important measure. Many devoted members of the society and some members of the Conference suspected that its tendency would be deteriorating to the simplicity and purity of the ministry; others, restless under the government of the Church, or disappointed in their ambition for places in the management or offices of the new institutions, availed themselves of the occasion to disturb the peace of the Connection." Perhaps these reasons are fairly enough stated, though the parties implicated tell another story, as might be expected. Dr. Samuel Warren, a prominent member of the Conference, led the way. Stevens says that he at first fully agreed with the educational

plan, but "finding that his own name was not reported in the nomination of its officers, he opposed the institution with extraordinary animosity." He wrote against it with severity, and organized the "Grand Central Association" for combined attack. He was in consequence suspended from the district meeting of Manchester. He threw the case into the courts, and it was decided against him, as he might have foreseen, and possibly did, as there could be no doubt about the legal validity of the Conference polity under the Poll-Deed of Wesley. He appealed to the Lord Chancellor, but the opinion of the Vice-Chancellor was confirmed. Warren then appealed to the next Conference against the district meeting which had suspended him. The Conference heard him, and then expelled him.

The Association became the basis of a new Methodist sect, "The Associated Methodists." A schism had taken place at Leeds over a church organ question in 1829, and these now joined the new body. At its second assembly it reported 20,000 members, but in the coming twenty years it had advanced numerically but about 2000. Warren labored energetically to promote its success, but finally took refuge in the National Church. No explanatory data are at hand, so the case must be left as Stevens reports it. It occurred in 1835. The gist of it is, however, that, as in other cases, the parent body had a way of first excising the disaffected and then conceding in its law about what had been contended for; for it is unreasonable to assume that all this agitation was without real grievances. The effect of the movement was considerable, but by the centenary year the old Conference had fully recovered. The result was that farther concessions were made to popular and liberal Methodism. Bunting, the sagacious, prepared a "Special Address" of the Conference to the Societies, "embodying," Stevens says, "explanations and some emendations of discipline, especially of rules or usages which had been most assailed by the seceders. This document recognized decidedly the propriety of 'Mixed Committees' of preachers and laymen in the administration of the funds and other temporalities of the denomination, a policy already in practice, but now more uniformly applied. It made new provisions for accused members under trial, granting them farther opportunities of appeal. It authorized applications from the people through the 'June quarterly meeting of every year' for any changes in the government of the Connection not incompatible with its constitution as left by Wesley."

A careful consideration of the concessions as thus outlined by Stevens will disclose how vital to lay rights are some of them, and the query recurs, why the parent body should expel first and afterward concede. The reason, perhaps, is not far to find. Intrenched in authority backed by property, no serious thought is given to the unbalanced government, until an uprising demands changes by the people. Acquiescence would have acknowledged superior wisdom in the discontented. It would look too much as though rights withheld had been wrested from the power party. Hence expulsions for "moral discipline." Then in the Conference wisdom rights are voluntarily surrendered. But no one is deceived by such procedure. It remains true that men, as individuals or corporations, do not part with power except under coercive stress, and hence also the fact that reforms from within are rarely, if ever, successful, for the reason that reforms work from above downward. Revolutions work from below upward. The destiny of the Associated Methodists will be given later.

In 1828 Dr. William Capers of the South Carolina Conference was sent by the General Conference to the Wesleyan Conference. In 1835 William Lord was sent by the Wesleyan Conference to the General Conference in America. Dr. Wilbur Fisk was sent with fraternal letters in return in 1836.¹ The slavery question was under discussion in both countries, and the British brethren had made some pointed allusions to it in their former address. An effort was made to prejudice the Wesleyans against Dr. Fisk on this score. But explanations were made, and he was cordially received, and by "his influence," Stevens says, "the form of ordination by imposition of hands was adopted for the first time by the Conference, he himself sharing in the ceremony." It was a reactionary step and marked the influence of the American Episcopacy over them.

During the period just closed the Wesleyan Conference increased by an average of forty a year. Three hundred and forty-nine had passed to their reward, among them notable names. Charles Atmore, David Stoner, Thomas Vasey, died in this period. The latter was sent to America with Coke and Whatcoat to assist Asbury in 1784. He remained in the American Con-

¹ Buckley, in his "History of Methodism," Vol. I. p. 451, says "William Fiske and Dr. Capers were elected fraternal delegates to the British Conference." In the light of the facts found in the running text as just given, this statement is misleading. It must be put down to the haste of composition.

tion a few years, but grew dissatisfied, probably with the Asburyan rule, as no other has ever been assigned, when he entered the Protestant Episcopal Church, receiving ordination at the hands of Bishop White. He returned to England, accepted a curacy, Stevens says "with Wesley's approbation," proof that he had good reasons for his course in America, and in 1789 he resumed his place as a Methodist itinerant under Wesley. He lingered to his eighty-fourth year and died in 1826. John Smith, the revivalist, also died triumphantly. In 1833 two of the greatest lights of English Methodism departed,—Richard Watson and Adam Clarke. A volume to each of them would not suffice for memorial. Among honored laymen were Butterworth, Thomas Thompson, and Samuel Drew, who from a shoemaker's bench rose to literary eminence as editor of the *Imperial Magazine* and as a metaphysician of high rank. Samuel Hick and William Carvosso also departed, leaving testimony to the saving power of the faith they taught and exemplified.

The Centenary of Methodism was celebrated both in England and America with appropriate ceremonies and excusable exultation over the marvellous spread of a heart-religion on both continents. A layman, Butterworth, had suggested the commemoration. An imposing assembly met at Manchester, 1838, comprising about 250 preachers and laymen. It was resolved to raise £80,000 as a centenary offering. The actual sum raised was £216,000. In October, 1839, the Methodist world united in the celebration. Nothing like it for munificent giving was ever before known in a denomination. Wesley died at the head of 550 itinerants and 140,000 members in all quarters of the globe. A half century later these had grown to an army of 6080 itinerant preachers and four times as many local preachers, and 1,400,000 members, including the various bodies claiming to be Methodists. It had about 350 foreign missionaries, and about 3000 unpaid assistants, occupying some 300 stations. Perronet wrote years before Wesley's death, "I make no doubt that Methodism is designed by Providence to introduce the approaching millenium." Wesley caught its true spirit some twelve years before his death, regarding it not as a sect, or as a party in dogmatic theology, but a revival of spiritual Christianity designed to uplift the Christian world and furnish a lever for the moral betterment of the ungodly masses. It is doubtful whether in after years it can be claimed as an improvement, or even as a necessity, when it became in the parent bodies of England, and specially America, a pronounced

sect with some exclusive pretension,¹ and too largely intent upon denominational aggrandizement as well. Meantime most of the evangelical churches have affiliated with it more closely in the preached modification of doctrine, and particularly in experiential piety. Its career for one hundred years has been succinctly traced; fifty more are to come, within which half-time it has fulfilled the promise of its beginning by tripling its numbers, girdling the world, and searching out its hidden corners. What remains for it no one cares to anticipate, lest the realized exaggerations of the past should make incredulous the hope of the future.

Nothing can better conclude these reflections than the words of Stevens as to a distinguishing peculiarity of this the greatest moral and spiritual force of modern times. "It has practically restored the primitive 'priesthood of the people,' not only by the example of its lay or local preachers, more than twice as numerous as its regular ministry, but by its exhorters, class leaders, prayer leaders, and the religious activity to which it has trained its laity generally." But how regrettable is it that this noble record is marred by the stultifying blindness of the founders of the parent bodies in England and America, the latter, it is true, but the echo of the former, in studiously and persistently excluding that priesthood of the people from all participation in its governmental structure. In the primitive Church nothing was done legislatively but by the consent of the people congregationally assembled. But antichrist—the overslaughting of the people by the preaching class—early appeared, soon consolidated, and erected itself into a hierarchy of little and big popes. That the favored class should be enamored of it is consonant with all the exhibitions of human nature, fettered in this, if

¹ Among the signs of this pretentiousness about this time, 1840, to the amusement of the English Christian world, and the grief of not a few Wesleyan Methodists, was the donning of full episcopal canonicals by leading and lesser lights of the Conference. Even the brainful Jabez Bunting was afflicted with this mania for clerical millinery, and appeared in his pulpit arrayed in all the toggerly of an episcopal priest. The *London Wesleyan Magazine* for the period has a frontispiece, for one number, of Rev. Matthew Richey of the Conference, stationed at Toronto, Canada, arrayed in all the glory of canonicals. There were not a few other instances. It was Wesleyan enough, it must be admitted, as was the Sunday Service, abridged by him for the use of his societies when he had no thought of their ever becoming a Church; but now that they were clearly Dissenters in fact and law, it was pitiable to see them aping the style of the National Church, which had spurned them, and which was spurned by them in turn. It did not last long, however, but died with other episcopal plumings, which were too grotesque for a serious Methodist congregation, even in England.

nothing else, with the selfish spirit. It has taken one hundred years of better education, restive agitation, demand and denial, with its precipitation of expulsions for opinions' sake, to awaken the old bodies to a sense of its high inexpediency, not to say its wrong. Slowly, but surely, the great reform has gone forward, and it is manifest destiny for it to continue to go forward, until Methodism, not only its protesting bodies living and thriving side by side with the parents as object-lessons and modifying forces, shall emancipate itself from a false interpretation of a laity without parallel for its loyalty to the ministry, its devotion and liberality, its conservatism, its high average intelligence, and all the qualities that make Christian manhood a coveted patent of nobility. The words of the Apostle shall be accommodationally true in this also: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceit) that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved."

CHAPTER XV

Wesleyan Methodism from 1840 to 1890; a mere glance — The great Reform in 1877 of a Pastoral and a Representative house in the Conference — Another attempt to episcopalize the Conference, by Riggs and Hughes, an utter failure — The Bible Christians; O'Brian and his case 1809 to 1814; his expulsion — Organization of a new Methodism; its marvellous success under a liberal polity — The United Methodist Free churches; a coalition of secedent bodies — Sketch of its polity and growth — Expulsion of Messrs. Griffith, Everett, and Dunn, originates the Free Methodists in 1849 — Comparative growth of liberal and autocratic Methodism.

It would demand more space than the scope and intent of this History could allow to treat with even the same discursiveness the half-century of English Methodism from 1840 to 1890, nor is it necessary. In the symposium for the centenary of Wesley's death, 1891, in the *New York Independent*, the Wesleyan Conference is treated by James M. King, D.D. The sketch is meagre considering its importance, and much of its contents has been anticipated. Of course, it takes no notice of the expulsions and secessions from the body, specially of a later date than the Associated Methodists under Dr. Warren. These have a separate history in this symposium and shall occupy most of the space of this concluding chapter on transatlantic Methodisms. Notice is taken of a few aphoristic sentences of Dr. King's: "No great religious movement known in history is so thoroughly personal in conception, development, and manner of its ramifications as the Wesleyan movement." "The separation from the Church of England was brought about by gradual steps, and was never the subject of formal declaration."

The leaven of lay-recognition, as has been found under the educational force of secessions, continued to work from the last in 1835 down through others to be mentioned until the year 1877, when the widest stride was made in this direction. Dr. King epitomizes it: "In 1877 the constitution of the Conference was so amended as to admit lay-representatives to a participation in certain parts of its proceedings. The Pastoral Session of the Conference, composed of ministers only, deals with ministerial

and pastoral questions; and the Representative Session of the Conference, composed of ministers and laymen, manages financial and general matters. But these sessions of the Conference possess no functions interfering with the constitutional rights of the Legal Hundred." It outlines the deepest inroad yet made upon the exclusiveness of the ministerial class, and when Dr. King says "lay-representation" he means lay-delegation. Two houses, one for ministers, and one for ministers and laymen, is a favorite idea, borrowed from these brethren by not a few Episcopal Methodist ministers as they see the inevitable crowding upon them. It is a plausible scheme, and if adopted would satisfy, for the time at least, not a few of the thoughtful laymen of that Church. But it is seriously objectionable, and will never be received as a finality by the self-respecting lay element; but this is not the place for its discussion. It shows also how the Poll-Deed stands as a bar to generous enlargement, and is the responsible factor for these makeshifts of a liberal polity. Every such movement also is sure to alarm the class, typical among the ministers, of the old paternal idea, and reactionary steps are ever and anon suggested. In 1891, when the large delegation of the Wesleyan Conference mingled with the paramount element of the Episcopal churches at the second Ecumenical Conference in Washington, D. C., its features of strength and centralization appealed to the admiration of some of the foremost of these brethren, and they returned home full of the purpose to embody modifications of them in the Wesleyan Conference. They secured at the last Conference a committee to consider the subject of strengthening the executive department. It originated with Rev. Dr. Riggs and had the support of Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and other prominent men. The plan is not fully matured by the committee having it in hand, but it is in brief: to create a body of thirteen administrative officers, who for the present shall be styled "Separated Chairmen," each of whom shall have administrative charge of some sixty circuits as a superintendent, preside over meetings of the district conferences, etc. These officers are to be elected for a term of six years. It is a recrudescence of Coke's plan at the Manchester Conference nearly one hundred years ago, though this does not appear to be confessed, as it might prejudice the case. It is the mildest approach possible to a reestablishment of the paternal idea, and would probably be helpful, but the lurking danger of something else it might generate has turned upon it already in its incipiency a storm of opposition from lay-

men and ministers. The English Methodist press reports R. W. Peeks, a member of Parliament and a layman, as saying: "It is a new scheme for the creation of a bench of Methodist bishops. . . . I earnestly appeal to my fellow Methodists not to be misled by poetical similes and adulatory phrases; but to recognize the plain and naked fact, that the new clerical order will be nothing more or less than a Methodist episcopate." Rev. W. H. Coradine says, "The whole affair, to sum up, is too autocratic and bureaucratic for the 'times' and for the Methodist Church." Rev. W. G. Hall says: "Will the game be worth the candle? I call it a game, for I cannot but see it in the light of playing a pretty little game at bishops . . . the powers of such brethren, chairmen or bishops as we might call them, would soon grow beyond that of the President. . . . I think it likely the thirteen so appointed would be known as the thirteen Methodist tyrants, and their government as the Methodist Reign of Terror. The toadyism to which this would give rise would be most degrading to the ministerial character, and the partiality to which the bishops would be tempted would soon show itself." Nothing comparable to this severity of language can be found in the whole range of the Reform controversy of 1820-30 in America, and yet for milder protests laymen and preachers in no small numbers were expelled the Mother Church. Will this man lose his clerical head? No. The time for the excision of men for opinions' sake and denying freedom of speech is past in Methodism. The Riggs proposition will probably be disastrously defeated.¹ "In founding the United Societies of the people called Methodists, John Wesley founded a Church." The statement must be unqualifiedly denied. There is not a single fact to support it, and such reckless avowals confuse true history. Such annalists deliver themselves in an occult sense, and if critically pressed could justify their assertions only in a refined transcendental meaning. There is a purpose, however, in linking Wesley's name with Churchism both in England and America, as will hereafter be seen. Wesleyan Methodism under the immediate supervision of the Conference is accredited with the following statistics for 1891. Members in Great Britain, 423,615; in Ireland and Irish missions, 25,365; in Foreign missions, 34,287; French Conference, 1411; South African Conference, 28,776; West India Conferences, 45,928; total, 559,382. Ministers, total 2224. Dr. King furnishes no property values for this period.

¹ The plan has since been abandoned by its advocates.

It is necessary to retrace steps to notice the Bible Christian denomination, originating in the expulsion of William O'Brian, a lay-preacher, from the Wesleyan society in 1810. It is remarkable that Stevens takes no account of this transaction.

O'Brian was born in Cornwall in 1778. His mother was a deeply pious woman, and, with her family, joined the Methodists when they organized in her neighborhood. Her son was converted in his eighteenth year, and at once began to exhort his companions and establish meetings in various places, which were marked with converting power. In 1804 he suffered a severe illness, and promised the Lord that if restored he would give himself fully to the ministry. He consulted the circuit preacher, but was not encouraged. In 1809 the circuit preacher was absent and O'Brian was called upon to fill his appointments. He did so acceptably, often walking twenty and thirty miles and preaching three and four times on the Sabbath. Scores were converted and united with the societies. For six years he hoped to be engaged by the Conference. He attended the annual district meeting and begged to be heard. He was not heard, and was requested to return home. No data are before us explaining the reason for this persistent refusal. He kept up his irregular services, and in November, 1810, he was expelled from the local society where he held his membership, and in a chapel built upon a piece of land he gave. He quietly submitted, but worked and preached, as the way was opened to him, into distant and destitute neighborhoods. His mother began to hold services also, and a deep prejudice was created against both of them. In 1814, O'Brian gave up his business that he might devote himself wholly to the work. He heard that in the east of Cornwall there were thirteen parishes destitute of evangelical preaching. He went among them in 1815. He was greatly persecuted by the parish priests and was threatened with the jail if he continued. He made repeated overtures for work under the Conference. He was as repeatedly rejected. In 1815 he formed the first society of a new cause in a farmhouse in the county of Devon. Twenty united with the Thorne family, who opened their farmhouse to him. He was much maligned, but, disproving all the calumnies, grew more popular than ever. A first quarterly meeting was held January 1, 1816, at Holsworthy, Devon, where his mother had come to live. The number in society was now 237, all of them O'Brian's converts under God, none having been received from the old societies. They held their first love-feast and

prospered. A storm of persecution beat upon them from the viler sort of sinners. Johanna Brooks was converted. She began to tell her neighbors what great things God had done for her. This she did in the parish church, and a warden turned her out. O'Brian was sent for and began working. Many influential families were brought to Christ under his crude, but powerful preaching. James Thorne at twenty years of age began to preach, his parents consenting. He set out upon what proved to be his life-work of eminent usefulness. He sought for and professed to find the full salvation, and in consequence "a fervor and a zeal burned through all his life." Making the Bible alone their guide-book, wonderful results attended their word. Their persecutions were akin to all the early Methodist preachers. The first church, or chapel, was built on the Thorne estate. It was twenty by forty feet, and opened May 29, 1818. On the same estate has since been built the Connectional College. At the quarterly meeting, held October 6, 1817, the membership had increased to 1146. There were now six travelling preachers and three circuits.

The first Conference was held at Baddash Launceston, in Cornwall, and about twelve preachers attended, August 17, 1819. The form of a deed for the conveyance of property was made and duly enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. The subject of women preaching was discussed and unanimously agreed to. The printed minutes of the Conference showed sixteen men and fourteen women on the roll. A Home missionary society was organized, and the work much enlarged under it. The second Conference was held at Baddash in 1820. There were six ordained ministers, nineteen on trial, and nineteen women, making a total of forty-four. There were seventeen circuits. The third Conference was held at Shebbear, in Lake chapel, in August, 1820. An Annuitant Society was formed, whose capital fund is now £4212. It is for the superannuated and their families. A connectional magazine was established in 1822. It is now a sixty-four page monthly. In 1822 a mission was opened in London and in the Channel islands. In 1831 a missionary was sent to Canada. In 1850 two were sent to South Australia; in 1855 one to Victoria; in 1866 a mission was opened in Queensland, and in 1877 in New Zealand. In 1885 two missionaries were sent to China, which have been increased to eight. It is therefore a truly missionary Church, thus showing its credentials as of Christ. In 1883 their Canada Conference of 71 ministers, 168

local preachers, 181 chapels with 6918 members, and their Sabbath-schools, went into the union of Methodisms. Its statistics for 1891 are: 271 ministers, 1899 local preachers, 1011 chapels, halls, and rooms, with a membership of 30,000. Its polity is liberal, and, on the question of women preaching, radical. These facts are gleaned from the paper of Rev. William Higman, President of the Conference, in the symposium of the *New York Independent* for 1891, the centenary of Wesley's decease.

The United Methodist Free Churches now demand attention. They embody the most recent and numerous secessions from the Wesleyan body with their own increase under a prosperity that scouts the idea that a favoring Providence is on the side of Wesley's paternal polity as embodied in the Poll-Deed and the Wesleyan Conference. The Union was formed in 1857 between the Associated Methodists of 1835, whose history was left incomplete in the notice of their organization under the lead of Dr. Warren; the Wesleyan Reformers of 1849; the Protestant Methodists originating in the Leeds organ question, and the last secession resulting from the expulsion of Rev. James Everett, Samuel Dunn, and William Griffith, with the sequel of the loss of one hundred thousand officers and members to the Wesleyan connection. These sections, or branches of Methodism, finding that their principles of church government and administration were identical, after friendly negotiations, met by representation in the town of Rochdale, Lancashire, and in July, 1857, the Union was consummated, and for more than thirty years it has worked with undisputed satisfaction to all the contracting parties.

It is under an Annual Assembly. Its constitution is found in a legal instrument called the "Foundation Deed." The Annual Assembly is purely elective, and that directly from the quarterly meetings of the circuits. The ratio is one to every circuit having under 500 members, two for every 500 and under 1000, and three for every 1000 members and upward. No qualification is required for election but membership in the circuit, and no distinction is made between ministers and laymen, and there is nothing to bar the eligibility of a woman, if elected.

The Assembly has four ex-officio members, the President, the Connectional and Corresponding Secretaries, and the Treasurer, who form the connecting link between the Annual Assemblies. A Connectional Committee has charge of the interests of the denomination during the interval of the Assemblies. The ministry is connectional, and in principle itinerant, but without a

restrictive rule as to limit of pastoral service. Its ministry is also under the absolute control of the Annual Assembly. It controls all the connectional institutions and funds. "The fundamental principles of the body are circuit independence and free election to the Annual Assembly, which, however, has no authority to interfere with the internal affairs of the circuits or to make laws for their guidance. The district meetings have no judicial or legislative functions, but are the medium of communication between the circuits and the Assembly." The circuit strength of the denomination lies principally in the mining and manufacturing counties of England; it has also large interests in the agricultural provinces. Lately attention has been given to London.

In the earlier years of the Union its resources were taxed to depletion in building chapels and consolidating itself, a factor in all these secedent branches, of which too much account cannot be taken in comparative estimates. Then it took up Home and Foreign missions, and collections must be taken up for them under penalty of forfeiture of membership in the Assembly. Its foreign missions are in Jamaica, West and East Africa, China, Australia, and New Zealand. The income for the Mission Fund is £12,000. They are prosecuted at great expense and martyr devotion from its young preachers. The denomination has a publishing house in London which issues its connectional literature. The profits are distributed among the connectional funds. A new congregational hymn-book was published in 1890. A Relief Fund for indigent chapels and a London Chapel Fund are among its creations. In 1877 a college was opened at Harrogate, Yorkshire, for the education of ministers and for commercial life. It has other funds in common with the Methodisms, special attention being given to its "Temperance League." Its statistics are as follows: 417 ministers, 1608 chapels and preaching-places, with a roll of 85,461 members. There are also 3341 local preachers, 3889 class leaders, 1367 Sunday-schools, 26,689 teachers, and 203,883 scholars. The value of church property is about £2,037,384. "Such is Free Methodism as at present organized and administered. It constitutes the fairest and fullest opportunity ever given in Great Britain for testing the problem, whether the peculiar genius of Methodism can be successfully worked on purely democratic principles. At present Free Methodism is robust and vigorous."

It is proper for a better understanding of the origin of the Free

Methodists that notice in more detail should be taken of the expulsion of Messrs. Griffith, Everett, and Dunn at the Manchester Conference, August 3, 1849. Several years before suspicion was aroused among not a few of the prominent ministers and laymen of the Wesleyan body that the management of the temporalities of the denomination, specially in the Mission House, was not as careful and judicious as might be, and under the reasonable checks which business affairs always demand. The proceedings had been conducted after the genius of paternalism, with a degree of secrecy deemed impolitic by those who wished the conduct of affairs to be above suspicion. It will be remembered that even the proceedings of the Wesleyan Conference itself were still conducted with closed doors, as had been the fashion from Wesley's day, and as to the internal management through committees and secretaries little was ever disclosed except in the annual reports. Inquiries were met with brusque answers, only serving to heighten the suspicion of the wide-awake investigators. Finding themselves thwarted at every turn, they began to issue anonymous circulars and pamphlets, which were widely distributed and extensively read, thereby arousing the connection and bringing the subject-matter to the immediate attention of the laity. Great excitement was created by the accusations on the one hand and the denials on the other, the controversy waxing warmer as it became acrimonious and personal. All the efforts of the Conference authorities proved abortive in discovering the authors of the circulars, which came to be called "Fly-sheets," those engaged in the work proving themselves as capable of keeping a secret as those managing the close corporation concerns of the Conference in the Mission House, etc. A Mr. Osburn was designated by the Conference to ferret out the authors, and with much adroitness and not overscrupulous methods he proceeded to his work, travelling from place to place and nosing into the confidence of unwary people until he secured some inklings suiting his purpose. But this information was too indefinite for judicial proceedings, and the Conference finally issued a Test, or Declaration, in the form of an inquisitorial paper, which was presented to the preachers for signature as their avowal that they were not the authors of the fly-sheets and were not in sympathy with the new Reform movement. Osburn carried it about, and, under penalty of accusation, within two years about a thousand of the Conference preachers had signed the Declaration. It was a new application of the doctrine of

exclusion in the diagnosis of the case by the Conference doctors. If it is not you and you and you, then, after narrowing the circle to a remaining half-dozen who refused to sign, it must be you. Out of the fly-sheets it was not difficult to secure ample material for charges and specifications against the hidden malcontents. In one of the circulars the President of the Conference was styled a "pope," and one of the agents most suspected of malfeasance in office, if not worse, was dubbed an "archfiend." On the other side, the denunciation of the Reformers was not a whit milder.

At the Manchester Conference the issue was joined. Expectation was on the tiptoe. The adherents of the Conference were out in force and almost at the opening of it, Thomas Jackson, President, the matter of the fly-sheets was brought before the body. The name of James Everett was called, and he was requested to present himself before the platform. He promptly complied, and at once a scene of the deepest interest and intense excitement was opened. Men in their anxiety to see stood upon the seats and craned their necks, while a suppressed murmur rippled over the Conference room. Dr. Hannah proposed the questions, which were of a nature to criminate Everett by self-confession, if answered, as to any complicity of his in the fly-sheet publications. He requested to be presented with formal charges and disciplinary law under which the demands were made. He was informed that he was arraigned to answer categorically the questions of the Conference. He farther demurred and protested amid cries from the accusing body of "plead, plead." The question was finally put, after a long verbal bout with Dr. Hannah, "Brother James Everett, are you the writer in whole or in part of a certain publication called fly-sheets?" After a pause Everett answered with deliberation, "I will not answer that question for reasons elsewhere assigned." He was requested to take his seat. The name of Burdsal was called, and he took his place before this modern inquisition. The same form was gone through with, though he was not so contumacious in the eyes of the accusers as Everett. He took his seat. Daniel Walton was summoned and responded. After a long parley his case was deferred. Samuel Dunn was called and took position before the bar. He was as uncompromising as Everett, and pressed to answer as to the fly-sheets "Yes" or "No." He refused to answer. The name of George was called and he was more gently dealt with. The case of Bromly was the last, and by this time some apprehension seemed to steal over the Conference that

matters were going too far, and his case was virtually abandoned by the accusers. Action was subsequently taken, with the result that Everett, Griffith, and Dunn were expelled. Burdsal, Walton, George, and Bromly were censured and degraded.

But the Conference was not through expelling. T. S. Stamp, ex-editor of the *Watchman*, an organ of the Conference, and treasurer of the Children's Fund, one of those who had been accused by the fly-sheets, was detected in embezzlement by his own associates, and so palpable was his guilt that he decamped before the Conference assembled. Investigation was made into the affairs of the Fund, and it was found that he had embezzled over £2500. Most of it was expended, as the evidence showed, in feasting at high dinners where expensive wines were served his close Conference friends and official associates. He was expelled; so the Conference purged itself of its virtue and its vice alike—the detectives and the detected were both pronounced guilty. It is not affirmed that the body made no distinction between moral turpitude and official contumacy, but it is one of the intrinsic weaknesses of the parental system under close corporation auspices, that it makes slow discovery of misdemeanors in its agents and often in its haste punishes those who are friendly to discovery of wrong-doing. Instances might be multiplied. One will be cited in its proper connection of the same moral complexion, but of greater damage, in the history of the Book Concern of Northern Episcopal Methodism. The Conference adjourned after issuing an address to the United Societies, in which the best construction possible is put upon their action with assurances of more careful administration of the temporal affairs, but admonitory also not to sympathize with the expelled or further their methods of reform.

As never before under the fly-sheet controversy, the whole denomination was convulsed from centre to circumference. The laity now rose up and demanded participation, at least in the temporalities, such as would make impossible such fraud and scandal as had developed. The expelled and the censured were centres of interrogation and sympathy. They were requested to tell all they knew, and meetings were held by the laity, the public often taking part as in a common cause for honest methods and that fair play which always appeals to a free-born Englishman. In the town hall of Birmingham, holding six thousand persons, a meeting was called to hear the expelled give their version of the dispute, and it was filled to overflowing. After hearing the

case the meeting unanimously, except a few Wesleyan preachers who had come that they might report proceedings, passed a resolution the sum of which is, that the action of the Conference in the expulsion of Everett, Griffith, and Dunn was "a gross violation of New Testament principles." It was a sample of numerous other meetings, larger and smaller, all over the kingdom through which the pent-up indignation expended itself. The secular papers took it up and almost without exception sided with the expelled. The Dissenters and their periodicals took part arrayed on the same side. Meanwhile, blind to the popular sentiment, the Conference authorities exercised discipline upon the offenders. The local preachers came forward and asserted themselves. An Association for Mutual Aid was formed in London, six hundred being present at the organization. Four hundred lay delegates met in London, April 14, 1850, to consider the situation. Then expulsions of the local preachers began, a Mr. Heritage being the first to undergo discipline. The London *Wesleyan Times* was established and grew in circulation as the organ of the Reformers. A fund was raised for the support of the expelled. Finally, around them immense secessions gathered, and the Free Methodist denomination crystallized with a loss to the parent body, as the outcome of the whole controversy, of one hundred thousand members, or approximating one-third of the English Methodists. It may be safely estimated that a large number, while approving the movement, for the cogent reasons always operating in such emergencies, remained with the old body in silent submission. Their final union with the other smaller secedent bodies of like polity and views, in 1857, has already been noticed. Granting all that may be alleged for the Conference party, such a movement as this against it stands as an impeachment of its methods and of the Deed of Declaration which made possible such an oligarchy in the Church of Christ.

After this review of British Methodism, it is for the impartial reader to decide whether or not the first fundamental has been sustained; to wit, that the Deed of Declaration was the cardinal error of English Methodism in giving corporate form to an oligarchic entail of governmental power. It has been the direct or indirect cause of all the divisions in it, rendered all the more conspicuous by the singular unity of all Methodists as to doctrine, means of grace, and its great operative forces — "a revival church in its spirit and a missionary church in its organization." The several offshoots from the parent body, numerically and

materially, nearly equal in their aggregation the Wesleyan body at an estimate for 1891 of 550,000. Thus, but for the disintegrating tendencies of a polity which was sincerely, but erroneously, proposed to unify, transatlantic Methodism would to-day be a million strong. True, its divisions are far from being an unmixed evil, if an evil at all, in view of the zeal provoked and the restraints imposed upon the parent body. Precisely in the measure of the legal imperatives of the Poll-Deed, all else having from time to time been wrested from it as concessions to a popular demand under the educative influence of the secedent bodies, it has preserved Wesleyan conferential authority and proprietary rights in chapels and vested funds, and so perpetuated a system which many admire and loyally uphold as the wisest and best. Largely, it is a matter of type and temperament in the human personality. Many prefer to be governed in that way for the privilege in their grade of governing others themselves. The protesting bodies have no right to complain of their preference. What they claim is a right to their own preference and the undisturbed privilege through their own liberal methods of demonstrating that they are most consonant with primitive and apostolical precedents, and in line with the religious and civil liberties of God's people, and so the wisest and best.

A closing fact needs clear enunciation. In comparative estimates of the numerical success of English Methodism, as set over against American Methodism, it must not be overlooked that, through all the years of the last century, at least, the former have been constantly and vastly depleted by foreign emigration, thus feeding the latter, so that the American Methodist web has not only been spread to catch all who come within its radii, but to an extent not fairly acknowledged heretofore, the web itself is spun out of the bowels of the British spider. Another fact needs emphasis: the respective losses and gains by home migration. It is asserted, as a fair calculation, that the Wesleyan Conference and the Episcopal Methodisms lose by migration of their members not more than one in four as accretions to the secedent bodies, while these bodies lose by accretions to the parent denominations not less than three of the four. It is specially true of America. The Episcopal webs are spread all over the country, and the migrating Liberal Methodist falls into them by the necessity of the situation three cases out of four, because the webs of the secedent bodies are so territorially circumscribed; and for the same reason they catch in turn not more than one in

four from the parent bodies. These facts may be farther enlarged when the statistics of Methodism are under particular consideration at a later period. Thus a concise view of English Methodism in all its phases has been given, first as historical information, which all Methodists may claim in common, and second as it bears upon the struggle between the oligarchic and democratic systems of government, respectively defended and maintained by their adherents.

CHAPTER XVI

Methodism in America — Robert Strawbridge and Philip Embury; the pioneer preachers of Maryland and New York — The priority of their arrival and preaching considered, 1760 or 1766? — Captain Webb in the New York rigging loft, 1767 — John Street chapel, 1768 — Strawbridge's log chapel in Frederick County, Md. — Richard Owens and William Watters — Boardman and Rankin — Robert Williams and John King — Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor — Asbury and Richard Wright — Asbury the monumental man; descriptions and characteristics; original pen-sketch of him; arrival in Philadelphia, 1771; appointed "Assistant," superseding Boardman, and is in turn superseded by Rankin; jealousies among them; effects of the autocratic principle — Snethen's view — Shadford.

METHODISM in America now demands our investigation and study. It has been found that the Wesleys were no strangers to the virgin land of civil and religious liberty a quarter of a century before the first Methodist pioneers landed upon her shores. The two brothers, under the missionary impulse which followed them through life, labored in Savannah and its vicinage, Charles for about six months or from early in 1736 to July of the same year, and John from the same period to the close of 1737, or about twenty months. In 1739 they began their evangelical work in England under a new experience of saving grace, regeneration, assurance, and sanctification, doctrines as old as the Reformation, but overlaid with the thick crust of formalism, except in the case of a few devout pastors and spiritual people scattered among the Reformed churches. There is no stimulation to the human mind and heart like the love of God shed abroad therein through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. It unlooses the tongue of the stammering, and the joy of the new birth must be uttered, it cannot be hid. All else is trivial, and it runs to the ends of the earth that the gladsome story may be told. It breaks down the barriers of sacerdotalism and inaugurates a priesthood of the people, which, like that at Pentecost, fulfilled the prophecy of Joel: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . . and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."



BARBARA HECK.

Among the converts of Wesley and his helpers in the early days were Robert Strawbridge and Philip Embury, the former from the county Leitrim, and the latter from the county Limerick, Ireland. They became class leaders and local preachers in their respective neighborhoods, and were eminently successful in their work of preaching the gospel while laboring for a living for their families. They turned their gaze toward the new land of promise in the wilds of America and emigrated thither. The question of the priority of their arrival in America has perplexed Methodist antiquarians and is not fully settled to this day. Embury arrived with a small company of Methodists, notably Paul and Barbara Heck, on the 10th of August, 1760, in the harbor of New York. It is claimed that Robert Strawbridge and his company arrived in the same year. This is the view of Lednum, Dr. Roberts, who made careful investigation, and Dr. Hamilton, who also sides with them. On the other hand, Wakeley and Shillington, an Irish authority, hold that he did not arrive until 1764 or 1765. Embury and his company, under the stress of their surroundings, became lukewarm, and some of them fell into evil ways. Barbara Heck kept alive the flame of her early love, and, rebuking Embury for his want of zeal, aroused him to a sense of their spiritual need. In 1766 he opened preaching in his own house, having but four to attend the first service. They continued their meetings, and the peculiar services were noised abroad, considerably increasing the attendance. Three musicians from a neighboring barrack became converted and joined the little company. In February, 1767, they were surprised, if not alarmed, at the appearance in one of their meetings of a military stranger in full dress. He soon made himself known as Captain Thomas Webb of the King's service, but also a soldier of the cross and a spiritual son of John Wesley. He was a local preacher. He was offered their humble desk or pulpit, and thenceforth became one of the founders of American Methodism. He had lost his right eye at Louisburg and was wounded in his right arm at Quebec. He was an impassioned preacher, and on his final return to England often officiated at the Old Foundry, and was a favorite with Wesley, who makes mention of him in his *Journal*, for some ten years. He lived to a good old age. He continued to labor with Embury, and so successful were they, that it was found necessary to rent a rigging loft sixty feet by eighteen on William Street in 1767. Here they preached thrice a week until it also became too small for the congregation. Barbara Heck, not behind either of them in zeal

and labors, conceived an economical plan for building a chapel, and it was at once put into effect. A site was leased on John Street in 1768 and purchased in 1770. They appealed for assistance to the people, and a stone chapel was built sixty feet in length and forty-two in breadth, faced with blue plaster, and provided with a fireplace and chimney to avoid the law, as Dissenters were not yet allowed to erect a church. Embury worked on it with his own hands, being a carpenter by trade. He dedicated it October 30, 1768. Within two years at least 2000 hearers crowded it and the area in front.¹ At this time the city contained about 20,000 inhabitants and the colonies about 3,000,000. Webb was very generous in its construction. He became an itinerant preacher after his army retirement with the title and pay of a captain. At Jamaica, L. I., Pemberton, Trenton, Burlington, and other places in New Jersey he formed classes and established preaching-places. He was the founder of Methodism in Philadelphia, again started in a sail loft. He aided in the purchase of its first church, St. George's, in 1770. He preached in New Castle, Wilmington, and on the shores of the Brandywine in Delaware. In 1772 he returned to England and appealed for missionaries for America, and led back with him Shadford and Rankin, Pilmoor and Boardman having come in response to his numerous letters previously. He must be considered the principal founder of the American Methodist Church, says Stevens, and justly. Embury continued in charge at New York until the arrival of Pilmoor and Boardman in 1769, when he retired to Salem, in New York, on a small farm. While mowing in his field in 1775² he injured himself severely and died suddenly from its effects, aged forty-five years. He was buried on a neighboring farm; and, after reposing fifty-seven years in his solitary and unmarked grave, his remains were removed to Ashgrove burial-ground in the vicinage and the spot properly marked by a monument. Some of his family removed to Canada, whither Barbara Heck accompanied them and founded Methodism in that province.

Returning to Robert Strawbridge, a character quite as worthy of extended notice claims farther attention. He did not tarry in New York when he landed, but travelled southward, until he found a location in the backwoods; for Frederick County, Md.,

¹ Bangs's "History of the M. E. Church" has an excellent engraving of it as a frontispiece to Vol. I.

² This is the received date, but the archives of the Troy Conference Historical Society M. E. Church make it indubitable that he died in 1773. See *Christian Advocate*, Sept. 15, 1898.

had but recently been reclaimed from savage invasion. At his conversion his zeal for religion provoked such a storm of persecution that he was compelled to remove from Drumsnagh, near the river Shannon in Leitrim County, to the county Sligo, where he was eminently useful as a local preacher, and here he found his devoted young wife. His name remains embalmed in the memory of its latest generations. Clearing a place on Sam's Creek, he built his rude house and at once opened preaching in it. He never lost the warmth and buoyancy of his religious experience. One of his praiseworthy characteristics was that his zeal for God outran his provident care of himself and family, though one of his motives undoubtedly in coming to America was to improve his temporal condition. He had a wife, however, who was equal to the situation and willing to bear anything that the gospel might not be hindered. Out of his nearest neighbors he soon formed a Methodist society, and not long after his settlement built the historically famous "Log Meeting House" on Sam's Creek about a mile from his own home. Asbury has settled beyond dispute that it was the first chapel built in America for the Methodists and the first society formed. He says: "This settlement of Pipe Creek is the richest in the state. Here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland—and *America*."¹ The word *America* is italicized by Asbury. Thoroughly conversant, as it may be safely assumed he was, with American Methodist history, nothing but positive evidence to the contrary can shake this testimony on the mooted question of priority.² The only exception that can be made to the whole

¹ "Journal," Vol. III. p. 24.

² Michael Laird, who subsequently removed to Philadelphia in 1770, testified that his father, who was personally acquainted with Strawbridge, fixed the date of his coming to America with his family in 1760. Henry Maynard, who was born on August 12, 1757, and died in 1839, testifies that he was baptized by Strawbridge when he was four or five years old, which fixes it not later than 1762, and the particulars of the baptism were remembered by Ephraim Maynard as late as 1866, as received from the traditions of the neighborhood. Other evidence makes it clear that Strawbridge was engaged in preaching as early as 1762. When Asbury recorded his verdict he had been in the neighborhood for some days and had full opportunity to investigate the matter for himself. It is believed that Strawbridge obtained ordination from a German minister, Benedict Swope, just as Otterbein afterward assisted at the ordination of Asbury. Dr. G. C. M. Roberts, who furnishes most of these facts in his "Centennial Pictorial Album,"* also furnishes a likeness of Strawbridge, drawn from memory, as given by those who knew him. Notwithstanding such proofs as these, other historians still maintain that the case has not been made out for Strawbridge, for the reason forsooth that some of the facts are not under affidavit, and the documents at command. Such

* Square 4to. 144 pp. Cloth. 1866. Woods, printer. Illustrated.

statement is that he confounds Pipe Creek with Sam's Creek, quite a common error of contemporary writers.

The chapel was a rude structure twenty-two feet square, built of logs, a door sawed in one side, and in the other three holes for windows. Though used for years, it was never completed, and it has been noted that it was not deeded to the Conference. A stone chapel took its place in 1783, and this was rebuilt and enlarged in 1800. Strawbridge became an independent itinerant, travelling not only over Frederick, then comprehending three later counties, but into eastern Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia. His preaching was fervent and fluent and his popularity widespread and abiding. He often left his family for weeks, his kind neighbors, who believed in him, running his small farm meanwhile, and supplies coming in from unexpected quarters. He founded Methodism in Baltimore and Harford counties of Maryland. The first native American preacher, Richard Owens, was converted under his preaching. He afterward entered the itinerancy and died in it. William Watters was the first native itinerant,¹ but Owens the first native preacher. Owens and Strawbridge were congenial spirits. The latter was the spiritual father of a number of the earliest preachers, local and travelling: Sater Stevenson, Nathan Perigo, Richard Webster, and others, while not a few prominent laymen must also be added to the number of his converts. Such men as Watters, Gatch, Bowham, Hagerty, Durbin, and Garrettson were prepared by him for the more methodical prosecution of the work. His own name does not occur in the minutes of the Conference as an itinerant until 1773-75, and then suddenly and without explanation drops out. The truth of history is that Strawbridge's spirit would not brook the stern authority of Asbury and his British associate, Rankin. As the earliest American preacher, and having clear convictions that the Methodists in this country should not be

a test might invalidate even Embury's claim, and other originals received without farther question. It is possible that section has something to do with the matter. Most of the histories have been written from north of Pennsylvania, with Boston as a centre, and for this reason it is that its Boston "tea party," of Revolutionary fame, is so well known, though it did not occur until December 16, 1773, and was patriotism in Indian disguise; while the burning of the *Peggy Stewart* in the harbor of Annapolis, Md., occurred on Oct. 19, 1772, and her cargo of tea, as well as the vessel, destroyed by the order of Maryland patriots by the hands of the owner himself, is not well known.

¹ Dr. Atkinson, in his "History of American Methodism," 1896, affirms, p. 431, "Edward Evans itinerated and died in New Jersey before Watters began to preach. There is no evidence that Evans was not an American by birth."

dependent upon the Anglican clergy for the ordinances, specially now, when they were fleeing the country on account of their loyalty to the King, and utterly at odds with the undemocratic polity of the Conference, he could not be brought under the yoke. He was one of three men whom Asbury could neither command nor cajole, the other two being James O'Kelly and Nicholas Snethen, as will be shown later.

Asbury knew Strawbridge's worth and influence. He bid for his submission, as he never did in any other case. He was uncompromising in the matter of the ordinances, for the reason that he knew full well that to yield to the demand of the preachers and people would be to frustrate his cherished design of seeing a Methodist Church organized on an Episcopal plan in accord with his own conscientious convictions of its scriptural nature, and of succumbing to a liberal Presbyterian polity, which was the vogue of a large number of the preachers and the people, specially south of Philadelphia. As early as December, 1772, at a quarterly meeting in Harford County, the sacramental question was discussed, and Asbury says: "Brother S—— (Strawbridge) pleaded much for the ordinances, and so did the people, who appeared to be much biassed by him. I told them I would not agree to it at that time, and insisted on our abiding by our rules. But Mr. B—— (Boardman) had given them their way at the quarterly meeting held here before, and I was obliged to connive at some things for the sake of peace."¹ Again, at the Conference of July, 1773, in Philadelphia, among other propositions that were agreed to, the third is, "No preacher in our Connection shall be permitted to administer the ordinances at this time; except Mr. S—— (Strawbridge), and he under the particular direction of the assistant (Rankin)."¹ Strawbridge would not submit.² As he grew older, he restricted his attention to the Sam's Creek society and Brush Forest, the latter being in Harford County, and its chapel the second built in Maryland. Finally, in his old age and poverty, having devoted his all to Christ and Methodism, he is traced to Long Green, in Baltimore County, where Captain Charles Ridgely, a rich and generous friend, gave him a farm

¹ Ashury's "Journal," Vol. I. pp. 57-80.

² Guirey states that in the discussion of Asbury with Strawbridge and John King as to the ordinances, King proposed to leave it with the people to decide whether they would have the ordinances or not, but Asbury replied, "I came to teach the people, not to be taught by them." See p. 242 of his "History of Episcopacy." 12mo. 381 pp. Written before 1800. A copy in Maryland Historical Library, Baltimore, Md.

free of rent for life. While residing here, in one of his pastoral visiting rounds to his spiritual children, he was taken with his last illness at the house of Joseph Wheeler, in the summer of 1781, and died in great peace. Owens preached his funeral to a great throng in the open air under a tree at the northwest corner of the house. A number of his log chapel congregation were there to honor the occasion, and, as the throng bore him to his last resting-place, they sang as they marched one of Charles Wesley's rapturous lyrics. "He sleeps," says Stevens, "in an orchard of the friend at whose house he died — one of his own converts — under a tree, from the foot of which can be seen the great city which claims him as its Methodist apostle."¹ He is described as "of medium size, of dark complexion, black hair, had a sweet voice, and was an excellent singer." Boehm's "Reminiscences" says, "He was a stout, heavy man." He was an entertaining conversationist and a man of broad intelligence. Asbury's unforgiving prejudice against any and every man who asserted his independence of his military authority, he does not conceal. A few months after Strawbridge's decease, Asbury visited the Brush Forest chapel, and made the following uncharitable record: "Monday, September 3d. I visited the Brush chapel. The people here once left us to follow another; time was when the labors of their leader were made a blessing to them, but pride is a *busy* sin. He is no more: upon the whole I am inclined to think the Lord took him away in judgment, because he was in a way to do hurt to his cause; and that he saved him in mercy, because from his deathbed conversation he appears to have had hope in his end."² Asbury revised his own Journal, omitting, as he declared, records a sober second thought disapproved. He left unblotted this severe judgment of Strawbridge. Posterity has reversed it. Even Asbury, fifteen years afterward, or in 1790, prompted possibly by Coke, for to him is attributed most of the literary work on the "Discipline," in the historical preface, makes this note of Strawbridge, "About the same time Robert Strawbridge from Ireland settled in Frederick County, Md., preaching there and forming societies."³ Thus the log chapel on Sam's Creek, Md., and Wesley

¹ His remains were long after removed to Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Baltimore.

² "Journal," Vol. I. p 431.

³ This ancient verdict is perhaps as near the truth of history as to the priority of Strawbridge or Embury as posterity will ever get. Since the previous section bearing upon it was written, the author has had the pleasure of perusing Rev. Dr. Atkinson's elaborate and exhaustive argument defensive of Embury's claim, to



ROBERT STRAWBRIDGE.

chapel, John Street, New York, are more significant in their forecast of a great and unprecedented work of God than the proudest cathedrals of stained glass and pointing spire.

In response to appeals which were made from John Street Methodists to Wesley for missionaries, Robert Williams, a local preacher, applied to his friend, Ashton, a well-to-do layman, and they came over together, landing in New York in 1769, the latter paying Williams's passage over. Ashgrove chapel was named after him, and he left a memorial legacy which continues to this day. Williams at once began his labors in Wesley chapel, and for about six years, to his death, led a conspicuous career as a Methodist itinerant. He went to the aid of Strawbridge, became the apostle of Methodism in Virginia, coöperated with Jarrett, the apostolical and evangelical Churchman, and pushed his travels

which he devotes forty-six pages of his new History.* Nothing could be more ingenuous than his method of treating the alleged facts and arguments on both sides, and most readers will rise from its perusal convinced that the case is with Embury. It is not, however, claimed even by Dr. Atkinson that Strawbridge came to America later than 1766, nor is it claimed that Embury, though in the country following secular business as a linen manufacturer, began preaching earlier than 1766 in New York City, under Barbara Heck's entreaties, nor that there could have been more than nine months' or a year's difference in any case between their first preaching respectively, so that it was "about the same time" after all—Strawbridge, the pioneer of Methodism in the South, and Embury in the North. This is the whole case. Embury, as a resident of New York City, has the advantage of recorded documentary evidence as to certain dates, whereas Strawbridge—in the wilds of Frederick County, Md., has no such records; left no Journal, not even letters to authenticate his case; only the traditions of the neighborhood, upon which Asbury relied; so that the traditional case is with the latter, though as Dr. Atkinson shows, the documentary case is with the former.

The latest phase of the question is furnished by Rev. Dr. W. S. Edwards in the New York *Christian Advocate* for January 7, 1897, by citing from certain papers of Rev. Alfred Griffith, among them the following, in which Griffith gives the substance of a conversation held by him with Bishop Asbury in 1809: "He said he was aware of the dispute about the priority of claim in church building between the two original branches of the Methodist family, and that with a view to compose the difference he had investigated the question with considerable pains by inquiries on the spot in each locality; that he had had recourse to the most intelligent and reliable sources, but still was unable to determine with certainty who commenced first to build, Embury or Strawbridge; but that Strawbridge commenced to preach first there could be no doubt; that he had concluded that it was most probably true that each had commenced to build his house within the same calendar year—1768—and there could not have been more than a few months' difference between them; but which had his house ready for preaching first he could not determine. He then observed that the whole question was of little consequence."

* "History of the Origin of the Wesleyan Movement in America and of the establishment therein of Methodism." By John Atkinson, D.D., Jersey City, N. J., Wesleyan Publishing Co. 1896. Large 8vo. 458 pp. Cloth. It treats of the American period prior to 1774, and is a most valuable contribution.

down into North Carolina. He was the spiritual father of Jesse Lee while in Virginia, and carried to Philadelphia such a glowing account of the southern work that he bore back with him William Watters, the first American itinerant. He printed and circulated Wesley's sermons, thus giving him the notable title of "the first Methodist minister in America who published a book, the first that married, the first that located, and the first that died."¹ He located between Norfolk and Suffolk, Va., preaching through the neighborhood, and departed this life September 26, 1775. Asbury happened in the vicinage, preached his funeral sermon, and passed a eulogy upon him in his Journal. The place of his sepulchre is unknown.

The historian must couple with him the name of John King, who came over from London to America, near the close of 1770. He first appeared in Philadelphia like a stray evangelical comet. He offered himself for license, but the officary hesitated. He announced preaching in the Potters' Field, over the graves of the poor. He was licensed and went to Wilmington, Del., and from thence into Maryland, where he met and cooperated with Williams. Despite his uncultivated style and peculiar manners as a preacher, he had notable converts. He preached at the forks of the Gunpowder River, and James J. Baker was converted, and on his estate the third Methodist chapel in Maryland was built. In Baltimore his first pulpit was a blacksmith's block at the intersection of Front and French streets. His next was from a table at Baltimore and Calvert streets. Five years afterward Methodism was strong enough in the city to entertain the Annual Conference. He was afterward received into the regular itinerancy, and was a member of the first Conference of 1773. He labored in New Jersey with Watters, and then was back again to Virginia with Williams. While he was yet in England, Wesley thought him "headstrong and stubborn," and often kindly reprov'd him, telling him in one of his letters, "Scream no more at the peril of your soul." He located about 1777; practised medicine and preached; died at New Berne in 1794; buried in Wake County, N. C.² This sextette of local preachers laid the foundation of Methodism in America. All honor here and glory hereafter to Strawbridge, Embury, Webb, Owens, Williams, and King.

The John Street society wrote Wesley, "Send us an able and experienced preacher." At the Conference at Leeds, August 3,

¹ Wakeley's "Lost Chapters," p. 20.

² Atkinson's "Methodism in America," p. 236.

1769, Wesley appealed for some one to go. There was no response. A voyage to America was a serious matter in those days. The next day, however, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor responded. The former was about thirty-one years of age, the latter was also a young man, and both of them exceptionally useful at home, men of good abilities and fair education. They arrived at Gloucester, six miles south of Philadelphia, October 24, 1769, after a nine weeks' voyage on the boisterous ocean. Boardman was named as Wesley's "assistant" or superintendent. He at once made his way to New York, preaching on the way, while Pilmoor tarried in Philadelphia, preaching on the steps in front of the old state-house on Chestnut Street, and from the race course judges' stand on the common, now Franklin Square, at Sixth and Race streets. Between 4000 and 5000 hearers attended. Boardman opened in New York, and at the end of five months he exchanged with Pilmoor, and they alternated two or three times a year, after a custom of frequent changes already inaugurated. Their frequent letters to Wesley are full of good news. They extended their labors to various points for three or four years, Boardman going north as far as Boston, and Pilmoor going south as far as Savannah, everywhere received with honor by the societies their predecessors had formed as Wesley's first missionaries. There are but scant records of their itinerary, but crowds attended the ministry of both, conversions were numerous, and societies organized as centres of religious influence for large neighborhoods. The name *America* appears for the first time in Wesley's minutes for 1770; Pilmoor, Boardman, Williams, and King are mentioned as missionaries. The next year the numbers in society are given at 316. The preachers appealed for other recruits. At the Conference of 1771, Wesley asked, "Who are willing to go over and help them?" Five responded and two were appointed, the home needs forbidding permission to a larger number. The young men appointed were Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. The two names stand in broad contrast in the light of their future careers. Both were Wesley's selection out of the five offering. No unfavorable comment is on record of Wright's appointment, and he ran but a short career both in America and in England. He may be dismissed before entering upon a consideration of the other selection, fraught with such momentous results in the history of American Methodism,—its colossal figure from 1771 to 1816. Wright had travelled but one year when he came to America with Asbury,

and but little is known of him. Bangs and Lee note his coming, and then he passes into oblivion. Stevens says that he accompanied Asbury in his travels, spending most of his time in Maryland and Virginia. In the spring of 1772 he was in New York, and in 1773 he was stationed in Norfolk, Va. In 1774 he returned to England, and after three years' service he dropped out of the records altogether.

Francis Asbury. His name justly fills a sentence with a period. He was born in England, four miles from Birmingham, in Staffordshire, on the 20th or 21st of August, 1745. After the death of an infant sister, he was the only child of his parents. He was early sent to school, but he did not make much progress, owing to his dread of the master. At thirteen he was removed from school and apprenticed to the trade of button-making, which relation he continued six years and a half. His master was a pious man and helped his apprentice in many ways. He could read the Bible at seven years of age and had a thirst for knowledge. He heard of the Methodists at Handsworth, and his mother, on his inquiry, gave him a good account of them. He attended their meetings, and was delighted with the singing, the extempore praying and preaching. Praying in his father's barn, he received the witness of pardoned sin. Henceforth he began to hold meetings on his own account. He soon became a local preacher, and exercised his gifts to the conversion of souls. He was about twenty-one when he became an itinerant, taking the place as a supply of an absent travelling preacher. He early exhibited the characteristics of his life. Stevens sketches him with the hand of a master: "He was studious, somewhat introspective, with a thoughtfulness which was tinged at times with melancholy. His was one of those minds which can find rest only in labor; designed for great work, and therefore endowed with a restless instinct for it. He was an incessant preacher, of singular practical directness; was ever in motion, on foot or on horseback, over his long circuits; a rigorous disciplinarian, disposed to do everything by method; a man of few words, and those always to the point; of quick and marvellous insight into character; of a sobriety, not to say severity, of temperament, which might have been repulsive had it not been softened by a profound religious humility, for his soul, ever aspiring to the highest virtue, was ever complaining within itself over its shortcomings. His mind had eminently a military cast. He never lost his self-possession, and could therefore seldom be surprised. He seemed

not to know fear, and never yielded to discouragement in a course sanctioned by his faith or conscience. He could plan sagaciously, seldom pausing to consider theories of wisdom or policy, but as seldom failing in practical prudence. The rigor which his disciplinary predilections imposed upon others was so exemplified by himself that his associates and subordinates, instead of revolting from it, accepted it as a challenge of heroic emulation. Discerning men could not come into his presence without perceiving that his soul was essentially heroic, and that nothing committed to his agency could fail, if it depended upon conscientiousness, prudence, courage, labor, and persistence."¹ No other good pen-portrait of his physique remains except Henry Boehm's. The portraits of him, taken from an oil painting for which he sat in Baltimore in June, 1794, present him as a war-worn veteran of strongly drawn facial lines, eyelids slightly a-droop, with a firm though benevolent expression presiding over the countenance. He wore the regulation high collar on a buttoned-up coat, gray or black, cut away in the frock after the Quaker style and common to Methodist preachers, with breeches and leggings and sometimes shoe-buckles. He was exceedingly neat in his attire, with an easy dignity of manner, which commanded respect if not affection. In the prime of his life he was erect, robust, about five feet nine inches in stature, well rounded out, but never inclined to flesh, weighing but 150 pounds; of a fresh countenance, which early seamed into fast-coming wrinkles, brownish hair brushed down over an ample forehead and flowing back around his coat-collar, and steel-blue eyes so full of a penetrating magnetism that few could withstand them as they glinted from under the slightly falling eyelids. His nose was straight, nostrils expanded, mouth large, and chin firm, and the whole contour that of a ruggedly handsome man, as he sat uncovered or walked under his broad-brimmed and low-crowned hat.²

¹ Stevens's "History of M. E. Church," Vol. I. pp. 115, 116.

² The annexed description of Asbury in his old age is by the author of a poem styled, "The Conference, or Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism." It was published anonymously by John Clarke, at Bridgeton, West New Jersey, 1824. It is 12mo, 92 pp., pasteboard binding. His identity has been discovered by the writer, and from prose sketches at the close of the poem, he was a Wesleyan minister who labored with William Black, being stationed for a time at Halifax, Newfoundland, Canada, and afterward in New York City as a visitor. He was Rev. Joshua Marsden. The author was a man of education, and the poetry is of a respectable order. He had often met with Asbury. This volume, and no other is known to exist, was presented to the wife of Rev. Thomas M'Cormick at the General Conference of the M. E. Church in Baltimore, 1824, by Rev. Charles Pittman who,

It is a singular comment on the misjudgment of men, though nothing specially to Wesley's credit, when Wright's selection at the same time is recalled, that when Asbury offered and was accepted to go to America, some of the preachers objected to him, and not a few of his acquaintances were struck with wonder when they heard that Wesley had appointed him.¹ When he came to Bristol he had not a penny in his pocket; but he was soon supplied with a wardrobe and ten pounds, probably furnished by Wesley. They set sail from a port near Bristol, September 4, 1771. It is on record that some months before the Conference Asbury had thoughts of going to America. Stevens furnishes a key-note—a single sentence—to which every event of his life responds, "He saw in the New World a befitting sphere for his apostolic aspirations." It comprehended two things: first, the largest field for eminent usefulness; and, second, an opportunity to be something personally, both of them worthy ambitions. On the 12th of September, on shipboard, he thus soliloquized: "Whither am I going? To the New World. What to do? To gain honor? No, if I know my heart. To get money? No; I am going to live to God, and to bring others so to do, . . . the people God owns in England are the Methodists. The doctrines they preach and the discipline they enforce, are, I believe, the purest of any people now in the world. The Lord has greatly blessed these doctrines and this discipline in the three kingdoms; they must therefore be pleasing to him. If God does not acknowledge me in America, I will soon return to England. I know my views are upright now; may they never be otherwise."²

with Rev. Joseph Rusling, was a guest at the home of the M'Cormicks during the Conference. It was presented to the writer by Rev. Thomas M'Cormick, February 24, 1882, when he was in the ninety-first year of his age, and is so inscribed on a fly-leaf. The volume contains an interesting letter from William Black to Marsden, in which he furnishes some important facts in connection with the funeral of Asbury, which he attended in 1816, in Baltimore, Md. These facts will be used in the proper connection. In the author's "Account of the Rev. F. Ashury," a clear analysis of his character is given by this admirer, and also this description of his person. "In his appearance he was a picture of plainness and simplicity, bordering upon the costume of the Friends; the reader may figure to himself an old man, spare and tall, but remarkably clean, with a plain frock coat, drab, or mixed, waistcoat and small-clothes of the same kind, a neat stock, a broad-brimmed hat with an uncommon low crown, while his white locks, venerable with age, added a simplicity to his appearance it is not easy to describe; his countenance had a cast of severity, but this was owing probably to his habitual gravity and seriousness; his look was remarkably penetrating; in a word, I never recollect to have seen a man of a more venerable and dignified appearance."

¹ *Arminian Magazine*, Vol. I. p. 185.

² Asbury's "Journal," Vol. I. p. 12.

Not a sentiment here uttered needs be discounted in all his after career. It was the spiritual side of him that spoke; it was the human side of him that aspired.

On the 27th of October he landed in Philadelphia, and the same evening heard Pilmoor preach to a large congregation in the St. George's church, and which is still revered as the "old Cathedral" by Methodists of the city. Bangs computes that there were now about 600 in the society, with ten preachers, including Wesley's four missionaries. Boardman was Wesley's assistant or superintendent. Asbury opened his commission, preaching often, and soon made his way to New York, where he met Boardman, "in peace but weak in body." He made preaching excursions into the surrounding country, and soon took in the situation. In the winter Boardman confined himself mostly to New York City, partly perhaps, as seen, from ill health, and Pilmoor did the same in Philadelphia. It was not to Asbury's liking, and though but a "helper" to Boardman, he talks like a master. "I have not yet the thing which I seek, a circulation of preachers. I am fixed to the Methodist plan; I am willing to suffer, yea, to die, sooner than betray so good a cause by any means." Again he writes: "At present I am dissatisfied. I judge we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I shall show them the way." Centres of population would seem to afford the largest opportunity for usefulness, but it was not Asbury's idea. He entered upon a winter campaign. Some months after, he wrote, "I hope that before long about seven preachers of us will spread over seven or eight hundred miles." He kept in constant motion, and he had but little patience with any preacher who did not do likewise. He kept his soul alive to God; this was his stimulus. He exclaims, "I preached with life, and long to be as an ever rising flame of fire." His example stirred up the other preachers, and the work widened north and south. Wesley kept himself in correspondence with all these helpers, and had a willing ear and an easy credence for all that was written him. He exercised his authority at 3000 miles distance as he did at home. In the autumn of 1772 Asbury received a commission from Wesley appointing him "Assistant" or Superintendent of the American Societies, thus superseding Boardman, and, as far as is known, without so much as consulting him. He was only about twenty-seven years of age. He was not slow to take charge, and at once shaped his plans for aggression. He got upon the path of the six local

preachers and set them in motion, and in December, in the northern part of the eastern shore, he held his "quarterly conference at J. Presbury's, in Christmas week, 1772." It was the first of which there is any account. He adopted Wesley's method of questions and answers in the business meeting, and the moral character of all the preachers passed except one exhorter, about whom there was some doubt.

By this time some ten or twelve native local preachers were enrolled: Richard Owens, William Watters, Richard Webster, Nathan Perigo, Isaac Rollins, Hezekiah Bonham, Nicholas Watters, Sater Stevenson, J. Presbury, Philip Gatch, and probably Aquila Standford and Abraham Rollins.¹ Asbury established his headquarters at Baltimore, and his coming was hailed with delight by the little society at Fell's Point and scattered members elsewhere. Three or four private houses were opened, and a sail loft at the corner of Mills and Block streets was secured and soon filled with a congregation for five o'clock preaching. He settled the classes and appointed leaders, a man for the men and a woman for the women's class. A lot on Strawberry Alley and Fleet Street, sixty by seventy-five feet, was purchased by a number of brethren. The following year two lots were purchased on Lovely Lane, and a church erected. The latter was the first finished and occupied. Asbury formed a circuit for himself of 200 miles and twenty-four appointments, travelling over it every three weeks. Every slow-moving preacher was sure to be prodded, and they found themselves under a military-like discipline. He received tart and complaining letters from Pilmoor and others; he hastened to New York, preaching all along the route. He meant to be obeyed, and he did not hesitate to face the opposition. Snethen remarks, "We always had occasion to notice that Mr. Asbury placed his chief reliance for the ascendancy of his influence upon his presence. Where trouble was, there was he." The disaffection to his rule grew so formidable that Asbury wrote to Wesley all the particulars from his point of view and begged Wesley to come over personally.

Captain Webb had gone to England soliciting missionaries for America, and he was now returning with his recruits. Pilmoor had left New York the same day Asbury arrived. It may have been designed, and it was probably well these Englishmen did not meet in the warmth of their blood. Thomas Rankin and

¹ Lednum's "History," p. 86. A copy in Congressional Library, and also in the writer's collection. He is about the only authority for these early times.



THOMAS WEBB.

George Shadford were sent with Webb, as also Joseph Yearbry, a volunteer preacher. Rankin stood high among his brethren; he was the senior in years of Asbury and esteemed a rigid disciplinarian, while George Shadford was a young man and a great favorite with Wesley. The former bore with him his commission as General Assistant to Wesley in America, thus outranking Asbury. It is the method of autocratic minds that, if complaint is made of the arbitrary administration of a chief subordinate, not to give instructions for the relaxation of rigor, but to relieve the subordinate and appoint one of severer temper and a firmer hand. A pause is called for a reflection of Snethen's applied by him to Wesley, and equally to his appointees, in these cases, "I can never be brought to believe that it argues any extraordinary sagacity in men, to take for themselves and their successors as much power to do good as is possible, without any regard to the power which it would give them to do evil." It detracts not a jot of its force to answer that these are good men and they would not abuse their power. Granting it all as a matter of fact in the given cases, the impolity of it must be apparent to every mind not of the same type. The early workings of the false principle are soon seen. Rankin, Shadford, and Yearbry were welcomed by Asbury and the Methodists in Philadelphia on the 3d of June, 1773. There is no evidence that Asbury knew of his supersedure, any more than Boardman. There was no reason he should know on Wesley's plan. Snethen again puts it, with the reasons for it, in justification, as far as it can be justified: "During the life of Mr. Wesley he held everything in his power. His maxims were, *You come to me, not I to you. If you are not willing to help as I direct, you shall not help me at all.* The ground on which he exercised this authority was not only that he considered himself as the father of the connection, but that the members of his society were also members of the National Church, and that those who left his society experienced no change of church relations." Rankin and Asbury preached before each other, and journeyed together to New York. Shadford went to New Jersey and labored effectively. Rankin was a strong and discerning man, and felt himself competent to any situation. He took in the causes of dissension between Asbury and the preachers, particularly Pilmoor. He appears to have taken sides with neither party. Asbury submitted to Rankin's authority, but there is abundant evidence that inwardly he felt his reduction to the ranks by Wesley. Evidently he was disappointed in the turn

things took. If Wesley himself had come over, as he partially promised he would, Asbury knew that he could make such a case as would in the end subdue the malcontents and settle him more securely in his position as head of the American Church. The preachers soon realized that they had gained nothing by a change of superintendents as to disciplinary administration. It was more rigid than ever, and much ill-feeling was engendered against Rankin, but he largely outlived it and conciliated most of them. He determined to call a meeting of all the preachers in Philadelphia, and this brings us to an event of greatest moment, and marks a new chapter in these stirring transactions.

CHAPTER XVII

First American Annual Conference in Philadelphia, 1773; those present—The minutes as printed at several times—The Rankin-Asbury contention and its grounds—Principles of the Revolution and the Methodist system in conflict; evidences—Boardman and Pilmoor return to England; other early preachers—Character of Asbury; celibacy in practice and precept—Effect upon the preachers and the people—Asbury and Rev. William Otterbein; sketch of the latter; their close friendship; kinship of views.

THE First American Annual Conference assembled at St. George's Church in Philadelphia, July 14, 1773, and continued three days. Those present were all Europeans: Thomas Rankin, Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, George Shadford, Thomas Webb, John King, Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yearbry.¹ Strawbridge's name appears in the printed minutes, but he was not present, nor was Embury. The minutes were taken down in writing, and in 1795 John Dickins, first Book Agent, published all the minutes from 1773 to 1795 in one volume. They were afterward republished by Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware for the "Methodist Connection in the United States, John C. Totten printer, 1813," and brought down to that date. They were again republished and brought down to 1839 by Mason and Lane for the Book Concern, New York, 1840. In the edition of 1813 sundry changes were made by Coke and Asbury on their own motion, of which notice will be taken hereafter. The minutes of 1773 are very brief and follow the English model of Questions and Answers. "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

¹ Lednum, p. 111. Atkinson's "History," 1896, p. 430, differs slightly and is in detail, omitting King.

follow that if any preachers deviate from the minutes we can have no fellowship with them till they change their conduct? *Answer, Yes.*" Some other rules were agreed to: to avoid administering the ordinances; attendance upon the Episcopal Church; restrictions as to love-feasts and selling books, and reports once in six months to the superintendent. The Conference was held with closed doors, and this practice was continued, also after the English plan, for more than fifty years. It must not be assumed that there was voting as popularly understood. This Wesley discountenanced, and his American appointees did the same. The title was unique: "Minutes of some Conversations between the Preachers in Connection with the Reverend John Wesley." It was continued as a title until 1784. Asbury did not get to the Conference of 1773 until the second day; the reason assigned by Stevens that "he was detained on his New York circuit," does not seem supported by Asbury himself, who says that "on the Lord's Day [previous] he preached twice with great plainness to a large number of people; and then set off in company with Mr. J. toward Philadelphia. Came safe to the city on Thursday, but did not find such perfect harmony as I could wish for."¹ The Conference had met on Wednesday. A ride of nearly one hundred miles in three days was not much for such a traveller as Asbury on horseback, but it may be that it took him a day longer, and it may be also that he had other reasons for delay. The appointments of this Conference were as follows: New York, Thomas Rankin; Philadelphia, George Shadford (to change in six months with Rankin); New Jersey, John King, William Watters; Baltimore, Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, Abraham Whitworth, Joseph Yearbry; Norfolk, William Wright; Petersburg, Robert Williams. Watters was received at this Conference. The numbers in society were: New York, 180; Philadelphia, 180; New Jersey, 200; Maryland, 500; Virginia, 100; total, 1160.

Stevens says of this juncture: "Asbury labored hard to conform the American societies to Wesley's model, but met with no little resistance from both preachers and people; Rankin had been sent out for this purpose, and to these two thorough disciplinarians we owe the effective organization of the incipient Methodism of the New World."² This must be granted as to the peculiar system, but in view of all the consequences that

¹ Asbury's "Journal," Vol. I. p. 80.

² "History," Vol. I. p. 161.

followed in American history its wisdom may be doubted. Wesley's plan for England and that same plan for America, with its differentiation of environment, was like an attempt to make an exotic of an indigenous plant. The friction complained of, and the insubordination experienced by these leaders were much of it due to this difference; but the preachers and the societies were laid upon the Procrustean bed and shortened or lengthened accordingly. It must be admitted, however, that no satisfactory argument can be made before the facts against the system that did prove itself effective and potential. In tracing its outworkings it is a curious and instructive study of human nature when it is discovered how early the official, not the personal, relations of these two leaders were strained. The allegations against Asbury were that he was too rigid in his discipline of preachers and people. It is not long before it is found that Asbury takes up this very charge against Rankin, his superior. To gore and to be gored are different operations. For nearly fourteen months after Rankin's arrival there is scarcely a reference to him in Asbury's Journal until, August 15, 1774, the following is noted: "I felt some convictions for sleeping too long; and my mind was troubled on account of a conversation which had passed between Mr. R. (Rankin), Mr. S. (Shadford), and myself. But the great Searcher of hearts knoweth my intentions; and to him I submit all future events." Stevens says, "The disciplinary views of Rankin, enforced during the preceding year upon the preachers and societies, with a rigor which seemed to some of them hardly tolerable, had produced salutary effects generally." And again, "Even Asbury hesitated at his rigor, but was conciliated by seeing his own judgment followed in detail, though 'stubbornly opposed' at first."¹

¹ Bangs, in his "History," Vol. I. pp. 86, 87, and 115, 116, is outspoken as to the differences between Rankin and Asbury, though he assumes ignorance as to the cause. He says that Asbury records in his Journal that the Conference of 1773 adjourned "with great harmony and sweetness of temper"; that the record as to the good temper was made with a view to show that, notwithstanding some difficulties had occurred between Rankin and 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 . . . These things laid the foundation of those complaints against Asbury which were transmitted to Mr. Wesley, and afterward became the cause of much of that uneasiness which will be noticed hereafter." The after notice is to this effect: "We have already alluded to a dissatisfaction expressed by Mr. Asbury of the spirit and conduct of Mr. Rankin; and it is certain from sundry notices in his Journal that he suspected strongly that Mr. Rankin had

Asbury had already settled it in his own mind that Methodists in America, when the time should be ripe for it, should be organized on an Episcopal basis. The necessities of the societies in the wilds of America made ultimate separation from Wesley a foregone conclusion, and he patiently bided his time. Rankin, with no such ulterior purpose, furthered unconsciously the plan. The local preachers who had preceded Wesley's missionaries and the native preachers, as they arose, had clear convictions of their scriptural right to govern themselves and "feed the flock of Christ over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers" by administering the ordinances. The logic of the situation was all on their side. Stevens candidly admits it, though carefully guarding his admissions: "A great proportion of the colonists had no traditional attachment to the Anglican Church; the submissive policy of Wesley in England was therefore irrelevant in America. He was too distant to perceive the fact; and his representatives were too Anglican to recognize it, but many of the American Methodists, and some of their preachers, were wiser. They insisted upon their right to the sacraments from their own pastors. Theoretically, none of us now can dispute their claim; . . . the men who then seemed radical in this respect were so simply because they had a superior foresight of the predestined importance and needs of American Methodism."¹ Every year, and its events, only strengthened the independent thinkers among preachers and people in their views. The sentiments and principles underlying the American Revolution were budding in the colonies. At this time they were nearly ready to bloom.

misrepresented him to Mr. Wesley." What the subject of difference was precisely is not known, but it is manifest from the following extract of a letter from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Rankin that the suspicions of Mr. Asbury were well founded. In this letter, which is dated May 4, 1775, he says: "I doubt not that Brother Asbury and you will part friends. I shall hope to see him at the Conference. He is quite an upright man. I apprehend he will go through his work more cheerfully when he is within a little distance from me." In a letter of July 28, 1775, occur the following words, "I rejoice over honest Francis Asbury, and hope that he will no more enter into temptation." Bangs concludes, "Hence we are confirmed in the opinion before expressed that either Mr. Rankin or some one else, probably from jealousy of the growing reputation of Mr. Asbury, had written to his disadvantage, and had even advised Mr. Wesley to call him home." It is clear from Wesley's letter that he had really made up his mind to recall Asbury on the representations made to him, but between May and July he changed his mind. In the light of future events it is well that he did change his mind, for it would have precipitated a development of the fact that Asbury did not purpose to be controlled by any authority in the world. Thus enough clear proof is presented of the truth of the allegations and surmises in the case.

¹ "History," Vol. I. p. 164.

The friction between the English Crown and its American subjects heated and smoked and finally flamed. To those entertaining paternal ideas of government the contention was unwise and uncalled for. It was simple enough in the abstract, but meant chains or liberty in the concrete. A Stamp Act and a duty upon tea, had crystallized into the war-cry, "No Taxation without Representation," and they took their lives in their hands against the theory of Non-resistance and Passive Obedience. Quite a strong Tory party dissented from the revolutionists, not so much that they were less American, but by reason of a fear that with separation from the Crown would come the loss of the entire English common law, and so a breakdown of all civil safeguards. In these circumstances the clergy of English nativity, and they were nearly all such, began to desert their parishes and return home, while not a few of those who remained were of questionable morals, from a Methodist point of view at least. There can be no doubt that these views, reflected upon the Methodist societies made up of native-born people, would have ultimated in a Presbyterian system. Dr. Coke so confesses in his famous letter to the Bishop of London in 1799: "But I return (to England and the National Church) with a full conviction that our numerous societies in America would have been a regular Presbyterian Church, if Mr. Wesley and myself had not taken the steps which we judged it necessary to adopt." McCaine's note upon this extract is fair and judicious.¹ As already admitted, no argument before the fact in favor of this system as against the hierarchic one of Asbury can be made,² but after the fact it is clear from

¹ "The Doctor refers to church government, not to doctrines contrary to the Church of England, which he held to be Arminian. 2d. He intimates that the 'numerous societies in America' preferred a presbyterian form of government to an episcopal one. 3d. That to prevent the societies from becoming a regular Presbyterian Church, he and Mr. Wesley took the steps they did." (How far Mr. Wesley was in reality concerned will be seen in this work.) "And 4th. From the whole we infer that the episcopal form of church government was not such as the people would have adopted, if it had been submitted to their choice, but in consequence of certain measures, it was imposed upon them contrary to their inclination, and without their consent." The writer also observes that the probable reason Dr. Coke does not name Asbury as a factor in the case is that he was unknown to the Bishop of London, and therefore could have had no weight in his statements. See McCaine's "History and Mystery," p. 31.

² Stevens is of opinion that without the system of Asbury, as it was reinforced by the discipline and views of Rankin and supported by Wesley's precedent in England, disintegrating results would have followed. He says, "Without them it seems probable that it [Methodism] would have adopted a settled pastorate, and become blended with the Anglican Church of the colonies, or, like the fruits of Whitefield's labors, been absorbed in the general Protestantism of the country." See his "History," Vol. I. p. 161.

the equal success of a liberal polity joined to the doctrines and means of grace, both in England and America, that it would have been happy for American Methodism in the conservation of its future organic unity, if a balanced and representative polity had been adopted when organization finally took place. Thus it is seen how early the issue was joined between the two systems. How the one came to prevail over the other shall be told in the future. While the contention was proceeding, from 1773 to 1784, the current of history must not be overlooked with brevity of reference.

Boardman and Pilmoor do not appear in the list of appointments of 1773. They had resolved to return to England. Stevens assigns the one reason for it that they were loyal to the Crown and foresaw the war coming on. How much supersedure, first by Asbury and then by Rankin, had to do with it must remain unwritten history. They tarried in the country about six months, and then reëmbarked for England, January 2, 1774. They left 2073 members in society, 10 regular organized circuits, and 17 preachers. Boardman resumed his travels in Ireland, was greatly useful, and continued until September, 1782, when he died suddenly of apoplexy and was borne to his grave by his brethren with lyrics and rejoicing. Pilmoor desisted from travel for two years, then received an appointment in London and at several other points. He dropped out in 1785, returned to America, took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, was stationed in Philadelphia as rector of St. Paul's Church, to whose pulpit he often invited Asbury, Coke, and others. He lived to a good old age and died in peace. Captain Webb also returned, and on his retired pay spent a number of years as a local preacher, died suddenly, and was greatly honored by his brethren. Jarrett and M'Roberts, two clergymen in Virginia, were exceptions to their order;¹ the former, specially devout and spiritual, coöperated with the Methodist preachers through life, though he strongly objected to the organization of the societies into a Church in 1784. He kept up an intimacy with Asbury, was as zealous and evangelical as any of the preachers, and a loyal churchman to the end.

Lednum has preserved the name of John Smith as the first itinerant in Kent County, Md., and whose remains repose at Hinson's chapel. Philip Gatch entered in 1773, though his name does not appear in the minutes until 1774. Judge M'Lean has left a monograph of him. Nathan Perigo was a powerful local

¹ Bangs's "History," Vol. I. pp. 90-115. A series of letters.

preacher who coöperated with Strawbridge. Benjamin Abbott appeared in New Jersey about 1773, and, though not named in the minutes, he was a zealous itinerant and one of the most memorable names in early Methodism. He was an original character and a unique preacher in matter and manner. Stevens devotes twelve pages to a recital of the salient events of his phenomenal career, and a monograph of his labors was made by John Firth, New York, 1854. The results of his preaching were of the most extraordinary character, and thousands owned him as their spiritual father. He lies buried under the shadow of the Methodist church in Salem, N. J. Abraham Whitworth, already named, must be painfully recorded as the first apostate. He fell from grace and ran into evil habits, and the closing trace of him is his enlistment in the British army as a soldier, and his death in one of the engagements with the American forces.

Daniel Ruff was converted in 1771, became a local, and afterward an itinerant, preacher for a brief period, but was eminently useful, Asbury being his eulogist. Shadford, one of the regulars, merits farther notice. He was a man of very respectable parts and conspicuously useful, a familiar of Asbury's, and this is saying much, for he had few confidants. They were as David and Jonathan, Stevens says, and when he returned to England with Rankin his departure was greatly regretted. Occasion will occur to mention him once more in the future in association with an event of Asbury's career.

Returning to Asbury as the master spirit of them all, he was at once in his saddle after the adjournment of the first Conference of 1773, journeying southward to Baltimore. His health had already been broken by his excessive labors and exposures, but he rose superior to bodily suffering, often riding all day with a burning fever upon him. He was susceptible to malaria, and, riding by day and night in fever-stricken sections, he imbibed the seeds of bilious distempers from which he was rarely ever free through life. Delivered from the entanglements of Conference, and the care the human side of him took to preserve or recover leadership, to which he was born, his soul was ever aspiring to purity and love. He was then seen at his best. It was this devout consecration to God that won from his travelling companions in after years such remarkable tributes. A man cannot easily dissemble with those who ride with him all day, eat with him, and sleep with him, and mark his temper under trials and temptations. They read one's character and are able to compare

it with reputation. Asbury's Journal is full of spiritual aspirations, with tinges of sadness and depreciation, the result of his melancholy under sickness. It was this character that made Henry Boehm declare: "Bishop Whatcoat I loved, Bishop M'Kendree I admired, but Bishop Asbury I venerated." He was his travelling companion for eight years, and has left the best analysis of his whole make-up extant, as well as a good picture of him.¹ It was this character that constrained Snethen, while differing from him as to his governmental methods, to eulogize him in these words: "There was one point in which this chief man in our Israel challenges universal admiration, and that was the impulse he gave to experimental and practical religion. It is impossible for the most able of his admirers to convey, to those who knew not the man and his communication, any adequate conception of his virtue-inspiring and virtue-animating influence over the minds of the preachers." Snethen was his travelling companion for two years, and their affection was mutual, and from no one, perhaps, did Asbury receive with more patience contradiction of his views and policy. It was this character that led John Wesley Bond, his last travelling companion for two years, to nurse him like a mother nurses her sick child and to be with him in his final hours.

Asbury carried his asceticism to the extreme of an anchorite. He rigorously fasted every Friday and on special occasions. He was cast in the mould of Ignatius Loyola, and had he lived in the sixteenth century might have vied with him as a leader. Indeed, it will be seen as progress is made in his life-story that, perhaps unconsciously to himself, he exemplified and was moulding his preachers to adopt the triple vow of the Order of Jesus — poverty, chastity, and obedience. His love of leadership and the necessities it imposed of a personal superintendency of preachers and people scattered over thousands of miles of a wild and almost trackless territory, made its duties paramount to every other consideration, even the appeals of nature for conjugal association, so that he not only remained a bachelor through life, but discouraged marriage in the preachers by both his example and precept. The poverty grew out of the straitened circumstances of

¹ "Reminiscences of Rev. Henry Boehm." 12mo. Book Concern, New York, 1866. These are invaluable to the historian, bating a few errors of date, and personal conclusions. He travelled forty thousand miles with Asbury, was one of his executors, and lived to be a centenarian. The reminiscences are siftings from his Journal of two thousand pages and personal recollections as made to Rev. Dr. Wakeley.

the people, the obedience was a primal law of the inchoate Church, and the chastity grew out of both these conditions. The result was that youth and inexperience were the rule among the itinerants. A few would hold out until thirty or forty years of age before they married, and this meant location or a narrow sphere of travel. This state of things continued during Asbury's life. Henry Boehm cites the case of the Virginia Conference of 1809, which he attended with Asbury. It was composed of eighty-four preachers, and but three of them married. It was no exception. He says: "It was properly called the 'Bachelor' Conference. We also had bachelor bishops." M'Kendree was the associate now and he imitated Asbury in his celibacy, but had no successor. It is open to proof that when a preacher married, unless he joined himself to some worldly means as well, Asbury expressed his disapproval by giving him an appointment of the scantiest living, often of necessity, but not unfrequently to exhibit his disapprobation.¹ It was unwholesome in every sense, but its ready obedience and self-sacrifice are as clear as the same conditions in the Roman hierarchy, which in not a few features it so closely followed. The people were poor, but it contradicts all that is known of human nature to conclude that they would not have supported married men as well. The celibate life seemed the choice of the preachers; there was a timid sensitiveness among them not to be open to the charge that they were "preaching for money"; sixty-four dollars a year sufficed for all the material wants of the preachers, often not more than half of it received; they had no participation in the government, so that it soon grew upon them to believe that, as in Wesley's time, the trinity of virtues for a layman was: to pray, pay, and obey. It was a vicious system in some of its tendencies. But the martyr-like sufferings, the toils, the zeal, the fervid spirit, the tearful preaching of men whose convictions and experience were as deep and solemn as the grave, condoned for these tendencies; and the circuit rider, not to say the presiding elder and the bishop when the paternal plan crystallized, were received into the humble homes of the people almost like messengers from another world. The Roman priest and the Methodist preacher in this regard had no parallel, and it has not yet died out of the popular heart. He talked religion at the fireside, and could be heard praying often at odd hours of the night. In much it was virtue-imparting to him and virtue-inspiring to them; and in this the time never was

¹ See foot-note to p. 265, Stevens's "History," Vol. I.

when Asbury could not say to the most consecrated of his helpers, "Follow me as I follow Christ." He says in his Journal, "I have little leisure for anything but prayer; seldom more than two hours in the day, and that space I wish to spend in retired meditation and prayer." Again, "I find it expedient to spend an hour in prayer for myself alone; and an hour each morning and evening for all the preachers and people." Once more, "I see the need of returning to my twelve times of prayer," and much more to the same effect. The apostle's injunction to "Pray without ceasing" is now better understood even by Methodists as a constant prayerful spirit more than hours of time in the closet. The world-wide evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, made a discovery it is well for the ascetic to study when he substantially declared, "It would have been better had I devoted some of the time I have spent in the closet to a more careful study of the Word." But it made a race of spiritual heroes for Methodism, whose line is not yet ended.

During the year 1773-74 Asbury formed the acquaintance of William Otterbein of the German Reformed Church. He came to America in 1752; discovered his need of heart religion; found it; established a church in Baltimore, partly by Asbury's influence; became Asbury's lifelong friend and counsellor; organized "The United Brethren in Christ," or the German Methodists; became, with Martin Boehm, father of Henry Boehm, one of its first bishops, in 1800, after the first Conference in 1789; and died in 1813 in the eighty-eighth year of his age. By his adverse criticism he saved Asbury from publishing a volume of inelegant verse — Asbury did not escape the verse-making malady — he heeded, and burned the manuscript.¹ The Church Otterbein founded shows the Episcopal features of Asbury's Methodism, though liberalized in after years. Jesse Lee was converted in Virginia and Freeborn Garrettson in Maryland this year. Asbury labored in and about Baltimore. Rankin, from New York, was exercising discipline, and having incipient trouble with the sons of the Revolution which impended. Five chapels were built or building, notably the two in Baltimore. As the Conference year closed, under the call of Rankin the scattered itinerants wended their way toward Philadelphia.

¹ Baltimore *Christian Advocate*, Dr. T. E. Bond, Jr., editor.

CHAPTER XVIII

Conference of 1774 — More English missionaries — Gough and Perry Hall — Conference of 1775 — The Revolution — Council of preachers to act in Asbury's absence in seclusion at Judge White's — Memorable preachers from 1774 to 1779 — Asbury under suspicion — His motives in hiding excusable, but had effect on the native-born preachers — Their persecution — Asbury as a student; his habits and culture — A high churchman, and to what it led him — The questionable act of Church organization in 1784.

THE second Annual Conference met in Philadelphia at St. George's, May 25, 1774, and continued four days. Seven preachers were admitted to trial, namely, William Duke, Daniel Ruff, Edward Dromgoole, Isaac Rollins, Robert Lindsay, and Samuel Spragg.

Watters, Whitworth, Yearbry, Gatch, and Ebert were received into full connection. This Conference adopted the question, "Are there any objections to any of the preachers? *Answer.* They were examined one by one." This scrutiny into moral and official character was a marked feature of the Conferences ever afterward. Space will not permit a continued republication of the Plans of Appointments. Those who are curious can find them in the published Minutes as heretofore described. Mention is made that under Rankin the changes during the year were made more frequent, the city preachers every three months, and those in the country every six months. Stevens says: "The system speedily killed off such as were weak in body, and drove off such as were feeble in character; the remnant were the 'giants of those days,' morally, very often intellectually, and, to a notable extent, physically." The Conference now numbered seventeen, and, despite the truthful words of Stevens, there were always plenty of young men applying for admission, drawn not by the system, but by the zeal engendered of their heart religion, a tongue of fire to tell the story of redeeming love.

Nearly 1000 members had been added to the societies the past year, a total of 2073, two-thirds of them were in Maryland and Virginia. Asbury hastened to New York, — his appointment, — and at once set to work, but, worn out with disease, he was com-

pelled to succumb and take to his bed. His spirit's glowing wheel was consuming his life by its revolutionary friction.

In November two more missionaries were sent over by Wesley, James Dempster and Martin Rodda, accompanied by William Glendenning as a volunteer. Asbury was relieved and went southward. The first was an educated man, but married and retired, joining the Presbyterians. Disparaging allusions are made to him by the early annalists, but without reason.

The second soon exhibited such imprudent loyalty to the Crown that he was compelled to escape to the British fleet, and thence to England, in 1777. The third remained in the Conference until 1786, when he retired under a cloud. He travelled mostly in Virginia, and from the first appears to have allied himself with the opponents of Asbury's Episcopal views, and he complains of him as attempting to undermine his authority. He was a troubler in Israel. Jesse Lee insists that he was not of sound mind, though his name is printed in the Minutes second to Asbury among the elders for 1784, and he had regular work. He receives scant courtesy from the annalists, and was probably too independent and eccentric for the military *régime* of the leaders. The revolutionary storm was brewing, and Rankin and the English preachers who were still in the country prognosticated evil for the colonies, and thus paved the way for their retirement. Asbury, more discreet and far-seeing, labored in Baltimore and the surrounding country; and this leads to a notable event in Methodist history.

There resided about twelve miles from the city in princely style, Henry Dorsey Gough and family. He was computed to be worth \$300,000 in landed estate and servants. His wife had become converted, and he went to hear Asbury preach. He, too, was soundly converted, and at once Perry Hall, his homestead, was a retreat for the preachers and a preaching-place; a chapel was built, being the first in America with a bell. He afterward fell away under the temptations of his high social position, but was reclaimed by Asbury, and died in the faith in 1808, while the General Conference was in session in Baltimore. Asbury was with him and preached the funeral sermon, and a number of the members attended. His household continued faithful to Methodism long after, and Asbury often sojourned with them for physical repair and spiritual refreshment.

The revival work of those days and long after was attended with much excitement and vociferation. Jesse Lee, speaking of

a quarterly meeting in Virginia, says, "I left them about the setting of the sun, and at that time their prayers and cries might be heard a mile off."¹ The disaffection in the South over the stringent regulations of Rankin and Asbury against administering the ordinances was growing with the American feeling of independence, the sentiments and principles of the one fostering those of the other. It was shared by nearly all of the native-born preachers and the people. It was rampant in the South, and serious consequences grew out of the persistent resistance of Asbury to it in after days.

The third Annual Conference convened in Philadelphia, May 17, 1775. There had been another increase of over 1000 members. Robert Lindsay, John Copper, and William Glendenning were received on trial. A general fast for the prosperity of the work and the peace of America was ordered for the 18th of July. The printed Minutes of these Conferences do not cover more for each than a page and a half of a twelvemo volume. The Revolutionary War had broken out a month before at Concord and Lexington, and the Colonial Congress met in Philadelphia a few months later. Asbury was appointed to Norfolk, Va., and he at once set out for his new field. Here, and in Portsmouth and Brunswick, he labored through the year. The fourth Annual Conference was held in Baltimore, May 21, 1776, in the Lovely Lane chapel, now completed. This year there was an increase of 1800 members, the total being 4921. Among the notable preachers received on trial were Francis Poythress and Freeborn Garrettson. Asbury started for the Conference, but was taken ill and did not reach it. He was appointed to Baltimore. Twenty-five itinerants were enrolled. The fifth Annual Conference was held on Deer Creek in Harford County, Md., May 20, 1777. John Dickins, afterward prominent, was among the fourteen received. There was a gain of 2000 members for the year, an increase of one-third, so marvellously did the work prosper amid the strifes and turmoils and hinderances of war.

The Conference took a precautionary step. Rankin and Shadford had announced their purpose to return to England, and even Asbury for a time seemed shaken, so much so that the Conference selected Watters, Gatch, Dromgoole, Ruff, and Glendenning as a committee to act in the place of the General Assistant. The matter of administering the ordinances was again discussed, as it would not down, and the disposition to Presbyterianize the body

¹ Lee's "History," p. 56.

grew apace. Two things alone kept them from action, veneration for the counsels of Wesley and the indefatigable opposition of Asbury. It so happened, providentially the advocates of the Episcopal system will hold, that, when such a crisis arrived, Asbury, by his correspondence, could fortify his position with a letter from Wesley, and for the time deferred action. Watters, writing from this Conference, says, "In fact, we considered ourselves, at this time, as belonging to the Church of England." The parting of the preachers at this Conference was an affecting scene. The sixth Annual Conference met at Leesburg, Va., May 19, 1778. All the English preachers, save Asbury, had returned, and he was in seclusion at Judge White's in Delaware. The Conference was presided over by William Watters, the oldest native itinerant. He was not yet twenty-seven years of age. Nine preachers were admitted on trial, among them James O'Kelly, Richard Ivy, and Henry Willis. The sacramental question was once more postponed. Asbury's name does not even appear in the printed minutes. The membership fell off about 900, owing to the ravages of the war, specially in the North. The next Conference was appointed for Brokenback chapel,¹ Fluvanna County, Va., May 18, 1779. It marks a crisis in the history of early Methodism and must receive special attention. Before doing so, it seems proper to embalm some of the precious names and labors of these long-suffering preachers.

During the five years from 1774 to 1779, as the Revolution culminated and ran its course, space would fail to narrate these sufferings and labors. Stevens devotes 150 pages to this phase of the subject, and to him readers are commendatorily referred. America was already an asylum for the oppressed religiously as well as civilly. Many refugees were prominent in the colonies, while the native-born felt the thrill of free air and independent surroundings. Stevens says aptly, "The hierarchy of Great Britain was to them a form of anti-Christ, and it was an integral part of its constitution." The people had received a military education through the two French and Indian wars. They had taken up arms against the mother country, it may be almost literally said, for an idea. They had been educated to self-government and had reached the point when they could not and would not suffer any infringement of their civil rights; while in religion they spurned all trammels upon

¹ Stevens invariably speaks of it as "Brockenback," but assigns no reason for it. Perhaps typographical.

their conscience and freedom. No environment could have been more inauspicious for a Methodist hierarchy, yet the first steps which led to it had been already taken and its consummation will presently occupy our attention. The Stamp Act was repealed, as it could not be enforced, with other objectionable legislation for the colonies by the home government; only the duty on tea remained; but as this involved the principle, it was resisted in the overt acts of the burning of the *Peggy Stewart* in the harbor of Annapolis, Md., with its cargo of tea, not by men disguised as Indians, as in the Boston tea-party, but the owner himself was compelled to fire his ship. This event took place October 19, 1772, thus antedating the Boston affair, which took place December 15, 1773. As already noticed, the Tory party was largely American and sincere in their convictions, just as sincere as in after days Asbury was, and those who coöperated with him, in a polity for the Methodists, utterly incongruous with all the principles of government in which they were educated and for the maintenance of which they staked "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor." Sneathen, whose brilliant and analytical mind looked into the seeds of things, luminously exhibits the parallel: "Our brethren are no doubt quite serious in believing that lay-delegates will lead to a change in all the rules of discipline, because they cannot conceive how the form of discipline can be maintained without exclusive power in travelling preachers. Their sincerity, however, is equalled by that of the opposers of our national independence, who believed that with the loss of kingly power the common law of England would be lost forever. They, too, could not conceive how laws which had been administered for hundreds of years in the name of the king could be respected and enforced for their own sakes. It was not the majesty of the laws which they revered so much as the majesty of the king. The tendency of all absolute principles of government is to make the ministers of justice more fearful than justice itself." Entertaining such opinions, the Anglo-American clergy had fled the country for the most part; Jarrett in Virginia and a few others were exalted exceptions. The English missionaries of Wesley followed them, in their loyalty to the king. Some of them acted and talked after a manner which prejudiced the native mind against the whole confraternity, so that, like the Tories, they were watched and put under disability. George Shadford was the last to leave. He and Asbury, quite bosom friends, conferred and prayed together over it, and differing

answers came to each, as they professed. Asbury said, "If you are called to go, I am called to stay; so here we must part." They parted to meet no more.

Meantime Asbury came under suspicion; for while he was discreet and did not meddle with the politics of the country, yet the test oath was too much for him, as it conditioned that the subscriber to it would, if called on, take up arms in defence of the country. He did what he conscientiously could to conciliate public opinion. Finding that he could best conform to the conditions of citizenship offered in Delaware, he had himself registered as a citizen of that colony, or state. He was offered a quiet settlement over an Episcopal church, but answered: "I will do nothing that shall separate me from my brethren. I hope to live and die a Methodist." In March, 1778, the patrol became so rigid that Asbury took refuge with Judge White of Kent County, Del.¹ On the 2d of April the light-horse seized the judge and bore him away from his wife and children. Asbury again fled and found refuge in the neighborhood. He says, "I lay in a swamp until sundown, and was then kindly taken in by a friend." About a month afterward he ventured back to Judge White's, who after five weeks' detention was released, the charge against him being that he was a Methodist. From Judge White's he was able to keep up a surreptitious correspondence with some of the preachers, and covert visits were paid to him. During this time he formed the acquaintance of Judge Barratt and Richard Bassett, both names figuring conspicuously in early Methodism. For a year he did not venture far from his retreat. The governor of Delaware became friendly to him, and a letter he had written to Rankin about 1777 became known, in which he expressed the opinion that the outcome of the war would be the independence of the colonies, served him a good purpose in securing him wider liberty to preach.

¹ "History of the Rise of Methodism in America from 1736 to 1785," 434 pp. 12mo. Cloth. 1859. By John Lednum, of the Philadelphia Conference. A copy in the Congressional Library, Washington, D. C. On page 210 he freely criticises Asbury's conduct for this hiding at Judge White's. Indeed, despite all that has been said to extenuate it, nothing is satisfactory but the fact that at this time, and for some years after, he was a thorough English Tory. Yet as late as 1885, Bishop Harris, of the M. E. Church, avers as though there was no room for question — "Mr. Asbury, who warmly espoused the cause of the colonies, and identified his fortunes with his flock in the wilderness." It is in this way that history is manufactured and falsified. See page 9, "The Relation of the Episcopacy to the General Conference," by the late Bishop W. L. Harris, D.D., LL.D. New York, Hunt & Eaton, 1888. 12mo. 96 pp. Cloth.

Except the name of Perry Hall no retreats for Asbury are so frequently mentioned in his Journal as Bassett's princely home at Bohemia Manor, and Barratt's, on which the chapel of that name was built, famous for the meeting of Coke and Asbury in 1784. Asbury's stately manners and wide intelligence gave him influence with not a few families of social distinction, which gave to the Methodism of the day more commanding position than it first possessed. To offset these mollifying influences, Wesley about this time, issued and sent to America his "Calm Address to the Colonies," in which the most radical monarchical sentiments were avowed, and exasperated the Americans. Asbury deprecated this intermeddling of Wesley in the politics of the country. Not a few writers from time to time have inveighed against Asbury for his concealment at Judge White's, as reflecting upon his courage and impugning his motives. The writer cannot join them. He acted as a conscientious Christian man of his avowed sentiments might be expected to act. The deprecatory thing about his course was the effect it seemed to have upon other preachers of the native-born stock in refusing to take the test oath, leading to their arrest, imprisonment, maltreatment, and surcease of usefulness. It is no wonder, on the other hand, that the Revolutionists could not excuse them.¹ The light they had was reflected during the Civil War, from 1861-66. Test oaths of the most binding nature were applied to all who were suspected as out of full sympathy for the preservation of the Union. In the North, not even ministers were exempt from the draft. Men who took the position as to American independence, such as Asbury and other of the preachers, were dealt with with greater severity. Jonathan Forrest and William Wren were arrested at Annapolis, Md., with some others and committed to jail. In Queen Anne County Joseph Hartley was bound over in £500 not to preach in the county. Freeborn Garrettson was beaten with a stick by one of the county judges, pursued on horseback, and nearly killed. Hartley was also whipped in Talbot County and imprisoned. Caleb Peddicord was whipped and bore the scars to his grave. Isham Tatum of South Carolina must be mentioned as a local preacher of renown. Francis Poythress, already named, was a distinguished character of early

¹ Guirey states that from 1776 to 1780 not a few of the deeds of American Methodist chapels were destroyed to prevent seizure by the Revolutionists as British property. He gives Adam Cloud of the early itinerants as his authority. See p. 269.

Methodism. He was a Virginian, and held in the highest esteem by Asbury for his labors in Virginia, Carolina, Maryland, and Kentucky. He was designated by Asbury for a superintendent, or bishop to peer with himself, in 1797, and would have been elected probably, but for the fact that the preachers took the ground that it was not competent for a yearly Conference to elect bishops. It illustrates how little Asbury cared for precedents or constructions, if his will could be gratified. Poythress died insane. Jesse Lee was a giant in those days, and did for New England Methodism, as elsewhere, an immortal work. Richard Webster and John Watters were local leaders in their day, and Maryland owes much to them. Dromgoole lived to an old age, and, though he never changed his church relations, was in sympathy with O'Kelly and the later Reformers, whose day he lived to see.¹ Dickins was a leader in the southern movement to liberalize Methodism, but afterward became Book Agent in Philadelphia and, as will be seen in not a few other cases, official position made a change in his sentiments. Thomas Ware labored for fifty years, and his sketches of his life and travels are the best contributions to early Methodist history. John Tunnell was a saintly man of great gifts, who, in East Tennessee and the far West, did pioneer work for thirteen years. He died July, 1790,

¹ In the *Methodist Protestant* of May 22, 1847, there is a reprint of a letter addressed to W. L. Mackensie, Esq., of New York, under date of June 21, 1844, from General George C. Dromgoole, of Virginia, a son of Rev. Edward Dromgoole, who was born in Ireland, located, after emigration to this country, in Philadelphia, converted under the earliest Methodist preaching, and in 1774 became leader of the first class ever organized in America. He subsequently united with the Methodists as an itinerant, labored principally in Virginia, and finally settled in Brunswick County, where he died in 1835 in the eighty-fourth year of his age. In the beginning of the Revolutionary War, he promptly took the oath of allegiance before his friend, Robert Jones, magistrate in Sussex County, Va., and ever afterward carried with him a certificate of the fact, so that he travelled wherever he wished entirely unmolested by the American patrol. When the Declaration of Independence was made he read the instrument from the court-house steps to a large company in Halifax County, Va., and exhibited his attachment to his adopted country in every proper way. It was in broad contrast with the course of Bishop Asbury, who refused to take the oath, and in consequence felt it expedient to retire into seclusion at his friend's, Judge White, who was also a Tory.. Dr. Atkinson, in his "Centennial History of Methodism," feels called upon to rebut the statement that Edward Dromgoole united in his old age with the Reformers of 1827-30, and adduces a letter from one of his sons to this effect. It is, no doubt, technically correct that he never withdrew from the old Church, but there is evidence that he attended and preached at a Reform camp-meeting in Virginia, and that a son was a minister of the new Church, two conditions which can be accounted for on the supposition only that his sympathies were with the Reformers.

and Asbury preached his funeral sermon. William Gill, his bosom friend, was another great light of the day. The famous Dr. Rush of Philadelphia pronounced him "the greatest divine I have ever heard." He died in Chestertown, Md., but his grave is unmarked, says Atkinson in his "Memorials." His last words were, "All is well," and he closed his own eyes as he expired. Reuben Ellis of North Carolina was among the leaders, with few as his equal. Le Roy Cole, a Virginian, for fifty years ranked high, lived to 1830, nearly eighty-one years old. John Littlejohn was an Englishman of superior parts, who settled in Virginia, served the Church for sixty years, and died in 1836. All these were men who would rank with the ablest of ministers in this day. Richard Ivy must be added to this roll of the worthy. As a preacher he was known from New Jersey to Georgia, and after eighteen years of service retired to care for his aged mother in 1794, and died in peace in 1795. John Major was known as the "weeping prophet," owing to his pathetic eloquence, which kept his congregations in tears. Henry Willis, now scarcely remembered, is a name history will not suffer to die. After thirty years' labor he died in 1808 at Pipe Creek, Md., and Asbury, on visiting his grave, apostrophized: "Henry Willis! Ah, when shall I look upon thy like again! Rest, man of God!" James O'Kelly needs but to be named, as his prominence will call shortly for special notice. As the memory of these noble men fades away the printed page must preserve Ruff, Boyer, Baxter, Mair, Bruce, and others whose record is on high. They were nearly all native-born south of Pennsylvania, as the strength of Methodism was in Maryland and Virginia, and the pertinence of this fact will presently be recognized as the Conference of 1779 comes to be considered.

Before recording its eventful transactions, observation must be made of its principal actor, Francis Asbury, as a student. Studious in his early manhood, as has been found, when he came to America and the vision of future greatness loomed up before him with the intimation that comes to most men of genius, he gave himself to the cultivation of his naturally strong mind with unflagging diligence. One thing alone seemed to bias him in his choice of reading, — his hierarchal views of church government. He became fixed in these principles by careful reading and copying of Bishop Potter's work, a pronounced successionist and high churchman. The Bible he mastered not in English only, but fluently read it in both Hebrew and Greek. He stopped a night

with a Hebrew in his early American ministry that he might have the advantage of Hebraic learning from him, and he expresses his gratification. Otherwise his reading was almost omnivorous, most of all along lines defensive of his preconceived opinions. There is no note, however, that in his travels he ever picked up a stray volume of Shakespeare for perusal, and in this he was unlike his immortal exemplar, John Wesley, in whose library a well-thumbed and carefully annotated volume of the poet of nature was found by an unlettered preacher, and who, shocked by the profanation of the place by the book, incontinently destroyed it, or otherwise the world might have had the benefit of Wesley's analytical mind on this classic production. So soon as Asbury reached a harbor after a day's travel and found time to open his saddle-pockets, social courtesies were brief; he sat down to read and write. His Journal is full of the records of books being read; and in later years, when he took the care of all the chapels on him and the whole boundless continent was his circuit, it was one of his acute methods of keeping himself in authority, and preserving his magnetic touch with the preachers and a few leading laymen, by incessant letter-writing, much of it necessarily official; but more of it outreaching antennæ. He devoured theology and history, his mind was stored with incidents, and he was a ready and instructive conversationist when he thought it timely to communicate, and he was equally at home and self-possessed in all grades of society. It is computed that he wrote an average of a thousand letters a year. This correspondence took in, specially after the English preachers retired, Wesley and Shadford, and a few others, not to name his mother, early widowed and in part dependent on him for support, a filial obligation he never neglected. For while he accepted celibacy rather than be hampered in his control of a continent, he gallantly begs the pardon of the sex, in one place in his Journal, for not marrying; and after the decease of his mother he helped for long years the widow of John Dickins, on the principle, it is said, that every man ought to do something toward the support of one woman. Reference has been made to his inflexible views of Episcopacy and how early it absorbed his head, heart, and conscience. In February, 1775, this note occurs in his Journal: "I received a letter from Miss G. (Gilbert) at Antigua (West Indies), in which she informs me that Mr. G. (Gilbert), her father and lay-missionary, was going away; and as there are about three hundred members in society, she entreats me to go and labor amongst them.

And as Mr. Wesley has given his consent, I feel inclined to go and take one of the young men with me. But there is one obstacle in the way — the administration of the ordinances. It is possible to get the ordination of a presbytery, but this would be incompatible with Methodism: which would be an effectual bar in my way.”¹ This suggestive note does not seem to have been cited by any other historian, and for the reason that it makes plain that to Asbury Methodism was not primarily a self-witnessing doctrine and a personal spiritual life, as Wesley affirmed, — though he emphasized these, — as it was a sect, a Church, with a ministry of apostolical succession, as Wesley denied; and he will be found bending all his energies to this end, and finally, with Dr. Coke as coadjutor, accomplishing it, shaving closely the very edges of the questionable, to put it mildly, in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The initial act of this questionable type will demand attention in the transactions of the dual Conference of 1779, as it shall open a new chapter of this History.

¹ “Journal,” Vol. I. p. 145.

CHAPTER XIX

The regular Conference at Brokenback chapel, Fluvanna County, Va., May, 1779 — Determination to Presbyterianize the body in polity — Asbury's factional conference a month in advance at Judge White's in Delaware, with eleven preachers in attendance — Extracts from the minutes of both conferences and the ground of the contentions between them, with new facts incorporated, making it the fullest account ever presented in any history — How Asbury, the strategist, finally prevailed through the weakening of Gatch — Silence of the printed minutes as to the Brokenback Conference by suppression of the facts by Asbury and Coke in 1795 — Reunion of the bodies in May, 1781 — Asbury tells how he circumvented the Virginia brethren.

It has been found that the Leesburg Conference of 1778 was presided over by William Watters, Asbury being in duress at Judge White's in Delaware. Though but twenty-seven years of age, he was the chairman of the commission of five which the previous session had appointed, and whose names have been already given, to manage the affairs of the Methodist Societies. The Leesburg Conference adjourned, to meet at the Brokenback chapel in Fluvanna County, Va., May 18, 1779. It was the only regular Conference. They had adjourned with the understanding that the matter of the ordinances and ordination should receive final disposition at this Conference, and it was also known that it was about settled that the figment of episcopacy and servile dependence upon the clergy of the now scattered and practically disestablished National Church of England on American soil should be disowned. Asbury was fully acquainted with these purposes and the temper of the large majority of the preachers in their support. To circumvent them he laid under contribution all his strategic resources, and they were fully employed. The situation was critical, and no one was more keenly alive to it than Asbury. Rankin had retired, thus leaving the societies without a head of Wesley's appointment. Asbury had never presided at a Conference¹ of which record is made in the printed Minutes.

¹ Stevens says, "During the administration of Rankin, Asbury was entirely subordinate to his authority, and sometimes grievously humiliated by it. Rankin presided at all the annual conferences, and made out all the appointments, some-

No successor was formally appointed to Rankin until 1784. It will be seen how Asbury reasserted his former position as General Assistant by assumption of its powers through the force of his personal character. One thing remained to him: in opposing the plans of the Fluvanna preachers he was in line with Wesley's purpose not to separate from the National Church, and he used this argument with the hand of a master. He at once put himself in letter-link connection with such of the preachers north of the Potomac (for all south of it were dissentients) as would yield to the cogency of this argument, and thus brought to his succor several of the native American preachers who, but for it, would on general principles have also sided with the Fluvanna men. Among these were Watters, Garrettson, Peddicord, Gill, and Ruff. He suggested April 28, 1779, as a time for meeting him at Judge White's for conference. Besides those named, six others found their way to Asbury's place of seclusion.¹

Once within the magic circle of his personal presence, he largely moulded them at will. What they did, so far as is known, is on record in the minutes of two printed pages. Reviewing them in reverse order, as probably the actual one, the question was put, "Ought not brother Asbury to act as General Assistant in America?" *Answer*, "He ought: first, on account of his age; second, because originally appointed by Mr. Wesley; third, because joined with Messrs. Rankin and Shadford by express order from Mr. Wesley." The fact of history is that Shadford was not sent as a co-general assistant with Rankin. The next question was: "How far shall his power extend?" *Answer*, "On hearing every preacher for and against what is in debate, the right of determination shall rest with him according to the minutes."²

times appointing Asbury to circuits directly against his will. Asbury had never presided at an annual Conference recorded in the minutes." Asbury in this gave evidence, if any were needed, of his fitness to control on the well-known principle, he alone is fit to command who has first learned to obey. And he had that rare patience and diplomatic skill which assured him of a final advantage over less discreet men, like Rankin, and afterward O'Kelly.

¹ Guirey gives the names of all who were present at the 1779 Asbury Conference: Freeborn Garrettson, Jos. Hartley, William Glendenning, Daniel Ruff, Jos. Cromwell, Thomas S. Chew, Thomas M'Clure, Caleb B. Peddicord, John Cooper, William Gill, and William Watters, making, with Francis Asbury, twelve. The information is important. Jennings, in his "Exposition," gives the full list, probably from Guirey. See p. 124.

² That is Wesley's rule in the English Minutes.

Thus they clothed him with the plenary authority of Wesley himself, and he continued to exercise it for years afterward. And so these twelve men, inclusive of Asbury, by a high-handed act repudiated the action of the two prior regular Conferences. Some farther questions were: "Shall we guard against a separation from the Church, directly or indirectly?" *Answer*, "By all means." This to nullify any action the Fluvanna Conference might take, under this Asburian assumption of authority. "Why was the Delaware Conference held? For the convenience of the preachers in the northern stations, that we all might have an opportunity of meeting in Conference, it being inadvisable for brother Asbury and brother Ruff, with some others, to attend in Virginia; it is considered also as preparatory to the Conference in Virginia. Our sentiments to be given in by brother Watters." It must be admitted it was a guileful answer, with scarcely a defensible point in it, except as sending Watters as a messenger to bear to the regular Conference the sentiments of this secedent body of Methodist preachers. "Who of the preachers are willing to take the station this Conference shall place them in, and continue till next Conference?" The twelve, inclusive of Asbury, answered affirmatively. Thus they ignored the Fluvanna Conference utterly in the vital matter of the appointments. It was a step farther than the assumption that they were the Conference; it repudiated the appointing power of any other. Asbury in his Journal makes note of these things only to tell, "We had much love, prayer, and harmony," and fear of the separation of the southern brethren led to the message, with Watters as the messenger. "We wrote them a soft, healing epistle." Had that letter been preserved, it would exhibit Asbury at his best as a peacemaker, provided his will and way be accepted. He gives one fact not in the printed Minutes: "We appointed our next Conference to be held in Baltimore town, the last Tuesday in April next."

Thus it is seen that no half-way measures were proposed. May 3, 1779, he writes in his Journal: "To-day I wrote to John Dickins, to Philip Gatch, Edward Dromgoole, and William Glendenning, urging them, if possible, to prevent a separation among the preachers in the South, that is, Virginia and North Carolina. And I entertain great hopes that the breach will be healed; if not, the consequences may be bad." Significant words! There is something leonine in his attitude. Himself and eleven others separate from the regular Conference and then put the stigma of separation upon it. But he knew he occupied the coign of

vantage,—he had them on the hip. Wesley would side with him so soon as he could be heard from, and so it proved. It boots nothing in the present emergency that only five years after this time, he and Dr. Coke concoct a plan of separation not only from the Church, but a few years later separate from Wesley also; and his authority is put at defiance, just as now the regular Conference is put at defiance. Bangs, with that bias which leads him to excuse and justify everything that Asbury did, says, with a reckless disregard of facts as to the Asburian Conference at Judge White's: "Although this was considered as 'a preparatory conference,' yet, if we take into consideration that the one afterward held in the absence of the general assistant at the Broken-back church in Virginia, we shall see good reason for allowing that this, which was held under the presidency of Mr. Asbury, was the *regular* conference, and hence their acts and doings are to be considered valid."¹ Such a position is too much for the native candor and historic accuracy of Stevens. He attacks and refutes it utterly. A few citations will suffice to show his pronounced opinion: "They had the right to provide the divinely enjoined ordinances of religion for themselves and their children, and they proceeded to do so by orderly and solemn forms. If at Fluvanna they were revolvers, seceders, then it must be acknowledged that American Methodism as a whole must bear this reproach, for the proceedings of that session not only represented a majority of the circuits, preachers, and people, but were enacted in the legal assembly of the Church for the year, and by a legal majority of its recognized legislators. Nor can we accuse them of impatience. For at least six years the question had been pending, and they conceding to their opponents. . . . But assuredly these are not reasons why such faithful men, including Philip Gatch, John Dickins, Nelson Reed, Reuben Ellis, John Major, Henry Willis, Francis Poythress, and others as eminent, should be represented, however indirectly, as they have hitherto been by some of our authorities, as practically revolvers and disturbers of the Church. They were, as we have seen, in every legal sense the Church itself. Historic impartiality requires this vindication of their memory. It is requisite not only for their memory, but also, as will hereafter be seen, for a rectification of a grave defect in the official records of the denomination."² He makes an exhaustive vindication of the Fluvanna Conference,

¹ Bangs's "History M. E. Church," Vol. I. p. 128.

² Stevens's "History," Vol. II. pp. 56-66.

with contemporary references, to which those are referred who may have any doubt of his position and that of this writer.

Undeterred and unawed by the proceedings of Asbury and those who conferred with him, the regular Conference was held as appointed. The printed Minutes are as brief as those of Asbury's Conference, but they alone furnish the statistics and the full Plan of Appointments. Philip Gatch was elected to preside. The whole number of preachers was 44, though these minutes say 49, from the error of twice counting those on two Maryland circuits. It was a gain of 14. The circuits numbered 20, a gain of 5. Philadelphia, Chester, and Frederick reappear, omitted the year before on account of the interruptions of the war. The members reported are 8577, a gain of 2482. Numerically, three-fifths of them were within the territory south of the Potomac, as were all the commissioners, save one. For the outcome of the sacramental controversy Stevens says history is indebted to Gatch's manuscript Journal of the proceedings. The printed Minutes take no note of it whatever. It will be remembered that these printed Minutes of 1795 were revised by the bishops, Asbury and Coke, and they included or left out just what they pleased, as John Dickins, the first book agent, who had become a pervert to the views he held in 1778-79, did their bidding.¹ This garbling of minutes and suppression of facts is a frequent occurrence, as will be seen as advance is made into the secret things of Methodist Episcopal organization.² At this session they took action. Their justification was that "the Episcopal establishment is now dissolved in this country, and therefore in almost all our circuits the members are without the ordinances." They therefore appointed Gatch, Foster, Cole, and Ellis "a Presbytery," first, to administer the ordinances them-

¹ Guirey gave a satirizing couplet of the times reproaching Dickins for his change of front.

Who would not blush, if such a man there be, —
Who would not weep, if John Dickins were he.

² Guirey states that in 1781 the following minute was passed by the Asbury Conference against the Fluvanna brethren, "If any of the preachers administer the ordinances they may be borne with a year, but if any of the members receive them from the preachers they shall be expelled immediately." It anticipated — this high-handed proceeding — the "Gag Law," of 1796, used relentlessly against Reformers ever afterward, by which they were thrown out of this branch of the visible Church, notwithstanding their unimpeachable moral characters! You look, however, in vain for this minute in those published by Dickins in 1795. By that time Ashury and Coke found it expedient to suppress it from history; but these arbitrary and unchristian rulings find the light, as in this instance, through other sources. See p. 287 of Guirey's "History."

selves; second, to authorize any other preacher, or preachers, approved by them, by the form of laying on of hands. Some of the questions and answers were: "What is to be observed as touching the administration of the ordinances, and to whom shall they be administered? To those who are under our care and discipline. Shall we re-baptize any under our care? No. What mode shall we adopt for the administration of baptism? Either sprinkling or plunging, as the parents or adults may choose. What ceremony shall be used in the administration? Let it be according to our Lord's commandment, Matt. xxviii. 19, short and extempore. Shall the sign of the cross be used? No. Who shall receive the charge of the child after baptism for future instruction? The parent or person having the care of the child, with advice from the preacher. What mode shall be adopted for the administration of the Lord's Supper? Kneeling is thought the most proper, but in case of conscience may be left to the choice of the communicant. What ceremony shall be observed in this ordinance? After singing, prayer, and exhortation, the preacher shall deliver the bread, saying, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc., after the Church order.'"

It is observable that though this Conference was outlawed by Asbury, these regulations were found so sensible, broad, and scriptural that they remain to this day parts of the Discipline except that the Prayer Book forms, which these liberal-minded preachers practically rejected, were incorporated when Mr. Wesley's Sunday Service for the American Methodists was brought over by Dr. Coke and accepted by the Christmas Conference of 1784. The plan of appointments (there is no information as to the manner of making it, whether by Gatch or the Commission) covered the whole field except Delaware and points north of Maryland. Asbury's name does not appear in the printed Minutes at all, as it had not in the two previous Conferences. The appointments for Baltimore and Frederick were the same in both bodies. The vote being taken on the sacramental question, it was carried by a vote of eighteen in the affirmative. Watters, the only member who attended both sessions, says, "A few did not agree" with the affirmative. It is due to Watters to record in passing that he "received no notice of the Asbury Conference, but hearing of it indirectly, determined if possible to get there, though in a weak state of health, in order that he might persuade Asbury to attend the regularly appointed Conference."¹ He was President

¹ Watters's "Life," p. 72.

of the Leesburg Conference of 1778, and there is little doubt that he was at the time in sympathy with the Fluvanna brethren. Freeborn Garrettson, who was also at the Asbury Conference, in his semi-centennial sermon admits that Fluvanna was the regular Conference. So that, of the eleven preachers who attended, it is far from conclusive that they did so because they approved his proceedings, but, once under Asbury's magnetic influence and persuasive reasoning, they agreed to his proposals.

Before the Conference at Fluvanna adjourned, the "presbytery" before noted ordained one another, and then all of the preachers but the few who did not agree. As Watters attended Asbury's Conference from Fairfax County, Va., as he tells, in order to persuade him to go to the regular Conference, it would seem that he might have done so if he had wished, as it must have been as easy and as free from risk for Asbury to find the Fluvanna Conference as it was for the invited brethren to find him, thus establishing a probability that, foreseeing that he would be overborne by the action at Fluvanna, he determined not to attend, but call in anticipation an irregular conference to do his will. To use a vulgar illustration, "He took the bit in his teeth." Philip Gatch had retired in 1777, being one of the few married men, but such was the respect in which he was held that he was elected to preside over the Conference of 1779. That he was liberal in his sentiments, one proof is in the fact that to him the laity of the societies were indebted for a change in the mode of trial. Stevens says, "The Church owes to him one of its most momentous legislative measures: the trial of accused members by committees in place of the previous clerical power of excommunication." The Fluvanna Conference adjourned, to meet at Manakintown, Powhatan County, Va., May 8, 1780. Asbury records in his Journal, under date July 30, 1779: "I received the minutes of the Virginia Conference, by which I learn the preachers there effected a lame separation from the Episcopal Church, that will last about a year. I pity them; Satan has a desire to have us that he may sift us as wheat." The irony is biting, and it stands with numerous other deliverances which prove that this good man was after all severely human. Of such references the candid Stevens says: "Asbury's judgment was always severe in such cases. His own iron conscientiousness, and his rigorous habits of 'discipline,' led him to condemn deviations from 'order' as dangerous, if not disastrous sins; and many of his allusions to men whose opinions disagreed with his

own, or whose infirmities clouded their last days, require no little qualification from the charity that 'hopeth all things.' "

From the silence of the annalists of these early days it must not be inferred that the two parties into which the societies and the preachers were now divided did not press their divergent views of Conference polity, the one under the lead of Gatch, unfortunately for the cause now retired, and for this reason not so influential as he would have been, supported by Poythress, Ivy, Willis, Dickins, Yeargan, O'Kelly, Tatum, Gill, Cole, Glendenning, Reed, Major, Tunnell, Ellis, as well as Watters and others, to the number of nearly thirty out of the forty-four preachers, paving the way for a Presbyterian system; while Asbury, with the less hearty support of some dozen American preachers, Ruff, Garrettson, Cooper, Hartley, Chew, Cromwell, and Peddicord being the principals, predetermined that it should be hierarchal, an Episcopacy of three orders, with property rights and ecclesiastical authority exclusively vested in the preachers, as in Wesley's day. The former were equally conscientious, and if they had been equally firm in the maintenance of their convictions, the organic form of American Methodism would have been conformed to the precedents of the New Testament churches, which established the priesthood of the people with a ministry to serve in honor for their works' sake. Had it prevailed, it is patent that the O'Kelly secession of 1792 would have been forestalled, and the societies saved the most disastrous destruction of their unity they ever experienced, until the climax of disunion in 1844. Had it prevailed, a strong probability would be established, as will be seen, that the organic unity of American Methodism would have been preserved, with what advantages denominationally, and what honor as a magnificent section of Christ's earthly fold, the pen of the historian cannot describe. All the Scripture, all the methods of the primitive Church for two centuries, all the logic, all the rights of manhood Christianized, all the political sentiments of the American Methodists and revolutionary people, were on the side of the Fluvanna's large majority of the preachers and three-fifths of the people.

On the other hand, Asbury could cite the talismanic name of Wesley and show letters from him. All but two of the preachers — Dickins, who was an Englishman, and Glendenning, who was a Scotsman — were native-born. It is doubtful whether Wesley had much personal acquaintance with any but Asbury, so that likely he alone kept up a correspondence with the father of

Methodism. There is no doubt that he plied him diligently with letters setting forth his own views and convictions, and as they were in accord with the Wesleyan policy in England, he would have had little difficulty in recommissioning him as General Assistant, but for the counter fact that Rankin, and, strange to say, Shadford, his bosom friend in America, and Boardman, and other returned missionaries of Wesley's, did not make favorable representations of Asbury's disposition and aspirations; so that, distracted, he finally wrote, as his will in the case of the dispute in America, through Dickins, that "they should continue on the old plan until farther directed," as is gleaned from Garrettson's semi-centennial sermon, about the only record extant of these transactions.

Asbury called his Conference to meet in Baltimore, at Lovely Lane chapel, April 24, 1780.¹ He had now come from his retirement after twenty-five months' seclusion, and presided over the Conference. His personal influence brought together twenty-four of the preachers, but not by accessions from the regular Conference. The proceedings, as usual in the printed Minutes, are brief, the most important items as follows: "What preachers do now agree to sit in Conference on the original plan, as Methodists?" The significance of the form of this query will strike every careful reader. It is premonitory of another action. To it the twenty-four, inclusive of Asbury, responded affirmatively, not by voting, let it be underscored, but not dissenting; Asbury records the result. Five were admitted into connection and are counted among the twenty-four. "Shall we continue in close connection with the Church, and press our people to a closer communion with her? Yes. Will this Conference grant the privilege to all the friendly clergy of the Church of England, at the request or desire of the people, to preach or administer the ordinances in our preaching-houses or chapels? Yes." This introduced a new custom and practically made Episcopalians of the societies. "Ought not this Conference to require those preachers who hold slaves to give promises to set them free? Yes. Does this Conference acknowledge that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society;

¹ Guirey tells that this Conference was composed of the eleven named as attending the Delaware 1779 Conference, except M'Clure, who was not in the 1780 meeting, and to the others was added John Hagerty, Richard Garrettson, John Tunnell, and Micajah Dehruler, all young men just received. No other historian gives this complete list.

contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not others should do to us and ours? Do we pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom? Yes." The measure was drastic. Jesse Lee says, "The preachers in this case went too far in their censures." The resolves fell into desuetude; but it is interesting to note with Stevens, "Methodism thus early recorded its protest against negro slavery, anticipating its abolition in Massachusetts by three years; in Rhode Island and Connecticut by four years; the thesis of Clarkson before the University of Cambridge by five years; and the ordinance of Congress against it in the Northwestern Territory by seven years." "Does this whole Conference disapprove the steps our brethren have taken in Virginia? Yes. Do we look upon them no longer as Methodists in connection with Mr. Wesley and us until they come back? Agreed. What must be the condition of our union with our Virginia brethren? To suspend all their administrations for one year, and all meet together in Baltimore."

Thus virtual excommunication was passed by the minority upon the majority; the seceders expel the regular Conference and all their adherents! Asbury saw it was a case of life or death for him, and he administered heroic treatment. He had not yet heard from Wesley, so that these high-handed proceedings were on his own responsibility, and there never was an exigency to which he did not prove himself equal; his iron will bore down all before it. The utter ignoring of the regular Conference found its climax in another query: "What shall the Conference do in case of brother Asbury's death or absence? Meet once a year, and act according to the minutes." It was just what the regular Conference was doing. A faction reconstitute Asbury General Assistant without authorization from Wesley, who alone could appoint, expel the regular Conference and three-fifths of the membership, and coolly declare that they are "no longer Methodists in connection with Mr. Wesley!" "Shall brothers Asbury, Garrettson, and Watters attend the Virginia Conference and inform them of our proceedings in this, and receive their answer? Yes." Watters says that Gatch and Ellis of the Virginia brethren were present as spectators of these memorable transactions in the Baltimore Conference. He acted as mediator between the parties, and while in sympathy with the regular Conference, was willing to almost any terms that would save a final rupture. The printed Minutes contain the plan of appoint-

ments of Asbury, but there is not the slightest reference to the Manakintown regular Conference, except, without acknowledgment of their source, the plan of appointments for Virginia and North Carolina is inserted. By it twenty preachers are stationed. The statistics are given for the whole connection. Membership, 8504, showing a loss of 73. This, in contrast with the gain of 1500 the previous year, cannot be accounted for on the ground solely of the war draft and other such hinderances, but must include the disaffection and falling away of members when the preachers fell out among themselves.

Why do the printed Minutes take no notice of the Manakintown Conference? Undoubtedly they were properly kept and forwarded to the Asbury party, as they had been the previous year. The answer is plain: when the manuscript copies were printed by Dickins, under the supervision of Coke and Asbury, in 1795, the regular Conference is historically blotted out so far as such an act made it possible. Stevens is justly indignant that "it is unmentioned in all our contemporary official documents." Before leaving the Asbury Conference, it must be noted that it placed itself on record as the first American Temperance Society, antedating all other organizations. "Do we disapprove of the practice of distilling grain into liquor? Shall we disown our friends who will not renounce the practice? Yes."

The Manakintown regular Conference met May 28, 1780, according to adjournment. The minutes having been repudiated by the bishops in the edition of 1795, dependence for information is left to Watters and Garrettson and Asbury himself unofficially. All were present who attended the previous year. It is not known who presided, but presumably Gatch, and it is significant that Asbury, though present with Garrettson and Watters, is unrecognized, except as a preacher in the societies. Watters says, in substance, that on reaching the assembled Conference they were invited to be present, and that they "found the brethren as determined as ever in persevering in their newly adopted mode, with the added argument that the Lord had greatly blessed them in it. He tells of the tears and the sobs and the prayers,—effective weapons with tender-hearted preachers. Watters preached, and after waiting two days, "and all hopes of an accommodation failing, we had fixed on turning back in the morning." Finally, "one of their own party in Conference (none of the others being present)—it was probably Gatch, who made this private interview with the Baltimore men — proposed that they would suspend

the ordinances for a year, and in the meantime Wesley " should be written to for a decision, and by that they would abide. Gatch is suggested as making the proposal, for the reason that, at the Baltimore Conference, after withstanding all suggestions of conciliation, he and Ellis looked with favor on the proposal which came from Asbury to suspend the ordinances for a year, and thought it might be made the basis of negotiation.¹ He now brings it forward at Manakintown, and the next day submitted it to the Conference, coupled with a suggestion that Asbury be invited to travel through their circuits, etc. For the time it secured the peace of the faction with the regulars.

They agreed to meet in Baltimore in May, 1781, as a united Conference. For the future unity of American Methodism it was a fatal compromise. Not a compromise, but a surrender. It was the lost opportunity to organize Methodism on a liberal polity. They yielded their convictions for the time under the spell of the magnetic presence of Asbury. As several times already admitted, the argument before the fact as to the resultants is unsatisfactory, but it is now known from the comparative success of the polity likely to have been then inaugurated, in the history of the Methodist Protestant Church, that nothing essential to Methodism would have been sacrificed, and its organic unity in America probably preserved. All the annalists agree in commending them for the Christian spirit of their submission, but it has taken more than one hundred years even partially to undo the results of this surrender. Asbury's account of the Manakintown Conference is characteristic. On his way he preached in Fairfax County, Va., and says: "Prepared some papers for Virginia Conference. I go with a heavy heart, and fear the violence of a party of positive men; Lord, give me wisdom." What a strange conglomerate is even pious human nature. He fears the "violence of a party of positive men." He seems utterly oblivious that himself and his retainers had done all the "violence" as a "positive party." "He found the people full of the ordinances;" he had ridden into the open air of a free American Methodism, and it troubled him much. Arrived at the Conference, "he talked with his countryman, John Dickins, and found him opposed to our continuance in union with the Episcopal Church; brothers Watters and Garrettson tried their men and found them inflexible." So it seems that they had planned to capture the preachers in sections, a plan worthy of such a strategist as Asbury.

¹ Asbury's "Journal," Vol. I. p. 364.

“Brothers Watters, Garrettson, and myself stood back, and being afterward joined by brother Dromgoole, we were desired to come in, and I was permitted to speak.” Permitted to speak! How oddly it sounds! Was he crestfallen? Never a bit. It was his golden opportunity, and he availed of it. “I read Mr. Wesley’s thoughts on separation; showed my private letters of instruction from Mr. Wesley; set before them the sentiments of the Delaware and Baltimore Conferences; read our epistles, and read my letter to brother Gatch, and Dickins’s letter in answer.”

He preaches, and like a wise builder makes no allusion to the differences. Nothing, however, would move them, not even “letters from Mr. Wesley,” chiefly, it may be opined, because they must have been very general and unsatisfactory, as it is known they were up to this point; he was too distracted by different stories to reach a conclusion thus early as to the disputants. “In the afternoon we met; the preachers appeared to be farther off; there had been, I thought, some talking out of doors.” Who did this talking? Likely leading laymen made an outside lobby, for not one of them might put his foot inside a Conference, not a local preacher, not even a preacher on trial. He offers his ultimatum,—suspension of the ordinances for one year and submission of the matter to Wesley’s decision. In an hour they assembled again, and their answer was that “they could not submit to the terms of union.” Asbury turned away to his lodging-place “under the heaviest cloud I ever felt in America.” That his last proposal, seemingly so fair, should be rejected, was too much for him. He fully understood that it was germinal of the whole matter, for he knew full well on general principles what Wesley’s decision would be as to separation from the Church, and it may be that a few of the regular Conference understood it also, and hence their hesitation. James O’Kelly was there, an active participant, and was not easily circumvented. Some years later, when his hot blood was up, he characterized Asbury not very courteously as “a long-headed Englishman,” and so he was in politer phrase. Both parties went to praying, Asbury at his lodging-place, Watters and Garrettson “upstairs where the Conference met,”—the loft probably; the regular Conference was praying, with a result like the prayers of chaplains in confronting armies, with a final construction that the Lord was on the side of the heaviest guns. The next day Asbury came back to take leave of the Conference on his return to the north, but found that “they had been brought to an agreement while I was pray-

ing." The Lord was on his side! Gatch had probably yielded, and with him the Conference, to suspend the ordinances and refer to Wesley, all to meet in Baltimore, in May, 1781. The letter was prepared and sent to Wesley by John Dickins, who from this time is found ranged on the winning side. Asbury, on reaching Petersburg, writes to Wesley, three days afterward. He returns to Maryland with the regular Conference in his saddle-pockets.¹ The Manakintown Conference is no longer a lost chapter in Methodism, but its finality must ever be regarded as its "lost opportunity." What it stood for could not, however, be compromised or throttled in its birth. The principles involved were undying; they live to-day in forms of liberal Methodism, and in a Methodist Episcopacy so revised in structure and so broadened in administration that Asbury would not know it. The Manakintown leaven is so working that nothing can arrest the full acknowledgment of its principles, as will be proven from the crises which have developed from that day to the present, and a near future for the consummation of Snethen's axiom, "I lay it down as an axiom that the religious liberty of a people should never be reduced in principle below the standard of their civil liberty."

¹ Dr. Tigert, though so prejudiced in favor of Asbury, cannot refrain the sensible remark anent him, and it furnishes a key to his whole career as a heady leader: "After all, it is probable that had Asbury agreed with the southern majority in their convictions that the administration of the sacraments was now a necessity, or in the expediency and legitimacy of presbyterial ordinations, he would have found a way to get rid of all constitutional and Wesleyan difficulties." See his "Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism," 1894, p. 101.

CHAPTER XX

Asbury as his own physician — Variant opinions held by him of O'Kelly — Wesley did not recommission Asbury until 1784 — Heroic preachers of the time — Second Asbury conference at Judge White's, 1781 — Lee's account of it, and Baltimore Conferences of 1781-82 — O'Kelly's account of the tergiversation of Dickins — Muzzling of the Virginia preachers, and extirpation of their liberal polity — Jarrett helps his plans — Asbury's methods with Wesley — Lambert, Wyatt, Bruce, Everett, Moriarty, Hickson, Easter, the Abbott of the South; M'Kendree and George among his converts.

BEFORE resuming the thread of this History let note be made of some incidental matters, and an embalment of heroic names attached to this period. A few quotations from Asbury's Journal for 1780 will disclose his methods and convictions. November, 1779, he writes: "Began this morning to read books on the practice of physic: I want to help the bodies and souls of men." He was led to this course by his own physical ailments and the few physicians in the country. His bane was bilious complaints, quinsy, and, later, from so much exposure, rheumatism. It was not a fortunate thing, however, that he read medicine, for it will ever remain true that the man who is his own physician has a fool for a patient. He carried a lancet, and his saddle-pockets were crammed with pills and potions and plasters. Almost to the day of his death, thirty-five years later, his Journal is punctuated with bleedings and blisterings and black draughts and hierapiera. He dosed himself without mercy, and the marvel is that, between the drugs he took, the bleedings he inflicted on himself, and the diseases he struggled with, that he held out to seventy years. It was his way, however, of keeping himself well, though a lifelong invalid. In March, 1780, he writes, "I have been collecting all the minutes of our Conferences in America to assist me in a brief history of the Methodists; and an account of our principles." Again, a month later, "I was employed in writing a short history of the Methodists." But with this the subject is no more mentioned, — he abandoned the task, and there was no history until Jesse Lee issued his in 1810.

On his return ride to Maryland from Manakintown he writes, May 17, "I read and transcribed some of Potter's church government; and must prefer the Episcopal mode of church government to the Presbyterian." Two days afterward he writes, "I read and transcribed some of Potter's church government until ten o'clock." The reader will remember an earlier reference to this saturation of his whole nature with High Church, apostolical succession arguments and sentiments. He not only read it into his memory, but he wrote it in, and probably conned it over as he rode along. To the same purpose, about the same time: "I advised our friends to attend the Episcopal Church, that prejudice might be removed; then their people will attend us. If I could stay, some would attend." In June he writes, "Brother Dickins drew the subscription for a Kingswood school in America; this was what came out, a college in the subscription printed by Dr. Coke." This reference to Cokesbury College must have been inserted when he revised his Journal by association of ideas. What it shows, however, is that brother Dickins having been "labored with" by Asbury after the Manakintown Conference is now, and to the close of his career remained, a faithful adherent of his countryman.

Asbury is now on a tour among the Virginia and North Carolina brethren. In July he writes, "I have thought if I had two horses, and Harry a [colored man] to go with and drive one, and meet the black people, and to spend about six months in Virginia and the Carolinas, it would be attended with a blessing." Black Harry afterward became famous in his travels with Asbury. Reaching North Carolina at Cypress chapel he says, "Here James O'Kelly met me; he spoke, and appears to be a warm-hearted, good man; but he was troubled with the people about these times." A few days later, "James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other: this dear man rose at midnight, and prayed very devoutly for me and himself." About twelve years later he changed his opinion of O'Kelly materially, and it seems that it was the "people" who continued to give trouble as against Asbury's Episcopal plan. Afterward he met brother Allen, "A promising young man, but a little of a Dissenter." Alas, that there should be any independent thinkers in the world except brother Asbury. September 16, 1780, he says, "Wrote to Mr. Wesley at the desire of the Virginia Conference; who had consented to suspend the administration of the ordinances for one year." This must have been in addition to the letter they

authorized sent through John Dickins before noticed. There is no contemporary evidence that the "Virginia Conference," as Asbury states, authorized formally the writing of this second letter. There is no way to reconcile the discrepancy, but to assume that after the Dickins letter had been forwarded, some of the Virginia preachers suggested to Asbury, nearly six months later, perhaps because Wesley within this lapse of time had made no answer, to write again, and the early practice of his taking the consent of the part for the whole led him to say that the "Virginia Conference" desired him to do so. It met, no doubt, his personal approval, as it gave opportunity to fortify his position with Wesley. It was only a reflection of a monarchical idea: what is done by the Crown is done by the kingdom. That both the letters were written and sent is in evidence, because the answer to the Dickins letter, which the Conference at Manakintown did authorize, was received, Garrettson says, in time for the Baltimore Conference of April 24, 1781, while the answer to Asbury's second letter was delayed until 1784.¹ Why delayed until three years after? It needs only a little reading between the lines to decipher the reason. Wesley's answer to the Dickins letter covered the ground as far as he saw his way at that time. It simply directed, as has been found from Garrettson's semi-centennial sermon, that "we should continue on the old plan until farther directed." His counsellors distracted him, for it was a well-known fact that he not only listened to all the statements made him, and was impressed by the last interviewer or the last letter, until a nature ingenuous and unsuspecting as was Wesley's when he was compelled to compare conflicting statements, hesitated and delayed. It accounts for the fact that his letter to the Conference of 1781 does not recommission Asbury as General Assistant, an office now vacant for four years, or since Rankin's return to England. Neither Rankin, nor Boardman, nor Shadford, nor Rodda, in fact none of Wesley's returned missionaries, except perhaps Pilmoor, were advocates of Asbury at home; nevertheless, though three thousand miles distant, it will be seen in the sequel that he outgeneralled them all. In dismissing for the time these two famous letters it may be worth the remark that no other historian has developed their significance.

Pursuing his tour among the disaffected southrons he preaches at Manakintown in October, and finds his way to the Brokenback

¹ See Appendix C. The reader will not fail to peruse it before leaving this page.

chapel, where the Conference was held. He is accompanied by brother Edward Bailey as a guide, but he became sick and hindered his progress. He returns rapidly to Maryland, and, as six months had expired, according to the rule, he met some of the preachers at Barratt's chapel and changed them. He had travelled during this tour, he says, 2671 miles. In November he writes, "I arranged my papers containing a brief account of the beginning and progress of our divisions; it was transcribed into a book by Caleb Peddicord." As nothing more is heard of it he probably sent it to Wesley. About the same time he notes, "William Glendenning has handed me a book written by Jeremiah Burroughs, in the time of the Commonwealth, upon heart divisions and the evil of the times: in this work I promise myself good arguments against our separating brethren." He afterward issued it as an abridged pamphlet, together with Baxter's "Cure for Church Divisions," and made it do yeoman service against recalcitrants and dissenters from his views. It led him to the discovery that those who did not think as he did about church government had lost religion, and among such he distributed the pamphlet. Samuel Roe, a young preacher of the Virginia party, is reclaimed and takes an appointment. Asbury records his undisguised pleasure: "Samuel Roe is going to Sussex — one that had happily escaped the separating spirit and party in Virginia, and the snares laid for his feet; and so also did poor William Spencer of late years. Eternal thanks to God!" After such a devout exultation who can doubt the blind sincerity of the man? Early in January, 1781, he writes, "I received a letter from F. Garrettson, and another from T. S. C. (Chew), who promise me their filial obedience in the gospel." Chew was one of the Virginia brethren, and it is seen how one by one they came again under the spell of Asbury's genius and magnetism. He was but thirty-five years of age, but the citation just given foreshadows the habit he was forming, after the style of civil magnates, and with apostolical example, of calling the preachers his "sons in the gospel." Most of them, it is true, were still younger, but the paternal spirit animated him and prompted this address. In this he imitated Wesley also.

John Hagerty was a convert of John King's about 1771, and he soon found his gift as a preacher, and successfully exercised it until 1792; when, owing to the illness of his wife, he located in Baltimore, where he continued to labor effectively, no sacrifice being too much for him, until 1823, when he triumphantly ex-

pired in his seventy-seventh year. Nelson Reed was converted under the ministry of William Watters, entered the itinerancy, was present at the Conference of 1784, and continued his course for sixty-five years, dying in Baltimore in 1840, in the eighty-ninth year of his age, having the distinction of being at that time the oldest Methodist preacher in the world. He possessed substantial abilities and great courage, a striking instance of which occurred about 1796 in a bout he had with Dr. Coke and which will be narrated in its current place. Philip Cox was an Englishman, and is first named in the minutes of Asbury's Conference in 1779. Though a very small man, not weighing over one hundred pounds, he was full of mental and moral force and great energy. He remained single until he was fifty years of age. He had powerful revivals, and was cared for in his closing years by a well-to-do Methodist, with whom he languished out a life of much suffering from persecution, and died September, 1793, in peace. William Partridge, James O. Cromwell, and Thomas Foster must be mentioned. George Mair receives special notice from Stevens and deservedly. Ignatius Pigman was one of the most eloquent preachers of his day; also Stephen Black and Caleb Boyer. Pigman and Boyer received from Whatcoat and Vasey the extraordinary compliment, "they had not heard their equal in the British connection, except Wesley and Fletcher." Most of these early preachers deserved memoirs or monuments, instead of sleeping as they often do in unmarked graves. Space allows only the perpetuation of their names.

The successful outcome of the so-called preliminary Conference, held by Asbury in 1779 at Judge White's in Delaware, led him to follow the precedent thus set by calling another at the same place April 16, 1781, the regular session not being appointed until the 24th, in Baltimore. He makes brief note of it in his Journal as nothing unusual, "After meeting we rode about twenty miles to brother White's, where about twenty preachers met together to hold a Conference." It must have been that he named the place and time, and invited those who came. It was the way Wesley did for long years, the Conference was made of those whom he invited, and for any other to attend was an insubordination. There is no record as to who they were. Jesse Lee's "History" says of it: "1781 — On the 24th of April the ninth Conference met in Baltimore. But previous to this a few preachers on the Eastern Shore held a *little conference* in Delaware state, near Choptank, to make some arrangements for those preachers

who could not go with them; and then adjourned (as they called it) to Baltimore; so upon the whole it was considered but one Conference." The italicized words and the parenthetic sentence are Lee's. They smack of contempt. It will be remembered that the "History" was written in 1809-10, ten years after his defeat for the bishopric. He had been encouraged by Asbury with his influence for the position. Henry Boehm says: "They elected Richard Whatcoat bishop, he having a majority of four votes over Jesse Lee. I witnessed the excitement attending the different ballotings. The first, no election; the second, a tie; the third, Richard Whatcoat was elected." It was a great disappointment to Lee,¹ and he became afterward enough of a reformer to tell some things in his "History" Asbury did not relish, as will be seen farther on. Neither is there record as to what was done. It may be safely assumed that Asbury felt the pulse of them all, gauged them, and gave some hints of their appointments. Though there is no record of it, the circumstances make it probable that they largely journeyed together to Baltimore. His notice of the Conference in his Journal is almost as brief as that of the preliminary one. "Our Conference began in Baltimore, where several of the preachers attended from Virginia and North Carolina. All but one agreed to return to the old plan, and give up the administration of the ordinances: our troubles now seem over from that quarter; and there appears to be a considerable change in the preachers from North to South; all was conducted in peace and love." Turning to the printed Minutes it is found that thirty-nine preachers were in attendance out of fifty-four. A number of young men were received at this Conference. It seems that there were forty in all present, thirty-nine subscribing to the question which brought them again under Asbury's yoke. "What preachers are now determined after mature deliberation, close observation, and earnest prayer, to preach the old Methodist

¹ Snetten says: "Mr. Lee for several years had the prospect of the episcopacy full in view. The chagrin which he betrayed showed that it had been a governing motive with him, and as much the objective of his desire as of prospect. This disappointment rendered his feelings irritable, and as age had already begun to deface the signs by which the sympathies of nature are maintained, he lost in a considerable degree his hold on the affections and confidence of his best friends." For this and other strictures upon Lee he was called to account, but he showed himself fully able to meet the criticism. Few men were more intimate with Lee than Snetten, and they were fast friends from 1800 to the death of Lee in 1816. The prizes of ambition in a hierarchic system are such that every man of conscious abilities would be more than human if he felt indifferent to them. The redeeming feature of Lee was that he made no concealment of his aspirations.

doctrine, and strictly enforce the discipline, as contained in the notes, sermons, and minutes published by Mr. Wesley, as far as they respect both preachers and people, according to the knowledge we have of them, and the ability God shall give, and firmly resolved to discountenance a separation among either preachers or people?" Jesse Lee says, "Most part, if not all, the preachers 'subscribed,'" but he was not present, not yet having been received.

Asbury, as found, says that "all but one" agreed. Who was this staunch dissenter? He is named by no one of the early annalists, but an examination of the minutes brings to light the fact that James O'Kelly's name disappears from the roll with this session, neither is he among those "who desist from travel," which now appears among the questions for the second time. They were Dickins, Tatum, Moore, Green, and Ruff, mostly because married men; for in these days, though plenty of young men offered, in three to five or, in rare cases, in ten years they located. O'Kelly returned home an unreconciled dissenter. Next to Asbury, and perhaps Watters, he was the most influential preacher in the connection. The sequel of this act is yet eleven years in the future. The statistics show 10,539 members, a gain of 2000, the principal increase being in Delaware, now returned at 1052 as against 150 the year before, Lee says, by reason of great revivals. Asbury, it appears, was not satisfied with the prior reason for a preliminary Conference as given, the accommodation of the preachers, so the additional question is asked, "Is there any precedent for this in the economy of Methodism? *Answer*, Mr. Wesley generally held a Conference in Ireland for the same purpose." The reader has been made sufficiently acquainted with Wesley's Conferences to see how far-fetched is the illustration and the cases without parallel. It suited the purpose, however, and no doubt satisfied not a few who were no better informed. Four general fasts were appointed for the year. The probation for membership in the society was now three months. Of the 10,500 members only 873 were north of the southern boundary of Pennsylvania, yet the war was ravaging Virginia and the Carolinas at this time, and it is a phenomenal fact that, despite the action of the Conference as to slavery, the South was, and ever has been, the principal theatre of its most brilliant achievements for Christ. Revival work was also extensive in the South this year; but the preachers suffered many hardships; following Asbury, some were non-jurors, but were drafted and maltreated, some found refuge in the Epis-

copal Church, others made shipwreck of faith, and not a few perforce retired; but the depleted ranks were recruited by young converts to the heart-witnessing religion of Wesleyan doctrine, — and it must be repeated, not the system as such, — inspiring a zeal that consumed them for service and sacrifice.

Asbury was always on the wing, having entered upon those wonderful tours of the whole work, making the circuit about twice a year. His personal experience was always alive and flaming, except when the bile depressed him. The allusions are plentiful, "I am filled with love from day to day — I always find the Lord present when I go to a throne of grace." A few days after the last Conference adjourned he says, "I wrote to my father and to Mr. Wesley." He is down in North Carolina using the magic of his presence and persuasive force to win over the preachers and the people, who had been mightily convinced at both the Fluvanna and the Manakintown Conferences by John Dickins, the educated and intellectual Englishman, that the Presbyterian and not the Episcopal form of church government had the authority of Scripture and history, and who successfully withstood Asbury in the argumentative bout until he almost despaired of his purpose. O'Kelly's account of it is quaintly perspicuous, both for Fluvanna and Manakintown Conferences: "After there had been much disputing, John, whose surname was Dickins, made appear from Scripture that a Presbytery and not Episcopacy was the divine order. Then it pleased the Conference to form a Presbytery and ordain elders. We went out in the name of the Lord, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in our hands." It needs to be repeated parenthetically that this is true. For two or three years, in the absence of Asbury and his Episcopal leadership, unprecedented success up to that time attended these Presbyterian Methodist preachers of evangelical doctrine, and all the essentials of Methodism were preserved: and this is in evidence that equal success would have attended American Methodism, with a strong probability that its organic unity would have been conserved. O'Kelly resumes: "Tidings of this soon reached the northern preachers, and Francis (Asbury) wrote that we should meet in Conference at Manakintown, to consider the matter more minutely. We met accordingly; and Francis from the North and John from the South were chief speakers. Francis raised his argument from an author (Wesley), who advised the Methodists never to leave the established church. But John drew his arguments from the New Testament,

proving thereby that the true church was not the Episcopal order. Conference broke, and a separation was the result."¹

It may be in place to state another fact of a different character. This James O'Kelly was one of Asbury's presiding elders, and was noted for his rigid discipline and assertion of authority, and this has sometimes been availed of against him when he posed as a Reformer. It was also true of not a few of the later Methodist preachers and people who struggled and suffered in the Reform of 1820-30. But it is not intrinsically to their discredit. With increasing light came change of sentiment, and then this old volitional force made it possible for them to succeed — fidelity always means will-power. Illustrations of its mal-exercise will be developed even among Reformers in the course of this History. Asbury's will-power was steadily exercised to establish an Episcopacy, for he had put his conscience in it, and to make himself its Primate; for his autocratic nature could not divide authority with another. He knew by intuition, and discreetly employed his knowledge, that in managing strong men but two courses are open: you must either crush them into subjection or promote them into coöperation. He did both in his marvellous and successful career. In the spring of 1782 he managed to cross the path of O'Kelly, recusant and without a regular appointment, but commanding in his influence over the people who knew him. He also met with Philip Bruce, a strong man, now on New Hope circuit, but of O'Kelly's way of thinking. It does not seem material to a casual reader of his Journal that he makes this note, "Sunday, April 17, 1782 — I obtained the promise of brothers Bruce and O'Kelly to join heartily in our connection." It was the day before the assembling of a Conference he had appointed near by, at Ellis's preaching-house, in Sussex County, Va. O'Kelly had great warmth of friendship and was by nature extremely impulsive. He was not converted to Asbury's opinions, but he agreed to a truce. Asbury left him a presiding elder for some years beyond the limit of such appointments. As in the case of Strawbridge, he knew how to make exceptions when the preacher was of such influence with the people, and of such personal assertion as to make it unsafe to use the rod.

The next day the Conference opened. The evangelical Jarrett labored in this neighborhood, and Asbury secured his presence and services. He preached every day, the first text being from Hosea xiv. 5-7. "It afforded him," Stevens says, "topics of

¹ "Apology for Leaving the Episcopal Methodists," p. 4.

warning respecting the late controversy." Jarrett, as an uncompromising Churchman, aided Asbury with his arguments and persuasions. It can easily be imagined what a power these two men were. Never did the strategy of Asbury show itself to greater advantage. The Presbyterian drift of the preachers and people must be arrested. To turn a current upstream is no easy task, but it was accomplished. Asbury, not content with verbal adhesion to the "old plan," as it was called, prepared a paper, and the crucial test was applied of signing it. Asbury records in his Journal: "This instrument was signed by the greater part of the preachers without hesitation. Next morning I preached on Phil. ii. 1-5. I had liberty and it pleased God to set it home. One of the preachers, James Haw, who had his difficulties, was delivered from them all; and with the exception of one, all the signatures of the preachers present were obtained." Who was the recusant? Not an annalist tells—it is safe to assume that it was O'Kelly. It was a signal triumph for Asbury. Jarrett administered the Lord's Supper to preachers and people. He looked upon all of them as Episcopalians, and hence it was no violation of the Church canons. A love-feast was held. Asbury says, "The power of God was manifested in a most extraordinary manner: preachers and people wept, believed, loved, and obeyed,"—and nothing pleased him more than the last feature.

And now comes a revelation from Jesse Lee, who was present as a licentiate—he was received on trial at the next Conference. "The work had so increased and spread that it was now found necessary to have a Conference in the South every year, continuing the Conference in the North as usual. Yet as the Conference in the North was of the longest standing, and withal composed of the oldest preachers, it was allowed greater privileges than that in the South; especially in making rules and forming regulations for the societies. Accordingly, when anything was agreed to in the Virginia Conference, and afterward disapproved of in the Baltimore Conference, it was dropped. But if any rule was fixed and determined upon at the Baltimore Conference, the preachers of the South were under the necessity of abiding by it. The southern Conference was considered at that time as a convenience, and designed to accommodate the preachers in that part of the work and to do all the business of a regular Conference, except that of making or altering particular rules."¹ It was a crushing

¹ Lee's "History," p. 78.

hug of the anaconda of an Episcopal régime. In what a simple and plausible way it is stated. But how are the mighty fallen! Dickins, their champion, had retired at the previous Conference — he was married and had to look to the support of his wife, it was said; but he was too valuable a man to lose, if Asbury could prevent it. He did prevent it; for in a short time he suggested, and Dickins inaugurated, a Book Concern in Philadelphia on six hundred dollars of capital, and continued for the remainder of his life an ardent supporter of Asbury. It was one of the cases in which coöperation was secured by promotion. It did not succeed with O'Kelly. There was too much iron in his blood. He could not be prevailed on to sign away his convictions, and Asbury was too politic to attempt to crush him at this time. He is willing to take an appointment, and is assigned to Mecklenburg circuit, with Thomas S. Chew as helper. It was his old neighborhood and probably his own selection. The other leaders under pressure had succumbed. The rank and file surrendered.

Is the work of utter demoralization of the Presbyterian trend accomplished? Not quite. The lynx-eye of Asbury left nothing undiscovered to this end and the antidote applied. Turning to the printed Minutes, various things are done and the breach is closed by the rigor of new laws. "How shall we more effectually guard against disorderly travelling preachers? Write at the bottom of every certificate: the authority this conveys is limited to next Conference. How must we do if a preacher is found guilty and will not desist? Let the nearest Assistant stop him immediately. In brother Asbury's absence let the preachers inform the people of these rules." The muzzle was made ready. "By what rule shall we conduct ourselves toward preachers and people that separate from us? Disown them." By "separate" here is meant, to differ with Asbury ecclesiastically, otherwise there is no meaning in the answer — disown them. It is almost impossible at this day to realize what such an excommunication meant to a devout Methodist. Whither could he go for spiritual food? There was but one Jarrett in all the land. If within reach of some other denomination no such life-giving doctrines were preached. He was shut out from the only visible source of communion with God! It is the muzzle applied. "Shall we erase that question proposed in Deer Creek Conference respecting the ordinances?" You turn to the Conference of 1777 and find that it took no specific action on the ordinance question. Something else must be aimed at. It did appoint the Commission of

Watters, Gatch, Dromgoole, Ruff, and Glendenning to act for the societies. *Answer*, "Undoubtedly we must: it can have no place in our minutes while we stand to our agreement signed in Conference; it is therefore disannulled." It gave the quietus to the Commission and any permission it might have given to administer ordinances at any time. And now a crowning act is done — a finishing stroke. "Do the brethren in Conference unanimously choose brother Asbury to act according to Mr. Wesley's original appointment, and preside over the American Conferences and the whole work?" It reaffirmed what the Delaware Conference did, and coupled with it action making Asbury the judge of law and fact absolutely after hearing what the preachers might have to say, and so crowned him autocrat of the American Methodists. It did more: it virtually repudiated the authority of Wesley by taking the selection and appointment of General Assistant out of his hands. It cannot be supposed that Asbury did not see how far-reaching it was — indeed, there can be little doubt that it was done at his instigation. The Conference had been reduced practically to an automaton — he pulled the wires and the figures danced accordingly. He was vexed at the delay of Wesley in not reappointing him after Rankin had retired. He knew what influences were at work in England from the returned missionaries against him. He cut this Gordian knot. True, two years later, when Coke came over to ordain him General Superintendent with himself, he said, that if the Christmas Conference of 1784 would elect him as their choice for the position he would no longer act under Wesley's authority, thus making a feint of having done so up to that time. More of this in its place; but it proves the allegation already made, that Asbury now did not propose to be controlled by any authority in the world. The Ellis Preaching-House Conference adjourned to Lovely Lane in Baltimore, whither they assembled May 20, Asbury says, and not 21, as the printed Minutes say. They are treated as one, and there is no way now of telling who were present at either and who were present at both except as it may be guessed from the location of the preachers.

For the first time the question and answer occurs: "When and where shall our next Conferences be held? For Virginia the first Tuesday and for Baltimore the last Wednesday in May." The where is not given, but they were held again at Ellis's preaching-house and at Lovely Lane. It may be that Asbury thought it expedient to point up the solid wall he was building

against any farther innovations upon the "old plan." Before the Conference adjourned it passed a vote of thanks to Jarrett for attending, "and advised the preachers in the South, in the absence of brother Asbury, to consult him." Thus Asbury set a watch-dog over the troublesome section. Asbury adds: "I am persuaded that the separation of some, from our original plan about the ordinances, will, upon the whole, have a tendency to unite the body together and to make preachers and people abide wherein they are called. I see abundant cause to praise God for what He had done." Nothing can be more evident than when those of a differing opinion leave the residue will be united. In the Baltimore session all the preachers signed the agreement, and "there was a unanimous resolve to adhere to the old Methodist plan." It will be seen, however, farther on that the wall was daubed with untempered mortar. Free inquiry, sterling conviction, and the manhood equality begotten of the revolutionary struggle, now drawing to a successful close, could not be repressed for ecclesiastical rights as well. In after years, if Asbury could have quoted Shakespeare with the same readiness as Wesley, he would have disclosed his disappointment over the result of his extirpating measures by citing, "the snake is scotched, not killed." The statistics show a membership of 11,785, a gain of 1246. There were 60 preachers, including Asbury, a gain of 5, with 13 candidates received on trial. Twenty-six circuits made up the roll of appointments.

Among the heroes of this period Jeremiah Lambert must be named. He died in 1786 an elder of six years' standing, but his course, though brief, was useful, and his memory was fragrant with the brethren. He was the first appointee west of the Alleghanies. Joseph Wyatt, from Delaware, began preaching in 1780, located in 1788 from ill-health, returned two years later and rendered good service for about seven years, when he was compelled to withdraw. He was for a time chaplain to the Maryland Legislature. Philip Bruce, named but not fully honored, was one of the most laborious founders in the South. He retired to his kindred in Tennessee and died in 1826 loved and lamented. Lednum says that in the General Conference of 1816 there was quite a disposition to elect him Asbury's successor, and "probably nothing but his age prevented it." He was conscientious and firm, and Asbury handled him gently. Joseph Everett, of Maryland, is described "as the roughest spoken preacher that ever stood in the itinerant ranks." His experience was unique.

After his conversion he entered the ranks. For about thirty years he thundered the truth in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. He died in 1809 in his seventy-eighth year most triumphantly. Peter Moriarty, of Maryland, was raised a Roman Catholic, but the grace of God found him under the Methodists. At twenty years of age he began to preach and in 1782 his name appears in the minutes. He rose to be a presiding elder, labored thirty-two years, and died suddenly during the night, June 23, 1813. Woolman Hickson was a man of brilliant genius, but enfeebled with consumption. He introduced Methodism into Brooklyn, L. I. After seven years' labor he died in the latter part of 1788, not leaving money enough to bury him. The Church gave him honorable sepulchre. He first recognized the ability of Nicholas Snethen by appointing him leader of the class formed in Brooklyn. Ira Harris, named but not sufficiently honored, was held in high esteem by Asbury, who thought that if he had been educated he would have displayed abilities equal to Jefferson or Madison. He was compelled to locate in 1795 as a married man. John Easter is called the Benjamin Abbott of the South. His revival successes were wonderful. On Brunswick circuit the conversions are estimated at from fifteen hundred to two thousand. William M'Kendree was one of them, as also Enoch George. He located in 1792. He built a chapel on his own place in Sussex County, Va., and the Conferences of 1782-83 were held there.

CHAPTER XXI

Conference of 1783 — Letter from Wesley; the moot of Asbury's General Assistantship before 1784 considered — William Phoebus — Jesse Lee and Thomas Ware — Asbury as correspondent with Wesley and Shadford — Story of Dr. Coke and Mathews — Twelfth Conference, 1784 — Slavery resolves — Three Conferences appointed, but not held; superseded by the Christmas Conference of 1784 — Growth of the Societies — Other heroes of these days.

THE eleventh Conference was held at Ellis's and Lovely Lane, the former on the 7th and the latter on the 27th of May, 1783. Asbury gives but brief note of either of them, and Jesse Lee, who was received at this time, simply epitomizes from the minutes, except that he furnishes an important letter from Wesley, which is copied by Bangs and condensed by Stevens. Lee does not furnish the address of the receiver, but the contents show that it was not Asbury, and he farther says what he quotes is an "extract." It is dated Bristol, October 3, 1783, and exhorts the American Methodists to "abide by the Methodist doctrine and discipline . . . together with the large minutes of the Conference" (meaning the British Conference). He warns them to be careful how they receive preachers from England. The salient paragraph is in these words, "I do not wish our American brethren to receive any who make any difficulty of receiving Francis Asbury as the General Assistant."¹ From another paragraph in it, it is inferable that the returned missionaries had talked freely their prejudice against Asbury among the preachers, and Wesley discreetly anticipates any of this class who might go to America thus prejudiced. But does it not also show that all along from Rankin's return he had regarded Asbury as General Assistant? What it shows is that, having heard of the action of the American preachers, he does not make an issue with them over it. He was reaching a conclusion as to his appointee, and the drift was in favor of Asbury, his early choice. The tone of the letter is that he did not suspect that any one in America, much less Asbury, was drifting away from his personal authority. He discovered

¹ Lee's "History," pp. 85, 86.

it later and sorrowfully, but not in time to prevent the mischief of the ordinations for America, the following year. Asbury kept up a close correspondence with Wesley and a confidential one with Shadford, and he was too ingenuous with the latter to adopt Coke's method of concealment,—“burn this letter.” In fact, while Rankin was lording it over him he wrote to Wesley his grievances, but had the Christian courage to read it to Rankin before he sent it. It did not occur to him that the time would come when Shadford would disclose to Wesley the contents of some of his letters, as it will be found was the case. On the 24th of December, 1783, Asbury notes, “I received a letter from Wesley, in which he directs me to act as General Assistant, and to receive no preachers from Europe that are not recommended by him, nor any in America who will not submit to me, and to the minutes of the Conference.” This is the same letter cited by Lee; from its date of October 3 to December 24, being about the space of time requisite for its transit to this country across the ocean and then by the slow mail facilities of the times to reach Asbury. The contents as epitomized by Asbury also show the identity. Interest in his reference centres in Asbury's interpretation of it—“directs me to act as General Assistant”—the fine distinction between acting and being appointed is well enough. Wesley knew that he was acting and did not interfere with it. It is all the letter can be construed to mean.

His references to the Conference of 1783 are very brief: “Our Conference began at this place (Ellis's). Some young laborers were taken in to assist in spreading the gospel, which greatly prospers in the North. We all agreed in the spirit of African liberty, and strong testimonies were borne in its favor in our love-feast. Our affairs were conducted in love.” At Baltimore only this: “We began our Conference with what preachers were present. On Wednesday we had a full assembly, which lasted until Friday. We had a love-feast and parted in peace.” Garretson says “there were about sixty preachers present,” out of eighty-three who received appointments. Besides Jesse Lee, William Phoebus was afterward the most notable of the fourteen received on trial. The statistics show 13,740 members, an increase of 2000. As heretofore, the principal business was done at Ellis's, but confirmed at Lovely Lane. An assessment was levied upon certain prominent circuits, in the north £200 and in the south £60, for the support of the wives of eleven married preachers out of the eighty-three, so it is seen that after twelve

years the Conference is still composed of mere striplings. Asbury felt like a father toward them at thirty-eight years of age, and called them his "sons in the gospel," in both a patronizing and paternal sense. Henry Boehm in his characterization says: "He had an intuitive knowledge of men. He would sit in Conference and look from under his dark and heavy eyebrows, reading the countenances and studying the character and constitution of the preachers." He moulded them at will. Few had the temerity to speak unless questioned, and fewer still to dissent, whatever they might have thought. Had it not been made a law at the Delaware Conference, the pseudo-gathering of Asbury, "On hearing every preacher for and against what is in debate, the right of determination shall rest with him according to the minutes (Wesley's minutes and method)"? Stringent regulations were passed against local preachers who held slaves, and against making, selling, and drinking spirituous liquors. The moral boldness of these resolves can hardly be appreciated at this day. Two Thanksgivings and two Fast days are appointed for the year, the first for the conclusion of the treaty of peace between America and the mother country, and the second for the glorious work of God. It was determined that those who were to be received into connection, as well as the assistants, should attend the ensuing Conference, named for Baltimore alone, fourth Tuesday in May, 1784. For the first time general stewards are appointed, Samuel Owings, John Orick, and be it observed that these are laymen. It is their first official recognition as being competent to receive and distribute the assessments. Jesse Lee, William Phoebus, and Thomas Ware, who were received at the Conference of 1784, are landmarks in Methodism. The first has been noticed and will often obtrude hereafter. Phoebus was of Maryland, and after travelling fifteen years, located in New York, studied and practised medicine till 1806, when he reentered the work. In 1821 he became a "supernumerary," and died in New York in 1831, aged seventy-seven. His literary abilities were considerable, a good but not a popular preacher. He edited a magazine for some time in the interest of the denomination. The minutes say, "He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus." Thomas Ware was of New Jersey, born in 1758. He entered the army at the breaking out of the war, and was dismissed as an invalid with "camp fever." Under Peddicord he was converted; had an interview with Asbury, and was sent to a circuit in 1783. After having been invited to preach, he was ejected by vestrymen from

an Episcopal church. Long afterward he became associate book agent with Dickins in New York, and for fifty years served the Church with fidelity. His historical reminiscences are most valuable because so reliable, and farther notice must be made of him in connection with stirring events. The labors and apostasy of Rawlins or Rollins are noticed at length by Stevens about this time, but it is not to edification except as warning. During this year, Stevens says, Asbury wrote one of his confiding, affectionate letters to Shadford. Among other things he enumerated the clergymen of the Episcopal Church who were friendly: Jarrett of Virginia, Pettigrew of North Carolina, Dr. Magaw of Philadelphia, and Mogden of New Jersey. He says that he travelled four thousand miles a year. The letter is fervent, spiritual, exultant, and closes with a burst of enthusiastic loyalty: "O America! America! it certainly will be the glory of the world for religion! I have loved and do love America. I think it became necessary after the fall that government should lose it. Your old national pride as a people has got a blow. You must abate a little."

He also writes to Wesley as the next Conference approached. It was opportune; for he was now seriously engaged in the solution of the American question as to the ordinances, and Coke was urging him on to overstep the old restrictions of the National Church. It does not need imagination to show how Wesley's fellow-feeling would be appealed to, and how he would be influenced favorably toward the man who would so write: "You know, sir, it is not easy to rule, nor am I pleased with it. I bear it as my cross; yet it seems that a necessity is laid upon me. Oh, pray for me that I may be filled with light and power, with zeal and prudence, and above all with humility." It was written March 20, 1784 (see *Arminian Magazine*, Vol. 9, p. 681). It was just such language as Czar Nicholas might privately address to a brother emperor; as the Pope might address to the conclave of cardinals. They reign by the grace of God, and they waver under the fearful responsibility. Providentially ordained to their mission, schooled into the full persuasion that to resign the burden that so oppresses them would be sacrilege, the solace is compensating that they could not, if they would, be or do otherwise. Wesley had a full realization of this autocratic instinct, and it was still growing in Asbury. But are they not honest and sincere? Just as much so as any other form of lunacy; there is no sincerity like it. In 1801 he was reading Ostervald's "Christian

Theology," and met with the sentiment that in the "primitive Church there was always a President who presided over others, who were in a state of equality with himself," etc. He had also been reading Cave's "Lives of the Fathers," who was a high Churchman, and Asbury is quite in accord with him, so he combats Ostervald's Presbyterian view in these words, "There is not, nor indeed in my mind can there be, a perfect equality between a constant president, and those over whom he always presides."¹ He cannot mean by this that a presiding officer officially and while in the chair is superior to those over whom he is called to preside, as that would be a bald truism. He evidently means that such an officer, by reason of the perpetual relation, becomes in a well-defined sense a superior person as well.

Dr. Coke grew into it earlier, as early as 1796, at the General Conference of that year in Baltimore. Alfred Griffith, well known to American Methodism, in his sketch of Nelson Reed says, illustrative of his moral courage: "Dr. Coke, one of the superintendents of the church, was present; and one of the striking features of his character was that he was impatient of contradiction, and not wholly insensible to his own personal importance. He had on this occasion introduced some proposition in the General Conference, which seemed to some of the preachers a little dictatorial; and one of them, an Irishman by the name of Mathews, who had been converted in his native country from Romanism and had fled to this country from an apprehension that his life was in danger, sprang to his feet and cried out, 'Popery, Popery, Popery!' Dr. Coke rebuked the impulsive rudeness of Mathews, when he replied in his Irish manner, 'Och,' and sat down. While the Conference was now in a state of great suspense and agitation, Dr. Coke seized the paper containing his own resolution, and, tearing it up, not in the most moderate manner, looked around upon the preachers and said, 'Do you think yourselves equal to me?' Nelson Reed instantly arose, and, turning to Bishop Asbury, who was also present, said, 'Dr. Coke has asked if we think ourselves equal to him; I answer, yes, we think ourselves equal to him, notwithstanding he was educated at Oxford and has been honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws, and, more than that, we think ourselves equal to Dr. Coke's king.' Coke had now cooled off, and blandly said, 'He is hard on us.' Asbury replied, 'I told you our preachers are not block-

¹ Asbury's "Journal," Vol. III. p. 19.

heads.' Coke apologized, and thus the matter ended."¹ In addition to the direct point it makes, it throws light upon some of the transactions of the early Conferences, in which the repressed manhood of the preachers was provoked to outspoken resistance. It is delightful to turn from such phases of great and good men's characters, and look at the Christian side of them. August 4, 1783, Asbury journalizes: "Rose early to pour out my soul to God. I want to live to Him, and for Him; to be holy in heart, in life, and in conversation; this is my mark, my prize, my all—to be in my measure like God." Nothing higher of saintly aspiration can be expressed. In his travels and preaching it is almost impossible to keep track of him, the transitions from state to state are so constant and the incidents so varied amid all sorts of adverse surroundings and physical sufferings.

The twelfth Conference met for the Virginia brethren at Ellis's, though Baltimore alone was named as the place, April 30, 1784, for two days. The minutes say it ended on the 28th, but these discrepancies are numerous. Asbury devotes but a few lines to it: "Brother O'Kelly gave us a good sermon, and Jarrett gave us a good discourse; our business was conducted with uncommon love and unity." The allusions to the Baltimore session, May 25, 1784, are almost as brief: "Our Conference began all in peace. William Glendenning had been devising a plan to lay me aside, or at least to abridge my powers. Mr. Wesley's letter settled the point, and all was happy. The Conference rose on Friday morning." This was the letter already referred to. No annalist gives even an inkling of what Glendenning proposed as a reform in governmental methods, but it is clear that he was by far too erratic to reform anything. There are always forward men who have an idea that something ought to be done, but they utterly lack the sense and prudence to do it. They set back the cause they would befriend. More of it will develop in the next decade. Glendenning received, however, the appointment to Brunswick, one of the best in the Conference—Asbury found it best to handle him gingerly. The printed Minutes occupy six pages. Eleven preachers were received on trial. The examination of character was never overlooked, and every rumor of irregularity among the preachers canvassed. Seven new circuits were recognized, four in the South and three in the North,—Juniata, Trenton, and Long Island. The plan of appointments now covered forty-six stations and circuits. There was a gain in membership of 1248,

¹ Sprague's "Annals," Vol. VII. p. 69.

total 14,988, nearly three-fourths of them south of Pennsylvania, yet the resolves against slavery continued as stringent as ever. If nothing else was accomplished, testimony was borne. Jesse Lee quaintly remarks: "However good the intentions of the preachers might be in framing these rules, we are all well assured that they never were of any particular service to our societies. Some of the slaves, however, obtained their freedom in consequence of these rules." As a moral question every man answered to his own conscience. Owners within the societies lived and died Christians and were buried by these preachers with Christian rites, after their triumphant experiences in sickness and death. As a political question these resolves helped on mightily the final extirpation of an institution at war with the higher Christian principles, but for which the whole country was about equally responsible in its moral aspects.

The questions and answers are more numerous than usual. They relate to vacancies in the interval of the Conference, preaching-places that do not show fruit, erection of chapels and debts, superfluity in dress, reform in singing, and Conference collections. There are now thirteen married preachers who ask for a support for wives: Wyatt, Moore, Thomas, Mair, Ellis, Scott, Forrest, Pigman, Hagerty, Morris, O'Kelly, Dromgoole, and Dickins. Three hundred and two pounds is assessed for the purpose. The General Assistant is allowed twenty-four pounds, with his expenses for horse and travelling, assessed and paid at Conference. "What preachers have died this year?" It was a new question. The answer is, "William Wright, Henry Metcalf." That is all. Lee commends it. For many of them it was all that lay between them and oblivion. It was ever afterward asked, but the answer rarely extended to over a dozen lines even for the best and most useful of them. "What preachers desist from travelling?" This form answered for all who dropped out for any cause. Wesley's suggestions as to European preachers were adopted rigidly. Fast days were made more binding, "By writing it upon every class paper. To be the first Friday after every quarterly meeting." Many Methodists, following Asbury, fasted every Friday. The last question, "When and where shall our next Conferences be held?" The answer shows the entering wedge to a division of the work into Conferences. "The first at Green Hill (North Carolina) Friday, 29th, and Saturday, 30th, of April; the second in Virginia, at Conference chapel, May 8; the third in Maryland, Baltimore, the 15th of June." Time is

allowed for Asbury to travel from one to the other, and for such of the preachers as could and would get to Baltimore — the Conference in fact and law. The first two were not convened, and the last was anticipated by the Christmas Conference at the close of 1784.

Lee adds a note to the end of his observations on the Conference of May 28, 1784, to the effect that the minutes, heretofore kept only in manuscript, were from this date printed every year. As already found, the whole from 1773 to 1795 were printed and bound into a volume by order of the bishops, by John Dickins, the book agent of the Concern, now removed from Philadelphia to New York. This volume is very scarce. In 1813 a new volume was issued, covering the minutes from 1773 to 1813, as mentioned elsewhere, by Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware, who succeeded Dickins, and several changes of importance were quietly made by order of the bishops in the text, and not a few typographical and other errors crept into the new edition. The preface to this volume thus summarizes the work: "In the year 1773 the first Methodist Conference in America was held in Philadelphia, and consisted of ten travelling preachers, at which time there were only 1160 members in society. In the space of forty years you see the astonishing increase, amounting to 678 travelling preachers, besides those in the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, with several thousand local preachers of sufficient worth to grace any pulpit, and members amounting to upward of 214,000, . . . likewise you will find that, in the space of forty years, there have been about 1800 preachers admitted into the travelling connection, and about 110 died in the glorious work. . . . To view between six and seven hundred faithful ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, spread from the northern extremities of the province of Maine to St. Mary's and the Altamaha River in the southern extremities of Georgia; and from the seaboard in the Atlantic States to Erie, Detroit, Michigan, Wabash, and Missouri in the west; and southwestward to the Mississippi, Natchez, upper and lower Louisiana to New Orleans and the Tombecktee settlements,— what may we not expect and look for from the hands of a gracious God, in answer to prayer, and the rewards of the faithful and diligent laborers?" Note must be taken of the farther fact elicited from these statements, that of 1800 preachers who entered the work in these years between 1773 and 1813, over 1000 retired after an average of service less than ten years by reason of the hardships and the celibacy it

enforced, or an average of twenty-five a year. That the depleted ranks should be annually filled by young recruits in more than like numbers is in evidence of the impelling zeal and Holy Spirit call of a heart-religion as genuine as in apostolic days. Thomas Ware was admitted at this Conference of May, 1784. Of Asbury he writes: "Among these pioneers Asbury by common consent stood first and chief. There was something in his person, his eye, his mien, and the music of his voice, which interested all who saw and heard him. He possessed much natural wit, and was capable of the severest satire; but grace and good sense so far predominated that he never descended to anything beneath the dignity of a man and a Christian minister. In prayer he excelled." Garrettson says of this gift, "He prayed the best, and he prayed the most, of any man I ever knew."

Before entering upon a new epoch in Methodist history, following Stevens, who gleaned from Lednum and others, let us embalm other names of heroes in this strife in the closing years of this decade of conferential Methodism. The westward progress is marked by the itinerant toils of Jeremiah Lambert at the head waters of the Holston River, already adverted to, followed by Henry Willis. Redstone circuit was ultramontane. Braddock had opened a road beyond the Pennsylvania Alleghanies, and emigration followed it. John Cooper and Samuel Breeze labored out there, and Asbury scaled the Alleghanies for the first time to reach them. Poythress, Haw, Roberts, and others took part in the ground-breaking. Many Methodists had gone west of the mountains of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia after the war closed. John Jones built a cabin on Redstone Creek, and Robert Wooster was the first local preacher he heard. Uniontown in Pennsylvania became a centre, and Asbury held a Conference there in 1788. Among the mountaineer local preachers were William Shaw, Thomas Larkin, and John J. Jacobs. They were known as "the three bishops." Let their names at least go down to posterity. Simon Cochrane and Michael Cryder are two more, the former pushing on to the wilds of Ohio and Kentucky, and gave sixty-four years to the ministry, while the latter labored on the Juniata River as early as 1775. Robert Pennington of Delaware was among the first of the emigrants to this section, and he built a log chapel among the mountains, known by his name. Most of the regulars were locals at first, and too much honor cannot be accorded the humble but zealous men who blazed the path of Methodism in all the frontiers. Isaac Smith

is a name fragrant in the south. He was a Revolutionary private and officer, and took part in a number of the battles, and after the peace became a soldier of Christ, in 1783. He was the father of the South Carolina Conference, and did yeoman service until 1834, when he died of a cancer, "full of faith and the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Stevens gives him three pages, and crowns them with the sentence, "He was the St. John of the early Methodist apostolate." Wilson Lee, another of the western pioneers, seemed never satisfied unless he had the hardest field he could find. Not only in the West, but in New England, his path was luminous as a revival preacher. In 1804 he was returned as superannuated, and died in Anne Arundel County, Md., of a hemorrhage, while praying with a sick person. John Smith, a native of Maryland, already named, was of feeble constitution, but survived to 1812, when he died triumphantly. William Jessup was from Delaware. Asbury says, "Few such holy and steady men have been found among us." He died in 1795, and was buried at Martin Boehm's chapel in Pennsylvania, after a happy death. Not a few of these worthies have no earthly record at all. As local preachers their names do not appear in the printed Minutes, and many of these have no other perpetuation.

CHAPTER XXII

The Deed of Declaration and the Christmas Conference the acme of wisdom or fundamental errors; logically considered—What was intended by Wesley in contrast with what was done—Cumulation of evidence—How Coke secured his ordination by Wesley; the methods exposed—The testimonials Coke brought to America, and how they were either garbled or suppressed—Was Coke made a presiding presbyter or a bishop; English Wesleyan opinions—Coke's arrival in America; interview with Dickins in which the "little sketch" of government was disclosed for the first and only time except to Asbury—Bishop Seabury; declination of Coke and Asbury to receive ordination from him, and become Protestant Episcopalians, with new evidence of it—Events prior to the Christmas Conference.

THE Christmas Conference of 1784 is in view with its antecedents and consequents for careful and impartial consideration. It was the climacteric event in the history of American Methodism, and sustains the same relation to it as the Deed of Declaration does to British Methodism. Preintimation has been given in the introductory chapter that these two events are estimated, either as the summation of ecclesiastical wisdom, entailing and perpetuating, as they did in the latter case, a governmental system which constituted a Church for the ministry; recognizing it as the first and only estate depository of legislative, judicial, and executive functions, to the utter exclusion of the preponderating element of the locality as its second estate; and of the membership, the very base of the Church pyramid and the third estate; whom Christ as the Head of the Church recognized, and for the service of which, from Pentecost, a ministry was called of the Holy Ghost and elected by the people—a ministry for the Church. Or these two events are estimated as the fundamental errors respectively by Wesley for the English societies and by Asbury for the American, in ecclesiastical polity, as violative of the precedents of the New Testament churches and the whole structure of brotherhood by equality in all relations, more intrinsically demanded even than in civil government in ideal realization.

This may be the place for the general admission that though the contention of this History is, that these two events were fundamental errors of Church polity, that of the Deed of Decla-

ration, already traversed and submitted to the judgment of the reader, and that for the organization of the Christmas Conference, now to be made evidential, no question need be raised against the supporting facts that for both these events the successional prestige given them by Wesley and Asbury, with the conceded efficiency and potentiality of the autocratic and oligarchic polities as such, has given them a vantage-ground which has easily assured them leadership in the Methodisms of the world. It is not in anticipation that this leadership will ever be abdicated or lost in the growing successes of the excised and secedent denominations. It was and is their providential mission to materialize the true ideals of church government as taught by Christ and the apostles, and demonstrate their congruity with Methodist doctrine and its peculiar means of grace. This they are doing, and by reflex influences operating from without, and combining with the inevitable struggle of these same germinal principles within the old organizations (perpetually fomented whenever thought and investigation discover and magnify the suppressed rights of a Christian brotherhood), are modifying and reforming the old systems, until, after a hundred years of sapping and mining of these germinal principles against inherited power, the approximations of the old to the new are so great that neither Wesley nor Asbury would now recognize Wesleyan Methodism in England and Asburian Methodism in America as the systems whose foundations they laid more than a century ago. These modifications and reforms now for the most part accomplished by evolution from within, but made possible by the enforced revolution of such movements as the New Connexion, the Primitive, and the Associate Methodists of England, and of the Methodist Protestants in America, must and will go on until all the deprivations of laic rights and coöperation, which were denied in the original systems, shall be confessed and conceded, just as the evolution of American liberty was made possible by the Revolution which gave such liberty birth. And it is confessed as an open question whether these reforms will extend as far as carried by the secedent bodies, involving a radical reconstruction of the old organic forms. Perhaps the highest ecclesiastical wisdom for Methodists would strike a mean between these extremes, provided always that equal lay-representation and participation be not infringed. And it is a misconception that these secedent organizations, while inflexible for the principles for which they stand, have any jealousy or envy of the parent bodies. No.

They rejoice in their magnificent achievements and bid them "God speed." Methodism has so much in common in "casting out devils" that no forbidding word shall ever fall from them because others "follow not us." They invite coöperation in foreign mission work, if it can be done as Methodists simply, and in home mission work; all that is asked is a fair and open field with mutual respect for preëmpted locations by priority of occupation. These remarks are deemed pertinent, inasmuch as in the historical investigation of the Christmas Conference questionable proceedings shall be uncovered and more questionable methods of justification by statement and argument shall be met and, it is believed, overthrown. As in the case of the Deed of Declaration and its consequences, the final verdict shall be left with the reader.

The Christmas Conference of 1784 raises the issue, which has been expressed in the introductory chapter, in these words, "Did or did not Mr. Wesley intend to organize a Church for the American Methodists, and recommend the Episcopal form of government?" It will be seen to a moral certainty, as positive demonstration is impossible on either side, that he did not. That the American societies were so impressed by Coke and Asbury need not be questioned. The means employed to this end will be traversed when the ancient controversy is covered and the reader left to determine on which side of this darkly drawn line the truth is found. The facts in the case, and the unavoidable inferences from them, will be ascertained by considering the antecedents of the Christmas Conference.

First in order a citation, partially given heretofore, is made from Henry Moore, who at this period was on terms of the closest intimacy with Wesley and knew whereof he speaks. "When peace was established between Great Britain and the States the intercourse was opened betwixt the societies in both countries. Mr. Wesley then received from Mr. Asbury a full account of the progress of the work during the war; and especially of the division which had taken place, and the difficulties he met with before it was healed. He also informed Mr. Wesley of the extreme uneasiness of the people's minds for want of the sacraments; that thousands of their children were unbaptized, and the members of the society in general had not partaken of the Lord's Supper for many years. Mr. Wesley then considered the subject, and informed Dr. Coke of his design of drawing up a plan of church government and of establishing an ordination for the

American societies. But cautious of entering on so new a plan, he afterward suspended the execution of his purpose and weighed the whole for upward of a year."¹ The reader will not fail to observe that this is in perfect accord with observations already made, and they account for the year's delay here noticed. The significant portion is in the words, not heretofore made salient by other annalists, "informed Dr. Coke of his design of drawing up a plan of church government." It was held in abeyance for a year, and the reasons for this have also been pointed out. The nature of this "plan of church government" it is impossible for any man to divine. That it was matured and sent over with Dr. Coke as a part of his instructions and as directions for the American societies is clearly implicated in Wesley's letter to Coke, Asbury, and the "American brethren" of September 10, 1784, in these unmistakable words, "Some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch." This little sketch, containing instructions to Coke and Asbury and advice to the societies, was never permitted by them to see the light, and, not having been found among Coke's literary effects by his executor and biographer, Drew, it is morally certain that Coke destroyed it. If such a conclusion produces anything of a shock to the fine sensibilities of the reader, he will be assured of its truth when the fact is recalled that Dr. Coke did not hesitate to instruct correspondents to "burn" tell-tale letters, as will hereafter be seen; so that to burn such letters or instructions himself without scruple, need not be doubted. There could be but one motive for the suppression of this sketch—its instructions were violated. Further incidental reference will be made to it in the course of this History.

During the year or two of Wesley's suspense, he gradually settled upon Dr. Coke as the most suitable man to send to America. They often discussed it in private, and there are extant several letters from Coke to Wesley upon the subject, both of which have already been given in the full text, and to them the reader is referred back to Chapter Seventh of this work. Wesley, after vainly endeavoring to secure the concurrence of brother Churchmen, such as his brother Charles and the saintly Fletcher, in his plan for ordinations for America, finally made up his mind, and at the Leeds Conference of July 25, 1784, the same Conference at which the Deed of Declaration was

¹ Moore's "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. pp. 272, 273.

promulgated, he announced his purpose to send Dr. Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey to America. The manner of its reception by the Conference has already been traversed; but Wesley had passed his Rubicon, and when he read the plan of appointments these three were announced for the American work. He evidently intended the ceremony, if any, to be simple and brief; for no man knew better than himself that as an Episcopalian he had no right to formally ordain; but being convinced from his reading of Lord King and Bishop Stillingfleet that presbyters and bishops were the same in order in the primitive Church, he determined to exercise a Presbyterian authority and set apart these brethren.

As soon as the Conference adjourned Coke repaired to London to make preparations for his departure, and so it may be assumed did Whatcoat and Vasey, for their leaving was urgent. There is a strong probability that Wesley would have dismissed them with the least infraction of canon law possible; for he was loyal to his death to the National Church. Coke had all along plied him with arguments, not only for ordination as presbyters for Whatcoat and Vasey, but for an ordination of himself, though a presbyter equal with Wesley, such as would commend him to the American brethren as, at least, a quasi-bishop, the ambition of his life, though he had no such modified views of a three-order ministry as Wesley entertained. He must in some way secure it that he might be a Bishop in America. Wesley was now eighty-one years of age. The contention is made for him that his faculties were undimmed and showed no decay even down to the close of life, and as to preaching and administration, everything of routine order, there are no signs to the contrary; but that he was in a mood to be influenced unduly when the suggestions seemed to favor his own bias, and his near advisers pressed him, there is more than one instance. Coke, above all others about him, was insinuating, plausible, and diplomatic. All these traits are now alert — it is the emergent period of his official career. As already noticed, within six days after the Leeds Conference adjourned, he writes to Wesley the famous letter of August 9, 1784, from London. The reader will keep the Chapter Seventh open before him while the promised analysis is made.

Its opening is an appeal, "The more maturely I consider the subject the more expedient it appears to me that the power of ordaining others should be received by me from you by the imposition of your hands, and that you should lay hands on brother Whatcoat and brother Vasey." Is it not clear, as Tyer-

man suggests, that up to this late hour Wesley had not made up his mind to have any ceremony akin to an ordination? Coke urges it for "reasons," and what are they? "1. It seems to me the most scriptural way, and most agreeable to the practice of the primitive churches. 2. I may want all the influence in America which you can throw into my scale." How is this fortified? "Mr. Brackenbury informed me at Leeds that he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury in which he observed that he would not receive any person deputed by you with any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him, or words which evidently implied as much." Who exhibited this letter from Asbury? Who but Shadford, his only confidential correspondent in England besides Wesley. It was not the last thing he disclosed out of the correspondence showing Asbury's predetermination to be Primate in America and to disown Wesley's authority so soon as opportune. "I do not find any, the least degree, of prejudice in my mind against Asbury; on the contrary, a very great love and esteem, and am determined not to stir a finger without his consent, unless mere sheer necessity obliges me, but rather to lie at his feet in all things." Nothing could be more adroit than this "If" and "But" position. Wesley was not ignorant of the scheming of both Coke and Asbury. They were personally unknown to each other, as Asbury went to America five years before Coke became a follower of Wesley; but by reputation they knew each other; so that Coke was quite well posted as to Asbury's characteristics and Asbury as fully as to Coke's. Asbury had largely reinstated himself in Wesley's confidence, and, knowing the aspirations of Coke, the danger of a conflict between them was probably about Wesley's only serious trouble as to sending Coke to America; so that these averments of Coke answered a good purpose in quieting his fears. The shrewd strategist continues: "But as the journey is long, and you cannot spare me, often, and it is well to provide against all events, and an authority formally received from you will (I am conscious of it) be fully admitted by the people, and my exercising the office of ordination without that formal authority may be disputed; if there be any opposition on any account, I would therefore earnestly wish you would exercise that power in this instance, which I have not the shadow of a doubt but God hath invested you with for the good of our connection. I think you have tried me too often to doubt whether I will in any degree use the power you are pleased to invest me with, further than I

believe is absolutely necessary for the prosperity of the work. In short, it appears to me that everything should be prepared, and everything proper be done, that can possibly be done this side the water." Could Wesley have foreseen the use that would be made of his "setting apart" as history subsequently shows, he would have been spared the tears of repentance he shed in after years over this act into which he was betrayed by overpersuasion and misapplied confidence. In no unduly offensive sense the procedure of Coke has been characterized as playing "successfully the rôle of the little magician." The consummate moves of it are in the closing suggestion of this letter: "You can do all this in Mr. C——n's house, in your chamber, and afterward (according to Mr. Fletcher's advice) give us letters testimonial of the different offices with which you have been pleased to invest us. For the purpose of laying hands on brothers Whatcoat and Vasey I can bring Mr. C. [Creighton] down with me, by which you will have two presbyters with you. In respect to brother Rankin's argument, that you will escape a great deal of odium by omitting this, it is nothing. Either it will be known or not known; if not known, then no odium will arise; but if known, you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with perhaps your brother at the head of them. I shall entreat you to ponder these things.

"Your most dutiful,

"T. COKE."

Wesley was now touring in Wales. Returning, he reached the parsonage house in Bristol, August 28. The details proposed by Coke fell in with Wesley's views. Rankin, as already found, as well as all the returned missionaries from America, disapproved of the ordinations for America, because they feared in concert that with their knowledge of Asbury's ulterior purposes it would mean separation from Wesley. They had not been backward in expressing their opinions, and both Wesley and Coke were aware of them. Hence a secret service is named by Coke, and to be kept secret, if possible, and thus avoid the storm of criticism he knew would arise; but if it gets out, why then you must stand by me and take the responsibility, or suffer me to sink under it, your brother Charles in the lead. It appealed both to Wesley's courage and his friendship; in the first he never lacked and in the second he never faltered. The receipt of this coaxing,

reasoning, and plausible letter turned Wesley's hesitation into resolution. It is worthy of note in passing that Drew, Coke's biographer, gives not the slightest intimation of this letter to Wesley, but it is from him that the nature of his reply to Coke is furnished, not by publishing his answer, but by declaring, "He [Coke] had not been long in London before he received a letter from Mr. Wesley requesting him to repair to Bristol, to receive fuller powers, and to bring with him Rev. Mr. Creighton, a regularly ordained minister, who had long officiated at Mr. Wesley's chapels in London and assisted him in various branches of his ministerial duties."¹ The reader would inevitably infer from this statement that it was the only letter that passed between Wesley and Coke from the Leeds Conference of July 25 to an unknown date late in August. Drew's "Life of Coke" is apologetic, and this must account for his suppression of the letter he wrote Wesley August 9. In this, like a partial biographer, he protected the memory of Coke, nor is there any clew to what he means by "receiving fuller powers" from Wesley. Wesley's references to the "setting apart" at Bristol are so brief as to be misleading to the casual reader; but as the matter was to be kept secret, it may account for such language as the following: "Tuesday 31st [August]—Dr. Coke, Mr. Whatcoat, and Mr. Vasey came down from London in order to embark for America. Wednesday, September 1. — Being now clear in my own mind, I took a step which I had long weighed in my mind, and appointed Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey to go and serve the desolate sheep in the wilderness. Thursday — I added to them three more which I verily believe will be much to the glory of God."² This is all. Not a word of Dr. Coke's so-called ordination. Finally, as to Dr. Coke's remarkable letter to Wesley, the query is no doubt in the reader's mind — how did it get to the light? It was furnished by Whitehead several years after Wesley's death, who says of it, "This letter is taken from an attested copy of the Doctor's letter, in Mr. Charles Wesley's handwriting." It is quoted in full by Henry Moore, and this is evidence that its genuineness could not be questioned.

¹ "Life of Coke," p. 73.

² "Journal," Vol. II. p. 602. "On Thursday I added to them three more." Whatcoat, in his Journal, says, presently quoted, that on this Thursday, or September 2, he set apart Coke as a superintendent, and Whatcoat and Vasey as elders, and so Wesley makes the "three more." It is in proof that in his eighty-second year his memory was failing, unless he meant "three more" added to Asbury.

Constructively reader and writer are present in Wesley's private chamber at Bristol, September 1, 1784. What took place? It is not a very commodious room, yet there are besides the chamber furniture, chairs enough probably for six persons: John Wesley, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey. These and no more. There is no minute of their conversation, and nothing is known of what took place, except from the "testimonials" given and what Whatcoat has recorded in his private Journal, no part of which was published until after Whatcoat's decease, when his biographer, Phoebus, on page 17, gives this extract: "September 1, 1784—Rev. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and James Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England, formed a presbytery and ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, deacons. And on September 2, by the same hands, etc., Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey were ordained elders and Thomas Coke, LL.D., was ordained superintendent for the Church of God under our care in North America." As to the "testimonials," and the information they may furnish as to what was done, those provided by Wesley for Whatcoat and Vasey as presbyters have never been published, while that provided for Coke was suppressed by him and not published until after his death. It was found among his papers "in Wesley's own handwriting," and is in the following form:—

To all to whom these presents shall come: John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting:

Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacrament of baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usages of the same church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers,

Know all men that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And, therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to His glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands and prayers, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

JOHN WESLEY.

A few things may be observed of this document. It bears no resemblance to the credential of a Bishop in the National Church.

The word "ordain" does not occur in it, though Whatcoat uses it in his Journal account. What Wesley says he did is this, "I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands and prayers, . . . Thomas Coke," etc. It furnishes no evidence that he used the ordination form of the National Church at all. Admitting that he probably did for convenience, he certainly did not use the form of the English service, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." The logical form of the issue is this. Either he used the form of the National Church, including the foregoing invocation, or he did not. If he did, and meant thereby to raise Coke to a third order in the ministry, employing the terms "superintendent" and "bishop," as synonymous, then there is but one way to rescue his memory from an indelible blot, and that is the one accepted by his brother Charles — senility. For, despite the precautions of secrecy, what was done soon became known. Charles Wesley, who was in Bristol at the time, but in utter ignorance of the proceedings, gave vent to his indignation in no measured words. Pathetically, he said, having assumed this view: —

"'Twas age that made the breach, not he."

He lampooned the act in stinging words in metre: —

"So easily are bishops made
By man or woman's whim;
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?"

And when he heard of the ordination of Asbury by Coke, he lost sight of Christian charity and was guilty of satirizing the act in the quatrain — an unpardonable allusion to the humble origin of Asbury: —

"A Roman emperor, 'tis said,
His favorite horse a consul made;
But Coke brings greater things to pass,
He makes a bishop of an ass."

Charles Wesley's almost desperate resort, that of a second childhood, to account for what seemed to him a most erratic proceeding of his brother, not only in the setting apart, or ordination, as it

was at first commonly believed, of Whatcoat and Vasey, as elders or presbyters, but of Coke as a Bishop, cannot be received, and is not by any class of disputants over the affair; nor is it borne out by the facts in the case. The logical form of the question shuts up, then, to the conclusion: Wesley did not use the form of the National Church, except it may be a memoriter use of the prayers, and did not in any ecclesiastical sense set apart Coke as a Bishop. All Wesley's after explanations of what he did make this plain. Whatcoat has furnished the key to it when he says, "They [Wesley, Creighton, and Coke] formed themselves into a Presbytery." In casting about in his reading of ancient Church history Wesley found his justification. In the letter-controversy that followed with his brother Charles, the memorable sentence occurs that puts the matter in a nutshell: "I firmly believe that I am a scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove. But this does in no wise prevent my remaining in the Church of England, from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago." That is, as a presbyter I have a right to ordain presbyters, and as superintendent of the Methodists I am an *episcopos*, that is, a presiding presbyter, and this is what I did when I set apart Coke for America. In subjection to me I appointed him a superintendent for America and authorized him to set apart Francis Asbury as a joint superintendent with him, after the method of the primitive churches. The presbyters of a given locality, the churches advising, selected one of their number to be the ruling or presiding elder, or presbyter, for that locality. This is the gist of it, and the whole word-splitting controversy over it was brought about by the Episcopal bias, in the three-order sense of the ministry, of the King James translators of the Scriptures, giving to these *episcopi* the title of bishops. In fact, he had become a Presbyterian while he remained in form an Episcopalian.

It was not a new opinion. Forty years before, Lord King's account of the primitive Church convinced him "that bishops and presbyters are of one order"; in 1756 he wrote, "I still believe the Episcopal form of church government to agree with the practice and writings of the apostles" (and he explained this farther by declaring that he believed the Established Church of England the "best form for a National Church," and anent this there will be little dissent by any one); "but that it is prescribed in scripture, I do not believe." Again, in 1761, he said that

Stillingfleet had convinced him that to believe that none but episcopal ordination was valid "was an entire mistake." And finally, in 1780, prior to his actually setting apart as a presbyter, he startled his brother Charles by declaring, "I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain as to administer the Lord's Supper." After the collocation of these deliverances, the position taken that, ecclesiastically, he was a Presbyterian and not an Episcopalian seems established beyond successful contradiction. It sweeps away a great mass of cobweb spinning and fruitless logomachy of three grades of an episcopacy as proven from the Fathers in order to transfigure the simple ceremony over Coke in that private chamber into anything but an assignment of Coke by Wesley to be a superintendent with authority to confer the same office, not order, upon Asbury in America, into something else. The only excuse at all for a ceremony is found in the specious reasons urged by Coke, and the more potent fact that Wesley was the father and founder of the Methodists, and as such had a priority and an authority that may be easily conceded him.

The general view thus presented has been the traditional view of leading Wesleyan ministers, with marked exceptions, and that upon which their own Presbyterian polity is based; and it has been the declared view in logical sequence of the leading ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America from the period when the case of Bishop Andrews was made a crucial one in 1844, the action of that General Conference pronouncing that the bishopric in that Church is an office and not an order, to pave the way for the position it assumed that he could resign or they could suspend him to accomplish the purpose then in hand. True, there have been eminent dissenters since, revamping the old position that Coke and Asbury and their successors were in some sense and in some grade a third order, as well as officers in the Church they represent, a position more generally adhered to in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Tyerman, who may be accepted as a criterion of English Wesleyan sentiment, thus defines it: "What was the ordination to be? The only one possible was this. Wesley was the venerable father of the 15,000 Methodists in America. He was not able to visit them himself, but sends them Dr. Coke. The doctor pretends that it is more than possible that some of the American preachers and societies will refuse to acknowledge his authority. To remove this objection, Wesley, at Bristol, in a private room, holds a

religious service, puts his hands upon the head of Coke, and (to use his own words) sets him apart as a *superintendent* of the work in America, and gives him a written testimonial to that effect. This was all that Wesley did, and all that Wesley meant; but we greatly doubt whether it was all that the departing envoy wished. With the highest respect for Dr. Coke and his general excellencies, it is no detraction to assert that he was dangerously ambitious, and that the height of his ambition was a desire to be a bishop. . . . These are unpleasant facts; which we would rather have consigned to oblivion, had they not been necessary to vindicate Wesley from the huge inconsistency of ordaining a coequal presbyter to be a bishop. Wesley meant the ceremony to be a mere formality, likely to recommend his delegate to the favor of the Methodists in America; Coke in his ambition wished and intended it to be considered as an ordination to the bishopric."¹

So much for traditional English sentiment down to 1870. Whitehead, contemporary with the event, does not see this method of relief for Wesley's consistency; but, like Charles Wesley, whose views of ordination he supported, says ironically: "He complied with the doctor's wish, by consecrating him one of the Bishops, and Mr. Whatcoat and Vasey Presbyters of the new Methodist Episcopal Church in America. No doubt the three gentlemen were highly gratified with their new titles; as we often see both young and *old children* gratified with gilded toys, though clumsily made, and of no real worth or valuable use, except to quiet the cries of those for whom they are prepared."² Moore strongly objects to this lampooning by Whitehead, and twits him on his own alleged application to Wesley for ordination, and it may be admitted that he allowed his feelings to get the better of his judgment in his strictures. Bangs, whose "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," written about 1838, is severely partisan, dismisses the momentous event with a simple quotation of what occurred from Moore. He takes it for granted that Wesley made Coke a Bishop, and that he made Asbury a Bishop in turn, and so on in succession. Stevens, more candid and impartial, finds in it the knottiest question of his historic task, and he tackles it manfully, and in an argument covering seventeen pages of his "History of Methodism," Vol. II., he has built up a colossal fallacy, an ingenious weaving together of

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. pp. 433, 434.

² Written some years after the fact.

everything he could marshal to establish the validity of Coke's ordination, not as a third-order bishop, but as an office superior to the eldership, and made such by Wesley's ceremony at Bristol; and of Wesley's recommendation of the Episcopal form for the American Church, and his approval of all that Coke and Asbury did in the premises. It is exhaustive for that side, and by far the ablest defence that has ever been written. It was penned thirty-five years ago, and it is doubtful whether he would reproduce it to-day as satisfactory in view of the light since shed upon it. The literature that has grown up around the issue, as initiated by Alexander McCaine and others from 1827 down, and its controversion would make a volume of itself. All that is salient and essential in it on both sides may receive farther analysis later, but the thread must here be dropped, that the embarkation of Coke and his companions may not longer be delayed.

In the sixteen days that elapsed between the setting apart of the three and their departure from England it had found the ears of some of the preachers. Wesley probably, in his ingenuous way, on being interrogated as to the ceremony, spoke of it; for, as Charles said of him, "He never could keep a secret in his life;" and Coke was too full of it to keep silence, and the presumption is established that he aired himself as a Bishop for America among his friends. Henry Moore was within the confidential circle of both of them, and his unimpeached testimony is given to the public — it is true not until thirty-five years after — that he was present at some interview between Wesley and Coke in which the former took occasion to remind the latter that he meant no such inconsistent thing by the ceremony in his chamber as to make him a Bishop. Moore does not mince or qualify the matter: "With respect to the title of *bishop*, I know that Mr. Wesley enjoined the doctor and his associates, and in the most solemn manner, that it should not be taken. In a letter to Mrs. Gilbert, the widow of the excellent Nathaniel Gilbert of Antigua, a copy of which now lies before me, he states this in the strongest terms. In this and every similar deviation, I cannot be the apologist of Dr. Coke; and I can state, in contradiction of all that Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Hampson have said, that Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things; nor was he the author of one line of all that Dr. Coke published in America on this subject. His views on these points were very different from those of his zealous son in the gospel. He knew that the work of God neither needed, nor could truly be aided,

nor recommend itself to pious minds, by such additions."¹ If anything were needed to show what Wesley meant by his "setting apart," this ought to be conclusive. Moore was a close and confidential friend of both Wesley and Coke, and this must account for his willingness to conceal so important an interview for thirty-five years, from the public at least, knowing how important its bearing was upon the controverted point. It is, however, not the only instance of the kind involving the issues of 1820-30 in which a secret was kept, for no other apparent reason than that the possessor of it felt how damaging it would be to the view himself espoused at the time.²

In addition to the "plan of church government," or "a little sketch," as Wesley himself titles it, he prepared the following circular letter, Moore says, "to be printed and circulated in America:"—

BRISTOL, September 10, 1784.

To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America :

1. By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the British empire, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the state Assemblies ; but no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice ; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

2. Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. pp. 279, 280.

² This is the case, and it is of great moment. August 9 and 30, 1876, Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce of Georgia wrote two letters to his friend, Rev. Dr. Perrine, in which he makes the disclosure that, while travelling with Bishop Ashury in 1811, he said one day after a long and lonely ride, "I judge the time will come when our *people* will seek a *representative power* in our Legislative Conference," etc. The italics are supplied. So it seems that Dr. Pierce kept this a secret for sixty-five years, and he excuses his concealment on the ground that he makes it at the "only time I think in which it has ever been called for by the pending issues." Marvellous indeed ! Was not the controversy of 1820-30 such a proper time ? And is it not plain that Dr. Pierce did not then reveal it because himself opposed to the Reform movement of that period ? How powerfully it would have helped this cause had he opened his lips in candor, and revealed what he knew of Ashury's vaticinations. See the whole matter discussed by the author in the *Methodist Protestant*, of October 7, 1876, of which paper he was then editor. The only difference between Moore and Pierce is that the former concealed what he knew for thirty-five, and the latter sixty-five years. Further comment is unnecessary.

preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there are none either to baptize or administer the Lord's Supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end: and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America. As also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national church in the world), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying *extempore* on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present, I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object. 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us? 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

JOHN WESLEY.

Drew, Coke's biographer, says of this letter, which he gives in full, that it was prepared by Wesley in the interval of Coke's waiting in London, and which Dr. Coke "was directed to print and circulate among the societies on his arrival in America." Moore probably obtained this item of information already cited from Drew. A few observations on this circular are called for, though full consideration will be given it later. It was not printed and circulated among the American societies, as Wesley directed, "on his (Coke's) arrival in America." An essential portion of paragraph four was suppressed by Coke at the Christmas Conference, with Asbury's knowledge and approval. The suppressed portion begins with the words, "And I have prepared

a liturgy," etc., down to the close of the paragraph. The probable reasons for this unwarrantable suppression will be given later. Wesley's excuses for not deferring longer for ordination to the Bishops of the National Church require comment. The first, the refusal of the Bishop of London, has already been considered,—by canon law it was impossible for him to consent without an exceedingly loose construction of his prerogatives. They would be "slow," Wesley says, even if consent could be obtained, and the "matter admits of no delay." This is a curious reason, when it is considered that for four years the same urgency existed. "If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern them. And how grievously this would entangle us!" This is the true reason. Wesley could not entertain for a moment any expedient that deprived him of headship over the Methodists of the world. But for this reason it would have been easy enough at this period to secure ordination for the American preachers through legitimate channels Episcopally considered. Wesley was aware of it when he made these excuses. For early in 1784 Dr. Samuel Seabury of Connecticut was elected by a voluntary convention of the clergy of that state a Bishop. But how should he get consecration? He went to England, but finding the See of Canterbury vacant, and the Archbishop of York unable to take measures for the consecration of an American citizen without consent of Parliament, thus making a long delay unavoidable, he proceeded to Scotland, and received consecration from the Bishops of the Scotch Episcopal Church, and was ordained at Aberdeen on November 14, 1784. Through him Wesley, or for that Asbury himself, might have obtained Episcopal ordination, and thus American Methodism would have been corporately, what it was ostensibly, a part of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. It is to these facts that Charles Wesley refers, when, on April 28, 1785, he wrote to Dr. Chandler, an Episcopal clergyman, who was about to embark for America, "Had they [the American preachers] had patience a little longer, they would have seen a real Bishop in America, consecrated by three Scottish Bishops, who have their consecration from the English Bishops, and are acknowledged by them as the same with themselves."¹ But to Wesley it meant that dreaded thing, separation from him; besides, it is in farther proof how far he had modified his earliest views of Episcopacy and succession.² He was, as found, a

¹ Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 444.

² About this matter one is struck with the iteration of Stevens in his "His-

veritable Presbyterian, though clinging to the last to the Church home of his father and his childhood. Asbury was certainly aware of Seabury's ordination in Scotland and of his return about the time of the Christmas Conference;¹ but had not Wesley sent Coke over, it would no more have suited Asbury than it did Wesley, and for a similar reason: it would have deprived him of the Primacy over American preachers and people, even if he had been recognized on application to Seabury as a Bishop. It would have made him a simple diocesan instead of a continental Primate. But to Wesley's circular letter. As reflecting his change of views as to Episcopacy, in his fourth reason he speaks of the National Church as "the English hierarchy." Nowhere

tory," like the following foot-note — "Asbury's consecration to the episcopate was the first Protestant ordination of the kind *in* the New World, but Coke's was the first *for* it." Again — "The first Protestant bishop of the New World," and much to the same purpose, running through his work. On the theory that Coke was made a true bishop by the ceremony of Wesley at Bristol, you can partly account for this exultation over priority. Yes, Coke was set apart September 2, 1784, and Seabury, not until November 14, 1784, so Coke is ahead by two months and a half. And yet Stevens and M. E. Church authors generally scout the idea in their sober moments that Coke was made a bishop hierarchically understood. The bishopric is an office, not an order, they say, that is, since 1844, but like an efflorescence it blooms out ever and anon. Asbury was the first bishop of the New World. In the race, Eclipse is first, and that puts the other entries "nowhere." Pardon is craved, but it provokes a nausea. It might be retorted Seabury was *elected* first, and so dispute the palm. All this aping of the thing down to gowns and bands, and other millinery, reads between the lines like a tacit confession that the *Episcopacy* of American Methodism is a sham, and needs to be feathered and furbelowed to hide it. It is to be sincerely hoped that no future historian of the M. E. Church will perpetuate this brag. Dear brethren, "reform it altogether."

¹ In evidence the following extract from a letter found in an Appendix to "An Inquiry into the Validity of Methodist Episcopacy, with an Appendix, containing two original documents never before published, by an Episcopalian of the State of Maryland" (Rev. John Kewley). See Asbury's "Journal," Vol. III. p. 248, edition 1852. Wilmington, 1807. 12mo, 68 pp. Copy in author's possession. Said letter was written by Dr. Andrews to Dr. Smith, giving an account of an interview between Mr. West, Dr. Andrews, Dr. Coke, and Mr. Asbury. The letter states that an interview was appointed on or before the meeting of the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, the letter itself bearing date, "Baltimore, December 31, 1784. Dr. Coke "came at the appointed hour, six in the evening, and brought with him Mr. Goff [Gough] and Mr. Asbury." The Episcopalian informed them that they had seen Wesley's letter of September, 1784, addressed to Asbury and the American preachers, and wished to know if arrangements could not be made to consolidate the Methodist with the Protestant Episcopal Church. "The plan of church government which we had instituted in this state was very simple, and, as we trusted, a very rational plan: that it was to be exercised by a convention consisting of an equal number of laity and clergy, and having for their president a bishop, elected by the whole body of the clergy." It was farther suggested that Dr. Coke could be consecrated as a bishop, as "we could see no impropriety in having two bishops in one state, one of which

else in all his writings does he so designate it. It is not so spoken of by Episcopalians. It is a Romish coinage and carries with it all that is offensive ideally of priestly rule. If he would not dare to entangle them again with it, it may be assumed that he was not enamoured of it himself. "They are now at full liberty to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church." For the honor and unity of American Methodism one cannot forbear the wish, Would that they had!

In the interval of the British Conference of 1784 and the departure of Coke and his associates for America, Wesley employed such leisure as he could command in editing the Book of Common Prayer. It was used in most of the Methodist chapels, but needed some emendations for America. This amended book is very rare, but the M. E. Book Concern in New York has recently reissued it and a copy is consulted. The original title was: "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America, with other occasional services. London, printed in the year

might always be elected from among the people called Methodists, so long as that distinction should be kept up among them." To these proposals Dr. Coke made answer that the utmost he could do would be to submit the proposal to Mr. Wesley. The matter is discussed between them, Coke pointing out the difficulties in the way. The interview ended with no practical results, the letter ending with this paragraph, giving the conclusions of the Episcopalians, "Thus ended our negotiations which served no other purpose than to discover to us that the *minds of these gentlemen are not wholly free from resentment*, and it is a point which among them is indispensably necessary, that *Mr. Wesley be the first link of the chain upon which their church is suspended.*" The italics are in the letter. It vindicates these conclusions, and it may be that the proposals were in no wise more acceptable because of the church government—"an equal number of the laity and clergy." Neither Wesley, nor Coke, nor Asbury, had any use for a laity in church councils. They were simply the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Further use of this pamphlet of Kewley's will be made later. The suggestions of the Episcopalians must have been based upon their knowledge of the arrival of Bishop Seabury as a "consecrated" man.

This last note, as to Dr. Andrews's interview with Coke and Asbury, was written by the author in 1894. Recently, December, 1898, it is verified in a monogram just published with the title, "The Garrison Church," sketches of the history of St. Thomas's Parish. Garrison Forest, Baltimore County, Md., 1742-1852. By the Rev. Ethan Allen, D.D. Edited by Rev. Hobart Smith, rector of St. Thomas's parish, 1898, with additional sketches. Printed by Paul & Falconer, New York. James Pott & Company. For sale by E. Allen Lycett, Baltimore, Md. This monogram contains the explicit statement as given by the *Baltimore Sun*, in a notice of the book, that "One of the rectors, Dr. John Andrews, afterward provost of the University of Pennsylvania, tried when at Garrison Forest, to persuade Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury not to separate from the church when they met for this purpose at the Christmas Conference of the Methodists in 1784." This establishes, not the fact only as to Dr. Andrews, but the reliability of Dr. John Kewley as a historiographer. The Garrison Forest Church was built in 1741, and has had a continuous history ever since.

MDCCLXXXIV." The original preface to it is republished with the edition of 1893. In it Wesley says, "Little alteration is made in the following edition (which I recommend to our societies in America) except," etc. The holy days are omitted, the Lord's Day service abridged, some sentences in the office of Baptism and the Burial of the Dead omitted, for their Romish and water-regenerating drift, as well as some of the imprecatory Psalms, etc. Stevens says it also contained forms for "ordaining superintendents, elders, and deacons, the Articles of Religion, and a Collection of Psalms and Hymns." The late American edition does not conform to this, and altogether is an accommodational reprint. It was brought over by Coke in the sheets, probably for the portable advantage. There is no intimation by any one how large the edition was, but it is fairly presumable that it was enough for the wants of the societies, now numbering fifteen thousand members, should they adopt it. Wesley's obvious purpose was to conform the American societies more fully to the Wesleyan model under his authority, but with not so much as a dream of a Church, or else he would have enjoined it instead of modestly recommending it. Simple and indisputable as was the object, it is made to play an important part in the controversy of 1827-30, as shall be shown.

Thus accoutred, Dr. Coke and his associates, Whatcoat and Vasey, set sail from Bristol at ten o'clock on the morning of the 18th of September, 1784. He is possessed of his credentials as a superintendent, the little sketch, the circular letter addressed to the societies, and the Sunday Service, besides his luggage, including the canonicals, in which, like Wesley and other clergymen, he always officiated, with his books and papers. The vessel was bound for New York. After a tempestuous voyage of six weeks they reached their destination, November 3. He spent his time as a godly man should, in reading and prayer. The life of Xavier, the Catholic missionary, occupied him, as well as Hoadley on "Conformity and Episcopacy," and Augustine's "Meditations," and, to relieve the monotony, the "Pastorals" of Virgil, and, above all, his Greek New Testament. Disembarking, the three were met and conducted to the house of Stephen Sands, a member and trustee of the John Street chapel. John Dickins, the city preacher, was introduced, and as he was book agent and a leading preacher, Coke disclosed to him, Stevens says, "the scheme which he brought from Wesley. Dickins, being one of the Fluvanna brethren, emphatically approved it,

and requested that it might at once be announced to the public, assured that it would be received with joy. Coke deemed it expedient to disclose it no further till he could consult Asbury." Stevens gleaned this information probably from Coke's Journal, which Hampson cites to the effect that he opened Wesley's plan to a preacher in New York (Dickins it was), that he highly approved it, and, Coke adds, "he pressed me earnestly to make it public, because, as he justly observed, Mr. Wesley had determined the point, and therefore it was not to be investigated, but complied with." W. S. Stockton, the father of lay-representation in America among laymen, in the *Methodist Protestant* of December 28, 1844, points out that this "plan" could be no other than the "little sketch," and no one can doubt it. It is initial of the Christmas Conference business, and for its further full analysis a new chapter is demanded.

CHAPTER XXIII

The conscience of humanity rewrites history — "Methodist Episcopacy" rewritten by Alexander McCaine — Antecedents of the Christmas Conference — "Little sketch" of Wesley fully considered; Coke's disposition of it finally — Coke and Asbury at Barratt's chapel, 1784; interesting particulars; their private interview; Wesley's plan rejected, and Asbury's adopted by the "superintendents"; secret preliminaries to the Christmas Conference at Perry Hall — Asbury sees his opportunity, and his superior strategy prevails over Wesley and Coke — The Conference; who were present; order of the business; what was done; suppression of the Ritual paragraph in Wesley's letter and the motive for it explained — Were Coke and Asbury "elected"? fully considered — Asbury's credential from Coke — Garrettson a dissenter to the general superintendency — A Church organized of ministers, *by* ministers, and *for* ministers — Coke's explanation to Wesley of what they did — Asbury's ordination; to what?

A MODERN author has aptly said, "History is the conscience of humanity, since we are always looking at it from new points of view, and rewriting it in sympathy with our own feelings." No annalist, perhaps, can entirely divest himself of these feelings. Under its influence the proceedings of the chief actors in the Christmas Conference have been elaborately unfolded and justified in histories and monographs, so that nothing is left to be said on that side of it. The conscience of humanity, however, has never been satisfied with it. For three-quarters of a century it has been doubted and rewritten, and by no one so thoroughly as by Alexander McCaine in his trio of publications, "The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," his "Defence of the Truth," and his "Letters on the M. E. Church," with fugitive contributions. Unhappily, like James O'Kelly, he was irate, somewhat overbearing, bold to bluntness, and handled personal character unglorified. It shall be the object of the writer to avoid extremes in traversing the same ground, but with the confession that his convictions are not in sympathy with the apologists of Coke and Asbury in the transactions of the Christmas Conference.

It has been found that Coke divulged the plan of Wesley for the government of the American societies to John Dickins, who approved and urged its immediate publication as determined by Wesley, and, therefore, not to be considered, but executed. Much

space has been given to these antecedents, but it will be found that satisfactorily settled much space will be saved when the heart of this ancient controversy is touched, in thus brushing away the irrelevant ramblings and inconsequent arguments which have entangled it. If, as Stevens says, Dickins was still an exponent of the Fluvanna brethren, then it may be safely assumed that the "plan" did not conflict with their liberal views, and hence did not suit either Coke or Asbury. It is difficult to ascertain precisely when Dickins's tergiversation as to church politics began; but it may be doubted whether he was at this time even as liberal as when he led the argument for a Presbyterian polity. And, on the other hand, it must be assumed that the "plan" was not that of Coke and Asbury, or there would have been no motive in suppressing it so that no trace of it has ever been found. The interrogations of McCaine to the preachers contemporary with Dickins and the early Bishops utterly failed of any admission that any one of them had ever seen it, or, indeed, ever heard of it. Coke probably lost his opportunity when he declined to make it public, as Dickins proposed. For on either of the foregoing suppositions he would have held the vantage. If the "plan" were a liberal one, Coke, by espousing it publicly before he conferred with Asbury—as nothing was plainer than that unless Wesley's authority was to be disputed or impaired it was not to be considered, but executed—would have brought over to him that large majority of the preachers and the people who favored such a plan, and no doubt still secretly entertained it. Such a course would have gathered about him an influence that Asbury would have found much more difficult to contravene than in the case of the Fluvanna brethren. If the "plan" were in accord with Coke's and Asbury's view he had nothing to lose by publishing at once. It may be said that something of courtesy was due Asbury before such a step was taken, and that this was the reason for Coke's refusal to divulge it publicly. But if this had any influence with Coke the same courtesy demanded that he should not have revealed it first to Dickins. By such reasoning a strong presumption, at least, is raised that the "plan" ran in neither of these grooves, and, if so, it establishes a moral certainty that it was Wesleyan simply; and, if so, then what it was is foreshadowed by Wesley's polity with the English Conference with, perhaps, such circumstantial differences as the emergency that made a "plan" for the American societies a necessity required. At least four things may therefore be assumed as parts of it: it did

not authorize, in the widest construction that could be placed upon it, the organization of a Church. This Wesley would never tolerate. It did not mean that the "setting apart" of Coke and Asbury as "superintendents" was anything more than the subsequent setting apart of Mather for Scotland and Black for Nova Scotia as superintendents under Wesley. Neither of these ever presumed upon their self-evident office and work as, it will be seen, did Coke and Asbury. It was never intended that Wesley's authority should be less absolute and permanent than it was in England. It may be also safely assumed that it contained no liberal provisions. All of these assumptions will be reduced to moral certainties as the story of American Methodism unfolds. The upshot of the "little sketch," then, is that Dickins kept the secret; Asbury, when it was divulged to him, dissented to its provisions; Coke concurred, suppressed, and, finally, destroyed it. It will appear again in this History only as it forms a part of the McCaine-Emory controversy of 1827-30.¹

It is well to remember that the transactions in England as to the ordinations had become quite generally known in America through the correspondence of Asbury with Wesley and Shadford; and the public papers, so far as they took cognizance of Methodist affairs at home, so that the coming of Dr. Coke and his companions was not a surprise, though the particulars of their commission were not known even by Asbury. Coke himself says in his Journal, "By some means or other the whole country has been, as it were, expecting, and Mr. Asbury looking out for me for some time." Asbury's semiannual tours of the continental work were methodical, so that it was not difficult to guess his probable whereabouts at any time. Coke ascertained in New York that he was coming northward and was put upon his trail. He did not wait, therefore, for him to reach New York in course of travel, though but a few weeks would probably have elapsed. "The king's business requireth haste," and this business is characterized with it to a suspicious degree, considering the momentous issues involved and the steps taken. So that Coke, after tarrying but a few days in New York, preaching and taking in the situation, hastened to Philadelphia, which he reached on Saturday evening of the same week. On Sabbath he preached for Dr. Magaw at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and at St. George's to the Methodist Society at night. Monday he was introduced to Dr.

¹ The reader is apprised that this "little sketch" matter is thoroughly considered in a foot-note towards the close of the tenth chapter of the second volume.

White, afterward bishop, and the governor of the state. Learning that Asbury was in Delaware, he set out and reached Bassett's house in Dover where he met Garrettson, then a young American preacher whom he much admired. The next day, Sabbath, he reached, with Whatcoat, Barratt's chapel. Asbury is also in the immediate neighborhood, but did not make himself known. Coke took the pulpit and, in his full canonicals, preached to a "noble congregation," he says, "in the midst of a forest." Asbury was an auditor. It gave him time to look the stranger over, and he must have been pleased with him. Let Coke tell what happened: "After the sermon a plain, robust man came up to me in the pulpit and kissed me. I thought it could be no other than Mr. Asbury, and I was not deceived. I administered the sacrament after preaching to five or six hundred communicants, and held a love-feast. It was the best season I ever knew except at Charlemont in Ireland. After dinner Mr. Asbury and I had a private conversation on the future management of our affairs in America. He informed me that he had received some intimations of my arrival on the continent and had collected a considerable number of the preachers to form a council, and if they were of opinion that it would be expedient immediately to call a Conference it should be done. They were accordingly sent for, and, after debate, were unanimously of that opinion. We therefore sent off Freeborn Garrettson, like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left, and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas Eve." Garrettson, long years after in his semi-centennial sermon, gives about the same account of it. Asbury says of it: "Sunday, 14th — I came to Barratt's chapel: here to my great joy I met these dear men of God, Dr. Coke and Richard Whatcoat; we were greatly comforted together. The Doctor preached on "Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Having had no opportunity of conversing with them before service, I was greatly surprised to see brother Whatcoat assist by taking the cup in the administration of the Lord's Supper. I was shocked when first informed of the intention of these, my brethren, in coming to this country: it may be of God. My answer then was, if the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have heretofore done by Mr. Wesley's appointment. The design of organizing the Methodists into an Independent Episcopal Church was opened to the preachers present, and it was agreed to call a General Conference to meet at Baltimore the

ensuing Christmas." The implications of this statement contain the gist of the whole matter. It makes it plain how it all came about. He adds, "My soul is deeply engaged with God to know His will in this new business." Not a doubt need be entertained of it. All his reading, all his prepossessions, all his conscience, all his purposes, were in the plan. He cemented it with his prayers. There is a tradition that at the quarterly meeting, which was called for Barratt's, ten of the preachers who had come at Asbury's call were privately informed of his plan for organizing a Methodist Episcopal Church. After hearing him six of them, it is said, dissented, and four concurred. Some five more afterward came in, and these fifteen, with Coke to assist, were "labored with," the plan being again opened to the preachers present, and it was agreed to — not the plan — "but to call a General Conference."¹ What had become of Thomas Vasey, Coke's and Whatcoat's companion? He had made a detour, being more intent upon preaching than scheming, in the surrounding country. Asbury came up with him, two days after the Barratt chapel interview, at Bohemia Manor.

It is no loss, perhaps, to the religious world that no minutes were ever made, much less published, of the conversations between Coke and Asbury in that after-dinner talk at Barratt's home, "a private conversation on the management of our affairs in America." What Wesley directed them to do and what they afterward did were so incongruous, and so questionable, that it is well that no man knows to this day. Asbury discloses a single feature, and it is pregnant of consequences, "My answer then was, if the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have heretofore done by Mr. Wesley's appointment." It may be safely assumed that in that Sabbath afternoon private interview Coke showed Asbury the plan, or the "little sketch," his credentials as a superintendent, conveying authority to set him apart for the same position, and the circular letter to be printed and circulated among the societies. A crisis had arrived and Asbury was quick to perceive it, hence his demurrer. A joint superintendent with Coke. It did not accord with his purposes. Did Coke inform him how solemnly Wesley had charged him that the title of bishop as synonymous with superintendent should not be assumed, as Coke had given him reason to suspect would be the case? Under Asbury's cross-examination it may be concluded that nothing was kept back. He finds Asbury

¹ See *Methodist Protestant*, Vol. II. p. 268.

a pronounced hierarchist and a believer in apostolical succession, views most in accord with his own. A joint superintendent with Coke. He was to be watched and reported to Wesley by one equal in authority. Had he not been the paternal head of the American Methodists for thirteen years? Was he still to be under "tutors and governors," the chief three thousand miles distant? There were reasonable and honest objections to it, and it will be found that a few years after, when Wesley more fully appreciated what was done at the Christmas Conference and remonstrated with Asbury for his apparent insubordination, he frankly uncovered. Wesley writes, 1789, "I received some letters from Mr. Asbury affirming that no person in Europe knew how to direct those in America."¹ Prior to this he had written to Brackenbury, as Coke relates in his famous letter to Wesley, urging his own ordination, "he saw a letter in London from Mr. Asbury, in which he observed that he would not receive any person deputed by you to take any part of the superintendency of the work invested in him, or words evidently implying so much." In the introductory chapter the position is taken for this stage of the History that "a tripartite contention will be disclosed as the key to the mystery of otherwise unaccountable transactions of these three in dealing with each other." The beginning of it is disclosed. It shall be developed step by step, and the conclusion then reached vindicated.

In the hours of the Sabbath afternoon in a private interview Coke and Asbury arrived at an understanding. What it was will be unfolded at the Christmas Conference. Other details were talked about, for Coke says, "he and I have agreed to use our joint endeavors to establish a school or college." It is the sequel to suggestions which had been made by John Dickins, who had the English Kingswood school in mind, some time before. Just forty days would elapse before Christmas. An immense amount of work had to be done meantime. Garrettsen to notify all the eighty-three preachers widely scattered, and mail facilities almost nugatory for such hasty business. Asbury generalised the campaign. Coke says farther of the Barratt meeting: "Mr. Asbury had also drawn up for me a route of about a thousand miles in the meantime. He has also given me his black man (Harry by name) and borrowed an excellent horse for me. I exceedingly reverence Mr. Asbury; he has so much wisdom and consideration, so much meekness and love; and, under all this, though hardly to be

¹ McCaine's "Defence of the Truth," pp. 97-99.

perceived, so much command and authority." It is a pen-picture indeed. He was already under the spell of that magnetic presence.

The route mapped out by Asbury carried Coke over much of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. "Black Harry was small in stature and perfectly black, but had eyes of remarkable brilliancy and keenness, and singular readiness and aptness of speech." He travelled extensively with Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, and Garrettson. He was as popular with the white as with the colored congregations. Indeed, he acceptably took the place of those with whom he travelled. Flattery and hospitality led him to the use of wine, and he fell from grace. He recovered, however, was reinstated in confidence, resumed his labors, and died in Philadelphia in 1810, followed to his grave by a great procession of whites and blacks. Thomas Ware met with Coke and gives a good description of him, which Stevens cites, as well as a fragment of his conversation as to Asbury: "In the presence of Mr. Asbury I feel myself a child. He is, in my estimate, the most apostolic man I ever saw, except Mr. Wesley." He baptized in this tour thousands of children, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated almost whenever he preached. The purity of his English, the fluency of his style, and the evangelical fervor drew great crowds to hear him. Meanwhile Asbury, with Whatcoat and Vasey, had taken the Western Shore of Maryland. Everywhere they went they talked of the plan agreed upon, not Wesley's plan in the "little sketch," though the publication of it and its dissemination among the congregations would have expedited information, but Asbury's plan for a Methodist Episcopal Church. At the Calvert quarterly meeting he met Poythress, a leader among the preachers. "Brother Poythress and myself had much talk about the new plan." He does not say that Poythress approved it. A few days afterward he records, "I observed this day as a day of fasting and prayer, that I might know the will of God in the matter that is shortly to come before our Conference; the preachers and people seem much pleased with the projected plan; I myself am led to think it is of the Lord. I am not tickled with the honor to be gained — I see danger in the way. My soul waits upon God. Oh, that He may lead us in the way we should go. Part of my time is, and must necessarily be, taken up with preparation for the Conference." Later, "The Rev. M. W——s and myself had an interesting conversation on the subject of the Episcopal mode of church government." What was the honor he ingenuously confesses did not tickle him? Surely

not the simple setting apart of himself to be a joint superintendent with Coke. He was already that in fact, the form of it was nothing, if it was to mean only what Wesley meant when he set apart Coke for the same relation. But a godly man such as he was would see danger in being a Bishop of a Methodist Episcopal Church. It loomed up before him and he had a struggle with the phantom. December 14 he met Dr. Coke at Abingdon, "Mr. Richard Dallam kindly taking him there in his coach. . . . We talked of our affairs in great love." They were together at Perry Hall on the 18th, and remained until the morning of the 24th. William Black, the English missionary for the British dominions in Canada and "superintendent," also met them. He was south trying to secure recruits for his work. They all met, except Whatcoat, at Perry Hall on the 17th of December. Coke says, "It is the most elegant and spacious building in this state. Here," he adds, "I have a noble room to myself, where Mr. Asbury and I may, in the course of the week, mature everything for the Conference." Whatcoat arrived on the 19th. Black says they then began the revision of "the Rules and Minutes," and made other provisions for the approaching session, adds Stevens. Four days were spent in this task. One might wish that they had told all about it. Out of it some excuse might be framed for what they did, but business that requires concealment is always open to suspicion. It may be groundless, but the burden of proof lies upon those who conduct business in secret, or their apologists. All being in readiness and their respective parts agreed upon, Asbury and Coke, Whatcoat and Vasey, as well as Black, and it may be others in the vicinage, travelled to Baltimore, fifteen miles distant, starting early on the morning of the 24th of December, so that they reached Lovely Lane chapel in time to organize the first General Conference at 10 o'clock A.M. The chapel was not yet finished, but a stove was provided and backs put to the seats for the comfort of the preachers.

Reader, look in upon the gathering. There are conflicting data both as to the day the Conference convened and the number present. The date named is that now agreed upon, and the number of preachers present sixty-five, including Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat, and Vasey, out of eighty-three — the whole number of itinerants. Garrettson, who was there, could congratulate himself on the success of his endeavor to notify them, though Jesse Lee in his "History" intimates that he could have done even better, but being fond of preaching he loitered on his way, and, in conse-

quence, some of the more southern preachers did not get notice, himself among them. McCaine, who had unequalled opportunities and diligently employed them, says of those who assembled: "A list of the names of the members now lies before me; but whether it is correct or not we have no means of ascertaining. Instead, therefore, of transcribing their names we shall give the number of those who are marked present, and the years they were in the travelling connection when the Conference met." Dr. Coke says "About sixty were present, and most of these were young men." "Of these," says McCaine, "one had travelled 10 years; three, 9 years; three, 8 years; eight, 7 years; four, 6 years; six, 5 years; eight, 4 years; thirteen, 3 years; eight, 2 years; and eleven, 1 year."¹ This analysis shows forty of them had travelled under four years and were probably under twenty-five years of age. Coke was thirty-seven and Asbury thirty-nine, quite a father among these striplings, and fourteen years in America. The minutes were printed the following spring in Philadelphia, bound up with the Sunday Service sheets, which Coke had brought over; but there are no official documents of this Conference, save what is in the printed Minutes of 1795, and the "Discipline" of that year, so that the information is very meagre. Glimpses are furnished by Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat, Ware, Garrettson, O'Kelly, and Watters, who were present. Were there any spectators? Coke preached every day at noon, and it is probable that the society members came at this time, but during the deliberations Wesley's and Asbury's method of closed doors was observed. McCaine says, "We have never seen any document which would justify us in saying that sittings and deliberations of that Conference were conducted with open doors." The Conference began on the morning of the 24th, Friday, and ended on Monday, January 3, 1785. Stevens endeavors to furnish something of a consecutive account of the proceedings by a patchwork method, the best that could be done. Observe what can be made of it.

Dr. Coke presided as Wesley's appointed superintendent. Religious service ended, Stevens says, "Coke presented a letter from Wesley, dated Bristol, September 10, 1874, and addressed to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America." Let the reader refer back to chapter 22d and keep the full text of it before him. Stevens gives it, minus the section of paragraph fourth. Lee, as early as 1810 gives it, and Bangs, minus the

¹ "Letters on M. E. Church," 1850, pp. 77, 78.

suppressed section. Not one of them furnishes any hint that the text had been tampered with. The first did not know it probably, though in its official form it was printed in the minutes of the British Conference of 1785.¹ The last two did know it. As they do not explain their own silence it must be explained for them as far as it can be.

The explanation offered is, that it was the first of three palpable departures by Coke, with Asbury's approval, of Wesley's instructions, and it is printed in its garbled form in the minutes of the Christmas Conference. Finding it in this altered form, officially published as the letter Wesley sent, they discreetly, for their side of the story, leave it alone. It is dangerous to touch — it is verbal dynamite. It may be well to reproduce the omitted section. "And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted National Church in the world), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's Day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day." It seems impossible to conjecture the motive for this liberty with Wesley's letter intended for the societies. Even McCaine, ready as he was to construe and find motives, does not attempt to assign any. The fact of its omission is the material point.² There is no evidence that Coke's credential as "superintendent" was read to the Conference.

Perhaps the motive for the suppression of the liturgy paragraph may be found in the opening of the letter, "Whereas many of the people of the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine

¹ O'Kelly gives the letter in full, in his "Apology." My copy was printed at Pittsburgh, Pa., but the imprint has no date, though it must have been not later than 1800. He claims that it is a literal copy, and in it the letter is broken into twenty paragraphs, each one numbered, so that the suppressed portion forms a distinct one, and is numbered fourteen. Lee's "History" was not published until 1810, and he must have known of O'Kelly's "Apology." This makes it the more strange that he should have followed the mutilated copy in the minutes of 1785, and not the true letter. Perhaps at that time he felt that he should give not what Wesley gave, but what the "superintendents" chose to give of it.

² Several years after these statements were written the writer discovered that the full text of this letter was also printed very shortly after the adjournment of the Christmas Conference in the *Baltimore Gazette* by an anonymous writer who is severely arraigned for it by other correspondents as violative of a confidence among these early officials. This new phase is fully treated near the close of the tenth chapter of the second volume of this history, to which the reader is referred in course.

and discipline of the Church of England," etc. It would have flatly contradicted any intimation that Wesley had given his consent, not to say his approval, to the organization of an independent Church, which Coke and Asbury had predetermined. Its suppression is the more remarkable from the fact that on its evidence Coke, in his urgent letter to Wesley asking for some form of ordination, relied to overcome the objection of the American preachers to his authority, which he assumed would exist. There is not the slightest evidence that Wesley's "plan" for the government of the American societies committed to Coke was exhibited. Unlike the credential, it never saw the light, and must have been destroyed by Coke. This "little sketch," more than the credential, would have forestalled the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church as having the countenance of Wesley. With the aid of these side-lights a reason for the mutilation of the circular letter of Wesley appears. It implicates with emphasis that Wesley meant to continue his absolute direction of the American societies as such and not as a Church. The first two of these facts, the mutilation of the circular letter and the suppression of Coke's credential, are not denied, and for the reason that they could not be, are never referred to by the apologists of Coke and Asbury. The third fact, the suppression and final destruction of the "little sketch," is never referred to, except by Dr. Emory in his "Defence of Our Fathers," a reply to McCaine's "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy." It is so cogently put by the latter that it was impossible for the former to evade it, and his absolutely puerile explanation shall be considered in the proper connection.

Constructively, the reader and writer are spectators of the daily sessions. It will be remembered that the American Conferences, like the British, were not voting but simply deliberative gatherings of the preachers. Wesley for England, Coke for a series of years by appointment for Ireland, Rankin and Asbury for America,—the method was the same. "On hearing every preacher for or against what is in debate, the right of determination shall rest with him (the presiding Wesley or Coke or Asbury) according to the minutes." So after the reading of the mutilated circular letter, what next was done? The personnel of the body again invites attention. There are forty who had travelled less than four years and do not average over twenty-five years of age. They are a ruddy, rugged class, mostly dressed in "Virginia cloth," an excellent homespun. They listened eagerly and

prayed fervently, for this was their part; not one of them, perhaps, opened his lips during the Conference. Of the remaining twenty-one it may be that a short dozen took part in the questions and answers which were proposed, for that was a method also. Asbury was venerated; for most of them were his "sons in the gospel," and he called them by their given names. He is a striking figure, an impressive presence, as he sits with Dr. Coke, now "Superintendent in America," clad in full canonicals, and so the cynosure of all eyes. He is genial, but authoritative. What was next done? Nobody knows. Stevens says the next thing was "in accordance with this document" (the circular letter). "It was agreed," and he quotes Asbury in his *Journal*, "to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons." But certainly that was not done quite so precipitately. It must be taken as preliminary that Coke opened his commission verbally, and a straight guess may be made, from what did take place, that he informed the preachers of his new office, and that he was authorized to "set apart" their beloved Asbury as a "joint superintendent" with himself. Mr. Wesley had at last responded to their entreaties for ordination and the sacraments. It was a strong point. It was what the Fluvanna men had long been urging, and the Asbury men were equally anxious, so that it should be Episcopally done. They were agreed anent this as a necessity of their situation. Coke advanced cautiously, keeping Wesley well in front of him, for that was another vital point.

It has been seen how a letter from Wesley through Asbury quelled disaffection and was an end of all strife. He had sent over by Coke a Sunday Service adapted to America; a prayer book, with articles of religion and forms for ordaining, not bishops, priests, and deacons, but superintendents, elders, and deacons. It meant about the same thing, Coke likely suggested. And since he had conferred with Mr. Asbury, and saw the actual condition of things in America, it had occurred to him that what they needed, seeing he had come with full authority and Mr. Wesley was three thousand miles away, was to be organized into a Church and go on in an independent career subject to the authority of Wesley, under him and Asbury, in matters of church government. Indeed, he was quite sure that there would be no difficulty about it so far as Wesley was concerned, for did not the letter say that they were "now free to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church"? It may be that the "little sketch" was now in his side coat-pocket. But had he not been acting for

Mr. Wesley in Ireland, and often in England assumed what he was not authorized to do? It has been found that he often did, and was chided and rebuked for it. Stevens says that it is certain that the following of the preachers were present: Garretson, Gill, Ellis, Cole, Ivy, O'Kelly, Hagerty, Reed, Cromwell, Lambert, Dickins, Glendenning, Poythress, Everett, Black of Nova Scotia, Phoebus, and Ware. And Lednum gives a conjectural list of others who from contiguity of territory are assumed to have been present. Among these are found Dromgoole, the senior of them all, having travelled ten years, Peddicord, Cox, Forrest, Bruce, Hickson, Moriarty, and others not so conspicuous in history.

In order of time Stevens puts the organization of the Conference into an Episcopal Church, first, and the recognition of Coke and Asbury as superintendents, second. There is no evidence of this, however, and it does not seem antecedently probable, for after they had become an Independent Church the question of Wesley's appointment of Coke and the authority to set apart Asbury for a joint position had lost its significance. However, Stevens proceeds, "Asbury declined ordination to the superintendency, unless, in addition to the appointment of Wesley, his brethren should formally elect him to the office. Coke and he were unanimously elected superintendents." Thus the pregnant events of the Conference are set forth. As to the latter act the testimony is inextricably mixed. Stevens makes his averment on the statement of Lee's "History," but Lee was not present. Whatcoat, who has left in his Journal the most specific account, does not mention the election. He furnishes one item of legislation, however, no one else gives. He says, "On the 24th we rode to Baltimore; at ten o'clock we began our Conference, in which we agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, *in which the Liturgy* (as presented by the Rev. John Wesley) *should be read*, and the sacraments be administered by a superintendent, elders, and deacons, who shall be ordained by a presbytery, using the Episcopal form, as prescribed in the Rev. Mr. Wesley's prayer book. Persons to be ordained are to be nominated by the superintendent, elected by the Conference, and ordained by the imposition of the hands of the superintendent and elders; *the superintendent has a negative voice.*" The italics are his own. In the first instance they refer to the fact contained in the suppressed portion of the circular letter, for the matter of the prayer book was submitted to the Conference and it was accepted, though the use of it soon fell into desuetude with the

newly organized Church. This is the more remarkable when it is considered that nothing was left undone to give it an Episcopal basis, so that the failure of the prayer book is one of the forms of dissent on the part both of the preachers, who declined to use it, and the people, who stood by them in its discontinuance. In the second instance they refer to the "negative" of the superintendent to any ordination, even though fully approved by the Conference. Practically it was given, however, a wider application. The election of Coke and Asbury is not mentioned either in the minutes of 1795, as issued by John Dickins, of which one of the original edition is now before the writer, or in the minutes with the discipline attached, printed in Philadelphia by Charles Cist, 1785, a reprint of which is also before the writer.

James O'Kelly, who was present at the Conference, says, "Thomas and Francis [Coke and Asbury] were our superintendents as President elders, according to John's [Wesley] appointment, but they were not elected by the suffrage of Conference, although it is so written in the book of discipline." As it has been found that it is not in the discipline of 1785, how is his statement to be reconciled? Turning to a "Form of Discipline," etc., "considered and approved in Baltimore on Monday, the 27th of December, 1784," etc., and printed in Philadelphia, 1790, a copy of which is before the writer, being the sixth edition, under Section III., and in answer to the question, "What is the proper origin of the Episcopal authority in our church?" the whole answer making Section III. is new, and is dovetailed between Section II. and Section IV. of the Discipline of 1785. As the whole of it will come under review later, only the portion pertinent to the present purpose is cited: "At which time the General Conference held in Baltimore did unanimously receive the said Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as their Bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination." The printed capitalizing has been followed. Who wrote this new section? Coke and Asbury, as is confessed in their opening address or preface, to this effect, "We have made some little alterations in the present edition, yet such as affect not in any degree the essentials of our doctrines and discipline. We think ourselves obliged to view and review annually the whole order of our church," etc. Even in this statement the word "receive" and not "elect" is used, much to the confusion of the truth, as will be seen. The query obtrudes, If they were unanimously received, and the word is used synonymously with elected, why is this

important fact not included in the printed Minutes of 1785? Nothing but conjecture can now be indulged. One is offered, as the first of a series of proofs that Wesley did not recommend or approve anything that was done at the Christmas Conference, as it bears upon the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The printed Minutes of 1785, as ordered by Coke himself, and bound up with the Sunday Service, were those which would come under Wesley's eye. Coke left Baltimore for Philadelphia January 3, and was there from the 8th to the 19th, during which time the minutes were printed. He returned, and on the 2d of June sailed for England and was present at the British Conference, July 26, 1785. He undoubtedly carried copies of the printed Minutes with him. It would have made his explanations awkward of what was done in America if, after reading that the Conference in Baltimore determined, "During the Life of the Rev. John Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his Sons in the Gospel, ready in Matters belonging to Church-Government, to obey his commands. And we do engage after his Death to do every Thing that we judge consistent with the Cause of Religion in America, and the political interests of these States, to preserve and promote our Union with the Methodists of Europe" (capitalizing followed), he had also learned from these minutes that Dr. Coke was not received as his superintendent in America, and that Asbury declined the office until the Conference had unanimously by vote appointed him also, and in the same manner passed upon Dr. Coke.

Of nothing, perhaps, had Wesley such a dread as suffrage or voting. He never allowed it. McCaine says, "There is now lying before me a letter from a preacher who was a member of the Conference of '84, which contains the following sentence, 'Dr. Coke in 1787 made a second visit, and brought instructions with him from Mr. Wesley, which instructions I never saw, or heard but in part.' I received a letter from a preacher who had seen them, and quoted from them the following words: 'Put as few things as possible to vote. If you (Dr. Coke), brother Asbury, and brother Whatcoat are agreed, it is sufficient.'" McCaine farther affirms that, if this letter be questioned as a third-hand report, he refers to Rev. Nelson Reed as having the same information.¹ This was about the time that Asbury, in pursuance of the same policy, and utterly at variance with that proposed at the Christmas Conference of putting things to vote, conceived the "Council plan," and the foregoing letter may have

¹ "Defence of the Truth," p. 85.

been received by him through Coke, in response to his views on the subject. And it was in reference to this very Council plan over which he exercised a negative, and when urged to give it up, replied, "My negative is my own."¹ This is in proof of the affirmation that the privilege accorded him by the Conference of 1784, as noted by Whatcoat, of declining to ordain any one elected by a Conference, was extended by him without limit. These details, if not intimately germane to the question considered, are so interwoven with it that no better place could be found for their introduction. Were Coke and Asbury unanimously voted into position? Asbury himself affirms that they were, and that everything was decided by vote in this Conference. It is in place to record what he says of the Conference, and as it is so brief, it may be given in full. "Continued at Perry-Hall until Friday, the twenty-fourth. We then rode to Baltimore, where we met a few preachers" (this is remarkable, when it is known that sixty-one of eighty-three were there, and may be in proof that some allowance must be made for his Journal statements); "it was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons. When the Conference was seated, Dr. Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the Superintendency of the Church, and my ordination followed, after being previously ordained deacon and elder, as by the following certificate may be seen:—

"Know all men by these presents, that I, Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus College in the University of Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, and superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory; by the imposition of my hands, and prayer (being assisted by two ordained elders) did on the twenty-fifth day of this month, December, set apart Francis Asbury for the office of a deacon in the aforesaid Methodist Episcopal Church. And also on the twenty-sixth day of said month, did by the imposition of my hands, and prayer (being assisted by the said elders) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of elder in the said Methodist Episcopal Church. And in this twenty-seventh day of the said month, being the day of the date hereof, have, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer (being assisted by the said elders) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of a superintendent in the said Methodist Episcopal Church, a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony hereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty-seventh day of December, in the year of our Lord, 1784.

"THOMAS COKE."

¹ "Defence of the Truth," p. 91.

The hand of the reputed author of the Deed of Declaration is seen in this legal phrasing and iteration, as well as the educated mind. In large part it follows the "testimonial" Wesley gave Coke of his setting apart as a superintendent. "Twelve elders were elected and solemnly set apart to serve our societies in the United States, one for Antigua, and two for Nova Scotia. We spent the whole week in Conference, debating freely and determining all things by a majority of votes. The Doctor preached every day at noon, and some one of the other preachers morning and evening. We were in great haste and did much business in a little time."¹ One marvels at this record also. The business was of such a character that haste was unseemly, yet the session was longer by several days than the usual Conference. It is evident also that the business was "cut and dried" before the Conference assembled. Perhaps not a thing was done that either Coke or Asbury or both had not matured at Perry Hall. The Conference registered their pleasure. Not that dissentients were wanting, but the whole denouement was such a surprise, the salient advantages such as all desired, as it secured ordination and the sacraments with a church organization; and as they were impressed that the whole was Wesley's suggestion and recommendation, the last allegation alone, for the time at least, over-ruled all open criticism, and brought with it an outward show of unanimity. Is there any evidence to this effect? Freeborn Garrettson says: "In the evening news came to my room that Dr. Coke had arrived. I felt a spirit of rejoicing and hastened downstairs to receive him. I was somewhat surprised when Mr. Wesley's plan of ordination was opened to me, and determined to sit in silence." Note, it is not the "plan for governing the societies" that was opened to him, as it had been to Dickins, but the ordinations. And in accordance with the purpose then formed he no doubt did sit in silence during the Conference. For he was a dissenter through life to Asbury's continental superintendency. The same authority says that in 1792, traveling with Asbury to Rhinebeck in New York, some months only before the O'Kelly secession over the right of appeal, he quotes Garrettson as recording in his Journal, "On the way we had some close conversation on church government. On this subject there is not a perfect unanimity of sentiment," on which this authority comments: "What particular point of church government it was concerning which they discoursed, we are not told; but it is pre-

¹ Asbury's "Journal," Vol. I. pp. 486, 487.

sumed that it related to the general superintendency, as Mr. Garrettson was of opinion that, instead of having the whole continent under one general superintendency, it would have been better if it had been divided among several, making each superintendent responsible for his own particular district to the General Conference. To this opinion I believe he adhered through life, though he calmly acquiesced in a decision of a majority of his brethren in this as well as in all matters relating to the regulations of the discipline."¹ Garrettson was of high reputation with the preachers for unfeigned piety and sterling abilities, and was possessed of considerable means, so that Asbury suffered from him, as he did from Nicholas Snethen, free criticism of his polity. There is no way of determining how many more sat in silence and permitted without dissent the proceedings which they saw to be foregone to have their course. Thus was organized a Church *of* ministers, *by* ministers, and *for* ministers. Its only parallel in organization is the Roman hierarchy. It was also a Church of priests, *by* priests, and *for* priests. The specious arguments by which the former was and is justified and the refuting New Testament precedents and allied facts and arguments shall be produced at a later period. The parental system of Asbury in imitation of that of Wesley may be condoned and excused up to this formal usurpation of the right to select a form of church government, to organize and proclaim it by the ministerial class solely. The task is to fasten upon it the responsibility of all the divisions of American Methodism. Historically what has been educaed thus far is preliminary. Presently the consequents of that usurpation will demand almost continuous attention for a hundred years.

The question recurs: Did the Conference unanimously elect Dr. Coke and Asbury superintendents? How can positive statements for and against be reconciled? If the fact be recalled that the method of decisions was by questions and answers, there seems a simple solution of the difficulty. It must have been a surprise indeed to these preachers, when Asbury made his demurrer to an appointment as superintendent by Wesley, as he had appointed Coke. The motive for such a demurrer did not appear. It could not be that he had under the political inspiration of the American Revolution suddenly changed his views as to voting, in which he fully agreed with Wesley; for within three years it will be found that he is dissatisfied with the Gen-

¹ Bangs's "Life of Garrettson," edition 1830, p. 230.

eral Conference idea and proposed the Council plan of a half-dozen presiding elders of his appointment to supersede it, and over this small group of legislators, judges, and executors to have a veto. Lying back of his action are some facts that side-light the proceeding. Upon complaint of the preachers, Wesley had appointed Rankin as General Superintendent, and thereby superseded Asbury, and until now he could not be induced to restore him. In the intervening time such were the representations made to Wesley by Rankin and other returned missionaries from America that he actually wrote a letter of recall, as has been found, but which did not reach Asbury until countermanded. Under all this he fretted, and it must be confessed not without reason. An election by the Conference would virtually release him from Wesley's authority and make impossible a recurrence of such a trial as he had endured. "It was not practical expediency," to use his own expression, to serve under Wesley — he will be a king in his own realm. Must not, then, the form of the question have been like this: Shall Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury be received by the Conference as superintendents over the American societies? No one dissents, *ergo*, it is unanimously carried. And so probably passed other measures. Asbury was satisfied with it as an election, and, technicals aside, so it was; but O'Kelly did not so regard it. The difference about it may mean no more than this implies. However it was, it has been traditionally taken as an election, and so the old preachers regarded it. It was a point to be guarded, and it was successfully by Wesley; but not by others more keenly critical under adverse opinions. Hence it is found that Whitehead, commenting on this very matter, as stated by Dr. Coke, says: "But Dr. Coke tells us 'our bishops have been elected, or received, by the suffrage of the whole body of our ministers through the continent, assembled in General Conference.' Now these surely were not elected in any sense whatever, either by the preachers or the people. But they were 'elected or received' — when a writer thus links words together of different import, as though the meaning amounted to the same thing, we have just cause to suspect that he intends to deceive us, and lead us into a false notion of the subject he is discussing. Received perhaps they may be under a system of arbitrary government, which leaves no alternative to the people, nor to many of the preachers, but that of passive obedience, or to go about their business and quit the connection."¹ There is

¹ Whitehead's "Life of John Wesley," p. 264.

no way to avoid the force of these strictures, though some allowance must be made for the severity of the reference to Coke, whose artful methods were well known to Whitehead.

What else was done by this Conference of moment? The resolve already cited that they would obey Mr. Wesley during his life in all matters of church government, and after his death do all that would be possible to preserve the union with the English brethren. How did it get before the Conference? No one knows. It is certain that Asbury did not father it; for his own declaration is: "It is true I never did approve of that binding minute. I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley, at three thousand miles distance, in all matters relative to church government; neither did brother Whatcoat nor several others. At the first General Conference I was mute and modest when it was passed; and I was mute when it was expunged."¹ It is passing strange that a man of his strong common sense should conclude that he thereby escaped responsibility in either case. Dr. Coke, if he did not offer the resolution, most probably originated it and gave it his support; for it was essential that he should have it to fall back upon when he should come to explain the organization of a Church contrary, as he well knew, to Wesley's intentions. As has been found, Asbury stood ready to break with Wesley at any opportune time, and he felt this to be such a time. Open opposition allied to his mental protest in the matter would have revealed this secret purpose, as well as placed Coke in an awkward predicament when he returned to face Wesley, so he was mute. It shall be shown that it did answer Coke's purpose with Wesley, nor was he undeceived as to its hollowness until, several years after, he attempted to exercise the authority they said, and he thought, had been reposed in him, only to find that it was a resolution of unmeaning words. These are some of the conclusions that must be reached as to this business. It may be dismissed, as it will again come under review when the McCaine-Emory controversy over it shall be in place.

Asbury was ordained—to what? It will never be settled. Several views are entertained and pressed by the respective advocates. The contention of these pages is that it meant nothing more by Wesley than the appointment of Mather as superintendent in Scotland, yielding, in the former case, to the over-persuasion of Coke as set forth in his letter of September 3, 1784,

¹ "Journal," Vol. II. pp. 323, 324.

to dignify the appointment with a form of "setting apart," that he might have the benefit of such seeming to his authority in America. Another contention is, that it was an ordination to the bishopric in the sense of the Alexandrian church, which selected its officer and ordained him bishop. And a third, which claims for the American superintendents that they were bishops as a third order, as understood by Episcopalians. Coke himself claimed to have made Asbury a Bishop. So he wrote in his Journal while in Philadelphia in 1784, as may be seen from the *Arminian Magazine* of 1789, p. 291. His words are, "I ordained brother Asbury a Bishop." It is true that in his Journal, published in London in 1793, there is no allusion at all to the ordination.¹ This vexed question may also be dismissed until the controversy of 1827-30. On the second day of the Conference session he ordained Asbury a deacon, assisted by Whatcoat and Vasey. On the third day these ordained him an elder. On Monday he was set apart as a superintendent, and by Asbury's request Coke invited Otterbein, of the German Church, to assist. They were warm personal friends through life and had much in common. No explanation, however, has ever been attempted of his participation on the theory that it was understood as an ordination to the bishopric. Otterbein could not have taken part, by conviction, in such a ceremony. No doubt it was a solemn and impressive service conducted by these godly men. A modern painter of average ability threw the scene upon the canvas, and for some time it was on exhibition in the historical rooms of the Baltimore Preachers' Meeting. Afterward it was exhibited at the Woman's College in the same city, but subsequently claimed by the painter's executors and removed.

¹ Dr. Coke was a man of sober second thoughts, and did not hesitate to expunge and change records if expedient. It is known that his severe denunciations of Asbury and the American Conference for erasing Wesley's name from their minutes which garnished his memorial sermon in Baltimore after Wesley's death, were all expunged when the sermon was printed in London. Now it is also found that his Journal made in Philadelphia after 1785, on its reprint in London in 1793, two years after Wesley's death, omits all reference to the most eventful transaction of his life, to wit: the organization of the M. E. Church and the ordination of Ashury. There must have been a motive for it. What was it? Conjecture can be indulged. He returned in haste to England on the death of Wesley, and it was believed by the English preachers that his sudden coming was in the hope that he would succeed Wesley. This hope he cherished for some years. He knew that the whole American business was looked upon with suspicion by the preachers, and practically repudiated by them. It would remove a source of irritation to them if his reprint Journal should omit all reference, and it was done. If not the correct reason, it is amenable to reason.

The college, as Coke would call it, while Asbury was content to speak of it as a school, came under consideration on Saturday the 1st of January, 1785, and the plan was matured, Dickins taking large part in it. It was to be located at Abingdon, Md., and after much difficulty a name selected for it, which Coke proposed—Cokesbury, a combination of the two names of the superintendents. A considerable sum was soon subscribed by the willing and generous laity of the societies or Church. They also responded to the appeals of Coke for assistance to the brethren who were to go to Nova Scotia in the sum of \$50. Coke's sermon prior to the ordination of Asbury was a fine effort, and spiced with the assumption that he was now a brother with himself of high degree. It was printed and widely circulated. One more item, and all that is known of the Christmas Conference will have been considered. Among the regular proceedings of the Conference is the following minute: "It is recommended to all our brethren to suspend the execution of the minute on slavery till the deliberations of a future Conference; and that an equal space of time be allowed all our members for consideration, when the minute shall be put in force. N.B. We do hold in the deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery; and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means." What was the inspiration of this change of base? Most probably Dr. Coke; for, as it has already been discovered, his policy while in the West Indies was to deliver himself freely on the subject, but to make no attempt to incite insurrection or run counter to the civil laws. He may have suggested the wisdom of this course to the Conference when he found what had been previously done of a more drastic character. The institution had wrought itself into the very fibres of the domestic, social, and civil relations of the people. More than three-fourths of the Methodist membership was in the slaveholding states. Their personal piety could not be impugned. To continue to counsel coercion meant a conflict which must have eventuated in an abandonment of the territory. The institution had not yet assumed the proportions of a political power and party.

The minutes contain a list of the preachers, and the plan of appointments; for this Conference was made to supersede the three meetings called for April, May, and June of 1785, and no formal meeting again occurred until a year later in North Carolina, Virginia, and Baltimore, Md., in February, April, and May, 1786. The numbers in society were reported at 18,000, a gain of

3000. Asbury, in his Journal, says: "May 30—We went to Abingdon to settle our college business; and took a bond for the conveyance of the grounds; we then returned [to Baltimore] and fixed our plan for the approaching Conference. June 1—Our Conference began. I was unwell during the session, etc. On Thursday the Doctor [Coke] took his leave of us for this visit. We parted with heavy hearts. June 4—I spent three hours profitably in reading the printed minutes of the Conference," *i.e.* the minutes of the Christmas Conference which Coke had bound up with the Sunday Service in Philadelphia. The Conference referred to in these notes must have been an informal one, for no minutes of it are printed with the volume issued in 1795. No regular Conference was held in Baltimore or elsewhere until 1786.¹ For the first time, the plan of appointments found in the minutes of the Christmas Conference distinguishes the Presiding Elders formally as in charge of districts.

¹ Jesse Lee, in his "History," says that the three Conferences appointed in 1784 for North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, were held, that in Baltimore on the first of June, as Ashury notes in his Journal. Lee's notes complicate the situation, and are given that the reader can make his own opinion. "This was the first time that we had more than one regular Conference in the same year. For a few years before this we had two conferences in the same year, but they were considered only as one, first begun in one place and then adjourned to another. Now there were three and no adjournment. I have therefore considered the conferences as but one in the year, and have numbered them accordingly; but from this time I shall consider the number of the conferences as I find them in the minutes. This year, and the two succeeding years, the minutes were called 'Minutes of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.' The business of the three conferences was all arranged in the minutes as if it had all been done at one time and place." The last remark is certainly true. There is not an indication in the printed minutes that these three conferences were held so soon after the Christmas Conference, or that they were held at all. Nor can you tell from the printed Minutes, so-called of that Christmas Conference, a copy of which is now before me, but which minutes are, in reality, a reprint of the Discipline as agreed upon, largely taken from Wesley's larger minutes, what was the actual business of that Conference, and nothing at all as to the ordinations; neither do they include the service for ordinations. But as these are found in the Sunday Service, it was unnecessary to include them in the Discipline also. So it may be that the action anent the suspension of the rules on slavery was had at the three subsequent conferences, and not at the Christmas Conference; and so as to the plan of appointments forming a part of that Conference according to the printed Minutes of 1795.* There is a wonderful crudeness in all the proceedings as they have come down. Perhaps clearness was not one of the objects sought, so that some questionable proceedings are in the obscurity best befitting them, as shall be presently shown.

* The apparent contradiction of these statements is reconciled with the averment of a few pages back that the plan of appointments, as made by the Christmas Conference, superseded the three called conferences of 1784-85 only in that fact. As Lee avers, they were formally held, but without a change in the appointments until that in Baltimore in the spring of 1786.

CHAPTER XXIV

Drew on the private interview at Barratt's — Wesley's plan; Coke's confession that it was not carried out, and Moore's averment that Wesley had nothing to do with the organization of 1784; evidences in support of it — Coke and Asbury garbled the minutes of 1784, when printed in 1795; cumulative proofs — Historical preface to the Discipline erroneous, and should be expunged — It was done by the M. E. Church South, in 1866, and the M. E. Church will yet do it — Futile attempts of historians to show that the "people" approved the polity of 1784 at the time — The hierarchy in operation under Ashury — Snetben's foresight in aphorisms; logic correct, but facts not realized — No change of power, but of administration.

DREW, in his "Life of Coke," says as to the private meeting of Coke and Asbury after the Barratt chapel interview: "On leaving the chapel they repaired together to the house of a hospitable friend, who had anticipated their interview on their arrival. Here they took into consideration the plan which Mr. Wesley had devised for the government and discipline of the societies in America, and concerted measures for carrying his designs more fully into execution; especially as the measures to be adopted met the full approbation of Mr. Asbury, and therefore ensured their mutual coöperation."¹ He was dependent for his information upon what Coke told him, and he probably only told him as much as the case required. Drew was not a party to the private interviews of Wesley and Coke, as Henry Moore claims to have been to the essential matters Drew here mentions. He states the case precisely in accord with the common opinion of the American preachers, not only at the time, but down to McCaine's investigations in 1827-30. Coke and Asbury did take into consideration Wesley's "plan," but it was amended in execution by reason of Asbury's dissent to various features, so that no man knows what that plan was. How is it known that he dissented? In one particular, as already fully exposed: from his own pronounced deliverance; he would not be a superintendent according to Wesley's appointment. How is it known that his "plan" was not followed? From Coke's confession in his letter

¹ Page 99.

to Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church, written from Richmond, Va, in April 24, 1791, without Asbury's knowledge, although he was travelling and sleeping with him, and some days before he had heard of Wesley's decease. In that letter Coke says: "I am not sure but I went farther in the separation of our church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right to do, with Episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place." The qualification, "I am not sure," every reader understands only makes the confession more emphatic. If he could have enclosed Wesley's "little sketch" of church government for the Methodists, his case would have been made very strong with Bishop White; but by this time it had been consigned to the "tomb of the Capulets." How is it known that Wesley's plan was not followed? From the emphatic evidence of Henry Moore, who declared that "Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things; nor was he the author of one line of all that Dr. Coke published in America on this subject." "In this (calling themselves bishops) and in every similar deviation, I cannot be the apologist of Dr. Coke."¹ In passing it is important for the reader to note one expression here: "Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things." This puts the burden of proof where it belongs, and this averment of Moore's is boldly reiterated, and has been, from McCaine to this day, and not a syllable, not a line, has ever been produced showing that he approved of the steps taken at the Christmas Conference, but much that is emphatically to the contrary, all of which shall appear in due time. How is it known that Wesley's plan was not followed? A mass of collateral evidence, which shall be produced when these matters recur in this History, but to elaborate for introduction here, will answer.

Turning now to the official record, as found in the printed Minutes of 1775 to 1794, issued by John Dickins for the Methodist Church, with the imprint of "Philadelphia, No. 44 N. Second Street, near Arch Street, 1795," and inclusive of the minutes of the Christmas Conference of 1784, the following statement is found as historical. The title is: "Minutes of some Conversations between Ministers and Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at a General Conference held at Baltimore, January, 1785."

¹ Moore's "Life of Wesley," American edition, Vol. I. p. 279.

“As it was unanimously agreed at this Conference, that circumstances made it expedient for us to become a separate body, under the denomination of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is necessary that we should here assign some reasons for so doing.

“The following extract of a letter from the Rev. John Wesley will afford as good an explanation as can be given of the subject:” —

Here is inserted the Circular letter of Wesley to the American Methodists minus the paragraph which in O’Kelly’s reprint of the full text of it is numbered fourteen. And it may be observed, before leaving it, that as these minutes were to come under Wesley’s eye, it was a necessity that the truth should be told, at least in speaking of the Circular as published as an “extract,” or Wesley’s truth-loving instincts would have demanded an explanation of the mutilation of his letter. After the circular letter these remarkable words are appended:—

“Therefore, at this Conference, we formed ourselves into an Independent Church: and following the counsel of Mr. Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal form of church government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal church, making the Episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent or bishop amenable to the body of ministers and preachers.”

When and by whom was this historical statement made? It is obviously not in the minutes as taken at the time. The minutes themselves say in answer to the third question: “As the Ecclesiastical as well as Civil Affairs of these United States have passed through a considerable Change by the Revolution, what Plan of Church Government shall we hereafter pursue?” *Answer*: “We will form ourselves into an Episcopal Church under the Direction of Superintendents, Elders, Deacons, and Helpers, according to the Forms of Ordination annexed to our Liturgy, and the Form of Discipline set forth in these Minutes” (capitalizing followed). Nothing here about following the “counsel of Mr. Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal form of Church government,” etc. Moreover, the historical statement is in the past tense, — “It was agreed,” “We formed ourselves,” “We thought it best,” etc. So that the question recurs: When and by whom was it written? It will be remembered that, a few days after the Christmas Conference adjourned, Dr. Coke hastened to Philadelphia, and there had the minutes printed and bound up with the Sunday Service he had brought over from England in sheets, and to his pen must be attributed the histori-

cal statement now under consideration. That it was in accord with the impression made upon the Conference by Coke there can be no doubt; for it is the traditional view held by the preachers as to Wesley's connection with the new departure of an "Independent Church." Two other things will be observed of these minutes as printed. To that portion of Wesley's circular letter which speaks of the setting apart of Coke as a "superintendent" an asterisk follows the word, and a foot-note is supplied to this effect: "As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word Bishop instead of Superintendent, it has been thought by us that it would appear more scriptural to adopt the term bishop."¹ Accordingly "us," who could have been no other than Dr. Coke, and, constructively, Asbury, in the body of the historical statement, uses the terms as interchangeable,— "the elected superintendent or bishop,"— but the Episcopal word does not appear in the disciplinary minutes as taken, at the time of the Christmas Conference. These then are pure interpolations of what the Conference did, and are the fragile basis of the whole Episcopal invention as it appertains to the Methodist Episcopal Church. And this historical statement furnishes satisfactory reasons for the destruction of the plan of Wesleyan government contained in the "little sketch"; of the suppression of the "testimonial" of ordination Coke carried with him, and of the mutilation of Wesley's Circular letter for the societies in America.

No marvel that Asbury spent the 4th of July, 1785, as already quoted, reading, "I spent three hours profitably in reading the printed minutes of the Conference." They can be quite carefully read in half an hour, but they furnished food for serious reflection, and much admiration for the adroitness of his compeer in

¹ There is a moral certainty that the foot-note was not added and the word bishop interlarded in this historical statement, until after the title bishop had been assumed in 1787, if indeed it was not the work of Coke and Asbury when the minutes from 1775 to 1794, inclusive, were printed in one volume by John Dickins under the authority of the now called bishops in 1795. When the minutes of 1786 were printed the preachers discovered that without consulting the Conference the title superintendent had been changed to bishop by Coke and Asbury themselves, and they were called upon at the Conference of 1787 to explain. They then asked that the word might remain, and after a contest, not a few of the preachers demurring, it was finally allowed by a majority of them. This was the probable reason for inserting the foot-note and the word bishop as synonymous with superintendent. This view is sustained by Dr. Atkinson in his "Centennial History of American Methodism": "Such a notable procedure required explanation and justification. Therefore a note was inserted in the minutes as follows: 'As the translators,' etc.'" See pp. 88, 89.

office, "superintendent or bishop," Coke. Asbury's long cherished plan for organizing an Episcopal Church was realized. He had moulded Dr. Coke to his views, and as the plan agreed with his own conceptions, he was not hard to persuade. He saw that there were practical obstructions to Wesley's plan, and the contention of these pages is not that a strong case cannot be made for Asbury's view of it; it is that the methods employed to impress the preachers with the conviction that Asbury and Coke's plan was Wesley's plan, and that "he counselled and recommended it," and by so doing giving a gloss to the facts of history, were questionable and unwarrantable. It is intended to make this position a demonstration when the subject shall be closely analyzed under the McCaine-Emory controversy of 1827-30. The contention is that the truth of history demands that all reference to the counsel of Wesley and his recommendation of the organization of American Methodism into the Methodist Episcopal Church shall be expunged from the historical preface of the Discipline of that Church now persisted in under modifications for more than a hundred years, in the face of facts and arguments that incontestably prove the contrary. McCaine first exhumed these facts and arguments, and so thoroughly satisfied himself that he pronounced the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as it claimed Wesley's counsel and recommendation for it, a "fraud," as "surreptitiously introduced," as "foisted upon the Methodist societies." He found a spade, and he called it a spade, as shall be exhibited later. These pages, however, shall not so characterize the methods, but will claim and demonstrate that they were "questionable and unwarrantable." At the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in New Orleans in 1866, the committee appointed for the revision of the Discipline did subsequently expunge the entire historical preface on this subject, and which had been also perpetuated in that Church from 1846, when organized, down to 1866.¹ It has

¹ Inquiring of my friend, Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson, of that Church, for an explanation of this action, he furnished me this information with the pleasant remark that some of them were not so well pleased that it was done. Why did the committee on revision do it? Since our conversation with the Bishop the following motive was suggested by my reflections. The leader in that committee was the late learned Rev. Dr. Summers. He was a Wesleyan preacher before he came to the United States, and though strongly partisan in his attachments to the M. E. Church both before and after the division of 1844 when he went with his section of it, he knew full well that few Wesleyan preachers or people believed that Wesley counselled and recommended the M. E. Church organization; so in the interest of the truth of history he quietly, as chief reviser, left the preface out of

never been restored, so that unwittingly as to the Church in general and its ministers, it has set itself right on this vital question of ecclesiastical veracity. A later generation of Methodist preachers have looked into these matters with some degree of impartiality, appropriating the facts elicited by McCaine and other workers in this realm of the esoteric in their Church history, and have become convinced that their Church cannot longer afford to carry this stigma of unattested statement. Rev. Dr. Warren, President of the Boston University, of the M. E. Church, in an able article in the *Methodist Review* prior to the General Conference of 1892, called for the expurgation of the misstatements; but it was not pressed upon that General Conference, and nothing was done.¹ It will yet be done; the truth-loving men will cast it out, even though it will demand of them to bear the shame of an unmerited but unmitigated obloquy cast upon the name and the memory of Alexander McCaine and others.

Having traversed the antecedents and given the current story of the Christmas Conference, its consequents demand careful consideration. Stevens, speaking of this Conference, says, "The session was a jubilee to the Methodists of Baltimore and its vicinity." Such it undoubtedly was. Never before had they a commissioner direct from Mr. Wesley of such winning personal presence, clad while in Conference and during all public services in the full canonicals of the Church of England. There was preaching twice a day at Lovely Lane, and on the Point, and in Otterbein's chapel. What the Conference did from day to day

the Discipline. Should this motive for the act be questioned, let a better one be suggested, and it will be accepted. In this the Church was wiser than their quondam brethren North, as well as in introducing full lay parity of delegation in their General Conference at that same meeting in 1866.

¹ This statement needs qualification. That General Conference appointed a committee to revise the Discipline, of which Bishop Andrews was chairman, and an examination of the revised book shows that the Historical Statement came under the revision, probably the work of Bishop Andrews. Dr. Warren's suggestions, reënforced by other indubitable facts, may have led to this recast of the old preface. The objectionable wording; claiming John Wesley for the direct paternity of Methodist Episcopacy has been eliminated, though the bold declaration is made — "The plan of Mr. Wesley was submitted to them (the Conference of 1784), and it was unanimously and heartily approved." So that the statement still needs expurgation on the ground that it cannot be verified, while the facts of this History distinctly disprove it. In one other particular the Bishop makes an effort to shoot around the corner when he states that Mr. Asbury was duly "consecrated a Bishop." This is the modified language of the amended Form, but fails to state the truth in the light of 1784.

was given out to the people, and under the gloss, as already found, that the whole was of Wesley's prompting and recommendation, it was received with all the authority his name carried with every loyal Methodist. The preachers were to be ordained, and they were to have from their loved pastors the ordinances, and no longer be compelled to seek them, as best they might, from such Church of England rectors as could be found, few and far between. It gave general satisfaction to the societies. They were to have a new name. Dickins had proposed it,—The Methodist Episcopal Church; Coke had advocated it, and it was acceptable to Asbury, who seemed to acquiesce simply in the proceedings, knowing that the grooves carved out would be followed, interposing only when his far-seeing mind, taking in the future, saw peril to his primacy in America. The fervor of Methodist devotion was in a flame. No statutory laws were passed. The "Rules and Regulations" were such as they had had, and little attention was paid to the implications. A few of the more brainful preachers, perhaps, had made some mental analysis of the doings, but it seemed inopportune to make open exceptions where they were entertained. Their deliverance from past disabilities and the prospect of unity on almost any basis were welcomed, so that it is an easy task to quote from such of the preachers as in after years left journals and letters in which they set forth their approval, and certify that the people were also in full accord with the new order of things. Strange to say it is upon this testimony greatly that the defenders of Coke and Asbury depend in making it appear that, if the people were not consulted formally and had no part in the legislation, so far from protesting against anything that was done — after it was done, for no opportunity was theirs before — they quietly acquiesced and enjoyed the spiritual feast the Conference spread for them. It was a guileful application of the legal maxim: what you do by another, you do yourself. Great stress is laid upon this alleged popular approval, quoted to show, not as has been just exhibited, of the removal of disabilities only, but of the polity under which they had been placed and which they now indorsed. To this end Bangs cites these witnesses as though it was conclusive of the question, italicizing for effect the most telling portions. First, he summons Lee in his "History": "The Methodists were pretty generally pleased at our becoming a Church, and heartily united together in the plan which the conference had adopted, and from that time religion greatly revived." All of this from the word "heartily"

he italicizes for Lee. Suppose the italics are placed instead upon the words "were pretty generally pleased," and how does the matter stand? The contention of the Fluvanna Conference, which thoroughly represented the wishes of the people, centred in the ordinations and ordinances, so that it may be safely averred that none of the "people" objected to this action of the Christmas Conference. Evidently Lee knew that there was a minority not pleased with something. What could it be? It is safe to affirm that it must have been the exclusive rule of the preachers under the Episcopacy, for the trend at Fluvanna was toward a liberal Presbyterian polity, and it was then and afterward such a strong underswell that Coke's knowledge of its extent may be repeated from his letter to Bishop White: "Our societies would have been a regular Presbyterian Church but for the steps taken by Mr. Wesley and myself." It will be remembered how Asbury stamped it out. But it was not dead; it could not be with American born men and women. Bangs cites Watters, "We became instead of a religious society a separate Church. *This gave great satisfaction through all our societies.*" The italicized portion is by Bangs and with the same object. He calls Cooper, who, after stating the fact of their becoming an Independent Church, says: "*This step met with general approbation both among the preachers and members.* Perhaps we shall seldom find such *unanimity* of sentiment upon any question of such magnitude." The italics are again by Bangs. Getting out of these witnesses all that was possible by the force of italics, he sweeps the gamut and declares all was harmony: "Nor has a murmur been heard, except from a few disaffected individuals, through all our borders, on account of the measures which were adopted at that conference and the consequences which have resulted fully sustain the opinions above expressed."¹ The truth of this averment will come under review as this History progresses and the "Consequences" emphasized.

The year 1785 was a year of great spiritual success. The reënforced polity was at once put into operation. Asbury took to the saddle after Coke left for England; the Sunday Service bound up with the minutes was distributed, and the preachers settled down to work; and not a few of them to think over what had been done. The Eldership was formally inaugurated, henceforth they were to be the eyes and ears of the Superintendents with the circuit of a continent. So soon as Asbury came into the territory of one he was expected to travel with him over his district and thus

¹ Bangs's "History," Vol. I. pp. 165, 166.

the hierarchy was established; the bishop, the presiding elder, the elder, the deacon, the helper, the class leader: wheels within wheels. There never was but one thing more efficient and centralized as a human polity: the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Was it borrowed from it? Depart from the New Testament principles — the equality of the brotherhood, the parity of the ministry — and a hierarchy is inevitable. The people prayed, payed, and obeyed, and they did it with the loyalty of the truly converted. Their overseers of every grade were held in affectionate reverence. The class leader was a sub-pastor, and the appointee of the circuit elder; the exhorter and local preacher were in the next circle, dependent also for renewal of license upon the quarterly conference, all of whom were also dependent upon the circuit elder. The deacon served the elder and copied him; the elder was obedient to the presiding elder, for on him his appointment depended as he represented him to the bishop; the presiding elder was selected by the bishop and held office at his will and pleasure, so that virtually every official from the highest to the lowest was an appointee of the bishop.

But did it not make a strong government? Undoubtedly. The officials of every grade had a common interest and a common dependence, and Snethen has wisely observed: "Men who have the same interests will be prone to act alike; and as long as they perceive that their interests are mutual they will act together. It would be a miracle, that is, an event contrary to the course of nature, if either priests or preachers, with the legislative and executive power of the Church in their hands, should not manage the interests of others so as to promote their own." Again: "We are indeed free to declare our disbelief in the omnipotent virtue of any system; as we know that ambition, as well as other evils, come from within, out of the heart of man; but we cannot help prognosticating danger when the system under which men act has a natural tendency to inspire them with a desire for the distinctions of office. One may be habituated to climb until it shall be painful to walk on level ground. Every office in our Church is so organized as to have one above it, on which it depends, up to the bishops, who are equal among themselves. It is a problem which time alone can solve, how they, after having been schooled on the step-ladder of inequality, will agree to manage their coördinate jurisdiction. It will be happy for them, and happy for us all, if no strife creeps in among them, who shall be greatest." And, finally, for the culmination of this prognostication, "We

hope that our prediction will not secure its own fulfilment; but really our presentiment is, that before the middle of the present century a motion will be introduced into the General Conference, in effect to make an archbishop, and that party spirit will run high enough to cause it to pass to a second reading." The presentiment is logical in its sequence and based upon an axiomatic truth he uttered in another connection, namely, "No temptation to ambition is greater than opportunity." Again, "The body must be one, and the name one, that the head may find no resistance in council or command." Once more he speaks with the wisdom of a seer: "Mr. Hume, in a very able essay, explains the fact that the Persians submitted for a long time to their conquerors, the Greeks, by proving that the successors of Alexander adopted the polity of the Persian kings. Their polity was the same in civil matters that ours (M. E. Church) is in church government. In one view it seems very humiliating that a whole community, whether civil or religious, should be entirely dependent upon one man; but in another it is easy to perceive that such a state of dependence must generate expectation, that the same hand that humbles us may exalt us also. By sweeping away every element of aristocratic authority, as well as personal liberty, it is that all absolute governments, whether in Church or State, animate the hopes of all, from the least unto the greatest, so that the men who have no security for their highest honors are, nevertheless, stimulated to the greatest fidelity and zeal in the service of the superior, knowing that all are waiting and watching for their place. Were it not for this great principle of attachment and hope, all the monarchies and hierarchies, and ours among the rest, would soon fall into ruins." Snethen was not without evidence in his day of the tendency here vaticinated. On the same general subject he farther declares, "The body of the preachers to the west and south of Maryland, with a part of the Episcopacy [this was written when there were three bishops], and some preachers elsewhere, claim for the senior bishop a precedence; which, though they have not clearly defined, cannot be easily misunderstood in those cases in which his judgment happens to conflict with the Conferences." The current of history shows, however, that the fulfilment of his presentiment was arrested ere it matured. His logical sequence was correct, but he did not make sufficient allowance for that conservative force of democratic tendency inhering in the preachers. It never got farther than the *senior* bishop, so that the hierarchy of the Methodist Episcopal Church is a clear

instance, ecclesiastically, of arrest of development. There was not wanting in a later day a sickening toadyism, and aping of titles, indicative of a trend in the arrested direction. On the death of Bishop Morris, then senior bishop, one of the *Advocates* dubbed him, "The Right Reverend Father in God, Bishop Thomas A. Morris."

The logical certitude of Snethen's well-ordered mind led him to several other conclusions, which, tried by the logic of facts, turned out to be erroneous. In 1822 he wrote: "It cannot be long, I am fully persuaded, before the travelling preachers must give up their supremacy. If they will not be advised and warned with the voice of friendship and love, they may expect that the providence of God, which is so evidently abroad in the earth, vindicating the injured and insulted attribute of the lawgiver of the universe, will make its displeasure fearfully evident." He lived nearly a quarter of a century after this utterance of indignant warmth, only to learn the truth of the legend left to Reformers by one of their earlier zealots, who later became a bishop and exercised the very power he denounced, Rev. Dr. John Emory, "The march of power is ever onward, and its fearful tendency is to accumulation." Nearly a half-century more has passed away, and there has been but slight relaxation of the vise-like grip of ministerial prerogative, and it may be truthfully averred that the concessions so far made have been involuntary, wrested by the overwhelming force of a rising sentiment. Snethen also logically foresaw the overthrow by the preachers themselves of the Episcopacy. In this he is also corrected by the logic of facts. Nugatory efforts in that direction have been made, but the legal status has been untouched from the days of Asbury and M'Kendree, except that in administration a great change has come over the spirit of its dream. Exceptionally the iron hand in the velvet glove squeezes and crushes insubordination, actual or putative; but as a rule the noble men who have been elected to succeed in the Asburyan line have magnified their high office with such traits of Christian gentleness and fairness, that those whose names and destinations are annually on the points of their pens have little of which to complain.

CHAPTER XXV

Asbury travelling and feeling the pulse of the societies and the public as to the new organization of the Methodists; appears in bishop's canonicals; natural history of them — Gowns and the Sunday Service fall into desuetude together — June 2, 1785, Coke returned to England; how he explained his doings to Wesley covered by an ingenious subterfuge, and what came of it — Wesley hoodwinked, but when his eyes were opened was grieved, and rebuked the offenders, Coke and Asbury — Garrettsen in Nova Scotia as Wesley's superintendent; the appointment objectionable to Asbury; he could not bear another so near his throne; cumulation of proofs; new evidence and demonstration — Coke in England, and again in America.

RESUMING the thread of the narrative, the consequents of the Christmas Conference shall be farther traced. It has been found that Superintendent Asbury at once took to the saddle, and he can be tracked through his Journal down into Virginia with Hickson as a companion. He ordains Willis, who had been elected an elder, at Carter's church. Sunday, January 9, 1785, he records a temptation, "I am sometimes afraid of being led to think something more of myself in my new station than formerly." The good man, firm in his convictions that the Episcopal office to which Dr. Coke, "joint superintendent" in America, had ordained him, and which he assumed in palpable violation of his instructions and understanding with Wesley, as abundantly discovered already in his ordination sermon before the Christmas Conference and afterward, was the office of a Bishop; leaving his hearers and correspondents to interpret the term as it only can be interpreted, except by a mere juggle with the word, as a third order in the new Episcopal Church of the Methodists in America. No one need hesitate to believe that both of them thought it was to the glory of God. If Coke had any misgivings as to the legitimacy of the bastard thing there is no sign of it now. Later it will be demonstrated that he had not a shred of confidence in Wesley's ordination of him. To Asbury it was a temptation. He had a struggle with the concomitants of the new position, and presently it will be disclosed how the temptation overcame him. He continued his tour down

into South Carolina, feeling the pulse of the people and of other denominations as to the departure of the Methodists from the Episcopal Church of England, now in process of reorganization as the Protestant Episcopal Church. He gives us a brief consensus of this outside opinion: "Nothing could have better pleased our old Church folks than the steps we have taken in administering the ordinances; to the *Catholic* Presbyterians it also gives satisfaction; but the Baptists are discontented." Capitals and italics are his own. The deliverance is enigmatical in part. By old Church folks he seems to mean the Episcopalians, but it is known that the tried friend of the Methodists in Virginia, Jarrett, the rector, was much displeased at the separation and was never fully reconciled, though he resumed personal relations of a friendly character with Asbury subsequently. By the Catholic Presbyterians he must mean those of High Church leanings, while the dissent of the Baptists, ever protesting against kings and bishops and the whole spawn of hierarchists, is easily understood. He meets with Jesse Lee, who missed attendance at the Christmas Conference, "I was comfortable in brother Lee's company."¹ Lee was quite a young man, now in his second itinerant year. Lednum, following Dr. Lee's History of his uncle Jesse, makes record that, at Colonel Hindorus's in North Carolina, Lee was surprised to see Asbury open a Methodist meeting by reading the Sunday Service "and clad in gown, bands, and cassock." The natural history of these canonicals, had it been preserved, would be a matter of the deepest interest. If the events have been properly synchronized, the Episcopal toggerly must have been manufactured for him in Baltimore before he began this, his first official tour. Whether home-made or tailor-made, and other questions germane, could have been historically settled. Perhaps this was not the first time the suit was worn — it is at least the first recorded instance. Snethen naïvely says: "No habit could be more inconvenient for a *horseman*, and the want of a vestry, or dressing-room, to the

¹ Dr. Scudder, in his "American Methodism," 8vo, cloth, 1870, illustrated, furnishes a conspicuous instance how pseudo-Methodist historians draw upon their imagination for their facts. In Chap. XII., he describes at length the substance of an interview between Asbury and Lee at this time, so adroitly framed as to mislead Rev. G. C. Bacon in his booklet on the "Polity of the M. E. Church, and the Baltimore Conference resolutions of 1895," into quoting from Scudder a section of this imaginary conversation of Asbury and Lee as fact and not fiction. Scudder is full of errors, notably locating Strawbridge's log church "in Fairfax County, Va.," etc., etc. His book is a literary romance, but utterly unreliable for reference.



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country chapels exposed the *gownmen* not only to much difficulty, but also to some ridicule. These trappings of Episcopacy were finally given up, and all the heart-burnings that they occasioned have long since subsided." This was written in 1822. Lawn and silk are very compressible, however, and, bating the starched bands, Asbury managed no doubt to stow away the Episcopal belongings in his capacious saddle-pockets. The good man struggled with this temptation for a year or two and then succumbed to the inevitable. If the doctrine of the survival of the fittest applies to ecclesiasticals, then the discontinuance of the millinery and the Service is collateral evidence that Methodism and Episcopacy are not compatible. Asbury's fine pulpit presence made the habit very becoming. He must have looked every inch a Bishop, if he was only a Superintendent. Perhaps he parted with the stuff without a sigh. Methodism has many historical relics. Pity it is that gown, bands, and cassock were not preserved also. Lee makes brief reference to the custom: "The superintendents and some of the elders introduced the custom of wearing gowns and bands, but it was opposed by many of the preachers, as well as private members, who looked upon it as needless and *superfluous*. Having made a stand against it, after a few years it was given up, and has never been introduced among us since." In like manner the Sunday Service fell into desuetude. Its use had been confined mainly to the towns and cities, but the morning love-feast, with its flow of soul and spiritual jubilation, crowded upon the preaching hour, compelling intermittance of the lessons and prayers, for every Methodist had his appetite whetted by the love-feast for the sermon, and from intermission it was not far to abandonment. No official action, however, was ever taken by the Conference, so that the Service is legally permissible to-day. The Book Concern in New York has recently republished it with additions, answering some demand for it; but it can only come largely into use as the formal supersedes the spiritual in Methodism and the old love of aping Episcopalians is revived.¹

Asbury worked his way back to Maryland, Willis and Lee accompanying him part of the distance. April 21 he writes:

¹ The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1866, also ordered its republication, but if published it is not used. "The People called Methodists" are not Episcopalians, and if they were legislators they would not have the *sham* of it, not even the title "Bishop," for the plain, godly Superintendent, Wesley intended.

“On my way I stopped at A——’s and baptized some children: the poor mother held out a piece of gold to me. This is the pay of the priests here for such service; Lord, keep me from the love of honor, money, and ease.” Twenty-second of June he was in Annapolis, Md., and rode to Alexandria, Va., having crossed the Potomac into Virginia some distance up the river. The object in going to Alexandria was “to meet Dr. Coke; he did not come, however, until the next day.” They had planned a visit to General Washington, perhaps at Coke’s instigation — the loyal Englishman wished to see the loyal American general, now in the heyday of his popularity as the “Father of his Country.” Thursday, 26th — We waited on General Washington, who received us very politely and gave us his opinion against slavery.” They return to Annapolis, thence to Baltimore, and out to Harry Gough’s for the splendid hospitality of that munificent host. They went to Abingdon and settled for the Cokesbury College ground, and thence to Baltimore for the June Conference, hitherto noticed. June 2, 1785 — “On Thursday the Doctor [Coke] took his leave of America for this visit. We parted with heavy hearts.” Six years afterward they parted again in this city, but their hearts were alienated for reasons that had intervened.

It will preserve the chronological order of events if Dr. Coke is followed to England. The last day of the Baltimore Conference was delayed until midnight, as Coke had arranged to embark the next day by ship for home, which he reached after a week’s adverse winds on the American coast. Information of the Christmas Conference and its doings had probably preceded him. Charles Wesley, alert for evidence in substantiation of his prognostications as to Dr. Coke’s intentions with the quasi-indorsement of his brother John under the ordination seeming, was not slow in denouncing what he called “Dr. Coke’s Methodist episcopal Church in Baltimore,” coupled with the assertion that he had returned to make the English Methodists an Episcopal Church also, and implicating that his brother, having prepared the way by his assumption of Episcopal prerogatives in the ordinations for America, was guilty of complicity. The discussion got into the secular papers, and the Methodist Societies were greatly excited. Dr. Coke was put upon the defensive. His ordination sermon in Baltimore, at the setting apart of Asbury, was quoted against him, and effectively, as it contained not a little abuse of the clergy of the Church of England. Coke vindicated himself by admitting that there were some harsh expres-

sions in the sermon; but, without attempting to meet the charges of Charles Wesley in detail, he fell back upon the authority of John Wesley for all his official acts. Never did his strategy more conspicuously appear. What must have been the tenor of his report to Wesley to justify this public challenge to his chief? He carried back with him the minutes of the Christmas Conference bound up with the Sunday Service Wesley had sent over by him in sheets. They were laid before Wesley. It will be remembered that they contain not one word to the effect that the proceedings were recommended by him and were done by his counsel and advice. These are in the statements prepared by Coke while in Philadelphia overseeing the printing of the minutes in that form of them which was given to the American Church as a kind of preamble to the plan of appointments for the year, as well as the term "bishop" as interchangeable with "superintendent" and with a foot-note explaining it, so that these emendations did not come under Wesley's eye. If they had, Coke would have met with an indignant reproof like that administered to Asbury three years later, when Wesley found out that Coke had made Asbury a Bishop and that Asbury claimed to be one. The face of the minutes Wesley saw was fair enough. Coke was no doubt plied with various questions, not very conveniently answered, as to the calling of the Christmas Conference, the forming of an Independent Church, and the submission of questions to vote. On all these points Coke could make plausible answers which involved no one seriously but Asbury. He informed Wesley, undoubtedly, that on arriving in America and interviewing Asbury and the brethren, he found a state of things quite different from what he expected and from what Wesley had assumed to exist. The calling of a Conference; the formal separation from the English Church, but not from Wesley himself; the declination of Asbury to accept the appointment as superintendent without the sanction of the preachers; and the submission of other matters to vote, were all parts of one logical transaction, each being a sequence of the other. Coke had simply yielded to the exigent. He had done the best he could in the circumstances. Instead of remaining in America as coadjutor with Asbury, whom Wesley still held under the prejudice Rankin and others had incited in him, he had returned to make a full report of his doings. Nowhere is there extant any record of these interviews. It is an unavoidable surmise that after them Coke called attention to the attack of Charles Wesley upon him, and reminded John of their tacit

understanding in the persuasive letter of September, 1784, "Either it will be known or not known. If not known then no odium can arise; but if known then you will be obliged to acknowledge that I acted under your direction, or suffer me to sink under the weight of my enemies, with, perhaps, your brother at the head of them." The very exigency had occurred. Guileless, and true as the magnet to steel, Wesley came to his relief against his brother Charles and the other "enemies" in the American matter. Coke had not failed to emphasize the fact, made such at his own instance, as offsetting any other infractions of Wesley's orders, that the American preachers had resolved "During the life of Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands." It was a salvo very dear to him and largely condoned the irregularities of Coke and the obstreperous temperament of Asbury. Wesley accordingly took part in the newspaper bout, and declared over his own name: "I believe Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has *done* nothing rashly that I know; but he has *spoken* rashly, which he retracted the moment I spoke to him of it. He is now such a right hand to me as Thomas Walsh was. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those who can and will." It was addressed to his brother Charles.

There is not a syllable in Wesley's Journal about these matters, and the English Conference itself, which was opened July 26, 1785, was dismissed with a few lines. The apologists of Coke and Asbury have, however, seized upon this deliverance of Wesley as a full and satisfactory indorsement of the Christmas Conference doings. It is the straw at which the drowning man catches. Examined critically, however, and it is found as unreliable as such a straw, logically speaking. The reader is requested to remember references in this history and put in juxtaposition Wesley's verdict as to Coke then and now. Then he found him ambitious. Then he knew him to be rash and often rebuked him. Now he is eighty-two years old and has a friend in peril. Now he does not know all the facts as consequents of the Christmas Conference, or he could not and would not have attempted this vindication of Dr. Coke. A writer who cannot be charged with bias against Dr. Coke says of this vindication of Wesley, "It has been confidently quoted to refute the allegation that at the Christmas Conference Coke exceeded the authority with which Wesley invested him. Had Mr. Wesley known that Coke claimed he ordained Asbury a

Bishop, would he thus have exculpated him from the charge of rashness?"¹

Time must be taken to restate the true logical position on this question. It has been put by Henry Moore, already quoted for this purpose, "Mr. Wesley never gave his sanction to any of these things." Not a line has ever been produced to show that he did, and this burden of proof lies upon those who assert that he did to this day. But is there any proof to the contrary? As demanded by the situation logically, it need not be produced, but it is overwhelming in its character. It may be summarized here, as it will be itemized in the controversy of McCaine *vs.* Emory, of 1827-30. It is in proof that when Wesley discovered what had really been done and was made to feel the consequences of it, he was grieved and severely rebuked the principals in it. He was never known to write or recognize the title, The Methodist Episcopal Church, nor did the British Conference ever write or recognize it in their official communications with the American Methodists for thirty-five years afterward, or down to the fraternal visit of Rev. Dr. Emory in 1820. He bitterly repented of his American ordinations, before he died, in view of the advantage which had been taken of it at said Christmas Conference, and well-nigh lost all patience with Dr. Coke for the part he took in bringing about the separation. His letter to Asbury reviewing his assumptions will stand forever as one of the severest examples of Christian rebuke ever administered; which cannot be explained away nor mitigated, it contained much more that is collateral and cogent to the same purpose.

Coke, rehabilitated by Wesley's indorsement, travelled extensively through the United Kingdom, everywhere attracting large congregations, which gave him opportunity to enlarge upon the bright era for Methodism in the New World. It was this visit undoubtedly that inspired him with the foreign missionary propagandism, the lustrous side of his versatile character ever afterward. William Black was at the Christmas Conference, whither he had gone in quest of volunteers for the work in Canada, especially Nova Scotia. He had been sent over by Wesley at the request of many loyal King George Methodists who had fled to the north during the Revolutionary War. Coke became deeply interested in the Nova Scotia work, and raised funds in England for its more vigorous prosecution, volunteered to go himself, and prevailed on Wesley to send with him Hammett,

¹ Atkinson's "History," p. 95.

Warrener, and Clark as reinforcements, to Freeborn Garrettson, who, with James O. Cromwell, had been ordained in Baltimore and sent to the same promising field. Coke and his helpers, as already discovered, never reached their original destination, being driven southward from off the coast of Newfoundland by a severe gale which threatened the ship and the lives of all on board. They made for the West Indies and reached Antigua, where they found that little group of Methodists under the slaveholding layman, Gilbert, whose work was now established and enlarged by this providential intervention.

The mention of Garrettson in this connection makes it opportune to introduce an episode in his history which has more significance than has been allowed it by the historiographers. He was a man of ample patrimony, unaffected piety, retiring modesty, and more than average abilities as a preacher. He accepted the mission to Nova Scotia, and not long after the rise of the Christmas Conference made his way with Cromwell to Halifax, in Nova Scotia. His biographer, Dr. Nathan Bangs, furnishes the facts which when collated lead to the conclusion the writer draws from them. Early in March, 1785, he wrote Superintendent Coke from Halifax, giving an account of his labors. He placed himself in communication with Black and soon became popular as a preacher as he was at home, though he discovered some prejudice against him on account of his American birth. April 20, 1785, he wrote to Wesley, to which Wesley replied from Dublin, June 26, in which he said: "Dr. Coke gives some account of you in his journal, so that, although I have not seen you, I am not a stranger to your character." He hoped the way would open for him to visit England, etc. Garrettson pushed his labors successfully, organizing societies in various places. He continued his correspondence with Wesley, the letters being given in full by his biographer. Wesley wrote from London, September 30, 1786, and said: "I trust before this comes to hand, you and Dr. Coke will have met and refreshed each other's bowels in the Lord. I can exceedingly ill spare him from England, as I have no clergyman capable of supplying his lack of service; but I was convinced he was more wanting in America than in England." He urged him to send his journal. Again, under date of November 30, 1786: "As I take it for granted you have had several conversations with Dr. Coke, I doubt not you proposed all your difficulties to him, and received full satisfaction concerning them, etc. P.S. I see nothing of your journal yet. I am afraid of another American

Revolution. I know not how to get the enclosed safe to Dr. Coke, probably you know: on second thoughts I think it best not to write him at present."

Thus it will be seen that his communications with Wesley and Coke were closely confidential. Garrettson answers these letters from Halifax, March 10, 1787, in which he informs Wesley of the miscarriage of the ship with Coke and company, also of Cromwell's ill-health, of the work of John Mann, Black, Grandine, and others. September 25, 1786, Bangs inserts a letter of Garrettson's to Wesley in which he says: "Some months ago I received a letter from Mr. Asbury in which he intimates the desire they had of my being ordained to superintend the work in the north. A few days ago I received one from the Doctor [Coke] on the same subject." He also intimates his declination. Under date of 1786, with the month omitted, a letter is given from Garrettson to Asbury in which the sentence occurs: "I made bold to open matters to Mr. Wesley, and begged him to send one preacher from England, as a number of people would prefer an Englishman to an American," etc. Garrettson continued his labors until near the American Conference in Baltimore, of May 1, 1787, when he met with it under summons from Coke.

Now the gist of all this preliminary matter is that Bangs, his biographer, further declares, without giving either date or letter as authority, that "Mr. Wesley, having witnessed the sincerity, zeal, and devotedness of Mr. Garrettson in the work of the ministry, had designated him as the future superintendent of the Methodist societies in the British dominions in America. Dr. Coke, on his arrival at this Conference, made known the wishes of Mr. Wesley in this respect, and the subject was submitted to the Conference, and was by that body 'unanimously sanctioned.'" Evidently there is here more esoteric Methodist history. It would have thrown much light upon this transaction if Dr. Bangs had given the date of the letter Garrettson wrote to Asbury, and also the evidence as to date of Wesley's designation to Garrettson of his appointment by him as a "superintendent" in the north. Did it precede or follow Asbury's intimation of the same character of an appointment from him? The suppressions give room for the belief that Wesley's designation preceded that of Asbury's and was approved by Coke. Bangs says that Garrettson in his semi-centennial sermon gives "a fair and candid narration of the facts in the case, with a view to correct an erroneous impression," but this correction, instead, rather confirms

the belief that Asbury resented the interference of Wesley and Coke, as a presumption and arrogation of authority over himself, and thus is exposed the true inwardness of the conflict. Quoting Bangs, let Garrettson speak in the sermon: "Dr. Coke, as Mr. Wesley's delegate and representative, asked me if I would accept the appointment. I requested the liberty of deferring my answer until the next day. I think on the next day the Doctor came to my room and asked me if I had made up my mind to accept the appointment. I told him I had on certain conditions. I observed to him that I was willing to go on a tour and visit those parts to which I was appointed for one year, and if there was a cordiality in the appointment with those whom I was requested to serve, I would return to the next Conference and receive ordination for the office of superintendent. His reply was, 'I am perfectly satisfied,' and he gave me a recommendatory letter to the brethren in the West Indies, etc. I had intended, as soon as the Conference rose, to pursue my voyage to the West India islands, to visit Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and in the spring return. *What transpired in the Conference during my absence, I know not; but I was astonished, when the appointments were read, to hear my name mentioned to preside in the Peninsula.*" The italics in both these citations are furnished. By the Peninsula is meant the Eastern Shore of Maryland, as the minutes of this year confirm — Garrettson is the Elder on that shore of the Chesapeake. Bangs, in his final observations on this subject, writes like an unsophisticated brother, and may be he was in Methodist Church esoterics. He says: "It would appear from this plain statement of Mr. Garrettson that some alteration took place in the mind of the Conference respecting his appointment to the superintendency of the British provinces of America, and that it was finally agreed among themselves that it was not expedient that he should go at this time. . . . It is certain that it was a source of disappointment to himself, of some grief to Wesley, and contrary to the wishes of many of his brethren in Nova Scotia;" and he gives letters from Black in proof. Bangs's last words about it are: "Having thus relinquished the thought of returning to Nova Scotia, and having received his appointment to preside in the Peninsula, as above stated, he entered upon his work with his accustomed diligence, though not without some pressure of spirit, as he had reason to suspect that some unfriendliness had been manifested toward him, though he knew not by whom. To Dr. Coke he felt a strong attachment and the sincerest affec-

tion, and says that 'they mingled their tears together at this Conference.'"¹

A few observations are called for on these statements. It was not the Conference that altered its mind, and the implications all are that it did not. If it had during any of the after temporary absences of Garrettson from the sessions, he would assuredly have been informed of it. He declares that he had no suspicion of any change in his destination until his name was read out for the Peninsula.² Who was it then exhibited this unfriendliness? In a system like that of the Methodist Episcopal Church the power behind the throne is a frequent factor in administration, but palpably in this case it need not be looked for as it did not exist. It could not have been Wesley, nor Coke, nor Black, nor Cromwell; it was Asbury. Had Garrettson signified promptly his acceptance of the superintendency from Asbury, there is little doubt that it would have been confirmed instead of repudiated at this Conference. He showed instead a disposition to confer with Wesley and Coke by preference. It was enough to decide the question adversely while other reasons may have entered into it. Another superintendent on the North American continent might have proven inconvenient, if not of Asbury's appointing.

Subsidiary facts establish the hypothesis. Wesley, either in honest simplicity of confidence in the resolution to obey him in all matters of church government, or as a test of the honesty of the resolution itself, in a letter dated September 6, 1786, ordered Dr. Coke to call "a General Conference of all our preachers in

¹ Bangs's "Life of Garrettson," pp. 150-187.

² Jesse Lee's account differs somewhat from this view, but what he says cannot invalidate Garrettson's own declarations. Lee says: "Mr. Wesley had given directions for brother F. Garrettson to be ordained a superintendent for Nova Scotia; but when the business was taken into consideration, some of the preachers insisted that if he was ordained for that station he should confine himself wholly to that place for which he was set apart, and not be at liberty to return again to this part of the country. Mr. Garrettson did not feel free to enter into an obligation of that kind, and chose rather to continue as he was, and therefore he was not ordained." It may be assumed that the preachers who offered such an argument echoed the views of Asbury, and thus only confirm the conjecture that he could not brook another superintendent on the American continent. It does not seem probable, however, that Garrettson had given any reason for such an argument, inasmuch as he knew full well that he would be under Wesley a superintendent for Nova Scotia alone, just as he set apart Coke, and through him, Asbury, as superintendents for America, and afterward Mather as superintendent for Scotland. If, however, he did make the point alleged, and would not be circumscribed, then the case simply antedated by one hundred years the recent one of Bishop Taylor, who claimed to be a full-fledged bishop, while the General Conference finally interpreted that he was only a missionary bishop for Africa.

the United States to meet in Baltimore on May 1, 1787." It was a principal cause for leaving Wesley's name off the minutes at that very Conference, and of the degradation of Dr. Coke by compelling him to sign an instrument that he would never thereafter exercise his office as a Superintendent when absent from America, and that he would surrender all right to make the appointments when present, and confine himself to travelling and ordaining. These crucial events are here mentioned only for the specific purpose of connecting this arbitrary Episcopal assignment of Garrettson to an unexpected field with them.

What his own personal opinions may have been of the transaction there are no means of knowing, inasmuch as Garrettson never was a preacher with a grievance. Manly in the statement of his views, he never provoked hostility by persistent combativeness. Hence, he remained true to the Church of his choice to the end, though he may be claimed as the first of Reformers among the preachers antedating Snethen in this field. In proof, his biographer furnishes unwittingly enough for the purpose. Elected a member of every General Conference from that of 1812 to the close of his life, through the respect and confidence he commanded of his brethren and not by truckling subserviency, his biographer says: "In this character, though he often differed with some of his brethren on certain points of church government, he always manifested the most stern and inflexible opposition to any innovation upon the established doctrines of the Church; at the same time cheerfully bowing to the will of the majority on matters of indifference." In 1792 he was pronounced in favor of the election of the presiding elders by the Conference, and of a diocesan Episcopacy instead of the General Superintendency, and he adhered to his opinions to the end. In the General Conference of 1824, though he had not reached the stage occupied by Snethen and his compeers, his biographer admits: "Though Mr. Garrettson, in coincidence with the majority of his brethren, thought it inexpedient, under present circumstances, to grant the prayer of the petitioners for a lay-representation, yet he seemed to think that some modification in the general outlines of the government might be usefully introduced." Bishop George was unfavorably affected toward him on this account. His biographer again says: "Having seen Mr. Garrettson only occasionally at the General Conference, and sometimes being under the necessity of differing from him on some points of ecclesiastical polity, the bishop had formed an idea that Mr. Garrettson was rather austere in his

manners, and somewhat bigoted in his views," but these opinions were dispelled when he saw him under his own roof. Having necessarily digressed thus far to bring out the facts as to Asbury's dealing with him in 1787, it may be made the appropriate place for a final disposition of Garrettson in these pages. Born in Maryland, August 15, 1752, he early in life devoted himself to God. He entered the itinerant ministry, and maintained a position excelled by few of his compeers. No one of them, it was believed, was instrumental in the conversion of a larger number of people. He retired from active service after the General Conference of 1824 and spent his days at his well-ordered home at Rhinebeck, near New York City. He died triumphantly September 26, 1827, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the fifty-second of his ministry, being at the time the oldest travelling minister of the Church. He retained the confidence and friendship of Asbury, though often differing from him, and with Dr. Coke he maintained close relations until his death.

Dr. Coke was indefatigable in his labors while in England during this visit, but it is unnecessary to follow him in detail. He was busy planning missionary advances, and finally concentrated his labors upon Nova Scotia. While making preparations for his departure he had reprinted in London the Sunday Service and the minutes of the Conference of 1784, with the title "The Methodist Episcopal Church," inserted. The additional Article 23d, as ordered by the Conference of 1784, as to the Rulers of the United States, was also inserted. The significant thing about this republication is the fact that it bears the imprint: "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in the United States of America, with other occasional services. London, printed by Frys and Couchman, Worship Street, Upper Moorfields, 1786." This was not Mr. Wesley's press on which the Service of 1784 was printed, and all other subsequent editions, except this under the supervision of Dr. Coke and at his own expense. The unanswerable argument will be submitted in the McCaine-Emory Controversy that no motive can be conjectured that will bear the slightest investigation, but that assigned by McCaine, namely, the dissent of Wesley to have it thus printed upon his press because of the implication, at least, that he gave his approval to the Christmas Conference proceedings in the organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church. It may therefore be enumerated as the first of not a few evidences that, as Moore has expressed it, "He never gave his sanction to any of these things." There

is no information how this new edition reached America; the presumption is that it was shipped with Coke and his helpers, and from the West Indies was transmitted to the book agent, John Dickins, in New York City.

Wesley's letter to Coke ordering him to convene a General Conference in Baltimore, May 1, 1787, bears date September 6, 1786, and Dr. Coke left England for Nova Scotia September 24 of the same year, so that it is quite certain that he bore it with him. Reaching Antigua, he found that Gilbert, deceased, had been succeeded by Baxter in charge of the Methodist work. Dr. Coke landed December 25, 1786, and at once entered upon missionary work, the details of which make a chapter of the most interesting reading furnished by Drew, his biographer, inclusive of the labors and sufferings of Black Harry of St. Eustatius. Among both the blacks and whites the heart-witnessing religion of Wesley and Whitefield, of Coke and Asbury, made itself felt and known. Chapels were built, and the Lord Jesus Christ found many followers, even unto death, in these islands. Leaving Baxter in charge, who continued his labors until 1805, when he exchanged worlds, Dr. Coke, with Hammett, who had opportunity of displaying his wonderfully popular gifts as a preacher with much force of personal character during this sojourn, took ship February 10, 1787, for Charleston, S. C., which port he reached in eighteen days, having been absent from the continent much longer than he intended, or from June 2, 1785. Leaving him at Charleston with Hammett, who at once entered upon his extraordinary career in that city, with its sequel, hereafter to be developed, return is made, in a new chapter, to Superintendent Asbury and the work in the United States during these twenty months of Coke's absence.

CHAPTER XXVI

The tripartite contention of Wesley, Coke, and Asbury, for the supremacy — Burning of Cokesbury College, with moralizings — The system of Asbury operative — Wesley calls through Coke a General Conference for 1787; how the news reached Asbury: how he met it; and how he circumvented both Wesley and Coke; the former's name left off the minutes, and the latter compelled to abdicate his Episcopal powers; the incidents dramatic; Whatcoat rejected as a superintendent; how it was brought about; Asbury pulling the wires — Fatal error of the preachers in 1784 — The true contention of this History; proceedings of 1784 "questionable and unwarrantable" — Examination of character; hero preachers of this day.

AN ecclesiastical chessboard, figuratively speaking, lies before you. The illustration is employed because nothing else is so apt. Wesley, the guileless and ingenuous, under the delusion of the Christmas Conference resolve, to obey him in all matters of church government, is looking on as the mentor, and at times directing the moves. Coke is the strategist, now consulting Wesley with much obeisance, and now conferring with Asbury; but, mistrustful, he ventures to slide out his pawns with an eye ultimately to win the game for himself. Asbury, conscious that he is securely master of the situation, also looks on complacently, deferential to Wesley and watchful of Coke, with every new move of either or both he plays a hand soft as velvet, and astonishes Coke and sets Wesley to thinking, for he manages to turn every combination into a checkmate. It is the tripartite contention mentioned in the opening chapter of this History, and is now being disclosed. Three conscientious men, as each was, controlled by his educational convictions, are striving for the mastery, that they may the better glorify God and save souls. Wesley, greater than any bishop, brushes aside from his onward path musty traditions. A king, he makes another king, but never intended that he should be greater than his maker. Coke, ambitious of the high-sounding title as any child of plume and sword, accepts the minified thing, but never forgets, and loses no opportunity to make gold of the glitter, — a real successional apostolical bishop. Asbury, when proffered it, kneels for the coronation, but, like another Napoleon, he sets the crown upon his own head. History affords no more

interesting study of human nature than these three. But for the time it shall be incidental only to the spiritual work of these twenty months. It is much more congenial to portray these chief actors and their helpers as gospel preachers than as church politicians.

It will be remembered that after the rise of the Christmas Conference Asbury started upon his first official tour, reaching Charleston as its terminus, having Willis and Lee with him. They opened preaching in an abandoned Baptist church, and met with great success, Lee preaching the first Methodist sermon, though Pilmoor had held service there on passing through the city. It was left in charge of Willis, and this is the work Coke and Hammett found on their arrival twenty months after. Asbury returned to Maryland and bid adieu to Coke, June 2, 1785, in Baltimore. On the 5th of June, 1785, he laid the foundation of Cokesbury College at Abingdon, Md. Strickland, his biographer, says: "Attired in his long silk gown, and with his flowing bands, the pioneer bishop of America took his position on the walls of the college" and preached the sermon. When finished the college was 108 feet in length and 40 feet in breadth, located on the summit of six acres of land. It had, when in operation, a regular college curriculum and was well officered. It continued in fairly successful operation until December 7, 1795, when it was destroyed by fire, of probable incendiary origin. Asbury was in Charleston, S. C., at the time, and makes record: "We have now a second and confirmed account that Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of about £10,000 in about ten years. If any man should give me £10,000 per year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house I would not do it. The Lord called not Mr. Whitefield nor the Methodists to build colleges. I wished only for schools—Dr. Coke wanted a college. I feel distressed at the loss of the library." In this Asbury does not exhibit either his usual prescience or wisdom. Can it be that a man of his volitional temperament was fretted as much that the collapsed institution was not his own creation as the absolute loss materially? It was monumental, however, as a preintimation, both of the liberality of the laity and the colossal character of the future educational plants of the newly organized Church. Millions have since been contributed for buildings and endowments.¹

¹ Jesse Lee says in his "History," "When the college was built it was well understood that the whole management of it was to be under the direction of the

Leaving the corner-stone ceremonies he enters upon his travels, through Maryland, up into Pennsylvania, New Jersey, down the Eastern Shore of Maryland, back to Baltimore, on to Annapolis; buys a "wagon" to ride in; exchanges it for a second-hand sulky; pushes on; sick several times with his old complaint, the quinsy; exposed to all kinds of weather; down into Virginia; undertakes a revision of the Discipline—it is not to his liking; gets to Winston, N. C.; takes to horseback again as he cannot get on with the sulky; and turns his head homeward, if Baltimore and Harry Gough's can be called home to a man who was always moving and had but little patience with preachers who were not always moving also. "April 15, 1786—Read our form of Discipline in manuscript which brother Dickins has been preparing for the press." Arrived in Baltimore on the 26th; employs himself "inspecting the accounts of the Book Concern." "Monday, May 8, our Conference began at Abingdon, where love, candor, and precision marked our deliberations." That is all of it. He makes no mention whatever of the Conferences appointed at Salisbury, N. C., February 21, and at Lane's chapel, Virginia, April 10. The preachers in all that section were watched and discounted in the matter of church legislation. What they did, if not confirmed by the Baltimore Conference, was null and void. What Baltimore did was referred to them, and they were expected to acquiesce. Asbury's personal influence with the Baltimore preachers was paramount—he could depend upon them to register his will. Jesse Lee says that the North Carolina and Virginia Conferences were held at the times appointed.

The minutes from 1786 to 1787 were titled "Minutes of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Those of 1786 furnish but little information. It may be well to note that the initial question is, "Who are the Superintendents of our Conference. But after some years Mr. Asbury consented for it to be incorporated, which was done, and done without the consent of all the conferences. And the trustees which were named in the act of incorporation had the management of the institution among themselves, and the Conference was deprived of all the power of making rules or giving orders for the future welfare of the children. This step was disliked by many of our friends, who, from that time, concluded that the institution would not prosper, and the business was not well conducted afterward." This means only that centralization is the very genius of an autocracy. The ruling will grows less and less inclined to consult anybody. That it fomented discontent, and often disaffection, is not weighed, for the same autocratic power is armed to crush disaffection. A government by a board of trustees was undoubtedly the best, but when it had no amenability but to the autocratic head, the preachers of the common sort and the patrons, the people, lost interest in its perpetuation.

church? *Answer*, Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury." The number of members is 18,791, with 1890 blacks. The previous year 18,000 were reported in round numbers without discrimination of color. Conferences were ordered for North Carolina, May 17, 1787, Virginia, June 19, and Abingdon, Md., July 24. Thus it will be seen that the net increase was less than eight hundred for 1785-86. There must have been an adequate cause for it. The old doctrines had lost none of their saving power. There are not wanting hints that the minds of the preachers were distracted by the new Church order. They saw the Episcopal bud, a very innocent thing it seemed to be at the Christmas Conference, bloom out into full flower under Asbury, the Sunday Service, the canonicals donned by the leading preachers, and the presiding Eldership virtually introduced from 1785. Lee says—"The form of the minutes was changed this year, and all the Elders, who were directed to take the oversight of several circuits, were set to the right hand of a bracket, which enclosed all the circuits and preachers of which he was to take charge. This may be considered as the beginning of the presiding elder's office; although it was not known by that name at that time: yet in the absence of a Superintendent, this elder had the direction of all the preachers that were enclosed in the bracket against which his name was set." Briareus must have a hundred hands to keep in secret touch with the humblest preacher, and yet swing away from him while making the circuit of a continent. Besides these causes of distraction, it is in evidence that the English missionaries of Wesley, prior to 1780, kept on harrowing Asbury at home. Dr. Coke opened correspondence with some of the American preachers, for Lee says that, among the complaints urged against Dr. Coke at the Conference of 1787, was one for "writing improper letters to some of our preachers, such as were calculated to stir up strife and contention among them." James O'Kelly in the South was discussing the situation and strengthening himself for a tussle with Asbury, who was not idle in circumventing his unfriendly critics, while he kept himself in sympathy with a number of the leading preachers, and the wonderful charm of his personal presence sufficed to overawe the less influential. And all this was poured into Wesley's ear, preparing him for the decisive steps he took, as will be seen, to constrain Asbury to uncover, and through the American Conference either adhere to their Christmas Conference resolve of fealty to him; or do as they did, repudiate his authority and seat Asbury untrammelled on the Episcopal throne. All

these causes combined probably had their depressing influence, so that while in some sections there were gracious revivals, the numerical increase fell below the previous average largely.

Beverly Allen was among the notable preachers of this period, but died an apostate. He had great success in Charleston, S. C., and elsewhere. Henry Willis is a name fragrant with spiritual memories in the early work, as well as John Hagerty, who labored much in New Jersey. Thomas Morrell had been a revolutionary officer, and was converted under Hagerty, who led him forth to the ministry, which he afterward adorned. His name is conspicuous in the controversy with Hammett, to be noticed briefly later. He lived to his ninetieth year, not dying until August 9, 1838. Robert Cloud was also a colaborer with Morrell and widely useful. There was not a little controversy mingled with the preaching, as Universalists and Calvinists had to be confronted and confuted by these homespun, but brainy men of Methodist renown. The doctrine of the Trinity and the God-head of Christ were subjects largely traversed. Garrettson's labors have already been noticed. Watters was a prince in Israel and left his mark in many places. Jesse Lee rapidly grew in favor. Of stalwart figure, hard common sense, and as much culture as his environment allowed, he was a preacher of power, and bore down all obstructions before him; not in the South only, his native heath, but in the North, and among the educated communities, he planted Methodism. James O'Kelly, in his chosen field of North Carolina and eastern Virginia, swayed a great influence for his quick wit, strong understanding, fervid piety, which Asbury often felt and noted; but, cast in the mould of Strawbridge, he was independent, self-willed, and as a presiding elder made himself felt and feared by his subordinates. Asbury vainly endeavored to control him, and contrary to precedent left him in this high office for ten successive years in the same territory, but it availed nothing to his subordination, but contributed to the confidence he gathered that he was able to cope with Asbury. Presently he will be seen wrestling with him on a vital question with the ill-timed and disastrous secession he led in 1792-93.

The missionary propagandists must not be overlooked at least for embalment in memory. Jeremiah Lambert had labored in Antigua, but, health failing, he returned to America and was actively employed in the South until 1786, when he peacefully departed. James Haw and Benjamin Ogburn volunteered for Kentucky, then the outpost of civilization. Williamson, a young

man, soon joined them. And in passing it must be observed that, in most of the dangerous and laborious work of early Methodism, the pioneers who blazed the forests and kindled camp-fires on mountain and prairie were volunteers, so that what is attributed to the Episcopal system, as such in sending them, needs to be discounted to this degree, and the fact is elicited that it was the consuming zeal of regenerated men with the love of God in their hearts that impelled them, and this motive would have existed and been operative under a more liberal polity as well. John Tunnell and Thomas Ware were leaders in Tennessee. Space would fail to enlarge upon the equally arduous and successful labors of Foster, Ellis, Ivy, Bruce, Poythress, Cox, Chew, Matson, Reed, Owens, and Boyer. Whatcoat piously pursued his quiet way. Vasey sulked under Asbury, not finding his appointment by Wesley to America what he thought it ought to be. Ezekiel Cooper, next to Garrettson and coeval with Sneathen became a Reformer in after days. Gill and Pigman and Forrest and Hartley. These all lived and died in the faith. For brief and reliable memoirs of most of them see Atkinson's "Centennial History of American Methodism," the most impartial and truthful view of early American Methodism yet published by a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Conference year of 1786 was eventful for its great revivals in various sections of the country, so that, by the Conference of May 1, 1787, Lee says, there was a net gain of 8592, the whole being about 25,000 members. Ten new circuits were taken in and thirty-four young preachers received. There were now sixty-five circuits and 131 travelling preachers. Asbury unremittingly continued his travels and labors over a wide circuit. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia were compassed up to the close of December. He was ill in New York, and says, "Spent some time in looking over my journal, which I have kept for fifteen years back. Some things I corrected and some I expunged. Perhaps, if they are not published before, they will be after, my death, to let my friends and the world know how I have employed my time in America." February, he is in North Carolina, and is on horseback, for in no other way could he make progress over the bad roads. Early in March he is in South Carolina making for Charleston. On the 15th he writes, "Preached at the new church at S——'s: here I heard that Dr. Coke was in Charleston: . . . we arrived in Charleston and met Dr. Coke." It must not be inferred that Asbury had

no knowledge of his coming from England; Coke had no doubt written to him from the West Indies and other preachers, but it is singularly coincident in the seeming that, as Coke did not reach Charleston with Hammett until about the 1st of March, Asbury should have made his way down there and they met a few weeks afterward.

It will be remembered that Coke came with orders from Wesley to convene all the preachers in Baltimore, May 1, 1787, and also to ordain Whatcoat a Superintendent of the American Methodists. It is impossible to tell whether either Wesley or Coke had communicated his commands by other conveyance than the ship that was to have landed Coke and company in Nova Scotia, but was driven to the West Indies. It does not seem probable, for the official information came to Asbury after this Charleston meeting of the "joint superintendents" for America. March 25, Asbury writes, "We held our conference in this city," by which he must simply mean that Coke, Willis, Lee, and possibly any one else of the preachers within hail had an interchange of opinions; indeed, two days after he records, "We exchanged sentiments on matters freely." On the 29th, "Our conference ended." It would make stimulating reading if it were known what was said; Coke, in his Journal of 1793, says, "Asbury received him very coolly."

It will be remembered that the Conferences for this year were appointed for Salisbury, N. C., May 17th; at Petersburg, Va., June 19th; and Abingdon, Md., July 24. But here is an order from Wesley to convene all the preachers in Baltimore, May 1, 1787. Asbury does not appear to have given any sign of resistance to this exercise of authority, clearly reposed in Wesley by the Christmas Conference; but who can tell the letters that were written on the route back as Asbury and Coke travelled together, preaching on the way and notifying the preachers of the change of base, with inklings of Wesley's commands. Can there be any doubt that they were tentative? That Coke and Wesley meant to test Asbury? The two reached Salisbury where the first conference was to be held. Asbury preached and they travelled on, one or the other and sometimes both preaching. They reached Richmond, Va., where Coke preached, and on the 28th of April, in Alexandria, Va., he also preached, thence to Bladensburg, and to Baltimore by Monday noon, April 30th, the day before the Conference. Momentous as were its transactions, Asbury's Journal dismisses it with the observation, "We had some warm and

close debates in Conference; but all ended in love and peace. After much fatigue and trouble, our Conference ended on Monday, the 6th of May." There is here a strange mingling of terms, much trouble, warm debates, love, and peace. Jesse Lee says the conference that was to have been held at Salisbury, May 17, was held March 17, and that which was to have been held in Petersburg, Va., June 19, was held at Rough Creek, Va., on the 19th of April. Asbury and Coke must have both been present, but, as already seen, Asbury makes no mention of that at Salisbury, and the printed Minutes do not recognize it. Notwithstanding, it seems quite certain that a number of these preachers attended the Baltimore Conference, which gave it the character of a General Conference. But as already discovered, these southern conferences since the Fluvanna days were ignored legislatively. Neither is it known who, or how many, of the preachers were present. The printed Minutes, though they occupy eleven pages, a larger space than usual, make no note of the salient and vital events of the Conference. The incidental business was: regulations for the spiritual instruction of the negroes, now so termed; that married preachers shall not demand more than £48 (Pennsylvania currency) for salary a year; register books for marriages and baptisms, and a rule for organizing the children into classes to be met weekly where practicable; and the appointment of six conferences, the last in Baltimore, September 10, 1788. The opening question and its answer by a parenthetic sentence reveals the vital business, "Who are the Superintendents of our Church for the United States? Thomas Coke (when present in the States) and Francis Asbury."

A new paragraph is demanded for its consideration and understanding. It may be assumed as the natural order that soon after the formal organization, Coke by precedence occupying the chair, he opened his new commission from Wesley; the Conference had been convened by his order, under a change both of time and place as appointed by the Conference of 1786, with his recommendation that Whatcoat should be ordained a Superintendent for America, as well as the recognition of his appointment of Garrettson as Superintendent for Nova Scotia in the British dominions. Such unexpected claims put a number of the leading preachers upon their mettle. It was clearly seen that the issue was raised between Wesley and Coke, and Asbury and the Conference. The "cool" manner in which Asbury received Coke at Charleston was a precursor of the treatment he was to receive by the Conference.

Not a few of the Baltimore preachers had come to revolve around Asbury like satellites around their superior orb, and his displeasure at what he regarded as an officious interference was no doubt well known to his Conference friends before he reached Baltimore. The line of action was already determined, and it developed so soon as Coke named his business with this "General" Conference. Had he hoped that by assembling the preachers from Virginia and North Carolina as well he would summon an element supposed not to be loyal to Asbury? If he had, disappointment awaited him in this also.

For information as to the course of debate dependence must be placed almost entirely upon Whatcoat's Journal, Lee's "History," and O'Kelly's "Apology." The latter says that the matter was opened at the Rough Creek, Va., Conference, and he opposed the ordination of Whatcoat as a Superintendent. Asbury shrewdly and wisely kept himself in the background of the debate. O'Kelly says, "The chief speakers on the subject were Thomas [Coke] and James [O'Kelly]. Francis [Asbury] was opposed to the Joint Superintendent, yet said but little, for he was under authority. . . . I spoke after this manner: that the free people of America were exceeding jealous of the growing body of Methodists, because of the European heads. Moreover, I did not consider the person [Whatcoat] adequate to the task because of his age; and that also he was a stranger to the wilderness of America, etc. Above all I urged that two heads would produce two bodies. Francis proposed for the Baltimore Conference to decide the dispute, to which we all agreed." Other reasons in opposition were brought out at Baltimore. Lee says, "When this business was brought before the Conference most of the preachers objected and would not consent to it. The reasons against it were (1) That he [Whatcoat] was not qualified to take charge of the connection. (2) That they were apprehensive that if Mr. Whatcoat were ordained Mr. Wesley would likely recall Mr. Asbury and he would return to England. Dr. Coke contended that we were obliged to receive Mr. Whatcoat because we had said in the minutes taken at the Christmas Conference when we were first formed into a Church in 1784, 'during the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters of church government to obey his commands.' Many of the members of that Conference argued that they were not at the Conference when that engagement was entered into, and they did not consider themselves bound by it. Other preachers who had said they were 'ready to

obey his commands,' said they did not feel ready *now* to obey his commands. The preachers at last agreed to depart from that engagement which some of the elder brethren had formally entered into . . . they made the engagement of their own accord and among themselves, and they believed they had a right to depart therefrom when they pleased, seeing it was no contract with Mr. Wesley or any other person, but an agreement among themselves. It was further argued that Mr. Wesley, while in England, could not tell what man was qualified to govern us as well as we could who were present and were to be governed. We believed also that if Mr. Wesley were here himself, he would be of the same opinion with us." There is something ingenuous in this statement of the case — a chain of specious reasons, but not one of them sound, from the only legitimate premise: the Conference action of 1784. Rev. William Phoebus, who was present, in his "Memoirs of Whatcoat," gives the summing up: "The motion to remove his [Wesley's] name having a second, was debated and carried in the affirmative. They soon turned their attention to his son, Coke, as he would still possess the supreme rule, and it was feared he would abuse that power. To prevent the abuse of it was talked of in a desultory and in a menacing way till Dr. Coke, to free them from their fears, or pretended fears, said he would relinquish his power as Superintendent, as far as it respected supreme jurisdiction and supreme rule; and that he would claim no authority but to preside when the Conference did assemble; so he consented to become a mere moderator rather than to have his name left off the minutes. Seeing they had prevailed so far, some asked more than his word, so he gave them his bond for the fulfilment of his promise." No farther attention need be paid to the argument, now that it is so clearly established that the conclusion reached was foregone. The following is the instrument of abdication he signed before witnesses.

I do solemnly engage by this instrument that I never will, by virtue of my office as Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, during my absence from the United States of America, exercise any government whatever in the said Methodist Church during my absence from the United States. And I do also engage that I will exercise no privilege in the said Church, when present in the United States, except that of ordaining, according to the regulations and laws already existing or hereafter to be made by said Church, and that of presiding when present in Conference, and lastly that of travelling at large. Given under my hand, the second day of May, in the year 1787.

THOMAS COKE.

Witnesses: JOHN TUNNELL, JOHN HAGERTY, NELSON REED.

Was ever defeat more overwhelming—was ever humiliation more complete? And this is the explanation of the parenthetic qualification of the minute (when present in the States). Asbury probably took no open part in the debate whatever; but it is evident that not a step was taken about which he was not consulted by his loyal adherents, so that the action of the Conference was his action as well. Well might Coke take up the soliloquy of Banquo—“Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all.” With the expunging of the minute, Wesley’s name disappeared entirely from the official records. “Who are the Superintendents of our Church in the United States?” Thomas Coke (when present in the States) and Francis Asbury.”

The next important matter was the nomination of Whatcoat to be a joint Superintendent. It was easily disposed of, for the king being dethroned, the arguments of O’Kelly prevailed and the Conference resolved to non-concur. As late as 1796, Coke in a letter avers that, at the Charleston conference of 1787, Asbury *acquiesced* in the appointment of Whatcoat as a joint Superintendent, and Philip Bruce in the same year affirmed that he was not opposed to the appointment, and Whatcoat himself declared that he received a letter from Asbury shortly after the arrival of Coke in Charleston advising him to meet Asbury at the warm springs in Virginia, “and we will make out a plan for your route through the continent.” And Snethen, through Asbury in his Reply to O’Kelly reminds the latter that at Dick’s Ferry upon Dan River, he told O’Kelly that it was “best to accept Richard Whatcoat.” This evidence is collocated by Dr. Emory in the McCaine-Emory Controversy. No doubt Asbury on the first blush of the subject thought it “best” to “acquiesce.” He was far too politic a man to throw himself into a deadly breach before he had time to reconnoitre.¹ But who does not see that, with his dominating influence with the Baltimore Conference whenever he chose to assert it, he could have turned the scale for Whatcoat by saying as much then, two months later? The same may be said of leaving Wesley’s name off the minutes. In this, too, Emory, citing from Snethen’s Reply to O’Kelly, Asbury, speaking through Snethen, who simply edited the manuscript Asbury had himself prepared as a Reply, as will be shown later, says—“Asbury was not deserving of the smallest blame in the whole business.” This,

¹ Guirey fully confirms these conjectures as to the politic conduct of Asbury, in Wesley’s appointment of Whatcoat as a Superintendent in America, pp. 337-343.

however, goes farther than Asbury himself ventures to go in his Journal account — “I was mute when it was expunged.” And for this very reason the responsibility lodged with him. He was content to see it done and the more so because he did not seem to be the doer of it. For who does not see that his persuasive force and iron will, if at all exerted, could have prevented it? Wesley, when he received the account of it through Coke and the minutes as well, and, perhaps, through others of his American correspondents, would not condone Asbury’s conduct, ready as he always was to extenuate the lapses of his friends. Years afterward, 1796, Asbury let out a secret of his correspondence with Wesley, and says: “For this [leaving his name off the minutes] Mr. Wesley blamed me, and was displeased that I did not rather reject the whole connection, or leave them if they did not comply. But I could not give up the connection so easily after laboring and suffering so many years with and for them.” It is not often that Asbury is betrayed into special pleading like this — in modern parlance, availing himself of the “baby act.” He was the connection. It might leave him, as it did at the Fluvanna Conference, only to disclose this very fact — he was the connection. A wave of his hand in stay of proceedings and the minute with Wesley’s name would have remained. There can be no question with the impartial that these several acts brought about the culmination of Asbury’s desire, — an end of which he never lost sight: to be the Primate of American Methodism. Atkinson has well said: “Henceforth Francis Asbury was recognized as, what he had long been in fact, the governing mind of American Methodism. He was the Wesley of the New World.” Nicholas Snethen gives the same verdict while combining with it a high tribute to Asbury: “I assume it as a fact that Francis Asbury was the father of the system which goes under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Without his agency and influence it never could have been what it is now. Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke might have written, but their theories would have remained, in a great measure, a dead letter. The vast ability with which this great man presided over these elements was fully equalled by his sincerity. He had the utmost confidence in the plan as the best that could be devised to promote the work of God in this country.”

The work is monumental to-day — it girdles the world; but its greatest boast is not due to the system of Asbury, much as it may have done in a contributory sense, but to its doctrines and the impulse of the Holy Spirit through them; for other forms of

Methodism share fully in this impulse under a totally diverse, and, as the writer believes, a more scriptural, rational, and ideally correct theory, which has proven itself in practice all-sufficient for the successful embodiment of every Methodist feature. In all its forms it remains true, "A revival Church in its spirit — a missionary Church in its organization." As to the system, presently it will be seen that its exponent did not fully understand his own spirit — no autocrat ever does. His assumptions grew rapidly until the spirit of Americanism, not to say of apostolical religion, could brook no more, and his iron will was measurably broken. Presently it will be seen that the system is responsible — the postulate from the beginning — for rending the body by schism, a foretoken of many that were to follow and which must be fathered upon the system. Wesley, soon after the Conference of 1787, found out his fatal error in the ordinations, in view of his manifest purpose to keep the Methodisms of the world under his personal authority while he lived, and, constructively at least, a part of the Church of England. The American preachers found out that they committed an error in breaking away from his authority, not then seeing that one just as absolute would take its place, and upon some of them it dawned — an increasing number as time and events grew upon them — how much was lost, when the Fluvanna Conference surrender of their inherent Christian and natural rights took place.

And the mention of rights leads by association of ideas to the contention of the apologists of Coke and Asbury in the doings of 1784 and 1787: the contention of Bangs and Stevens and others in monographic displays that the preachers had a right to organize an independent Church; that they had a right to set aside Wesley's authority when it became too meddlesome. There can be no doubt of it — there is no contention on the other side over it. What is contended is that Wesley never intended the organization of an independent Church; that he never recommended the Episcopal, or any other form of church government, except that contained in the "little sketch," of which nothing is known, and that he meant to be mandatory without a General Conference or any other kind of a conference. Nevertheless, the impression was made upon the preachers in 1784 that such was the fact, and traditionally it was so received down to the investigations of Alexander McCaine. That this impression was consummated by the suppression of some papers, the garbling of others, followed by the violation of Wesley's most positive injunc-

tions, known to Coke and presumably to Asbury. That to make a show of Wesley's participation, unhistorical averments were introduced into the Discipline and changed in phraseology from time to time as they were made before and after Wesley's death. That these averments have been persisted in despite of abundant proof of their not having been verified in the Methodist Episcopal Church to this day.

As noted before, the extreme ground of Alexander McCaine is not taken in this History, but the position is believed to be impregnable that the proceedings were "questionable and unwarrantable." This will be made transparent in the McCaine-Emory controversy of a later day. Neither is there contention that what was done in 1784 and 1787 cannot be largely justified by expediency. Such questions only raise a controversial dust to obscure or hide the real issues, as shall be disclosed in season. And it may be repeated that no contention is made that the system of Asbury was not efficient and potential, as much so in its measure, as that of Rome as perfected by Ignatius Loyola. The contention is that the system of Asbury was false to manhood in its natural and inalienable rights; false to New Testament precedents and the apostolical Church; false to the equality of brotherhood and that priesthood of the people inculcated by the direct precepts and positive implications of the Christian's only Master,—the Lord Jesus Christ. The treatment of these subjects by Bangs is pronounced in its partisan prejudice and needs no notice. That by Stevens is more amenable to reason, and, though based in part upon misinformation or the lack of information, and often fallacious, is masterful in its weakness of conclusion, and shall receive respectful consideration in the proper place. It is certain that he would not and could not state the case to-day as he did thirty years ago. Atkinson has rearranged the story, and, with his additional lights and native candor, presents the whole matter as fairly and fully as any one could not a Methodist Dissenter. The view of this History is that of such a Dissenter, which has never before been so fully educed and, it is claimed, fairly presented.

A brief paragraph will suffice for the remaining doings of the Conference of 1787. As though conscious that Wesley and his commissioner had been roughly handled, the preachers, Lee says, endeavored to mollify him with a letter: "We then wrote a long and loving letter to Mr. Wesley, and requested him to come over to America and visit his spiritual children." No record is known

of this letter. It was no doubt "long" and "loving" and kindly intended; but there is a flavor of sarcasm in the invitation to cross the ocean to an old man of eighty-four years. Richard Owens, "one of the first local preachers on the continent," has a brief obituary this year. The question recurs at all these Conferences, continued in some form to this day, and has been a guarantee against irregularity of life and immoral conduct in the preachers: "Are all the preachers blameless in life and conversation? They were all strictly tried, one by one, before the Conference." The Methodist Church in all its organizations has never waited for charges to be preferred—it has sought them out by this examination. Conferences were ordered for "Charleston, S. C., March 12, 1788; in Georgia, April 9; at Holstein, May 13; at Amelia, Va., June 17; at Beesontown, July 22, and at Baltimore, September 10."

CHAPTER XXVII

Asbury and Coke reciprocally — Coke sailed for England May 27, 1787; his interview with Wesley at the Irish Conference; what a tale he had to tell of the Conference of 1787; his authority set aside; name dropped from the minutes, and Coke degraded; how the venerable man grieved over it; the Shadford letter, and the controversy about it; Pompey and Cæsar — Coke's return to America, 1789 — O'Kelly and Vasey; other incidents — Asbury's reprint of the Minutes; the changes made in them; how and by whom; rationale of the proceedings; title of Bishop; historical preface false to facts — Asbury's new "succession"; himself an apostle — Hero preachers of the time.

IMMEDIATELY after the adjournment of the Conference of 1787, Coke and Asbury retired to the restful home at Perry Hall. They talked over the proceedings. Coke, more than ever impressed with the reserved power and masterful skill of Asbury, received the emollient advances which his former compeer, but now superior in office, felt that he could well afford to bestow upon him with gracious condescension. In the present situation there was nothing else for him to do but to make the best of it. In his Journal for 1787, he writes, "Mr. Asbury, who is assuredly a great man of God, has treated me with much respect." Asbury had a high appreciation of Coke's abilities and sought coöperation with him, so that after each strain of their personal relations in Coke's attempts to recover his lost crown, either through Wesley or by means of his own contrivance, friendly correspondence was resumed after Coke had made amends that satisfied Asbury for the time. Specially will this be found true in the years that succeeded 1791, when they parted in apparent irreconcilable mood. They spent but a few days at Perry Hall, then on to Cokesbury College, of which Asbury says, "Drew a deed for the conveyance of the property of the college, and settled our temporal matters there." On to Elkton, to Wilmington, to Philadelphia, Coke doing the preaching "with great energy and acceptance." On to Elizabethtown, N. J., and thence to New York. Here they parted, Asbury going to Long Island. He had an abhorrence of city life: "I am now out of the city, and have time to reflect; my soul turns to its rest, and to its labor for souls, in which I can

live more by rule." Coke, finding no ship in New York homeward bound, returned to Philadelphia, where he found one bound for Dublin, Ireland, and after a leave-taking and a final sermon, he boarded her May 27, 1787. Of his parting with Coke, Asbury makes no mention whatever.

Drew, Coke's biographer, tells that he arrived in the bay of Dublin June 25, a speedy voyage in those days. On reaching Dublin he found the Irish Conference in session, Wesley himself presiding. It was a joyful meeting with his old friends, and he narrated to them his experiences while absent. In his private interviews with Wesley what a tale he must have had to tell. To the Conference he gave his exoteric experience, but to Wesley his esoteric. He had recovered himself, but what a disappointment were his revelations to Wesley — his authority set at defiance by his American preachers who had promised to obey him, and his son in the gospel, Asbury, never lifting either voice or hand to arrest the insubordination. It was a new experience, and he was much grieved and not a little indignant. How is it known? He wrote a letter of remonstrance and censure to Asbury, chiding him upon his want of fidelity. Asbury never suffered that letter to see the light, and if Wesley preserved a copy his executors suppressed it; but Asbury, to defend himself for the doings in 1787, revealed, as already quoted, how indignant Wesley was over the action — his name left off the minutes, thus disowning him; Coke, his commissioner, degraded; Whatcoat ignored as his appointee for Superintendent, and his assignment of Garrettsou as Superintendent for Nova Scotia annulled, not by the Conference, but by Asbury reading him out as presiding elder for the Peninsula of Maryland. Coke probably bore with him, as there was no more direct and speedy transit, the "long and loving letter" of the brethren. They read it over together, and Coke did what he could to mollify the venerable father and founder of Methodism, but what must have been the chagrin, and what the astonishment, of Wesley!

The Irish Conference over, with eleven of the preachers, they cross the Channel and arrive at the English Conference, held this year at Manchester. The story is told again, and more of the facts leak out. It was at this Conference undoubtedly that Rankin heard of the deposition of Wesley and exclaimed before he received the details, "That is Frank Asbury's doing." It savored of his prejudice, but it was near enough to the truth for practical purposes. Asbury had kept up his confidential corre-

spondence with Shadford, and it was probably about this time also that Shadford disclosed to Wesley — the events were such as to bring out all seeming confirmatory evidence — a part of the correspondence bearing on the subject now fermenting the English preachers. It came out in a letter Wesley wrote to Beverly Allen, once, as has been seen, in high repute among the American Methodists. It is under date of “London, October 31, 1789,” when he was eighty-six years of age. The third paragraph reads: “He [Asbury] told George Shadford: ‘Mr. Wesley and I are like Cæsar and Pompey — he will bear no equal, and I will bear no superior.’ And accordingly he quietly sat by, until his friends, by common consent, voted my name out of the American Minutes. This completed the matter and showed that he had no connection with me.” This letter disturbed the equanimity of Asbury greatly, and this allegation, specially, he felt called upon to explain away, if possible. The genuineness of it has been fully proved, and Asbury never denied that he employed such language in his confidential letter to Shadford. During the Morrell-Hammett controversy, which led to its publication, Hammett having received it in his correspondence with Wesley, Asbury became aware of it and in his Journal makes the brief comment: “Mr. H. [Hammett’s] quotation of a clause of my confidential letter to brother S——d [Shadford], is not altogether just.” In a letter of date August 6, 1806, he farther explains: “On the momentous matter you wrote, I must be prudent. I have suffered by a change of things with Mr. Wesley. When it was thought some persons should come from England to preside, George Shadford was in coutemplation. I wrote to him, and it was applied to Mr. Wesley; what a mistake!” That is, there was a time when Wesley thought of superseding Asbury and among those spoken of as a coadjutor, was Asbury’s former bosom friend, Shadford. Now, Asbury acknowledges that, learning of it, he wrote to Shadford that such an arrangement would not answer, as he and Shadford would be like Pompey and Cæsar, etc. But his qualification amounts to nothing, inasmuch as Shadford would have been the appointee of Wesley, so that Shadford did not misrepresent him under any misapprehension of Asbury’s final meaning. This matter occupies considerable space in the McCaine-Emory controversy, and the latter squirms under it, and ends with a denial of it, and says the letter was forged. But the view just given offers the only extenuation of its well-established facts.

Dr. Coke remained in England until after the Conference of

1788, busying himself with Wesley in the mission work of the societies, having practically abandoned America, for reasons every reader will determine sufficient in a man not entirely lost to all self-respect. The course of its events as framed by Asbury was closely observed by both Coke and Wesley, and correspondents were not wanting to keep them posted, often no doubt with some exaggerations of Asbury's career of undisputed leadership and autocratic domination.

Other missionaries were appointed to the West Indies, to which Coke again turned his attention, and soon after the English Conference of 1788 they set sail for Barbadoes. Dr. Coke, with Hammett as his leading man, whose abilities were of the most pronounced type and his piety stamped with fervor and zeal, continued his labors among these islands until late in January, 1789. Coke afterward published a volume covering this period. It will not be concluded that alienation between Wesley, Coke, and Asbury had reached the pitch of estrangement of worldly men. As Christians they maintained relations by letter exchange. Asbury courted it—it was politic to do so under a sincere admiration for both of his contemporaries, now that he was securely fixed in his Primacy. There are not wanting, however, evidences of the triangular movements of the three on the ecclesiastical chess-board, Asbury to retain, and Wesley and Coke to recover, lost prestige and position in America. Drew, Coke's biographer, states that Coke, with Hammett, arrived at Port Royal in Jamaica, January 19, 1790,¹ and "once more sailed for the continent. He reached Charleston, S. C., on the 24th of February, 1789, at which place he expected to meet Mr. Asbury, who was to come thither for that purpose by previous appointment. But as their voyage had exceeded the time of their respective calculations, Mr. Asbury had left the place a few days prior to his arrival, and proceeded on his way to Georgia, that he might be present at the approaching Conference. Dr. Coke instantly followed, and, by making extraordinary exertions, overtook him on the road, and became his companion through the remaining part of the journey."

Asbury, when he parted with Dr. Coke, May 22, 1787, retired to the country on Long Island, N. Y. Here he repaired his spiritual estate, for his deep religious experience of the things of God he never suffered to lapse. His personal acceptance through Christ in a clear assurance he valued first, then the conversion of souls, and then the "care of all the churches" under a persuasion

¹ One of his numerous chronological errors. It was 1789.

that he was called of God to oversee them all and direct the preachers scattered over a continent according to his "godly judgment," and would brook no interference with what he regarded as an apostolic authority. The whole structure of his character led him into this groove, utterly blind to his own assumptions and to the baleful consequences of such unamenable executive power. When they cropped out it never occurred to him to modify himself as a remedy, but he put it down to the weakness, jealousy, pride, ambition, or the want of religion in the obstructionists. He turns his horse southward again. June 28, came to York, Pa., and says: "I found it necessary to stop brother Hickson from going to Nova Scotia." The next day, "I was in prayer until midnight. O Lord, make me all life and love and patience and resignation under the troubles of the Church, and disappointments of its ministers." The General Superintendency and the itinerant plan were the very apple of Asbury's eye, in fact the gospel itself. Snethen says pertinently: "All men do not, cannot, judge alike of their own sincerity and impartiality. Whenever Mr. Asbury was accused of partiality, his standing reply was, 'I am set for the defence of the gospel,' meaning the travelling plan; but it so happened that this defence was identical with the defence of the unlimited power which he held for life. He was personally interested in every case of this kind." And, mayhap, he was meeting, step by step, other troubles. Lee, who was in full accord with the doings of the Christmas Conference, at least until after his own defeat for the bishopric by Whatcoat, gives some hints: "This step of receding from the above engagement [with Wesley] was afterward considered by some disaffected persons, as improper. If there was anything improper in the business, it was in entering into the engagement, and not in departing from it." It is an echo no doubt of Asbury's opinion, but logically inconsequent. Those who kept silent during the proceedings, and by their silence and not by their concurrence made the action seem unanimous, now began to dissent and discuss it. Garrettson was probably one of the number. His lifelong intimacy with Dr. Coke, and his well-known objection to several features of the Asburian plan, made him a dissenter.

O'Kelly had given Asbury unexpected encouragement when at the Virginia Conference, being the principal speaker, he opposed Coke, and Wesley's plan for the ordination of Whatcoat as a joint superintendent with Asbury and Coke. Did he go the whole length of the Baltimore Conference? There are no records to

show, but it is probable that he did, for he was something of an extremist in any position he took. There is no doubt that he was one of the earliest to perceive that, if a change of masters was the point to be gained by eschewing Wesley, the gain was a signal loss, and soon he is found giving evidence of his repentance by plotting against Asbury, putting himself in correspondence with both Coke and Wesley, and with such encouragement as he may have received, stoutly resisting his authority and becoming clamorous for reforms. Asbury unwittingly furnished the ground; for, with the fatality attending autocratic minds, finding himself sole master in America, it occurred to him, as is always the case with such typical characters, that the safe way to meet these incipient demands for a more liberal administration, was to tighten the fetters of personal authority.

Reaching Philadelphia on his return tour southward, he makes record, "Here I found T. V. [Thomas Vasey] had scattered fire-brands, and thrown dirt to bespatter us." Riding down into Maryland he adds, "I find T. V. has misrepresented us as having cast off Mr. Wesley, making this a plea for his reordination." Vasey had been disgruntled almost from his arrival in America with Coke and Whatcoat. He was evidently disappointed, so he sulked and probably did much to misrepresent American matters to Wesley and the English preachers. The course of Asbury and the preachers who shared his opinions did much to give the occasions. Vasey entered the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church and was put into the rectorship in Philadelphia. Asbury reaches Bath in Virginia, and meets with T. V. in person at the Widow Stroud's, some miles from Bath—he journalizes—"where I met with T. V., who made some acknowledgments for what he had said in the heat of his zeal at Philadelphia and at Bath." Asbury was back again in Baltimore by September, and also in Philadelphia. Southward again he turns, at times much depressed, his liver is torpid, producing malaise so that his spiritual moods are variable. He rides through the rain and meets every kind of discomfort. Back again to Maryland, down the Eastern Shore, up to Abingdon and—"opened our College, and admitted twenty-five students," December 6, 1787. A week after, "Brother H— attempted to travel with me, but was soon glad to resign." Who could keep up with him? Later a few men, Lee, Henry Boehm, Snethen, and J. Wesley Bond made themselves equal to the service. Down into Virginia he dashes, to North Carolina, and Charleston, S. C., where the first of the Conferences was held March 14,

1788 — “Our Conference began and we had a free, open time.” That is all of it. He is on to Georgia, where the next Conference is held April 9. A week before he says, “I rested and compiled two sections, which I shall recommend to be put into our form of discipline, in order to remove from society, by regular steps, either preachers or people that are disorderly.” The only record of this Conference is — “began at the Forks of Broad River, where six members and four probationers attended.” He is on to the Holstein Conference in Tennessee and crosses the mountains — “the first of which I called steel, the second stone, and the third iron.” His description of the crossing makes one wonder that flesh and blood could endure such things. The Conference was very informal; indeed, they were nothing more than preparatory meets for the Baltimore Conference. It was about the same at the Virginia Conference. Crossed the Alleghany Mountains again, and this is a part of his experience with the brethren who came along: “Near midnight stopped at A——’s, who hissed his dogs at us, but the women were determined to go to the quarterly meeting, so we went on. Our supper was tea. Brother Phoebus and Cook took to the woods; old —— gave up his bed to the women. I lay along the floor on a few deerskins with the fleas. That night our poor horses got no corn; and the next morning they had to swim across the Monongahela.” The next Conference at Uniontown (Beesontown either a misprint, or its old name in the edition of the Minutes of 1795 from which quotation was formerly made) in what is now West Virginia, July 22. A flash of wit is so rare in Asbury’s Journal that notice must be taken of an almost solitary instance: “I attempted to preach at Bath, on ‘the lame and the blind;’ the discourse was very *lame*; and it may be I left my hearers as I found them — *blind*.” He is in improved physical condition, as not only this flash but the record proves: “I am now closely engaged in reading, writing, and prayer — my soul enjoys much of God.” Baltimore, September 10, 1788: “Our Conference began; I chose not to preach while my mind was clogged by business with so many persons, and on so many subjects.” That is all of it. In Philadelphia an extra Conference was held, September 21. Asbury has been followed through the year and all the salient events he records in his Journal mentioned, except that Whatcoat is named at times as being with him. The good man whose life was like an “even spun thread” was a peace-lover and a peacemaker with no ambitions to foster. The great revivals of the

year receive also cursory mention. But the momentous events must be learned from other sources.

Jesse Lee in his "History" supplies the information. "In the course of this year (1787-88) Mr. Asbury reprinted the general minutes; but in a different form from what they were before." A reprint copy of 1788 is before the writer, with a title which challenges attention: "A Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, considered and approved at a Conference held in Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on Monday, December the 27th, 1784: in which the Reverend Thomas Coke, LL.D., and the Reverend Francis Asbury presided. Arranged under proper Heads and Methodised in a more acceptable and easy Manner. With some other useful Pieces annexed. Elizabethtown: Printed by Shepard Kollock. MDCCLXXXVIII." The statement that this Discipline was "considered and approved," at the Conference of 1784, next to Dr. Coke's prefatory allegations to the minutes of that Conference as found in the edition bound up with those up to 1794, with the imprint of 1795 by John Dickins, is the first of those easy-going departures in the printed official matter of the Church from the literal and exact truth, as made by Asbury and Coke. The truth of history is that essential portions of this Discipline were not "considered and approved" at the Conference of 1784. The following items are in this category. Quoting again from Lee's "History": "In this discipline, 1787, there were thirty-one sections and sixty-three questions, with answers to them all. The third question in the second section and the answer read thus: *Q.* Is there any other business to be done by the conference? *A.* The election and ordaining of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons. This was the first time that our Superintendents ever gave themselves the title of Bishops in the minutes. They changed the title themselves without the consent of the conference; and at the next conference they asked the preachers if the word Bishop might stand in the minutes; seeing that it was a scriptural name, and the meaning of the word Bishop was the same with that of Superintendent. Some of the preachers opposed the alteration, and wished to retain the former title; but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word Bishop remain; and in the annual minutes for the next year, the first question is, 'Who are the Bishops of our Church for the United States?' In the third section of this form of Discipline, and on the sixth page, it is said: 'We have constituted ourselves into an Epis-

copal Church under the direction of bishops, elders, deacons, and preachers, according to a form of ordination annexed to our prayer book, and the regulations laid down in the form of discipline. From that time the name of bishop has been common among us, both in conversation and in writing.’”

It needs to be observed that the “History” by Lee was not written for twenty-three years after 1787, so that when he speaks of “our Superintendents” doing these things, he either forgets that Superintendent Coke was not in the United States during the year these changes were made in the Discipline, or that he knew it to be a fact that Asbury, by correspondence with Dr. Coke in England, had secured his approbation to the changes.

If so, Lee might have regarded him as constructively present. While it is not probable that Asbury secured his coöperation in this way, the inherent probability is that Coke would readily have concurred, as he claimed to have ordained Asbury a “Bishop,” as he was in fact a three-order Episcopalian. It is, however, certain that Asbury did not write to Wesley for his concurrence, for a reason to be given shortly, of so crushing a nature that almost any man but one constituted like Asbury would have been overwhelmed by it to the point of retraction. This work, then, of changing the Discipline without the consent of the Conference must be fathered upon Asbury alone. He had it reprinted this year, 1787–88. It seems passing strange that he should venture to make this substitution of Bishop for Superintendent in the face of the moral certainty that Coke had informed him of the solemn manner in which Wesley had admonished him, as Moore relates, that it must not be taken, and in view of the farther facts that Asbury and others had been compelled, from the force of Methodist disapprobation, to abandon the canonicals, and that the Prayer Book of Wesley soon fell into desuetude, because both were esteemed by the sober preachers, and the people, so far as they ventured opinion, mere apings of the Episcopalians. It can be accounted for only on the principle that his ruling passion could not be controlled, and it was a *dernier ressort* for the revival of an empty dignity. That it was an error of judgment there can be no doubt, in view of the future unity and peace of the organization. There seems to have been in the Conference a pronounced opposition to it—an opposition which cannot be appreciated unless account is taken of the moral courage required to dissent to any proposal of the “Bishop.” A majority at last submitted, but it kindled a flame in the minority, however trampled

upon, and however suppressed, which continued to smoulder, and has never expired. It led to much discussion, and fostered the hierarchal notion among the preachers.

In letter addresses, the simple name, or the old custom of prefixing “Rev.” prevailed; but this smacked too much of equality among the “orders,” so that about a year after, Lee says: “At the conference this year (1789) the bishops proposed a new plan for directing our letters to each other, which was to this effect, that we should leave out the word reverend, and say ‘to A. B. — Bishop, Elder, Deacon, or Preacher.’ Many of the preachers adopted the plan; but others who did not favor the alteration, directed as they pleased, or as they formerly had done.” O’Kelly says: “And it came to pass about the year 1787(?) Francis directed the preachers that, whenever they wrote to him, to title him Bishop. They did so, and this was the beginning of our spurious Episcopacy.” This criticism Asbury felt called upon to notice ten years afterward. “The secret and truth of the matter was this: The preachers having had great difficulties about the appellation of the Rev. and Mr., that is, to call a man by one of the Divine appellations, supposing Mr. to be an abbreviation of Master (‘call no man master on earth’), it was talked over in the yearly conference, for then we had no general conference established. So we concluded it would be far best to give each man his official title, as deacon, elder and bishop; to this the majority agreed.” The reader may determine how far this explanation explains, as against his cotemporaries, O’Kelly and Lee.

Lee says this Discipline of 1787 consisted of thirty-one sections. An examination of the reprint copy of 1787 reveals thirty-four, but the last three were added at this Conference. The thirty-second is the one Asbury says, as already cited, he drafted for the specific purpose of dealing more summarily with “disorderly members,” as he styles them. It provided for trial, not for immoralities only, but for “disobedience to the order and discipline of the Church.” Section thirty-three provided for trial of ministers, including bishops, and the thirty-fourth is a new regulation as to stewards. The one thing that certainly can be claimed for this new Discipline of Asbury’s revising and supplementing on the title page is, “Arranged under proper heads and methodised in a more acceptable and easy manner.” It has these qualities. A further examination discloses a new section, numbered First, which gives answers to the three questions—“What was the rise

of Methodism in Europe? What was the rise of Methodism, so called, in America? What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists in America?" The answers form a part of the historical preface to the Discipline to this day in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is admirably stated. Section second is the same as section first in the Discipline of 1785, but section third is a recast with material changes and additions to Coke's prefatory statement as to the origin of the Church in the printed minutes of 1784, but not found in the disciplinarian minutes of the same year, the difference being accounted for only that the latter were intended for Wesley's eye and the former for the American Church.

The title as given to this section by Asbury is also pretentious, "On the Nature and Constitution of our Church." It is the first and, mayhap, the only time the word Constitution is used to describe the extra-constitutional proceedings of sixty-one preachers, without delegation from any one, instituting an organization, a body politic, without the consent of the governed; a proceeding without parallel in Church or State claiming to be constitutional, a term utterly malapropos to the conditions and circumstances; and which made it necessary one hundred years afterward that the General Conference of this Church should appoint a Commission to discover and define what is to be construed as its "Constitution"; but with very indifferent results as to the quest. In fact, the Constitution has never been found, and never will be, until the people in primary assembly shall meet and ordain one, the only way it can be established by all the recognized principles of jurisprudence and common sense. The reasons assigned for the organization of an Independent Church are totally dissimilar to those given by Dr. Coke. There is not a word about following the counsel of Mr. Wesley and his recommendation of the Episcopal form. Why the radical change? Was it too much for the conscience of Asbury who knew better? knew it as well as Coke himself; but he seems lacking in the effrontery to blazon it again as history. Or was it because he thus early hesitated to link the origin of his authority with Wesley, as he formally disallowed it not many years after? Asbury's first paragraph recites as reasons, that the Church of England is "deficient in several of the most important parts of Christian discipline"; that it has "lost the life and power of religion"; that it is "a National Church" and makes "servile devotion to the will of temporal governors"; that further connection with it might lead to "simi-

lar designs and attempts in these United States"; and opposition to a National Church as the "bane of truth and holiness, and a great impediment to the progress of vital Christianity." It is quite a severe, if a truthful, arraignment at the time. His second paragraph gives the gist of it: "For these reasons, we have thought it our duty to form ourselves into an independent church. And as the most excellent mode of church government, according to our maturest judgment, is that of a moderate Episcopacy; and as we are persuaded that the uninterrupted succession of Bishops from the Apostles can be proved neither from Scripture nor antiquity; we, therefore, have constituted ourselves into an Episcopal Church, under the direction of Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers, according to the forms of ordination annexed to our prayer book, and the regulations laid down in this form of discipline."

Ten years had now elapsed since Asbury usurped authority and, with his retainers, virtually expelled the regular Conference in Fluvanna County, Va., by reason of their liberal reconstruction of the American Methodist Society polity: organizing a Presbytery for ordination and opening the way to such a system. Then, as Drew, Coke's biographer, recites, gathering his information from Coke himself, Asbury "had not yet shaken off the rusty fetters of 'apostolical succession.'" His ecclesiastical reading at that date was confined to Potter. But, as his Journal indicates, in after years he came to widen his investigation into church history, and in this way he was delivered from the "rusty fetters." But it would be premature to conclude that his views were abstractly moderated. In declining to recognize Wesley as the source of his Episcopal functions in this revised statement, it will be plainly observed that he was growing into the opinion that in some sense, plainly enough defined in his own mind, he was an Apostle. It was not until 1805, seventeen years after the Conference of 1788, that he formulated and published it. He came to the Widow Sherwood's in New York State, May 22, and says: "In this state the subjects of *succession, rebaptism*, are much agitated. I will tell the world what I rest my authority upon. 1. Divine authority. 2. Seniority in America. 3. The election of the General Conference. 4. My ordination by Thomas Coke, William Philip Otterbein, German Presbyterian minister, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey. 5. Because the signs of an apostle have been seen in me." It seems to mean that he had established a new "succession," of which evidence shall be submitted when the Conference of 1789 is reached in course.

The new Discipline, with its emendations and additions as set forth, was adopted. When the minutes of this Conference were printed another conspicuous change was made, and for which there seems to have been no Conference action. Lee says: "When the minutes for this year were printed the condition of Dr. Coke's being a bishop 'when in the United States' was left out, and the question was changed and was entered thus: Q. Who are the bishops for our Church for the United States? A. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury." The change was immaterial, as the Conference held his abdication paper, and it may have been one of Asbury's methods of conciliating a man to whom he owed so much.

The preachers, Matson, Cloud, and Chew, are noted as "desisting from travel," but Lee says this was a mild way of expelling those who did not stand a trial. The rigors of the itinerancy — six months in a place — were so felt, that Boyer, Dudley, Cannon, Wyatt, Michael Ellis, and Pigman had "a partial location," having families. Four died, Major, Hickson, Curtis, and Elijah Ellis. Nineteen new circuits were taken in and fifty-two young preachers were received. There was an increase, Lee says, of 11,481, 9000 of them south of Pennsylvania. There were now 85 circuits and 165 preachers. Eleven Conferences were appointed for the ensuing year. Remarkable revivals of religion had taken place, and there were many more to follow. These stalwart men, full of the Holy Ghost, delivered a free salvation gospel with such unction and power that whole neighborhoods were converted. Indeed, converted fruit was looked for at all the services — they prayed and preached to this end.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Asbury's attempt to be ubiquitous as well as omnipotent ecclesiastically; Snethen's reflections — Meets Coke near Charleston, S. C.; they hold Conferences — Received, 1789, Wesley's "bitter pill"; history of it traced and demonstration made that it was the letter of September 20, 1788 — This letter given and analyzed with strange disclosures in a catenation of proofs never before brought together — Asbury and Coke travelling together — Unwarranted changes in the early minutes; motives for them — "Order" of Methodist Bishops instituted by Asbury and Coke with Wesley at the head; Dr. Emory's quibble — Division of 1844 foretold by Snethen and McCaine — General Conference of 1884 squelched the Bishop "Order" — The predicate confirmed by British historians; Wesley no party to the business at any time, and his tearful regrets over the ordinations of 1784 proved.

ASBURY is in Philadelphia the first Sabbath after the Conference of 1788 in Baltimore, and holds a Conference with a few, and then is on to New York where he holds another. Backward he turns, suffering in body from ill health, superinducing depression of spirits and distraction of mind from the pressure upon him of so vast a work, specially the debts and complications at Cokesbury. It never seems to occur to him to relegate part of his authority to another, and with it a part of his burden. Lee was stationed in Baltimore 1787-88, and was exhibiting all the qualities of leadership; and so was Wesley's appointee, Whatcoat, non-concurred in by the Conference; not to mention the fiery O'Kelly in the south, bold and masterful, whom Asbury handled cautiously, or leaving him to his own way, and so excited the jealousy of the other Elders. Under human limitation he would be ubiquitous as well as omnipotent, and he wore himself out in the effort to be such. Snethen's deliverances meet you at every turn as the phases of the Asburian plan develop. "Mr. Asbury, I know, was as sincere as he was indefatigable in his endeavors to make the hierarchy independent of the people; but he was my father, and we agreed to disagree. It was always a mystery to me, how a man of his great reading, and penetrating views of men and things, could so entirely lose sight of the danger of an unbalanced government. Of the ability of Mr. Wesley to govern, no one has a more exalted opinion than myself; but who will say that his system was the best that could have been

devised? Mr. Locke understood the science of government much better than Mr. Wesley: though the latter had the benefit of the writings of the former. Upon the maxim, 'necessity is the mother of invention,' it might be argued that men of the greatest talents for governing would be less apt to invent or make discoveries in the science than others of fewer resources in themselves. I can never be brought to believe that it argues any extraordinary sagacity in men to take for themselves and their successors as much power to do good as is possible, without any regard to the power which it would give them to do evil. Nothing is more evident than that this latter object never entered into the plans of our predecessors. To this day it makes no part of our discipline. Travelling preachers have no check from anybody but themselves." Again, "No period of the same duration in the history of any Church exhibits such a jumble of powers as ours did from 1784 to 1792."

In November, 1788, Asbury is down upon the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He is harassed with thoughts of fire at the college. He visits it and finds that a report to that effect is true: "an attempt had been made to burn the college." He is down in Virginia, in North Carolina, and in Charleston, S. C. He was expecting to meet Dr. Coke, as it was found when the thread of history disclosed his departure for Charleston from Barbadoes. He held the Conference and rode out into the country. "We were out of bread at P——'s, and we found our own stores of use. We had to send one of our weary horses eight miles to fetch the flour from the mill. Thursday, February 26 — Rode to Brutens and enjoyed uncommon happiness in God. Some time in the night Dr. Coke came in. He had landed in Charleston about three hours after I left the city; the next day he and myself both spoke at Ridgell's." They travelled and preached together until they reached Grant's in Georgia, where the first Conference for the year was held March 9, 1789. Asbury names an important item of business: "On Thursday we appointed a committee to procure five hundred acres of ground for the establishment of a school in the state of Georgia. Conference being ended, we directed our hasty steps back to Charleston. . . . Sunday, 15th — We reached the city, having ridden about two hundred miles in about five days and two hours. Here I received a *bitter pill* from one of my greatest friends. Praise the Lord for my trials also — may they all be sanctified!" The italics are his own.

A new paragraph is needed for an answer to the question, What

was this bitter pill he received? Preliminary, C. S. Nutter, to whom the Church is indebted for reprints of a number of the earliest Minutes and Disciplines, says in a preface to that of 1788, the changes of which are noted in the last chapter, “All efforts to find a copy of the third edition of the discipline, that of 1787, have failed; *it is, however, contained in this edition.*” Then, after giving internal evidence of its truth, he says, “From these data we infer that the edition of 1787 was nearly, if not exactly, the same as this [that of 1788], to the end of the thirty-first section.” It of course included the historical changes as to the origin of the Church Asbury introduced, as well as the substitution of the term bishop for superintendent. The Minutes and the Discipline had no doubt reached Wesley some time during the last half of 1787 or the first half of 1788. It is not supposable that Asbury sent them to him—their personal relations at this particular period were far from amicable, and the assumptions they contained he must have known would be disapproved by Wesley; but he had correspondents enough in America, and some of them not in accord with Asbury’s methods, to furnish the printed and the unprinted doings in America. Speculation as to his reflections on reading them are here indulged. Dr. Coke must also have received the Minutes and the Discipline, but whether synchronously, or whether they had opportunity of conferring over them, cannot be affirmed. Coke remained in England about a year, or from July, 1787, to August, 1788. Next to Coke, Henry Moore seems to have shared quite fully the confidence of Wesley in these years, and therefore he knew his mind as to these transactions, if any one did. Happily he has furnished some proof of it. He says: “A letter now before me, and which he (Wesley) wrote when I was with him, will clearly show how much he felt that deviation from the simplicity which is in Christ, in those whom he much loved. It was written to Mr. Asbury, and is dated London, September 20, 1788. After speaking of some general subjects, he adds:—

There is, indeed, a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to *all* the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am under God the father of the whole family. Therefore, I naturally care for you all in a manner no other person can do. Therefore, I in a measure provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not provide were it not for me—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but support him in so doing.

But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be *little*, you study to be *great*. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college. Nay, and call it after your own names! Oh, beware! Do not seek to be *something!* Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all.

One instance of this your greatness has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called a *bishop*? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call me a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me a *bishop!* For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart; and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN WESLEY.¹

When did Asbury receive this letter? McCaine, referring to the note in Asbury's Journal already quoted, makes the "Query. Could this *bitter pill* be the above letter?" A little investigation will make it morally certain. The letter is dated September 20, 1788. Remembering that ship communication with America at this date was not only uncertain, but few and far between, it is not unreasonable to assume that a month intervened before it was posted by ship. Allow a voyage of six weeks, about the average time, to America, and it did not reach New York, or Philadelphia, before the close of November. Now comes its transmission by the slow passenger mail and the slower horseback pouch in the Southern states; the delays of redirection at the several distributing offices as the postal service sent it in search of Asbury, whose particular whereabouts was by no means certain, and three months and a half is not an over-allowance for the distance from, say New York to Charleston, S. C., where it was finally addressed to him, for it was known that he would attend the Charleston Conference set for the 12th of March, 1789. Asbury acknowledged the receipt of the "*bitter pill*," March 15, 1789. Collaterally, when he heard of the decease of Wesley, two years afterward, he made note in his Journal among phrases of highest compliment, "For myself, notwithstanding my long absence from Mr. Wesley, and a few unpleasant expressions in some of his letters written to me (occasioned by the misrepresentations of others), I feel the stroke most sensibly," etc. Moore takes immediate occasion to correct this impression of Asbury's, "Mr.

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. II. pp. 285, 286.

Asbury was, however, mistaken when he supposed that Mr. Wesley was influenced 'by the misrepresentations of others,' and not by the facts stated, when he wrote those letters." And on whatever other letters Moore had his mind, it is clear that he included this one of September 20, 1788, and so far forth it stands as an acknowledgment by Asbury that it had been received; but it is the only one he ever made, and that was covert, as is seen. Too much importance cannot be attached to this letter, despite the futile attempt of Dr. Emory in 1827-30 to minify it, to be noticed later, and of other annalists to the same purpose by sparse citation of it, or suppression of it altogether from their Wesleyan histories and monographs, so that no excuse need be made for a searching investigation into it.

And it is well to start with the fact that its genuineness has never been doubted, much less denied. How did Moore come into its possession? He says he was present when Wesley wrote it. Did he act as amanuensis and make the copy for Wesley? It was Wesley's habit to preserve copies of all important letters, and, knowing how vital it would be as an historical document some time not very distant, did Moore make the third copy for his own use, and is this the one from which he quotes? Or, did Wesley make the copy himself which was preserved among his papers? Moore's "Life" was not published until 1824, or thirty-six years after the letter was written, and yet he gives the Methodist world the first and only knowledge of it. It was not found in Coke's and Moore's "Life of Wesley," published in 1792, and it is not quoted or referred to by Whitehead; Asbury suppressed the original and finally destroyed it, as there was no hint of it among his posthumous papers. It will be remembered that Coke, Moore, and Whitehead were Wesley's literary executors, with authority jointly to publish or burn as they might decide. All the papers were soon thereafter put into Whitehead's hands to write Wesley's life. How did it occur then that he does not include this letter in it, unfriendly as he was known to be to both Coke and Asbury? Was it abstracted before he saw the papers, and by whom? If Coke knew of its existence, he never disclosed it. All these inquiries challenge you and will not down. The conclusion is irresistible: Moore either abstracted it, having access to the papers, or he made a third copy, and suppressed it for thirty-six years, long after all the parties were dead.

The reader is left to surmise the motive — the writer confesses that he cannot, except it be the unparalleled severity of it, and its

disclosures which show both Coke and Asbury in so unenviable a light. Moore gives a reason for revealing the letter even at so late a date: "I have thought it my duty thus to show how invariably Mr. Wesley cherished those principles which so eminently shone in the early period of his Christian course, and which issued in what may be called a hatred of all display, except that of truth, love, and victory over the world; and when the Lord had given him so great a people, and such a number of able coadjutors." He then endeavors to palliate the offence the letter so unsparingly denounces; but in turn he seems to forget that it is to him history is indebted for the kindred information that Wesley had solemnly charged Coke, and Asbury through him, that the prelatival title was not to be taken by either of them. It is plain that this is the gist of the offence. In proof, Jonathan Crowther, an English Wesleyan preacher, has limned the salient temper of Wesley with the brush of a verbal master. "His natural temper was warm and vehement. Religion had done much in correcting this, yet it was visible. Persecution from without he bore without wrath, and apparently almost without feeling. But when he was opposed by his preachers or people, his displeasure was visible. But never did the sun go down upon his wrath, nor did he in this respect give place to the devil; generally it was over almost in a moment: he was easily pacified, and ready to forgive injuries and affronts. It has been said of him, that:—

'He carried anger as the flint bears fire;
Which, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.'

Of this imperfection, however, he was very sensible, and very readily acknowledged it, and sometimes asked forgiveness in such a spirit of genuine humility, as greatly affected those who witnessed it."¹ This feature from life is so admirably drawn that it has been wrought into the historical compositions of others, and at times without credit. The point of it for present purpose is, that "when he was opposed by his preachers or people, his displeasure was visible," and concurrent testimony is to the same effect.

The letter itself now calls for analysis. The reader has observed that certain words in it are italicized. It is a literal copy from Moore's "Life," and so it must be assumed that the italicized words are made such by Wesley for the stronger emphasis of his vehe-

¹ Crowther's "Portraiture of Wesleyan Methodism," New York, 1813, p. 71.

ment denunciation. How cogently he points out to his insubordinate son Asbury, the difference in their relations to the Methodists, and that whatever advantage he availed himself of from Coke's ordination was due primarily to him. The biting sarcasm of his allusions to the "Cokesbury" College, shows him a master of this style when he felt impelled to employ it. He couples Coke and Asbury together (though Asbury after the college was burned extenuates his connection with it by declaring that he wanted only a school but Coke overruled him for a college, a fact not known perhaps to Wesley) in the guilt of this vainglorious title. But the culmination of his righteous indignation is reached when he comes to the transmutation of his simple Superintendents into Bishops by Asbury's surreptitious act, for it cannot be supposed that he had not been informed by some one or more of the minority who held out against the change of term as made by Asbury in the interval of the Conference, of the method of its introduction and adoption. It is repulsive to an impartial and candid mind to read the wriggling, squirming, twisting attempts of the apologists of Coke and Asbury to explain away the force of these denunciations. They are summed up in the distinction without a difference that the whole of Wesley's objection was to the *name* and not the *fact* as an explanation of the language of a man whose lifelong maxim was, "I dispute not about words."

Dr. Emory, in his "Defence of our Fathers," as to this special matter, tamely glosses it over with the admission that the letter "contains expressions too severe," and deprecates the fact that McCaine, in his "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," which Emory essayed to answer, "rejoices over it as one who had found great spoil." No reader not organized to convict on one side of the question will so estimate it. Emory, alluding to that portion of the Wesley letter — "Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better," and which McCaine refers to Coke's admission to Bishop White, but erroneously, brings out its plain meaning; but in so doing handles an edged tool to his own logical damage. Emory explains that Wesley had reference to the fact that the Presbyterians use the terms Elder and Bishop as interchangeable in the New Testament sense as applied to all pastors. Precisely true; but it shows that Wesley will not allow the use of the term even in this sense, inasmuch as you cannot separate the name from the fact of prelacy except to juggle with it to deceive the common people. That greatest philosophical mind of early American Methodism, Nicho-

las Snethen, clearly points out the danger there is in a change of title, and Wesley saw it just as clearly, and no sophistry can refute its truth. Snethen says: "The General Conference (1787) would have done better if they had preserved the title superintendent, as it was in the first edition of the discipline. It bears the same relative meaning to the term bishop that president does to king. King of the United States, with the same limited and restricted functions of office which the President has, could not be borne. The title would spoil the officer and the people. Old prejudices and associations are not to be broken at will. We cannot get rid of them by changing names. I do not hesitate to declare that, if it were in my power, I would change the present titles of office for superintendent—thus, superintendent of circuits and stations, superintendents of districts, and general superintendents. Insignificant as these changes may seem, even with all the present attributes of office attached to them, they would, I have no doubt, contribute much to modify the notions of office among us. *We never think or talk about bishops in common and sober sense. It is a word which inspires submission or resistance. It has been so long flattered or abused that it cannot be restored to a harmless meaning when applied to a living officer.*" The italics have been supplied for the purpose of emphasizing this portion as a sweeping and irresistible answer to all quibbles and extenuations and pretences and sophistries as to this substitution of Bishop for Superintendent by Asbury.

There can be no doubt that Asbury made the change because he wished to augment authority by its use. He made no mistake—it has subserved this very purpose, as the future will demonstrate. The whole question will be exhaustively treated under the McCaine-Emory controversy, though the gist of it is thus succinctly presented aside from the mass of literature extant upon the subject. The concluding paragraph of the letter seems dewed with tears of the good old man, now in his eighty-fifth year: "Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart; and let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother, John Wesley." It was his familiar, paternal style. A letter sent to William Black, missionary, and superintendent afterward for the British dominions, a year before, is subscribed "Dear Billy." The letter was written according to a well-known rule he had adopted through life: "Tell every one what you think of him, and that plainly, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire

out of your bosom." The concluding paragraph is tenderly pathetic. He wishes the letter to stand as a witness of his true friendship for Asbury. The reader will marvel how he could suppress and destroy it; and how Moore, who held the only other copy, could conceal it for thirty-six years. It is mildness itself to declare that this was a part of the Wesley-Coke-Asbury proceedings, "questionable and unwarrantable." Let the painful subject be dismissed.

Asbury and Coke travelled together and slept together for the next three months, but there is no hint that the former ever named to the latter the Wesley letter, or, if he did, they agreed together, to use a choice word of Asbury, as to other questionable conduct of his, to be "mute" about it. They visited together the eleven Conferences of this year, extending in a chain from Georgia to New York. Lee says, "Several of these Conferences were within thirty or forty miles of each other, which was pretty generally disliked; but at that time the bishop had the right of appointing as many Conferences as he thought proper, and at such times and places as he thought best." The ruling practical reason probably was that it saved both time and expense to the preachers; and the prudential one probably was that it secured despatch of business and kept the preachers from concentrating and criticising the methods of the Bishops. There was much difference of opinion, and not a little opposition, now that the bud of Episcopacy was nearly full blown. They discovered that voting, introduced by Asbury in 1784, if tradition be true, for his own establishment in the Primacy, is now discarded by him. He wishes no more advice in the way of suffrage—it is found by him inconvenient. And then he was justified because it was Wesley's way. Indeed, as has been found, when Coke made his former visit, in 1787, he brought instructions from Wesley, already quoted: "Put as few things as possible to vote. If you [Dr. Coke], brother Asbury, and brother Whatcoat are agreed, it is sufficient." It stands, also, as a tacit protest against the voting in 1784, for Wesley "gave his sanction to none of those things."

Both Asbury's and Coke's account of their travels depict hardships almost incredible in the American wilderness of the South; but their hearts were cheered everywhere with the news of remarkable revivals of great power. Fourteen new circuits and stations were added; forty-five young preachers received: for the itinerancy had a certain romantic charm and offered a vent for the burning zeal of these new converts. There was a net increase

of 5911 and a total of over 43,000, the vast majority, as in the past, in the South. The six months' probationary rule was enacted in 1788, and has continued to this day in the Methodist Episcopal Church, but was abolished in the Church South in 1866. It was found that in this year the qualifications as to Coke (when present in the United States) were dropped, as a step of Asbury's toward his conciliation and that of his preacher friends in the Conference. And now it appears that a farther concession was made, in 1789, perhaps to mollify, if possible, Wesley, of whose treatment there began to be loud complaint; so the minutes were changed again, and the following is the remarkable record: "Q. Who are the persons that exercise the Episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America? A. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession." Here is an asterisk and a foot-note, "See the fourth section of the fifth edition of our Form of Discipline." That section disavows apostolical succession as held by high churchmen in England, but there is no evidence that it was appended in this year, while it is morally certain that it was added by Asbury when the minutes from 1775 to 1794 were printed and bound together, in 1795, or at the same time that the explanatory note was added as to Bishop and Superintendent being interchangeable terms and more scriptural, as already demonstrated. The minutes farther say: "Q. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist connection in America? A. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury."¹ These radical changes, let it be understood first, were the work of Coke and Asbury, and were not submitted to the Conference at all. The preachers came to their knowledge of them when the printed minutes were placed in their hands some months after adjournment. Nothing else has given the apologists of Coke and Asbury so much trouble as these questions and answers, and with good reason.

As to the motive for the changes, Lee confirms the surmise as to it, "As some persons had complained of our receding from a former engagement made by some of our preachers, that, 'during the life of Mr. Wesley in matters belonging to church government they would obey his commands,' and as others had thought that we did not pay as much respect to Mr. Wesley as we ought; the bishops introduced a question in the annual minutes which was as follows," etc.; then he gives question first. "The next ques-

¹ From a copy of this rare volume now before the author.

tion was asked differently from what it had ever been in any of the former minutes, which stands thus,” etc., and then he cites the second question. Bangs, taking his cue from Lee, though without acknowledgment, makes a lame effort at a similar explanation, while his comments upon both the questions and answers, specially the “regular order and succession” sentence, show him ill at ease as the truth forced itself upon him; but of which his prejudices forbid the confession: so he straddles the difficulties, “There appears no little ambiguity in this question and answer,” followed by a direct charge that Coke and Asbury did not say what they meant, and then proceeds to tell the reader what they did mean.¹ Stevens does not attempt to handle these questions and answers, except to say that it is “ambiguous” and “clumsy,” certainly no compliment to the classical learning of Coke and the direct style of Asbury, and dismisses them entirely with a foot-note, “Both Lee and Bangs give the clause I have italicized (regular order and succession), but it is not in the bound reprint of the Minutes. Bangs animadverted cautiously on the peculiar phraseology of the answer.”² He either had no knowledge of the printed and bound volume of minutes of 1795, or, purposely ignored it; for it is in this printed and bound volume of the minutes that the “regular order and succession” is found and nowhere else. Reprints after 1795 do not contain it, another evidence of the unwarrantable liberty the Bishops took with the only documents through which the truth of history could be conveyed, and without a parallel in the records of any other Christian Church, that of Rome alone excepted, in which similar changes and suppressions can be found. Let us look closely into it. “By regular order and succession” is found in these questions and answers, changed in order and in phraseology also, for reasons presently to be investigated, in the minutes of 1789, 1790, and in those of 1791; but omitted in those of 1792 and from this date onward. As the minutes were not again reprinted until 1813, and the volume of 1795 had become very scarce and rare³ in the eighteen intervening years, but few of the preachers knew

¹ “History M. E. Church,” Vol. I. pp. 279, 280.

² *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 498.

³ Rev. Dr. John Atkinson, author of “Centennial History,” writes to me March 22, 1894, “The only copy of the volume of minutes I know printed in 1795, is in the Episcopal Seminary, New York City.” The writer has a well-preserved copy from which his citations are made, casually picked up in a second-hand book-store in Washington, D. C., by a friend some years ago. There is a copy in the Baltimore Methodist Historical Library, and Dr. Collins Denny informed me that several copies are preserved at Vanderbilt University Library, Nashville, Tenn.

that such sentences had ever been in the old minutes as inserted by Coke and Asbury, and after 1813, so oblivious had they become of it that, when McCaine exhumed these old records in his investigations into the origin of Methodist Episcopacy, it startled the Church of his day, 1827-30.

These questions and answers after this preliminary examination call for interpretation. "Q. Who are the persons who exercise the Episcopal office in the Methodist Church of Europe and America? A. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession." McCaine directed attention to this change of phraseology and stated, "By this answer Mr. Wesley is announced as one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church" by Asbury and Coke — for these questions and answers are evidently their joint work — and that while Asbury had Wesley's letter, the "bitter pill," in his possession, informing him how absolutely he rejected the title for himself and forbade it to any of his "sons in the gospel," and specifically, Coke and Asbury. McCaine's averment is based upon the fact that there is no difference between the "Episcopal office" and "bishop." The only attempt ever made to show a difference was by Dr. Emory, who made the quibbling answer: "this is not correct [enumerating Wesley as one of the bishops]. They did enter him as exercising 'the Episcopal office,' but they did not entitle him bishop. The former was not offensive to him. He well knew the distinction between the *title* and the *office*. The latter he did exercise and asserted his right to exercise it;" and then he crawfished and beclouded the water by citing Wesley's declaration: "I firmly believe that I am a scriptural *Episcopos* as much as any man in England or in Europe. For the *uninterrupted succession* I know to be a fable which no man ever did or can prove." But did Wesley mean that he had, therefore, a right to create an *order* or an *office* superior to his own, as a Presbyterian of the Church of England? No sane or honest man will so affirm, though the literature of this controversy is full of it; and if not, then there could be no difference in Wesley's mind between the Episcopal office and the order of Bishop. And the farther puerility of Emory that these Minutes, so worded afterward, came under Wesley's notice and "this gave him no offense." How does he know it did not? There was only one way — by some written word or spoken utterance of Wesley's to that effect. Not a shadow of such a thing can be produced, while there is abundant collateral evidence that he was not conciliated by this substitution of Episcopal office for his

own chosen designation, Superintendent. Why then did Asbury and Coke, when they printed the minutes of 1789, make this substitution? The hint has been disclosed. Coke knew that the title of Bishop was most offensive to Wesley, for he had solemnly charged that it was not to be taken when he reached America, while Asbury held Wesley's letter just received, denouncing them both for this violation of trust. Asbury, if not Coke, had escaped the "rusty fetters" of apostolical succession, but as intimated not far back, he had also reached the conclusion that he was in some well-defined sense an Apostle himself, and these questions and answers, as formulated for the minutes of 1789, were intended to express the new Methodist Succession. And to give it a legitimate beginning, it was found expedient for this reason; and it might reconcile Wesley to restore his name to the minutes as the first link in the new succession; and as McCaine nervously phrases it, "His name was placed at the head of the American minutes as one of their bishops," but under the evasive title "the Episcopal office." This view of its intention makes the whole record consistent, and suggests the need of the qualification "in regular order and succession." The foot-note already cited, although not inserted until 1795, only confirms the view that it was not the Church of England's uninterrupted succession, but the new Methodist Succession in regular order. How? Wesley — Coke — Asbury. Dr. Emory himself unwittingly adds his testimony. Some writer during the controversy of 1827-30 had seized upon the words "regular order and succession" as proof that the old succession was thereby claimed; and there would have been some pretence for this construction eight or ten years earlier when Asbury was an uninterrupted successionist; but later reading of church history, out of the ruts of Potter, had modified his views, so Emory is correct when he says, "The intention was simply to acknowledge Mr. Wesley's *precedence*. To guard against any other construction a *note* was added to that observation of the minutes, referring to another place, in which the idea of the fabulous apostolical succession is expressly resisted by the bishops themselves." Henry Boehm plainly shows that this new Methodist Succession grew in favor as the years ran by. Writing of the Conference of 1803 he says: "I was ordained a deacon at this Conference, and took the solemn vows of God upon me. I was in the regular succession, for I was ordained by Richard Whatcoat, who was ordained by Wesley."

¹ "Reminiscences," p. 90.

The new Methodist succession as an order grew and consolidated, and finally, in 1844, indirectly became the occasion of the disruption of the Church, the absence of a lay element equal in strength with the ministry being the proximate cause, as it made the division possible. As early as 1792, Rev. Thomas Morrell, in the General Conference, held the third-order theory in reply to Hammett: "Distinct ordination proves a different degree of order." In 1796 it cropped out again in solving the question: Should Coke succeed Asbury in the event of the latter's death; and Coke was asked at this Conference if he would accept it, that there might be a succession from Wesley; he answered affirmatively, whereupon Asbury, in the open Conference, stretched out his right hand to him, Phoebus says in his "Memoirs of Whatcoat," in token of reconciliation, and the Doctor took his right hand in token of submission, and there were "tears of joy to see the happy union in the heads of department, and from a prospect of the Wesleyan Episcopacy being likely to continue in regular order and succession." The same writer says that Whatcoat, when ordained bishop in 1800, "esteemed it not as an office taken at pleasure, but an order of God." Within a year after Whatcoat's ordination as bishop, Asbury wrote in his Journal, quoted in full earlier in this History, that there "could not be a perfect equality between a constant President and those over whom he was called to preside." Atkinson says, "That this high view of the Episcopate was shared by Asbury there seems little reason to doubt." The evidence submitted is in demonstration that he not only shared in it, but originated it, with Coke's connivance. Five years afterward he distinctly gave in his Journal the genealogy of this new succession of Bishops. This also has been already cited in the full text of it. It was generally accepted, at least by such leading preachers as lived in expectation that they might reach the honor. In 1827, the editor of the *Methodist Magazine*, Dr. John Emory, wrote, "At the same time that our Church does not subscribe to the *essentiality* of this order of ministers [bishops], it certainly recognizes it as superior to and different from the office of elder." So it continued until the General Conference of 1844,¹—when the case of Bishop Andrews made it

¹ It is remarkable evidence of the wonderful forecast of both McCaine and Snethen that each predicted as a direct result of the Episcopacy of Asbury this disastrous division of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as other contentions and schisms. McCaine says in his "History and Mystery," p. 62, speaking

expedient that the high ground should be modified, and brought into accord with the action of the several General Conferences from 1796—which held that the Superintendent was subject to suspension or deposition from office at its will. But after the occasion had been served by this modification of opinion by the leaders, it was revived.

There is in human nature a constant hankering after the honors of hierarchal antichrist, and it plagued the aspirants in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so that as late as July, 1871, Dr. Whedon, editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, took the high prerogative view with a seeming earnestness that started an alarm among the rank and file of the preachers. The *Review* held to such sophistical language as the following: “The office conferred upon Dr. Coke had all the attributes ascribed to an order; namely, ordination, life tenure, and successional permanence in the future.” And again, “Are not our Bishops consecrated by the most solemn of the three ordinations? How can there be an ordination, if not to an order?” Well might such views excite alarm. Even Dr. Stevens, from whom better things might have been expected, in his elaborate defence of the Episcopacy of Asbury, says, “And if he did ordain Coke, it may again be asked, as Coke was already a presbyter, to what was he thus ordained, if it was not to the only remaining office, — the episcopacy?” But that was more than thirty years ago, while he was a young man alive to preferment, and had not yet felt the touch of the Episcopal Ithuriel spear for too much independence of opinion as a Church official. Later than any of these, Rev. Dr. Miley of that Church has maintained publicly the third-order view. The remarkable fact remains that the General Conferences themselves, penetrating the thin disguise and lordly pretence, have always opportunely clipped the wings of these high flyers, whether in or

of the Episcopacy: “But as we believe it has been, and ever will be, productive of evil, we think it ought to be abolished. That it has been an apple of discord, engendering strife and contention, we think is quite clear. And that it will ultimately be the means of severing the connection is, in our judgment, beyond a doubt.” Snethen, in the “Mutual Rights,” Vol. I., 1825, p. 261, says on the same subject: “Their property and power were feared, and as was the fear, so was the flattery. Some of our bishops, we perceive, will be much flattered to the south and west of the Susquehanna, and much and deservedly loved, too. But it does not now seem probable that they will receive such eulogy from the north and east. If this shall prove to be the fact, will not the limits of their praise be the limits within which their power will be feared? We beg that these remarks may be attended to, and carefully kept in mind. These are the data on which we have predicated the separation of the north and east from the south and west.”

out of the bishopric, and vetoed the claim, just as Wesley ignored the action of the Christmas Conference, and at least made tentative efforts to control his American superintendents down to his decease, as though such action was null and void; and so it was in Wesley's esteem. Finally, the General Conference of 1884 put an extinguisher on it by a rebellious rush at it, initiated by Rev. Dr. Neely of the Philadelphia Conference, a conference of "Radicals" in its lay membership almost in mass, and of the preachers as respecting their Christian manhood against all encroachments of the Episcopacy. The leaven dates back to 1820, from Ezekiel Cooper, William S. Stockton, and other staunch Reformers. The following resolution was passed by a large majority in 1884, "Resolved, that we reaffirm the doctrine of the fathers of our Church, that the Bishopric is not an order, but an office; and that in orders a Bishop is merely an Elder, or Presbyter." Dr. Curry, alert and favoring it, at once supplemented it by another resolution which almost unanimously prevailed, "Resolved, that these words be inserted at the beginning of the ritual for the consecration of Bishops (this service is not to be understood as an ordination to a higher Order in the Christian Ministry, beyond and above that of Elders, or Presbyters, but a solemn and fitting Consecration for the special and most sacred duties of Superintendency in the Church)." Thus, precisely one hundred years after the Christmas Conference, Wesley's simple intent is acknowledged; but what controversy, strife, ambition, lording it over God's heritage, political scheming, and final rending of the Church in twain, the Asburyan assumptions have cost the denomination! The theory is, perhaps, at last settled for the Church North, but the law-structure as to the Episcopacy remains largely unamenable, making abuse possible and redress difficult, of which ever recurring instances keep the thoughtful preachers on the rack as to what else must be done to keep, not so much any longer the office, but the officer, under limitations. Admission has already been offered that it has made, next to the Popedom, the strongest, and so far as strength alone makes efficiency, the most efficient church government in Christendom; but the exception inheres that a government that is so strong as to nullify the manhood of its adherents is too strong for the submission of self-respecting men. The primary question under consideration led to this trend, and it is followed historically to this disposal.

Returning to the averment of McCaine that the question of

1789 made Wesley the first of the Methodist Bishops, the opinion receives trenchant support from Tyerman, representing the traditional view of it as held by Wesleyan preachers, and showing that Dr. Emory's quibble affirming a difference between the "Episcopal office" and the "Bishop" was rejected by the common sense of the English Methodists. After quoting the question of 1789, Tyerman says: "This grandiloquent parade of office must not be ascribed to Wesley. He never sanctioned it; he positively condemned it. Besides, even allowing that Coke and Asbury had a right to designate themselves bishops of the Methodist churches in America, what was their authority for pronouncing Wesley the bishop of the Methodist Church of Europe? They had none. It was an unwarrantable liberty taken with the name of a venerable man, who had censured the use of such an appellation, and whose humility and modesty Coke would have been none the worse for copying. As it was, Wesley was held up to ridicule and made to suffer, on account of the episcopal ambition of his friends."¹

Let this dismiss for the time the unsavory business, except to cite the second question allied to the first in the Discipline of 1789. "Q. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist connection in America? A. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury." The phrasing is wonderful: that Asbury should make a parade of "elected by the unanimous suffrage," at the very time he was now scheming to do away with the last vestige of it in the "Council" which he set on foot only a few months after these minutes came from the press. And the modesty of it passes belief: "to superintend" — no longer a "bishop" for a purpose — "the Methodist connection in America," — no longer the "Methodist Episcopal Church in America." And poor, vain, supercilious, yet cringing Dr. Coke is quite overborne because his name is once more coupled with Asbury's. He is now ready to do his bidding, and talked so freely of his exploits that the chagrined and disappointed Wesley lost patience with him in his efforts to bring about the same state of things in England. Pawson says in reference to the English ordinations: "A few months before his death, he was so annoyed by Dr. Coke's conduct in persuading the people to depart from the original plan, that he threatened in a letter to have no more to do with him unless he desisted from such a course." However Asbury's essay

¹ "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 437.

to conciliate Coke had succeeded by these questions and answers in 1789, Wesley was not influenced by them. As a Christian gentleman he did not refuse answers to Asbury's letters; for, though some of them have been quoted to show how irenic must have been their relations, not a line has ever been produced indicating that he gave counsel for the organization of an Independent Church, or that he recommended the Episcopal form of government for it, or that he ever recognized the Christmas Conference, even to pen the title of Asbury's Church, or in any way to countenance the separation from him and the Church of England to the day of his death. He treated the whole business with silent repudiation, having better things to employ his time than in unavailing remonstrance. Once only was he exasperated into breaking that silence, but then it was to the purpose in the letter to Asbury of September 20, 1788.

Thus the negative evidence is complete, while the positive is cumulative and equally decisive. During this very year 1789, and onward to his death, Wesley publicly repented of his ordinations for America, and wherefore? His whole object had been abused and perverted by Coke and Asbury, for if in anything they had carried out his intent there would have been no occasion for his bitter regrets. One of these parties, Dr. Coke himself, is witness, though unwittingly. In his letter to Bishop White in 1791, he says: "He [Wesley] went farther, I am sure, than he would have done [the ordinations], if he had foreseen some events that followed. And this I am certain of — that he is now sorry for the separation." Another unimpeachable witness is Rev. James Creighton, who took part at Wesley's request in the ordinations, replying to a pamphlet of Samuel Bradburn's published in 1793, says with emphasis: "I must take the liberty publicly to contradict you [Bradburn had denied that Wesley ever expressed regrets]. He did repent of it [ordinations], and with *tears* in his eyes expressed his sorrow both in public and private." Again he says: "He likewise expressed his sorrow respecting this matter at Leeds Conference, in 1789, and occasionally afterward in London, until his death."¹ McCaine, quoting the reply of Creighton, from the pamphlet itself apparently, gives page 13 for these remarks. Tyerman quotes the same.² The Leeds Conference of 1789, referred to by Creighton, was attended by Dr. Coke, having just returned from America, bringing with him no doubt copies of the minutes with the questions and answers designed to placate the

¹ "History and Mystery," p. 85.

² "Life of Wesley," Vol. III. p. 441.

disowned Wesley. Coke, fertile of tongue and adroit in method, laid it before him with his explanations and glosses, and it would be a mine of conversational and diplomatic richness if it could be opened. Wesley, with his usual reticence about American affairs, makes no mention at all, except to note the presence of Dr. Coke on the Sabbath preceding the Leeds Conference: "I preached, and, with Dr. Coke's assistance, administered the sacrament to eleven or twelve hundred communicants."¹ The further proceedings of the American Conference of 1789 and the pregnant events that followed it must be deferred to another chapter.

¹ "Journal," Vol. II. p. 726.

CHAPTER XXIX

Lee on the state of the societies—Asbury's method of holding many conferences each year; its object; opposition to it led to the "Council" plan—The fullest account of it ever printed; O'Kelly's connection therewith and after opposition—Asbury's "negative"; end of the Council—Dickins and the Book Concern—Trial of members modified—Revivals—Asbury's travels and broken health—Lee's account of the Council—Imputations on O'Kelly's motives—Bangs and Stevens apologetic of the Council—The term "presiding elder"; when first used.

LEE is quite accurate and also supplies the facts as to the proceedings of the Baltimore Conference of 1789 (virtually the only legislative Conference of the eleven held this year for reasons already descanted upon in these pages) more fully than others, being not only present, but stationed in Baltimore. He notices the changes made in the mode of trial of private members for improper conduct, also the six months' probation, and the proposal of the "bishops" for a new plan for directing the preachers' letters, as Bishop, Elder, Deacon, or Preacher. He also declares "in the course of this year religion was pretty lively and prosperous in our societies, and in some places it was very remarkable," and gives some thrilling instances. He makes note of his transfer to New England; the inauguration of Methodism by him in that section with a success as great as the hindrances were formidable; the "first meeting-house ever built in that section, near the upper edge of Stratfield, and is now called Lee's Chapel." These itinerants were in their glory when revivals flamed and the ark of God went forward. They revelled in it, while the sufferings and deprivations only added zest to the work.

The method of Asbury of holding a dozen or more conferences each year, Lee declares "was pretty generally disliked." Asbury himself, blind to his assumptions of power, thought of nothing, perhaps, but the prudential advantages of it; it saved travel, time, and expense to the preachers, and it rid him of the trouble of their concentration when they were sure to assert their Christian manhood at times, and criticise the methods of their beloved but not infallible chief. It was so much easier to assign them to their

posts besides, a few days' talk together and he read them out, his saddled horse near by, which he incontinently mounted and was off before even complaint could reach his ears, and then at Baltimore the whole Plan of Appointments was finally settled by him and published in the minutes. These preachers — some of whom in person, or in that of their fathers, were in the Revolutionary struggle for liberty, which meant the overthrow of the principle, which England had endeavored to fasten upon the colonists (of Passive obedience and Non-resistance) — could not but contrast their new-found freedom in the State with this absolute subjection to the will of one man in the Church, so the murmur, if low, was deep and full of meaning. It was not much they modestly asked; only that they might all meet together once a year, or at least to be accorded the privilege, if not always availed of, in a General Conference.

But history only repeated itself in the manner Asbury met it. The autocratic mind is not warned while the storm only mutters. It has clear ideas of what is best for the underlings. The very segregation complained of, is intensified as a remedy for disaffection. There is an age-old story of the Israelites in Egypt. When they murmured that their task was too hard, the masters reported, and from the reigning Pharaoh came the interpretation, "Ye are idle," and the mandate went forth: not the tale of bricks only but they must now find their own straw. How did the American Bishop propose to manage it — after much prayer and reflection it must be assumed? Let Lee tell; for he knew more about it than others except O'Kelly, and his story does not give the text, but is rich as to the manipulation of the plan. "At these Conferences in 1789, a plan was laid for the holding of a *Council*. The Bishops said they had made it a matter of prayer; and they believed the present plan was the best they could think of. After some opposition had been made to the plan, and there had been much debating about it, a majority of the preachers agreed to the following plan, which was published in the minutes." It will be remembered that Coke and Asbury travelled together from Charleston in March, to Baltimore in May, and they were together at the Conferences. It was Asbury's plan, this is not disputed, and it was opened to the preachers from Conference to Conference, Coke, no doubt, furthering it; for he was now in a personal presence that had become awesome to him. To eat and sleep and travel with Asbury was to feel the strange magnetism of his reverent behavior, his persuasive logic, his unquestioned

sincerity, and his dominating will. All great leaders have this spell about them, and he was one of the greatest of great men in his sphere in the world's history. At each Conference there was opposition, and some debating despite the presence of two Bishops advocating it, and when it is summed up a "majority" only agree. The moral courage of the dissenters is something to admire in those times, and evidently from the sequel they were not few and embraced among them a number of the leaders in several of the Conference groups. Not a few of them, if they did not openly aver it, asked among themselves: Is this what we have gained by our barter in 1784, and 1787, of Wesley for Asbury? The Episcopacy was bursting into full flower. They were having time to repent of the unseemly haste of 1784, and the change of masters in 1787. What was it to which the "majority agreed"? Did they vote? If so, it was the last time any of them were to vote, with a meaning in it. Thus it is writ in the minutes:—

"Q. Whereas the holding of general conferences on this extensive continent would be attended with a variety of difficulties and many inconveniences to the work of God; and whereas we judge it expedient that a council should be formed of chosen men out of the several districts, as representatives of the connection, to meet at stated times; in what manner is this council to be formed, what shall be its powers, and what further regulations shall be made concerning it? A. 1st. Our bishops and presiding elders shall be members of this council; provided that the members who form the council be never fewer than nine. And if any unavoidable circumstance prevent the attendance of a presiding elder at the council, he shall have authority to send another elder out of his own district to represent him; but the elder so sent by the absenting presiding elder shall have no seat in the council without the approbation of the bishop or bishops, and presiding elders present. And, if after the above mentioned provisions are complied with, any unavoidable circumstance, or any contingency reduce the number to less than nine the bishop shall immediately summon such elders as do not preside to complete the number. 2d. These shall have power to mature everything they shall judge expedient. (1) To preserve the general union: (2) to render and preserve the external form of worship similar in all our societies through the continent: (3) To preserve the essentials of the Methodist doctrines and discipline pure and uncorrupted: and lastly, they are authorized to mature everything they may see necessary for the good of the Church, and for

the promoting and improving our colleges, and plan of education. 3d. Provided, nevertheless, that nothing shall be received as the resolution of the council, unless it be assented to unanimously by the council; and nothing so assented to by the council shall be binding in any district till it has been agreed upon by a majority of the Conference which is held in that district. 4th. The bishops shall have authority to summon the council to meet at such times and places as they shall judge expedient. 5th. The first council shall be held at Cokesbury, on the first day of next December."

The plan in its sequence of events, and its lack of rhetorical finish, betrays the hand of Asbury alone; there is nothing of the classical touch of Coke's pen in it, though he fully indorsed it at the Conferences. Lee was suspicious of it, and looked at it askance. He further says: "This plan for having a council was entirely new, and exceedingly dangerous. A majority of the preachers voted in favor of it, but were soon sensible that the plan would not answer the purpose for which it was intended. The council was to be composed of the bishops and the presiding elders; the presiding elders were appointed, changed, and put out of office by the bishop, and just when he pleased; of course the whole of the council was to consist of the bishops, and a few other men of their own choice or appointing." In this he touches the very marrow of the plan, and it is wonderful that he does not seem to see also that this is the genius of the system the Christmas Conference imposed upon itself. The bishop is in supreme control, and all the verbiage about checks, here and there, and references to the Conferences mean nothing as such. He also saw a dangerous provision in the third clause, and says: "This I saw clearly when the plan was first proposed; and to which I then objected." The first Council met in Baltimore instead of at Cokesbury, and Lee gives the proceedings in full, but they need not be reproduced, except in the salient portions.

"The Proceedings of the Bishop and Presiding Elders of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Council assembled, at Baltimore, on the first day of December, 1789." "The following members which formed the Council were present: Francis Asbury, Bishop, Richard Ivy, Reuben Ellis, Edward Morris, James O'Kelly, Philip Bruce, Lemuel Green, Nelson Reed, Joseph Everett, John Dickins, James O. Cromwell, Freeborn Garrettsen." An examination of the minutes of this year shows that these were all the Presiding Elders, except John Tunnell, who was absent, probably

on account of ill-health, as he was consumptive; Richard Whatcoat was absent, but Everett, being on the same district with him as co-elder, took his place. Lemuel Green also took the place of Henry Willis as a co-elder, and Francis Poythress was also absent. They spent an hour in prayer and then went to business. Two things only need be noted, that deacons were put upon a three years' probation before they could be ordained elders, and when the plan as passed by the Conference was read in the Council, it was found that the item objected to by Lee was changed, probably by Asbury himself; for the Bishop in that day did anything he wished to do, or thought best, so that, Lee says, "If a majority of the preachers in the different districts should approve the proceedings of the Council, it should then be binding on every preacher in each district, instead of a majority in every district." Lee quaintly says that he gives the minutes in full "that the reason may be known why it [the Council] was opposed, and why it was so soon given up, and rejected both by the Methodist preachers and people." He also tells, in unwitting confirmation of the surmise of these pages, that the object of the Council in its secret purpose was to substitute the assembling of the preachers, and so thwart any plans they might concoct in opposition to the Episcopacy. "The number of conferences was increased, so that but a small number of the preachers could collect at one place. There were fourteen conferences appointed for the next year (1790)."¹

Now cull from O'Kelly's "Apology" some of the unpublished proceedings in and out of the first Council. He says (the reader will make some allowance for the lapse of memory, perhaps, in some things, and the fiery blood of this pious and able Irish-American), "Francis refused two worthy ministers a seat in Council, in his absolute manner, without rendering any reason for so doing." Who were they? It is unknown. He says of the plan as Asbury unfolded it, "a few sentences at a time": "I confess that on one side it discovers weakness, and on the other hand policy. But as we were men under authority, we feared to offend our superior. He would often pray that God would deliver the preachers from the curse of suspicion. This prayer had the desired effect on some of us. . . . However, I told Francis that, instead of counsellors, we were his tools, and that I disliked to be a tool to any man." After the Council O'Kelly and Edward Morris travelled homeward together, and made critical examina-

¹ Lee's "History," pp. 149-160.

tion of the plan. "In observing the contents, we discovered a new constitution of a very despotic nature. Nine men could act as the legislature, but the Bishop had the negative on the Council for time to come. Edward signified to me that he would not travel under such a government, and went straightway and married a virtuous damsel, and located himself as others have also done."

O'Kelly now attempted to beard the lion, and wrote Asbury a letter, of which he gives a glimpse: "Brother, you know our infant state, grant us one year to consider the matter coming before us. Or, if you refuse this, take away your negative—and if you refuse, 'I shall as a duty I owe to the Church use mine influence,' etc." "Francis received my letter by the hand of the messenger, but he utterly refused to comply with my request. He answered me after this manner—'Thy letter greatly alarmed me, but pray who boldly demands my negative? My negative is my own. I never have received such a check from any preacher in America.'" Had the Council plan as presented to the Conferences expressly or by implication given him a negative? It had not, it would have been equivalent to its rejection even by these subservient preachers; but no sooner had it assembled than Asbury asserted his negative on any proceedings that did not please him. Whence its source then? Far back in 1777, when the little group of preachers he called together to circumvent the Fluvanna brethren agreed that he should have a virtual negative, and he never surrendered it to the day of his death.

The next year Asbury modified the plan and carried it with him to the Conferences for approval. When he reached that at Petersburg, Va., it was submitted, and O'Kelly says, "I easily discovered that in every alteration he took care to secure his power." A private caucus of the preachers was held, "and we all the next morning came before the president, in number about twenty-one, if I remember right. The president proposed it as above stated, and we all (except two) with one voice rejected it altogether. Then answered Francis and said, 'ye have all spoken out of one mouth.' Henceforth 'ye are all out of the union.' Then as one in distress he gathered up his papers; so ended the Conference without prayer. . . . The young ministers wept. I was struck with astonishment to find that we were all expelled the union, by the arbitrary voice of one man; for no offence but voting according to our own matured judgment! We could have appealed to the people of our care, and produced our godly char-

acter, but ah, no! the people have no power to help themselves! Now I began to see!" O'Kelly proposed the call of a convention, two from each district, but Asbury would not hear to it. O'Kelly proposed that he should be allowed to visit and submit his arguments to the northern Conferences, but Asbury rejected this also. O'Kelly concludes: "The interpretation is this; nineteen ministers, I believe called and approved of by God, and beloved by the people, were expelled the union of the Church, containing sixty or seventy thousand souls, by the voice of Francis. Is the like of this to be found in the annals of history? Should it be said that our expulsion was a natural consequence, or result of our rejecting the government which others had adopted; I would observe that only a minority had received it at the time." There is no escaping the logical cogency of these forceful words. Again, as in the case of the Fluvanna brethren, the bit was between his teeth. Before Asbury left them O'Kelly reports that the young ministers said to him, "What shall we do, and what will become of this district?" Asbury answered, "If you will agree that I shall be your bishop, I will station you in this district on the old plan. They accepted his offer, and the district was committed to their care: but no regard was paid to O'Kelly."¹ When the minutes were printed, however, Asbury's vehement displeasure had subsided, and O'Kelly was recognized as presiding elder and the preachers of his district named as usual.

Asbury in his *Journal* notes upon the first Council says, "All our business was done in love and unanimity." It was the surface indication. Under arbitrary systems silence is construed as giving consent. As dissent is neither courted nor allowed, it seldom exhibits. It was early in January, 1790, that Asbury received the letter O'Kelly had written him as already found, and quotation is given of what he says in his *Journal*, confirming the statements of O'Kelly, and in proof of his general reliability, though not always fully informed and at times biassed by his prejudices. "I received a letter from the presiding elder of this district, James O'Kelly: he makes heavy complaints of my power, and bids me stop for one year, or he must use his influence against me. Power! power! there is not a vote given in a conference in which the presiding elder has not greatly the advantage of me; all the influence I am to gain over a company of young men in a district must be done in three weeks; the greater part of them, perhaps, are seen by me only at conference, whilst

¹ O'Kelly, "Apology," pp. 10-16.

the presiding elder has had them with him all the year, and has the greatest opportunity of gaining influence; this advantage may be abused; let the bishops look to it: but who has the power to lay an embargo on me, and to make of non-effect the decision of all the conferences of the union?"¹ This deliverance deserves analysis, for the philosophical reflections it suggests and for matter of fact correction. It shows how the autocratic mind frames its excuses. He keeps out of sight the fact that the presiding elder is absolutely the creature of his will, and that every preacher under him is on the point of his pen for assignment. O'Kelly did not attempt to make of "non-effect the decision of all the conferences of the union." But three of the twelve had been held when O'Kelly made his protests at Petersburg and was sustained by the preachers. What is particularly noteworthy is this, "This advantage may be abused; let the bishops look to it." He took care to do so, by making the next Council more unamenable than the first.

The minutes of 1789 were famous not only for the transactions already noted, but for the record—"Philadelphia, John Dickins, Book steward." He was born and it seems well educated in the city of London, came to America before the Revolution, and about 1774 was converted and entered upon an active ministerial career in 1777. In 1778-79 he shared the leadership of Methodism with Gatch, and was easily the best debater, as is evident from showings already made of his successful controversial bout with Asbury, in defence of the action of the Fluvanna brethren in forming a Presbytery and ordaining the preachers, as well as in laying the superstructure of a Presbyterian polity for the Methodist societies while Asbury was in duress in Delaware in 1777-78 and part of 1779. What considerations afterward induced him to change his mind is open to conjecture. What is known is that in 1780 he had some throat trouble and spoke with difficulty. He came under the more direct influence of Asbury, who sent him to Philadelphia, where he once more entered upon active work, and initiated the book business, exhibiting ability in the management of temporalities. In his pastoral relation he raised the feeble society in that city to strength and influence, and himself won the confidence of the church leaders. He took an active part in the Christmas Conference, and was ever afterward an ardent friend of Asbury's, who kept him in view for promotion, and, now that everything was ripe for it, appointed him book steward. It

¹ "Journal," Vol. II. p. 69.

is the first of a number of instances to be considered in the progress of this History in which change of sentiment is found to be coincident with promotion, and which induced McCaine in after years to quote against several of his controversial opponents the sentiment: "God forbid that men should not learn while they live, but it is a bad sign when illumination and preferment come together." Dickins had saved six hundred dollars, which he invested in the business, and it was the cash foundation of the Book Concern, which arose from this humble beginning until it represents millions, a vast establishment, and an untold amount of good through its numerous publications. It stands the pride of the Methodist Episcopal Church to-day, but it has not been an unmixed good in that it became a right hand of power to the Episcopacy, and ultimated after the division of the Church in 1844 in a civil suit by the Church South against the Church for a recovery of her equitable share of the property, after all proposals of honorable Christian compromise had been rejected, and in which suit the Supreme Court of the United States, Judge Nelson presiding, gave verdict for the Church South, and in his statement of the genius of the government of the Church sustained all the allegations of earlier Reformers as to its law-structure. That suit stands an indelible disgrace, which time cannot wipe out. Dickins continued in charge of the book business of the Church until 1798, when he peacefully departed this life.¹ The Book Concern stands a monument to his business sagacity and honest management, while his private character and ministerial career are above reproach.

The abuse of the power lodged in the preachers for the expulsion of members had grown to such flagrant proportions that at this Conference a note was added to the minutes qualifying section 32 of the Discipline, but it soon fell into desuetude: "When a member of our society is to be tried for any offence, the officiating minister or preacher is to call together all the members, if the society be small, or a select number, if it be large, to take knowledge, and give advice, and bear witness to the justice of the whole process, that improper and private expulsions may be prevented in the future." Vested authority

¹ The *Arminian Magazine* was issued by him for 1789 and 1790, when it was discontinued. In 1797, by order of the General Conference of 1796, another periodical was published for 1797 and 1798, or down to the death of Dickins. His successor as book steward, Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, discontinued it when he took charge at the close of the volume for 1798. Rev. Dr. John Atkinson has complete files of them.

encourages administrative abuse under a hierarchy. The bishop ruled supreme over all the orders below him; the elders over the preachers, and preachers over the people. That there should be exaggerations of discipline, errors of judgment, sometimes passion and oftener prejudice as elements in such administration, all history proves. Those inferior in authority learned of their superiors. Stripling preachers took the short cut to the settlement of local church feuds by expelling, by simple announcement from the pulpit, whole classes, tearing up the class-books and reconstructing them. This was the method of Asbury with recalcitrants in the Conferences; witness Fluvanna and Petersburg; and those below him were not slow for a purpose to "copy the blot" as well as the writing. The young preachers in their novitiate were put into training, and the lesson set them until they became perfect in it was obedience. Any one of independent turn of mind and the elements in him to make a good presiding elder after a while, if he developed the traits prematurely, was "mounted" by his superior, to use a colloquial phrase of the times, and soon ridden into subjection or run out of the Conference.

Partridge, Bingham, Gill, Cooper, White, and Spry died this year, and from four to six lines are given each as an obituary in the minutes. This is all to remember them here, for their graves are unknown, but their "record is on high."

1789-90 were years of unwonted revivals. Except where Whitefield had touched the continent and some of the early Princeton College divines had stirred communities, evangelical religion was found alone among the Methodists and the Baptists, the latter few in numbers. It was the delight of these young preachers of Methodism to pioneer the country with the Wesleyan doctrines, a recrudescence of Luther's grand exhumation of Scripture truth, "justification by faith," with an attending experience, the witness of the spirit, adoption, and holiness. They were broadcast heralds of a present salvation, and everywhere they sowed, the seed took root, and societies were organized. There was a net increase of members for the year 1789-90, of eleven thousand whites and twenty-five hundred blacks, for the minute now made this distinction of color. Asbury continued to be present everywhere; as much as one personality and the use of two horses could make him. In the revivals it was expected that some recruits would be found for the itinerancy, and such men called by the Holy Ghost were not wanting. Snethen used to say that

Asbury often repeated at the Conferences that "he wondered where all these young preachers came from, riding good horses and with watches in their pockets."

His Journal furnishes some remarkable entries for 1790. In April he is down in North Carolina, and, after riding twenty-two miles, he "stopped with Colonel Graham, dripping wet with rain. . . . I was still unwell with a complaint that terminated the life of my grandfather Asbury, whose name I bear; perhaps, it will also be my end. . . . For several days I have been very sick and serious. I have been compelled to look into eternity with some pleasure. I could give up the church, the college, and schools; nevertheless, there was one drawback—what will my enemies and mistaken friends say? Why, that he hath offended the Lord, and he hath taken him away." It will be remembered that he is now wrestling with his preachers and the people over the Council plan. It must have been a fierce contest. He seems deeply conscious of it, but your autocrat is never in error. Only one drawback to a happy death: what will his enemies and mistaken friends say? Why he conjectures just about what he said of Strawbridge, some years now gone. "Why, he hath offended the Lord, and he hath taken him away." Thus the weak points of his human nature crop out from time to time. Whatcoat was now travelling with him and doing much of the preaching. They had just come from Charleston and had held the Conference: "Our business was conducted in great peace and love. The business of the Council came before us; and it was determined that the concerns of the college and the printing should be left with the Council to act decisively upon; but that no canons should be made, nor the old altered, without the consent of the conference, and that whatever was done on this head, should come in the shape of advice only." He makes a rapid trip into Kentucky, called by an urgent letter from Poythress, and the hardships of the journey are briefly but graphically depicted. Back again in Virginia, June 14: "Our Conference began (it was at Petersburg again); all was peace until the Council was mentioned. The young men appeared to be entirely under the influence of the elders, and turned it out of doors. I was weary, and felt but little freedom to speak on the subject. This business is to be explained to every preacher; and then it must be carried through the Conference twenty-four times, that is, through all the conferences for two years." The Council plan is deeply settled in his convictions, but the circumlocution of sub-

mission of its proceedings to the conferences and so down among the people wearies him, and to find the dissatisfaction growing greatly taxes his patience. The action of the Petersburg Conference haunts him. "I felt grieved in mind that there is a link broken out of twelve that should form a chain of union." His physical health is shattered, and his mental condition despondent and precarious. The attempt to be everywhere and to touch everything with his own hands, and to overrule as well as oversee the Church from the people to the Council, is proving too much for even a giant's strength. Snethen says, "It is well known what immense labor and difficulty it cost Mr. Asbury to maintain the non-representative system." This must have been the period referred to by him when he also wrote; "Age and soundness of mind are indispensable requisites in church rulers; qualities of rare attainment among itinerant men. In no labor is the body or the mind so quickly worn out, as by constant traveling and preaching. Even the mind of the great Asbury was for a whole year in a state of almost childlike debility, though he again recovered its strength."

He holds the Conference at Uniontown, Pa., and then is down in Virginia again at the Leesburg Conference, and makes this record: "To conciliate the minds of our brethren in the south district of Virginia, who are restless about the Council, I wrote their leader [O'Kelly] a letter, informing him that 'I would take my seat in Council as any other member,' and in that point, at least, waive the claims of episcopacy; yea, I would lie down and be trodden upon rather than knowingly injure one soul." He holds the Conference in Baltimore, September 6, 1790, and then at Duck Creek Cross Roads, for the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Delaware. "One or two of our brethren felt the Virginia fire about the question of Council, but all things came into order and the Council obtained." He held a Conference in Philadelphia, and finds, under Dickins, "our printing is in a good state." The last Conference for the year is held in New York, October 4. Sick, dejected at times, distracted about the Council, it is simply wonderful to follow his Journal, as he rode horseback from state to state, until he once more comes to Baltimore, where the second Council had been ordered to convene, December 1, 1790. His record of it is: "The Council was seated at Philip Rodgers's chamber. After some explanation, we all agreed that we had a right to manage the temporal concerns of the Church and college decisively; and to recommend to the Conferences, for ratifica-

tion, whatever we judged might be advantageous to the spiritual well-being of the whole body. For the sake of union we declined sending out any recommendatory propositions. We had great peace and union in all our labors. What we have done the minutes will show. . . . I have kept no Journal during the sitting of the Council."

Lee furnishes the minutes of the second Council. "Q. What members are present? A. Francis Asbury, bishop; Freeborn Garrettson, Francis Poythress, Nelson Reed, John Dickins, Philip Bruce, Isaac Smith, Thomas Bowen, James O. Cromwell, Joseph Everett, and Charles Connaway." It will be observed that O'Kelly is not present. Either he was not invited, for the Bishop selected the Elders, or he refused to come. Three new and less well-known men are in it. "Q. What power does this Council consider themselves invested with, by their electors? A. First, they unanimously consider themselves invested with full power to act decisively in all temporal matters. And secondly, to recommend to the several Conferences any new canons, or alterations to be made in the old ones." Lee gives also several pages of the routine business, but there is no intimation that Asbury made any surrender of his negative, as his letter to O'Kelly seems to suggest. Probably as it did not conciliate him, Asbury dropped the subject. The last question was, "Where and when shall the next Council be held? A. At Cokesbury College, or Baltimore, on the first day of December, 1792."

O'Kelly's account of the proceedings betrays the extreme of a faultfinding disposition. It is plain that he is set in a purpose of resistance to Asbury, — he cannot condone the arbitrary expulsion of himself and his preachers from the "Union." He wrote disaffecting letters to the preachers, opened correspondence with Dr. Coke, now in England, and evidently succeeded in persuading him that Asbury's "despotic" course, as O'Kelly called it, had ripened the preachers for a revolt, and probably suggested that, if he would come over and head it, Coke's past grievances with Asbury might find redress. Why are these surmises indulged? Because facts will soon be developed that make them morally certain. Lee's summing up of the whole matter is worth reproducing, as the writer's statement of the Council plan is intended to be the fullest ever yet given the Methodist people:¹ "This

¹ Garrettson was probably the secretary of the Councils, a legitimate inference from the following facts. A letter from Rev. Dr. John Atkinson, under date of October 23, 1897, from Clifton Springs, N. Y., and but a few months before his

Council determined to have another meeting two years from that time. But their proceedings gave such dissatisfaction to our connection in general, and to some of the travelling preachers in particular, that they were forced to abandon the plan. And there has never since been a meeting of the kind. . . . The most violent opposer of the Council among the travelling preachers was at first one of that body—James O'Kelly. While he was at the first Council, he appeared to be united to the plan and to the members; but after he returned to Virginia, he exclaimed bitterly against the proceedings and against what he himself had done in the business. He refused to have anything at all to do with the second Council. The supposition respecting the sudden change in the old man, and his hasty conduct in condemning what he had just before sanctioned, was that he went to the first Council with some expectation of being promoted in the Church; but, finding himself disappointed, he returned home mortified. We have sufficient reason to believe that the establishment of the Council was very injurious to the Methodist connection. The plan produced such difficulties in

decease, to the writer, furnishes the information that the manuscripts and papers of Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, which were inclusive of Garrettson's papers also, were for a long time in the possession of Rev. Dr. George A. Phoebus, he having obtained them from Dr. Ignatius T. Cooper, a nephew of Ezekiel, under bond to return them intact on demand. The owner died while they were yet in his possession, and when requisition was made for them they were recovered with extreme difficulty. Dr. Atkinson then purchased them for Mr. Deering, of Chicago, who presented them to the Garrett Biblical Institute at Evanston, Ill. When Dr. Atkinson examined the papers, the minutes of the Councils of 1789-90, known to be a part of the Garrettson collection, could not be found. Farther demand upon Dr. Phoebus has failed to recover these minutes, though he asserted to the writer in the presence of Rev. Dr. Lanahan in the early autumn of 1897, in the Methodist Historical Rooms in Baltimore, that he had these minutes in possession, and that he could prove from the Garrettson papers not only that Ashbury did not assign Garrettson to the eldership of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, from the Superintendency of Canada, without his full knowledge and consent, but that Wesley appointed Whatcoat a Superintendent for America the *second time*! Rev. Dr. Little, President of Garrett Institute, having examined the papers at the request of Dr. Lanahan under the writer's instigation, made personal report to him that the papers in hand furnished no such evidence. So if Dr. Phoebus has any such proof, it must be in such papers as he unlawfully retained out of the collection. It is not believed, however, that any such evidence exists, while the minutes of the Council of 1790, if he has these as claimed in disregard of his bond to return on demand everything loaned him, it is morally certain do not contain anything important beyond what these pages have given. So that the writer's claim, that the account of the Council business is "the fullest ever yet given the Methodist people," stands unimpeached.

Since the foregoing was written, Dr. Collins Denny of Nashville, Tenn., exhibited to the writer these minutes in printed form in full (1898).

the minds of the preachers and the people, and brought on such opposition, that it was hard to reconcile them one to another. Nothing could or would give satisfaction to the people but the calling together all the travelling preachers in a general conference; to which, after some time, the bishop consented."

A few comments are called for on this summing up. The charge that O'Kelly's motive for opposing the Council after having taken part in the first one was disappointed ambition, was covered by him in his "Apology" published fifteen years before Lee's "History," and with which Lee must have been acquainted, as it was widely circulated and more extensively read by preachers and people. He meets this charge that "he left them because he missed his expectation at the Council, where and when he expected to be ordained bishop. . . . I can appeal to the Lord, and am ready now to be qualified, that the man hath belied me to my face," etc. Let this be set over against Lee's charge as echoed from others. The charge is all the more to be regretted inasmuch as it can be well established that Lee himself cherished the expectation under encouragement from Asbury, until his defeat by Whatcoat settled the American Episcopal "succession" through him. And it may be generally observed that much such crimination and recrimination, imputation of motive, and aspersion of character will be disclosed in the future of this History, specially during the great controversy of 1820-30, from which neither party was entirely free. It goes for the saying, however, that the autocratic and oligarchic systems are surpassingly eminent for fostering scheming ambitions for place and power. It creates grades, and holds out prizes to the aspiring. It is indeed the cohesive cement of all hierarchies—but for it they would drop to pieces both in Church and State. Another remark upon Lee's summing up is that he paints in mild colors the damaging results of the Council plan. The agitation, the alienation, the coercion, the resistance, both directly and prospectively, in the O'Kelly schism, cannot be measured for injury to the Kingdom of Christ as represented by Methodism; while the responsibility comes directly home to the Asburian system, and is in support of the postulate that to Paternalism in American Methodism must be traced constant internal upheaval and its numerous denominational divisions. The Council plan was the climax of autocratic assumption, and from its dizzy height Asbury had his first ecclesiastical fall. No reader of the full and, as is claimed, impartial account of it these pages have traced, can reach any other con-

clusion. Even so partisan a writer as Rev. Dr. David Sherman says of it: "The Council had become so generally odious to the preachers and people that Asbury requested that it might be named no more. Highly and justly as they esteemed Asbury, they were not prepared to make him a Pope."¹ The comparison is not invidious, but it stands for more than its worth, considering the source of it. Dr. Bangs's notice of the Council quotes the minutes of the first, taken from Lee without credit, and leaves the impression that it was the joint work of the preachers and Asbury. Dr. Stevens makes note but briefly and apologetically — so with other writers — of the Asburyan school. It is a hot iron they do not care to handle with their bare fingers. In fine, the Council must be recorded an unmixed evil, except so far as it once more, since the Fluvanna times, set the people to thinking and encouraged the preachers to be something more than puppets. There can be no doubt that the struggle resulted in worse health for Asbury, and presaged a complete mental breakdown. He recovered, however, from the relaxation of the overbent bow, and was ready for the contest with O'Kelly in 1792. The title Presiding Elder first occurs in the minutes of the Council of 1789 and 1790, and does not recur anywhere until 1797; but the prefix "Presiding" did not go into the minutes of Conference, as Stevens alleges from the Council, for the two years of its existence. The district Elder headed the preachers under him in the minutes of 1784, and onward without change until 1797, when "Presiding" was prefixed.

¹ "History of the Discipline," p. 228.

CHAPTER XXX

Asbury's address to President Washington in New York, May 29, 1789, and its connection with the omission of Dr. Coke's name from the British minutes in 1786; and its complications in the McCaine-Emory controversy of 1827-28; the whole subject being traversed as never before by any writer, and a true solution found — Ashury and Sunday-schools — William Hammett, and the secession of 1792 in Charleston, S. C., the Coke, Asbury, Wesley intricacies; and Bishop Capers's error of statement in 1844; the knotty skein unravelled — Antecedents of the O'Kelly secession, 1791-92; final overthrow of the Council with Coke's assistance through O'Kelly; Asbury's first defeat — Asbury and Coke together at the Conferences watching each other — Coke's secret letter to Bishop White; when mailed; was it before or after he heard of Wesley's death? proved to be before, and Dr. Emory discredited.

A FEW dropped threads of history need to be taken up ere the finality of the Council matter and its issuance in a General Conference are resumed. At the New York Conference of 1789, held in New York City, May 28, the first Congress of the United States under the new Constitution being in session, and Washington, as President of the country, also present, it was thought by Asbury and Coke a good stroke of ecclesiastical policy to make him a congratulatory address. The Conference authorized it, and Dickins and Morrell, the leading preachers, were appointed to wait on Washington and have him designate a day for the reception of the bishops. May 29 was designated, and, accordingly, Asbury, Coke accompanying him and the committee, read the address, Morrell says, "with great self-possession and in an impressive manner. The President read his reply with fluency and animation." The full text of these addresses is given by both Bangs and Stevens. They were afterward printed in the newspapers of the day; and other denominations followed the example set them. They are invested with importance by the sequel, and this seems an appropriate place for its succinct mention. Asbury makes no reference to it whatever in his Journal. The only note is: "Our Conference began. All things were conducted in peace and order." Tyerman is silent. Drew, Coke's biographer, brings it into prominence, and through his misleading suggestions as to the date it forms a large part of the

McCaine-Emory controversy of 1827-30. Drew introduces his account of it with his eighth chapter, which treats of the events of 1785-86. A more careful biographer would not have made the error, though his excuse for this and other lapses of date is found in the preface, where he says that Dr. Coke left on his fatal voyage to India, intending to put his papers in chronological order on the way; but his untimely death prevented, so that the papers and notes when received by Drew were in no consecutive order; hence his blunders. Drew says — the substance is given — that on Coke's arrival at the British Conference of 1789, his part in the address to Washington had preceded him and was brought forward as a serious charge by those unfriendly to him. It was declared inconsistent in him as a British subject to join in such an address, as it was "a tacit impeachment of Mr. Wesley's political sentiments," and "calculated to provoke the indignation of government" against the Methodists. "Dr. Coke heard these charges against him in profound silence" and "as some decisive steps were necessary in this critical affair, it was finally determined that the name of Dr. Coke should be omitted in the minutes of the succeeding year." Unfortunate Dr. Coke, he had subscribed to sentiments of political liberty utterly incongruous with the monarchy of England and the Wesleyan polity over Methodists. Drew gives the answer of Washington but not the address of the bishops to him, but out of its chronological connection, or on page 113, evidently doing his deceased friend the favor of concealing from Englishmen the sentiments of the address to which Coke had affixed his name. Among the sentiments it contained it may be well to quote: "Those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of God, and the glorious Revolution." "The most excellent Constitution of these States, which is at present the admiration of the world."

No marvel his English brethren could not see how he could be a monarchist and a republican at the same time. Nor can any one see how he could reconcile these representative sentiments with his answer to the petitioners for lay-delegation as made to the British Conference soon after Wesley's decease, "Sirs, the Conference considers the plan of electing by votes of the people and sending delegates to Conference, and district meetings, committees, is founded on the principles of Jacobinism, principles which we abhor. . . . We are certain that our late venerable father in the gospel detested these principles as much as any man on earth; . . . we are, therefore, determined in the most resolved manner,

and with the most unanimous spirit, to reject the plan of delegates, in whatever shape or manner it may be presented.”¹ If it be possible to esteem him honest in his admiration of representative principles in the American States, then in view of the deliverance just cited to the British laymen, he must be recognized as the prototype of a class in the Methodist Episcopal Church who strenuously maintain that non-representation in the Church and its opposite in the State are concurrently consistent. For nearly a hundred years in American controversial Methodism this scriptural and dialectical absurdity has not been wanting in advocates. Happily the race is about extinct.

Both Drew and Bangs endeavor to excuse Coke on the ground that he had a double character to maintain, one as Bishop of the American Church, and one as a member of the British Conference. To which it is necessary only to say that double characters of every kind are infamous, and this double relation of Coke is no less inconsistent.² Bangs thinks the position of Asbury in the matter entirely proper, inasmuch as “he had become an American citizen,” etc. There is no evidence whatever that Asbury ever was naturalized. The most he ever did to save himself from farther molestation while at Judge White’s in Delaware, was to take the test-oath of that colony because it was more moderate than others and did not afflict his conscience as a non-juror. Bangs is severe in his invective against McCaine for assigning to these addresses the date of 1785, while Dr. Emory cuts him with the razor-edge of his sarcasm all to pieces. Both of them, if they had had a mind, might have referred to Drew, and so discovered that he had led McCaine astray as to dates, or, if they had given the least attention to McCaine’s own statement, that Drew misled him; but it seems that neither was magnanimous enough to forego the advantage it gave him to discredit McCaine’s general argument and masterful array of facts by this and a few other mistakes in his “History and Mystery.” Indeed, as to crimination and recrimination, McCaine, Emory, and Bangs seem to revel over this matter. McCaine was not only misled by Drew as to the date, but was excusable farther in that by a

¹ McCaine’s “Letters on the M. E. Church,” p. 143.

² Wesley never would have tolerated such a double character, and did not in the case of Coke, inasmuch as he looked upon him and Asbury, and Whatcoat, and others, to the day of his death, as subject to him, and an integral part of British Methodism, thus giving another tacit proof of his utter repudiation of Asbury’s separation from him and the Church of England. The fact of separation remained, but by no act or word of his did Wesley recognize it.

singular coincidence, when he came to his investigation of Methodist Episcopacy, he found that Dr. Coke's name was left off the minutes of the British Conference in 1786, and this seemed to confirm his theory that Coke's name was thus left off by reason of his complicity in the Christmas Conference doings and not the address to Washington. Emory gives as explanation of this omission of his name in 1786, the fact that he was sent on his missionary trip to Nova Scotia, but, miscarried by storm, ended in the West India mission; and this probably protracted absence led the Conference through its secretary to drop his name for the time. It is not satisfactory.¹ Suffice it to say as to this whole business that the serious amount of ink wasted by all the parties to the controversy has no better foundation than the unintentional, but unavoidable, misleading effect of Drew's associating the address to Washington and the censure of Coke by the Conference with 1785. No reader can understand him otherwise. It is not too much to say, however, that McCaine, as an educated preacher and school-teacher, ought to have known that in 1785 Washington was in private life on his plantation at Mt. Vernon, nor does he concede his error, when pointed out, as frankly as he should have done. A final word as to Asbury and the address. While he remained through life a British subject he came to have a sincere admiration for Washington, and believed the outcome of the Revolution to have been providential, and for the good of the country.

The minutes of the Conference of 1790 have the following question and answer: "Q. What can be done for the instruction of poor children (whites and blacks) to read? A. Let us labor as the heart and soul of one man, to establish Sunday-schools, in or near the places of public worship. Let persons be appointed by the bishops, elders, deacons, or preachers, to teach (gratis) all that

¹ If omission of Coke's name from the Conference minutes was counted a severe penalty for the year 1789, then Emory's explanation of the omission of his name in 1786 as a mere clerical error, or to note Coke's absence in Nova Scotia, is not satisfactory, for the idea of penalty must be associated with it also. McCaine so considered it, and his position that it was punitive, for the part he took in the Christmas Conference, is not so easily disposed of. And it is singular that no one of the historians of Methodism took any account of it until McCaine called attention to it. If, however, it was a punitive act by the Conference of 1785, omitting his name for 1786, it is equally difficult to understand why both Moore and Tyerman make no reference to it. Emory plays the part of a trickster in logic when he charges that McCaine alleged that the omission occurred in 1785, and then triumphantly showing that the omission occurred in 1786. McCaine made no such allegation for 1785, but for 1786, and the minutes bear him out in it, as the writer has personally verified from the British minutes.

will attend, and have a capacity to learn, from six in the morning until ten, and from two o'clock in the afternoon till six, where it does not interfere with public worship." Stevens says in his notice of this event that he quotes the action of the Conference from Lee as "the bound minutes do not give it." This makes it clear that he did not have a copy of those printed by Dickins in 1795, in my possession, for the action does appear in them. He depended on the edition of 1813, which was materially altered by the bishops before publication in some essential particulars, of which more notice may yet be taken. What the minute does is to establish that it was the first recognition of Sunday-schools by an American Church. It was only nine years after their establishment in England by Robert Raikes, who derived the idea from a young Methodist woman. Four years before this minute, or in 1786, Asbury established a Sunday-school, the first in the New World, at the house of Thomas Crenshaw in Hanover County, Va. The effort of Asbury from 1790 met with discouragements, but finally succeeded under modifications, and the Sunday-school Union of that Church is now an unexampled power for good intrinsically and of denominational cohesion and growth.

The revival flame which broke out in 1789 continued to burn with unabated ardor through the two succeeding years, and there was a vast increase of members, while the additions to the itinerancy more than met the demands of the enlarging work. It was necessary, for the locations and deaths were numerous through the hardship, exposure, and the celibate life demanded and encouraged by Asbury. Stevens says: "Of 650 whose names appear in the minutes, by the close of the century, about 500 died or located, and many of the remainder were, for a longer or shorter interval, in the local ranks, but were able again to enter the itinerancy. Nearly half of those whose deaths are recorded died before they were thirty years old; about two-thirds died before they had spent twelve years in the laborious service. They fell martyrs to their work." He gives lists of them by name.

Stevens also says, "No important doctrinal heresy had yet disturbed them." It is the central fact of Methodism. And the same may be said for the hundred years of evangelism which have rolled away since; the doctrines and the means of grace in all the branches of Wesleyan religion have preserved a wonderful unity. Would that as much could be said of the ecclesiastical system of

its English Founder and its American Pioneer. True, fond and partial historians and living advocates to-day see in it an instrumentality which they would give the chief place as a factor in the success of the great movement, did it not abolish all distinction between divine doctrines and human ordinances. With almost brazen fetters of organic law-structure, and so creating an administrative sweep and swing which have held tenaciously to a centralizing oligarchy since the days of Asbury, M'Kendree, and Soule, no question can arise as to its efficiency. Its momentum in the concrete, and its seven eyes of observation in the abstract, are equalled only by its power of abuse and evil in that its progress as a system has been against the grain of human nature under its best conditions, and subversive of all the ideals of Christian manhood and civilian rights. From the Fluvanna struggle onward to this day the ecclesiastical system has been assaulted from within with schism and division and ceaseless unrest; and it is the object of these pages to show that this system was the fundamental error in its organization, and that but for it Methodism might have been an organic unit to-day on both continents.

In June, 1789, Asbury in his Journal notes his sententious wisdom in two instances. Speaking of preaching and preaching-places, "To begin at the right end of the work is to go first to the *poor*; these *will*, the rich *may* possibly, hear the truth: there are among us who have blundered here." Once more as a key to that exclusive denominationalism which has ever characterized the Methodist Episcopal Church—it is not claimed wrongfully, all the conditions considered—he declares, "The Methodists ought to preach in their own houses; I have done with the houses of other people." In September he writes, "I preached at Bush Forest Chapel: this was one of the first houses that was built for the Methodists in the state of Maryland; and one of the first societies was formed here." It was probably next to Strawbridge's log chapel. In April, 1790, he writes, "The unsettled state of my stomach and bowels makes life and labor a burden." These are picked-up threads which might have been wrought into the fabric earlier.

It will be remembered that Mr. Hammett, the chief of the missionaries who accompanied Dr. Coke for Nova Scotia, but landed in the West Indies in 1789, had been left by him at Kingston in Jamaica, where he built a chapel and suffered much, though exercising unwonted zeal and displaying abilities of a high order so

that, when Coke returned the second time in 1791, he found him in a "deplorable condition, through excessive fatigue and violent opposition," says Drew. Dr. Coke was advised by the resident physicians to remove Hammett to the continent for the recovery of his health. They accordingly reached Charleston, S. C., January 27, 1791. He was placed in charge of the church through Coke's suggestion and influence. Advantage will be taken of this mention to cover an episode in Methodist history. There can be no doubt that Hammett derived his cue as to Asbury and his methods from Dr. Coke. They were close friends, and Hammett entered fully into Coke's grievances, which, though kept out of sight, were not forgotten, as will presently be seen. He shared in his prejudices against Asbury. Hammett soon made a wonderful impression in Charleston, broke from Asbury's authority, seceded with a large portion of the society, and built a commodious and expensive church of which he was independent pastor. He opened correspondence with Wesley, it is alleged, and the old man, suffering from the rebellious conduct of his "Dear Franky," was ready to listen to any tale earnestly and plausibly put as Hammett was capable of doing, and so secured letters from Wesley recognising him as in the "regular succession" despite Asbury's ignoring of him. This alleged fact did not come out, however, for fifty years afterward. Champions of a cause have a wonderful facility for concealing information that may militate against their theory until some change of environment enables them to use it to advantage. Bishop Capers, made such after the division of Methodism in 1844, in the debates of that General Conference affirmed that he had come into the possession of Hammett's correspondence with Wesley, and that in it "Wesley gave Hammett his decided countenance and blessing while he was in Charleston, no less than when he was at St. Kitts (West Indies). Here in South Carolina, then, Mr. Hammett formed a religious society with Mr. Wesley's sanction, and for the avowed purpose of being more Wesleyan than what was called Mr. Asbury's connection was thought to be."¹ The quotation answers a double purpose, though used by Bishop Capers for one only: it shows that Wesley during the closing year of his life recognized a slave-holding church as in communion with him, and the principles of its organization as more in accord with his own than the organization of the Christmas Conference, which he never approved.

¹ "General Conference Debates," 1844, p. 179.

Hammett issued circulars and pamphlets against Asbury, and after the General Conference of 1792, Dr. Coke, who undoubtedly furnished Hammett with fault finding material as to Asbury, is ranged against Hammett;¹ just as it will be found, he allied himself with O'Kelly and then forsook him when he came under that wonderful personal influence of Asbury, so that nothing is more apt as an illustration of his inconstancy, both of principles and friendships, than his own remark in connection with these events: "You may say that I am a weathercock." His ecclesiastical career is full of illustrations of its truth. Thomas Morrell, then a leading and gifted preacher in New York, replied to William Hammett, and he made effective use of his impetuous spirit and errors of judgment. Asbury reduced the grievances of Hammett to a minimum: "We are considered by him as seceders from Methodism, because we do not wear gowns and powder, and because we do not pay sufficient respect to Mr. Wesley." It is passing strange that the man who introduced "gowns," if not "powder," among the Methodist preachers, should now, when he had been compelled, by popular sentiment, to abandon the use, cite it against Hammett. As it respects Wesley, an impartial reader will conclude that, the less Asbury had to say of him, the better for his own record. Through his pulpit abilities Hammett succeeded well for a time; but he had gathered into his church discordant elements, and he found that the task of arranging and binding together was beyond his ability. They called themselves "Primitive Methodists," and a second chapel was built in the suburbs of Charleston. They also erected churches in Georgetown, Savannah, and in Wilmington, N. C., and they gathered a large congregation of blacks. Hammett survived eleven years,

¹ Hammett had appealed to the British Conference for sympathy and aid early in 1792, but Coke was now among them, and had changed his mind as to Hammett, and influenced them against his appeal. The Conference made official answer by addressing a letter, not to Hammett, but:—

"To Mr. Asbury, and all the American preachers." (In passing, the reader will not fail to note how this official letter carefully eschews both the "office" of Bishop Asbury, and the name Methodist Episcopal Church.) One paragraph of it only need be cited: "They esteem union and concord among brethren as one of the greatest blessings, and therefore do most deeply disapprove of the Schism which Wm. Hammett has made in the city of Charleston, and do acknowledge no farther connection with him who could attempt to rend the body of Christ.

"Signed in behalf of the Conference,

"ALEX. MATHER, President,

"THOMAS COKE, Secretary.

"London, August 15, 1792."

dying in 1803. After his demise, a Mr. Brazier, who had been also a missionary in the West Indies, took charge of his congregation, and he bargained away the church building to the Protestant Episcopalians. But the original trustees contested, and won their suit, and after a farther struggle to maintain themselves as an independent organization, they finally arranged to return to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Ultimately, all that remained of Hammett's movement was also merged in like manner. It must be confessed that it was an ill-starred departure, engendered, however, by a system that furnished the occasion for this and many other local schisms for a hundred years thereafter. Nowhere has the effort to establish Independent Methodism been inaugurated under such favorable auspices as in Baltimore, Md. Ultimate extinction is the sure goal at this writing. Methodism for final success must have connectional bonds. The Hammett secession, occurring simultaneously with that of O'Kelly, greatly aggravated the unrest of Asbury and his staunch adherents. Presently it will come under review. Meantime it will be well to consider the expiring struggle of Asbury to maintain the Council, and its supersedure by the General Conference of 1792.

The minutes of the Conference of 1791 are noteworthy in several particulars. Wesley having died in March, of this year, the following change is made in the Episcopal deliverances of the bishops. "Q. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist Episcopal Church in America? A. Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury. Q. Who are the persons who exercise the Episcopal Office in the Methodist Church in America? A. Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession."¹ The questions since the death of Wesley are mere duplicates. They show, however, that there was absolutely no distinction in the minds of Coke and Asbury between superintendent, bishop, and the episcopal office, and in consequence Dr. Emory's reply to the charge that they had made Mr. Wesley a bishop by associating his name in the American minutes as the origin of its Episcopal succession, is the merest quibble, unworthy of a fair controvertist, namely, that they published him only as exercising the "Episcopal Office."

The numerical increase of white members this year was over

¹ In the Dickins minutes of 1795 the words "by regular order and succession" occur in 1789-90 and 1791, but were afterward omitted, and in the republished minutes of 1813 the whole reference is omitted by order of Bishop Asbury for politic reasons.

seventeen thousand, but there is no corresponding increase among the blacks; only about one thousand, for unexplained reasons. There were seventeen conferences called for 1791-92. Bishop Asbury published an Address which is appended to the minutes: “To the Brethren of the United Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.”¹ It related to the establishment of industrial Sabbath-schools, separating the sexes, under suitable unpaid teachers. It was along the line of his Sunday-school work, and a conception worthy of his eminently practical, devout, and far-seeing mind. “A recommendatory caution” is also appended, warning the preachers not to “receive strange preachers, unless their names are on the minutes, or they can show a parchment or a certificate from the presiding elder, or some elder of the district they may say they come from.”¹ It was well timed, no doubt, for general reasons, though Hammett claimed that it was aimed at him as a particular reason.

The third Council had been nominated for December, 1792, but, as already found, it never assembled. Under the lead of such influential preachers as O’Kelly, Jesse Lee, Richard Ivy, Bruce, Garrettson, Haggard, Hull, M’Kendree, then a young man of high promise and vigorous intellect, and a number of others, the agitation against the Council and for a General Conference went on with increasing fervor and widening scope. O’Kelly, as already mentioned, opened correspondence with Dr. Coke in England, and won him over to his side. He also became a voluminous letter-writer at home, and with his associates made a powerful impression upon leading preachers and laymen, not against the Council only, but in favor of a more liberal policy in the government of the Church. Asbury found himself beset with a combination of influences—a current against him which it was impossible to stem; besides, he was sick, weary, and mentally depressed over

¹ These are found in Dickins’s edition of the minutes of 1795 only. The edition of 1813 omits them as it does not a few other matters materially important to the truth of history, but altered by the bishops to suit a purpose hereafter to be exposed. Asbury’s industrial school is explained in detail in his address. “The worship of God in the schoolhouse should be reading the Word of God, singing, and prayer, every morning and evening. Playing strictly prohibited. A lesson in the instructions weekly committed to memory—to enjoin manly exercises, as working in the garden or field, walking, reading, or speaking in public, or bathing. . . . To build a separate school for your daughters, and put these under a gracious woman of abilities, to learn to read, write, sew, knit, mark, and make their own clothing. . . . The elder can spend a day in the school once in two weeks to see how the parts of education are attended to. . . . These schools may be open on Sabbath days, two hours in the morning, and two hours in the evening, for those who have no other time,” etc.

a situation he had prepared by his own crowning attempt to free himself from all Conference control. There is something amazingly audacious in his attitude. Unchecked hitherto, with an unlimited confidence in his own triple office of legislator, judge, and executor, he reached for the summit of power, led on by a blind sincerity and an honest intention which enabled him prayerfully to evoke to his aid Divine interposition. The exigency was not greater than that at Fluvanna and in 1787, and it may be doubted whether he would not again have exhibited his overmastering strategy and daring personal usurpation as to the Council, had he not been disabled by impaired health enfeebling his will and enervating his mind. It was a crucial period in his career and in the history of the Methodist Church. It seems reasonable to conclude that Wesley was apprised of the situation, though now in the declining months of his eventful life. Did he give Coke the same encouragement he had given Hammett about this time? If the evidence existed, it has been suppressed, as his letter to Hammett was for fifty years.¹ It will be discovered that there are strong affirmations at least that he did give countenance to the scheme which was incubating in Dr. Coke's fertile brain to circumvent Asbury and regain for himself the lost crown of an undisputed and untrammelled bishopric. He was also in correspondence with Asbury. What was its character? Friendly to a high degree, and diplomatic as any leader in statecraft might wish. If this correspondence could be made available, it would

¹ A page or two back, certain conclusions were drawn, based upon Hammett's alleged correspondence with Wesley, which Dr. Capers produced from memory at the General Conference of 1844, during Hammett's career in Charleston. It is evident, however, upon such careful examination as McCaine, who emphasizes this Capers episode in the debates of 1844, did not give it, that no such correspondence could have taken place between Wesley and Hammett, legitimate as the conclusions would have been if the correspondence could be established. But it cannot, and therefore Dr. Capers did wisely when he professed to quote from memory. Hammett did not reach Charleston until late in February, 1791, and Wesley's death was known in America two months later, inasmuch as he died March 2, 1791, while Hammett's independent career did not begin for nearly a year thereafter, so that his grievance with Asbury and the American Methodists, on which the alleged correspondence is based, did not then exist. It makes a bad case for this portion of Dr. Capers's speech in 1844, and explodes the idea that Wesley gave his sanction to a slaveholding, independent church in Charleston as in fellowship with him, and its polity more in accord with his views. Perhaps the friends of Dr. Capers can explain. There is room for it. This exposure is made because honesty demands it at the expense of an argument in line with the trend of this History. Indeed, the writer might blot the whole of this matter of Hammett's alleged correspondence with Wesley, but for the revelation it gives of the methods of those who make history for a purpose. Hammett undoubtedly had a correspondence with Wesley, but it antedated the Charleston episode.

leave no doubt that the characters of these three men, Wesley, Coke, and Asbury, as depicted in the opening chapter of this History, would be abundantly verified.

The last consecutive mention of Dr. Coke in these pages was on his arrival at Charleston, S. C., with Hammett. Resuming at that point will bring him and Asbury together again, the mind of the former an arsenal of arch-plotting, and that of the latter fearless and so self-poised as never to be betrayed into surprises, or off his guard. Inquire what Asbury says about it in the cold statements of his Journal. "Wednesday, February 23, 1791 — Long looked for Dr. Coke came to town; he had been shipwrecked off Edisto. I found the Doctor's sentiments, with regard to the Council, quite changed. James O'Kelly's letters had reached London. I felt perfectly calm, and acceded to a General Conference, for the sake of peace."¹ There is a world of information in these brief lines. The long expected Dr. Coke. They had been in correspondence, in which Coke could not have betrayed the fact that he was also in correspondence with O'Kelly, and was urging him on with all his advice and support; for Asbury makes a discovery in conversation with Dr. Coke in Charleston: I found the sentiments of the Doctor, with regard to the Council, quite changed; sequel — James O'Kelly's letters had reached London. It was no doubt a trial to Asbury. The situation was not unlike that of Wellington and Napoleon at Waterloo. Everything depended upon Blücher. He arrived with his reinforcements in time, and the die was cast against Napoleon. Asbury had gone down to Charleston, it must be said, in hope that he should find Coke as ready to maintain him in the Council as he was to further it at the first. Alas, the reinforcements are in time, but on the wrong side. Coke is against him. He likely behaved as one who thought he held the coign of vantage. If he had been neutral, the case would not yet be desperate. He was with the malcontents, and the struggle ended. "I felt perfectly calm, and acceded to a General Conference, for the sake of peace." It was the first downright surrender he ever made. One is moved to sympathize with him, though it is hard to restrain indignant protest; after originating all this trouble by his arbitrary overreaching, he yields for the sake of peace. It was honest; he had been badgered into submission; he was broken, and could bear the strain no longer. The Conference is held. Dr. Coke preaches to "a very large

¹ "Journal," Vol. II. p. 110.

audience," but Asbury does not seem to enjoy the meeting. "I want to be gone into the country to enjoy sweet solitude and prayer." And again: "I am somewhat distressed at the uneasiness of our people, who claim a right to choose their own preachers—a thing quite new among the Methodists. No one but Mr. Hammett will do for them. We shall see how it will end." "I left the city somewhat grieved in mind." He left Coke with Hammett in Charleston, and from his country retreat, March 5, "I wrote nearly twenty pages to Dr. Coke on the concerns of the Church." How often regret must be expressed that none of these letters ever saw the light.

Meantime Coke and Hammett were comparing views, and found themselves still in accord as old friends. It was in the following year that Asbury refused to reappoint Hammett to Charleston, and the secession took place. He notes, just before the Conference of 1792 occurred: "Mr. Hammett had three grand objections to us. 1st, The American preachers and people insulted him. 2d, His name was not printed in our minutes. 3d, The *nota bene* cautioning minute was directed against him." Hammett was a man with a grievance, and his attacks upon Asbury and the American Church were so severe that Asbury, shortly after the Conference, felt that he must defend himself: "I received an abusive, anonymous letter (I believe from Mr. S.), on several subjects. My spirits were low; I came from my knees to receive the letter, and having read it, I returned whence I came; I judged it prudent and expedient, and I think I was urged thereto by conscience, to tell the people of some things relating to myself. I related to them the manner of my coming to America; how I continued during the war; the arrival of Dr. Coke, and the forming of the American Methodists into a Church; and finally why I did not commit the charge of the society in Charleston to Mr. Hammett, who was unknown, a foreigner, and did not acknowledge the authority of, nor join in connection with, the American Conference."¹ He had appointed Daniel Smith to Charleston.

Before following Asbury to Georgia to meet that Conference observe what Dr. Coke is doing. He spent a week or more in Charleston and then started to overtake Asbury at the Georgia Conference. How many letters he wrote to O'Kelly and others of the disaffected preachers, who, learning of his arrival, plied him with letters also, and were encouraged in their war upon the

¹ "Journal," Vol. II. p. 143.

Council by finding Dr. Coke one with them, must be conjectured. That he wrote such letters is evident from what subsequently took place. Perhaps he prepared another letter famous in the esoteric history of early Methodism, the contents and purpose of which he imparted neither to Asbury nor to the confederate preachers against him. The conjecture that it was written in Charleston is based upon its elaborate character. It is dated later, "Richmond (Va.), April 24, 1791." But whether prepared at Charleston or some days later is immaterial. Sunday, March 13, at Georgetown, Ga., Asbury says: "Dr. Coke came in time to preach, and then we opened a Conference. We sat very closely to our work, and had some matters of moment to attend to in the course of our deliberations." They travel together, eat and sleep together, confer on local Conference matters, Asbury cautiously scanning his companion since his change of mind as to the Council, and Coke, with a secret letter in his pocket addressed to Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church, now resident in Philadelphia. They alternate in preaching, Asbury giving Coke the preference, as his preaching abilities were of a high order. Asbury writes: "My body is weak, but my mind has heaven and peace within. We closely employed our intervals of leisure in preparing different tracts for the press." Asbury always availed of the superior education of Coke for such literary work. Onward they go to Salisbury in North Carolina, and hold the Conference. They are in Virginia, April 10, at sister Walker's in Brunswick, "Dr. Coke went to the barn and I preached in the house; the rain rendered our meeting uncomfortable." They reach Petersburg. Asbury says, "We agreed to take different lodgings during the sitting of the Conference." Why do these friends thus part? It may be a matter of personal convenience only, and it may be that they differed so widely as to the Council that they felt more comfortable apart. They had met with O'Kelly and others in North Carolina, and Coke was more and more enlisted on their side, and was emboldened in his talks with Asbury, who says: "The business of our Conference was brought on in peace. . . . The affair of the Council was suspended until a General Conference." Just after the Conference, Monday, April 25, Asbury writes: "I found the Doctor had much changed his sentiments since his last visit to this continent; and that these impressions still continued. I hope to be enabled to give up all I dare for peace's sake; and to please all men for their good to edification."

The famous — or, shall it not be said in the interest of fair dealing of man with man, Asbury with Coke and the reverse, and of impartial history, the infamous — letter which Coke had been waiting a favorable opportunity to mail is subscribed, as already cited, “Richmond, April 24, 1791.” It was not mailed there, for the bishops did not stop at Richmond during this tour.¹ April 24, they were at Colonel Clayton’s in Virginia, the next day at New Castle; the 27th, in Carolina County, thirty miles from New Castle. It was probably mailed at New Castle, inasmuch as a “P.S.” attached to the letter says, “You must excuse interlineations, etc. I am just going into the country, and have no time to transcribe.” On the 28th, they were at Pope’s Chapel, and “we hastened to Port Royal where the people were waiting, to whom the Doctor preached,” etc. On Friday, the 29th of April, at Port Royal they heard through the public papers of the death of Wesley. The letter was mailed ere this, or it would not have been sent at all. This is clear from the contents. Wesley’s death thwarted the purpose in view. It establishes a moral certainty that it was mailed at New Castle on the 25th of April, or four days before Coke had heard of Wesley’s decease.²

The point just made is pivotal largely of the entire matter, and reference has already been made to the disingenuous attempt of Rev. Dr. John Emory in his controversy with Rev. Alexander McCaine to overthrow it. The word disingenuous is used advisedly, and to the readers is submitted the proof for their verdict. Dr. Emory affirmed as to the date of Coke’s letter to Bishop White and the date of Coke’s knowledge of Wesley’s death, “The fact is that Mr. Wesley at the time was *dead*.” The italic is his own. What does he mean? He is primarily essaying to prove that the letter of Coke to White could not have been written as Rev. Kewley affirmed, echoed by Dr. Wyatt, both of the Protestant Episcopal Church, “with the sanction, if not actually by the order of Mr. Wesley.” Emory says, “We deny the statement and demand the proof. The fact is that Mr. Wesley at the time was *dead*.”³ What does he mean? That Coke could

¹ Conjecture only can be indulged for this “Richmond” address, as the letter could not have been written there. It may be that Dr. Coke uses it constructively as his location in Virginia, the capital of the state, better known to Bishop White than the smaller towns Coke and Asbury visited during this trip. It was immaterial, inasmuch as Coke provided in the letter itself that White’s answer should be sent to Mr. Baker in Philadelphia, or Mr. Rogers in Baltimore.

² Ashbury’s “Journal,” Vol. II. pp. 114, 115.

³ “Defence of our Fathers,” p. 32.

not have had an interview with Wesley before he left England for America, in which such a method of restoring peace to the American Church under the Council distractions was suggested by Coke and sanctioned by Wesley? He cannot mean that, or, to use his own language, "we deny the statement and demand the proof." What does he mean? Simply to assert that, "at that time Wesley was dead?" As a naked fact it was true, for Wesley died March 2, 1791. He cannot mean that and be ingenuous; for the only point is: Did Coke know of Wesley's death April 24, 1791, the date of the letter to White? Was he misled by Drew on Coke, as to the date, as McCaine was misled by him as to the address to Washington being in 1785, instead of 1789? It is just possible, but not probable, for he does not cite Drew in proof of his allegation, though Drew says, "He [Coke] had been preaching on the evening of the 20th of April at a place called Port Royal, in Virginia, and had engaged to preach about twelve miles distant at ten o'clock on the ensuing morning. But on returning after the evening preaching to the house of a merchant where he was to lodge, he was informed by him that the Philadelphia papers had just announced to the public the death of Mr. Wesley."¹ It is not probable, because Emory had Asbury's Journal before him and could have corrected Drew by Asbury. Nothing can be clearer than that April 20 in Drew is a typographical error for 29, or Drew misread Coke's posthumous notes, or Coke himself wrote 20 for 29. But Emory does not give Drew as his authority. Why not? He either knew it or he did not. If he knew it, his failure to cite exhibits the adroit misleader. If he did not know it, then the facts, as given by Asbury and of which Emory could not have been ignorant, are a demonstration that he was disingenuous when he affirmed that "Wesley at that time was dead," meaning as he must that Coke knew he was dead before April 24, 1791. He did not know it until April 29. The question may recur in the McCaine-Emory controversy of 1827-30, but it is thought best to settle it here in its proper connection. An analysis of the secret letter itself must be reserved to another chapter.

¹ Drew on Coke, p. 230.

CHAPTER XXXI

Full text of Dr. Coke's letter to Bishop White; proofs that it was written before his knowledge of Wesley's death; curious facts about it; and a full analysis of its contents; Dr. Kewley's connection with its publication; how it came into public knowledge, and how Asbury came into possession of Bishop White's answer before Dr. Coke—Dr. Coke manœuvring with the preachers and O'Kelly to outwit Asbury; Asbury in turn makes overtures to Coke—Bangs's futile effort to show kindly relations between them at this time; proof to the contrary—Did Asbury know of the White letter when he bid adieu to Coke at New Castle? surmises make it probable that he did, and the finesse between them; Asbury humbles Coke, and in 1792 they act together against O'Kelly.

THE letter of Dr. Coke to Bishop White, which was largely the subject of the last chapter, is so important, and has cost Dr. Emory and other apologists so much labor in futile efforts to minify it or explain it away, that it is deemed best to incorporate it in the running text of this History. It is as follows, the italics being those found in Bishop White's attested copy:—

RIGHT REVEREND SIR, — Permit me to intrude a little upon your time, upon a subject of great importance.

You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that church. For many years I was prejudiced, even I think to bigotry, in favor of it; but through a variety of causes and incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biassed on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went further *in the separation* of our church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place. He being pressed by our friends on this side the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few clergy of the Church of England in the states,) *went farther, I am sure than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed.* And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

But what can be done for a reunion, which I wish for, and to accomplish which, Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people, is very strong toward him, notwithstanding *the excessive ill usage he received from a few.* My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily, and to the utmost, be used to accomplish that (to us)

very desirable object ; if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to reunite.

It is even to your church an object of great importance. We have now above 60,000 adults in our society in these states ; and about 250 travelling ministers and preachers ; besides a great number of local preachers, far exceeding the number of travelling preachers, and some of these local preachers are men of very considerable abilities ; but if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their church, viz., by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship, they will make a larger body than you possibly conceive. The society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average, to give us our stated congregations, which will then amount to 300,000. And if the calculation, which I think some eminent writers have made, be just, that three-fifths of mankind are unadult (if I may use the expression), at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults, which form our congregations in these states amount to 750,000. About one-fifth of these are blacks.

The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia ; and in breadth, from the Atlantic to Lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holstein, Kentucky, Cumberland, etc.

But there are many hinderances in the way. Can they be removed ?

1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I do not think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a reordination, if other hinderances were removed out of the way. I must here observe that between 60 and 70 only, out of the 250, have been ordained presbyters, and about 60 deacons (only). The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2. The preachers would hardly submit to reunion if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended upon the present bishops in America. Because, though they are all, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides they would argue, if the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a reunion is so sincere and earnest, that these difficulties make me tremble ; and *yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success* ; for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well as in Europe, is I doubt not increasing, yet *Mr. Asbury whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply ; nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.*

In Europe, where some steps had been taken tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia ? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday, the 17th of May. If this be agreeable, I'll beg of you just to signify it in a note directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market Street, Philadelphia ; or if you please, by a few lines sent me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers', Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw ; and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge upon the subjects.

I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the present state

of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley, be circumstantially known. I must, therefore, beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw, till I have the honor of seeing you.

Thus you see that I have made a bold venture on your honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

I have notwithstanding been guilty of inadvertences. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarrett, which gave him great satisfaction; and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew.

When I was last in America I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazine, indeed almost everything that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating him that no part of them might be printed which could be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry; and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgements more public — though Mr. Jarrett does not desire it.

I am not sure whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw of the use of one of your churches, about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did offend, (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said to Mr. Richard Dallam of Abingdon,) I sincerely beg yours and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I'll endeavor to amend. But, alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor: that if you have no thought of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter and take no more notice of it, (for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated from each other if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent wishes desire,) but if you will further negotiate business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the meantime permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself, right reverend sir,

Your very humble servant in Christ,

THOMAS COKE.

The Rt. Rev. Father in God, BISHOP WHITE.

Richmond, April 24, 1791.

P. S. You must excuse interlineations, etc. I am just going into the country and have no time to transcribe.

The salient points of this remarkable letter challenge brief comment, though several of them have already been cited for evidential purposes. "I am not sure but that I went further in the separation of our Church in America than Mr. Wesley intended, . . . he did not intend that our entire separation should take place." The language is too plain to be misunderstood, and its implications are certain. The act of separation at the Christmas

Conference was the act of Coke and Asbury, and was without Wesley's knowledge, and without his recommendation or consent, either then or any time thereafter. "He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, . . . went farther I am sure than he would have gone if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am now certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation." Went farther in what? The organization of an Independent Church? No; but in the ordinations for America, and in view of the abuse of his confidence in this respect he is now sorry for the separation. And for the truth of it, unquestioned collateral evidence has been submitted, that he repented with tears of his proceedings for America. "But what can be done for a reunion, which I wish for, and to accomplish which I have no doubt Mr. Wesley would use his influence to the utmost?" Dr. Emory, it has been found, demanded the proof that this letter of Coke's was written with Wesley's privity. He and his friends can accept either horn of the dilemma. Dr. Coke either here utters matters of fact, or he invented the statement. If the former, then Coke and Wesley had talked of this scheme before Coke left England; and, if so, farther, there is but one conceivable motive for it: Coke suggested to Wesley that in this way Asbury could be brought into subjection again, at least to the extent of recognizing Wesley, by the restoration of Coke to full coördinate authority with Asbury as *Episcopalian* bishops. If this is not satisfactory, then Dr. Coke invented the statement that Wesley would use his influence to the utmost to accomplish it. It is a serious matter to affirm that he did invent it; but his tergiversations and other freakish features in association with his aspirations to be a real, live *Episcopalian* bishop show that he was capable of it; and, unfortunately for his apologist, it is the alternative in this case.

Rev. Dr. Kewley, who is primarily responsible for the statement that Coke's letter to White was written with the privity of Wesley, Alexander McCaine says, was born in Europe, classically educated, and was intended for the Romish priesthood. He studied medicine, went to the West Indies, and afterward came to the United States. He professed conversion under the preaching of McCaine and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, relinquished the practice of medicine, and was received into the travelling connection, where he remained a year or more. He then joined the Protestant Episcopal Church, and pronounced

upon it a pervert's extravagant eulogy. Finally he left it, following his logical ultimates, and returned to the bosom of Rome, whence he originally came. The reader may determine whether such a career intrinsically impeaches his veracity in general. McCaine put this record in contrast with that of Dr. John Emory,¹ and although the changes in his career are on a different line, one can scarcely avoid the conclusion, that if fatal to Kewley's general veracity they are also fatal to Emory's; but no one not bitterly prejudiced will accept either conclusion. What then? Kewley's averment is worthy of credence unless it can be shown to be antecedently improbable.² But just the contrary is the fact. It has been found that the relations of Wesley and Coke and Asbury at the time were such as to make Wesley ready to entertain such a proposition as Coke may have suggested to him, so that he felt justified in affirming that he had "no doubt" of his approval of it.

It is a fact that the proposition was made, that Coke held two interviews with Bishop White in the presence of Rev. Dr. Magaw,³ who, though a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was on intimate terms with both Coke and Asbury, and the former, at least, often preached in his pulpit. It is antecedently probable that in these interviews Coke was more unreserved than in his letter. That Wesley, whose decease was now known, made parts of the conversations is also known, for Bishop White so declares.³ If, then, Wesley's indorsement of the plan was so enlarged upon by Coke in these conversations, Kewley's knowledge of it is easily traced from Magaw, if not Bishop White. In the now almost forgotten newspaper controversy of Kewley and the Methodist preachers in Easton, Md., of 1806, Kewley fortified himself in every possible way, and it is antecedently probable that he wrote to Magaw, as he did to Bishop

¹ "Defence of the Truth," p. 23.

² Kewley's pamphlet was answered by Nelson Reed in a twelvemo broadside. Kewley says: "With respect to Dr. Coke's letter to Bishop White, whether it was right or wrong, the substance did not originate with him, but with certain clergymen of the Church of England, long before Dr. Coke wrote to Bishop White on that subject." To what can he refer? He does not inform his readers, but it seems clear that the foundation for his declaration can be found only in that interview of several officials of the Church of England in America with Ashury and Dr. Coke, referred to in Kewley's pamphlet, during which union was suggested by them, but declined by Coke and Ashury for reasons already found in a foot-note on the subject heretofore made. If this conjecture be correct, and it bears the impress of probability, then it serves to confirm the truth of such an interview as given by Kewley.

³ Letter to McCaine. See "Defence of the Truth," pp. 67-69.

White, and obtained the points which he used, and afterward embodied in his pamphlet containing the averment that Wesley was privy to the Coke letter to Bishop White. And if anything were wanting to clinch the argument, it is found in a sermon preached in Baltimore and published, in 1820, in which Rev. Dr. Wyatt repeats the allegation that Dr. Coke's proposal to Bishop White was "made with the approbation, if not direction, of Mr. Wesley." Did he make this declaration solely on Kewley's pamphlet? It cannot be known, but if he did it evinces confidence on his part in the veracity of Kewley; but the probabilities are that he had collateral evidence, as he does not give Kewley as his authority. And, finally, Dr. Coke, in the letter to Bishop White, says farther, "I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley be circumstantially known." The implication here is indubitable that he had mentioned it to Wesley; but he was not prepared to act until his mind should be "circumstantially known." And this leads to the gist of a matter otherwise immaterial: Wesley knew of the Coke proposal, but not of its embodiment in the letter. It cannot be known to what extent he intended to support Coke in it; but as he was always open as the day in all his transactions, while Coke was close as the night in many of his, what Coke says of Wesley's coöperation needs to be largely qualified. The justification for this elaborate digression is that it establishes one of the fundamental contentions of a tripartite struggle of Coke and Asbury, with the knowledge, if not the approval, of Wesley, the object of which was, on Coke's part specially, to circumvent Asbury and restore himself to his lost coördinate position as a "joint superintendent" with him over the American societies.

Resuming comment upon Coke's letter to Bishop White, the next thing to be observed is that he declares the affection of the American preachers and people for Wesley, "notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few." He refers to the Conference of 1787 in dropping his name from the minutes, and so abrogating his authority. There can be no doubt that most of the leading preachers took part in it, understanding that Asbury approved of it, though "mute" himself as to speech about it, as their attachment to Asbury, whom they personally knew, was greater than their attachment to Wesley, whom they did not personally know. One of the itinerants present in 1787 affirms in substance that the resolution to drop Wesley's name

was passed in the absence of all the juniors; "when we juniors were admitted it had been done." How Coke regarded it will be seen when his sermon upon the death of Wesley is considered. It was no doubt a minority act; but it was the Baltimore Conference, in which were Asbury's trusted partisans, that did it.

In the letter now under analysis Coke informs Bishop White that "between 60 and 70 only out of the 250 have been ordained elders, and about 60 deacons only." That is to say, only 120 or 130 were Conference voters out of 250 preachers. As that was in 1791, it is probable that the number of voters was much less in 1787. It emphasizes Coke's statement that he received "excessive ill usage from a few." The letter sets before Bishop White the fact that the accretion to the Protestant Episcopal Church would be 60,000 adults, and this he multiplies by five for families, and these again by three-fifths, and so he covers about 750,000. "About one-fifth of these are blacks." He names several obstacles, and then gives the following paragraph: "My desire for a reunion is so sincere and earnest that these difficulties make me tremble: and *yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success*; for though my influence among the Methodists in these States as well as in Europe is, I doubt not, increasing, *yet Mr. Asbury, whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply: nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.*" The implication from these italicized words is clear that he had cursorily named the subject hypothetically to Asbury, so as not to excite his suspicions; and he received no encouragement. It is about the only instance wherein Asbury was successfully hoodwinked by Coke, but his physical and mental enervation at this time will be remembered. The letter asks for "a private interview in Philadelphia," and names "Tuesday, the 17th of May. If this be agreeable," he begs that the Bishop will "signify it in a note directed to Jacob Baker's, Market Street, Philadelphia," or, "if you please, by a few lines sent me by the return of the post at Philip Rogers', Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge on the subjects." If he had been content to leave it until he reached Philadelphia, and had not been prompted by his clandestine zeal to get an opinion "by return of the post," Bishop White's letter in reply would not have fallen into the hands of Asbury, and so exposed the plot. Again he reminds the bishop that he had ventured all upon his honor and candor. The three ensuing paragraphs are expressions of the most obsequious apology, in which he literally

fawns upon the bishop. In the concluding paragraph he says: "I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim of your candor: that if you have no thought of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter and take no more notice of it," etc. The subscription to it has already been quoted. From these words the reader can judge for himself of the Christian confidence existing between Coke and Asbury at this time.

How did this letter become public? Bishop White kept the secret letter of Coke's in confidence, as throughout he proved himself the Christian gentleman. But in the summer of 1806, fifteen years afterward, a controversy arose on the Eastern Shore of Maryland between the Methodists and certain clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which the existence of such a letter was affirmed and denied with equal positiveness, and he was requested to settle it, which he did by two letters; one to Rev. Simon Wilmer of the Episcopal Church and one to Rev. Mr. M'Closkey of the Methodist Church. Bishop White gave the information, and also confided an exact copy of it to Rev. Dr. Kemp of Maryland, under date of October 30, 1806. It was published by Kewley in the appendix to his pamphlet of 1807, already referred to under its full title, and from this copy in my possession all other citations from it are made. Twenty years afterward Alexander McCaine, in his "Defence of the Truth," a refutation of Emory's "Defence of Our Fathers," to settle the question between them as to whether or not Coke knew of the decease of Wesley at the time he wrote the letter to White, to make assurance doubly sure that he did not, wrote to Bishop White in Philadelphia, and McCaine on his return to Baltimore thought it best to have him commit to writing the result of his verbal interview, and made such a request of him. The Bishop answered under date "Philadelphia, August 4, 1828." In this letter the Bishop says: "When Dr. Coke addressed me the letter to which you refer, he could not have known of the death of Mr. Wesley, which was an event of too signal a character not to be discoursed of immediately on the arrival of the tidings of it. I am persuaded there was no knowledge of it in Philadelphia when I wrote my answer to the aforesaid letter. Dr. Coke was informed of it between the date of his letter and the arrival of mine."¹ Occasion for reference to this letter as to another paragraph in it will present itself shortly.

Dismissing this letter for the time, it will be well to take up

¹ "Defence of the Truth," p. 69.

the thread of the narrative with Asbury and Coke at Port Royal, Va., where they heard of the decease of Wesley, April 29, 1791. Asbury in his *Journal* says, "The solemn news reached our ears that the public papers had announced the death of that dear man of God, John Wesley." He pens some eulogistic sentences ending, "I conclude his equal is not to be found among all the sons he hath brought up, nor his superior among all the sons of Adam he may have left behind." He says Dr. Coke at once set out for Baltimore, to get the most speedy passage to England. Asbury overtakes him at Colchester, and thence on with him to Alexandria, Va., where they had "certain information of Wesley's death." On Sabbath Day, May 1, Coke reached Baltimore, and preached on the occasion of Mr. Wesley's death, "and mentioned some things which gave offence." It does not appear that Asbury was present, but he came on in time for the Conference, which opened on the 5th of May, and held three days. What were the things that "gave offence"? Coke was prevailed on to preach a funeral sermon for Wesley on that Sabbath night, and among other outspoken and unqualified utterances of the hour, delivered in the heat of excitement and in the absence of Asbury, whose presence generally exerted a subduing power over him, he said: "The leaving of Mr. Wesley's name off the minutes was an almost diabolical thing. No history furnishes any parallel to it — that a body of Christian ministers should treat an aged and faithful minister, as Mr. Wesley undoubtedly was, with such disrespect." And farther on in the sermon, "Two of these actors in Mr. Wesley's expulsion are dead and damned, and the others, with their patron, will go to hell except they repent."¹ Their patron was certainly Asbury. These remarks were omitted when he came to reprint his sermon in London not long after. Drew, his biographer, states that he took the coach for the North the next morning, May 2, hoping to reach the packet advertised to sail for England from New York, but he was taken ill on the road and had to stop over in Wilmington, Del. He was able, however, to sit up and write several letters. Under date of May 4 he wrote to Baltimore, and says: "I doubt much whether the cruel usage he received in Baltimore in 1787, when he was excommunicated (wonderful and unparalleled step), did not hasten his death. Indeed, I little doubt it. For from the time he was informed of it, he began to hold down his head and to

¹ Dr. Collins Denny of Nashville, Tenn., claims to have a copy of this sermon printed in Baltimore immediately after its delivery.

think he had lived long enough.”¹ This has already been cited and corrected by Tyerman as an impression sincerely entertained by Coke. He seems altogether oblivious of the fact, however, that his own conduct in the American affairs had given Wesley quite as much disquiet as Asbury and the Conference. Coke also wrote to James O'Kelly under the same date. The letter is as follows:—

WILMINGTON, May 4, 1791.

TO BROTHER O'KELLY:

Dear Friend,—I have written a letter of a sheet and a half to you, but on consideration I believe I shall not send it to you till I reach Europe; then I shall probably write as much again to you. By this time you probably have been informed of our great loss in the death of Mr. Wesley. I am hastening to Europe in this important crisis. You may depend on my being with you, God willing, at the General Conference. I think no step will be taken during my absence to prevent the General Conference; it would be so gross an insult on truth, justice, mercy, and peace, that it will not be, I think, attempted. If it be so, and successfully, we will call a congress.

I expect you to be faithful. But as Mordecai said to Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape more than others; for if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Oh, be firm, be very firm, and very cautious, and very wise; and depend upon a faithful friend in,

THOMAS COKE.¹

In addition to these letters, the one intended to emphasize his use of Wesley's death and the “ill treatment” of him by Asbury and the Conference (a grave error of judgment as it turned out), and the other to stiffen O'Kelly in his opposition to the Council, and for the call of a General Conference (but it will be seen that he proved false to O'Kelly at the General Conference of 1792 itself despite these professions), the reader will not be master of the whole situation without also citing from a letter Asbury had written to O'Kelly about this time: “Let all past conduct between thee and me be buried, and never come before the Conference or elsewhere; send me the dove. I saw thy face was not toward me in all the Council, therefore did not treat thee with that respect due to one who had suffered so much for the cause of truth and liberty. I wrote to the Doctor [Coke] that if he came here again he would see trouble.”²

So much is seen in these affectionate epistles, so childlike and guileless, that one marvels that they could emanate from men of pronounced piety and intelligence; and they show also how unsupported is Dr. Emory's averment in the “Defence of Our

¹ McCaine's “Letters on M. E. Church,” 1850, pp. 112, 119. ² *Ibid.* p. 118.

Fathers," that O'Kelly "took special pains to enlist Dr. Coke in his views, and to produce disaffection between him and Bishop Asbury." It is true only in that O'Kelly gave Coke, in his London letters, the news from America, but Coke needed no efforts to awaken him to the situation as opportune for him to recover lost ground of authority. Alexander McCaine accurately measured the three men when he says: "The fact is, these two ecclesiastical leaders, in their struggle for power, were afraid of Mr. O'Kelly, and each took 'special pains' that this gentleman's influence might be thrown into his scale." The letters are the sufficient proof. Dr. Coke was in the greatest hurry of his life to get to London,¹ for reasons already traversed and more than suspected by his British brethren; but he must lay his American train carefully and apply a slow-match till he could return. May 4, 1791, was a very busy day with him at Wilmington, despite his indisposition. He issued a circular, which he distributed as far as he deemed prudent, in which he says: "Five things we have in view. 1. The abolition of the arbitrary aristocracy. 2. The investing of the nomination of the presiding elders in the Conference of the districts. 3. The limitation of the districts to be invested in the General Conference. 4. An appeal allowed each preacher on the reading of the stations. 5. A General Conference of at least two-thirds of the preachers as a check upon everything. *But a good superintendent will not do wrong, you fear.* I answer a good superintendent is but a man, and a man is fond of power. But a good superintendent may

¹ In evidence it is necessary only to cite from Drew, page 231: "Having taken a seat in the mail-coach, he departed from Baltimore very early in the morning, but was somewhat indisposed during the day. The following morning when he attempted to rise, he found himself totally unable to proceed; but having received some medical assistance during the day, he seemed better; and on the ensuing morning pursued the coach on horseback, still hoping that he should reach New York before the packet put to sea. But his complaint returning, he was compelled to remain at Wilmington another day, and this rendered all his efforts to reach the packet ineffectual. Discovering the impossibility of gaining the packet, he now turned his face to Philadelphia, but on reaching this city he found that no ship was expected to sail for any part of England until some considerable time had elapsed. He therefore continued here nine days, preaching almost every evening, and sometimes in the morning, as well as three times on the Lord's day, waiting the departure of some ship that should carry him across the Atlantic. At length, on the 14th of May, hearing that a ship was about to sail from New Castle immediately for London, he hastened thither, and procured a passage, and taking leave of Mr. Asbury and a few of the preachers who had repaired to New Castle to bid him farewell, sailed from the port, and after a pleasant voyage was put on shore at Falmouth by some fishermen who fell in with the vessel in the English Channel."

become a tyrant, or be succeeded by one. Oh, stand up for liberty, be friends of mankind in all things.”¹ He had become a radical of the radicals and he does not mince his words. What a strange spectacle of human nature he presents, and how all ideas of consistency and constancy are shattered by his subsequent conduct!

The foot-note from Drew sets forth that he went from Wilmington to Philadelphia, where he remained nine days. It was during this time that he had his two interviews with Bishop White in the presence of Dr. Magaw. There are two sources of information as to the interviews: letters of Bishop White himself and disclosures made by his biographer recently, Julius H. Ward. July 30, 1804, Bishop White wrote a letter in answer to one of inquiry received by him, June 27, from Philadelphia. The Bishop states in substance the reasons he was led to make Dr. Coke's letter to him known: “I found myself under a necessity of stating facts in order to guard against misrepresentation. In the spring of the year 1791 I received a letter from Dr. Coke on the subject of uniting the Methodist *society* with the Protestant Episcopal *Church*. An answer was returned. In consequence of which Dr. Coke made me a visit, having not then received my letter, but having heard that I had written.” He then gives a brief of the plan as outlined in Dr. Coke's letter, and adds: “This intercourse was communicated at the time from Dr. Coke to Dr. Magaw. I do not know of any person he informed of it, unless I may except the gentleman above alluded to, *by whom*, if I have been rightly informed, *my letter to Dr. Coke was opened in his absence*; such a freedom being understood, as I supposed, to arise out of the connection of the two gentlemen. But for this part of the statement I cannot vouch. It was understood between Dr. Coke and me that the proposal should be communicated to the bishops of the Episcopal Church at the next convention, which was to be in September, 1792, in New York. This was accordingly done.” The italics are his.² Citation has already been made from a letter of Bishop White's to Alexander McCaine, of August 4, 1828, and the third paragraph of it, as bearing immediately upon the subject, is now given: “In the conversations — for there were two — with Dr. Coke, in the presence of Dr. Magaw, there was certainly a reference to the decease of Mr. Wesley, to what effect I do not recollect, although I am persuaded it had no bearing on the purpose of the visits of Dr.

¹ McCaine's “Letters,” 1850, p. 119.

² Kewley's pamphlet of 1807, p. 59.

Coke. That gentleman did not intimate any intention of withdrawing the proposals the letter contained; and I was left at full liberty to communicate to our convention."

Bishop White's last biographer, Julius H. Ward, gives some interesting items in the same line. He says: "He [Dr. Coke] wrote first to Bishop White, about two months after Wesley's death, and then, three weeks later, May 14, 1791, to Bishop Seabury, proposing, in a confidential way, measures for the union of Methodists in this country with the Episcopal Church. He evidently felt that he had no adequate authority to his office as an overseer or bishop in the Church of God. His actual feeling is expressed in the following extract from his letter to Bishop Seabury: 'I love the Methodists in America and could not think of leaving them entirely, whatever might happen to me in Europe. The preachers and people also love me; many have a peculiar regard for me. But I could not with propriety visit American Methodists, possessing in our Church on this side of the water an office inferior to that of Mr. Asbury. But if the two Houses of your convention of the clergy (meaning the General Convention) would consent to your consecration of Mr. Asbury and me as bishops of the Methodist society in the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States, or by any other title, if that be not proper, on the supposition of the reunion of the two churches under proper mutual stipulations, and engage that the Methodist societies shall have a regular supply on the death of their bishops, and so on, *ad perpetuum*, the grand difficulty with respect to the teachers would be removed — they would have the same men to confide in whom they have at present, and all other mutual stipulations would soon be settled.'" Mr. Ward adds, "It is not known that Bishop Seabury sent any answer to this letter, but Bishop White returned an answer." He then interjects an account of Bishop Madison's attempt to secure a union in the Convention of 1792. "The clerical and lay-deputies would not entertain it for a moment, and the bishops asked leave silently to withdraw it. Bishop White saw Dr. Coke three times and heard him read the letter which he had written to Bishop Seabury." He farther says that Bishop White remarks that "it was evident that from some circumstances there was a degree of jealousy, if not misunderstanding, between him and Mr. Asbury"; and Ward supplements, "it is not known that the latter desired the Episcopal office." He then writes of Dr. White's visit to England for his own consecration, and while waiting made an

effort to see Mr. Wesley concerning these things, but failed, for the reason already discovered: Wesley's engagements of travel were such as to prevent it. Finally Ward states, interpreting Bishop White's views, that "the object of Dr. Coke seems to have been to obtain Episcopal office on the ground that it would confer upon himself a real authority as a leader of the Methodist body."¹ The letter of Coke to Seabury is referred to by "Laicus" (W. S. Stockton) in a series of articles on Methodist Episcopacy in the *Methodist Protestant*, January 15, 1842; but he does not say that he ever saw a copy of it.

It is noteworthy that neither Bangs nor Drew makes the slightest reference to this salient episode in Coke's career, intimately interwoven as it is with the history of American Methodism. Stevens gives no hint of it in his "History of the M. E. Church," and but a single line in his "History of Methodism," Vol. III., p. 339: "Coke's attempt with Bishop White to unite the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal Churches," and this furnishes no information. Is the old maxim correct: A suppression of the true is a suggestion of the false? Indeed, Bangs is culpable in an effort to conceal the relations of Asbury and Coke at this time by quoting in full a letter from Asbury to Coke of the most amicable character, taken from Drew as though it had been written amid these events. The effort to conceal is found in that he suppresses the date of the letter, which Drew gives as "Georgetown, February 12, 1791," a few lines in advance of the letter itself.² Let it be examined and see if this letter was not written before Asbury could know of Coke's change of mind toward him in the Council matter and in the affair of the White-Seabury-Coke correspondence. Examining Asbury's Journal, it is found that he was at Georgetown, S. C., on the date of the letter.³ He was expecting Dr. Coke at Charleston, which Asbury reached on the 15th, but Coke did not arrive until the 23d, hence this letter goes for nothing as to the irenic spirit of it.

This chapter must close by completing the episode of the Coke letters to White and Seabury. Drew has told of the parting of Coke with Asbury and the preachers at New Castle, May 14 or 16, the first date the very day the Seabury letter was written. Asbury confirms what Drew says as gleaned from Coke's papers, and gives the date of departure as the 16th of May. "I rode to

¹ "Life and Times of Bishop White," by Julius H. Ward. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.

² "Life of Coke," p. 233.

³ "Journal," Vol. II. p. 111.

New Castle and had the last interview with Dr. Coke." That is all. The next day he rode to Philadelphia and opened the Conference. He gives a fragment about Hammett: "Mr. Hammett came from Charleston with wonderful lists of petitioners desiring his return; to this so far as I had to say, I submitted; but—I see and hear many things that might wound my spirit; if it were not that the Lord bears me up above all." He went to New York and held the Conference. Hammett was there also. "Mr. Hammett's preaching was not well received. . . . I expect some things will be retailed to my disadvantage. Be it so—I trust the Lord."

Did he know of the Coke letter to White when he bid him adieu at New Castle? It is extremely probable, if not certain. The presence of the "other preachers" may have deterred reference to it, or Asbury may have been politic enough to keep silence, a gift he had at opportune times. Comparing such data as are at hand, and it is established that Bishop White's letter to Coke in answer was received at Philip Rogers's between the departure of Coke from Baltimore, May 2, and Asbury's departure after the Conference had adjourned. It was handed to Asbury by Rogers as, in his estimation, the proper custodian. Bishop White says that he ascertained his letter "was opened in his [Coke's] absence" by Asbury, and with true Christian courtesy endeavors to extenuate it. Was Asbury justified in this act? Only as White has put it: "Such a freedom being understood, as I supposed, to arise out of the connection between the two gentlemen. But for this part of the statement I cannot vouch." Their relations at this time, to the contrary, were strained. Coke's sermon on Wesley had greatly displeased Asbury, most of the preachers, and the people. Would Coke have opened a letter addressed to Asbury in like circumstances? It must be confessed that it is likely that he would. It is material only as offsetting the contention of those who are satisfied to believe that not only were these "joint superintendents" always on friendly terms, but would not think of violating conventional proprieties with each other. Asbury opened the letter, and what a revelation it contained! The plotter is now a marplot. Is even McCaine's language, vitriolic as were the droppings from his pen at times, too severe? "How must Mr. Asbury have felt when he received, opened, and read Bishop White's answer to the Doctor's letter, which fell into his hands? Is it not reasonable to suppose that he was thunderstruck with surprise, and indignant at such con-

duct? That he was ready to cry out, treachery, deception, intrigue, and a thousand things beside? Nor is it strange that in a letter, written subsequently, and now lying before me, he should say, 'I cannot confide in ecclesiastics passing through the degrees and *intrigues* of a university, as I can trust to a ploughman.'"¹ It is morally certain that he knew of the White letter when he bid Coke adieu at New Castle, for he did not return to Baltimore until the close of the following November, having made an extensive circuit among the New England churches from the New York Conference; and there is evidence, under Dr. Coke's own hand, that during this whole period he nursed his righteous indignation. The proof? It is found in a letter of Coke's to Asbury under date of September 23, 1791, and bound up in the pamphlet published in London in 1793, as an appeal to the English Methodists against the publication of the Coke-Moore "Life of Wesley" in opposition to Whitehead's "Life" as authorized by his will and the executors. This letter was republished in this country in the Baltimore *Methodist Magazine*² for May, 1856, and the following are extracts from it:—

ISLE OF JERSEY, on the Coast of France, September 23, 1791.

DEAR FRIEND: I have written many letters to you, but have received none from you. I have written so much to you concerning the imprudence I was led into in preaching Mr. Wesley's funeral sermon, that I shall say no more at present on that head. I also dwelt on some other things which you might construe as unkindness to you. . . . Will you appoint a place for me to meet you in the month of November of next year? I mean, will you inform me what part of the continent you will be in at that time? Why don't you send me your minutes? Why don't you write me? . . . Come, let everything contrary to love and friendship die away and be no more forever. You must make allowance for me, considering the great influence Mr. Wesley had on my mind, and his great prejudice toward you. . . . I am determined to write to you every opportunity till I sail for America, let your neglect toward me be ever so great, or ever so much deserved by me. Adieu. Pray at least,

For Your Truly Faithful Friend and affectionate brother,
THOMAS COKE.

Nothing could show the stern attitude of Asbury toward this supplanting Jacob, like this letter. Coke had pushed out his pawns upon the ecclesiastical chess-board in over-confidence of winning, but the master of the game dexterously turned out his hand, and again it was a disastrous checkmate for the venture-

¹ "Defence of the Truth," p. 64.

² A full two years' file in the writer's possession.

some player. Asbury kept him on the stool of repentance until he was thoroughly humbled. How thoroughly humbled and subdued let his next visit to America and the General Conference of 1792 exhibit. Asbury was an adept in all ecclesiastical finesse, but he did not acquire it as an art. He was a leader by the genius of his nature. In Coke it was an art, and as such belongs to the trickster; and Asbury allowed him the monopoly of it.

CHAPTER XXXII

Delegated General Conference; was it first suggested by Asbury, or Lee, or Snethen?—The suppression of individuality under forms of law leads to its clandestine assertion without law—Logical and philosophical reflections on the early Methodist preacher and the effects of the hierarchic system on him thoroughly analyzed—The sovereignty of government and that of the people contrasted—Inventions in excuse of the former by Dr. Bond and others—Asbury its personification; manœuvring with O'Kelly; reform ideas and the laity; preparation for the General Conference of 1792—Lee's statistics, also Dickins's—The newly organized Protestant Episcopal Church lay-representative; the example disregarded by the Methodist Bishops.

It was while Asbury was making his long circuit in New England named in the last chapter, that he records, under date July 7, 1791 (Jesse Lee was abundant in labors in this section, and at Lynn and Lynnfield the Methodists had grown to 2200): "This day brother Jesse Lee put a paper in my hand proposing the election of not less than two, nor more than four preachers from each Conference, to form a General Conference in Baltimore in December, 1792, to be continued annually." It must be admitted that this is the first public suggestion of a delegated General Conference with a plan. Asbury probably had been revolving some method in his mind to meet the exigency which he could no longer defer nor thwart. Some years afterward Nicholas Snethen made a suggestion of a properly constituted delegated General Conference to Asbury, who urged him to advance it in the General Conference of 1804, which he did, but it was not adopted until 1808, and the first Conference of this character met in 1812. Lee's original suggestion was not adopted, and while Snethen admits that Asbury may have had some such plan in mind when he named his own to him, he says that Asbury did not make it known, or give him information of Lee's suggestion made nearly ten years before, so that Snethen's claim as originating the delegated Conference is well founded. It will be reviewed later. Ware says of Lee, "he was the best speaker in the Conference." Of commanding physique, of much natural intelligence, though not largely cultivated, deeply pious and laborious, with a will-power to overcome obstacles and assert his convictions, he was

rapidly coming into leadership in the North, while O'Kelly was claiming the same attention in the South. They were agreed in their opposition to the Council, and for a call of a General Conference. The intelligent and pious among the laity were on the same side, so that Asbury, when he found that Dr. Coke was with the malcontents, yielded to the pressure, and consented to the assembling of the preachers in General Conference at Baltimore, December 1, 1792.

The mind of the reader has necessarily been much absorbed with the ecclesiastics of Methodism so that the impression may obtain that there was little else doing but scheming among the "superintendents," and counter-scheming among the leading preachers. It could not be otherwise under such a system as that of Wesley and Asbury. The suppression of individuality under forms of law leads to its clandestine assertion without law. The violation of natural and Christian rights may seem to be a success under a hierarchy, and really conducive to prosperity, but opportunity comes and then the pent-up forces effervesce and explode, often with disastrous results. But the average preacher of those days, and all the juniors as non-voters in the Conference, and they always made a large minority, occupied themselves in soul-saving, with a living experience of saving grace in their hearts, and a sublime gospel of justification by faith under a witnessing Spirit. The terrors of the law were preached with stentorian lungs — terrors of fervid lightning as from a gaping hell to the unawakened sinners to whom such fiery declamation was a strange revelation, and they cried out in repentant throes, and fell prostrate under the "power," so that Pentecostal scenes were revived and of frequent occurrence, as the preacher with tearful eyes and profound emotion invited these seekers to the Saviour, and they entered into the joys of the new birth with exulting shouts of praise which left lifelong impressions under the sealing of the Holy Ghost. They preached for immediate effects, and their faith was not disappointed. The "revival" followed the track of the itinerant around his circuit of hundreds of miles, with preaching every day and three times on Sabbath, with as many classes to lead and prayer-meetings to hold. And then a wide-awake lookout was kept for promising converts among the youths, who found their "call to preach," and they came up to Conference in groups of fifties and sixties to replenish the more slowly depleting ranks as the veterans dropped on the field or retired to win a livelihood out of the soil for a growing family, and at the same time beating

every bush in all their vicinage for stray sinners. The preacher was welcomed to the homes of the people with reverence, and the best they had was at his service, even though that best consisted of a heap of deer or other animal skins in the corner of the house loft, and jerked venison graced the rural table. He was an authority in the household, and came to exercise it as he grew into consequence, and earned his way by a like reverence and obedience to his "preacher in charge," and the presiding elder, and the awesome Bishop, as he knew full well, if at all aspiring, that these were the steps to the throne.

It was a unique system, as powerful for evil in this educational trend as it was for good in its coercive and cohesive force. For the most part the great leaders of the American Methodistic movement were sincerely of opinion that the "general superintendency" and the round and round circuit of the preachers, under the absolute leadership of Asbury, had all the virtue of its successes. His power to appoint the preachers, where, when, and how he wished, he guarded most jealously to this end. He honestly believed that if he were divested of it he "would no more be able to send missionaries to the Western States and Territories in proportion to their rapid population. The grand circulation of ministers would be at an end. The surplus of preachers in one Conference could not be drawn out to supply the deficiencies of others."¹ It was one of the arguments unanswerable in its day used by Bishops Coke and Asbury in favor of the extremest interpretation of the powers vested in them. And yet nothing is more evident from the early Conference records and traditional remains that, when forlorn missions were demanded, appeals were made for volunteers and responses were sure to be made, evidencing that the moving quality after all was not the Bishop's power, but the constraining love of souls, that animated these heroic men. And the administration of those days is not wanting in plentiful examples of arbitrary differences of treatment in the disposition of these itinerants. Colbert, one of the early preachers, tells that Sylvester Hutchinson, a powerful and acceptable preacher of his times, was left off the minutes and without appointment by Asbury, without the consent of the Conference, while he was on a visit to his childhood's home. Colbert says, "Finding on his return that his name was dropped, he remonstrated with Asbury and offered to continue in the ministry. Mr. Asbury finally offered him a circuit on which he was not acceptable. There was

¹ "Notes on the Discipline," 1796-97 edition.

also another preacher who was not very acceptable where he had been sent, and Hutchinson and he proposed to Asbury that they should be exchanged; but this was refused, and, turning to Mr. Hutchinson, he said: 'Go there or go home.' Mr. Hutchinson answered, 'Then I must go home,' and thus, about 1805, ended his connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church."¹ But in another case gleaned from Asbury's Journal, and about this time, April, 1805, he writes, "L. M'Combs had refused to take his station. After some alterations were made he consented to go to Philadelphia." Unlike Hutchinson, this was a clear case of rebellion to his authority. Asbury had his reasons for yielding, into which no man might inquire nor was it needful, the point was gained; but into such cases like that of Hutchinson, and they were not isolated, it were useless to inquire, and there was no redress.

Logical and philosophical reflections obtrude themselves and demand expression at this stage. It is the very genius of a hierarchy to exert its repressive force against popular liberty in the sense of its last analysis: individualism. And this it does by subordinating the individual activity to the uniformity of the system. It studiously avoids recognition of the unit, and spends all its energies in exalting the aggregate. The man is nothing; the system is everything. As it is exhibited in the unique hierarchy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, modified in administration by the pressure of liberalism upon it within and without in recent years, yet like the leopard it does not change its spots, so that the outspoken representative of its genius even in the present year of grace, eighteen hundred and ninety-four, does not hesitate to inculcate this very sentiment. At the Baltimore Conference of 1894, Bishop Fowler presiding, one of the most gifted of her chief pastors, but thoroughly saturated with the authority of office, and enamored of the system as such, addressing a class of candidates for orders in the presence of the Conference and a crowded congregation, consumed its time at great length, evidently intending his address for the benefit of the body and the people present, as much as the four young preachers who stood before him, for the substance of it was, "You do not come here to be made Baptist, nor Presbyterian ministers, but Methodist ministers. You do not join the Baltimore Conference, but you join the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. You become a part of the system and agree to be directed by the au-

¹ Atkinson's "Centennial History," p. 152.

thorities of the church so as to best promote the efficiency of the system.”¹ The address is not thus crystallized because it misrepresents the polity, but as evidential of affirmations concerning it. It was thus declared that its controlling, cohesive, and coercive forces are ecclesiastical and not moral, and just so far forth it is clear that it operates upon the lower plane of human nature and that the trend of its education is destructive of moral liberty. No question is raised as to the potentiality of such a system, not as an aggressive force only, but for growth and consolidation. All extant Episcopacies from Rome downward are in demonstration, but not a few of their strongest and most alert thinkers, specially in the Methodist Episcopal Church, are holding out the danger signals: the growth and consolidation of officialism and institutionalism as well. It is admitted that every system will develop its extremes, and that these must not be made the criterion for either its approval or disapproval abstractly. To use a nautical figure, if the popular, representative system of the Methodist Protestant Church, by its levelling principles tends to overweight the hold of the Church craft with ballast and so detracts from its sailing momentum by settling it too deeply in the water, the system of paternalism, authority in the head, flies the danger-signal of being top-heavy—it carries too great a spread of canvas for the amount of ballast—its officialism and institutionalism are listing the craft. This is not an invention or an imagination of the writer. Only a few months since one of the leading periodicals of that Church, employing the same nautical figure, illustrates the continued repression of lay influence and gives warning that the timbers of the old ship are creaking and groaning under it, and hints that if the stokers in the hold, meaning the laymen who supply the sinews of strength, once throw down their shovels, and the fires burn low or are extinguished, there will be no longer use for the blue-coated officers who pace the ship’s bridge and command the quarter-deck trumpet in hand.

To resume the argument. The solidarity of the hierarchal system, whatever may be its efficient uses, is radically opposed to that individuality which is the very genius of the gospel, not for personal salvation only, but for true ecclesiastical assertion. Its essential quality is self-determination. It deals with human nature on its highest plane. Its authority is from below upward and not from above downward. To repeat a geometrical figure, the pyramid stands upon its base and not its apex, and there can be

¹ Condensed by Rev. W. M. Strayer, an eye and ear witness.

no dispute that this is the order both of nature and of revelation. In no other way can a system of government be kept in touch with the moral convictions of men. This truth has been well expressed by a contemporary: "Civilized society is gradually being conformed by the leavening influence of the principles contained in the gospel of Christ. Instead of depending on force and fear, organized society is coming to recognize the voluntary principle as the power by which the community is to be held together. 'A government of the people, by the people, and for the people,' is but another expression for the incarnation of the gospel of Christ in the social relations."¹ Rev. Dr. Buckley, editor of the *New York Christian Advocate*, and one of the brightest and shrewdest of Methodist Episcopal officials, sees this truth, but as a conservator of old methods, as in duty bound, grasps at a straw in a current number of that paper. Quoting a deliverance of Bishop Watterson of the Roman Catholic Church, at a summer school held at Columbus, Ohio, recently: "All the revolutions of this century have been caused by a wrong principle, which sought to make authority come from below rather than from above," he italicizes, and says: "There is a great truth in this." But only as he evidently mistakes the Bishop, who was not thinking of the theocratic side of government, but of the Popish side. So viewed, who will dare affirm that there is a great truth in it in the sense of commendation? Not even Dr. Buckley. He sees the dilemma in which his admission places him, and, holding to the mistaken sense, adds: "A republican government can be harmonized with this principle without difficulty, providing the people recognize their allegiance to God, and exercise their votes conscientiously." That goes for the saying, but what he wishes to teach the Church between the lines is, that there is an excuse for a system; that is, the Methodist Episcopal polity, in which authority is from above downward, as in the Romish Church.

The essential differential quality of hierarchy and democracy is, that the former recognizes no sovereignty but that of government, while the latter recognizes none but the sovereignty of the people. The former is the basic principle of all monarchic, aristocratic, and autocratic, civil and religious systems; the latter, the basic principle of the republic of manhood in both civil and religious systems. And it is noteworthy that New Testament teaching, as embodied by Christ and the apostles, while it recognizes in civil government "the powers that be" of whatever existent type;

¹ Dr. Stephens in *Methodist Recorder*.

for religious government it lays down the one law of love, Christ, as Head of the Church, being its only criterion as declared in His fundamental, "One is your master, even Christ;" it as absolutely recognizes the equality of brotherhood as underlying the sovereignty of the people in the counterpart of this fundamental, "and all ye are brethren." It thus pronounces against the sovereignty of government as its ecclesiastical ideal, inasmuch as His law of love is the law of the many and not of the few or of the one. So while it declaratively enjoins as its ideal the sovereignty of the people, it also implicatively forbids all civil systems not grounded on this sovereignty of the people, as incongruous with His ecclesiastical ideal. Hence it is demonstrable that the autocratic system of Wesley, as a striking illustration of the sovereignty of government, while it was allowable and had its justifying uses in the formative stages of his religious "Societies," accepting him as their unquestioned ruler, its entailment under the Deed of Declaration was forbidden by Christ's ecclesiastical ideal, the law of love being in its necessary quality distributive of rights, and is utterly exclusive of any claim of obedience in one over another of his mystical members, the Church. The same holds true of Asbury's autocratic government of the American "Societies" as such, and while the same allowance for expedient ends may be conceded, it was none the less violative of Christ's ecclesiastical ideal when the sovereignty of government was entailed in 1784 in the organized hierarchy of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Hence it cannot be admitted that the limited monarchy of England, based upon popular suffrage in its representative House of Commons, can be in accord with Christ's ideal, and therefore right, and an opposite system as ordained by the Deed of Declaration for the Wesleyan Church be also in accord with it and right; any more than it can be admitted that the Republic of America, based upon the sovereignty of the people, can be in accord and right, and the sovereignty of government as displayed in the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church be in accord and right also. If the one be ideally right, the other must be ideally wrong, and so destroys for it all its traditional claims and expedient policy. And this leads to the contention that a hierarchy in the Church cannot peacefully abide, and be ultimately perpetuated in a civil republic, that of Rome not excepted. A hundred years of internal strife, and a gradual reform in the Methodist Episcopal Church of its features inconsistent with personal Christian liberty, are the irrefragable proof.

So complete is the scriptural and logical refutation that it led to the invention of the unchristian theory that, admitting the utter incongruity of its unbalanced polity with New Testament ideals, and the existent civil polity of the States of the American Union, a sufficient check is nevertheless found in the prerogative of the people to withhold supplies. It originated early after the enactments of 1784, as Ware declares in his "Reminiscences"; became the staple of Dr. Bond's argument in the controversy of 1827-30, and was then rightly stigmatized as "the purse-string" argument; and has been used by the ignorant with the ignorant ever since. What language of reprobation can sufficiently characterize a system which gave birth to the infamous suggestion as a salvo to Methodist Episcopal laymen: Your effective remedy and sufficient compensation for exclusion from the government is in your power to impoverish and starve your ministers as the legislative, judicial, and executive class in the Church! It led to the invention of that equally abhorrent fallacy that the assertion of manhood suffrage in the civil system and the subjection of manhood suffrage in the ecclesiastical system have the same divine warrant! And by consequence that the arguments which support the one do not invalidate the other. And these dual inventions led to the crowning one as the last resort and final analysis, that the exclusive rule of a limited class in ecclesiastical government is by a "divine right," the administration of "moral discipline" carrying with it the prerogative of ministerial rule under a hierarchic polity. It is destroyed the moment it is brought in touch with the Christly dictum, "one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." A recent writer has well observed (an enlightened Roman Catholic), "There is a true instinct in the popular mind which teaches it that the cause of civil and spiritual liberty is in truth identical." And this is but to affirm that the civil order of personal liberty is but the reflex of the scriptural order whose "seat is the bosom of God and whose voice is the harmony of the universe."

Dr. Coke's sudden and unexpected arrival in England, and what came of it until his return to America in November, 1792, a period of over eighteen months, has already been rehearsed in previous chapters. Bishop Asbury's Journal for this period is a series of jottings of his ceaseless travel, hardships, and ill-health, through New England, with a return tour as far south as Charleston, S. C., and Georgia, and thence back to Baltimore in time for the General Conference which he had called under the pressure

brought to bear upon him by the principal preachers and influential laymen, Coke having thrown the weight of his influence in favor of it also. The odds had been too much for Asbury. Snethen says, "It is well known what immense labor and difficulty it cost Mr. Asbury to maintain the non-representative system." It was his chief concern now to mould what he could not control. His Journal, however, for all these months gives no hint of the internecine struggle, except that he was unremitting in letter-writing to the preachers. No man knew better than he how to conciliate men either by epistolary contact or personal interview. It has been found that for many months, despite frequent letters of parley from Dr. Coke, he steadfastly refused to condone his conduct in the Bishop White affair and the circular he addressed the preachers favoring ostensibly radical changes in the Methodist government—he took not the slightest notice of him. But he kept close to O'Kelly and the American dissenters. In September, 1791, he records, "I received the olive branch from Virginia. All is peace; it was obtained by a kind letter from me to O'Kelly." Could the letters of that day be collected as to the prevailing contest, what a revelation they would be of political manœuvring, spiced with intrigue and craft. But that the truth of history, as to momentous issues, is involved, it would be well if the veil of oblivion were drawn over it.

Though an organization was effected in 1784, there was no semblance of a Constitution, so that, for the period intervening, there was but one law—the will of Asbury. Snethen says, "No period of the same duration in the history of any church exhibits such a jumble of powers as ours did from 1784 to 1792." The ostensible purpose of the General Conference was to review the doings of the Council and to supersede it; but O'Kelly and not a few of the leading preachers saw in it the opportunity for curtailing the powers of the Episcopacy. They, too, were busy through the mail disseminating their views. The right of appeal from the appointing power of the Bishop was their objective, and, as will be presently seen, they came to the Conference of 1792 in a decided majority. That there was quiet agitation among the laymen for changes giving them some recognition there can be no doubt, otherwise it is impossible to account for the favor with which the innovations made by O'Kelly in the seceding section under his lead in 1792-93 were received. Indeed, so complete was the subordination of the laity, that their interchanges of grievance were with bated breath. There is not

wanting evidence that governmental questions were not discussed by the preachers with the laity, the prevailing opinion being that the less they knew of such matters the better. In many it begat an indifference to the whole subject of polity, and they were so willing through the indolence of human nature to waive its consideration, that it encouraged the arrogation of the preachers. Forcibly Snethen has put it: "Truly, if the people care not how the Church is governed, their governors will, in process of time, care little how they govern them. This indifference is one of the awful and undoubted evidences of the effects of an absolute government." By a species of heredity, it must be confessed it has come down to this day in the laymen of that Church. Knowing the subject to be under ban, the average member lives content with the peace of stagnation. It has been availed of, by the ministerial class, during all the uprisings of the thinking membership for the hundred years of its well-nigh ceaseless agitation. It was the affirmation in reply to the Reformers of 1824-28, and so onward; the people do not wish participation in the government, or so soon as a sufficient number demand, heed will be paid; but more than forty years passed away before the General Conference of 1872 took the initial steps, and every concession from that date to this has been wrested from the clerical class; for voluntary surrender of power is a thing unknown to absolute systems. It will be seen, in the succeeding chapter, how the General Conference of 1792 rejected every proposition looking to a modification of the aristocratic polity.

Lee affirms that, during this eventful year, or from December, 1791, to September, 1792, eighteen Conferences were called by Asbury, with a change of method in that they began in Virginia, went southward, then northward, and returned to Baltimore. Eleven new circuits were formed, fifty young preachers received, and 2314 added to the membership. It was a great falling off compared with the 6257 of the previous year. He makes no attempt to account for it; but the prevailing unrest of the preachers—the strife between power and principle—must be accepted as a large factor in the case. The statistics as thus given by Lee do not quadrate with those of the minutes in Dickins's edition of 1795. He gives for 1790 whites, 45,949, colored, or "blacks" in the phrase of the day, 11,682; for 1791, whites, 63,269, blacks, 12,884; for 1792, whites, 52,109, blacks, 13,871. Further comment on these figures will be made under the results of the O'Kelly secession. Mention must also be

made in this connection of the historical fact that in 1789 Bishop White of Pennsylvania called a Convention of the Episcopal Church, now dissolved as a national one by the declared Independence of the United States. A Constitution was formed recognizing equal representation of the clergy and laity, the latter to be elected as delegates to the Conventions, Annual and General, by the local vestry of each congregation, the vestry being elected annually by the congregation, thus securing a direct lay-representation. This Constitution was adopted by the General Convention of that Church in 1792. Thus the only denomination in America except the Roman Catholics, not directly controlled by the primary assembly of the people in membership, came into line and harmonized with the civil government of the country. These examples were before the English Bishops of the American Methodist Societies, but instead of proving an incentive to a scriptural and rational polity for the Methodists, the very presence of the laity seemed to repel these autocratic men, for the overtures which were made for a union of the two churches in 1784 were rejected by Coke and Asbury, this reason no doubt being one of the determining ones, as was learned from Kewley's disclosures upon the subject. Lay-participation and popular suffrage were inimical to Wesley's views, and his American Superintendents would have none of it. Alas, for the peace and unity of Methodism in every quarter of the globe; from 1784 for the Deed of Declaration and also for the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The General Conference of 1792; sources of information — Arrival of Dr. Coke; Asbury receives his repentant brother — The business prearranged by Asbury in conference with his confidants; O'Kelly's account — November 1, 1792, the Conference assembled at Light Street church, Baltimore; who composed it; Coke presiding; business committee shut out the Council matter for which it had been called; revision of Discipline instead; Lee's and O'Kelly's story as to the business; Coke a confessed "weathercock"; forsakes O'Kelly and reform and works with Asbury — O'Kelly's right of appeal brought forward; methods for its defeat; large majority turned into a small minority; ingenious scheming of Asbury; course of the debate; Asbury's letter to the Conference; defeat of O'Kelly and his secession — The Episcopacy strengthened; and other business of the Conference.

THE minutes of the General Conference of 1792, like those of the General Conference of 1784, are irrevocably lost. In the printed edition of the minutes by John Dickins of 1795, it has been established that the prefatory statements as to 1784 were made on the sole authority of the Superintendents Coke and Asbury. They are brief and misleading, and because misleading were afterward amended with the change of circumstances for a specific purpose by the same sole authority. This edition makes no note whatever of the Conference of 1792. All that is known of it must be gleaned from Asbury's Journal, Lee's "History," O'Kelly's "Apology," and a few reminiscences left by preachers who were also present. This testimony, except O'Kelly's, is biased in favor of the constituted authority of the Church of that day. It shall be the purpose to weave a consecutive statement which will offset this bias as far as may be without falling into the opposite tendency.

Asbury says: "Tuesday, October 30 — Came to Baltimore in a storm of rain. Whilst we were sitting in the room at Mr. Rogers', in came Dr. Coke, of whose arrival we had not heard, and whom we embraced with great love." Dr. Coke left England for America, September, 1792, and after a stormy voyage of sixty days, as is ascertained from his Journal, reached New Castle, on the Delaware, October 30, Stevens says, citing the Journal. He had seventy miles to ride in the space of a day and a few hours, in order to be in time for the General Confer-

ence; he flew over the distance, wearing out one chaise-horse and breaking down another. "About nine o'clock Wednesday night, October 31, I arrived at the house of my friend, Philip Rogers of Baltimore, with just time to take some refreshment, and a little sleep before the General Conference commenced. Mr. Asbury and the preachers who were at Mr. Rogers's were surprised to see me at this critical moment. They had almost given me up, but intended to spend ten days in debating matters of the smallest importance, in prayer, and in declaring their experiences, before they entered upon the weightier business, if I did not sooner arrive." Recurring to Coke's letter to Asbury of September 23, 1791, in which he so piteously begs for recognition, and anxiously solicits an interview with him in America in November, 1792 — the time set for the General Conference — it is necessary to observe that there are no data by which the period of Asbury's condescension to resume epistolary association with Dr. Coke, after this utter estrangement, can be fixed, as no other letters between them during this time are extant. There can be no doubt, however, that Coke confessed, promised to abandon O'Kelly and the Reform movement in America, and put himself once more under the absolute direction of Asbury. Otherwise it is impossible to account for the fact that he received Coke with an "embrace" and "great love," and that Coke came to America at all at this time, despite his pledges to O'Kelly. Asbury took the prodigal back and his vanity was flattered at the prospect of his reception, so that he cannot restrain an overweening conceit, that the whole General Conference would wait ten days for him, if necessary, dawdling away the time for this purpose. What light it would throw upon the "weightier business" already agreed between them, if their letters could be read from the time of the reconciliation to Coke's departure for America. If Drew found this correspondence in Coke's posthumous papers he discreetly destroyed it, as the episode of this visit to America is dismissed in half a dozen lines, telling, however, what Asbury does not, that, after the General Conference, he left America for the West Indies December 12, 1792.

Asbury had been closeted with "the preachers who were at Mr. Rogers's" for several days in advance of the Conference. Who they were is not known. It may be taken for granted that neither O'Kelly nor any of his ilk was of them. He held in his possession, however, two letters: that written by Coke from Wilmington, already cited, and that written by Asbury about the

same time and also given, and of which more presently. Asbury had constituted the coterie at Rogers's a committee, and they pre-planned the business of the Conference. Coke, when he arrived, shared the confidence. It was a prudent arrangement, for O'Kelly had been diligent in mustering his forces, and no one knew better than Asbury the strategic importance of holding the key to the position. It will anticipate but slightly the order of events if O'Kelly be allowed to give his testimony, particularly as he is entirely ignored in making up the case by the biased historians. He cites from Coke's letter to him, and also from Asbury's, and says: "Just at the eve of business, the Dr. [Coke] appeared. His presence revived me, for I thought my best *friend* had come to town. I perceived by the countenance of Francis [Asbury] that he rejoiced to see Thomas [Coke]." He had not witnessed them embrace each other. "And, after the salutation, fixed him in the chair. I began to think that Thomas had taken the alarm, and rather than be expelled as John [Wesley] was, he had stepped over to the strongest side, and left me to suffer: and it was so. Then proceeded Francis, according to his foreknowledge, predestination, and sovereign power" (referring to the secret meetings at Rogers's) "to choose out of Conference a few men, which framed the privy council. Then he proceeded to read their names, and asked if there was any objection to any of them. And it was so that my name was among them. He appointed for us to meet him (and Thomas) that evening in a private house. Conference adjourned."¹ That will do for witness O'Kelly for the time, while attention is directed to the General Conference which was convened November 1, 1792, in the Light Street church, Baltimore.

Contemporary evidence is that it was the largest and most influential gathering of the preachers from every section of the country ever assembled. Consulting the minutes it is found that there were now 28 who were admitted on trial, 48 continued on trial, 45 admitted into full connection, 82 deacons, 78 elders; and omitting those on trial, a round number of 188 who were entitled to membership. It may be assumed that not less than 150 of these availed of the opportunity of attending. There are no means, however, of tabulating a roster of those who were present; even less satisfactory, therefore, is the information than for the informal gathering of 1784. Lee, who gives the most information in general terms, as O'Kelly gives the most in details, says:

¹ "Apology," p. 20.

"On the first day of November, 1792, the first regular General Conference began in Baltimore. Our preachers who had been received into full connection came together from all parts of the United States where we had any circuits formed, with an expectation that something of great importance would take place in the connection in consequence of that Conference. The preachers generally thought that in all probability there would never be another Conference of that kind, at which all the preachers in connection might attend. The work was spreading throughout the United States, and the different territories, and was likely to increase more and more, so that it was generally thought that this Conference would adopt some permanent regulations, which would prevent the preachers in future from coming together in a General Conference. This persuasion brought out more of the preachers than otherwise would have attended." The ostensible and controlling reason for the call was the Council question. The last, at its session in 1790, had adjourned to meet at Cokesbury College, December, 1792, but the overwhelming opposition of Coke, Lee, O'Kelly, and many of the leaders, as well as the people so far as they dared to discuss such questions, intimidated and overslaughed Asbury so that he abandoned the project even before the General Conference could officially pass upon it. Stevens says it was called, "probably supposing that it would be recognized and empowered by the General Conference." There could have been no such supposition in the case, inasmuch as the opposition had not developed in 1790, and before 1792 it was absolutely certain that the General Conference would decide against it, and this is the reason Coke and Asbury refused to allow it to be so much as named in the General Conference, to the surprise of the preachers.

The committee had arranged that it should not be presented, and substituted a revision of the Discipline as the business of the body, and, that innovations might be under control, a regulation was proposed on the opening day of the Conference and carried, which provided that two-thirds of the members could abolish an old law or make a new one, but that a majority might alter or amend any existing law. A whole day was spent in such preliminary work. Stevens in his account of the proceedings follows the order of business as it was remembered by William Colbert, one of the members, and with it O'Kelly in the main agrees. Lee says as to the Council business, and in confirmation of these allegations: "By this time the plan of the former council

had become exceedingly disagreeable to the greater part of our brethren, both preachers and people; and it was expected that some of the preachers would try, at that Conference, to revive and establish it. But we were agreeably disappointed. For soon after we met together, the bishops and the preachers in general showed a disposition to drop the council, and all things belonging thereto. And the bishop requested that the name of the council might not be mentioned in the Conference again. No one attempted to bring forward that business again."

It has been found that, much to his surprise, but in line with Asbury's cajoling letter to him, O'Kelly was named on the committee to mature business. Let him be called again as a witness. "I met the select number that evening according to appointment, and found them engaged in revising our old form of discipline. My thoughts were many but my words were few—they looked one at another, and one turned toward me, and addressed me in the following manner: 'Will you pass your word to abide by what this Conference may do?' My answer was, 'You alarm me. Tell me what you intend to do?' They answered and said, 'we cannot tell; but we will pass our word to abide by the decision of this Conference.' I utterly refused to pass my word. I then saw why they wanted me in that meeting." It was diamond cut diamond. Never before did the sagacity of Asbury exhibit itself to such advantage, as in the whole politic management of this Conference. At the very opening of the session he modestly proposed that Dr. Coke should preside. He says, "At my desire they appointed a moderator." Many ends were thus subserved. He was in poor health and might find it a burden. It flattered the well-known vanity of Dr. Coke. It enabled him to be present or not as he deemed best. His knowledge of human nature had led him to measure the strength and mark the weaknesses of his principal foeman in the debates, James O'Kelly. He knew that he was irate and impetuous, and he foresaw that in his own absence from the chair and from the Conference at times, he would probably be provoked into indiscretions and extremes, and so defeat himself, and this forecast proved to be true. It enabled him to confer with his tried adherents and so direct the course of events. With Dr. Coke and the committee he had a full understanding. Self-poised, he viewed the field, and in the hottest debates he was calm. He saw a large majority against him dwindle into a small minority. His voice was seldom, if ever, heard, and his manipulating hand, gloved in velvet, seldom seen.

Let the devious course of the proceedings be traced as far as the meagre information that has come down will allow. Quite promptly Dr. Coke reported from the committee the final regulations, and said: "The members of this Conference are the representatives of the People, and we are to all intents the legislature of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the government is aristocratical. You may call me a weathercock."¹ O'Kelly has preserved this deliverance in part. Asbury, Lee, Bangs, and Stevens are all silent about it. The reason for their silence need not be pressed. Alas, for Dr. Coke! How these sentiments compare with his letter to O'Kelly in May, 1791. How amazed must have been the numerous preachers to whom he had sent at the same time his private circular outlining the reforms he and O'Kelly would inaugurate at this Conference. His conscience extorted from him the confession, however ignoble — you may think me a weathercock! O'Kelly was left no longer in doubt that he was not only deserted, but turned upon by his quondam friend and ally; but he did not quail or despair. In this regard he was made of much the same clay as Wesley and Asbury. The committee reported revisions of the Discipline for Conference action. Some of the leading preachers demanded the Council business, to pass upon which they had joined in the call for this General Conference. Let O'Kelly be called again. There is something naïve about his manifestly truthful story, maugre some lapses of memory as to dates, as when he puts this Conference "in the latter end of the year 1791." It may be in this case a misprint only. He says: "This speech [of Coke's just cited] affected many minds, because they justly expected the affairs of the council to have come before them; that being the business for which they were called together. Some of the members at sundry times would interrupt the president after this manner: but where is the council affairs, etc. Thomas [Coke] would arise and warmly oppose, and demand silence on the subject: and silence it was. In our debates if at any time we were led to speak of the conduct of Francis [Asbury] he would leave the house." Among the interrupters of the president were James O'Kelly, Freeborn Garrettson, Ivy Harris, Rice Haggard, Hope Hull, Stephen Davis, William M'Kendree, and others, the last named then a young preacher, but exhibiting all the characteristics that afterward as a Bishop in the Church made him a worthy successor of Francis Asbury. He was quite intemperate in his speech, and one of his impassioned utterances has

¹ Guirey's "Episcopacy," p. 372.

been preserved and was used as a slogan by the Reformers of 1820-30. It must not be forgotten that not a few of the ringing, epigrammatical, and pungent sayings of these Reformers were the coinage of such changelings as M'Kendree, Emory, and Waugh, all of them afterward bishops.

On the second day of the Conference, according to Colbert, but according to the drift of the discussion as reported by O'Kelly it must have been later, this great leader of the opposition brought in a resolution which Lee gives in full: "After the Bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have the liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections; and if the Conference approve his objections, the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit." It has become embalmed in history as the "Right of Appeal." Lee farther says: "This motion brought on a long debate, the arguments for and against the proposal were weighty, and handled in a masterly manner. There never had been a subject before us that so fully called forth the strength of the preachers. A large majority of them at first appeared to be in favor of the motion. But at last Mr. John Dickins moved to divide the question thus: 1. Shall the Bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits? 2. Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal? After some debate, dividing the question was carried." Dickins is the same who so stoutly and successfully withstood Asbury at the Fluvanna Conference in a contention for a more liberal Methodism, the right of the preachers to form a presbytery, ordain, and secure the ordinances; but a changeling too; afterward book steward, and a stanch adherent of Asbury and his methods. A skilled parliamentarian and adroit debater, this movement of division insured the defeat of the appeal. Lee says farther: "The first question being put, it was carried without a dissenting voice. But when we came to the second question, there was a difficulty started whether this was to be considered a new rule or only an amendment to an old one. If it was a new rule, it would take two-thirds of the votes to carry it. After a considerable debate, it was agreed by vote that it was only an amendment to an old rule. Of course after all these lengthy debates, we were just where we began, and had to take up the question as it was proposed at first. One rule for our debates was 'that each person if he choose shall have liberty to speak three times on each question.' By dividing the question and then coming back to where

we were at first, we were kept on that subject called the appeal for two or three days. On Monday we began the debate afresh, and continued it through the day; and at night we went to Mr. Otterbein's church, and continued it until near bedtime, when the vote was taken, and the motion was lost by a large majority." It does not appear that Lee was prominent in this debate.¹ He was resting on his laurels. The Council had been abolished by common consent. Lee's biographer says: "He was present at its funeral. It had threatened to disown him as a preacher, because of his opposition to it. His triumph had come and it was complete. He enjoyed it in silence." After Dickins came Henry Willis, one of the ablest of the preachers, and full of Asbury's high church notions,—so full that he persisted in wearing the gown, bands, and cassock in Philadelphia some time after even Asbury and the other elders had sent them into an "innocuous desuetude." It greatly distracted the Church. He was an ardent defender of the absolute powers of the Bishop. The exciting debates were relieved on the Sabbath by preaching,—Coke in the morning, O'Kelly in the afternoon, and Willis at night. What a green spot Stevens discloses amid the sands of this desolating debate: "Meanwhile, there was daily preaching in the city and vicinity, and a general 'revival' kindled, for there were many of the preachers who cared more for the prosperity of the churches than for the controversies of the Conference."

Asbury gives more space in his *Journal* to this Conference than usual, and does the very uncommon thing for him of citing entire a letter he wrote to the brethren during the session—probably in the early portion. It was not the only letter he wrote directing the storm. Let him be heard: "I felt awful at the General Conference, which began November 1, 1792. At my desire they appointed a moderator and preparatory committee to keep order and bring forward the business with regularity. We had heavy debates on the first, second, and third sections of our form of discipline. My power to station the preachers without an appeal was much debated, but finally carried by a large majority. Perhaps a new bishop, new conference, and new laws would have better pleased some. I have been much grieved for others, and distressed with the burden I bear and must here-

¹ He is mentioned by Peck in his "Early Methodism," who gives in the affirmative of the debate, O'Kelly, Ivy, Hull, Garrettsen, and Swift, omitting Haggard and Davis, given by O'Kelly, and for the negative, Willis, Lee, Morrill, Everett, and Reed, omitting Dickins, the chief of them, so that he probably erred as to Lee.

after bear. O my soul, enter into rest! Ah, who am I that the burden of the work should lie on my heart, hands, and head? Thursday, 8—Having taken cold, and had my rest broken, I went to bed to bring on a free perspiration, and from this I received relief. My soul breathed unto God, and I was exceedingly happy in his love. Some individuals among the preachers, having their jealousies about my influence in the Conference, I gave the matter wholly up to them, and to Dr. Coke who presided. Meantime (confirmatory), during the first week I sent them the following letter:—

“MY DEAR BRETHREN: Let my absence give you no pain—Dr. Coke presides. I am happily excused from assisting to make laws by which I myself am to be governed: I have only to obey and execute. I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers. Are you sure that, if you please yourselves, the people will be as fully satisfied? They often say, ‘Let us have such a preacher,’ and sometimes, ‘We will not have such a preacher—we will sooner pay him to stay home.’ Perhaps, I must say, ‘His appeal forced him upon you.’ I am one—ye are many. I am willing to serve you as ever. I want not to sit in any man’s way. I scorn to solicit votes. I am a very trembling, poor creature to hear praise or dispraise. Speak your minds freely; but remember you are only making laws for the present time. It may be that, as in some other things, so in this, a future day may give you further light.

I am yours, etc.,

“FRANCIS ASBURY.”

“I am not fond of alterations; we cannot please everybody, and sometimes not ourselves, I am resigned,”¹ This record bears study. He no doubt prayed much over it, And what a disclosure it makes of the inward workings of the autocratic mind, the parentalism of which he is so unconsciously fond. Did he mean this letter to influence legislation? Read it again and note the argument. The issue before the Conference was trembling in the balance; he threw this letter into the scale, but it was not the final determining factor. What does O’Kelly farther say of the course of the debate? His style is by no means faultless, but there is a verisimilitude in it that convinces you he is speaking the truth as he remembered it. “The debates of the synod turned chiefly on Episcopal dignity. The Virginians for a while did distinguish themselves in defending their ecclesiastical liberties, but they fainted in the struggle. Richard Ivy exceeded himself; he spake with tears, and in the fear of God,

¹ “Journal,” Vol. II. pp. 172, 173.



WILLIAM M'KENDREE.

and much to the purpose, crying popery, etc. If at any time a minister would move to *abridge* (in any degree) the Bishop's power, the defenders of that faith would not only oppose the motion, but would charge the member with something like treason, as it were." He continues in the "Appeal," pp. 21-25, to give circumstantial account of the fencing by the able champions on both sides, but it might be discriminating to burden these pages with so much of his testimony. Let a few citations suffice. "William M'Kendree, with several more, did with holy zeal strive with me for liberty." "Hope Hull, a worthy Elder, sounded a proper alarm. He exceeded himself by far. . . . He spoke after this manner: 'Did not our fathers bleed to free their sons from the British yoke? and shall we be slaves to ecclesiastical oppression!' He lifted up his voice and cried: 'What, no appeal for an injured brother? Are these things so? Am I in my senses?'" "Stephen Davis, in whom was the spirit of wisdom, withstood the celebrated Henry [Willis], assuring us that the last arguments were badly founded — 'We are far gone into popery.' Quickly after this the vote was taken. Ah! fatal hour! the motion was lost; and out of an hundred and more, we had a small minority."

In these and other extracts the extremes of declamation are discovered; happily, the crowning one by M'Kendree has been preserved by Ezekiel Cooper, one of the preachers present, and in it, probably more than any other utterance, the determining factor is laid open. In his semi-centennial sermon he states, that while M'Kendree was on the floor, delivering a masterful and vehement argument, he said, referring to the power of the Bishop to appoint absolutely without any appeal, "It is an insult to my understanding, and is such an arbitrary stretch of power, so tyrannical [or] despotic, that I cannot [or] will not submit to it." These are red-letter sentences, and will recur forty years later in this History of Reform. Thomas Ware, another of the preachers present, gives the rationale of the defeat of O'Kelly. Stevens quotes a page and a half of it, but as much of it has already been anticipated by the writer, in dissecting Asbury's management of the logical fray, the whole need not be here reproduced. He says: "Had O'Kelly's proposition been differently managed, it might possibly have been carried. For myself, I did not at first see anything very objectionable in it. But when it came to be debated, I very much disliked the spirit of those who advocated it, and wondered at the severity in which

the movers, and others who spoke in favor of it, indulged in the course of their remarks." He cites some of the extreme illustrations, and gives in part M'Kendree's philippic. "The advocates of the opposite side were more dispassionate and argumentative. . . . Hearing all that was said on both sides, I was finally convinced that the motion for such an appeal ought not to carry."

The sagacious Asbury foresaw what would thus happen under O'Kelly's leadership, and, by frequent absences from the Conference, his magnetic personal presence, awesome to most of the preachers, was lost upon the advocates of repeal, and Dr. Coke gave them full latitude for extreme denunciations degenerating into personality. There were enough present on the other side, wily and composed, who urged on their opponents. It is also a common experience in deliberative assemblies, that a proposition, however popular at first, by acrimonious debate gets into a position of doubt, and then, the longer it is continued, the less its chances of success; its timid friends absenting themselves, and so a default. Over-confidence was another element in the defeat. Coke was believed to favor it until he arrived and showed his perfidy. O'Kelly had rallied most of the leading preachers, so that he came to Conference backed, as he believed, by a strong majority, and he presumed upon it. It was kept a full week upon the anvil of discussion, and was beaten out of all shape. A night session was called, sure to distemper speech and action. Of one hundred and fifty members in the city, the vote was taken by something over a hundred. These considerations are recited because otherwise it is impossible to account for the defeat of a measure every way amenable to reason. It had just been carried by the English preachers, among other guarantees in the British Conference of 1792, and from which Dr. Coke was fresh. He knew of it, and probably informed Asbury, but they made no sign. If O'Kelly knew of it, it was not brought forward. But it is morally certain he did not, for it would have been a powerful argument on his side, and would probably have settled the vote affirmatively. It has continued a constitutional right of every Wesleyan preacher the world over. It has been incorporated into the organic law of all the liberal Methodisms. It is an essential feature of the Methodist Protestant Church, and wherever adopted it has proved a safeguard with no injurious results to the itinerancy of the Church. In the denomination last named it is seldom availed of, but held as a sacred right,

inalienable and infeasible, against errors of judgment in the appointing power, whether the President of an annual Conference or a Stationing committee. In the Maryland Conference, chief among its confederates in numbers, in a period of over sixty years it has been resorted to but some half-dozen times, with varying results to the individual appealing; but every man knows that his rights cannot be invaded, and that there is for him redress, if he can prove a grievance. What was the upshot of this debate, of which Stevens says: "Coke, however anxious for the issue of the controversy, sat in the chair rapt in admiration of the talent it elicited"? Lee answers this question: "The next morning, when the Conference assembled, we received a letter from Mr. O'Kelly, and a few other preachers, directed to the Conference, informing us that they could no longer sit among us, because the appeal was not allowed." This act of secession, and the disastrous consequences it involved to the Methodist connection, will be fully considered in the next chapter. The proceedings of the Conference sequentially demand attention.

Stevens says, "After the withdrawal of O'Kelly, peace and the old brotherly spirit again pervaded the Conference." Even so. Asbury says: "The General Conference went through the Discipline, Articles of Faith, Forms of Baptism, Matrimony, and the Burial of the Dead; as also the offices of Ordination. The Conference ended in peace, after voting another General Conference to be held four years hence." The words, "went through the Discipline," mean more than they seem to imply. Asbury was quick to discern the vantage, and with his adherents lost no time in strengthening the Episcopacy. There were several weak places in the joints of the armor which the events of the past few years exposed. Effective means must be placed in his hands for the arrest and disposal of malcontents. Such scenes as those just exhibited must be no more. Lee gives a summation of the principal changes made. The Annual Conferences as such were virtually abolished, and distinguished as "District Conferences," one to be held in each presiding elder's district, their limits to be defined by the bishop, "yet so as not to include more than twelve, nor less than three, circuits in each district." The bishop has also power to appoint the times of meeting. Thus Asbury's method of segregating the preachers had now the sanction of law, though Lee says it had been so unpopular when episcopally exercised by him without law. The supernumerary preacher is defined.

Provision was made more definitely for the election, ordination, and trial of bishops, the latter feature being open to serious objection as was afterward pointed out. The Presiding Elder took definite form, and he was limited to reappointment over the same district to four years. This was to meet such cases as that of O'Kelly, who had been reappointed by Asbury for some ten consecutive years to one district, the only exception of the kind he ever made, and under stress of his great personal popularity, and a disinclination not to disregard his wishes; for in influence he was second only to Lee. Stevens says, "By the present Conference the presiding elder was virtually made a diocesan bishop." It became the right arm of the Episcopacy. The powers of the office were great, but care was taken that the subordination should be perfect. The transfer certificate of membership was formulated, without which no one could be received on removal into another society. The trial of preachers and members was made more specific. Cases of "improper words, tempers, and actions" were provided for, as well as provision for trial of ministers or preachers "who hold and preach doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion." A backward step was taken touching Band meetings, which under "needless self-indulgence" included "such as taking snuff or tobacco" among reasons for exclusion. This was now rescinded. Tobacco was grown all over the southland, hence this weak concession. Lee quizzically says of it, "Some of them say it is an advantage to their teeth, and others, that it is good for their health." In this year of grace, however, it is a condition of ordination in most of the Conferences, and must ultimately come under ban as a habit a Christian man can indulge and be blameless. Most of the new prohibitive regulations were made to anticipate O'Kelly and hold in firm subjection the membership. To this end an amendment was made to the mode of trial of members, looking to their speedy expulsion for other cause than immorality. It was in these words: "If a member of our Church shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrine or discipline, such persons so offending shall be first reprov'd by the senior preacher of his circuit; and if he afterward persist in such pernicious practices he shall be expelled the society." An old regulation of Wesley's time, intended by him to protect the high officers of the British crown from defamation, and phrased as "speaking evil of ministers," was incorporated in the American rules, and though proven to have been used by

Wesley exclusively of political officers, was perverted at this time and with marked effect in the controversy of 1820-30, as meaning gospel ministers. The two regulations were stigmatized by those who suffered from them, while blameless in moral deportment, and by their friends, as "the gag law." Indeed, from this memorable Conference of 1792, which so firmly welded the iron laws of a hierarchy, not over-scrupulous care was taken as to the means employed so the ends of discipline were secured.

John Dickins was continued as book steward at a salary of \$666.33, a comfortable provision in that day for one who had no family but his wife, in the city of Philadelphia. Provision was also made for Cokesbury College, \$800 a year for the quadrennium. It is notable that the salary of the Bishop is still kept at \$64 a year. Asbury preached one sermon toward the close, and Coke the concluding one on the last and fifteenth day of the session. He says: "The meeting was continued until about midnight, and twelve persons, we have reason to believe, were added to the family of God. This was a glorious conclusion; a gracious seal from heaven to our proceedings." That large majority who came to the Conference in favor of the right of appeal melted away to a small minority. They acquiesced in the decision, but did they surrender their convictions? No. The question revived in after Conferences, but never successfully, largely, perhaps, by reason of the ill-considered secession of O'Kelly, and the thousands of the membership who followed him into an independent organization. Asbury left Baltimore the day after the Conference adjourned and made speed to the Manchester District conference which met November 26, at Manchester, Va. Ira Ellis and other preachers accompanied him. Dr. Coke went North, and, after tarrying, preaching, and employing himself in directions to Dickins for a new and revised edition of the Discipline, he set sail for the West Indies December 12, and reached St. Eustatius on the 31st, in pursuance of the missionary work intrusted to him by the British Conference. It is an unalloyed pleasure to follow him as the great Methodist Missionary propagandist, as he passed from island to island superintending the various societies which had sprung up, ameliorating their persecutions as far as possible, abundant in preaching labors himself, and keeping all around him on the move. His biographer gives numerous interesting incidents of this visit to the islands, where he continued until he sailed from Jamaica on the 14th of April, 1793, for England, landing at Falmouth the 6th of June.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The secession of O'Kelly ; motives ascribed to him ; his abrupt departure from the Conference of 1792 with Rice Haggard and others ; Lee's account ; heresy charge by "one of the preachers" — O'Kelly's own account ; efforts to conciliate him by Asbury through Coke — M'Kendree's desertion of O'Kelly and the motives for it traced ; Haggard, Hull, Bruce, and Garrettsen not of M'Kendree's ilk — Extent of the secession ; how it spread in its principles ; the Republican Methodists, afterward the Christian Church — The heresy examined ; true history of it — Outline of O'Kelly ; strong and weak points of his character ; the war of pamphlets — Snethen's answer to O'Kelly, true account ; only edited what Asbury prepared ; much new evidence and new facts as to O'Kelly ; complete vindication of him as to heresy — Asbury and O'Kelly in a final interview — Stevens's errors and aspersions exposed as to O'Kelly — This chapter contains the fullest and fairest account of O'Kelly and his followers ever published — Major Sommers, a contemporary of O'Kelly and his cause — Summation ; Gladstone in point.

THE secession of O'Kelly, and what came of it, shall be the text of this chapter. Asbury says: "Mr. O'Kelly, being disappointed in not getting an appeal from any station made by me, withdrew from the connection, and went off. For himself the Conference well knew he could not complain of the regulation." It is ever thus, and commonly only too true, that the diversions of men from the settled order have at bottom some selfish motive. Asbury thinks he finds such an incentive in O'Kelly, but the very argument he cites disproves his insinuation. It is that he was allowed to continue in the south district as elder for ten years, and that such was his influence that he had nothing personally to fear as to his appointments. Yet he threw himself into this breach with the almost utterly unselfish purpose of securing protection to his preacher brethren, and not for himself. Thus traducement of motive is sure to follow your change of attitude. By others it was charged that he was ambitious to be a Bishop, and intended this as a stepping-stone. It is true that Jesse Lee and himself, by their friends at least, were quasi-candidates. It is known only that when O'Kelly heard this imputation he made the solemn affirmation, "I arose before the people, and spake after this manner — I can appeal to the Lord,

and am now ready to be qualified, that the man hath belied me to my face." These were not the only Parthian arrows that were shot after him. Lee, after briefly rehearsing the efforts made to conciliate him and his friends through Dr. Coke, which O'Kelly, in his "Appeal" gives in full, says: "Waiting in town a day or two longer, he and the preachers that were particularly influenced by him set off for Virginia, taking their saddle-bags, greatcoats, and other bundles on their shoulders and arms, walking on foot to the place where they left their horses, which was about twelve miles from town. I stood and looked after them as they went off, and observed to one of the preachers, that I was sorry to see the old man go off in that way, for I was persuaded that he would not be quiet long, but would try to be the head of some party. The preacher then informed me that Mr. O'Kelly denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and preached against it, by saying that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were characters and not persons; and that these characters all belonged to Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The preacher farther said that it was his intention to have had O'Kelly tried at that Conference for the false doctrines which he had been preaching; and he believed that his leaving the Conference was more out of fear of being brought to trial than on account of the appeal. But so it was, Mr. James O'Kelly never more united with the Methodists." How insidiously insinuating! Lee does not furnish the name of this scandalizing preacher. Yet it seems he had not before heard of O'Kelly's grave heresies. As put by his traducer one is at a loss to find it except by the art of the disingenuous — the trick of those

"Who can sever and divide,
A hair 'twixt north and northwest side."

But this paragraph from Lee has wrought great mischief to O'Kelly personally, and to the denomination he fathered and left behind him to this day. Lee speaks of him as "the old man." Stevens is led to reproduce the heresy motive, and to speak of him disparagingly. His excuse may be that he had nothing to guide him but Lee, and the old saw accounts for the bias he exhibits, followed by other historians of Methodism, that "when the wish is father to the thought, we are apt to draw upon our imagination for the facts." He says, "He was now a veteran, broken with age, an Irishman of fiery temperament, and, as usual with such temperaments, his conscience was weak and easily

swayed by his prejudices; weak to yield to them, but strong to defend them." The truth is, that he was now only about fifty-eight years of age, and able to walk twelve miles with saddle-bags and other impedimenta; and such was his vitality that he lived to be ninety-two years old. As to the heresy, the grain of truth in it shall be sifted out of the bushel of doctrinal slander.

Secession pure and simple is rarely justified and as rarely succeeds. This was a case of secession pure and simple. So soon as O'Kelly's letter was received by the Conference, Asbury set Coke in motion to conciliate him if possible. He knew his worth and foresaw that it meant a heavy collateral loss, and he also knew his power, and that to cope with him challenged a giant's strength. O'Kelly tells how he was invited to an interview with Coke in private, how obsequious he was, and asked "pardon ten thousand times." He inquired then of O'Kelly on what terms he would return, and he answered, "Only let an injured man have an appeal." Then Coke gave the final word, "That cannot be granted." Let it be here observed that no one honestly desiring to know the truth of history as to these things will fail not to read only, but to allow full credit of general truthfulness to O'Kelly in his elaborate exposures in his "Apology." The temptation is strong to quote largely from it as offsetting the text of most historians who have taken pains to garner all the fragments of testimony of the opposite complexion, but forbearance will be exercised as this History is meant to observe the golden mean of extremes. His story, rigidly condensed, is that he left as Lee informs, accompanied by Rice Haggard, John Robinson, John Allen, William M'Kendree, and, perhaps, a few others, who subsequently helped him though they did not secede at this time, among them Hope Hull and Philip Bruce. He admits that he knew not what to do, except that he intended to keep on preaching; "but I have no intention of a separate party." Reaching home, in a few days messengers came to him from Asbury, expressing his sorrow at his departure; that he was his "right eye, right hand, and right foot." He promised him free access to the Methodist pulpits and £40 a year, because "I had suffered so much for the cause of truth and liberty." The former he says he accepted, but not the latter. Some time afterward he was sent a present of £10 by Asbury which, on the advice of friends, he received, and gave it the same day in part pay for a saddle-horse. "After these things I was met by one of their elders, who blamed me for leading the people into

the nature of church government; whereas they had no business with such knowledge." The fact that he accepted the £10 was soon used against him—he was receiving support from the Methodists, and yet opposed them. Then, he says, he saw it was intended for hush money. He could neither be coaxed nor bribed out of his position. Then Asbury left him and turned his attention to M'Kendree.

O'Kelly had no plan. There was no forethought. His ardent temperament, when he was so certain of success, could not brook the mortification of defeat. The personal equation was too large. Two wise sentiments of D'Aubigné are in place as warnings: "Every revolution should be wrought out in men's minds before it takes the shape of action," and "Mankind needs time to accommodate themselves to great changes." O'Kelly, without intending it, was driven onward by the pressure of those disaffected elements which the "aristocratic system," Coke's favorite phrase for the polity then prevailing, had fomented, and which had lain dormant for a long time—at least since the General Conference of 1784. Thoughtful laymen through the connection felt the galling yoke, and awaited opportunity only to assert their recognition. This is evident from Coke's plan in his circular from Wilmington, in 1791. It is plain from the large concessions made the laity in the "Republican Methodist Church," as organized by O'Kelly and his compeers. And great as was its success as a wide secession and a working polity, it can be shown that the introduction of this element was not the cause of the ultimate decadence of the new denomination. It was not sufficiently anchored in fundamental principles, and the true causes of its decay will be uncovered as its history is explored. But every fact entering into it will serve to demonstrate that the allegation is true: the Asburian system was responsible for this, the first great division of the Church. American Methodist unity was destroyed by the established hierarchy of 1784, in less than a decade afterward. And yet but little can be said in extenuation of O'Kelly, who could not, would not wait, and had no plan to make the elements cohere and perpetuate themselves. In the General Conference of 1796 the right of appeal, modified as the right of an elective presiding eldership, was brought forward;¹ but the old leaders were not there, and the spectre of secession,

¹ It is a noteworthy fact that *none* of the Methodist historians makes the slightest allusion to this important revival of liberal principles. Asbury alone gives us a slight cue. He says: "At this Conference there was a stroke aimed at

and the mongrel polity which grew out of it, cut the nerves of its power as an initial step to other reforms. Had he remained, with such coadjutors as Haggard, Hull, Bruce, Garrettson, Davis, and M'Kendree, there would have been hope, stimulated by the abuses which were practised under the more rigid Episcopacy of the period from 1792 to 1796. Nothing remained, however, but a protesting minority, who fostered for years afterward the liberty they could not gain. All honor to them, and those who came after them, exhibiting heroic efforts for Reform in 1820, and again in 1824-30, and, with some measure of success for lay-rights, forty years later still. So true are the words of De Tocqueville, "Stubborn minorities are the hope of republics."

The situation confronting both Asbury and O'Kelly was perilous in the extreme. Both leaders seem to have recoiled from the consequences and resorted to pacificatory means of averting a formal division. Give them both a hearing, something Bangs, Stevens, and others did not do; thus the golden mean will be observed. Asbury says: "Sunday 25" (November, about two weeks after the General Conference had adjourned) "Came to Manchester, and preached in the afternoon, and felt life amongst the people and preachers who were met for the district Conference. . . . W. M'Kendree and R. H. [Rice Haggard] sent me their resignations in writing." A pause is demanded at the mention of M'Kendree. Every effort short of direct prevarication has been resorted to to minify the conduct of this historical character of early Methodism as to his connection with the O'Kelly movement. Let all the facts be disclosed. William M'Kendree, or, as it is entered in the early minutes, M'Kentree, and confirmed by Alexander McCaine, who knew whereof he affirmed, to have been originally Macintree, was born near Richmond, Va., July 6, 1757.¹ His early educational advantages were sparse, and at twenty he entered the Revolutionary army and rose to the position of adjutant, remaining in the army until the close of the war. He was converted in 1787, at about thirty years of age, and joined the Conference in 1788, so that at the time of his resignation he had travelled four years and was thirty-four years of age. His biographer claims for him "that element of all true greatness,

the President Eldership." See "Journal," Vol. II. p. 319, edition of 1852. Incidentally from other sources it is ascertained that it was ably debated, but for the reasons assigned made no headway against Episcopal prerogatives now so impregnable entrenched and buttressed by this same Conference.

¹ "Life and Times of Bishop M'Kendree." By Bishop Paine. Nashville, Tenn., 1880.

known as *common sense*, which he possessed in an eminent degree. . . . Few men have been more distinguished for sound, unsophisticated judgment . . . and a manly independence in the investigation of truth." He had travelled under O'Kelly and was thoroughly imbued with his ideas. Such was the mature and self-centred man who, in the Conference, uttered the declaration against unamenable Episcopal prerogatives, which has been already quoted and which history will never suffer to die, both for its relative and intrinsic importance. Six weeks afterward he sent to Asbury his resignation in writing. Ample time for calm review and change of purpose. Rice Haggard was one of the leading preachers of the South. These three, and no doubt others in sympathy, did not attend the Manchester Conference.

The reflection to be entertained as to M'Kendree is: Is it antecedently probable that such a man could have been unduly influenced by O'Kelly or any other person in this matter of Reform principles? The reader must answer. Paine, his biographer, indulges in all the extremes of accusation against O'Kelly, and exonerates M'Kendree. A specimen is given from page 76: "What a pity that one so pure and artless should be brought under the influence of a jealous, sour, intriguing old preacher! . . . Yes, here is an elder poisoning the minds of the young preachers against Asbury, and other holy men; assuming extraordinary piety and love for Methodism, leading these unsuspecting souls to regard Mr. Asbury as despotic and mercenary, and plotting the overthrow of the very system for which he had lately voted in Council. What a presiding elder! A wolf in charge of lambs!" There is much to the same purpose, and couched in as charitable language. He also gives a letter at length, written at the request of Asbury and bearing date 1803, in which M'Kendree exculpates himself on similar grounds, but the gist of it is found in the following statement, "I therefore refused to take a regular station at Conference, because I expected to reject the 'monstrous system' [of O'Kelly] when it should appear; but met you and the presiding elder a few days after the Conference, and took a station." How is human credulity taxed to believe it! He had sent a letter of resignation to this very Conference because he was settled in his convictions as to O'Kelly's reform measures, and was not in attendance. Reconcile the facts who can with this letter ten years afterward, "I therefore refused to take a regular station at Conference because I expected to reject the monstrous system."

Why this sad exposure? To save the memory of men who have been bitterly aspersed and misrepresented—to save the truth of history. Can such tergiversation be accounted for in such a man? Let a few facts be stated. Asbury says not one word of M'Kendree's return, and does not even mention him for a year afterward, when the brief record is from Virginia, "I gave place to brother M'K.," [M'Kendree] in preaching; and Lee does not so much as mention M'Kendree in any connection these days; and Stevens only observes, innocently enough: "The indiscretion [M'Kendree's] was brief, however; it does not appear in the Conference minutes, there being no interruption in his appointments, for at the next Conference he was designated to Norfolk and Portsmouth. Regretting his sudden error, he resolved to ascertain, from personal acquaintance, the real character of Asbury, and for this purpose accompanied the Bishop in his travels. He became satisfied that O'Kelly misrepresented him, and resumed his work with a devotion which never again wavered." Resort will have to be made to other sources and presumptive evidence. M'Kendree was on the Greenville circuit, not very far from Manchester. After Conference—"a few days," himself says—Asbury had an interview with him and the presiding elder. Did Asbury seek M'Kendree, or otherwise? Can there be any doubt? A presiding elder (who was it? for it is in O'Kelly's district and he had not been officially removed) accompanied the Bishop, and M'Kendree was interviewed. What took place no mortal knows. What is known is, that M'Kendree accepted a change of appointments from Greenville to Norfolk, and the next Conference he was entered for "Norfolk and Portsmouth." These were growing towns adjacent to the Portsmouth work of the Conference, numbering near eight hundred members. It is known that the Bishop took M'Kendree with him on his travels, changed his appointment to Petersburg and several other places. It is known that M'Kendree forsook O'Kelly and his cause. It is known that from a recusant he was transformed into a partisan. Much more is known to be considered later. So far the witnesses have had it about their own way, so let O'Kelly be heard.

What did this man of "fiery temperament," as Stevens says, do? It has been found that he declined, under the interviews of the "messengers" Asbury sent to him, to recant and return, but as a forlorn hope the Manchester conference at Asbury's instigation left the pulpits open to him and voted him £40 a

year for his past services. He did not accept the latter, though the historians raise a dust and make it appear that he did; but they are confused probably with the £10 he did afterward receive, sent him by Asbury. This suggested neutrality did not last. O'Kelly says: "I was quickly shut out of doors, none to publish my appointments, the people warned against hearing me preach the gospel. This act of cruelty did not satisfy the rage of false zeal, but they fell upon my character, even to cruel reproaches. They picked up and retailed things they cannot prove." Charlotte County was the hot-bed of O'Kellyism. Two meetings were held of the aggrieved members who sided with their loved Elder and leader. They sent John Chappel and E. Almonds as messengers to Asbury, "over the great mountains," proposing a compromise, "yet all their efforts were in vain." Then petitions were drawn up by O'Kelly and others asking for certain reforms and praying for union. "But the people were forbid to sign on pain of expulsion." The new law of the Discipline, contrived for the purpose, "sowing dissension, etc.," was used effectively. The Asburian preachers told those who were for changes to "go out," so the petitions fell through. That this was the purpose of the new law is attested unwittingly by Lee. Referring to the divisive spirit prevailing he says, in reference to the law, "They [the Conference] therefore determined to try and check it as soon as possible." A conference was called of all the disaffected to meet at Piney Grove, Chesterfield County, August 2, 1793. They once more formulated their wishes, and sent it by messengers to the Petersburg conference, which met November 15, 1793. Asbury presented their petition to the conference, and after due consideration he answered for it, "I have no power to call such a meeting as you wish, if, therefore, five hundred preachers should come on their knees before me, I would not do it."¹ It is not too much to say that he evaded the issue, and the autocrat of Methodism delivered his final decision. The die was cast.

These facts are stated because they prove that the secession was not as precipitate as adverse historians would make it. More than a year elapsed before the conference at Manakintown was held, December 25, 1793. It was a memorable place, for here it was that the Virginia preachers, in 1779, under Dickins, Gatch, and others, organized Methodism on a basis which would have placed it in harmony with the civil government now in the throes

¹ Guirey's "Episcopacy," p. 380. Also Lee's "History."

of a successful Revolution: they asserted and practised the New Testament right of any body of Christians, in default of so-called regular order, to organize a Church, appoint a Presbytery, ordain its preachers, and secure to it the ordinances, outside of priestly succession of any kind. It would have secured the unity of American Methodism to this day. The defeat and surrender of these brethren has already been recited. The evidence is sadly abundant how fiercely and unrelentingly the controversy raged throughout Virginia and North Carolina, and sympathetically in adjacent parts, for three or four years. As in all religious strife the tongue, that "world of iniquity," scattered "firebrands, arrows, and death." Crimination and recrimination was the staple of discourse everywhere. Asbury's Journal contains numerous allusions to the bitterness and uncharitableness of the O'Kellyites, even to a confession involving himself. February 2, 1793, he writes: "I am not enough in prayer. I have said more than was for the glory of God concerning those who have left the American connection, and who have reviled Mr. Wesley, Mr. Fletcher, Dr. Coke, and poor *me*." O'Kelly's "Apology" and Guirey's "Episcopacy" are equally abundant with citations of vile and slanderous imputations upon him and his adherents by the Asburyan zealots, who hunted them down like partridges on the mountain.

The Manakintown Conference was well attended, and orderly in proceeding. There is no evidence, however, that more than one of the travelling preachers with O'Kelly was present to join his fortunes with the new Church. Rice Haggard resisted all the inducements held out for the recalcitrants to return. Remembering the fearful cost of such a resolve in that day you are surprised. The new Church was without chapels, and there was less prospect of support, specially to married men, than before, meagre as it was, and the whole power of the old Church was brought to bear to crush the faction, and, such is the religious persecuting conscience, they believed such conduct was to do God service. The return of M'Kendree has been recited. It differed from the others in that he made haste to retrieve his hierarchal character by denouncing his seceding brethren and zealously advocating the things he had so mercilessly decried at the Conference of 1792, and later on accepting the Bishopric, and exercising the powers with severity, which he had stigmatized as an "insult to his understanding," as an "arbitrary stretch of power so despotic that I will not submit to it." Others who stood by

him and O’Kelly in that famous debate submitted at once to the voice of the majority, or soon returned. Garrettson, Hope Hull, Philip Bruce, and others continued to receive appointments under Asbury, did valiant service for the gospel, and maintained friendly relations with their chief. But it is not recorded that any of these stultified themselves or were guilty of the unspeakable meanness of open treachery. Many of the local ministers joined the movement, while the people in whole societies swelled the tide, and then, like a reflux wave, obliterated the old Church in entire neighborhoods. The Republican party in civil politics was strong at that time in Virginia, and the name “Republican Methodists” was adopted at the Manakintown Conference. Lee says they did it in order to curry favor with these politicians. O’Kelly summarizes what they farther did toward a permanent organization: “We formed our ministers on an equality; gave the lay-members a balance of power in the legislature; and left the executive business in the Church collectively. But fearing we should err again, as we were young hands at the business, we resolved to establish nothing before another general meeting. So we adjourned Conference.”

As is inevitable, malcontents of every class sought admission, and stray preachers of every name found work, as the secession proved one from the membership in such large numbers, the underswell being a lay-revolt, that preachers were scarce. There was much unwisdom in the councils, and the sails of the new craft were set by unskilled officers to catch favoring breezes. They adjourned to meet again in Surry County, August 4, 1794. “We held Conference with open doors that all might see and learn.” It was a wise departure from the Asburyan rule of closed door and secrecy of administration. But the differing opinions which cropped out overturned what they had done, and the whole question of organization was referred to a committee of seven. The fatal immaturity of the secession became apparent to others, if not to themselves. O’Kelly, in his “Apology,” gives an outline of the long and distracting proceedings, ending in the Conference discarding all human laws and accepting the Word of God as their guide, and so set the new craft afloat once more. Meantime the old Conference tried to be happy over the situation, and face with composure the heavy loss of members. They passed to the seceders this Christian (?) salutation,¹ “A few

¹ General Conference of 1796, Address to British Conference, in Stevens.

indeed, who were as great enemies to the civil government under which they lived as to our Discipline, have left us; and now we have not a jarring string among us." Except the last sentence, and that with a sign of interrogation, the same amount of misrepresentation could not well be put in as few words. O'Kelly, while never looking back, admits, "We very plainly felt the loss of union with the Episcopalian brethren." The breach could not be healed and there were no farther attempts on either side to do it. Lee gives about the same account of the O'Kelly movement, save the bias is always strongly against it. Asbury sums it up in a fashion which could be taken as a model for all imputators of motive, "If the real cause of this division were known, I think it would appear that one wanted to be immovably fixed in a district; another wanted money; a third wanted ordination; a fourth wanted liberty to do as he pleased about slaves, and not to be called to an account," etc. Stevens says of the Bishop, "He found it necessary to recite in his congregations the history of these disputes, to vindicate his episcopal administration, to encounter personal rebuffs from former Methodists." It was a sad piece of business all around.

Attempts have been made to minify the extent of the secession and consign to a swift oblivion its leader. Let this aspect be examined. The minutes, as published by John Dickins in 1795, and attested by those of 1813, make the statistical showing as follows: for 1791-92, 63,269 whites, 12,884 blacks; for 1792-93, 52,109 whites, 13,871 blacks; for 1793-94, 51,416 whites, 16,227 blacks; for 1794-95, 52,794 whites, 13,814 blacks. So, for the General Conference year of 1792, there is a decline in numbers of 11,000 whites, and for the succeeding years, despite the fact that the average increase from conversions was about 5000, there is no increase until 1794-95, when it gains about 1400. This confirms the estimate given in the introductory chapter that the secession of 1792-93, with collateral causes, cost the Methodist Episcopal Church about one-fifth of its whole membership. This aggregate loss did not go to swell the numbers of the Republican Methodists as such. Many simply fell away from religion, preachers withdrew and located, many people stood aloof from the Methodists for no other reason than the hierarchal nature of the government. The liberal principles of 1779, in Virginia, were not dead—this schism revived them, and the agitation continued within the Methodist Church. Lee, speaking for 1794-95, says: "This was a year of great trouble and distress

among the Methodists in the Southern states, partly owing to the divisions that had taken place, as mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and partly to an uneasy and restless spirit that prevailed in many places, both among our local preachers and private members. Some of them contended that the local preachers ought to have a seat and a vote in all our Conferences; and others said there ought to be a delegation of lay-members."

Thus it is seen that the old fires only smouldered. The secession of Hammett in Charleston, S. C., already referred to, ran parallel with it, and out of it grew a bitter war of pamphlets, Hammett attacking, but not always wisely, Wesley, Asbury, Coke, and others in turn, and a defender rose in Morrell, a man of splendid abilities and a popular preacher of the North; and he ably championed Asbury and the Episcopal polity. O'Kellyism, as it was stigmatized, became noised over the connection and polemical parties divided the brethren, both of the ministry and the laity. Asbury found it at the Lynn, New England, Conference, in 1793, and Stevens says that "The news of the O'Kelly schism in the South reached them. Nearly twenty-five preachers, in various parts of the connection, had ceased to travel; four of them had withdrawn, and among them was their own 'Boanerges.'" The defenders of Asbury did not fail to use the heresy argument as well as every other damaging report bigoted zeal had set afloat against O'Kelly. Lee, who was laboring these years in New England, except for a period after the Conference of 1792, when he helped Asbury in the Virginia and North Carolina sections (his native heath) to pacify the Methodists, made much of the doctrinal heresy of O'Kelly as published by "a preacher who told him" all he knew of it at the 1792 Conference. It was advertised in New England, and it will presently be seen what came of the substantial slander by reason thereof. The true extent of the schism being thus portrayed, let the minifying historians speak. Bangs says, "They began to contend among themselves, and then to divide and subdivide; until within a few years scarcely a vestige of them was to be found in all Virginia." Alas! he so eagerly wished it to be so that he was content to make "history" out of some such rumor a prevaricating preacher, perhaps, had retailed to him. Stevens is more careful, "The year [1793] had been a calamitous one for the Church generally; the minutes reported an aggregate decrease of 6317 members;" but he does not tell how he made it this figure. Lee, without entering into the statistics, says, with a better knowledge of its

extent, "Such a loss we had never before known since we were a people."¹

What a price it cost to maintain the absolute system! What a responsibility it assumed! Conscience does not teach what is right, but it prompts to do what is believed to be right. The conscience of the defenders of the hierarchal plan had only been enlightened on one side of the question. Unfortunately the principles of Scripture and reason, which so radically overthrew it, were in that day largely abstract, — the history of Methodism furnished no antecedent facts against the plan, — it had always been so, and although it is now known to have been a bald fallacy, fairness demands that their conscience in the matter should be respected. Paine, M'Kendree's biographer, says, attempting to account for his tergiversation, "He soon understood, too, the evil consequences which would inevitably follow the adoption of the O'Kelly favorite measure — the ruin of the General Superintendency and of the whole itinerant system." It is remarkable that Asbury, the crowned authority, does not argumentatively defend it, — he simply personated it, — it was foregone with him. He and Dr. Coke, travelling together in the South in 1796,² thus piously dispose of it. Going over the scenes of the Virginia secession Asbury writes: "I feel happy among the few old disciples who are left. My mind of late hath been in great peace. I am glad I have not contended with those violent men who were once with us." Contend with them! not he; but what about the history of those days? Coke rejoiced also at the Virginia Conference. Hear him and be amazed, careful reader. "It was in respect to love the counterpart of our General Conference. Oh, what great good does the Lord frequently bring out of evil! The sifting and schisms we have had turned out to be the greatest blessings!"

No such sleuth-hound can be let loose upon a preacher as a charge of heresy. True or false, it answers its purpose. It has been found that Dr. Coke tried it against Newton in the British Conference, and others against Dr. Adam Clarke — was he not a believer in the Eternal Sonship, etc.? Hound him down. It was so with O'Kelly in America. Let that good man, Bishop Paine, M'Kendree's biographer, a veritable Boswell for his Johnson, though steeped to the lips in the bigotry of early Methodist opinion, state the case against him: "Indeed, there is a strong

¹ Yet he also minifies elsewhere the new Church.

² Stevens says 1795, an error. See "History," Vol. III. p. 355, edition of 1867.

probability that, knowing he would be impeached on account of his denial of the distinct personality of the holy Trinity, he felt himself in 'a strait between expulsion and secession.'" What Christian magnanimity of statement! And to show that he is not underrated as a biographer, listen, "He did not withdraw from the Church or the ministry." Asbury says, as found, "W. M'Kendree and R. H. [Rice Haggard] sent me their resignations in writing." That shall be enough from him on the O'Kelly matter, but there are other precious tidbits to come ere M'Kendree disappears from these pages. He is now in heaven with O'Kelly and others of either side who could not in this world "see eye to eye," and abused each other roundly in consequence.

How much truth was there in the heresy of O'Kelly? Perhaps a grain. Make a search through the bushel of lying chaff to find it. It is worth the space and trouble, for this man was so foully spit upon and maligned. It will not be found with any of the historians of Methodism. But it is found with other witnesses who are not partial to him on this score. First, perhaps, a designed word from O'Kelly incidentally wrought. Speaking in his "Apology" of the form of ordination of his preachers he gives it, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, with the approbation of the Church, and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, we set apart this our brother to the Holy Order and Office of Elder in the Church of God; in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, Amen." The italics in the triune blessing are his own. It is noteworthy that this reference by implication to his views of the Trinity is the only one to be found in any of his writings for many years after. If in his preaching he ever expressed a formula of belief as to it differing from that found in the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, its production is challenged. He was an original thinker, but not a scholastic, and assuming that the error of his statement of the Trinity is truthfully given in Lee's expression of it, as volunteered by "one of the preachers," it will be discovered, from this and other proofs to be furnished, that it is found in an undue emphasis upon the Divinity of Christ that "Jesus Christ was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." Nothing more heretical than this can anywhere be found as evidence against him. In preaching and conversation this emphasis no doubt caught the attention of quibblers, and in 1792 it is made the occasion for accusation of heresy. It does not matter that the foundation is

as frail as that of Dr. Coke's charge against Newton, and much less frail than those alleged against Dr. Clarke which were passed as peccadilloes of a masterful mind; he must be hocked in his career, and the attempt was made with as blunt an instrument as the heresy-cry.

In passing, it may be observed that but little is known of O'Kelly's antecedents or of his manner of life up to manhood. He must have had such educational advantages as the times afforded,¹ and he says, in vindication of his loyalty, that he was a private in the Revolutionary army, was taken prisoner, and resisted bribery as a bait to disclose information against his country; he marched on foot and was honorably discharged at the close of the war. He was thoroughly American. His name first appears in the minutes of 1778, as a preacher "on trial," and as it is not among those admitted on trial in 1777 it is clear that Asbury assigned him to work in the interval, and as he died October 16, 1826, in his ninety-second year, he must have been at this time about forty-three years old. That is, born in 1734, joined Conference 1777-78, aged forty-three or four, which would make him, as already stated, in 1792 about fifty-eight; so he survived that General Conference thirty-four years, and Asbury ten years, being his senior about twelve years. His after career to the period under consideration has been sufficiently traced. The imputation of false doctrine was broadcast by the unfriendly. How it came to be linked so closely with his name and that of his followers in later years will be seen in the sequel of his history and the denomination here presented.

After the Conference in Surry County, Va., in 1794, the new organization pursued its way with the fluctuations of fortune common to secessions among Methodists. The work was manned largely from the locality until preachers arose out of the converts of many successful revival meetings held by the Republican Methodists. O'Kelly cannot be regarded as an able constructionist, so that the gathered forces were of slight structure. Jealousies and bickerings grew apace among them, owing to diverse views and many other causes of distraction. In the neighborhoods where it carried most of the old Methodists with it the work prospered; but where there was division the strife was continuous, and the communities were vexed with the controversies of embittered partisans. O'Kelly issued pamphlet after pamphlet,

¹ "Letters from Heaven, Consulted." By James O'Kelly. Hillsborough, 1822. 8vo, 67 pp. Its literary ability is very fair.

which were answered by the friends of Asbury with the logical advantage so greatly with the New Side that Lee and Asbury were both stirred to replication. The former, however, never published his manuscript, anticipated probably by the voluminous preparations Asbury made, but which he also hesitated to publish. As late as July, 1798, he writes: "Mr. O'Kelly hath now published to the world what he hath been telling to his disciples for years. Mr. Hammett was moderate; Glendenning not very severe; but James hath turned the butt-end of his whip and is unanswerably abusive: the Lord judge between us! And he certainly will in that day of days." And later still, September, 1799: "James O'Kelly hath sent out another pamphlet, and propounds terms of union himself for the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists. . . . I ask in turn, what will James give up? His Unitarian errors? . . . I am now more fully satisfied than ever that his book is not worth answering." So it is seen that if O'Kelly could use the butt of his whip Asbury knew how to parry and thrust. A Unitarian! Whatever else he was, if to be a Unitarian is to deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, then he was the last remove possible from being one, as will be exposed presently. Probably Asbury took no pains to be better informed—he joined in the hue and cry. And he did answer him, forging out the arguments, but hiding himself under a proxy. Lacking some of the elements of effective leadership, O'Kelly could not control other aspirants within the new Church. Extremes were advocated, factions arose, and one of them convened in Charlotte County, a stronghold of the seceders, and organized on a plan of their own. Amid these distractions not a few returned to the old Church and others were scattered for lack of proper pastoral oversight. There was much in the movement that was educating in two directions: first, as depreciatory of premature schism; and second, as sowing liberal principles and enfranchising the laity, an influence which was subsequently felt throughout the whole Methodist Church. So matters continued until the meeting of the General Conference of 1796. It and concurrent salient events in the Methodist Episcopal Church shall receive attention later, so as not to break the continuity of the O'Kellyite history, one action of the Conference excepted as a part of it. It has already been cited—a slur and slander unworthy of the Conference.

It is time to group the concluding events of this divisional struggle. John Dickins entered the fray with a pamphlet, in 1795, in which the extremest positions as to the Episcopacy were

taken, and, as may be inferred from his abilities, with much plausibility. From the General Conference of 1796, in which measures were taken to triply bar the Church against a recurrence of such a loss as came of the new Church movement, up to 1801, the Republican Methodists about held their own, counting those who separated, but who did not return to the old Church from time to time. Meanwhile the controversy so thickened and the pamphleteering so increased that Asbury brought his accumulations for a swooping answer to the General Conference of 1800, and requested that a committee be appointed to edit a "Reply" to O'Kelly. Bangs makes no allusion to this item. Stevens summarizes it, but not correctly. As Rev. Nicholas Snethen figures so conspicuously in it, let him tell what was done, and who did it. And as his career is to be fully limned hereafter, it is necessary only to say that he was now a young preacher of splendid abilities, both with pen and tongue, who was admitted to the Conference "on trial" in 1794. He acknowledges that as a young preacher, in 1792-94, he was prejudiced to the extent of a firm belief that all the reformers of that day were bad men. "Motives and intentions, thoughts and designs, that were known only to God, were thus transmitted to me by my seniors and superiors as facts, and as such I received them, without reflection or examination. It is evident, therefore, that my mind was prejudiced against men I had never seen, not merely because they had done a peculiar act or held a certain opinion; but I was led to infer from my information that they were bad men, and whatever they might say and do in their vindication must go for nothing so long as this prejudice against their moral characters remained in my mind. All that those men could have said of the nature and tendencies of the existing powers, though its truth might have been as evident as the sun at noonday, would not have convinced me but that they were bad men. And while this prejudice remained, I must needs have thought I did God service in opposing them. . . . And how can a young man doubt what a bishop or a presiding elder shall tell him of a Reformer. . . . It seems that there is hardly a besetment of our frail nature, that we are so seldom successful in guarding against, as evil surmising. To question a man's motives is, indeed, infinitely easier than to answer his arguments." What a faithful portrait this is of the human heart and mind, and how it should be used as a mantle to cover a multitude of sins ascribed both to reformers and anti-reformers. Again his evidence direct as to the "Reply"

to O'Kelly. "At the General Conference of 1800 Mr. Asbury presented a mass of materials and documents which he had prepared and collected as an answer to O'Kelly's 'Apology.' The Conference was not eager to accept them. But near the close of the session Philip Bruce, George Roberts, and Nicholas Snethen were chosen as a committee, with powers to compose such an answer as they might think proper from the papers furnished by Mr. Asbury. It was not Mr. Asbury, but the General Conference, which made the choice of me as the *last* member of the committee, and the youngest. To this choice Mr. Asbury did not object, though he well knew that I was what is now called a new-side man. My colleagues devolved the labor of the compilation, or abridgment, upon me, and in this humble task I think it likely that I made much of the language my own, but how much I could not now tell; for I have not seen either of the pamphlets these twenty-seven years. But the leading ideas in the quotations I am persuaded I spake not of myself. Young men were then taught, as they are now, if not that 'might is right,' that success is truth. The reader may perceive that in those days young writers, scarcely out of their novitiate, were quite as flippant in the use of the arguments drawn from our success as they are in these days," etc. And here is a stray fact. "No circumstance is more distinctly in my recollection than that Mr. Asbury conceived that the English preachers were of opinion that Mr. Wesley might recall him, and that some of them were disposed to use their influence to effect his recall. The documents I thought best in my answer to O'Kelly to suppress, and Mr. Asbury acquiesced."

And now final explanation of his connection with the "Reply." "In 1800 I lent the aid of my pen to stop the progress of a separation from the Church; in 1821 I did the same, as may be seen from the first volume of the *Wesleyan Repository*. . . . In 1827 I continue to do the same." Upon what was this line of procedure based? He tells in a judgment of the O'Kelly secession, with which the views the writer has expressed are in accord. "The disastrous division in Virginia savored more at first of a strife for the mastery than a fair and correct discussion of social rights. The leader of it, while a presiding elder, was considered among the most rigid of that class of officers; and, like most men of irascible tempers and indistinct views, in the progress of his struggles and disappointments seems to have yielded himself up to the influence of the most desperate prejudices. There was a

crisis in the public mind, which, I cannot but think that if he had possessed a head sufficiently clear to have seized upon and held up to the view of the people, the true principles of social liberty would have insured him success. This chapter in our earlier history ought to be an everlasting monument to warn all of the danger of building or attempting to support a church upon any but the broadest foundation of the abstract principles of social rights."

There is much solid philosophical instruction in these quotations, but they are given at such length because those who read Methodist history elsewhere cannot but be struck with the half-concealed zest with which Snethen's name is connected with Asbury's "Reply" (so it should be titled) to O'Kelly's "Apology," and the suggestion, as between the lines, of his inconsistency therefore as a reformer in 1827-30. But the difference between the objective of these two men is antipodal: O'Kelly's contention was for ministerial rights pure and simple at the time; Snethen's contention from 1800 to his death was for laical rights—he was a lay-representationist pure and simple. Bangs and Stevens, and, specially, Drs. Bond and Emory, were not ingenuons in this mal-use of Snethen's name. O'Kelly's "Apology for Leaving the Episcopal Methodists" was not issued until 1799-1800, the first editions. The Asbury-Snethen "Reply to an Apology" followed, to which O'Kelly rejoined in "A Vindication of an Apology," printed at Raleigh, N. C., Jos. Gales, Printer, 1801, 62 pp. Snethen answered the "Vindication." The whole was under the revisive eye of Asbury, as it must be remembered that Snethen was travelling companion to the bishop by appointment of the General Conference this year. He refers to it in his *Journal*: "Thursday, 28th [August, 1800]—At Perry Hall—I was visited by Elders Bruce and Snethen. I heard the 'Reply' to Mr. O'Kelly's 'Apology'; soft and defensive and as little offensive as the nature of the case would admit."¹ M'Kendree

¹ Asbury in his "Journal," Vol. III. p. 8, admits fully that Snethen's work was a mere compilation. He is in South Carolina, February 5, 1801: "I received the compilation of N. Snethen, intended as an answer to James O'Kelly: it is well done, and very correctly done, except in a few cases." Snethen could not restrain the expression of his liberal views even in the O'Kelly matter, much as he disapproved his secession at the time, and this is the significance of the remark, "except in a few cases." In the same paragraph, Asbury having just been over the ground travelled by him and Coke in 1791, and having probably heard some averments of his "cold" treatment of Coke when he arrived at Charleston, S. C., and was chagrined to discover that he was against the Connell, and in favor of a General Conference, siding now with O'Kelly as was found, he thinks it advisa-

and Lee were also much with him at this period. In all this Snethen was entirely consistent with himself. At no time of his life did he lose his personal respect for Asbury, and their friendship remained to the close of the latter's life, though he held pronounced liberal views on government and often discussed them with his chief. It was during this period that he won from Asbury the cognomen "My silver trumpet," alluding to his remarkable voice and overwhelming oratory. There may be surmised two reasons Asbury did not complete his purpose to reply to O'Kelly personally. He had a distrust of his literary abilities, hence he left nothing but his Journal, and this severely edited by Hollingsworth, and his posthumous instructions to the Conference through M'Kendree. Again, he fully understood the levelling tendencies of controversy, so he forebore to enter the lists with O'Kelly under his own name—he held himself above him. It is noteworthy that Lee makes not the slightest reference to the Asbury-Snethen-O'Kelly controversy.

A period is now reached in the career of O'Kelly which calls for a resumption of the heresy question and its final disposition. Dissatisfaction grew out of the denominational name, Republican Methodists, so in 1801 O'Kelly published a pamphlet in which was proposed a new name—"The Christian Church."¹ Most of

ble to enter a disclaimer at this late date, ten years after, as to his treatment of Coke by declaring: "There was no sharpness at all upon my side with Dr. Coke at Charleston respecting the proposed General Conference which was afterward held [1792]. I was fully convinced that nothing *else* would finish the unhappy business with O'Kelly, and that did finish it." But not on the original issues, which were the abolition of the Council and the call of a General Conference, points which were won by Coke and O'Kelly; but the issue that finished O'Kelly in the disastrous secession was a new one, that of an appeal for the preachers. Naturally Ashury puts the best face on it he can in this note.

¹ Following in this the best obtainable data from Methodist historians, error is recorded as to the origin and time of this new appellation. Happily, recent reliable information gives the corrections and other interesting facts as to O'Kelly, and the denomination of Christians acknowledging him as their father. The writer has before him the centennial number of the *Christian Sun*, organ of this Church in the South, and published at Raleigh, N. C., under that title since 1844. It is exhaustive of the whole church history of the Christians, and supplies not a few facts as to O'Kelly not before generally known. This issue of the paper bears date December 6, 1894. From it information is gleaned that O'Kelly was born in Virginia, his father at least being an Irishman, and that he had the best educational advantages the country then afforded, being a school chum with Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry. On the 4th of August, 1794, a Conference of the O'Kelly reformers was held at Lebanon chapel in Surry County, Va., and Rice Haggard then moved "the adoption of the name Christian to the exclusion of all party or sectarian names," and the motion prevailed. The several divisions of the Christians (not the Church of Alexander Campbell) in the South, West, and

his societies accorded with it; but it became a new occasion for division among them, and led to the Charlotte County defection of four of his preachers and a number of members. The original movement was confined to Virginia and North Carolina, with fragmentary adherents in the adjacent states. As the Christian Church it held well. The old Methodist doctrines were zealously preached, the means of grace observed, and there was nothing in the teaching that savored of O'Kelly's alleged Unitarianism. He circulated among them, aided by Rice Haggard, and they were accomplishing the work of Methodists under a liberal polity; but the organization was fated to suffer from the heresy allegation in an unexpected manner. Rev. Dr. John Paris of North Carolina, author of a "History of the Methodist Protestant Church," etc., and who was thoroughly acquainted with the Christian Church and its divisions, bears testimony, in 1849, "The Church in connection with Mr. O'Kelly always did and still does believe, and the ministers preach, the doctrine of a Trinity, the divinity of the Son of God, and His atonement for lost sinners, as fully and closely as any people on earth." Ten years after this date he wrote a pamphlet, "Unitarianism exposed as it exists in the 'Christian Church,'" ¹ from which the following facts are cited. Rev. Leonard Prather, the friend and pupil of O'Kelly and for many years one of their ablest and most learned preachers, says: "Some years after the organization of this [the Christian Church], a sect sprang up in New England that was strictly Unitarian, and also calling themselves the Christian Church. They published a paper called the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, edited by Elias Smith, in which they deny the divinity of Christ and ridicule the doctrine of the atonement." This paper was instituted in 1808, and, it is conceded, was the first religious paper ever published in the United States. Hearing of O'Kelly's Christian Church in the South, they sent one of their missionary preachers, by the name of Plummer, to visit them at Pine Stake, N. C., where the Conference had assembled. Why was Plummer sent? Undoubtedly because years before Lee and others had circulated the

North have been united, making to-day quite a strong denomination, with college and seminary and other appliances of a well-equipped organization. O'Kelly is buried in the cemetery attached to the Raleigh, N. C., church, and his grave designated with a suitable monument. The Church he originated is essentially Methodist in its teaching and methods to-day, though the sections West and North differ in some particulars; and the reunited body has a respectable standing and a reasonable degree of prosperity.

¹ Baltimore, Sherwood, printer. 1860. 16mo. 72 pp.

heresy charge against O'Kelly in New England, and Plummer was impressed that the southern Christian Church must be doctrinally akin to his own. Making his mission known at the Conference, O'Kelly confronted him with the direct question, "If Jesus Christ were now on earth, and you knew it were he, would you worship him?" He answered, "No; no sooner than I would you, for I do not believe he was any more divine." Mr. O'Kelly replied, "Then I have no fellowship with you." Plummer was a man of ability and insinuating address, and drew off William Guirey, author of the "Rise of Episcopacy," cited in this work, one of their ablest preachers; and the infection spread among others, and "some of the most numerous and respectable societies in Virginia." O'Kelly was now an aging man and unable to cope with the outbreak, but he and his adherents refused all fellowship with the northern Christian Church, and until long after his death there was no intercourse between them. The Christians under Plummer and Guirey established not long after a weekly paper at Suffolk, Va., which continued a feeble existence many years, called the *Christian Sun*. It was against them that Paris wrote while defending the orthodoxy of O'Kelly and his societies.

It is but fair to the preachers and people, still quite numerous in North Carolina and Virginia, to state that they have ever denied being Unitarians of the Priestley and Channing order. About 1840 a union was formed of these Christians in the North and in the South, both the Trinitarian and the Unitarian sections of O'Kelly's people (it was fourteen years after his death), and the disciples of Barton W. Stowe in the West. The platform on which they united is a broad one. "1st. Christ the only head of the Church. 2d. The name of Christian to the exclusion of all party or sectarian names. 3d. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, our only creed or confession of faith. 4th. Christian character or vital piety the true Scriptural test of fellowship or church membership. 5th. The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience the privilege and duty of all." They hold an annual convention of a representative character, and at their last meeting claimed some two hundred societies under their union. The subject need not be pursued farther. Enough has been shown completely to vindicate O'Kelly and his followers from the aspersion of heresy.¹ He was as true

¹ Bishop M'Tyeire says: "Impartial history requires us to say we find no evidence of the heresy alleged against James O'Kelly — that he was unsound on the

to the Articles of Religion and doctrinal standards of Methodism as those who traduced him; and historians of that ilk should correct their records and sin no more against his memory. The final allusion of Stevens needs correction, "Though the schism lingered, it gradually died from this period," *i.e.* the period of 1801. It is fair to admit that he knew no better, though the same sources of information were open to him if he had sought for them. With Snethen it is believed to have been premature and ill-considered, and as a secession not to be justified in the circumstances; but its author died under a full persuasion of its necessity and rightfulness. "To the latest period of his life he retained unabated confidence in the purity and power of his system. In age and feebleness his hope in the work of his hands did not desert him. He went down to the grave, according to one of his followers, satisfied with the past, and peaceful and trustful with respect to the future."¹

A few facts and reflections remain in conclusion of this subject. Asbury relates in his Journal, under date of August 20, 1802, Winchester, Va. — "Mr. O'Kelly having been taken ill in town, I sent two of our brethren, Reed and Walls, to see him, by whom I signified that if he wished to see me I would wait upon him: he desired a visit, which I made him on Monday, August 23. We met in peace, asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of former times. Perhaps this is the last interview we shall have upon the earth." The interview is alike honorable to both. They went their ways again, Asbury to survive fourteen years and O'Kelly twenty-four. It is a sad fact that Stevens, after noting this exchange of Christian courtesies, should occupy a full page in moral reflections, in which he classes O'Kelly's proceedings in the same category with the sins and frailties of David, Judas, and Peter, concluding with the Scriptural admonition, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

It has been affirmed that the liberal lay features of the seceding Church had little, if anything, to do with the circumscription to its original boundaries and, at best, its stunted growth. Rev. W. C. Lipscomb, an unimpeachable witness, testified² that it

Trinity, and hastened his secession for fear of being brought to trial. . . . The trouble was governmental, not doctrinal." "History of Methodism," p. 412.

¹ Dr. L. M. Lee's "History of Jesse Lee," p. 287.

² *Methodist Protestant*, April 2, 1859.

failed of general adoption by the Methodists for want of proper disciplinary arrangements solely. In evidence of this statement he cites his recollection of a conversation with Major Simon Sommers,¹ who was contemporary with O'Kelly and a Methodist of that early day, and, though not identified with his societies, was personally acquainted with him and knew whereof he affirmed, a large society of Republican Methodists existing in the neighborhood of his plantation, "Sommerville," where he lived and died. His opinion in effect was that if O'Kelly had rejected only such parts of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church as were deemed objectionable, and retained the remainder, he "would have swept the concern." And now, as offsetting Stevens's category of ecclesiastical sinners, the whole of this Asbury-O'Kelly contest may be crystallized in the language of Mr. Gladstone, ex-premier of England. In a recent article on "The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Modern Christian Church," speaking of the non-conformists and citing their service to both the Church and State, he observes, "There are civil cases when, though we may not be able to say the rebel is in the right, yet we can clearly see that the possessor of power, who drove him to be a rebel, is far more profoundly in the wrong."

¹ Simon Sommers, of Alexandria County, Va., was a Major in the Revolutionary War, was on the staff of General Washington, and, residing so near Mount Vernon, was socially intimate with him. He was an educated Christian gentleman who had embraced the Methodist religion, and became the head of a large and influential family of Methodists, some of whom were among the founders of the Methodist Protestant Church in that section. He was intimate with Asbury, and occasion will he had in a review of the General Conference of 1796 and the events to 1800 to note an incident in which both figured in church affairs. He was born in Fairfax County, Va., November 23, 1747, and died in Alexandria County, Va., at his homestead, "Sommerville," December, 1836.

CHAPTER XXXV

A head-roll of worthy names; itinerants of this early day who pioneered the Methodist gospel in America, with brief comments—The General Conference of 1796—Presence of Coke—Lee's narrative; the new form of church deed; other salient doings—Response to the British Conference Address—A general Fast—Proposal to elect another bishop; adroit management by Ashbury, and Coke accepted under restrictions—The instrument defining his relation—The Discipline of 1796 with Notes prepared by Ashbury and Coke—A running comment on these Notes; moulded in the interest of Episcopacy—Section on the Trial of Members considered; stringent and summary method of expulsion of Reformers of that day—Slavery, and the attitude of the Church in 1796; no comment on it in the Notes—Bishop and not "Superintendent" the term now constantly used officially—Ashbury sends copy of Discipline with Notes to Major Simon Sommers of Virginia, asking his opinion—The latter replies exhaustively in a letter now published for the first time.

BEFORE cataloguing the salient events of the General Conference of 1796, brief reference will be made to the prominent workers who successfully preached this Methodist gospel of spiritual regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, and holiness of life. The career of Benjamin Abbott has already been sketched. Whatcoat was quietly travelling; more intent upon doing good than interested in the Ashbury-O'Kelly struggle. Stevens, in his running narration of the giants of these times, recites with romantic fervor the labors of such men as Henry Smith and M'Cormick, and gives large eulogistic space to M'Kendree, every word of which is merited for zeal, abilities, and like Ashbury, ascetic habits and unflinching courage as a herald of the cross in these days of hardship, and in many cases, of literal martyrdom. Enoch George, afterward Bishop, John Easter, Hope Hull, who left an undying memory in the far South. Coleman and Simon Carlise, Stephen G. Roszel, and Joshua Wells, whose renown was in Maryland and Virginia. George Pickering, Ezekiel Cooper, John M'Claskey and Lawrence M'Comb, Morrell and Colbert in the East and North. Henry B. Bascom, the brilliant young itinerant, and who will receive large notice ere this History is concluded. The two Bowmans, with Thornton Fleming and Valentine Cook. The Emburys and Hecks in Canada. Dunham and Losee, Coleman

and Woolsey. Sylvanus Keeler and Samuel Coate, one of whose printed sermons is in possession of the writer. Wooster and Lorenzo Dow, who, after much hesitation by Asbury on account of his eccentricities, was received by the Conference of 1798, but did not long abide in the regular harness. Benjamin Bemis, and Enoch Mudge, the first native Methodist preacher of New England. Aaron Hunt, Joshua Taylor, Daniel Ostrander, Zadock Priest, Joshua Hall, and Thomas Ware, of fragrant memory among Methodists. These and others just as worthy, but whose names have no embalment except in the Minutes. These men laid the doctrinal and spiritual foundation of what the *London Quarterly Review* of nearly three decades ago denominated: "American Methodism is the most wonderful instance of Church development which the world's history has shown." The grandeur of the spectacle is marred only by its numerous divisions the world over, all of them it may be averred the direct or indirect consequence of the organized error of 1784 both in Britain and America as to its polity. This is repeated with due deference to the preponderating opinion of its advocates that ecclesiastical wisdom was about exhausted in these paternal entails of Wesley and Asbury. In the West such men as John Cooper carried on the pioneering, and with him Samuel Breese, John Akers, Moriarty, Tunnell, and Poythress. Barnabas M'Henry, William Burke, and Francis M'Cormick, the founder of Methodism in Ohio. Scott, Tiffin, and others. Stevens gives up three-fourths of his third volume to sketches of these noble men.

The General Conference of 1796. Dependence must be placed upon Lee for the most details. It met October 20, in the Light Street church, Baltimore. Asbury dismisses it in a few lines. "About a hundred preachers were assembled. . . . They agreed to a committee and then complained; upon which we dissolved ourselves. . . . No angry passions were felt among the preachers; we had a great deal of good and judicious talk. The Conference rose on Thursday, November 3: what we have done is printed. Bishop Coke was cordially received, as my friend and colleague, to be wholly for America, unless a way should be opened to France. . . . I am thankful that our session is over." October 14, six days before the Conference, he notes, "We heard by the newspapers of the arrival of Doctor Coke in the United States." The reader will not take the impression that Asbury was not expecting him. Their relations had been cordial and confidential since the General Conference of 1792, when Asbury received his

submission and restored him to favor. Lee says there were one hundred and twenty preachers present. He also states that the District conferences, on the segregating plan of Asbury, and which gave such dissatisfaction to the preachers, gave even more up to the General Conference of 1796, when the name was changed to Annual, and the number restricted by law to seven in each year.¹ It was a set-back for Asbury, but he does not refer to it, as he knew how and when to bend, under the conviction that if he did not there might be a serious break.

At this Conference also a new form of deed for holding church property was enacted, and the link forged was a solid one for Episcopal supremacy, as it formally established the dictum, "Empire follows property." It is given in full in the tenth edition of the Discipline of 1796, on pp. 172-176, a copy of which is now before the writer, printed in 1798. The gist of this new deed is in the stipulation, "For the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the ministers and preachers of said church, at their General Conferences in the United States of America; and in further trust and confidence that they shall at all times, forever hereafter, permit such ministers and preachers, belonging to said church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conferences of the ministers and people of the said Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the yearly Conferences authorized by the said General Conference, and none others, to preach and expound God's holy word therein." Then follows provision for filling vacancies in the board of trustees which place the choice practically in the preference of the minister or preacher, and under his full control, and so also as to the first choice of a board. This legal paper, copper-bottomed and steel-riveted, holds to this day, except in the case of a few large and influential churches which are held by the congregation in fact as well as form, the authorities of the Church having found it wise to connive at the departure. The true character of this deed has been discussed for nearly one hundred years, and in its proper place in the controversy of 1827-30 it will be thoroughly explored.

The *Arminian Magazine* was changed in name to the *Methodist Magazine*. The Chartered Fund of the Church was instituted for the support of superannuated preachers, their widows and orphans. Preachers on trial were not to attend Conference. Local preachers

¹ Lee's "History," pp. 194, 195.

were allowed some compensation when actively employed, and provision was made for their trial under charges. A stringent law against the use and sale of spirituous liquors was enacted. An attempt was made by the reforming party of preachers to secure the election of presiding elders by the Annual Conferences, but, as already noticed, it failed for reasons given. An Address was ordered to the British Conference in response to one brought over from it by Dr. Coke, and presented to the American Conference, which was couched in the most fraternal language, but carefully guards any recognition either of Asbury as a "Bishop," or of the Conference as "The Methodist Episcopal Church." Neither of these terms is found in it. As exposed already, the British brethren would not be compromised with the proceedings of 1784 in America, because believed by them to be utterly subversive of Wesley's intent in the mission of Coke to Asbury. It is in this American Address that the fling is made at O'Kelly and his followers already noted. It is worth the mention in passing that Dr. Coke brought with him, in 1796, as a companion, Pierre de Pontavice, a nobleman of a distinguished house in Brittany and a convert from Romanism to Methodism. Though he could not preach in the English tongue, he was cordially received and hospitably entertained. A General Fast had been ordered by the Conferences of 1795, for the first Friday in March, 1796, and a General Thanksgiving for the last Thursday of October, 1796. Lee puts the Fast on the last Friday in February, 1795, and the Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of October, 1795. He is probably in error as to the year; Bangs and Stevens are for 1796.

The two most material actions of the General Conference are yet to be noted. Asbury was in failing health, though but fifty-one years of age, and it was manifest that his labors were too onerous. By his own election he must keep himself in actual touch with every part of the Methodist machinery in America; he felt that his Primacy depended on it. It is not known whether he suggested it, or whether the Conference first moved in the matter, but it is known that a proposition was introduced and carried to elect another Bishop for the Church, to cooperate with him. Stevens says, "A discussion ensued for two days, not without some partisan feeling on the manner of his appointment." For this information he is indebted to Dr. L. M. Lee in his "Life of Jesse Lee," written many years afterward, as compiled from Lee's papers. Lee says only in his "History": "At that time it was thought proper to have another bishop elected and ordained, and

the Conference voted that it should be done during the sitting of that Conference. After the vote was taken, a difficulty arose about the manner of choosing or electing a man to be ordained a bishop." Why a difficulty, is a query arising in every thoughtful mind. Did they not have the action of the Conference of 1784, which quite a number of them had attended, and knew precisely how it was that Coke and Asbury were "elected or received" as Superintendents? Of course they had, and it revives the old question as to that muddle, never satisfactorily explained to this day. Lee continues, "and before the point was settled Dr. Coke begged that the business might be laid over until the afternoon, which was done. When we met in the afternoon, the Doctor offered himself to us, if we saw cause to take him; and promised to serve us in the best manner he could, and to be entirely at the disposal of his American brethren, and to live or die among them." Had he consulted with Asbury in the meantime? Who can doubt it. The truth of history would be helped very much if the fine work put in as to this business were known. The Conference of 1787 had cashiered him, and exacted that humiliating abdication already given to the readers. He went back to England, and suffered the displeasure of Asbury until the winter of 1791-92. The paper of abdication with his sign-manual and attested by three Conference witnesses Asbury had preserved. But times had changed. He is now restored, and is the ready instrument of Asbury's dominating will in everything. Hear Lee again: "The Conference at length agreed to the Doctor's proposal, and concluded that if the Doctor tarried with us we could do with two bishops, without ordaining a third, and the former vote for choosing another bishop was dropped. The Doctor then gave us the following instrument of writing:—

"I offer myself to my American brethren entirely at their service, all I am and have, with my talents and labors in every respect; without any mental reservation whatever to labor among them, and to assist Bishop Asbury; not to station the preachers at any time when he is present; but to exercise all the episcopal duties, when I hold a conference in his absence, and by his consent, and to visit the West Indies and France, when there is an opening, and I can be spared.

“[Signed] THOMAS COKE.

“CONFERENCE ROOM, Baltimore, October 27, 1796.”

This paper is as much of a study as that of his abdication. The brethren must have taunted him on his failure to stay after 1784, as Wesley intended, and on his restless absences from the country

ever afterward. Could they trust him if he promised to stay among them now? Was he tricky and uncertain? Else why this sentence — "without any mental reservation whatever?" There can be no doubt that seeing "the difficulty," Asbury quietly put in his velvet hand and managed it. He did not mean that another Bishop coequal with himself should be thus elected. Is there moral certainty for it? In a year it will be seen what he proposed as a substitute, and the reader can determine. The trouble with good Dr. Coke was that he was kept so busy, "running with the hounds and holding with the hare," — trying to sit on two stools, that he ever and anon fell between them.

Another important measure of the Conference was their authorization to the Bishops to issue a new Discipline with Notes. As given in the "Advertisement to the Reader," page 4, of the Discipline of 1796, it reads as follows: "The last General Conference desired the Bishops to draw up Annotations on the Form of Discipline, and to publish them with the present edition; — The Bishops have accordingly complied, and have proved or illustrated everything by quotations from the Word of God, agreeably, also, to the advice of the Conference; and they sincerely pray that their labors of love may be made a blessing to many." Dr. Coke remained in America this time until the 6th of February, 1797, when he embarked for England from Charleston, S. C., a period of about four months from the General Conference. It was during this time that the Bishops prepared the Notes. They are elaborate, and show the ecclesiastical hand of Asbury and the classical pen of Coke. They travelled together from the General Conference during these four months, and had ample opportunity to consult and make the Notes. Asbury says at Charleston, S. C., February 9, 1797, "To-morrow my dear Dr. Coke sails for Europe." And on the 10th he writes: "This day Dr. Coke is waiting to sail for Ireland. Strangers to the delicacies of Christian friendship know little or nothing of the pain of parting." Drew's date of the 6th of February, already given, must be an error quite common to him. Asbury and Coke had become again as David and Jonathan. Lee makes no mention of this Discipline with Notes.

It may be well to run through the new Discipline and examine these Notes. The copy in hand bears this title-page, which is of historical interest: "The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America with Explanatory Notes, by

Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury. The tenth edition. Philadelphia: Printed by Henry Tuckniss, Sold by John Dickins, no. 41 Market street, between Front and Second streets, and by the Methodist Ministers and Preachers throughout the United States. 1798." 12mo, 208 pp., sheep. These statements show that ten editions were sold within about a year. The preachers were diligent in circulating them, and Asbury was very proud of the Notes, and frequently sent copies to special friends and those whom he thought needed conversion from liberal views. A striking instance of his method and its result in one notable case shall be given presently. They began at the prefatory statement and remoulded it. They then added a new section on the Origin of the Church, which is a wide departure from their previous accounts in 1784 and later. It is a studied effort to show an Episcopacy derived from Wesley, and it is a mild criticism to say that the facts are wrested to make them quadrate with the theory. McCaine severely arraigned them for it, and there is no escaping the verdict just given.

The Notes to this section cover three closely printed pages in fine type. It is the arsenal from which has been furnished the arms and ammunition to the defenders of its polity to the present day. The line of the argument is that as apostolical succession as held by the high churchmen of the National Establishment in England cannot be maintained, "It follows, therefore, indubitably that every church has a right to choose, if it please, the episcopal plan." This is a truism, but the objection to its application to the Asburyan Church is that as such it did not choose it, and that it was foisted upon the preachers who organized it. The literature of the subject fills volumes for and against, but the allegation made has already been proved and submitted for the verdict of the reader. "The late reverend John Wesley recommended the *episcopal* form for the societies in America; and the general conference, which is the chief synod of the church, unanimously accepted of it. Mr. Wesley did more. He first consecrated one for the office of a bishop, that our episcopacy might descend from himself." It seems difficult to understand how these good men could bring themselves to make this unqualified record. There is no solution but to assume that, having a case to make, and believing the end justified it, they strained the facts of history. "Mr. Wesley, therefore, preferred the episcopal form of church government; and God has (glory be to his name!) wonderfully blessed it amongst us." The true question is evaded

throughout. Mr. Wesley, it is known, was an Episcopalian of the low-church school, and he avows that for "a National Church he knows no form as good," and this is not disputed. Neither is it the question, if Wesley had ordained a polity for the American societies that he would have preferred the Episcopal to the Presbyterian polity, though in the new American environment, and his instructions to the American Methodists in his letter to them, it is doubtful. The question is: Did he recommend the Episcopal form, and did he authorize the formation of an American Church under it? Facts enough have already been presented at an earlier stage of this History to demonstrate that he did not, and that Coke and Asbury knew he did not; though it was adroitly concealed from the preachers in 1784, and the catenation of adverse facts were not exhumed and made known until 1827-30 by Alexander McCaine. His statement of the facts has never been invalidated, though his style of statement was open to objection and weakened the force of his allegations, as will be exhibited in its proper order. Coke and Asbury did not fail to clinch their averments with the old-time Methodist acclamation, "glory be to His name!" and so challenged contradiction. The scripture argument for the Episcopal plan, and just such a plan as the Asburyan, is put as strongly as it can be—the learning of Coke and the shrewdness of Asbury combined upon it. They take up the Articles of Religion, and under XXII. administer a severe animadversion against the "spirit of division," in the main unexceptionable, but for its direct thrusts at O'Kelly and his friends. Next the Discipline proper is taken up, and an ingenious defence made of it. They meet the question (showing the lay agitation of that early day), "But it may be asked, Why are not delegates sent to these conferences from each of the circuits? We answer, It would utterly destroy *our itinerant plan.*" Every autocrat firmly persuades himself that without his headship there could be no union, and without such a union there could be no effective administration. It was easy for the preachers to believe it, so that it was almost universally entertained by them; there was no counter-experience to disprove it, and though the course of Methodist events has since clearly shown that the presence of lay-delegates, so far from hampering the itinerancy, has strengthened it, and they have proved themselves the most reliable upholders of the general superintendency and an itinerant ministry; so the fallacy of assertion has been overborne by the logic of events.

The Notes upon this subject occupy nearly seven pages. Imaginary opponents of an itinerant plan, like men of straw, are set up — there was no whisper of opposition among the people of that day, and the preachers were well-nigh a unit in favor — and the Bishops knock them down and then thresh the straw! Why all this labor? The true objective was the absolute headship of the Bishop, and his unlimited power in stationing the preachers. It is interesting to watch them examining every link in the chain, and forging new ones where wanted, and then they connect the ends and make it a circle of iron. Thousands of good men have gone down to their graves in the full persuasion that this method and nothing else was the moving spring of Methodist success, and much may be and must be conceded to it. It was a power for good, but as Snethen has so convincingly shown, it carried with it a corresponding power to do evil, which its advocates refused to consider, but out of which have come issues which have destroyed the unity of Methodism, an evil far outweighing the good of an arbitrary system. It is the principal contention of this History to prove the allegation true. The hortatory mood of the Bishops is something vehement for a final word, "Shall we not rather support it, notwithstanding everything which may be subtly urged by our enemies under the cry of tyranny, which is the common cry of restless spirits even against the best governments in order that they may throw everything into confusion, and then ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm." There are catch phrases here that have come down through all the Reform movements. "We recommend a careful perusal of the Causes, Evils, and Cures, of Heart and Church Divisions." It was published as a pamphlet about these times, and widely distributed. Asbury referred to it frequently in his Journal. He read it into himself until it was thoroughly assimilated. It was one of the O'Kelly antidotes and contained very good advice, only the Bishop seemed never to suspect that his methods might be among the Causes of Church Divisions.

Section VIII., under the question, "How shall a suspected member be brought to trial?" the old method is given, and then is added as an "N.B.," the new law, "If a member of our society shall be clearly convicted of endeavoring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending shall be first reprov'd by the senior minister or preacher on his circuit, and if he afterward persists in such pernicious practices, he shall be

expelled the society.” It was enacted for a specific purpose — a ready instrument for the precipitate expulsion of all reformers within the Church without regard to their moral character. It was found so effective that it has been retained in the Discipline to this day with the single amendment, “He shall be brought to trial, and if found guilty.” What! the reader exclaims, was not that the case as originally framed? It was not. It gave the preacher power after reproof to expel without formality, and it was exercised unsparingly. Its power of evil was tremendous. From 1796 down to 1812 and farther, it was held as a menace over all who might dare to sympathize actively with any who opposed the will of the preacher in any of his measures. If distractions or dissatisfactions occurred in the society even stripling preachers ended it by publicly tearing up the class book, and reinstating such as they chose. Under it presiding elders ruled with a rod of iron all refractory elements. Examples of its working will occur later in this History. Two observations of the logical and philosophical Snethen must be cited as bearing upon the subject, the one directly and the other indirectly. “This article [just canvassed], if I remember rightly, was introduced into the form of discipline after the separation of James O’Kelly; . . . it were to be wished that enactments which are predicated upon temporary and accidental circumstances might expire by their own limitation, and not be suffered to remain a dead letter in the discipline long after the occasion for them ceases.” This was written before the expulsions of 1827–30, or in August, 1821, or he would have discovered that it was not a dead letter. And now as to the impolicy of such a law, and its reflex influences, he says: “The weakest governments are not those which have the least power, but the least degree of social organization. To govern is to manage the social sympathies and energies so as to bring the greatest possible degree of general regard to bear upon the general interest. The oldest and most powerful hierarchies stand recorded upon the pages of history, and will forever stand recorded, for unparalleled corruption and depravity. For all moral and religious purposes they become utterly impotent; innocence and virtue alone groaned and bled under their iron rule.”

The agitation against the unbalanced system of the Episcopacy not only cost the wide and disastrous secession of O’Kelly; but the slow recovery of the old organization, despite the accustomed zeal and fidelity of both preachers and people, is in evidence how whole communities in which they labored were prejudiced against

a system giving birth to such expedients for the equalizing of rights and of such laws as that under review for the suppression of the Reformers. How many stood aloof from Methodism on this account is an unknown quantity, but the patriotic intelligence of the times was offended at the exercise of ecclesiastical authority by an exclusive class. The course of history in the Church is proof, however, that power is repressive, so that the reforming element was twenty years in reaching the position abandoned when O'Kelly seceded. They were put under espionage, and hampered in every way. History fairly recorded shows that the Reformers among the ministers and people persisted despite all discouragements. The moral courage required cannot be appreciated by Methodists of to-day. Hope seemed forlorn, but they did not surrender their principles. All honor to them for keeping alive the issues which have made this "History of Methodist Reform" both a possibility and a necessity. The keen-cut words of the philosophical novelist, George Eliot, are in place, "Any coward can fight when he is sure of winning, but give me the man who has pluck to fight when he is sure of losing." The brainful, liberal element of both classes in the Church saw the concrete idea of a hierarchy fastening itself with the grip of an octopus, and they resisted with Christian manliness its arrogations. But what availed counter Scripture and reasoning? For the time nothing. Principle has an inherent vitality, as the contest of a hundred years convincingly proves, but power is overmastering, and again and again prevailed. Snethen has in a few pregnant sentences crystallized the whole controversy: "Power combined with interest and inclination cannot be controlled by logic. But even power shrinks from the test of logic." It was true at this period, and in every period of Reform, but conspicuously so in the contention of 1827-30, as shall be seen. Shrinking from the reasoning, it withered with power. The answer of the Throne has ever been, I meet your reason with my resolution.

The regulations as to slavery were made more stringent, the provisions and conditions exhibiting the difference between the pronouncements of a theory and the impracticables of a condition. No Church ever spoke with so clear a voice as did the Methodist Episcopal Church on the theory, and no Church has ever been so handicapped by it as an inexorable condition. The majority of its membership always lay in the slaveholding states. The Scylla or Charybdis was always before it, and impartial history will give the verdict that it did the best thing possible at every

period and in every phase of it down to 1844. It is observable that to Section IX., on Slavery, no Notes are added, exposition and exhortation are refrained. It must also be declared how vulnerable are these Notes as to the true application of Scripture, the pertinence of examples and the conclusiveness of reasoning, — the plausibility alone is satisfying. Take an example — “The sitting apart of men and women’ was the universal practice of the primitive church. A general mixture of the sexes is obviously improper in places of divine worship: 1 Cor. xiv. 40, ‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’” What as to the fact, what as to the obviousness, and what as to the Scripture proof? The Disciplines of 1784 to 1796 (a copy of that of 1790 now before the writer) are substantially the same, and cover 256 pp., sheep, only 60 pp., however, are of the Discipline proper, the remainder consisting of essays on doctrine, while the additions and Notes made in 1796 swell the Discipline proper to 187 pp., all the essays omitted. The old Discipline did not contain the Forms for Ordination, while they are affixed to the new one after the index. The term “Superintendent” nowhere occurs in it; it is an Ordination of a Bishop, and the form is almost identical with that of the National Church of England. The inconsistency and absurdity of it remained until the hard common sense of the preachers analyzed it and enforced the changes congruous with the official deliverance of the modern Methodist Church that the bishopric is an Office simply, and not an Order. It is now a “Consecration” service, and is freed from the incongruous Churchism of Asbury and Coke.

Before closing observations on the Discipline with notes recurrence must be made to Asbury’s high estimate of it and his diligence in circulating it. Soon after it came from the press he sent a copy with his regards to one of his lay Methodist friends whom he knew to entertain liberal views of church government, Major Simon Sommers of the west end of Alexandria (near the line of Fairfax) County, Va., courting his opinion of it with apparent confidence that it was unanswerable. Major Sommers, heretofore referred to as giving the true cause in his view of the failure of O’Kelly’s movement to prevail over the Asburyan Church, answered the Bishop’s request in a letter which is made, because of its intrinsic and antiquarian importance, and despite of its length, an Appendix to this volume. No reader should fail to peruse it in full as furnishing an intellectual treat and as a fine specimen of the lay-rights arguments of that early day.

Such were some of the men who were denied all participation in the government of the Methodist Church.¹ See Appendix D.

¹ A "copy" of a letter addressed to Bishop Asbury, August 6, 1798, by Simon Sommers, a layman of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Fairfax circuit, Va., in answer to a copy of the Discipline of 1796-97 with Notes, sent to him by the Bishop as a token of friendship. He resided, after his active career in the United States Army, at his plantation, "Sommerville," about three miles from Georgetown, D. C., in Fairfax, or Alexandria County, Va. He held his membership at the old "Brick Chapel," near by his residence, and was a trustee. He withdrew from the old Church long years before the Reform controversy of 1827-30 was inaugurated, thus proving that there were not wanting intelligent laymen who discerned and protested against the arbitrary methods of the Episcopal *régime* long before that period. That their voice was stifled goes for the saying, only an opportunity like this was not allowed to pass without Christian protestation. Sommers lived to a great age, and was associated with the Reformed Methodists of 1820-36. This copy was presented to the writer by Miss Elizabeth M. Minor (whose mother was a daughter of Simon Sommers, and married Smith Minor of Fairfax County, Va.) some ten years ago. Subsequently a second copy, in a different chirography, but a transliteration of the first, was presented to the writer by the same granddaughter. This is in evidence that Sommers and his reform friends multiplied copies of it in writing for circulation. Both are in a good state of preservation. A letter from this granddaughter under date March 22, 1898, says: "Grandfather was always a strong advocate of Mutual Rights, and took the paper from its first publication. My mother told me that Bishop Asbury made my grandfather's his home when on his visiting tour from North to South, and they had many long controversies on church government, sometimes sitting until a late hour discussing the matter."

CHAPTER XXXVI

Racy extracts from Asbury's Journal on sundry subjects — His failing health and the Wilbraham annual conference; "assistant bishops" proposed; Lee in the episcopal saddle; and what came of the adroit proposal; McCaine's information — Asbury's extraordinary itinerary for a sick man — Statistics as to the O'Kelly secession; reflections on it — Sudden appearance of Dr. Coke in Virginia; how he played coy with the American and British brethren; present at the General Conference of 1800; how Asbury now began to play fast and loose with him; McCaine exposes letters throwing light on the subject — The writer's justification for exhuming these hidden facts; ignored by other Methodist historians — Coke's resolve to come no more to America unless he can be received as a coördinate Bishop — Final disappearance.

A FEW events call for notice. Asbury writes, May 21, 1795 — "This day I heard of the death of one, among my best friends in America — Judge White, of Kent County, in the state of Delaware. This news was attended with an awful shock to me. I have met with nothing like it in the death of any friend on the continent. . . . He was about sixty-five years of age." And then a quizzical note — October, 1795, in the Pitt District of Maryland — "The Africans of this town desire a church, which in temporals shall be altogether under their own direction, and ask greater privileges than the white stewards and trustees ever had a right to claim." Naughty fellows. Was not Asbury striving for the freedom of them all, and they innocently conclude that, if the sauce is good for the goose it must be good for the gander — they would like to be free Christians also! The Bishop's language leaves in doubt whether he was ready to laugh or cry. January, 1796 — "We have now a second and confirmed account that the Cokesbury college is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of about 10,000 pounds [fifty thousand dollars] in about ten years." It was ten months before the meeting of the General Conference. And now January, 1797, or two months afterward: "Serious news from Baltimore — the academy and our church in Light st., with brother Hawkins's elegant house, all destroyed by fire. The loss we sustain in the college, academy, and church, I estimate from fifteen to twenty thousand

pounds; it affected my mind." These were providences by second causes only. It was no Divine frown, for in nothing has Methodism been more blessed than in its institutions of learning, etc. It has been an unmixed good, except the churchly presumption it has engendered, and the strength it has given to its largely unamenable officialism. Built by the people's money, but controlled and owned by the Cincinnati, Ohio, Incorporation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in trust for the General Conference. But what did the O'Kellyites and the Sommersites say about it? It is a gratification that, so far as can be discovered, there are no criticisms except those indulged by Asbury and Lee themselves. Can it be believed that if the O'Kellyites had built such structures, and the destruction had followed, that the Asbury party would have been as charitable? Asbury agreed with Cowper — "God made the country and man made the town," and his notes are full of his preference for the country. Escaping out of Charleston, S. C., he says: "On my way I felt as if I were let out of prison. Hail! ye solitary pines! the jessamine, the red-bud, and dogwood! how charming in full bloom! the former a most fragrant smell." June, 1797, in Baltimore — "Thomas Barber, from Birmingham (England) took a second likeness of me, at the desire of my mother, to send to England." His health is desperately broken, yet he keeps right on, and it is simply amazing to follow his path as laid down in his Journal; he is over the whole expansive territory, from South to North, and from North to South, with incursions to the West and back again. It is doubtful whether even Paul was such a suffering traveller. But one idea possessed him: to be the prime mover of the Methodist machinery, spurred by the conviction that Methodism and the salvation of souls were synonyms. He could not consent to be chief among equals, even in the Episcopacy, until physical prostration so increased that he literally dropped in his tracks.

It has been discovered how the project at the General Conference, of electing another Bishop in view of Asbury's fast-failing health, was estopped by the accepted offer of Coke to remain in America and act as Bishop, a plan in which Asbury concurred, to forestall the election of another, though Coke remained in the country but four months afterward, embarking from Charleston, S. C., apparently without Asbury's consent,¹ so

¹ On the eve of his departure Asbury placed in his hands a letter, which McCaine in his "Letters on the Organization of the M. E. Church," page 145, gives

that for many months he was left alone. He struggled, under burning fever and dropsical symptoms, northward, to meet, if possible, the Wilbraham Conference in Massachusetts, September 19. At New Rochelle, N. Y., he utterly broke down, and wrote a letter to Jesse Lee, appointing him to preside at the Conference. The next day, however, he was again on his way, but had to return. There were some strong men now laboring in New England, Enoch Mudge, Jesse Stoneman, Philip Wager, Joseph Mitchell, Evan Rodgers, Joshua Hall, Joshua Wells, Shadrack Bostwell, Michael Coate, Peter Jayne, William Thacher, Lorenzo Dow, the last still refused admission to the Conference, and Jesse Lee, the corypheus of them all. For the hard soil of New England¹ they had met with phenomenal success. It was Asbury's opportunity to advance his own plan for Episcopal support, and in a letter to the Conference he proposed the appointment of Jesse Lee, Richard Whatcoat, and Francis Poythress as "assistant bishops." Asbury knew what he meant, and his meaning was plain enough. He was to be chief, not among equals, but among assistants. He did not consent to be chief among equals until the election, in 1800, of Whatcoat as Bishop. He was domiciled with the Sherwood family, who showed him much kindness and nursed him back to travelling health, though that was not much. On the day before the Conference at Wilbraham he writes: "I feel strength of faith and body, as if I should be raised up again. I rode for recreation, nine miles. The clouds are dispelling from my mind. . . . I wished to speak to a poor African whom I saw in a field as I went by. . . . Oh, it was going into the Egypt of South Carolina after those poor souls of Africans I have lost my health, if not my life in the end. The will of the Lord be done!" Again from his retreat, while the Conference was in session, September 23: "I received a

in full, in which he strongly reminds him of his pledge to assist him in America, made to the Conference. The following are excerpts: "My very dear friend, Dr. Coke: When I consider the solemn offer you made of yourself to the General Conference, and their free and deliberate acceptance of you as their *Episcopos*, I must view you as most assuredly bound to this branch. . . . Nothing ought to prevent your hasty return to the continent to live and die in America." He appeals also to his pride and ambition by contrasting the little island of Britain with the American continent. "I am, with great respect, your ever dear brother, Francis Asbury." Dated Charleston, February 8, 1797. A postscript is added: "I give you this to remind you, lest you should forget what you have done, and what the General Conference expects from you."

¹ Lednum assigns three reasons for the predominance of Methodism in the South—the temperament of the people, the Church of England education, and the absence of strong Calvinistic teaching. See in full, page 418.

letter from Dr. Coke; . . . it is a doubt if the Doctor cometh to America until spring, if at all until the General Conference. I am more than ever convinced of the propriety of the attempts I have made to bring forward Episcopal men: first, from the uncertain state of my health; secondly, from a regard to the union and good order of the American body, and the state of the European connection. I am sensibly assured the Americans ought to act as if they expected to lose me every day, and had no dependence on Dr. Coke; taking prudent care not to place themselves at all under the controlling influence of British Methodists." Why his apprehension of the influence of the British brethren? Was it because liberal sentiments were prevailing and liberal concessions being made, despite the reactionary efforts of Coke, Moore, Pawson, Clarke, and others who acted together? Let a better reason be assigned, if possible.

Before noticing the action of the Wilbraham Conference on the Bishop's suggestion for three Assistants, it may be well to furnish a proof that this was but a revived idea of Asbury's. As early as 1786 he proposed a tantamount arrangement to Wesley and asked his concurrence. McCaine in his "History and Mystery," p. 42, assigning reasons for the action of the Conference in expunging the name of Wesley from the minutes in 1787, gives among others the following: "A writer from whose work we make the following extract, 'in 1786, Mr. Asbury complained of the long Latin word *superintendent*, and wished it to be termed *bishop*. This was not all, but he proposed to the Rev. Mr. Wesley, Mr. T., Mr. W., and Mr. A., as three persons to be appointed bishops for the United States to act under Mr. Asbury.' Mr. Wesley's answer was to this purport, and is worthy to be engraven in characters of gold, 'During my life, there shall be no Archbishops for the Methodist Church, but send me the man of your choice, and I shall have him appointed *joint superintendent* with you. Mr. Asbury objected to either of these men proposed as joint superintendents with him; but desired Mr. Wesley to send a man of his choice, and he would receive him.'" The history is that subsequently Mr. Wesley called through Dr. Coke a special General Conference for America, and named Richard Whatcoat as a Superintendent. The result has already been traversed. After the practice of Methodist writers of the period as to so much that was done in secret, and written, if at all, in initials, you are left by this writer to guess who the three were. Examining the minutes of that period, and of the eligible elders whose reputation

would make them a likely choice with Asbury, Mr. T. was John Tunnell; Mr. W., Richard Whatcoat; and Mr. A., Beverly Allen. Of these, ten years later, 1797, Tunnell was dead and Allen had withdrawn. Comparing the facts given with the recommendation he made to the Wilbraham brethren, and it is clear that Asbury no more than Wesley would permit "a rival near his throne." The Father of Methodism may have overreached a little in construing Asbury's sub-bishops as named into an ambition to be an Arch-bishop, though the squinting in that direction is sufficiently pronounced; but it establishes the moral certainty before premised that Asbury alone would be the Bishop during his life of the American preachers and people. The names he proposed were judiciously chosen: Lee for the Northeast, Whatcoat for the East, and Poythress for the Southwest; each swayed a commanding influence in his section.

Conjecture is legitimate as to what he would have further done had the Wilbraham brethren approved his plan. He would have carried it, armed with their action as a precedent, to all the other six Conferences, and winning them to it, it is an open question whether he would have ventured to "set them apart," or held them over to the General Conference of 1800. As neither Asbury, Lee, nor Bangs makes any allusion to this episode in the proceedings, Stevens must be accepted as to the result and the reason for it, and he depends upon Dr. L. M. Lee's "Memoirs" for what he asserts, "The Conference declined the proposition as being incompatible with the requirements of the discipline." No one knew the requirements of the Discipline better than Asbury, so that this conclusion of the brethren was either an easy evasion of his wish, or they misunderstood him to appoint Bishops when nothing was further from his purpose. Lee's account is simply the following: "The Conference at Wilbraham made choice of me to preside in that meeting and to station the preachers. The business was conducted to the satisfaction of the preachers, and peace and love dwelt among us. At the close of the Conference the preachers gave me a certificate, signifying their approbation of the proposed plan for me to travel with the Bishop, and to fill up his appointments when he could not be present." Asbury in his letter to Lee urged him to travel with him, "He said he had made it a matter of prayer, and there was no one who would do to travel with him, or to take his appointments but myself." Not a word about the assistant bishops. October 26, a month after the Conference, he was again in the saddle and he

records, "This day Joshua Wells returned from Wilbraham conference. Matters were conducted well." He did not offer his plan at any other Conference. It did not fall in with the humor of the preachers, and to press it might prove another cause of serious contention, so he dropped it.

Lee and Wells accompanied him to the South, then Whatcoat joined Lee, and Wells returned, and together the first two went on with him as far as Charleston, S. C., and in accordance with the new order of the previous year of beginning the Conferences from the South northward, so as to secure better weather for Asbury. Before another year he is back in Massachusetts. Think of it, twice the length of the continent mostly horseback, for a sick man within a year. Lee attended the Charleston Conference for him; Asbury was afraid of the malaria, and says, "I believed that going to Charleston this season would end my life." The blessed work of soul-saving after the Methodist fashion was again going on. Lee says that at the close of 1797 there had been a net gain of 1999 members, the first gains reported for five years, and this small outcome is in proof how deeply the O'Kelly secession and its causes had shaken the very foundations, and how widely it had affected the public mind against the arbitrary system of Asbury, so that new converts and thoughtful people stood aloof from the Church. This will read like a novel explanation to those who have found no hint of it in other histories of these times, but every current fact vouches for its truth.

During Asbury's enforced brief seasons of rest, he engaged himself in revising his Journal. This year Alexander McCaine, who will figure so largely and notably in this History thirty years later, and who was the O'Kelly of the new Reform, was received on "trial" with thirty-eight others. Honored names occur in the roster of the Conference, and the Eldership was particularly strong. Among those admitted in 1798 are Lorenzo Dow, heretofore noticed; Truman Bishop, one of the purest men of his day, and a Reformer of 1827-29, against whom calumny never raised its voice, though he set his face like a flint against the persecuting spirit and practice of his quondam brethren; and Billy Hibbard, whose eccentricities and usefulness were excelled only by Dow's. Nicholas Snethen had joined the Conference in 1794 and rapidly forged his way to the front as a young man. He had great versatility of talent, a voice of wonderful timbre and penetration, education above his peers, deep spirituality, and developed a mind more philosophical and logically prescient than any other man

ever produced by early Methodism. The minutes of 1798 give nearly three pages, an extraordinary length, to an obituary of John Dickins, who died September 22, but of whom enough has been already said in this History.

Comparison of statistics as to membership from 1792 to 1796, the period of the O'Kelly agitation and secession, is very uncertain if the printed minutes are followed, for notable errors occur in the summing up. A glaring one is found in the minutes of 1791, of thirteen thousand in the white membership.¹ It ought to have been easy of detection by comparing those of 1790 with those of 1792, but it is carried over from the edition of Dickins in 1795 to those of 1813 without correction. And for this period a cursory reader of these minutes could not detect any declension of numbers from 1792 to 1796, yet Jesse Lee, who next to Asbury was in closest touch with the whole work, declares, after giving the aggregates according to states which are found to be perfectly accurate compared with the same in the Minutes, except that he counts white and colored together, making for 1796, 56,664, that, "We lost in numbers for this year (1796) 2627 members. We have been going back, and our numbers decreasing for three years past, in which time we have lost 10,979 members in number. The declension was mostly in the middle states, and especially where the divisive spirit most prevailed." Methodist historians do not cite these figures of Lee's, but, by citing the not unfrequently erroneous numbers from the printed minutes, minify the decrease largely. Lee, and in this he is followed by others, gives the O'Kelly secession as the prime cause; the occasion of it, and the principal fact is not revealed: the arrogation of ecclesiastical power by Asbury and his coadjutors. The one phenomenal fact about it is that the ministry during this period continued to increase in a way altogether incommensurate with the loss of members. Taking the minutes, as Lee does not furnish the data here, the preachers were, in 1791, 250, and in 1796, 293, an increase of nearly one-sixth, while the membership declined about one-fifth. It is a curious study, and there is no way of accounting for the strange contrasts but on the human theory that the environment attracted rule-loving men into the ministry, but repelled liberty-loving Christians from the membership, a heavy percentage by actual loss and a heavier one by standing aloof from the organization.

¹ The unfair part this error is made to play in the Emory-McCaine disputation in 1827 will be noted in its connection.

Asbury had for his travelling companions during these years up to the General Conferences of 1800-04, Lee, Whatcoat, Snethen, Hutchinson, or McCaine. Allusion has been made to that immense circuit of the continent after the Wilbraham Conference with Lee as companion. He had about given up seeing Coke return, but this ecclesiastical magician thought nothing of taking ship from Europe or America and crossing the ocean, with a sudden appearance among his friends like an apparition. While Asbury and Lee were returning northward from Charleston in November, 1797, they stopped for a night with John Ellis, who lived ten miles from Bellamy's chapel in Virginia. Asbury records, "We rose early to go on our way, and behold who should meet us but Bishop Coke with a borrowed horse, and a large white boy riding behind him on the same horse!" He had come to America by way of Charleston without notice, and remained about six months travelling and preaching, but he kept no journal of it. You must look beneath the surface to find the method and meaning of these alternations between England and America. His abilities were freely recognized on both sides the ocean, while his liberality and zealous labors were without stint. Asbury wanted him and the British brethren wanted him — he was their missionary propagandist. It would be interesting to traverse all the negotiations carried on over him, and which Coke stimulated and prolonged by playing coy — a sort of hide-and-seek between his brethren — but space forbids indulgence. Coke was politic enough to keep both parties bidding for him. When in America his letters to England intimated that he would never be back. When in England his letters to America intimated that he would remain at home. The abundant direct and collateral evidence is that the one overmastering weakness of Dr. Coke was his ambition to be an ecclesiastic coequal with Wesley or Asbury. Deeply pious, consecrated, gifted, versatile, his heart took in the world in its love of souls, but, running parallel with all his endeavors, and the spring of much of his unwonted activity, was this aspiration which he would not let die.

It seems opportune to exhaust this phase of his character before dismissing him finally from these pages. Drew, his biographer, has summed it up with a charitable pen as to his benefactor. "The general conference, after viewing with due deliberation the peculiar ground on which he stood, and weighing the solicitation which the English conference had made for his return, instead of enforcing those claims which his promise had

enabled them to urge, manifested a willingness to follow the example which the preceding letter (Asbury's from the Virginia Conference to the British brethren) had set before them. They were willing to suspend their demands, but not to renounce their rights. The utmost, therefore, to which they would submit was, that Dr. Coke should remain in England and act under the direction of the British conference so long as his presence in America was not essentially necessary. But in case they thought it needful to call him to the continent, his promise was still to be considered obligatory, and he was to obey the summons. Such was the final determination of the general conference, and in this state of uncanceled suspension his promise remained until his eyes were closed in death."¹ Coke remained in England after the last visit to America already noted until his return at Asbury's solicitation to attend the General Conference in May, 1800, in Baltimore.

One difference between him and Asbury was that the latter was a crowned authority over his brethren and dictated accordingly, while the former exercised the authority without being crowned. He could not help meddling. An instance was his unauthorized correspondence with the Bishop of London on March 29, 1799, proposing a union of the Wesleyan Societies with the Church of England. It was repelled by the Bishop, and Coke was scarified for it by the Conference. At the General Conference of 1800 he was a welcome guest and participant. Asbury showed him every deference consistent with his own grasp of the keys. He preached the ordination sermon, and was otherwise honored. Asbury says "two days were spent in considering about Doctor Coke's return to Europe." He makes no further mention of him for this visit to America. It will be inferentially seen presently that the cordiality between them was again shadowed. The final answer of the Conference to the British brethren for Dr. Coke's services Drew gives in full—the gist of it is: "We have, therefore, in compliance with your request, *lent* the doctor to you for a season, to return to us as soon as he conveniently can, but at the farthest by the meeting of our next General Conference." Signed, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat.

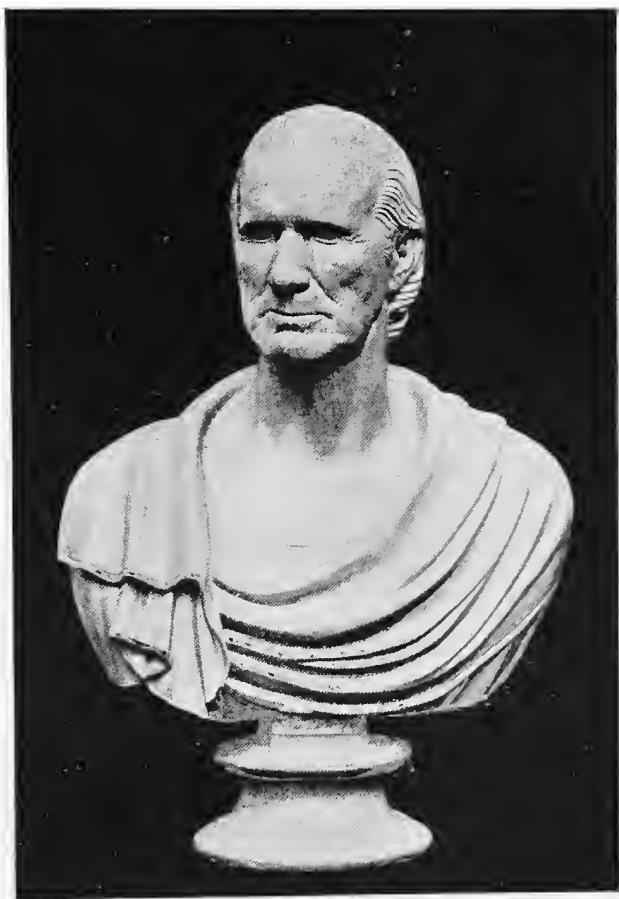
Somehow they had reached the conclusion that they could spare him for four years. Coke observed it all, and he made a hasty retreat to the West Indies on his missionary work for the Wes-

¹ "Life of Rev. Dr. Coke," p. 282. No other title given him in England.

leyan Conference. He returned to England and established the Welsh missions, and was unremitting in labors until the autumn of 1803, when he again visited America. It was unsolicited and apparently unexpected. Asbury says, December 26, 1803: "To my surprise I find Bishop Coke is in Augusta [Ga.] before me. I have received letters of consequence from the North." Coke had also his American correspondents. There were ambitious schemers, plotters, and counter-plotters among the leaders, and the bishopric was the shuttlecock these battledores kept whizzing in the air. In fact, Asbury had ceased to have personal use for Bishop Coke. Whatcoat had been named coadjutor, and he had other travelling companions. He must make some disposition of Bishop Coke. "I gave Bishop Coke a plan for a journey as far as Boston, before the General Conference." It was sent to him in a letter, Drew says, under date of November 23, 1803, and addressed to him at Light Street church, Baltimore, and points out a track of nearly five thousand miles in length, a tour which would take him about nine months to accomplish. As the date of this letter was a month before Asbury found him with surprise in Augusta, Ga., before him, he must have known of Coke's coming and waylaid him with this letter. Drew says, "Whether he acceded to the proposal is to the writer of these pages very uncertain." Alexander McCaine says of Coke's trip from Baltimore to Augusta: "The writer was fleeing by the advice of his physicians, from the rigors of a northern winter to the South, where he fell in with Dr. Coke and travelled with him to Augusta." He was a member of the General Conference the ensuing May, in Baltimore, and makes this significant mention: "And he is no less certain that he was applied to, by one in authority, in a matter relating to Dr. Coke, which no man living knows but himself; but as he has no document to prove the fact, the secret shall go down with him to the grave."¹

Asbury and McCaine were bosom friends; it shall be duly proved that no man in the connection had more of his confidence and affection. And while there can be little doubt that the "matter relating to Dr. Coke" was one of the esoteric schemes of the bishopric, the writer will not attempt to surmise it, in the face of this conspicuous instance of McCaine's honor. As Coke left no Journal of this his last visit to America, and as Asbury makes no farther mention of him in his Journal from November, 1803, to May, 1804, it is impossible to trace Dr. Coke through

¹ "Letters on M. E. Church," 1850, p. 151.



ALEXANDER MCCAINE.

Cast taken about 1835.

these nine months. All that is known leads to the conclusion that he did not follow Asbury's letter of instruction, but responded to invitations for his services in any direction, and it would be unlike him if he did not keep himself in close touch with all of Asbury's malcontents. He makes no mention of Coke in his brief lines upon the General Conference of 1804, nor does he name him again until March, 1806. Is there a reason for it? Do not look for it in the writings of Methodist Episcopal historians — they are silent as the grave. Why not be silent also? Because of the repeated asseveration by their apologists, notably Dr. John Emory, that "the greatest harmony, union, and affection" subsisted between these brethren through life. If true, then Methodist Reformers have defamed them and should be gibbeted in history. If not true, then are their averments vindicated, and their smooth-tongued accusers should be historically hung; the gallows built for Mordecai must be used for Haman.

If abundant evidence has not already been offered in their vindication, the following as a cap-sheaf is presented in proof likewise of the endearing relations existing between Asbury and Alexander McCaine. The latter furnishes from their correspondence, "a few extracts from letters in our possession that have never seen the light" (1850). Extracts from Asbury's private letters to McCaine, their use justified by the calumnies heaped upon him by Emory, Bond, and others: "I have no correspondent in England. I should be afraid of committing myself. In compliance with my character I answer all letters." (An aside by the writer: then Coke's complaint in September, 1791, shows more glaringly than ever how Asbury repelled and resented Coke's conduct in the Bishop White business.) "I cannot say but Dr. Coke will use policy to attach the British connection to him" (just as the writer heretofore has asserted he did). "Some have thought that he only wished to get off from his engagements to the Americans, and never would visit the continent again. But I should not wonder if he should be upon the continent in less than a year. And I know not how soon death may put me out of his way. Some are bold to say I am the only person in his way. . . . Perhaps the Doctor's letter transpiring may not be so displeasing. The British must know he pledged himself in a most solemn manner" (McCaine here parenthesizes, and it shows his conscientious care in quoting) — "[the word manner it is presumed was intended to have been written, but it is not in the original] — to the Americans — this the conferences remind him of, and tell

him he has changed his ground. . . . All establishments—all collegiate qualifications for the ministry must be done away. God is able to make prophets and apostles out of fishermen, ploughmen, or carpenters and tent-makers, as ever he was. F. ASBURY." McCaine then remarks, "There is no date to this letter; but it is received and labelled 'August 30, 1804.'" He adds: "In another letter which now lies before me, dated December 27, 1806, Mr. Asbury says: 'I wonder exceedingly why the British connection should be so agitated with Dr. Coke about his letter to us. They seem like bees, and all heads! But had the Doctor only written his letter to me, I would have handed it to every conference at his desire. *Yea, if it had been an impeachment of my own person.* . . . I do not correspond with any as I do with you. Only look well to your soul; to be holy is to be happy. Farewell in the Lord. Amen.'" Once more McCaine says: "In a Postscript of another letter, dated April 24, 1808, Mr. Asbury says: 'I have been grieved in former times with some little misunderstandings between the American connection; I now wish to guard against anything that might make discord between us and the British connection through Dr. Coke. We should all be pious, prudent, and pure, and entertain high and honorable thoughts of each other. . . . I leave you to make a prudent use of what I have written. I am yours as ever in Jesus. FRANCIS ASBURY.'" ¹

The reader having looked on that picture, now let him look on this; and while it allows Dr. Coke to speak for himself touching some of these very things, it supplies the cue to the whole of the negotiations of the Doctor with the American and the British Conference respectively during these years. The following are extracts from two letters Dr. Coke wrote to McCaine, and which the latter gives in full in his "Letters," 1850. He knew the intimacy of McCaine with Asbury and his trustworthiness. The first was written from "Truro, Cornwall, Eng., Jan. 10, 1806," and runs in part:—"MY VERY DEAR BROTHER: I wrote to you by the last packet, a letter for the Baltimore Annual Conference, in conference assembled, in answer to their official letter sent to you by me." He requests several paragraphs to be added to that letter so that it may quadruplicate with duplicates sent to Cooper and Wilson, and gives a reason for it. He begs McCaine to write him immediately as to the sentiments of the Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York brethren as to his return, etc. Signed, THOMAS COKE.

¹ McCaine's "Letters," 8vo, 1850, pp. 152, 153.

McCaine supplies the letter to the Baltimore Conference referred to, the gist of which is, his willingness to "come over to you on this ground—to assist in preserving the union of the body. To preserve that union I would think my life well spent, or well sacrificed, but I want you to indulge me with some explanation, with respect to myself and my sphere of action, if I come over." (An aside by the writer; he wishes to draw from them whether, if he come, the conferences will receive him as a coequal with Asbury as a Bishop. Unless this is made clear to him, though he appreciates the honor of preaching in all the American pulpits), "I could not, as the servant of Christ, sacrifice any considerable influence in Europe, when considered in all its parts, for a sphere of usefulness comparatively so small. . . . I have received letters from New England and Western conferences; but I shall not be able to hear from them again before the British conference." [This paragraph as a postscript.] THOMAS COKE." McCaine gives the second letter referred to, and says: "The next year I received from Dr. Coke the following letter:—

"TAUNTON, SOMERSETSHIRE, Feb. 2, 1807.

"MY DEAR BROTHER: Some time ago I sent you a long letter addressed to the Baltimore Annual Conference, and after that a short letter which I wished to be added to the former letter. But I request you to add the following to the first letter, instead of adding the first letter to it.' (An aside by the writer: why these changes? He fluctuated as variant information reached him as to the temper of the American preachers, and he trimmed accordingly. This is what he now wishes added, in excerpts, though McCaine gives the full letter): 'Perhaps, dear respected brethren, you will now ask—why did you offer yourself to us? I answer—it was your unanimous vote at the General Conference, that the Episcopacy wanted to be strengthened. I had been consecrated by our venerable Father in the Gospel, the late Mr. Wesley, a Bishop, particularly for America. I had been the means of establishing your present form of Church government, which in a general view (though it may admit of improvements) I prefer to any other. . . .' Changing the phraseology of the former letter, he next pursues the same thought about the union and his desire to promote it and the extent of the American territory, etc., but now for the gist of this epistle. . . . 'I cannot come to you as a *mere* preacher. . . . Am I to come to you in any sense as a bishop, and in what sense? I don't want to act, if I come, but in perfect subordination to the General Conference, but yet still as a Bishop, and having a right to give my judgment in all episcopal matters, unless I render myself unworthy of the office. Do write me as soon as you have considered this letter. Send me duplicates, etc. In this case I believe I shall hear from you before the next British Conference, which I particularly desire to do, etc.

"T. COKE.'"¹

¹ McCaine's "Letters," 8vo, pp. 154, 155. 1850.

There is no mistaking his meaning now: "I cannot come to you as a *mere* preacher," the italic is his own. Resolve that you will receive me as the coequal of Asbury and as I came to you from Mr. Wesley, and I will finally break away from England and spend my days among you. Asbury, as is seen from his letters to McCaine, anticipated his purpose, and held him under deserved suspicion. The scheming and counter-scheming among the leaders reached a height from 1800 to 1808 never before attained. There were a number of aspirants to the Episcopacy, and the factions kept themselves in correspondence with Coke, while they were secretly united in deprecating his return in the capacity he wished, and so matters continued until the General Conference of 1808. Coke kept himself busy with his missionary plans in Europe, but did not venture to return to America. The Bishop White letter had been published, as found in 1807, and brought upon his head severe criticisms. It is doubtful if his letter to the Baltimore Annual Conference intrusted to McCaine, Cooper, and Wilson, was ever officially presented. He was evidently kept well informed of the course of events by his friends in America, so that as the Conference of 1808 approached he exercises his diplomacy by inditing a long and carefully worded letter to it, which can be found in full in Bangs's "History," Vol. II. pp. 207-210, in which he traverses the American Conferences from 1784 downward, devoting the body of the letter to an apology and explanation of the Bishop White letter which is ingenious and by his friends esteemed ingenuous. The Conference carefully considered it, and with quite as much diplomacy made answer in substance, that they would retain his name among the Bishops, but he was relieved of any further service in America unless "recalled by the General Conference or the unanimous request of all the annual Conferences." A fraternal address was also received from the British Conference covering the same subject and this was also answered with many kindly phrases but to the same purport. All these may be found in full in Bangs's "History," Vol. II.

Alas for the discrowned hero. Lee makes no mention of his name after 1803. Bangs dismisses him from his pages after 1808, and Stevens also. After 1804, Asbury makes fitful mention of him. March, 1806, he says: "An answer was given to Dr. Coke's letter, I fear in a manner that will not please him. An order was passed that the answer should be presented to all the annual conferences." It was done accordingly, and he makes several

notes of it in Philadelphia and New York. August, 1806, in Virginia — “Report says that a copy of Dr. Coke’s letter was taken by stealth: the British are irritated, and the Americans are not pleased.” A glint this of Methodist Episcopal esoterics. November, 1806 — “I wrote a letter to Dr. Coke giving a general statement of the work of God upon our continent.” It is the last mention until June, 1815 — “By vote of conference I preached the funeral sermon of Dr. Coke — of blessed mind and soul — of the third branch of Oxonian Methodists — a gentleman, and a scholar, and a bishop to us — and as a minister of Christ in zeal, in labors, and in services, the greatest man in the last century.” It was less than a year to his own death. His memory is mellow and his words are eulogistically true. And such words are fitting with which to dismiss him from these pages, deferring to the verdict of the readers that if the singular foible of his character has been clearly exhibited as set over against his virtues, it is because this History is set for the defence of Methodist Reformers and their allegations of Dr. Coke as a part thereof. It is a background for the unavoidable recurrence to him in the controversy of 1827–30, and is so far anticipatory that the true likeness of him shall need but finishing touches of the author’s historical brush. Attention must now be recalled to the General Conference of 1800.

CHAPTER XXXVII

The General Conference of 1800 — Asbury's resignations; comments of Lee and Suthen — A new Bishop again proposed; the contest between Lee and Whatcoat, and the close election of the latter — A plan for the support of the Bishops — Preachers' salaries — The presiding eldership question brought forward; Reformers still working at it — Coke and Wells attempt to limit the powers of the Episcopacy, but failed — The quadrennium of 1800-04 the most remarkable for revivals; camp-meetings introduced; statistics — McCaine, Suthen, and M'Kendree, travelling companions to Ashury; and his comment on his Episcopal power — The General Conference of 1804 — Suthen and a delegated Conference — Restless Reformers and the sticklers for old forms clash — Two Disciplines issued, one for the South, omitting the stringent regulations on slavery, and one for the North including them — Death of Whatcoat — Abortive Convention called; defeated by Lee.

THE manuscript Journal of the General Conference of 1800 contains no list of members, but as all the deacons and elders were entitled to membership, the printed minutes of that year furnish the list, except absentees. It met in Baltimore at the new Light Street church. This city was the cradle of Methodism, and all the previous General Conferences, as well as a number after 1800, met here. Asbury gives but fifteen lines to it, and some of these have already been cited. He says there were 116 members present. It held from the 6th to the 20th of May. The salient events were few but material. From the defeat of Asbury's assistant bishop plan of 1797, he struggled along in declining health, and the chroniclers say seriously meditated resigning his Bishopric. He virtually did so at this Conference. It is not meant to impeach his integrity and sincerity when the statement is made that he did it with a salvo. Lee gives us a candid account of it, and this is probably among the things Asbury excepted to ten years after in Lee's "History." Boehm was with him when he read the first copy that came into his hands, and he says, "it made the Bishop nervous." His own record of it is: "It is better than I expected. He has not always presented me under the most honorable aspect. We are all liable to mistakes, and I am unmoved by his." Lee, after

stating that Asbury had written to a number of the leading preachers during 1799 intimating his resignation, declares that he had it actually written for presentation. It came up as the first business of the Conference, and the body resolved: "This Conference do earnestly entreat Mr. Asbury for a continuation of his services as one of the general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as far as his strength will permit." It is noteworthy that he is addressed as Mr. Asbury and as a general superintendent. Asbury's salvo is revealed by Lee: "Mr. Asbury told the conference that he was still feeble both in body and mind, but was much better than he had been for some time before; and, notwithstanding he had been inclined to resign his office, he was now willing to do anything he could to serve the connection, and that the conference might require of him." Nicholas Snethen was a member of this Conference and of subsequent ones, and witnessed other feints of resignation by the Bishop, resulting in virtual reëlections by the Conference. Sincerely as he loved and honored him, as these pages witness, these tentations led him to write in 1822: "When Mr. Asbury used to contrive to get the votes of the General Conferences to request him to continue to serve the connection other four years, that circumstance first set us to thinking whether it would be lawful, or expedient, to have an actual reëlection of bishops, or choose them only for a term of years; and the strongest objection to such a plan seemed to us, like to the divine right of kings, viz.; they are the Lord's anointed, and so we left it."

Asbury did not bring forward his assistant bishop plan; the preachers had canvassed it in the Annual Conferences and over-slaughed the Bishop's views. But it was evident that he must have episcopal coöperation. The question was squarely met by the Conference: "What farther help will this Conference afford him? *A.* Another bishop shall be elected and consecrated. *Q.* In what manner shall the votes for the election of a bishop be taken? *A.* By ballot." The impression was, Stevens says, that Lee was Asbury's choice, judging from his Wilbraham letter and other considerations, and he had a large following among the preachers. But they had had a taste of his administration since 1797, as Asbury's companion and substitute, and all the liberals combined against him. Moreover, it presented an opportunity of recalcitrants in the matter of Whatcoat's rejection in 1787, and the dissidents to the "rough usage" of Wesley, as Coke puts it, at the same Conference, to show their hands. Lee again

lifts the veil: "There was then a lengthy debate respecting the powers the new bishop should possess. Some were of opinion that he ought to act under the direction of the old bishop, and be governed by him; but it was finally determined that they should be on an equal footing and be joint superintendents." It was the expiring effort of Asbury's close friends to save for him the Primacy. The pseudo-archbishopric had been scotched; now it was killed. Lee concludes: "The conference then proceeded to vote for a bishop; on the first balloting no one had a majority. They balloted a second time, and the tellers reported that there was a tie between Richard Whatcoat and Jesse Lee. They proceeded to a third ballot, when Richard Whatcoat was declared to be duly elected by a majority of four votes." He was now sixty-four years of age, and, in view of the past, there seemed to be a poetic justice in his selection. To what extent it entered into the merits of the canvass, no one can tell. For sixteen years he bore among the brethren an unimpeachable character, while his self-poise and piety, his unoffending and meek attitude, made him a safe man for the emergency. Asbury silently acquiesced in the decision. On the 18th of May, he was ordained by Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury and some of the elders. Among other items of business, the preachers' salaries were raised from \$64 to \$80 and their travelling expenses, the same for the wives, and \$14 for each child under seven, and \$24 for each one under fourteen. Provision was made for building parsonages. Lee also says: "There was a small alteration made in the rule for trying our members; and the private members in future were to judge whether the accused person was guilty or not of the crime charged upon him." This concession was made probably under pressure from such protesting laymen as Simon Sommers as a type, and the regulations as to this point among the Republican Methodists.

Seven Annual Conferences were now established by law, and the important financial scheme for the support of the bishops— "Let each annual Conference pay its proportionate part towards the allowance of the bishops." Lee says, "This was the first time that a regular plan was laid for the support of the bishops; formerly the bishop received the greater part of his support from private friends, and the deficiency was generally made up by particular societies." This plan in after years lapsed, and the bishops were paid out of the profits of the Book Concern, despite the provision of its charter that such surplus was to be equally divided

among the Conferences for the support of superannuated preachers, their widows and orphans. This continued to be the rule for many years, until finally the illegality of it was pointed out, and the assessment plan upon the Conferences reënacted. It is one among the curious but significant violations of law winked at to render the Episcopacy more independent. Preachers were allowed from this Conference to receive presents, etc., without accounting for them as salary. Also, "No preacher shall have a right to sit as a member in the next General Conference, unless he is in full connection and has been a travelling preacher four years." Formerly the deacons were members, and under it Alexander McCaine and others were members of the Conference of 1800. A rule was made for the ordination of colored preachers as deacons; but Lee says in 1810 that it was never printed, and so unknown to most of the preachers. Under it Asbury had ordained Richard Allen of Philadelphia, who subsequently seceded and originated the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and gave much trouble to the parent white body. It was not published, just as two editions of the Discipline were published,—one, omitting the stringent regulations anent slavery, for circulation among the southern people, another of the curious moral obliquities of Episcopal legislation.

Stevens furnishes some other items. Nicholas Snethen was Secretary of the Conference, and it voted to allow Asbury a travelling companion, and from his Journal it is learned that he selected Snethen. Stevens also records: "On the second day a motion was introduced to authorize the Annual Conferences to elect their presiding elders. It was defeated, but was the beginning of a controversy which prevailed for years in the Conference, and throughout the Church." He either did not know or forgot to mention that it was introduced in 1796, and, as will be found, bobbed up every time until 1820, when it was carried by a two-thirds vote, and stifled by the Bishops. It was the sign of that unresting minority from 1792, who bravely held out for a more liberal Episcopacy. There was quite a thick sprinkling of them, and Stevens further enlightens the Church in things "which have hitherto been unnoticed by the historians of the Church." He must be honored as the first of the class who uncovered suppressed facts, and opened the way for tardy justice to noble men. William Ormond was of the number, who appears to have been the noblest "radical" of the body, and tried to secure the ordination of local preachers as elders several times during the session,

but failed. The minutes of 1804 say that he fell a martyr to his work during the yellow fever at Norfolk in 1803; that "he had a high sense of the rights of men," and died triumphantly. A motion to reorganize the Conference as a delegated body failed by a large majority. Coke attempted, without success, to obtain a rule by which the new Bishop, in the absence of Asbury, should be required to read his appointments of preachers in the Annual Conferences; "to hear what the Conference may have to say on each station, in accordance with the English example." It was a piece of invidious legislation and deserved to be defeated on that score, though right in principle. Then Joshua Wells tried to hamper the new Bishop by "a motion to provide a committee of three or four elders to be chosen by each Annual Conference, to aid the new Bishop in making the appointments." It was twice renewed by other members, but lost. Various efforts were made to make the rule on slavery still more stringent. Light Street church, and specially Old Town, on Fell's Point, were in a blaze of revival during the Conference, and about one hundred conversions were reported. Henry Boehm, who was a visitor, gives quite a full account of the work in his "Reminiscences." Many meetings were held in private houses and most of the conversions so occurred. The ensuing General Conference was ordered for Baltimore, May 6, 1804.

The coming quadrennium was the most remarkable in the history of the Church for its extensive revivals. Lee gives up twenty-four pages of his concise "History" to a description of the wonderful work, which was not confined to any location or state. Camp-meetings were introduced into Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland, from the West, and afterward spread into most of the Middle States. They continued from three to ten days, and were attended by thousands, some of the campers coming for many miles.¹ The revival swept through whole towns. For the year 1800-01 the minutes report a gain of 7980 members. For 1802-03, a gain of 13,860. For 1803-04, 17,336, the largest

¹ One was held at Cobbin Creek in Kentucky, which many Presbyterians attended (this afterward led to the expulsion of a number of their ministers for holding such meetings and begat the Cumberland Presbyterian Church), and it was estimated that twenty thousand people were in attendance, and thousands fell as though stricken down as Paul was, and the whole state was quickened in religion. Another on Desher's Creek, near the Cumberland River, of which it is said, "The people fell under the power of the word like corn before a storm of wind." Among them Grenade, who had a remarkable conversion, became a leader of Methodism in all that section, and revival hymns, composed and sung by him, were familiar everywhere.

number ever received in one year. The total membership in the seven Conferences was 104,700, of whom 22,453 were blacks. Fifty young preachers were admitted on trial. Sixty remained on trial. Forty-six were received into full connection. There were 87 deacons and 204 elders. At the close of 1799 Lee took a census of the local preachers as far as he found it possible, and they numbered 850. It is safe to assume, in the absence of actual statistics, that up to 1804 they numbered a round one thousand. A considerable percentage of these were of those who located from the regular work.

Bishop Asbury's Journal of his itinerary from the General Conference of 1800 to that of 1804 calls for few references not already made in accord with the plan of this History. There are frequent mentions of his travelling companions and assistants, Alexander McCaine, Nicholas Snethen, William M'Kendree, whose splendid physique and intellectual strength made him a marked character among his brethren, and he became a leader of the itinerants of the West and South after the mental disability of Poythress. Whatcoat was much with him, and Hope Hull and John Watson are named as rendering faithful service. He notes affectionately the death of his mother, January 6, 1802, the father having preceded her. Hutchinson accompanied Whatcoat, whose health was feeble, as did also Asbury at times. In 1803 Asbury is occupied enough with the Reform sentiment among the preachers and people, which the Notes on the Discipline, the wide circulation of "The Cause and Cure of Heart and Church Divisions," and the negative action of the last General Conference on all liberal movements, could not extirpate, to make a paragraph on it to which space is here given that impartiality may be observed and his point of view exhibited. "I will make a few observations upon the ignorance of foolish men who will rail against our church government. The Methodists acknowledge no superiority but what is founded on seniority, election, and long and faithful service. For myself I pity those who cannot distinguish between a pope of Rome, and an old wornout man of sixty years, who has the *power given him* [his own italics] of riding five thousand miles a year, at a salary of eighty dollars, through summer's heat and winter's cold, travelling in all weather, preaching in all places, his best covering from rain often but a blanket; the surest sharpener of his wit, hunger — from fasts, voluntary and involuntary; his best fare for six months of the year, coarse kindness; and his best reward

from too many, suspicion, envy, and murmurings all the year round."

The General Conference of 1804, May 6, at Light Street church. Lee says there were 111 present, not including Coke, Asbury, Whatcoat. It has been found that there were 204 elders, so that the representation was but a fraction over one-half, and these so unequally distributed, owing to the expense of travel and other causes, that Lee makes special reference to it. From the Western Conferences, 3; South Carolina, 5; Virginia, 17; Baltimore, 30; Philadelphia, 37; New York, 12; New England, 4. He states a number of changes in the Discipline, Coke reading the book by sections while the Conference passed upon them. He deploras that there was no revival interest and attributes it to a most inadequate cause, but it shows how wedded the preachers of that day were to the old forms. They had opened the sessions of the Conference to the public who were allowed to occupy the spacious galleries, yet Lee puts its down as "one principal cause of our barrenness." But before the Conference adjourned they closed the galleries, and the revival did not come. Ezekiel Cooper, who had been elected Book Agent to succeed Dickins, was reelected, and the Book Concern removed to New York. Asbury dismisses the Conference with a few lines. May 7 (the 6th was a Sabbath): "Our General Conference began. What was done the revised form of discipline will show. There were attempts made upon the ruling eldership. We had a great talk. I talked little upon any subject; and was kept in peace. I preached but twice. . . . The Lord did not own the ministerial labors of the General Conference." Bangs gives a full list of the names of those in attendance and makes it 105, seven being declared ineligible by reason of time disqualification. Stevens, as usual, gives details. William Black, who was a visitor at the Conference, 1784, is again present just twenty years later. The unequal representation of the preachers gave much force to the renewed attempts to organize the Conference on a delegated plan. Stevens alone refers to it: "It was deferred to the next session." Snethen furnishes an item. He had discussed it with Asbury in their travels, and he makes this record: "I was ignorant of Mr. Asbury's sentiments, about a representative General Conference, when I broached the subject to him. We discussed the subject between ourselves, and it was agreed that I should support it at the General Conference. The motion, however, was lost by a large majority; and when it was carried (1808) I was no longer a member of the General Confer-

ence. I will not take upon me to say that Mr. Asbury had not the plan in his mind, when I first made known to him my thoughts upon the subject."

Hitherto there had been no restriction as to the appointments. The preachers were sent for six months, or longer, as the Bishop might deem best, but some were retained through the pressure of influence for three years. A restrictive rule was now enacted which forbade the appointment of a preacher longer than two years. It is embalmed in Methodist history as the "Restrictive Rule." Asbury was pleased with this regulation as it came to the assistance of the appointing power. It was probably a wise regulation in its day, but it became so incorporated with the fundamental law as to require special legislation for any change of it. For more than fifty years it was jealously guarded as a kind of fetish which augured and secured the success of Methodist preaching. But with the increasing diligence and spirituality of the surrounding Christian denominations, and the peculiar environment of city pastoral work, the disadvantages of such an iron-clad law grew upon the convictions of the most thoughtful, and gradual extensions were made of the rule, more by the pressure brought to bear by the ministry than by the active interference of the laity, who though so thoroughly mistrusted and deemed incompetent to share in the legislative functions of the Church, have ever been its most loyal and conservative force, until, at this date, the time limit has been prolonged to five years.

A ruling was made that Bishops should allow Annual Conferences to sit at least a week. Hitherto they closed them at pleasure, often after two or three days. It gave more time, if not more liberty of debate, in these bodies. The presiding Bishop entertained, or refused to entertain motions, and controlled debate within such limits that there was little semblance of a deliberative assembly. The title of "Quarterly Meeting Conference" was given the quarterly gathering of the officary on the local work. Provision was made for the election of a presiding elder to preside at Conferences in the absence of a Bishop. The law against the marriage of Church members with "unawakened persons" was changed from expulsion to being put back on trial for six months. Rev. William Colbert, who was a member of the Conference, says of it: "I am possessed with awful fears that this Conference as a body will lift the flood-gates of corruption." It was recommended to Annual Conferences that preachers be restrained from publications of any kind before submitting their

manuscripts to the Conference or the Book committee in New York. It looks like an innocuous measure, but it virtually destroyed the liberty of the press and was widely intended to cut off criticism of church officials, and was in subsequent years made a criminal offence to infract it. The Article of Religion on the National Constitution was changed to its present form. It brings out that strange paradox, persisted in by the preachers of class legislative powers arrogated to themselves and utterly unamenable to the people, as to civil responsibility: "The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, *as the delegates of the people*, are the rulers of the United States of America," etc. The italics were put in the law as framed. The seeds of the paradox were sown early in the Church history, they fructified and flowered in 1827-30 in the open proclamation of the General Conference that her ministry not only preached and administered moral discipline, but ruled, legislatively, judicially, and executively, by Divine Right. More of it in its proper place.

Thomas Lyell moved the abolition of the presiding elders. It cut at the tap-root of the right-hand power of the Bishops as never before. "In the afternoon, after a long debate, the motion of Lyell was lost."¹ There must have been earnest supporters of it and Lyell himself was a foremost man. It was probably intended as a preparation for another radical step which will be disclosed in the proceedings of the ensuing General Conference, and it will be seen through these General Conferences down to 1820 how the Episcopal anaconda tightened its coils in these futile efforts of the liberal minority to secure some limitations to its power, until it crushed the authority of the General Conference itself. Watters had a favorite project which he pushed to a crisis: "Shall there be an ordination of local elders?" It was decided against it by a tie vote of 44 to 44, and then laid over as unfinished business to the next General Conference. Colbert says, "William Watters, who perhaps considered himself the most deeply interested in the business, went off this afternoon." He was becoming infected with radical notions, and some of his descendants were original members of the Methodist Protestant Church. It was a hopeless way they had in those days of emphasizing their dissent,—defeated, they went home. Colbert says the numbers were reduced within two weeks of the session from 105 to 70. It will be seen in the next General Con-

¹ "General Conference Journal," 1804, *passim*.

ference how the whole delegations of Philadelphia and New York, making nearly one-half of the body, threatened to secede, and were brought back only by yielding to their views. It was the Conference of 1804 that ordered a division of the Discipline into two parts—The Doctrines and Discipline, and The Temporal Economy. Two thousand copies of the first were ordered bound separately, and did not contain the laws on slavery, for the use of the South. On the twenty-third of May the Conference adjourned. Colbert says the debates were warm and spirited, and so was the preaching by the giants in attendance, of which he gives quite a full account, but there was no revival. Asbury, Coke, and Whatcoat parted to meet no more in General Conference. Coke never returned to America for reasons already presented, Whatcoat died two years after, and Asbury came to the Conference of 1808, once more sole Bishop of the Church.

A few events of conspicuous importance must receive attention before passing to the General Conference of 1808. The first is the departure out of this life of Bishop Richard Whatcoat. Asbury says, "On my return [Kingston] I found a letter from Dr. Chandler declaring the death of Bishop Whatcoat, that father in Israel and my faithful friend for forty years—a man of solid parts, a self-denying man of God; who ever heard him speak an idle word? When was guile found in his mouth? . . . A man so uniformly good I have not known in Europe or America. He was long afflicted with gravel and stone, in which afflictions, nevertheless, he travelled a great deal—three thousand miles the last year. . . . He died in Dover on the 5th of July, 1806, and his mortal remains were interred under the altar of the Wesley Dover Church. . . . I had changed my route to visit him, but only reached within one hundred and thirty miles; death was too quick for me." He had acted as Bishop six years and was in the seventy-first year of his age. Lee makes extended notice of him, of which a sentence is cited, "in his death the preachers have lost a pattern of piety, and the people have lost an able teacher."

Asbury's naturally strong constitution was rapidly undermining. It was nearly two years to the ensuing General Conference, and a project to meet an emergency was conceived, if not by Asbury himself, it met with his entire approval and coöperation in an endeavor to guard against insecurity in the Episcopacy. It ostensibly originated with the New York Conference, and it proposed that forty-nine delegated electors, seven from each Conference, should convene in Baltimore, July 4, 1807, "for the express pur-

pose and with full powers to elect, organize, and establish a permanent Superintendency, and for no other purpose." The paper was "signed by order, and in behalf of the unanimous voice of the Conference," by Freeborn Garrettson, Ezekiel Cooper, and Samuel Coate, attested by the Secretary, Francis Ward, and dated New York, May 22, 1806. It was laid before the several Conferences by Asbury, and he used all his influence to carry it through them. He succeeded in New England, the Western, and the South Carolina Conferences, but when it came to Virginia it met with a decisive rebuff—they refused even to consider it, only seven voting in favor, and on the second attempt, Asbury being present, only fourteen could be counted in favor. The answer of the Conference was a transcript of its minutes signed by P. Bruce, Jesse Lee, and T. L. Douglass, as Secretary. The original document came into the possession of Bishop M'Kendree as Asbury's literary executor, and through M'Kendree's posthumous papers it came into the possession of Bishop Paine, M'Kendree's biographer.¹ Lee says of it, "When it was proposed to the Virginia Conference . . . they refused to take it into consideration, and rejected it as being pointedly in opposition to all the rules of our Church. The Bishop labored hard to carry the point, but he labored in vain; and the whole business of that dangerous plan was overset by the Virginia Conference. The inventors and defenders of that project might have meant well; but they certainly erred in judgment." Like the Wilbraham Associate Bishop scheme, it was extra-conferential, but what did the autocratic mind of Asbury care for lack of precedent and form of law! The fact is there was no law and therefore could be no transgression. There was simply no precedent, as similar circumstances never before combined to make one. Lee is credited with the defeat of the measure. Perhaps, to copy the inelegant diction of an impugner of O'Kelly's motives, "he had a sneaking notion to be a Bishop" and stand in the shoes of his deceased competitor of 1800.

Lee was a brusque, honest man, and came near being as unmanageable by Asbury as it has been shown Strawbridge, O'Kelly, and Snethen were. He had much of the quality Asbury commended in Alexander McCaine—"Your *honest bluntness* I approve."² Asbury indorsed and urged the plan for a reason that always dominated with him and Wesley as well: Lead and select

¹ Paine's "Life of M'Kendree" gives it in full.

² "Defence of the Truth," p. 15.

your own helpers with as little conference as possible with your associates, and none with the Church. During the quadrennium from 1804 to 1808, the defeated proposition for a delegated General Conference came before the Annual Conferences with varied results. Asbury writes from the South at the close of 1806, "We began our conference. The subject of the delegated conference was adopted, with only two dissentient voices: these members, however, cheerfully submitted, and one of the dissentients was elected a member."

He comes to Perry Hall, May 2, 1808, and finds its owner, Harry Gough, dying. His remains were laid out in Baltimore. "When the corpse was moved to be taken into the country for interment, many members of the General Conference walked in procession after it to the end of the town." He and his palatial home receive much mention from Asbury and others. He was the means of his conversion, thirty years before, but living in high society, he afterward backslid, but was reclaimed by Asbury. It was not often that the Methodism of that day secured a family of such great wealth and social position, and it was these factors that made him religiously prominent more than his piety — this was embodied in his saintly wife. June 5, he preached Gough's funeral sermon — "there might be two thousand people to hear."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The General Conference of 1808 — Asbury and M'Kendree presiding — It looks into the relation of Dr. Coke to the Conference — Asbury presents two letters from him, both of which were intended to placate his American brethren over the letter to Bishop White, etc. — Did he inform Asbury of the letter when he parted with him at New Castle? — A full analysis of this important point — Action of the Conference in Coke's case — The plan for a delegated General Conference; how it was brought about, after three differing systems were put forward by leaders with the final prevalence of the Asbury-Soule-M'Kendree preference — A full *exposé* of the whole transaction as never before presented in any History — Has the Church a Constitution considered — Sneathen's voice in 1822 as to it — Lee's "History" under ban by the Conference; reasons; how finally published — The first delegated General Conference of 1812 in New York City — What it did; removal of the Book Concern to New York; its significance — Asbury's conduct with Lee — The slavery question.

THE General Conference of 1808. Not one of the historical sources gives information where it was held in Baltimore, May 6, whether at the old Light Street or at the new Eutaw Street church just finished.¹ Asbury's record of it as usual is brief. "Friday, 6 — Our General Conference opened in peace. On Saturday 129 members took their seats. The new church on Eutaw Street was opened on the Sabbath day and I gave a discourse on the occasion from 2 Cor. iii. 12. On the 26th the Conference rose. We have done very little except making the rule for representation hereafter one member of the General Conference for every six members of the annual conferences; and the electing dear brother M'Kendree assistant bishop: the burden is now borne by two pairs of shoulders instead of one; the care is cast upon two hearts and heads." The historians differ as to the order of the business, but this is immaterial. Lee briefly outlines what was done, but as it is in harmony with other chroniclers need not be cited.

Following the order Stevens gives, the salient events were as follows: After organization, Asbury presiding, a committee of two from each Conference represented was appointed to report on the subject of a Delegated General Conference. They did not

¹ Boehm says there was preaching at Light Street three times every day and on Sabbath, so that the Conference must have been held at the new Eutaw Street.

report for ten days. Meanwhile the Conference looked into the relation of Coke to the Church. He was not present for reasons already given. Bangs gives the full report of this item. The Conference was in a mood to discipline him for his manœuvrings with the preachers in the interval. He was kept advised of these things by his American friends, and, to make fair weather with the brethren if possible, he wrote two long letters to the Conference, which Bangs gives; the first intended to define his position as to his farther relations to the American brethren, which is only excelled in adroit wording and suggestions by the second, which he designed to cover his conduct in the matter of his letter to Bishop White, of 1791, which had become known through the Kewley pamphlet already fully considered. If this letter did not satisfy his critics, it did save him from open censure. In it occurs that sentence as to it: "Before I sailed for England, I met Bishop Asbury at New Castle, in the state of Delaware (from which place I went on board), and laid the matter before him, who, with that caution which peculiarly characterizes him, gave me no decisive opinion upon the subject." So far as is known Asbury neither affirmed nor denied the truth of this allegation. The assumption was made when that parting at New Castle was traversed in these pages that in view of the environment at the time the matter could not have been opened between them. It was farther assumed that from the necessary sequence of dates he had in his possession Bishop White's reply, but that gives but a meagre and unsatisfactory idea of Coke's letter in its details. So that if Coke did refer to it in that hurried parting, he did not give Asbury its contents, otherwise it puts the latter in the embarrassing position before the Conference of 1808 of being a silent partaker in the offensive business; for it is certain that he never reported any such conversation as held with Coke at New Castle. The logical dilemma for him then is this: If he knew of Coke's letter to White when this sentence was read to the Conference, he deemed it politic to be silent. If he did not know it, he was equally politic in not disowning it, as he knew the fate of Coke was sealed with the American brethren, and allowed it to pass. It is morally certain from the postscript to the White letter that Coke made no copy of it, and, therefore, could at the best only give Asbury an idea of what it contained. It consequently compromises Asbury too seriously to credit any other theory than what Coke had told him at New Castle did not make his plan with Bishop White clear to Asbury. This would account

for the indecision Coke admits he exhibited; for if he did understand it, Asbury was not the man to have "no decisive opinion on the subject." The Conference disposed of him by resolving "that Dr. Coke's name shall be retained on our minutes, after the names of the bishops, in an 'N.B. Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, resides in Europe: he is not to exercise the office of superintendent among us in the United States until he be recalled by the General Conference or by all the annual Conferences respectively.'" He was, as genteelly as his past services would allow, laid upon the shelf. It is noteworthy that both of Dr. Coke's letters to the Conference are addressed "To the General American Conference." He claimed to have been the originator of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but for prudential reasons, writing from England, he omits its corporate title when he officially addresses it. Wesley never penned the title. It is among the facts the apologists and advocates of the American Episcopacy pass in silence; suppression, as in this whole class of facts, being opportune.

Before unravelling farther the interchanging business of this, the most momentous General Conference ever held, in its pregnant results, it is needful to recur to the appointment of the committee of fourteen, two from each Conference, whose report the thread of history awaits. It is the key to the position, and was never before so lucidly and convincingly set forth as by Dr. Tigert in his work,¹ the objective of which is to establish the superior constitutional status of the Methodist Episcopal Church South along the lines of Asburian Episcopacy. He gathers his materials from the General Conference Journal of 1808. It was composed of most of the strongest men of that day, and presently the leaders will close in a veritable battle of the giants. Three men may be named as conspicuously embodying as many theories, which were brought forward in this triple contest, namely, Jesse Lee, Joshua Soule, and Ezekiel Cooper, with Asbury supporting the Soule section. The composition of the Conference was as follows: New England, 7, New York, 19, Western, 11, South Carolina, 11, Philadelphia, 32, Virginia, 18, and 31 from Baltimore. It was found that the proposition of a Council, or Conclave, of 49 delegates, seven from each Conference, proposed in 1807 to give "permanency to the Episcopacy" was defeated by Lee and Bruce, though it was inclusive of a Delegated General

¹ "A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism," Nashville, Tenn., 1894. 4to. 414 pp.

Conference. Four of the seven Conferences had approved, but these four had but 48 representatives on the General Conference floor as against the three non-concurring Conferences with 81. On the surface the prospect of carrying the measure, complicated as it was, and suspicious as it was to the liberal elements of the Church, was doubtful. But parliamentary strategy often accomplishes what fair, open dealing cannot, even in religious bodies. Let the reader observe this dexterously played game of ecclesiastical chess.

The memorial of the forty-eight was presented to the General Conference. The day following Asbury "called for the mind of the Conference, whether any future regulation in the order of the General Conference" was necessary. It was carried. Then Stephen G. Roszel of Baltimore and William Burke of the West moved for a committee "to draw up such regulations as they may think best, to regulate the General Conferences." Here Bishop Asbury (did he leave the chair to do it?) interposed with a motion that "the committee be formed from an equal number from each of the annual Conferences." It was a master move of the pawns by the king of the board. Tigert says, "this was excellent parliamentary tactics, for it insured to the memorialists a majority of the committee" — the forty-eight had this advantage over the eighty-one. If he ever merited his cognomen, "a long-headed Englishman," it was now. The motion carried, no one objecting; it seemed so fair. The committee was named: Cooper and Wilson from New York; Pickering and Soule from New England; M'Kendree and Burke from the West; Phoebus and Randle from South Carolina; Bruce and Lee from Virginia; Roszel and Reed from Baltimore; McClaskey and Ware from Philadelphia. Tigert says, "The memorialists had a clear majority of two, and thus, by the old Bishop's timely help, had won the skirmish for position." The sequel will show that it had won everything: an impregnable constitutional support to an unamenable Episcopacy, with a Delegated General Conference of one member for every five to be chosen by seniority, or choice, at the discretion of the Annual Conferences, etc.

The committee thus constituted retired and went to work. The official records of the Conference must be supplemented by the revelations of later days, from which it is learned that in session a sub-committee was formed to draft a paper for their action, and Ezekiel Cooper, Joshua Soule, and Philip Bruce were appointed. It was fair, as they represented the three theories

striving for mastery. The whole fray centred around the Episcopacy as may be assured. The three theories crystallized: that of Soule, a supreme Episcopacy; that of Cooper, an election of seven Bishops; one for each annual Conference, a species of diocesan episcopacy and no eldership, with Asbury for the time President of the bishops; that of Bruce, as representing Lee, for Annual Conference rights on a more liberal scale, and the principle of seniority. That of Soule he embodied in the third Restrictive Article, and must be given: "The General Conference shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away Episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency." Finally, in sub-committee Bruce sided with Soule, then the plan was submitted to the fourteen and agreed upon; and in that form came before the Conference. It is generally admitted that Soule was the master mind of the Conference, and that the report as framed was his work, save unimportant amendments.

Despite the space required, Methodist Episcopacy cannot be understood by the reader unless the whole report, consisting of "Section III. of the General Conference," is given: —

1. The General Conference shall be composed of delegates from the Annual Conferences.

2. The delegates shall be chosen by ballot, without debate in the Annual Conferences respectively, in the last meeting of Conference previous to the meeting of the General Conference.

3. Each Annual Conference respectively, shall have a right to send seven elders, members of their Conference, as delegates to the General Conference.

4. Each Annual Conference shall have a right to send one delegate in addition to the seven, for every ten members belonging to such Conference over and above fifty — so that if there be sixty members, they shall send eight, if seventy, they shall send nine; and so on in proportion.

5. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and twelve, and thenceforward on the first day of May, once in four years perpetually, at such place or places as shall be fixed by the General Conference from time to time.

6. At all times, when the General Conference is met, it shall take two-thirds of the whole number of delegates to form a quorum.

7. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the

General Conference, but in case no general superintendent is present, the General Conference shall choose a president, *pro tem*.

8. The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules and regulations, and canons for our Church, under the following limitations and restrictions, viz. : —

The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new standards of doctrine.

They shall not lessen the number of seven delegates from each Annual Conference, nor allow of a greater number from any Annual Conference than is provided in the fourth paragraph of this section.

They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away episcopacy, or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

They shall not revoke or change the General Rules of the United Societies.

They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by committee, and an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society, or by a committee, and of an appeal.

They shall not apply the produce of the Book Concern or of the Chartered Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the travelling, superannuated, supernumerary, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions.

Look at the paper. So far as human skill can conceive and frame a plan for the perpetuation of the Methodist Union under an inviolable Episcopacy, and an exclusion forever of any lay participation in the government, and a delegated reduction of the number of preachers who shall constitute the supreme and only authority of the Church, it seems secure beyond legal flaw or exception. Yet it will be seen in the sequel of this History, that it brought about the destruction of the Union, and was pronounced a rope of sand by the highest judicial authority of the United States government when it was appealed to by one of the parties to the disunion against the other as a last resort for an equal distribution of the property — the essence of empire — owned by the General Conference which, in the exercise of the

independent sovereignty residing in every General Conference agreed to a separation of the South from the North. In the shape just given it came before the Conference after being in committee for ten days. It was discussed all day — it was a tussle of the giants, Lee setting himself against it with all his massive and rugged force. Tigert and Dr. L. M. Lee, who enter into the details more fully than others, fail to make perspicuous the reasons of Lee's trenchant opposition. He was certainly not opposed to a Delegated General Conference, and he was as certainly for an Episcopal General Superintendency, yet he tackled the report, and the informants lead to the inference that his dissent clustered around a preference for selection of the delegates by seniority rather than choice by election. Ezekiel Cooper, seconded by Joshua Wells, made a diversion by securing the postponement of the question to make "room for the consideration of a new resolution." It carried, and when his resolution was sprung upon the Conference, it was in these words, "By whom shall the presiding elders be chosen? A. Each Annual Conference, respectively, without debate, shall annually choose by ballot its own presiding elders." He was a master of strategy in debate also. His motion for seven bishops had been defeated. He had sought to withdraw it when he saw the tide against it, but Pickering and Soule were too alert, and forced a vote and killed it. He then endeavored to secure the next best thing, an elective eldership. It laid under contribution all the debating strength of the Conference, which was continued through the greater part of two days, Soule making repeated efforts to call the previous question on it, and finally succeeded. Garrettson and Sparks, knowing how good men were intimidated by the open voting on questions, secured a vote by ballot, and when the tickets were counted, it stood 52 for and 73 against out of a full vote of 128, or a slim majority of one-sixth. Despite all the influence of the Episcopal party to defeat it by a finality it would not down, and came thus perilously near for its opponents to adoption.

On the first Sabbath morning of Conference, M'Kendree, who was looked upon as a backwoodsman, was appointed to preach. Lee and Cooper were the favorite candidates for the bishopric, but now occurred one of those crises in human affairs impossible of anticipation. M'Kendree had been steadily growing in power and influence, and was known as a rigid disciplinarian, and the staunchest supporter of Asbury's extremest measures. He had faced about since 1792, and displayed a bigoted zeal in building

the things which once he destroyed. Six feet in stature, finely proportioned, with kindling blue eyes and an intellectual face, clothed in homespun, he stood before his congregation all alive to the issues of the hour. Bangs, who was present, gives an extravagant description of the sermon. Boehm, who was also present, says: "This was the eloquent sermon that made him bishop. Slow in his commencement, he rose with his subject till his audience was melted like wax before the fire." Four days afterward he was elected Bishop by 95 votes out of 128. Immediately after the ballot on the elective eldership, another diversion was made by a call for the ordination of M'Kendree, the first native American Bishop. Garrettson, Lee, Bruce, and Ware, assisted Bishop Asbury in the "consecration" as the sobered General Conference of 1884, just one hundred years from the so-called "ordination" of Asbury by Coke, determined by a rubric it should be denominated, having settled by a previous large vote that it was an "office," and not an "order." It will be seen, however, that the Church South, adopting Soule's construction of the bishopric and its powers, never so qualified it.

The smoke of the argumentative battle on the report of the committee having risen under this dispersing interposition, it again came up as the main question. It was carried that the vote be by ballot on the first resolution, defining a Delegated General Conference. Did the defeat of Lee and Cooper have anything to do with their opposition to the report? They were no doubt so adjudged freely, the defeated parties, as human nature verdicts, always have questionable motives, the successful ones are the pure fellows. The interval was long enough without much opportunity of concert to combine all the disappointed and dissatisfied elements of the body, so that, to the chagrin and amazement of Asbury and other chief advocates of the Soule instrument, the first item was defeated by a vote of nays 64, to 58 yeas. Stevens says the favoring party "were profoundly afflicted." The New England delegates asked leave to withdraw from the body. The Western men were in no better mood, and many of the delegates from the remoter Conferences made preparations to go home — the body was in a panic. The defeat was due largely to the votes of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences. Asbury, M'Kendree, and Elijah Hedding from New England threw themselves into the breach, and by entreaty and every other persuasion induced the stampeding brethren to remain in hope of a reconsideration.

The subject was allowed to rest from Wednesday until the following Monday morning. The interval was effectively employed to change the result by the Asbury-Soule party. As hinted once before, such a postponement in a deliberative body as a rule proves fatal to the majority. It is due in most cases to the persuasive arguments of power and patronage. A striking and notable instance will be chronicled in 1820, prompted by this very Soule, involving substantially the same issues. What made the vote so pregnant? It was like striking out the enacting clause of a legislative bill—it carried the whole with it. May 23, by adroit advances, a reconsideration in effect was secured, if not in form, and a resolution that covered the first paragraph of the report was carried by a large majority without naming the paragraph at all. It is not meant as a reflection, rather otherwise; but given a body of Methodist preachers and any measure on which a persistent and able leadership have fixed their purpose can be carried, even if methods that come dangerously near to indirection are employed. Lee's hitch now appeared again—shall the Delegated Conference be selected by choice or seniority? During a pause Soule moved that the selection should be either by seniority or choice. Lee's biographer says it discomfited him; "his point was gained but he felt that he had lost a victory," and, "walking up to his friend, poked him in the side with his finger, and whispered, 'Brother Soule, you have played me a Yankee trick!'" Shrewd and able, and of sterling goodness, he was capable of tricks, as shall be exhibited later. In these elements he was the precise prototype of another man who fills a large space in Methodist controversial literature, Rev. Dr. T. E. Bond, Sr. The other paragraphs of the report were carried on distinct motions, and on the 26th of May the Conference adjourned. Liberalism in every form once more received a decided backset, and absolutism was crowned. The Episcopacy tied a knot as it believed hard and fast. The anaconda once more tightened its coils. Did not the genius of a hierarchy make it a necessity of action, wonder might arise that the Asbury-Soule party did not pause. It is seen that they prevailed and how they prevailed, but the true sentiment of the body on the restrictive articles was expressed in the only unbiassed vote, 58 in favor and 64 against: 122, six being absent or not voting. Such a victory must needs have its retributions, and so it shall be proven later.

What they embodied as law is called by Stevens, "a species of constitution." It is well phrased, though he afterwards says that

the "Restrictive Rules, the Articles of Religion, and the General Rules compose the organic or constitutional law of the denomination." Bangs is more dubious — "Call these rules, therefore, restrictive regulations, or a constitution of the church — for we contend not about names merely — they have ever since been regarded as sacredly binding." Stevens's phrase is apt, "a species." The genus Constitution is well defined by that keen and analytical mind, Nicholas Snethen, and what he delivered needs citation as in part prophetic of the legal construction of Judge Nelson in 1850. "What is a constitution? According to the opinion of the most approved writers on the subject, it is an instrument of relation that cannot be made, altered, or abrogated by a legislative power; but by the united consent and authority of a whole community. The United States and each individual state of the Union have a written constitution from which the legislative authority is derived. In other countries, where the form of government cannot be traced to any common act, or choice of the people, much pains have been taken, and great learning displayed to prove that a constitution may exist without such choice or consent. Americans, however, think otherwise and act accordingly. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, no instrument was ever dignified with the name of a constitution; but in that year 1808, six articles were framed under the denomination of limitations and restrictions, . . . but the word Constitution is not found in the book of discipline. And if we may be permitted to think and speak as Americans, neither the General Conference, nor any body among us, was ever organized, or endowed with prerogatives, to make a constitution. The General Conference of 1808 might signify its opinion or wish to its successors, but the most that can be said of its limiting and restricting enactments is that they are laws having no more binding authority upon its successors than legislative enactments. It is to be hoped that every preacher will admit that the General Conference of 1808 had none of the attributes or powers of Constitution makers, as all are infinitely interested in disavowing such a precedent, and in having the origin and nature of a Constitution clearly and distinctly defined."

This was written in August, 1822, while he was yet in the Church of his early choice and love, and with no thought other than to live and die in it. This definition cannot be invalidated. Lexicographers in an accommodational sense have allowed the species Constitution to be the established form of government in a country. It is incontrovertible that the General Conference

of 1808 had no more sovereign authority to dictate enactments to be forever binding upon its successors, than the General Conference of 1804 had to bind that of 1808, and by parity of reasoning could assert no sovereignty that would debar the General Conference of 1812 from disannulling what it did as a law-making body. The reason for it is obvious: the parties to it, under the anomalous system of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are coördinate in power. But, its authority never having been questioned, its precedent crystallized as a dominating sovereignty. This settler from an imaginary interlocutor needs qualification in two respects. It is true only of the law-making class—the ministers, many exceptions being allowed—and the reason for it is given when Snethen's aphoristic utterance is again cited: "Men who have the same interests will be prone to act alike; and as long as they perceive that their interests are mutual, they will act together." It has been largely questioned by the laity as an excluded class, and the highest judicial authority in this country has adjudged that with every assembly of a General Conference an independent sovereignty is embodied.

Moreover, the source of authority has never been satisfied that the enactments of 1808 were in any legal sense a Constitution. Individual opinions have been given to this effect, and the course of legislation has assumed it, but the abstract doubt took concrete form, when, just eighty years after, the General Conference of 1888 appointed a Constitutional Commission of its ablest opponents to find its Constitution, if any there be. It wrestled with the problem through the quadrennium, and when it reported to the Conference of 1892, it was refused concurrence, after long and lively debating in which a contrariety of opinions was expressed. The finality was, until some future "Commission" to find out the same thing shall dissent, it may be that the section under "General Conference" in the Discipline of 1808, with modifications as made since that date, is the Constitution. Whence all this incertitude? It is retributive, as already intimated, of the assumption of powers by a class taking advantage of the accident of position. The concrete position of the Church can never be made abstractly right until a Convention is called, of both classes, to such a compact, the ministers to select their representatives, and the laity to select theirs, through primary assembly of the membership, as has been recently suggested, through the *New York Christian Advocate*, by

an intelligent member of the last class. It was deemed best to dispose of this question in this connection, as it stands vitally associated with Methodist Reform in 1827-30.

Ezekiel Cooper resigned the Book Agency, having served eight years, and thereupon it was moved that eight years be the limit of such occupancy, but this was in later years abrogated. History gives no reasons for his act, but his subsequent career makes it evident that he did not surrender his liberal sentiments as declared at this Conference of 1808, and while he remained loyal to the Church, in 1821 and onward he is found closely connected with Reform movements, and in 1827 drafted a scheme for lay-representation, but was discouraged from its ultimate prosecution with the Reformers of that period by reason of the local preacher feature, which was pressed as an integer, of which more in its proper place.

Lee had finished his "History of the Methodists" and submitted it to a committee of the Conference, and through it that body disapproved of the manuscript. As no reason is known at this day for the action, it can be surmised only that either it was thought inadequate in literary execution and fulness of detail, or its honest bluntness and disclosures in a few places, not in line with servile toadyism; and his probable refusal to expurgate brought it under ban. Is there ground for the truth of this surmise? It is found in the list of "Subscribers' Names" at the close, as published, which is conspicuous for the absence of nearly every preacher of the Asbury-Soule-M'Kendree class, and the presence of many who were active Reformers from 1820, both in the local ranks and of the laity. This could not be an accident. Debarred from its official publication under the Conference rule, he rebelled, carried down the manuscript to the close of 1809, and issued it by the help of his subscribing friends who loved the liberty of the press, denied to Lee and others in that early day. The imprint is, "Baltimore, Printed by Magill and Clime, booksellers, 224 Baltimore st., 1810." As an appendix he gives an invaluable roster of all the preachers who ever travelled from 1769 to 1806, classified, with notes of much historical value on many of them. But one edition was ever issued, and to-day it is exceedingly scarce, the writer's copy having been secured after long search and considerable expense. Properly to group the pertinent facts, it needs to be stated that the ensuing General Conference of 1812 voted that "the Annual Conferences should collect by committees, historical materials, and the New York

Conference employ a historian to prepare them for publication — a proceeding which seems to have been soon forgotten," says Stevens.

The first Delegated General Conference was ordered for New York City, May 1, 1812. When the Book Concern was moved from Philadelphia, Baltimore, the cradle of Methodism and the centre of its membership, territorially, competed with New York, but failed. It was the first index of a northward trend, and the General Conference now followed, all the previous ones having been held in Baltimore. New York was growing as a great commercial centre, but there were other reasons between the lines of debate. It was a drift in the direction of a division which a few years more than thirty brought about. Had the Book Concern been brought to Baltimore, with its traditional claims, it is fairly safe to say that the disruption of 1844 would not have occurred — the plum would have been on the wrong side of the ecclesiastical pie. The Solomonic sword of the civil law had to be invoked for its equitable division, much to the religious discredit of all concerned. It seems like poetic retribution that the General Conference of 1844, that agreed to the Plan of Separation, reassuming the sovereignty of such a body, met in New York City.

The General Conference of 1812 met at John Street church, New York City, May 1. Asbury's references are few and epigrammatical. "Our General Conference began. . . . Local deacons, after four years of probation, should be elected to the eldership, having no slaves, or having them, to manumit them, where the law allowed it — it passed by a majority. . . . A motion was made to strengthen the episcopacy by adding another bishop. . . . After a serious struggle of two days in General Conference to change the mode of appointing presiding elders, it remains as it was. Means had been used to keep back every presiding elder who was known to be favorable to appointments by the bishops; and long and earnest speeches have been made to influence the minds of the members. Lee, Shinn, and Snethen were of a side; and these are great men. . . . Mr. Shaw of London called to see me, and I had seventeen of the preachers to dine with me; there was vinegar, mustard, and a still greater portion of oil, but the disappointed parties sat down in peace, and we enjoyed our sober meal." That is all. Bangs furnishes a full list of the members. The notable men were Garrettson, Ostrander, Phoebus, Bangs, Truman Bishop, Stead, and Billy Hibbard from New York.

Pickering, Hedding, Soule, Stevens and Kent, from New England. Genesee, Lacy and Owen. Western, Learner Blackman, Stier, Quinn — James and Isaac — Axley, Young, and Thomas Stillwell. South Carolina, Myers, Lovick Pierce, Daniel Asbury, and Hilliard Judge. Virginia, Jesse Lee, Bruce, Douglass, Lattimore, and John Early. Baltimore, Reed, Wells, Snethen, Enoch George, Shinn, Gruber, Robert R. Roberts, Ryland, Christopher Frye, James and Henry Smith. Philadelphia, Cooper, McClaskey, Thos. F. Sargent, S. G. Roszel, Ware, Sneath, Bartine, and Michael Coate. The whole number was ninety. Asbury and M'Kendree presided. The former had a letter, which he received from Dr. Coke, read, and Bangs reports from memory, as it was not officially recognized so as to be among the Conference papers, that he advised the brethren he was about to visit the East Indies and sent his unabated love to them. It was his last communication to friends in America, and his last ocean trip with his missionary preachers.

M'Kendree, without having consulted his colleague, read an address or message to the Conference in the nature of an Episcopal report which Bangs gives in full. No sooner had he finished than Asbury arose and said to M'Kendree, "This is a new thing. I never did business in this way, and why is this new thing introduced?" M'Kendree replied, "You are our *father*, we are your sons; you never have had need of it. I am only a *brother* and have need of it." Asbury said no more, but sat down with a smile on his face.¹ The good Bishop in this gave a characteristic exhibition of an old man inflexibly settled in his opinions and habits. And in this also M'Kendree by his independence even of Asbury, though thoroughly under his influence now for twenty years, shows how inconsequent is the reasoning that his views of the unbearable nature of Episcopal prerogatives, rung out by him with a clarion voice in the Conference of 1792, could have been a mere echo of O'Kelly's views. Such apologies for his after tergiversation are a reflection upon his whole character. It would be more to the credit of all concerned if Methodist historians were to pass this episode in his career in silence. This very address gives proof of the even balance of his sinewy mind: "I consider myself justly accountable, not for the system of government, but for my administration, and ought, therefore, to be ready to answer in General Conference for my past conduct, and be willing to receive information and advice to perfect future operations. I

¹ Tigert's "History," p. 329.

wish this body to exercise their rights in these respects.”¹ No wonder Asbury was amazed at his junior Bishop.

For the last time Asbury intimated his desire to be relieved, as “he had thoughts of going to Europe.” It was rather an amiable weakness and quite excusable as such. It was referred to a committee with the usual result: complimentary resolutions, and then Asbury graciously yields. The presiding elder question, as Asbury informs, occupied two whole days. In addition to Lee,² Snethen, and Shinn, Stevens adds, Cooper, Garrettson, Ware, Phoebus and Hunt as in the affirmative, “the bishops being known as profoundly opposed to it.” When it came to vote it was defeated but by three. The brains of the Conference evidently did not regard the question as settled by the constitutional (?) provisions of 1808. Asbury, however, planted himself upon this ground, but whether he took the cue from Soule, or Soule in 1820 from Asbury’s Journal, July, 1811, cannot be determined. He had just met the New York Conference and says: “It is said the

¹ Tigert’s “History,” p. 328.

² Wakeley, in his “Heroes of Methodism,” cites a well-known incident, though not found in any of the regular church histories, strikingly illustrative of the domineering passion of the saintliest hierarchs, and notably of Asbury. Worried by the persistence and ability of the advocates of an elective presiding eldership, while Lee was leading in a speech on this side, Asbury, as presiding officer, deliberately turned in the chair, with his back to Lee and the Conference. It would have disconcerted a less heroic man, and withered into silence a weaker one, but Lee met it with a simple uninterrupted continuation of the trenchant and vehement speech he set himself to deliver. One of the preachers on the Asbury side interrupted him with the remark that “no man of common sense would have adduced such arguments as Lee.” Lee replied, “Our brother has said no one of common sense would use such arguments. I am, therefore, Mr. President (addressing the back of Asbury), compelled to believe the brother thinks me a man of *uncommon* sense.” “Yes! yes!” said Asbury, turning half round in his chair, “Yes! yes! Brother Lee, you are a man of *uncommon* sense.” “Then, sir,” said Lee quickly, and without the slightest loss of temper, “then I beg that *uncommon attention* may be paid to what I say.” The Bishop again turned his face to the wall, Wakeley adding, “the Conference smiling as Mr. Lee proceeded to finish his argument.” At what they could have smiled it is difficult at this day at least to divine; the marvel is they did not weep. There was occasion for it. Never did Asbury exhibit himself at such disadvantage, both as a professed gentleman and a Christian. It was the last General Conference he ever attended. It was a case of deliberate insult to the Conference as a deliberative body, and a sign of contempt for Lee. Deliberate, it is said, for after the genteel but stinging rebuke of Lee’s rejoinder, any one but a veritable bull of Bashan would have been shamed into decent observance of the conventional proprieties; not so Bishop Asbury. Was it among the reasons the measure was defeated by but three votes? But you make too much of it. Granted, there is danger of an extreme in that direction, and the writer may have fallen into it. But what of the danger of making too little of it, and recording it among practical jokes? Is it not a clear case of the philosophy of the Absolutist teaching by example?

wise men of York Conference have discovered that it will be far better to elect the presiding elder in conference and give them the power of stationing the preachers. I suppose we shall hear more of this." He did hear more of it then, and six months later. He adds in connection with the New York Conference this pronounced opinion, "If the preachers take any specific power, right, or privilege from the bishops which the General Conference may have given them, it is clear that they dissolve the whole contract." Put this in juxtaposition with the section of 1808, "They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away episcopacy, or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency," and you have his meaning. Soule as found was the author of it, and in 1820 he claimed to be the interpreter of it, and overthrew the General Conference, on that issue.

Daniel Hitt, the Book Agent, and not a member of the Conference, was elected secretary, thereby establishing a precedent in that regard. Two years before Asbury had organized the Genesee Conference. His authority was questioned, but this General Conference approved and its delegates were admitted. The liberalizing trend of this Conference had one result: "It was ordered that the stewards should no longer be appointed by the preacher in charge, but be nominated by him and appointed by the quarterly Conference." The docile laymen of the Church caught eagerly even at straws—this was nothing but a straw. The temperance question was at a low ebb officially. Axley made repeated attempts to have passed a rule: "No stationed or local preacher shall retail spirituous or malt liquors without forfeiting his ministerial character among us." At the third effort he was defeated. David Young moved that "the Conference inquire into the nature and moral tendency of slavery." It was laid on the table. Zealots of to-day and forty years past may denounce this as cowardice, but three years before even Asbury, travelling in and holding the Virginia Conference, puts these moralizings into his Journal: "We are defrauded of great numbers by the pains that are taken to keep the blacks from us; the masters are afraid of the influence of our principles. Would not an *amelioration* in the condition and treatment of slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans than an attempt at their *emancipation*? The state of society unhappily does not admit of this: besides, the blacks are deprived of the means of instruction. . . . What is the personal liberty of the African, which

he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul; how may it be compared?" It was not God's time, whatever cavillers may adjudge. The fearful retributive justice did not come until fifty years later, and then He punished both North and South for the mutual sin of our forefathers.

The committee on the Episcopacy reported against electing any more bishops at the session. Asbury held out just four years more, and it gave M'Kendree scope for the display of his cast-iron administration, heartily seconded by Asbury, whose physical infirmities compelled him to defer largely to M'Kendree. The *Methodist Magazine*, which had been issued for 1789-90, was discontinued, and an order was now made to reissue it, and Thomas Ware was made assistant Book Agent looking to this end. But the mandate was not obeyed, perhaps for pecuniary reasons, and the Church had no magazine down to 1818, and this accounts for the dearth of historical materials for this period. The literature of the Church was at a low ebb. The church property question revived on discovery that local laws in some of the states were in conflict with the Deed of the Church, and action was taken to cover it, but "so as to secure the premises firmly, by deed and permanently to the Methodist Episcopal Church," etc. The right of self-preservation inheres in every organization, but it shall be shown that, wise as was this provision, it was not open to abuse only, but was abused, and was never a necessity, inasmuch as the courts of equity in numerous decisions have established the principle that church property cannot be alienated so long as any of the original contributors or loyal members contend for it. The Episcopacy felt that more must be secured — empire by property as its potent lever and controlling force. There were other enactments of minor importance, and the Conference adjourned May 22, after issuing an Address to the members of the Church, which Bangs gives in full.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Effect of the War of 1812-13 on the Canada Methodists — Organization of the Reformed Methodist Church in Vermont, 1814; minified by historians; true account with comments — The General Conference of 1816 — Asbury's Valedictory — Elective Eldership revived, but again defeated — Election of George and Roberts as bishops — Action on slavery; wise and otherwise — Salient event of this Conference the funeral of Bishop Ashury; large excerpts from his Journal on various subjects with comments; Snethen and Asbury — Camp-meetings of the day depicted — Last days of Asbury; full account of his demise, and the most elaborate statement of his funeral in Baltimore ever given, with new details; Black's estimate of Asbury; the author's analysis of his character and work; philosophizings on him; his Episcopal views as set forth by others, and shown untenable — The Episcopal system can never be made a factor of Union among Methodists; the trend against it as such; proofs.

BEFORE considering the Second Delegated Conference of 1816, the culminating point of this volume, some salient events must be noticed to preserve chronological order. Shortly after the rise of the last General Conference, war was declared against Great Britain. This brought on a collision of sentiment with the Canadian Methodists. William Black was the Wesleyan General Superintendent in that province, appointed as such by Wesley, and continued by the Conference, just as Mather had been appointed to Scotland by Wesley. And the Methodist Episcopal Church also had an organization of a missionary character, and ministers were sent to the work by the American bishops. Such was the alienation now, that Nathan Bangs, who was appointed presiding elder for the lower province with the charge of Montreal, was released from his engagement. After much subsequent negotiation, at the close of the war, in which both parties seem to have made efforts to outdo the other in ecclesiastical finesse,¹ Dr. John Emory was sent by the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1820, to the British Conference, and a final adjustment was made.

¹ November 6, 1820, Kingston, Canada, the Wesleyan Society petition the British Conference to restore them their British missionary, remonstrating against his withdrawal under the plan of adjustment. The action had, and published in the Canada newspapers was based upon the "presumption that *misrepresentations had been made to the committee by the American Delegate.*" See McCaine's "Defence of the Truth," p. 102.

Pliny Britt, one of the New England preachers, located in 1813, and shortly after withdrew from the Church. He, with Elijah Bailey and others, called a Convention of Methodists to meet at Readsborough, Vt., on the 16th of January, 1814, and organized the Reformed Methodist Church. Bangs, but no other historian, gives a paragraph to this defection and secession. He says of it. "They succeeded in raising a considerable party, which, for a short season, made some inroads upon our Church, but for want of unity of action and that amount of piety and talent necessary to command public confidence, they gradually declined in influence. . . . They finally sank into obscurity, and have long since ceased to exist as a distinct denomination." He wrote this in 1838-39. It is another illustration — the first being his account of the failure of the O'Kelly movement — in proof of the adage, "We easily believe what we wish to be true." How much his statement at that time needed large qualification to make it truthful, the following facts will show. There is now before me a booklet, 36mo, 32 pp., paper cover, printed at "Fayetteville, Methodist Reform Press, 1841," with the title, "Doctrines and Discipline of the Reformed Methodist Church of the United States and Upper Canada."¹ An examination shows that the principles of the organization were substantially those of the Methodist Protestant Church. A few extracts only can be given, "They felt straitened in their religious rights and privileges, under the Episcopal mode of Church government." At a subsequent Convention on the 5th of February, they adopted a Constitution and Articles of Religion and a Discipline. The Articles and the means of grace are those practically of the Old Church; the Constitution gives a "Declaration of Rights," "All power for the government and regulation of the Church, under God, belongs to, and of right is at the control of, the Church; therefore the right of priests to rule, as well as of kings to reign, we view as contrary to the gospel of Christ, and inconsistent with the natural, original, and inherent rights of man." It provided for quarterly, annual, and general conferences on a basis of equal representation in the last two, of ministers and laymen. Visiting elders are provided for to attend quarterly and other meetings. The other machinery is Methodistic. Actual statistics of its after growth through thirty years are not at command, but is estimated at from three to five thousand. Ultimately their

¹ Indebted to Rev. Dr. G. B. McElroy of Adrian College, Michigan, for this copy.

societies in large part were merged into the Methodist Protestant Church. That it seriously affected the Old Church is evident when the statistics are consulted. The gain in that Church for 1812 was 8017, and for 1813, 14,596, while the decrease in 1814, was 2750. Bangs puts it down to the war. It had much to do with it, undoubtedly, as well as the Canada defection as a part of it, but the Reform movement most accounts for the decline, though not acknowledged by any of her historians.

Why did not this movement more fully succeed? Its principles were scriptural and amenable to reason, but, as in the O'Kelly schism, the personal equation was too conspicuous. The hard soil of New England, always unfriendly to Methodism, was against the liberal tentation. If the social and business and organized opposition of the Methodist Episcopal Church was as strenuously and unrelentingly put forth as it was against the Methodist Protestant Church of 1830-40, the marvel is that it was not incontinently strangled in its birth-throes. The proscription and ostracism were fearfully intimidating. It was circumscribed in its source, and hedged about more and more in its attempts to enlarge its area. This, as well as the settled determination of its leaders not to secede or to sympathize with secession, made it impossible for the Reformers of the Snethen, Shinn, Jennings, McCaine, Brown, Dorsey, French, and Hill type of 1820-30 to affiliate with it. The pride of personal leadership made it impossible that the Britt-Bailey Reformers should consent to absorption by the latter Reform until necessity made it a virtue to coalesce. The same remarks are applicable to the secession of William M. Stillwell, one of the ablest of the itinerant preachers of his day, who organized in New York, 1819-20, and gathered some societies on liberal principles, but there was lacking the cohesive power of a common sympathy. Such schisms cannot long survive the personal life and posthumous influence of the projectors, and, as schisms, are, for the most part, intrinsically ill-advised. A number of his adherents were absorbed by the Methodist Protestants and found thereby a congenial Church home. Both these movements, however, trace their inspiration and execution to the Episcopal system as embodied and administered in the Asburyan Church.

The General Conference of 1816 had been appointed for Baltimore on the 1st of May. Boehm says it assembled at Light Street church. Bangs furnishes a full list of the members, 106 in number. Asbury was dead, and M'Kendree, though present, was in feeble health. His episcopal address was presented by

Douglass, and referred with Asbury's valedictory, previously prepared, to appropriate committees. On the 7th, the presiding elder question was brought forward, the strong minority in favor of an elective method maintaining heart and hope. It was put in various forms in accommodation to the moods of those who were interested in it. The Conference resolved itself into a committee of the whole, an unusual proceeding, and M'Kendree retired from the chair, selecting Garretson to preside, and so he did from day to day through the week it was under consideration. It was working against wind and tide to carry a measure which the Episcopacy had openly denounced. What convincing arguments were used to thwart it receives some intimation by the vote from day to day, on differing phases but substantially the same issue: 42 in favor, 60 against—38 in favor, 63 against; finally defeated by "an overwhelming majority," Tigert says, speaking from the *Journal*. How this overwhelming majority was coached is presumptive in the face of the fact that four years later it is again the vexed question, and is carried by a two-thirds majority.

The Committee on the Episcopacy reported in favor of the election of two Bishops. On the 14th of May, the election took place, and Enoch George, known to be in favor of an elective eldership, received 57 out of 106 votes on the first ballot, and Robert Richford Roberts 55 out of 106 on the second ballot. None of the historians tells who were the opposing candidates that made the majority of the successful names so narrow. Roberts frequently occupied the chair during the closing sessions, but George never assumed it during this Conference. The committee on slavery reported that "the evil appears to be past remedy," and that "they are constrained to admit that to bring about such a change in the civil code as would favor the cause of liberty is not in the power of the General Conference." It was a wise conclusion, though unsatisfactory to the conscientious opponents of the institution. The most that an ecclesiastical body can do with moral questions is to bear testimony against the evils, and then in their civic capacity work to the end of their destruction. Disregard of this rational course led indirectly to the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844, and of the "suspension of official relations" of the West and North from the East and South in the Methodist Protestant Church, in 1858. Obedience to it preserved the Protestant Episcopal Church of all the Protestant denominations in the country from a like division.

The local preachers presented memorials to this Conference asking: (1) for representation in the councils of the Church; (2) a share in the administration; (3) a stipulation that their services might be compensated where the people desired their services. Some amendatory provisions were made to the law, but the specific things asked were not granted. Provision was made for the support of the wives of the newly elected bishops, M'Kendree being the last of the bachelor order, and this was the beginning of their support out of the Book Concern in violation of its charter. Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason were elected Book Agents, and the *Methodist Magazine* again ordered, but it was not republished until 1818. These are the material items of business. The Conference adjourned on the 24th of May, to meet again in Baltimore, May 1, 1820.

Standing inseparably connected with this General Conference was the death of Bishop Francis Asbury, which cast a pall over it and the whole Church, and was heralded throughout the country as a public calamity. Before touching it let his Journal be consulted for records bearing upon his history and pertinent to the special object of this work, and in line with the fact that no previous History has fortified its possessions so fully from his Journal. They shall be rapidly sketched from 1804. November, — "The Superintendent Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America being reduced to two dollars, he was obliged to make his wants known." He received not unfrequent legacies from partial friends, which he kept at interest, and when he died about two thousand dollars was found to his credit, which he willed to the Book Concern. He was utterly unselfish and devoid of money love. December, — "We came away twenty miles to see Alexander McCaine." He was to his death a bosom friend and counsellor. March, 1805, — "We had a meeting in Doctor Jennings's house," New London, Va. It is the first mention of this afterward distinguished man in Methodism. October — "Saw Moses Black and his wife — he about forty and she fifteen: such are the wise contracts Methodist preachers sometimes make." He had been reading Haweis's "Church History" and says: "It is the author's opinion that the evangelists were chief, superintending, episcopal men: aye, so say I: and they prescribed forms of discipline, and systematized codes of doctrine." He eagerly caught at everything to fortify his own authority. Haweis was chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon, Whitefield's friend, and a staunch clergyman of the Church of England. Asbury believed

in himself and his methods, and his Journals are punctuated with readings to confirm him in them. He yielded his deepest convictions to them, and hence, at the close of his eventful career, could with a good conscience appeal to the "purity of his intentions." No sober historian would think of questioning them. He believed he found in Scripture and reason and his own experience abundant testimony that he was right. This History will be written in vain if it does not show that his main premise is unsupported by Scripture and reason, and that his experience should have taught him that posterity in his own Church would cut the very sinews of his episcopal prerogatives and anomalous polity, though it has taken one hundred years of struggle without fully accomplishing it.

In February, 1806, this pithy sentence, "Religion will do great things; but it does not make Solomons." Georgia, November, 1806 — "Behold, here is a bell over the gallery, and cracked, too; may it break! It is the first I ever saw in America in a house of ours; I hope it will be the last." March, 1807, Chester, Del. — "I find that unpleasant prejudices have been excited by the publication of a pamphlet on *succession in the church*; the author is one Kewley, who went from us." June — "And must I walk through the seven conferences, and travel seven thousand miles in ten months?" Pennsylvania, July — "It is but too manifest that the success of our labors, more especially at Camp-meetings, has roused a spirit of persecution against us; riots, fines, stripes, perhaps prisons and death, if we do not give up our camp-meetings: we shall never abandon them," etc. July, 1808, western Pennsylvania — "I had a conversation with Asa Shinn respecting his removal to Baltimore." Shinn was admitted on trial in 1801, a young man of promise, but not of robust physique. Snethen knew him well. He was a native of New Jersey. Judge his surprise and that of his friend when he was read out for his first appointment to Redstone, western Pennsylvania, as a junior preacher to Jesse Stoneman, with Thornton Fleming as presiding elder, in the wild, mountainous country beyond the Alleghanies. Snethen says that he pitied him. It was one of Asbury's methods of testing young men, and sometimes rather an evidence of his regard than otherwise. He had no horse and no money to provide one, so before the brethren dispersed Snethen took up a collection and procured one for him, for it was the only method of reaching his distant appointment. He proved in after years to be one of the greatest theologians,



NICHOLAS SNETHEN.

Ministerial Father of Lay Representation.

metaphysicians, and logicians of early Methodism, and as a Methodist Reformer of 1827-30, his arguments of pen and tongue were feared and respected, while his integrity of purpose no one dared question. Asbury now consults him before transferring him to Baltimore, perhaps in amends for his previous rough handling. The next year he is in Baltimore, as associate with Robert R. Roberts, afterward, as found, Bishop, and S. Bunn for the city stations, and Nicholas Snethen at Fell's Point, whither he was sent by Asbury, Snethen having just married, an almost reprehensible thing in a preacher with the Bishop, while Fell's Point in the far east of the city was unable to support a married man. It led not long after to Snethen's enforced retirement from the active work. The year following, or in 1810, Roberts is named first, with Snethen and Burch at City Station, composed of Light and Eutaw Street churches.

Snethen located upon his farm on the Linganore, Frederick County, Md., 1814. He preserved his confidence in and his social intimacy with Asbury, which he fully reciprocated. No two men perhaps of the early period talked with such freedom to each other, and none more closely on the questions of unlimited episcopal prerogatives, Snethen admonishing him as to "his English prejudices," and he bears witness that Asbury always heard him patiently, for he soon discovered that Snethen's convictions could not be controlled. It won Asbury's respect, but he took care that he should not be placed in positions of influence for their propagation. The following from Snethen's pen in 1822 showed his liberal views, and gave him occasion in a kind of parable to disclose a pertinent fact in his own history. "The bishops will make the presiding elders and the elders the bishops. Mutual interests will give rise to mutual fears. No sensibilities are more instinctive than those which belong to ambition. All this commerce for places may be carried on by dumb signals or indirect hints. A bishop [Asbury] once said to a preacher [Snethen] that his colleague [Whatecoat] proposed him for a certain district [Eldership] but I said you were too much of a republican. The preacher was indeed too much of an independent man to be won by such artifice, but he was a young man, and was more intent upon the improvement of his mind than desirous of office. The time was not yet come to try him to the uttermost, nor is it yet come to try other men so; but come it surely will, if the present unbounded prerogative remain."

"I rejoice to think," Asbury says in September, 1808, "that

there will be, perhaps, four or five hundred camp-meetings this year; may this year outdo all former years in the conversion of precious souls to God!" Snethen introduced them in Maryland, and his own preaching at some of them was a marvel of spiritual power and overwhelming eloquence then and in later years.¹ In Georgia he writes, January, 1809—"We (M'Kendree, companion) are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise, in partnership, two bishops of us, but it must be confessed it tallies well with the weight of our purses: what bishops! well: but we hear great news, and we have great times," etc. It must be confessed that the secret springs of a godly ambition are a poor compensation to

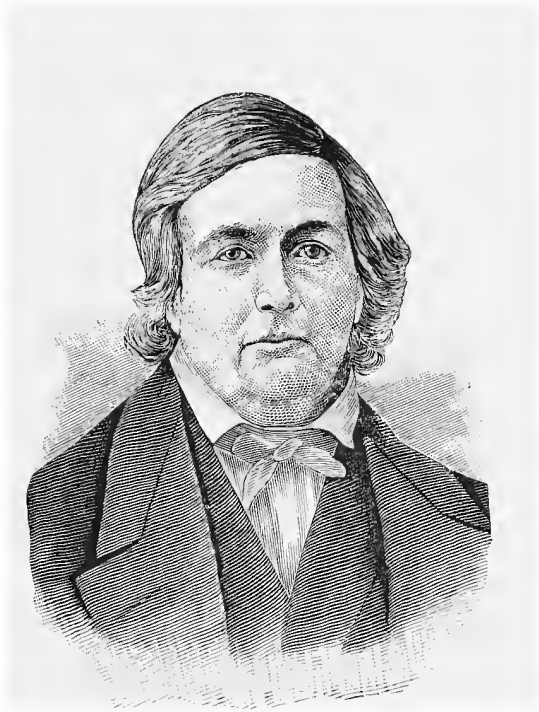
¹ "Extracts from Letters containing some account of the work of God, since the year 1800, written by the preachers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church to their Bishops, New York." Published by Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson, 1805. 16mo. 120 pp. Paper binding.

A copy of this now exceedingly rare book—the only other known to the writer was in the possession of the late Rev. Isaac P. Cook of Baltimore, Md.—was presented to me by the late Rev. Thomas McCormick in 1879, when he was in the eighty-fifth year of his age. He lived to his ninety-second year. It contains three letters on this first camp in Maryland, one by Snethen, one by Fanny Lewis, and one by Samuel Coate. Snethen says that after spending three days preparing the ground, the camp began September 24, 1803. It began on Saturday morning, and ended "three o'clock Monday morning," so that they were more in the nature of what afterward were known as woods' meetings than the subsequent camps of from one to two full weeks. Snethen exults over it—"O! happy day! O day of mercy and salvation, never to be forgotten! Twice I fell prostrate upon the stand, beneath the overwhelming power of saving grace. The day is canonized; it is memorable in the church, to numbers, as the happy Monday, the blessed 26th of September, 1803. The number converted cannot be ascertained; but all will agree that there were a hundred, or upward, who were subjects of an extraordinary work, either of conviction, conversion, or sanctification." Fanny Lewis says, after describing the location of the tents and wagons: "There was scarce any intermission day or night. . . . No sound was heard except Glory to God in the highest! Mercy! mercy! . . . On Monday morning there was such a gust of the power of God, that it appeared to me the very gates of hell would give way. All the people were filled with wonder, love, and praise. Mr. S— (Snethen) came and threw himself in our tent, crying Glory! glory! this is the happiest day I ever saw! . . . The time between services was not taken up with 'what shall we eat, and what shall we drink?' . . . The preachers all seemed as men filled with new wine. Some standing crying, others prostrate on the ground." Samuel Coate says: "There were twenty or more travelling and local preachers. Our number of people on the week days were from one thousand to fifteen hundred, and about five thousand, or upward, on the Sabbath. . . . Two or three hundred camped on the ground. . . . Tents, wagons, carts, coaches, stages, and the like, were ranged in a circular form. The staud was in the centre, and at night pine knot fires, lanterns, and candles in the trees, gave a spectral light, though it was the time of the full moon. . . . I was informed that there was not three minutes for one whole night but what they were in the exercises of singing or prayer." It was held fifteen miles from Baltimore, a little to the east of Reisterstown road.

offset such material disadvantages. February 1 — “Opened the Virginia Conference. We had eighty-four preachers present, sixty of them the most pleasing, promising young men; seventeen preachers were admitted; in all the conference there are but three married men.” Boehm refers to this fact. It was a Conference after his own heart — he saw military efficiency and obedience in a ministry of celibates. Other citations will show his irrepressible sarcasm over the married men. June, 1809 — “I have as much as I can bear in body and mind. I see what has been doing for nine years past to make Presbyterian Methodists.” He was a rabid episcopo-phile. July — “Such roads, such rains, and such lodgings! Why should I wish to stay in this land? I have no possessions or babes to bind me to the soil; what are called the comforts of life I rarely enjoy; the wish to live an hour such a life as this would be strange to so suffering, so toil-worn a wretch. But God is with me and souls are my reward: I may yet rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” October, 1809 — “I am continually at prayer; but a certain fiend assaults me without ceasing — this is for my humiliation.” Like Paul, he had his thorn in the flesh, unknown to any other mortal. So he is constantly throwing open the windows of his heart. In this and his prayer seasons he differed widely from Wesley, whose Journal is barren of these introspections of soul-service and struggle. He too had an experience, but he did not tell it for the inspection of future generations except in the Band meetings. Asbury's “experience” is known almost from day to day. He is up in Massachusetts, June, 1810 — “At Warren my audience gave me a little of their attention. Our preachers get wives and a home, and run to their *dears* almost every night.” June, 1811, he reads Adam Clarke, “and am amused as well as instructed. He indirectly unchristianizes all old bachelors. Woe is me!” Also same date — “We have ridden two hundred miles since we left New York, and have preached every day, and the preachers there are hardly starting to their stations, *but they have wives.*” And now a touch of nature of which the whole world is kin: “We stopped at Dickson's, where I gave ninety dollars for a mare to supply the place of poor Spark, which I sold for twenty dollars; when about to start he whickered after us; it went to my heart — poor slave, how much toil he has patiently endured for us!” November, 1811 — “Hilliard Judge is chosen chaplain to the legislature of South Carolina; and O, great Snethen is chaplain to Congress; so we begin to partake of the honor that cometh

from men ; now is our time of danger." Jesse Lee had also been chaplain to Congress. In Virginia, March, 1812 — "Doctor Jennings was at Conference, and preached often for us, and was much followed." May, 1813 — "Bishop M'Kendree preached. It appeared to me as if a ray of divine glory rested on him." June 6, 1813 — "Knowing the uncertainty of the tenure of human life, I have made my will, appointing Bishop M'Kendree, Daniel Hitt, and Henry Boehm my executors. If I do not in the meantime spend it, I shall leave when I die, an estate of two thousand dollars, I believe: I give it all to the Book Concern. This money and somewhat more I have inherited from dear departed Methodist friends, in the state of Maryland, who died childless, besides some legacies which I have never taken. Let it all return and continue to aid the cause of piety." And here is a specimen of his Christian nobility of soul which it would have been well if his successors in the ministry of 1827-30 and since then, both at home and in Japan,¹ had imitated as to the building of altar against altar to circumvent Reform Methodists. June, 1813 — "I never knew the state of the Methodist chapel in New Durham [New York] until now. It was bought of the Presbyterians, carried five miles, and rebuilt or replaced within hearing of the Independents' Church [the Britt-Bailey Reformers' movement?]; there is surely little of the mind of Christ in all this, and I will preach no more in it, if I can avoid it. Should the Methodists have imitated the Low Dutch, who treated them exactly thus in Albany?" Bravo, for the good Bishop. And now an item not so commendatory. Wm. B. Lacy in 1812 was an active advocate of an elective Eldership, and after the General Conference of 1812, in despair of Reform, he withdrew from his circuit (Herkimer) in New York, in an unofficial manner, and subsequently united with the Protestant Episcopal Church. At the New York Conference

¹ This case in substance is that Rev. C. F. Klein, missionary at Yokohama, Japan, prospecting for a place to work nearer the interior, selected Nagoya, then unoccupied by the M. E. Church in any form. He made his purpose known to Rev. Mr. Soper and to McClay, superintendent of their mission work, informing them that he thought of occupying Nagoya, and if they did not purpose so doing under the invitation to "coöperate in foreign fields by churches of the same theology"; and his approaches were met with a friendly intimation that the territory was open to him, as they could not then occupy. He occupied accordingly, and built a house. This was in 1887. In 1888 Bishop Fowler made a visit to the place, and though he must have known of the occupation, selected a site hard by, and commenced operations for the M. E. Church, thus ignoring the irenic plan of non-interference of the Methodisms abroad with each other's work. The full particulars are voluminous, but can be furnished to any one doubting the substantial truth of these allegations.



SAMUEL K. JENNINGS.

of 1813 his case was adjudicated, and a messenger sent, Asbury says, "To demand his parchments; the culprit refused to deliver up his credentials in a very peremptory manner," etc. And now what did the Conference do, both the bishops being present? Instead of simply recording his name in the minutes as "Withdrawn," the usual practice, they pilloried him and shot him through with a Parthian arrow in a review of his case, the conclusion of which is: "he had attempted to sow discord among the people of our charge, and left the connection in an improper manner. If this conduct entitles him to the wisdom of the *Serpent*, does it not deprive him of the harmlessness of the *Dove*?" Lacy's conduct was naughty as a Methodist Reformer, but does it merit to be stigmatized as of the *Serpent*? How easy it seems to ascribe the work of our opponents to Satan; much easier than even the silence of charity. Asbury has made record that O'Kelly's secession was instigated by "Satan," and the Reformers of 1827-30 were gazetted by their quondam friends as in league with the Devil, and as to Alexander McCaine, he had clearly sold himself to the nether powers, and so was by name excluded from the conditional amnesty offered his associates by the General Conference of 1828.

August, 1813 — "I addressed a valedictory statement of my opinion to Bishop M'Kendree on the primitive church government and ordinations; I shall leave it with my papers." And so he did. October he says, "On the peaceful banks of the Saluda I wrote my valedictory address to the presiding elders." It will call for notice later. His premonitions of approaching end grew upon him, and he put his house in order. A cold he had taken in South Carolina, early in 1815, settled upon his lungs, and tubercular consumption set in, which, with his other diseases, ended his life. January 8, 1815, he writes, "This place calls for great labor, and I am not fit for it; I must go hence." March, 1815, at Lynchburg, Va., he says, "Doctor Jennings preached us a great sermon on 'I am the vine,'" etc. July, 1815, he is with Hollingsworth, who edited his *Journal*, and with him revised it down to 1807, and says, "I have buried in shades all that will be proper to forget, in which I am personally concerned; if truth and I have been wronged, we have both witnessed our day of triumph." It was well that these things were expunged from the record, and it would have been better if his censorious judgment of Strawbridge, O'Kelly, and others had been also expurgated, though in that case posterity would not have known that with

not a few graces of the angel he had the serious infirmities of man. In August, 1815, he writes, "O, joyful consideration to those who have put on the Lord Jesus, and shall love his appearing—this time of suffering is short!" September in Cincinnati, he has a long talk with M'Kendree about the work, and his inability to keep up with his part of the labor. Yet he travels on with his colleague until November. "My eyes fail. I will resign the stations to Bishop M'Kendree; I will take away my feet; my mind enjoys great peace and consolation; glory! glory! glory!" He parts with M'Kendree, but his devoted John Wesley Bond is with him nursing him like a child. He travels into Virginia, and thence to South Carolina, Bond preaching when he could not. They return northward, and the record is, November, 1815—"I die daily, am made perfect by suffering and labor, and fill up what is still behind. . . . I am wasting away with a constant dysentery and cough." "Thursday, December 7— We met a storm and stopped at William Baker's, Granby." It is the last note in his Journal. His resolute mind stayed him in the hope of reaching the General Conference set for May 2, 1816, in Baltimore. He reached Richmond, Va., and March 24, preached his last sermon in the old Methodist church. He was seated on a table, being unable either to walk or stand. The text was Rom. ix. 28, and was an hour in length through frequent pauses to recover his breath. Carried from the pulpit to his carriage, he rode to his lodgings. The next day he resumed his journey, and reached the house of his old friend, George Arnold, in Spottsylvania.

He took to his dying bed. Hearing Bond speaking with the family respecting an appointment to preach, Asbury observed that they need not be in haste. It was so unusual a remark that it gave Bond much concern. His indisposition greatly increased, and at three o'clock in the morning Asbury said that he had passed a night of great bodily affliction. It was proposed to send for a physician, but he intimated that it would be useless, as he could only pronounce him dead. Being asked if he had anything to communicate, he replied that he had fully expressed his mind, and had nothing more to add. Eleven o'clock Sabbath morning, the family was called together, and Bond sang, prayed, and expounded the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, during which time he was calm and much engaged in devotion. He grew so weak that he was unable to swallow a little barley-water, and his speech began to fail. Observing the distress of his faithful Bond, he raised his right hand

and at the same time looked joyfully at him. On being asked by Bond if he felt Jesus to be precious, exerting all his strength, he raised both hands in token of victory. A few minutes after, as he sat in his chair with his head reclining upon the hand of Bond, without a struggle he breathed his last in the seventy-first year of his age.

It was Sabbath, four o'clock P.M., March 31, 1816. His remains were deposited in the family burying-ground of Mr. Arnold. Five weeks after, by order of the General Conference, they were disinterred and brought to Baltimore, where a crypt was prepared for them under the recess of the Eutaw Street church pulpit. On the tenth day of May, the public burial took place, the double coffin borne by twelve pall-bearers, was carried from the Light Street church, where the General Conference had assembled, to Eutaw church, a distance of over one mile, the bearers alternating, in a procession composed of all the members, and a vast concourse estimated by William Black at "about 20,000 or, as some suppose, 25,000 persons were present in the procession, and out of it, as spectators on the solemn occasion. Previous to the interment Bishop M'Kendree delivered a short discourse, in a very faint and feeble voice, to as many as could crowd into the chapel, embracing some of the leading traits of his history and character. It was about twelve minutes long, but I fear was not heard distinctly by one-third of the people. On the following Sabbath, a funeral sermon was delivered in each of the eight or nine chapels occupied by the Methodists. It was my lot to preach in the Light Street chapel on that solemn occasion. The congregation was very large, and almost silent as death. The chapel contained about three thousand, but hundreds were obliged to go away for want of room."¹

¹ The writer is indebted for these facts and others to be stated to J. W. Bond's letter to Bishop M'Kendree, from which all other historians have likewise gleaned, and recollections given him by Rev. Thomas McCormick, of Baltimore, who was the last survivor of the twelve pall-bearers, having lived until February 20, 1883. He was one of the eleven ministers and preachers who were expelled the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1827, for their advocacy of Reform through the Wesleyan Repository and the Union Societies. Some ten years ago a person appeared in the office of the writer, then editor of the *Methodist Protestant*, and exhibited the original class book of the Light Street Station containing the names of the eleven, and after each name in a round, bold hand the word "Expelled" written. The writer failed to secure the book under promise from the holder that he would return it to the officary of the Light Street church, but subsequent inquiry showed that he never did it, and the book is probably irrevocably lost. The General Methodist Episcopal Conference of 1880, in Baltimore City, honored itself and the man by introducing McCormick to it in his proper character, and as the last sur-

Asbury's remains, after reposing in this place until June 16, 1854, were again disinterred and finally deposited in Mt. Olivet cemetery, on the suburbs of Baltimore, west end, where are also deposited, some by direct burial and others by removal to this place, the following of the earlier ministers:—Robert Strawbridge, died 1781; Reuben Ellis, 1796; Wilson Lee, 1805; Francis Asbury, 1816; Nathan Richardson, 1816; Jesse Lee, 1816; Hamilton Jefferson, 1822; John Hagerty, 1823; Abner Neal, 1824; James Smith, 1827; Enoch George, 1829; John Emory, 1836; Beverly Waugh, 1858; Henry Smith, 1863, and sixty-nine other ministers up to 1888. For eulogies on Asbury, those of Boehm, Bangs, and Stevens are exhaustive, but none of them excels Sneathen's oration, delivered soon after Asbury's demise. It was published, but no extant copy is known; the original manuscript, however, is preserved among his literary remains in possession of the Pittsburgh Book Concern of the Methodist Protestant Church. The Baltimore Conference through its com-

vivor of the Asbury funeral. The writer recently made a careful examination of the files of *The American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, of Baltimore, for May, 1816, with the remarkable result that on the 9th of May, a brief notice is given of the Asbury funeral, and all clergymen invited. On the 10th, it publishes the Bond letter to M'Kendree of more than a column in length, giving all the particulars of his last illness and death minutely. But on the 11th, and thereafter, not a single line is given as to the funeral. It can be accounted for only on the theory that, as Black affirms, the whole of Baltimore town of that day, either attended the funeral or heard of it, so that reportorially the paper deemed it unnecessary to publish what everybody knew, so universal was the interest it excited. Bond's letter is under date, "Spottsylvania, April 1, 1816." Rev. McCormick, before referred to, in 1882, then in his ninety-first year, presented the writer with a book heretofore noticed, "The Conference, or Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism," published in 1824, at Bridgeton, N. J. It is in verse, and as appendices, there is an account of Asbury with a pen-portrait of great merit, and also a Letter to the unknown author* from Rev. William Black, General Superintendent of the Canada work of the Wesleyan Conference, and who was a visitor at the General Conference of 1816. He gives an extended account of Asbury's funeral, from which citations have been made in the running text. He also informs that with Bishop M'Kendree they headed the procession before the coffin, borne by the pall-bearers, as in that day carriages and hearses were unknown at funerals, and that in the procession were the Protestant Episcopal Bishop, and the governor of the state, and "several other ministers of different communions." Black made the concluding prayer after M'Kendree's address. This letter is found nowhere else, and the book itself so rare that the writer has never heard of but one other copy. Around the margins of this printed letter McCormick has written in a legible hand in blue pencil his recollection of Black, and other facts in connection with the book and the funeral.

* Wakeley, in his "Heroes of Methodism," says it was Rev. Joshua Marsden, a Wesleyan missionary, who was in this country in 1812-14, and that it was first published in London in 1815. This is an error, as the book refers to Asbury as dead, which was not until 1816. The true date was 1820. Asbury refers to Marsden, see "Journal," 1813.

mittee in 1817-18, appointed Rev. Dr. Samuel K. Jennings to write a "Life of Asbury," and he was making good progress with the work up to 1824, when the bitterness and prejudice against him as an ardent and uncompromising Reformer of that time hampered him, of which more will be given in its connection. The Conference of 1824 appointed Rev. Henry Beauchamp to do the work, but his death soon after forestalled it, and no "Life" was written until years after, when Strickland's appeared, and is an admirable production. He was aged seventy years, seven months, and eleven days. The writer's pen-portrait of him, given earlier in this volume, is believed to be the fullest and most accurate so far given, as it was compiled from sources some of which were not at the command of his predecessors in historical labors. The author of "The Conference, etc.," in his masterly summation of his character as an appendix to the work, may be cited a little further. "As a preacher, although not an orator, he was dignified, eloquent, and impressive: his sermons were the result of good sense and sound wisdom, delivered with great authority, and gravity, and often attended with a divine unction which made them refreshing as the dews of heaven. . . . His talents as a preacher were respectable, but his chief excellency lay in governing; for this, perhaps, no man was better qualified; he presided with dignity, moderation, and firmness over a large body of men. . . . A man of less energy would have given up the reins; and one of less wisdom, prudence, and moderation would have committed the same error as Phaeton; and the whole system would have been confused and distracted; but Mr. Asbury managed the vast economy with singular ability. . . . His prudence was equal to his integrity; he never committed himself; hence he had few things to undo. . . . Many deviated from the work, but his step was firm; though opposed, he was unmoved; neither friends nor foes could shake his resolution. . . . I have seen him sit in Conference with the greatest calmness; when many things were canvassed which must have greatly pained and wounded his mind. . . . If he could not carry a point, he did not force it against wind and tide, but calmly sat down till the blast was gone by, and with a placid dignity made a virtue of necessity, or, with discriminating wisdom, brought the measure forward in a less exceptional shape, and at a more convenient time. . . . I should not omit his temperance, having frequently dined with him. I have been astonished how a man who ate so sparingly could perform such vast labors; an egg, a little salad

or bread, and a small piece of meat was his usual dinner; sometimes he dined only upon tea or coffee; wine, spirits, or cordials he seldom tasted; at dinner his meals were seasoned with some weighty and profitable discourse, chiefly upon vital and practical godliness; he rose early from table and always concluded with prayer."

As a copy of a primitive Evangelist, and an apostolical Bishop, remembering that this word is the preferred translation of an Evangelist's office because suited to the third-order hierarchy of the Episcopal translators of the King James's version of our English Scriptures, it may be said, perhaps without exaggeration, that he has had no equal in labors since the apostle Paul. Conscientious in his Episcopal convictions, as all his reading was to the end of fortifying himself in these convictions, the error of his system — an anomaly in ecclesiastical polity — was in rigidly holding to the logical conclusion of his early education and after reading, that a religious organization is best held together by a supreme leader buttressed by force. It was his beau-ideal for Methodist Union — the peripheral tire binding felloes and spokes to the hub of centralized authority. This History will fail in one of its fundamental purposes if it does not prove that instead it has been the disintegrating force and element of disunion.

Is further evidence needed that this is a fair interpretation of Asbury's views? Let a few citations from his Valedictory Address to Bishop M'Kendree penned at Lancaster, Penn., August 5, 1813, speak, "It is a serious thing for a Bishop to be stripped of any constitutional rights chartered to him at his ordination, without which he could not, and would not have entered into that sacred office, he being conscious at the same time he had never violated those sacred rights. . . . Thus I have traced regular order and succession in John Wesley, Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, and William M'Kendree. Let any other church trace its succession as direct and as pure if it can. . . . My dear Bishop, it is the travelling apostolic order and ministry that is found in our very constitution." Could confirmation stronger be given of the views expressed in earlier portions of this History as to Asbury's meaning of "regular order and succession," over which Dr. John Emory so puerilely blunders? It was a Methodist order and succession, and he meant by order, a third order — why equivocate over it? And how remarkable this deliverance is in that, contrary to the tracery of his "authority," given in May, 1805, when he disowned Wesley as the first

link in it! Was it an accident? It could not be: the difference was in 1805 and 1813 and the environments of each. And yet, how utterly invalid it is by any test that makes the terms "Bishop," and "Episcopal," anything but sham appellations! It was the very gist of the McCaine-Emory controversy over it in 1827, and what sheer logical folly was the latter in elaborating the position that a Church may adopt the likeness of a thing — its semblance — if it choose, or as Dr. Buckley has put it as late as 1894, "The members of the Methodist Episcopal Church believe that no particular system of government — meaning by that exception, no system of government in details of construction — is enjoined in the New Testament, and, therefore, that Christian believers are entitled to form such a government as the Methodist Episcopal Church has adopted."¹ This position would be logically relevant if it had ever been disputed. It never has been called in question. He misses the point, shall it be said adroitly? No system is "enjoined" in the New Testament, but will he be bold enough to affirm that no system is *exemplified* by the ministry and Church of that day, or that the Methodist Episcopal system can be found in what is thus exemplified? That is the point, Messrs. Emory, Buckley, and the ilk! It is not so wonderful that Dr. Tigert should be carried away with this infatuation and fallacy, for his Church is the exponent, since 1844, of the Asbury-M'Kendree-Soule theory. Hear him define terms, "'Episcopal' is the chief word in the title of the two Methodist Episcopal Churches, and 'Methodist' is a qualifying term to point out the kind of Episcopalians we are. The grammar and the logic as well as the history of our name make Episcopal the *genus* and Methodist the *species*;" and much more to the same purpose. The definition is not at fault, and it serves to remind the brethren of their press and histories that in the title of The Methodist Protestant Church, Protestant is the genus, and Methodist the species or qualifying term, and that the "grammar and the logic and the history of our name" forbid the transposing of the terms into Protestant Methodists, and to remind such that whether in every

¹ In one of the debates of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1888, Rev. Dr. A. B. Leonard, one of the missionary secretaries, said, "I know, and you know, that if the Methodist Episcopal Church were to be organized to-day, it could not be on its present basis." It was a truth that every one must have felt. Not that any body of Christians would not have the right to select it with all its anomalies, but because plainly not in accord with the Primitive Church system as exemplified by that Church, and out of analogy with the equality of Christian brotherhood.

case it is intended so or not, that the grammar and the logic and the history as the terms are thus transposed, implicate at least covertly that instead of Methodists who protest against Episcopacy, they protest against Methodism. Let it be disavowed once for all, and let there be no more of this ecclesiastical slur: "We be brethren."

While upon this subject it is opportune to notice that Tigert suavely delivers the opinion and wish — in these days of non-episcopal successes in Methodism — that lies so near the heart of the dominating bodies of the Episcopal *régime*, that, "If the English Wesleyans, and all other bodies of Methodists throughout the world, could be brought to adopt the Episcopal form of church government, we should have universal Methodism conforming to Mr. Wesley's ideal and plan, in respect of both doctrine and polity. It is not likely to be misunderstood if we venture to add that there can be little doubt that the Methodist Episcopal Churches are truer exponents and examples of Mr. Wesley's views and intentions respecting the constitution of the Church and the government of his followers than the non-episcopal bodies."

Here is expressed a fallacy and a misunderstanding. The fallacy is, as exposed in these pages already, and to be demonstrated by further cumulation of evidence, that the Episcopacy of the type of Wesley and Asbury can ever be made a unifying force in Methodism. The marvellous fact of its doctrinal unity is here admitted for the thousandth time, and it is as marvellous that it is not seen that there must be something radically wrong and inexpedient in a polity which has so utterly destroyed the unity of governmental Methodism. It is equally marvellous that such writers do not further see that the trend of all the Methodisms — mark, it is said of the Wesley-Asbury type of polity — is away from that system. Observe the equal lay-delegation system of the Wesleyan Conference so far as the unfortunate Deed of Declaration makes it possible without a disarrangement of its legal property holdings and other features tied up with it; as well as the sturdy resistance of the laity and the less ambitious section of the ministry against all attempts open or covert to make it Episcopal. Observe that the "Methodist" Church of Canada under the consolidation of its various branches is a Methodist Protestant, and not a Methodist Episcopal, polity — it is a non-episcopal Methodism in every essential of it. Before the union could be accomplished the Episcopal branch of its Methodism

consented to the obliteration of the term from the new Church title, and while it has a "General Superintendency," of a four-year elective type, and of as limited powers as a Methodist Protestant Annual Conference President, the very latest attempt to call that Superintendent a "Bishop," was overwhelmingly defeated. Observe that the Methodist Episcopal Church under a pressure from within — for nothing has ever been voluntarily conceded — has a form of lay-delegation, mark it is delegation only, and its Episcopacy is so shorn of its Wesley-Asbury features that these sainted men could they revisit earth would not recognize it as their own. Observe that the Methodist Episcopal Church South, under the prompting of a high expediency, and ulterior purpose to be exposed farther in its proper connection, has since 1866 a parity of lay-delegates in its General Conference, and a pressure also from within for recognition in the Annual Conferences which cannot long be delayed. And while it yet holds to the Asbury-M'Kendree-Soule theory of its Episcopacy, a logical necessity since 1844, and it must be confessed with the "constitutional" and argumentative advantage of the Northern branch as shown by Dr. Tigert, with much skill and abundant evidence, it will be compelled in the near future to abandon its three-order theory of the Episcopacy. So everywhere the inevitable tide in the affairs of world-Methodism is against the "Episcopal form of Church government," as understood by Dr. Tigert and his Church. His hope is forlorn and desperate.

It is not a fallacy only, it is a misunderstanding as to non-Episcopal bodies and "Wesley's views and intentions." He loses his civility even when he states it elsewhere. Speaking of those — a strong majority in English and a strong minority in American Methodism, who insist that the Coke organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Asbury coöperating so far as Coke was brought to organize it in accordance with his plan, — and matured long before Wesley sent Coke over, were not "Mr. Wesley's views and intentions"; he sums up in these disparaging and misrepresenting words, "But fortunately the ancient performances of this general type sufficiently reveal their origin in pique and disappointment, and the modern imitators usually betray their design to establish or defend some newly devised theory of Methodism, and its government, which would fain root itself in the past, even if false to the fathers and the facts." Speaking for the Methodist Protestant Church — and this is the impelling motive of this controverting argument — as the most

salient and successful of the non-episcopal Methodisms ; it must be affirmed that the whole issue raised by the McCaine-Emory discussion of 1827-30 was a mere accident of the movement growing out of the discovery of a whole class of facts until then suppressed or overlooked as to the esoteric organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church ; a class of facts unnoted by Dr. Tigert and all the historians of his school and order ; while lay representation was its true objective, and this form of government never sought to "root itself in the past," and therefore could not have been "false to the fathers and the facts." It never essayed any "newly devised theory of Methodism and its government" as countenanced by Wesley or Asbury. It was a mere accident of the Reform movement of 1820-30 that drew Wesley's intentions into it. It is true a remarkable and discreditable class of facts were unearthed, which, when published, raised a storm of persecution against the discoverer, and being so persistently denied, or explained away, or silently waived, that disproportionate space has unavoidably been given in this History as well as in the Reform literature of the past, to the restatement and establishment of this class of facts. This is enough as an answer to Dr. Tigert, as the specific things must come under review at a later period.

CHAPTER XL

Episcopacy as administered by Wesley, Asbury, and M'Kendree; examples and incidents; aping of it by the Elders then and the Bishops now — Heroes of the period of 1800 onward; a roster of them with anecdotes of these grand pioneers in the North, South, East, and West — Incidental mention of Methodist Episcopacy in its origin — "Expulsion" as a generic term in the early Minutes, and its significance — Dr. John Emory and Dr. Nathan Bangs and Wilbur Fiske, etc. — Harriet Stubbs, the heroine — Jesse Lee outlined — Church literature in that day — Numerical success as an argument for the hierarchic form of the Methodist government; its fallacy shown maugre Drs. Stevens and Tigert, and their arguments analyzed; puerility of the precedence claimed as the first American Episcopacy — A quasi claim as the National Church — End of the first volume.

THE closing chapter of this volume must be devoted to some features of the administration of the Episcopacy under Asbury and M'Kendree, the great revival under the camp-meeting impulse, and to brief outlines of some of the conspicuous characters not heretofore named in this heroic period of early Methodism.

After the enactments of 1808 in the Restrictive Articles and the Rules and Regulations, which being accepted by the succeeding delegated General Conferences of 1812, 1816, the precedents thus established passed under the guise of a Constitution, and have ever since been so respected, until the General Conference of 1844 resumed its sovereignty in agreeing to a separation of the South from the North, thus destroying the unity those iron-clad enactments were intended to render indissoluble, while the administration of the Episcopacy in its several grades became more rigid and imperative. From the young preacher on trial up to the presiding elder there was a natural aping of the higher authority. For the whole policy the example of Wesley was cited and effectively, no allowance being made for his unique position and original power. The secret spring of this clerical arrogance was the security felt in the property sovereignty; the deeds making the investiture of all the churches and other material wealth in the itinerant class of ministers secure. As to Wesley, Snethen, in 1825, records an illustrative instance: "Having lodged with a certain preacher on a Saturday night, the two went into the pulpit together on Sunday

morning. Mr. Wesley, at the close of the service, without consulting the preacher, announced an appointment for him in the evening. The preacher, repeating his words, said he would not preach there in the evening; to which Mr. Wesley immediately subjoined that the preacher was no longer a member of the connection. Without any apparent heat or agitation, they returned to the house, and parted forever. Could any man who felt poor and dependent venture on such a proceeding? Here we see the spontaneous motion of feelings, the origin and nature of which we cannot mistake or confound with others. High-minded preachers of independent spirits, undrilled and unbroken by power, will seldom fail to test the genuine feelings which belong to those who have entire control of church property. Mr. Wesley in this case did not in reality partake of the hospitality of the preacher. The house, the table, were all Mr. Wesley's as well as the chapel; and the preacher was employed only on the condition of passive obedience." In 1827, this incident as published in the *Wesleyan Repository* was used as one of the charges preferred against Reformers as a scandal upon Mr. Wesley, though it bore every mark of verisimilitude. It was pronounced a fabrication, which compelled Snethen, who was much surprised at the turn given to it, to aver that he received the incident from the lips of an English Wesleyan preacher, and had no doubt of its truth, nor will any one else have in this day. Numerous illustrations of the exercise of authority and its arrogant abuse in those days of Episcopacy might be given. Any system may be abused. Yes, but here is one that makes provision in its very nature, not only for abuse, but the cultivation of it as human nature goes. One case in point amply verified. During the camp-meeting successes of the days of 1804-28, down in North Carolina, in 1828,¹ a young preacher, zealous for the Lord and innocent of wrong-doing, under the prompting of the brethren, announced a camp-meeting and pushed the preparations to completion; when the presiding elder appeared upon the scene, took the young preacher to task, rebuked the brethren, and ordered peremptorily that they recall the camp. Entreaty and apology were in vain; he would teach them a lesson, was he not my Lord of Canterbury in that region? The abashed young preacher recalled the meeting, and the brethren slunk away to their homes. Such examples might be multiplied.²

¹ See *Mutual Rights*, of November 22, 1828, reported by Rev. W. W. Hill.

² Numerous examples might be given of every degree and in various localities. A few are here given as late as 1894, in both cases simply because fresh in mind.

M'Kendree rode through the connection, Asbury keeping up with him, and often in company, so far as his physical infirmities would permit, a master in the pulpit and an autocrat in the Conference. The last of the bachelor Bishops, he was untrammelled in his movements, and displayed an ability to govern only second to Asbury himself. True, he introduced some innovations on the senior's plans. His addresses to the General Conferences, in which he deferred to their opinion and advice; his consultation at the Annual Conferences with the Elders before reading the plan of appointments, a practice which since, by tradition and precedent only, has passed into the "Bishop's Cabinet." He kept himself at the head of the strict constructionists of the law, and enforced it unsparingly. All this did not prevent the

They indicate not only the truth of these allegations, but prove conclusively that though the Episcopal administration has been of late years, indeed since 1830, materially modified and softened, yet the law is unchanged, and when opportunity serves or necessity suggests, it is seen that this ecclesiastical leopard has not and cannot change its spots. The facts are rigidly condensed. Case first occurred at the Baltimore Annual Conference of March, 1894. Bishop Hurst, resident Bishop in Washington, D. C., thought it would be best, for special reasons bearing upon the University, of which he is the President, that a presiding elder, Dr. Naylor, of the District, should be removed, and so advised the Presiding Bishop of the Conference, Dr. Fowler. Without consultation with him, when the appointments were read he was removed and sent to a station in Baltimore, after serving but two years of his allowable term of six. It produced great excitement, not to say indignation, in the Elder's district. In a majority of the churches public meetings were held of the laity, and resolutions asking for the recall of the action of Bishop Fowler, passed after speeches from laymen, such as in 1827-30 would have indicted and expelled groups of them. After long and fruitless negotiation, a committee of the whole waited on Bishop Hurst against his wish, and urged their suit. He met them with the dignified repittance of a true successor of Asbury and M'Kendree, the upshot of the interview being in these words of the Bishop: "Attend your prayer-meetings, and leave the important responsibilities of the Annual Conference in the hands of the bishop presiding," etc. Abashed and defeated they retired. For full particulars see Washington papers of this date. An iron hand was drawn out of a velvet glove. The other case is certified by the *Methodist Recorder*, November 17, 1894, citing from an Indianapolis, Ind., paper, as it occurred in one of the M. E. churches of that city. The congregation expressed at the Conference a desire for a change of pastor. It was disregarded. On his return the official board declined coöperation with him. Whereupon, with the presiding elder abetting him, he called a meeting of the official board, and in violation of the order of business, the elder in the chair, the pastor announced the names of eighteen laymen as class leaders, though the size of the congregation never before called for more than two, and by these eighteen new votes he usurped a majority in the quarterly conference, changed its character, and asserted his will over both the legitimate officary and the congregation. This official board were in error according to the law of that church, but what about the usurpation of power by the pastor and the elder in the appointment of eighteen class leaders for no other reason than to overmaster it? An iron hand was drawn from a velvet glove.

submerged liberal minority from working to their end, so that it has been found that in 1816 they prevailed to the extent of electing their choice to the Bishopric, in George and Roberts, the former, if not the latter, differing from M'Kendree as to administration so widely that for a long period there was a state of actual estrangement between them. He declined to be under the eye of M'Kendree by travelling with him, and both attending the same Conference, as he had done with Asbury, and this led to a distribution of Episcopal labors, which soon ripened into a custom. Soule had been held in check by this liberal element, and kept by his friends in abeyance, though he was immeasurably the superior of either George or Roberts; but he found his opportunity in 1820, and his election, as will be found, precipitated the last struggle between an unlimited Episcopacy and the liberal party, ending in the overthrow of the latter, but by such measures as finally defeated its own end.

The camp-meeting era, when fully inaugurated, spread into all the Conferences, and the successes of Methodist doctrine and zeal were unprecedented. From 1800, the first net increase is noted after the O'Kelly defection, and the shock the agitation gave the whole connection, of about 3500. After this, the camps, with their converts by the hundreds, multiplied the membership at a rapid ratio, five, ten, and fifteen thousand increase, growing with the growing years, until at the death of Asbury, he left 700 preachers and 218,307 members in the societies. In the accomplishment of this mighty work space fails even to sketch the long line of heroes, who toiled, suffered, and died for the salvation of souls. Some effort must be made to embalm their memories, even in this concise History of the old Methodism. George Dougharty is a name never to be forgotten in the early annals of Southern Methodism. He was ungainly, tall, slight, with but one eye, and slovenly in his dress, yet such was the power of his piety and the originality of his mind, that his preaching was overwhelming at times. He applied himself to his own cultivation even to exhaustion, reading Hebrew fluently, and was a strong friend of education. Though six feet tall, he was of frail structure, and yet won for himself the distinction of being without equal in his day among his brethren. In 1801 he was attacked, in Charleston, S. C., by a mob, for his anti-slavery deliverances, dragged from the church and held under a pump until he would have died but for the interposition of a Mrs. Martha Kugley, who rescued him from their infuriated

hands. As the result, he fell into a consumption, and died at the home of Joshua Wells, in 1807, and his rescuer also died from the abuse she received, and the wetting at the same pump. William Watters has often been mentioned, and deserves further notice as the first American Methodist preacher. He lived in Fairfax County, Va., and spent most of his time about the cities of Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington. He entered and retired from the active ranks several times, and was of conservative opinions, though sometimes inclining to liberal views, and then again swinging back to the old moorings. He survived until 1833, in the eighty-second year of his age. Some of his brother's descendants in Harford County, Md., were staunch Reformers in 1827-30. Philip Gatch has also been associated with stirring times and events, and was a close friend of Watters's, and one of the most useful and notable men of Methodism, but had the misfortune to be but little noticed in the average eulogies, though Hon. John M'Lean wrote a biography of him. William Gassaway also fills a niche in the temple of heroic preachers of the Southland. William Ryland and James Smith may be coupled together. The former was six times elected chaplain to Congress, and William Pinckney pronounced him the greatest pulpit orator he had ever heard. James Smith began to preach at sixteen years of age. He was a man of high intellect, but as a preacher in marked contrast with Ryland, fervor and pathos being his characteristics. He was remarkable for the physical difference in his eyes, one being a soft blue and the other a dark hazel. He was an able debater. He died in Baltimore in 1827, after taking an earnest and able part for Reform, in 1822-25, as his contributions to the *Wesleyan Repository* and *The Mutual Rights* attest.

In the Middle States, Dr. Chandler and Solomon Sharpe and Thomas Smith and Sylvester Hutchinson and Henry Boehm deserve mention conspicuously did space permit. The latter published his "Reminiscences," covering a period of more than eighty years. He survived to be a centenarian. Jacob Gruber for his piety and eccentricities is remembered, and a fund of stories is told of his preaching and methods in revivals. Peter Vannest, Thomas Burch, William Thatcher, and Billy Hibbard, the last notable all over the East and North for his humor and independence and rapturous religion. He labored for fifty years and died in 1844. Samuel Mervinis, another name never to be forgotten from Canada all along the Atlantic coast,

while the annals of Methodism live. Valentine Cook and William Colbert, both heroes in the strife, the former a tempestuous preacher, and the latter singularly acute and successful in his itinerant work. Lorenzo Dow was a beacon light, but he burned strange fire, and could never be brought under the severe discipline of the Episcopacy. Now he is in the Conference, and now he is out. As an independent evangelist he had no equal, and thousands date their conversion to his preaching. His biography and literary remains make a large quarto volume. He has been previously noticed. James Paynter, a strange name to modern Methodist ears, yet he labored for forty-eight years, and was as successful as he was indefatigable. And Alward White, thirty-nine years in the work, and James Moore and James Polhamus and James Smith, called the Irish Jimmy to distinguish him from the other James Smith, known for the same purpose as "Baltimore James Smith," and Morris Howe, and Jonathan Newman of stentorian voice who "rolled out peal after peal like the roar of distant thunder," and Timothy Dewy, the profound thinker, a great and good man, and a bead-roll of others equally worthy, made up the primitive corps. Hezekiah Calvin Wooster was a shining light, and of him it is mentioned that Asbury, when he saw him, was "filled with admiration," and at his ordination used the words "From the ends of the earth we call upon thee, O Lord our God, to pour upon this thy servant the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a deacon in the Church of God," substituting these for the prescribed formula, so it is seen that the stickler for forms, as a Bishop he felt bound by nothing but his own will and whim. Robert Yellalee and John Broadhead, as well as Timothy Merrett, must be embalmed with this host.

William Beauchamp, says Stevens, "was a man of genuine greatness, one of nature's noblemen and God's elect," born in Delaware in 1772. He was well educated, and after teaching school for some time entered the itinerancy in 1793. In 1815 he took the editorial charge of the *Western Christian Monitor*, published at Chillicothe, Ohio, and the only periodical at that time in the Church. He was called the Demosthenes of the West, and exhibited the ability of a rare genius with much versatility. He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1824, and was among the competitors of Joshua Soule for the bishopric, failing of election by but two votes. It was an indispensable qualification for the honors of that day that a man should have travelled with

saddle-pockets all his career. It operated against Beauchamp, who had spent much of his time in other positions, or he would have been elected. He died in October of the same year in the fifty-third year of his age. Daniel Webb in New England Methodism is well and deservedly known. Epaphras Kibby is also a monumental name. Joshua Soule was born in Maine in 1781, was converted and entered the ranks in 1798, being about seventeen years of age. Though uneducated, such were his native abilities and industrious habits of study that he made himself famous both as a preacher and as a great church leader in after life. He was the editor of the *Methodist Magazine* after the resumption of publication in 1818, and the thought and style of his contributions attracted attention as well as his Book Agency. While stationed in Baltimore in 1824 he was elected Bishop, as will be seen later. He was then forty-three years of age, and in the twenty-sixth of his ministry. He occupied the bishopric for forty-three years, and died at Nashville, Tenn., March 6, 1867, in full assurance of faith. He was tall and erect and of dignified bearing, voice strong and commanding, and a pulpit figure of imposing solemnity, but in other relations he impressed many as pompous and repulsive. He was a born leader and an autocrat by nature. During the General Conference of 1844 he joined his fortunes with the Southern side, and was esteemed in the North afterwards as a specimen of that class known as a "Northern man with Southern principles," just as Bond, as an example, was a Southern man with Northern principles. Soule, however, was consistent with his own principles in adhering to the South, and became the exponent of its ideas as to the constitutional powers of a Bishop. Elijah Hedding was born in New York in 1780, and afterward rose to eminence in the Episcopacy of the Church. Thomas Branch is worthy to be named with the martyrs of Methodism. An able preacher, he went into the wilderness of southern New York, and after many hardships fell into a consumption. It was with difficulty he found a home with a poor family, where he died after great suffering, but losing no opportunity to preach and exhort upon his dying bed. His body was conveyed to the grave on a sled drawn by oxen, after the corpse was refused admittance to a log meeting-house, so that the services were performed out of doors, and he was laid to rest in a clearing of the forest, his grave being marked with a decent stone.

Western Methodism had its long line of heroes — the country was new and the hardships unendurable except to men called of the

Holy Ghost to preach and who counted not their lives dear unto themselves. What a procession of them there is: McCormick, Cook, Hitt, Quinn, Moriarty, Fidler, Coleman, Lasley Matthews and Chieuverant, the last two papists, but, converted with power, they stood like lions for their Lord. Thornton Fleming and Asa Shinn, a volume would not suffice for each. Robert R. Roberts, Stoneman, Hunter, Shane, Daughday, Budd, and Bostwick, the first afterwards a Bishop of respectable parts and careful administration. Francis Poythress was a leader in the West, and one of the most distinguished characters of Methodism. His career was one long triumph of preaching and toil. He was held in highest estimation by Asbury, and was selected as a probable successor. But, worn out by excessive labors, his mind broke down and he died under a cloud of insanity, but honored by all who knew him. William M'Kendree won fame and souls as a Western preacher and presiding elder until his memorable sermon before the General Conference of 1808 made him a Bishop. The biography of this extraordinary man by Paine is another instance of a Johnson finding a Boswell. A single sentence from Stevens's photographs the man — "If he appeared on a camp-ground, every eye was upon him, and his word was law." Jacob Young makes a history in himself, a perfect romance of adventure and success. Tobias Gibson, and Learner Blackman, Kobler, and Sale, are among worthies too numerous even for mention. Asbury made five expeditions into the wilds of the West, crossing the Alleghanies during the eight years of 1796-1804. The sufferings of himself, M'Kendree, and Snethen as companion almost exceed belief. Asbury, from sleeping in filthy houses and filthy beds, took the itch, and thus moralizes: "I do not see that there is any security against it, but by sleeping in a brimstone shirt — poor bishop! But we must bear it for the elect's sake. My soul is tranquil, the air is pure, and the house of God near, and Jehovah is nearer."

In the South again and extending the period from 1808 to 1816, another group of pioneers and leaders demand enrolment. "Methodism," says Stevens, "took ecclesiastical possession of the South," and it is no exaggeration. In Charleston, Savannah, Richmond, and other centres of growing population, it became intrenched. Hope Hull, Daugharty, William Capers, Thomas Lyell, and Jesse Lee as a commanding figure, as well as the pioneer of New England Methodism. The Southwest was invaded, hundreds of miles of virgin forest were traversed by these fearless and intrepid men, mention being made of one such expedition;

the parties to it, Ford and Kennon, slept under the trees for thirteen nights, carrying their own provisions except as Indian supplies could be secured. Thus Mississippi and Alabama were evangelized. Lewis Myers, William Kenneday, and James Russell were also of the class, most of them stalwart men, six feet in stature, brawny and enduring as the exactions of their labor demanded. A converted heart makes a clear head even in those moderately endowed, while not a few won honors for living thoughts in burning words. Lovick and also Reddick Pierce — the first long-lived and splendidly equipped for the work of a Methodist preacher, fills a wide space in Southern history, not only for his intrinsic excellencies, but as the father of George R. Pierce, afterward Bishop, — were of this travelling host, while his brother last named “was one of the purest of men,” says Stevens, “and his word was with prevailing power.” Richmond Nolly and Samuel Dunwody must close up the long line of these Southland men, the latter the founder of Methodism in the Mississippi Conference and farther south.

Coming back to the Middle States, Job Guest and his friend Alfred Griffith entered the itinerancy together in 1806, and did yoeman service in their appointed fields through Virginia and Maryland. Both of them, but conspicuously the latter, were pronounced Reformers from 1820, until the violence of the storm of persecution led them to withdraw active support without open repudiation of their liberal principles. To this Griffith never descended, though afterward honored by his Church in her legislative assemblies. Both of them long survived. And now an extraordinary character is noted, John Early, who joined the Virginia Conference in 1807. Blessed with an iron constitution, ardent mind, and powerful will which made him a dreaded disciplinarian, he was of such stuff as a Bishop of the Asbury type could have been made. Honest, unflinching, and unpurchasable, he declined profitable positions from the United States government, saying that he “could not come down” to them. He was the counsellor of Asbury, Bruce, M’Kendree, and Jesse Lee, a great revivalist, and at the same time chief founder of Randolph-Macon College, and a candidate for the Episcopacy in 1832, but the sectional feeling, already rife, defeated him. He was a leader in the measures that led to a division of the Church in 1844, and was president *pro tempore* of its first General Conference. In 1854 he was elected a Bishop of the Church South, resigned the position on account of his age in 1866, and lived long after — one of the

lingering representatives of the old *régime*. William Capers has been named, but needs mention as one of the most gifted in person and mind of all the Southern preachers; a friend of the black race, though uncompromisingly for his section and its issues, elected Bishop, he survived until 1855. Beverly Waugh joined the Baltimore Conference in 1809, rose rapidly in fame as a preacher of well-balanced faculties and amiable disposition. In 1820-24 he was one of the most active of the Reform itinerants, disseminating their views on his fields of labor by an effective still hunt, of which the evidence was abundant in Frederick County, Md., and elsewhere. His brother, Major Alexander Waugh, often attributed his conversion to Reform to the arguments of Beverly, but, unlike him, once having espoused them he consistently adhered to them, and lived and died a member of the Methodist Protestant Church in Cumberland, Md. Beverly silently sunk his opinions and convictions, from what motives others may explain, but the facts of his subsequent history are that in 1832 he was elected by the General Conference Book Agent in New York; in 1836 he was elected a Bishop, which position he laboriously filled, exhibiting conservative views through the controversy of 1844, until he was removed by death in 1858. Not a few of his old Reform friends maintained friendly relations with him. Linked with him was John Davis, who with Griffith made a notable trio, having shared each other's views favorable to Reform. He was esteemed a "Prince in Israel," of deep piety and good intellect, he commanded the suffrages of his brethren, and the confidence of the Bishops, being appointed presiding elder for a series of years, and elected to every General Conference, save two, after 1816. He died in 1853, on his farm in Harford County, Md., leaving the testimony: "Happy! happy! peaceful! Tell the Conference all is peace." Robert R. Roberts was from the ultramontane woods of Pennsylvania; found his way to the Baltimore Conference; made a deep impression; was sent to Light Street church immediately after Conference; filled all the prominent stations, and rose to the bishopric as already found in 1816; lived usefully, and died respected by the whole Church. These are but a moiety of the class of men nurtured by Methodism and prominent in her councils and work. The obituary rolls of the minutes for this period remind of other names: Benjamin Jones, Nicholas Watters, John Durbin, Henry Willis, Edmund Henley, the last, anticipating his death, returned home, erected a stand in the family graveyard, preached to the neighbors his own funeral sermon, and was

soon thereafter released. Leonard Cassell, of astonishing genius, eloquence, and piety, Joseph Everett, Moses Black, Samuel Mills, Nathan Weedon, Jesse Pinnell, Jacob Rump, Jesse Brown, Leroy Merrett, Joel Arrington, Nathan Lodge, Zecharia Witten, Ewen Johnson, James Quail, Samuel Waggoner, Peter Wyatt, William Patridge, Anthony Senter, Henry Padgett, Fletcher Harris, Joseph Stone, Thomas Lucas, John Wesley Bond, John T. Brame, George Burnett, Charles Dickinson, and Archibald Robinson, all have a better record on high than this transitory mention.

A few concluding paragraphs are for details of a random but material character in line with the objective of this History. The Minutes of 1815 contain the obituary of Dr. Coke. Among the statements is this: "November 3, he landed in New York, and communicated to the preachers a new plan of government for the Methodist societies on the continent of America, drawn up by Mr. Wesley and himself, which was afterward published." The first paragraph of this obituary hints that it was the work of the Book Agents, Hitt and Ware. In common with the preachers from 1784, down to 1827, it expresses their received belief as to the origin of Methodist Episcopacy. How variant it is from the facts in the case has been already shown and to be further exposed in its proper connection. The statements are in accord with the traditions of those times, as the controverting facts were locked up in the bosoms of two men, Asbury and Coke, and possibly John Dickins.¹ Even Nicholas Snethen was thoroughly

¹ What was "afterward published," the Circular Letter or "the plan of government"? It is now known that the Circular Letter was published in the *Maryland Journal* and *Baltimore Advertiser* on Jan. 3, 1785, and later in the *English American Magazine*, but the "plan of government" was never published, as the writer has exhaustively shown in an elaborate foot-note toward the close of Chap. X. of Vol. II. of this History. Ware, at least, was a member of the Christmas Conference of 1784, but, as elsewhere shown, he was not in the confidence of Coke and Ashury as to the "plan of government." Nor can these Book Agents, Hitt and Ware, who prepared this obituary be correct as to the joint authorship of the Circular Letter by "Mr. Wesley and himself," as all the evidence shows that it was Wesley's work alone.

An examination of the *Maryland Journal* for January 3, 1785, the very day the Conference adjourned, shows that the Circular Letter of Wesley to Coke, Asbury, and the American societies, including the expurgated paragraph beginning "and I have prepared a liturgy," etc., which was not in the Letter as made known to the Christmas Conference, and given by Lee in his "History," in its garbled condition, evidently because he had probably never seen the Letter in its full text, was published by some one signing himself "Christiauus." Who this was cannot even be guessed at this day. He was caustically attacked in February, by "Americus Patriæ," for publishing it, and "A Protestant," from "Baltimore County, February 8,"

imbued with it. How could it be otherwise? Writing in 1822, he says, "But though we obtained the consent of Mr. Wesley to become an Episcopal Church, it does not appear, on the face of the communications and transactions, that he anticipated all the events which actually took place." Thus he dimly foresaw what McCaine, five years afterwards, by circumstances purely accidental, proved, but whose revelations and coördination of the facts so widely departed from the received traditional opinion, that even McCaine's fellow Reformers hesitated to accept them, realizing how damaging they were to the candor and fairness of Dr. Coke, if not directly of Asbury.

It was the custom of the early minutes to note "expulsion" before the names of any of the preachers who were deprived of Conference membership for any cause, making no discrimination as to the moral character of the offence for which expulsion was meted out. Two notable exceptions, however, to this rule occur

appears in the paper of February 15, 1785, in rejoinder, and he says, among other equally caustic remarks, "Comments and remarks on a little sketch directed to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and the Methodist Brethren in North America, signed by that reverend gentleman (Mr. Wesley)." This is a clear instance of one near the times identifying the Circular Letter and "the little sketch," apparently as one and the same, but he gives no more reason for so doing than does Dr. Collins Denny and Dr. Kerley, as exposed in the extended notes on the question near the close of Chap. X. Vol. II. of this History. "A Protestant" further says: "It is certain Mr. Wesley never conceived this piece would have found its way into a newspaper, and the gentlemen to whom it was directed and the society had no intention in that manner to lay it before the public."* It cannot even be guessed who "A Protestant" was, but his last statement adds to the inexplicable things of this Letter and the "little sketch." Lee says, page 9, of his "History," that this Letter was intended "to be printed and circulated among us." There is no evidence that it was ever done, except in ways this writer says were surreptitious. But more curious still, and adding to the complexity of the situation, under date of February 23, 1785, and published in the *Maryland Journal* for March 11, 1785, "A Marylander" enters this controversial bout, and asserts of this Circular, whether it was "the little sketch" or not, that "Mr. Wesley never knew of, much less penned, this 'little sketch.'" It cannot even be guessed who "A Marylander" was, but he seems to fortify the dubitation entertained by some that Dr.

* It is impossible to conjecture why this writer, evidently one of the Conference preachers, or a close friend of the Methodists, so seriously objects to the publication of this Circular Letter in a daily newspaper, unless it be the fact that it contains, as published, the expurgated paragraph, anent the ritual, etc., which Coke and Asbury, for politic reasons, thought best not to give to the Christmas Conference. And it adds to the muddle and puzzle of this whole business that O'Kelly, who was a member of the '84 Conference, says of this Circular Letter: "Wesley sent printed circular letters to the preachers in America," and then immediately gives it in its unexpurgated condition. See his "Apology," p. 5. And as Jesse Lee did not write his "History" until some ten years after, and must have been acquainted with O'Kelly's "Apology," it is inexplicable that when he cites the Circular Letter he gives it in its expurgated form, unless he simply preferred to follow the official minute form of it from 1785 to 1795, when Asbury directed Dickens to republish these minutes in book form. And it confirms McCaine's allegation that, as it came to the Christmas Conference it was expurgated, unless some one can show from the manuscript or printed minutes of 1785 in the original form that they contain the Letter unexpurgated.

in the minutes of the period under consideration, and a little later. Minutes of 1816, under, "Who have been expelled from our connection this year?" In the Philadelphia Conference, "Joseph Sampson, for refusing to subscribe to the second article of the doctrines of our Church." Again, in 1826, "Jesse Chesney is deprived of his official standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church." The pertinence of these differentiating cases will be exhibited when the expulsion of Reformers in 1827-30 is under consideration.¹

John Emory was born in 1789 in Queen Anne County, Md., of good Methodist stock, and in his seventeenth year united with the Church, a consecrated youth. He was classically educated and devoted himself to the profession of the law. All his worldly prospects he surrendered after a great struggle, and entered the itinerancy in 1810. He rose rapidly, and in 1813 was appointed to the Academy (Union) church, Philadelphia, the Eastern Shore of Maryland then being in the Philadelphia Conference. It was a leading church of the denomination. In 1816 he was elected to the General Conference, being but twenty-seven years of age. He was below the ordinary size and weighed not over 125 pounds, of slight constitution, but was one of the most scholarly and highly educated men of the ministry. He was pre-eminent as a debater, his legal skill furnishing him with all the arts of argumentative fence. Such a man was laudably ambitious,

Coke and not Mr. Wesley was the author of the Circular Letter. But "A Protestant" rejoins to "A Marylander," March 18, 1785, and two excerpts are given: "Wesley's little sketch as genuine or no," and his query, "Is it likely that a whole society of Christians could easily believe so gross an imposition to be practised upon them?" Calling the Circular Letter the "little sketch" seems to be a mere echo one of the other of these anonymous writers, and this confusion is in evidence that though these controvertists wrote immediately after the adjournment of the Christmas Conference, they were as much in the dark as the Conference itself as to the suppressed "plan of government" in "the little sketch," as differed from the "Circular Letter." In fairness, however, to those who believe the contrary, this newly discovered evidence is given for all it is worth, but the discriminating reader will remember that even could it be indubitably established, an impossibility as the case stands, it does not invalidate in the least the mass of collateral evidence that Wesley was not the author or instigator of American Episcopacy in its Methodism. The writer, in conclusion, requests only that the reader who is disposed to weigh the whole matter shall carefully read these notes in conjunction with those near the close of Chap. X. of Vol. II. on the same subject, and exhaustive of all that can be said on either side of the question.

¹ The early Discipline also made provision for such a distinction. See "Discipline of 1790," sixth edition, in my possession, under Section VIII., on Class-Meetings, p. 13, speaking of those who wilfully neglect these meetings: "If they do not amend, let the Elder exclude them in the society; showing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of discipline, and not for immoral conduct."

and, loving his Church, his aims were high. His mental structure was independent, so that it is not surprising that he early imbibed Reform principles, and became a leader from 1816 of the liberal element in the ministry, who after the decease of Asbury took new heart and hope for the circumscription of Episcopal powers. His coadjutors in this endeavor were not a few, many of the leading delegates from all the conferences to the General Conference of 1820 espousing his cause of an elective presiding eldership. It will be seen that this measure, so strenuously resisted by Asbury, M'Kendree, Soule, and many others, and uniformly defeated from 1796 to 1820, in that year was carried by a two-thirds majority. How its final overthrow was accomplished, though it had one of the Bishops as its friend in George, with Roberts largely neutral, will furnish material for the opening chapter of a new volume of this History, as it was the crux and crisis of the Church. Emory failed of an election to the General Conference of 1824, Stevens evasively observing, "except that of 1824, when, being in a minority in his Conference on a disputed question, he was not elected." It was kind to his memory thus to gloss over the facts, but lacking in historical candor. The disputed question, it is well known by all Reform Methodists then and now, was this very elective presiding eldership, and other advances in the direction of a more liberal system which he countenanced. So pronounced were his views that he was the author of an Address which, like the utterances of M'Kendree in 1792, contained epigrammatical sentences which have never ceased to be slogans in the literature and rallies of Reformers. His opinions were shared by an influential relationship in Maryland, two of whom at least were eminent men, Dr. Sellers, his brother-in-law, and the late Judge Philemon B. Hopper, who stood all his life like a rock for the principles of Methodist Reform. Emory's participation in the controversy of 1827-30 will occupy a large space in its proper place, so that for the time his church politics are relegated to that period. As a controvertist he was distinguished, having answered Bishop White on a doctrinal question, and issued other polemical pamphlets, this being the natural attitude of his splendidly equipped mind. In 1824 the General Conference elected him Book Agent, as associate with Nathan Bangs. It marked a radical change in his ecclesiastical views, so marked that by the General Conference of 1832 he was elected one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His administration was mild but masterful. Driving to Baltimore from his country

residence near Reisterstown, he was thrown, it is supposed, from his buggy and was found bleeding and insensible on the roadside, in 1835. He died from concussion of the brain, having never recovered consciousness, and was buried at Mt. Olivet cemetery, already referred to as the resting-place of so many notable Methodists. With the brethren of his Church his name has been as "ointment poured forth"; churches were called after him, and he has numerous namesakes in the citizenship of his native State. His eldest son, Robert, a classical teacher in Methodism, has written a biography of his venerated father, which is largely an effort to vindicate his memory from the dreadful (?) aspersion of being a "Radical" in 1820-24. How far he succeeds will come under review later.

Nathan Bangs was received in 1812, rose rapidly, became eminent in most of the leading Church centres, developed a high intellect, unflagging industry, unflinching loyalty, piety, and zeal. He served in the Eldership, was Book Agent with Emory and Soule, a member of most of the General Conferences, in which he was known for his stanch adherence to old methods and Asburyan principles. For a number of years he was in the mind of his friends for the bishopric, had a large following, but finally missed it by a narrow vote. While Book Agent he took a prominent part in opposition to all Reform measures, and in the controversy of 1820-24, wrote against it in his "Vindication of Methodist Episcopacy," which took the three-order, high-church view of the episcopacy, and, strange to say, its publication was opposed by his associate Soule, at the expense of the Book Concern. It was finally done, and he was compensated with one hundred dollars for the pamphlet. It has not been quoted since 1844 by his contemporaries, for obvious reasons, and it made no impression at the time of its issue upon such Reformers as Snetten, Shinn, and others, though scathingly reviewed and riddled with counter arguments. He was made editor of the *Christian Advocate*, and his last great work was his "History of the Church," in four volumes, able but partisan, and overloaded with documents. In his last years he exhibited petulance and discontent with Church leaders, and went so far as to prefer charges against Dr. T. E. Bond, Sr., for his management of the *Advocate* during his last term, but they were dismissed. He lived to old age, and died like a faithful Methodist, peacefully. He was tall and commanding in physique, carrying a very large head on stalwart shoulders, with a pose to one side. It led to the singu-

lar proof of the imitative tendency of the young preachers that some of them who came under his eldership arrived at Conference carrying their heads on one side *à la* Bangs.

Jacob Gruber, Freeborn Garrettson, and Thomas Ware have left biographies which do ample justice to their memories. Marvin Richardson was a strong man in his day, of fine personal appearance, gentlemanly manners, and unblemished reputation. He lived to old age. Scanning the minutes, the careful reader is struck with familiar names of heroic men who filled conspicuous places in the Methodism of these days. Some of them by reason of close association with Reform movements will be brought forward in the second volume, but it would thwart the direct purpose of this work to enter at present more fully into these sketches. Wilbur Fiske must be noticed, as he looms above his contemporaries. Entering the ministry in 1818, Stevens says: "It may be said to have dated a new epoch in New England Methodism." Collegiately educated, of attractive presence, brilliant intellect, and steady piety, he linked himself with the educational work of the Church, and was too great in his sublime elevation to accept the election of Bishop of the Canada Church in 1828, and afterward Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1836, declining each time and remaining in his chosen vocation of a teacher. Called to the Presidency of Wesleyan University, of which he was one of the founders, he closed a career of rare usefulness and undying reputation in its employ February 22, 1839, when only forty-eight years of age. Edward T. Taylor is another whose career was so wonderful that, as Stevens has nervously said, "It forces upon the historian the suspicion, not to say the discredit, of writing 'romance' rather than fact." As a preacher he disputed the palm with the ablest divines of any denomination in the city of Boston. Pickering also shared largely the honors of his day. In the West James B. Finley, William Swayze, and Charles Elliot, as also Truman Bishop, were foremost in the itinerant ranks. Jane Trimble had a career in the West as a mother in Israel unexcelled for heroism in the annals of the world, not as a preacher, but as a pathfinder and an undaunted Methodist. She with her husband pushed the work into the very heart of the Indian country. Dying as late as 1839, in her eighty-fourth year, she deserves to live as one of the "elect ladies" of a form of Christian life which has done more than all other denominations to emancipate womanhood from all disabilities of tradition and prejudice. Mention is made of Jesse Walker

and his pioneer adventures, Samuel Parker, the Cicero of the West, James Axley and his crusades against slavery and whiskey, Peter Cartwright and his marvellous revivals and extraordinary character, David Young, and John Collins. To these must be added John Strange, Russell Biglow, and Henry B. Bascom, who entered the itineracy in his sixteenth year to be hereafter fully considered; Thomas A. Morris, afterward Bishop; John P. Durbin, who deserved this crowning honor if he did not reach it; William Winans, the sturdy oak of Southern Methodism, and a host of others; Richmond Nolly, Lewis Hobbs, Drury Powell, and Thomas Griffin, a quartet of as intrepid men as ever blazed the forest, swung the axe, and preached the gospel in the far southwest, or in the world, the peers of the self-immolating men known to song and story. This record is worthily closed with the name and deeds of Harriet Stubbs, sister-in-law to Judge M'Lean, one of the converts to Methodism in these days, who went to the Wyandotte Indians as a missionary, and soon won their confidence and love in such a degree that five of their leading chiefs were converted. Of nearly all these founders and pioneers it may be said that in their most arduous fields and distant exiles they were volunteers; the love of Christ was the constraining force, and though they were parts of the governmental system, and by many it is given all the credit of the work, the results would have been the same under a wiser and less autocratic one, with the same class of men to move forward. They were not "sent"; they went under a call from within by the Spirit of God, and nothing could keep them back.

Note has been made of the decease of Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat, Bishops of the Church. It remains to note the departure of Jesse Lee, than whom no man has done more for American Methodism. Uncultured as the schools go, he was yet well read, and he had the faculty of utilizing all he did know for the effective preaching of the gospel. Six feet in stature, of sinewy build, rugged intellect, great will power, he was a loyal Methodist, though of independent mental structure, and Asbury handled him cautiously. He met and mastered the New England climate, the hard theology of Calvinism, and planted Methodism in its uncongenial soil. In the Middle States and the South, he was an acknowledged leader, and his many stanch adherents kept him forward as a prospective Episcopos, furthered by Asbury, who secretly loved manly independence, and so admired him as he did Alexander McCaine for the same reason; but his advocacy

at times of liberal measures, his bluff manners, and lack of the conciliatory temper kept the prize from him, though it is undeniable that he labored in laudable expectation of it. To this end, probably, he never married and never located; facts that in his day were strong recommendations. Those who would see him in the favorable light of partial biography will consult his "Life," by his nephew, Rev. L. M. Lee. He was a marked figure in the procession of Asbury's funeral. Thrift, who also wrote a biography of him, walked with him, and says, "Lee's countenance bespoke his emotions. A dignified sorrow, such as veterans feel, while following to the grave an old companion in arms, was evinced by his words and countenance." Only four months after, in August, he attended a camp-meeting near Hillsboro', Eastern Shore of Maryland, and after preaching was seized with an intractable fever,¹ and all remedies failed. Realizing the end, at first he was depressed, but soon rallied, and for several days before his death was filled with holy joy. He gave minute directions about his affairs, with rapturous assurance that he was "dying in the Lord," sent his love to Bishop M'Kendree and his fellow-laborers, and fell asleep on the evening of the 12th of September, 1816. His remains were brought to Baltimore, and after fitting services buried in Mt. Olivet cemetery. He was but fifty-eight years of age, with unabated vigor of mind and body. It is not altogether idle to speculate what would have been the result to himself and the momentous events of the succeeding fifteen years had he lived out the natural length of such a physical constitution. For years of pronounced opinions as to the elective eldership, he would have gone into the contest of 1820, with sledge-hammer blows such as he could wield, and would have enjoyed the signal, if short-lived, victory of the hour, as he did the overthrow of the Council Plan of Asbury and the call of a General Conference as its substitute. It would probably have carried him into the bishopric over Soule, and thus changed the current of history. In the subsequent controversy of 1824-30,

¹ Henry Boehm was present and waited upon Lee during his illness and death, and gives a full account of it in his "Reminiscences," pp. 461, 462. While in Annapolis, Lee knocked off a little skin from his leg. It began to inflame at the camp-meeting, and the fever set in. He grew worse till mortification took place, and death ensued in three weeks. At Lee's request, Boehm closed his eyes when dead, laid him out, and saw him buried in the family ground of Father Henry Downs; wrote to Lee's friends in Virginia, and to Bishop M'Kendree. A few days after the burial, in Boehm's absence, some brethren from Baltimore disinterred the remains and removed them to Mt. Olivet, as mentioned in the text.

whether mitred or not, his position would have been, to say the least, conservative, and thus have arrested the extreme measures inaugurated against the Reformers. As it was, it has taken fifty years to modify the intolerant policy that did ensue.

One object of this History is to provide incidentally for Reform Methodists, and others as well, a succinct view of general Methodism so that other histories need not be consulted to gain a necessary knowledge of its salient literature. To this end it may be emphasized that the Press as an auxiliary to religion was highly appreciated by Wesley, as the liberal use of it and the numerous publications he wrote or edited evince. Asbury and his successors were no less awake to its importance. Williams was the pioneer in America, and by his publication of Wesley's sermons, etc., at his own charges, which he scattered broadcast, reaping whatever profit it may have yielded to eke out his insufficient support. And though he was estopped by the Conference, and a ban put upon such publications in the future that did not appear under its authorization, he may be declared the originator of the book business. Subsequently, as found, John Dickins, after his location in Philadelphia with Asbury's concurrence, established a publishing house on his own capital of six hundred dollars which afterward grew into the New York Book Concern, a monumental institution of unparalleled size and wealth. Every preacher from 1784, and specially from 1787, was made an agent for the sale of its publications. The *Arminian Magazine* was the first periodical monthly, afterward named the *Methodist Magazine*, issued from 1818 after a suspension of some years. Then came Beauchamp's *Christian Monitor* in Ohio, in 1815, then the *New England Missionary Magazine* at Concord, N. H., in the same year, which in 1821 became *Zion's Herald*, still the organ of the New England Conferences. The first number of the *Herald* did not appear until January 9, 1823. Then the *New York Christian Advocate* was issued by the Book Concern in September, 1826, and has been the mother of a whole brood of such weekly papers. A new publishing house was built in 1833, and in 1836 the whole was destroyed by fire, and while there was no debt there seems to have been no insurance (institutions little known then), a loss of \$250,000. Another building was erected with enlarged facilities, and since then this was substituted by the present magnificent structure. The division of its value by judicial decision with the Methodist Church South will be noted. The conduct and morale of such an institution may be farther considered in the future.

The Sunday-school and Educational work have grown to enormous proportions, with a moral and social influence almost beyond estimate and too voluminous for full treatment in this work. It will be germane, however, to note the fact that Rev. Dr. Jennings, having removed to Baltimore early in 1818, under the patronage of several benevolent and public-spirited individuals of the Methodist Church, organized Asbury College, an institution of learning, the first of its kind since the second destruction by fire of Cokesbury College, in this city, and it entered upon its career with the most flattering prospects, Rev. Dr. Soule giving it and its President the highest commendation, through the *Methodist Magazine* of March, 1818. The Church, however, under its past discouragements, some regarding the losses by fire as frowns of Providence, was not responsive, and the college, much to the mortification and pecuniary loss of its patrons, ceased to be, adding another to the fatalities of such attempts. The Indian and Foreign missions, together with the Church Extension work, are marvels of completeness and success. Denominationally like a huge octopus, it has stretched out its lengthening tentacles, grasping and appropriating all within reach, and there is a side of this zeal highly to be commended, though fraught with the dangerous trend of all such powerful aggregations.

The statistics of the Church in 1820 were 273,856 members and between nine and ten hundred preachers. In the years from 1804 there had been a gain of 158,447 members, more than five hundred preachers, and the first native American preacher, William Watters, was still alive. Its ecclesiastical geography was well defined, with eleven immense Annual Conferences, sixty-four presiding elders' districts, five hundred circuits, some of them with a range of five hundred miles. Moreover, its episcopal polity, by which is meant not only its general superintendency, a feature unobjectionable if it could have been kept within amenable limits, had consolidated in such a manner that this very environment discouraged any attempts to modify its hierarchic form and was urged as a strong argument against innovation. Traditions had grown up around the Church which supplemented the written law, so that, as Snethen declared, "success was virtue." How fallacious it is, history is full of parallels both ecclesiastical and civil. Stevens, at the close of his "History," sums up an admirable argument in support of the unique system of Methodism, and no Reform Methodist would wish to invalidate it. It was and is their conviction, if the measures proposed by them had been

incorporated, despite the difficulties of such an undertaking in view of facts just adverted to in making inroads upon the marvellous machinery of ecclesiasticism of the Methodist type, it would have rendered still more efficient the general plan, with the exceptional and exclusive virtue of preserving that Methodist unity of polity which, as has so far it is believed been abundantly proven, was destroyed by the prevailing hierarchy. In the course of his masterful argument he does not seem to see the extreme weakness of one of its links — “For the first time in recorded history was about to be seen the spectacle of a great nation without a state religion. Mediæval dogmatism was to be more fully thrown into abeyance; ecclesiasticism and hierarchism to receive a shock under which they might reel for a while, but only to fall sooner or later, to their proper subordination, or desuetude.”

The term hierarchism is unpalatable to Methodist Episcopalians as applicable to the system under which they live, yet when for other purposes it is found answering to the ecclesiastical fact, they do not hesitate to use it as a semi-stigma. So it is here employed by Stevens, and so it is employed by Wesley in his letter to the American societies in 1784 — “as our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or with the other.” To be oblivious of the tendency, if not the very form, of your own favorite system while condemning its features in one antagonized for any reason, is in accord with our knowledge of human nature. The excerpt from Wesley’s letter does one of two things as a dilemma. Either his purpose, “not to entangle them again,” means that his plan as detailed in “the little sketch” of church government he intrusted to Coke, but which he found expedient to suppress by reason in the main of Asbury’s opposition to it, was not such a hierarchic system as he is charged with having formulated, and which the Christmas Conference only legislatively enacted into the Methodist Episcopal Church; or, he is open to the logical inconsistency of denouncing it in the Established Church of England and its congener in America, and at the same time of laying the foundations of a more absolute form of hierarchy through Dr. Coke — a new Methodist “succession” through himself to anticipate the reorganization of the Protestant Episcopal Church; thereby sustaining the allegation of George Bancroft in his “History of the United States,” that “he resolved to get the start of the English hierarchy.” It is upon just this dilemma that the whole of the voluminous controversy, begun in

1827 by McCaine's "History and Mystery," and which continues down to this day, hinges; and which will probably never be settled to the satisfaction of both contestants, though the ground is being so totally dug away from under the feet of the advocates of Mr. Wesley's fatherhood of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that recent writers of that Church are making concessions, wrung out of them by the "potency of a definite fact," to use the expressive phrase of an American statesman, that he could not have intended, and never gave countenance to the hierarchy born of the Christmas Conference, whatever may have been his personal preferences as to church polity, and whatever he might have done, or probably would have done, had he been present, or even consulted. The only question is: What did he do? and the answer gathers volume and sweep more and more that he did not dream of a Christmas Conference and never approved its enactments. This negative view established, Wesley's logical consistency is vindicated, and the argument lost for those who maintain the affirmative.

Returning to Dr. Stevens's historical felicitation, let the sentences be repeated — "ecclesiasticism and hierarchism to receive a shock under which they might reel for a while, but only to fall sooner or later, to their proper subordination or desuetude." To what does he refer? Manifestly to the English Church and its American branch, particularly in its national character. His exultation is over — "a great nation without a state religion." It would have been opportune, if he had been in rhythmic mood, to have cited the well-known couplet crystallizing the idea: —

"A Church without a Bishop,
And a State without a King."

Yet he labors more successfully than any other Methodist historian to prove that the Methodist Episcopal Church is the legitimate successor of the Church of England in America, and gloats over it as though it were an achievement of which to boast. And upon what is it based? Upon the trivial circumstance that Coke got to America, and the Conference of December 25, 1784, was organized about six weeks before Bishop White succeeded in securing "consecration" in England, though Seabury secured his as Bishop of Connecticut from the non-jurors of Scotland on the 14th of November, or about six weeks before Dr. Coke ordained Asbury a "General Superintendent." The veriest "mint and anise and cummin"! It is coveted eagerly,

as a child covets its rattle. No disrespect is intended, and there is a reason for it; the *éclat* of Episcopacy must be secured, not as another example of it in church government, but as the first example of it — “Apostolical Succession,” laughed to scorn by them in their millenary brethren of the “historic Episcopate,” but seriously maintained for Wesley’s succession, as having priority in a Methodist line.

The latest of this class of writers, Dr. Tigert, joins hands with Dr. Stevens, and caps a chapter with the most unqualified deliverance of the kind yet recorded by these enthusiasts of Episcopacy; not surely “a moderate Episcopacy” such as Thomas Ware tells the fathers of 1784 thought they were inaugurating, but a true succession to the Church of England in America. And that it may be seen that the case has not been overdrawn, let space be given for the whole of this summation, so conclusive, the author thinks, that he cites the nervous words of Stevens: “The man who gainsays such evidence must be given up as incorrigible. There can be no reasoning with him.” Tigert says: “The one ground of the use of the term ‘Episcopal’ in the name of our churches [North and South he means] is generally overlooked. The word does not imply simply that the government is episcopal as distinguished from presbyterian or congregational. Asbury and his coadjutors, and our early English membership, were Episcopalian; and history will sustain the point that our name meant to indicate the organization on scriptural principles of the first (and therefore at that time the one) Episcopal Church on the American continent. Hitherto the American Methodists had received the sacraments from the English clergy resident in the colonies, and regarded themselves as members of that Church. In 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was organized, neither the English nor the Protestant Episcopal Church existed here in legal or complete organic form. The American Methodists, by the help of Mr. Wesley, therefore organized themselves into an American Episcopal Church, taking the name and style already indicated. They regarded themselves as the successors of the old Church, then defunct, and entered upon their work accordingly. The Methodist Episcopalian still adhered ‘to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England,’ and this historical truth is fittingly embalmed in the parchment of their first bishop. American Methodism, according to the design of its founders, has for more than a century approved itself as the great popular

Episcopal Church of America." Quoting now from Stevens the argument is clinched: "The Methodist Bishops were the first Protestant Bishops, and Methodism was the first Protestant Episcopal Church of the New World; and as Mr. Wesley had given it the Anglican Articles of religion (omitting the seventeenth on predestination), and the liturgy wisely abridged, it became both by its precedent organization and its subsequent numerical importance the real successor to the Anglican Church in America."¹

This, as late as 1894, does not augur hopefully that a cure will ever be effected of such writers, but if these brethren ever hope to gain the respect of such historians as Bancroft, and others who may be called upon to wade through such ecclesiastical twaddle, they will abandon the puerile business and put the defence of Methodist Episcopacy upon other grounds. It also shows how much something like an exhaustive History of Methodist Reform is called for, that the whole class of facts which are studiously ignored shall not be lost by the simple dictum of such writers on the principle that constant reiteration finally secures belief. And it is apropos that this volume should close with the line of thought traversed as a preparation for final assault upon the errors of its presumptions in the controversy of 1827-30. It is also germane to observe that no religious denomination in the United States, the Romish Church excepted as a claim inherent in their system, has done so much tentative work looking to a quasi-recognition of it as a National Church as the Methodist Episcopal Church. The proofs will be incidentally discovered as advance is made in the second volume.

¹ Tigert's "History," pp. 206, 207.



ASA SHINN.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

AN Introduction to Whitehead's "Life of the Wesleys," *genuine* edition published by W. S. Stockton of Philadelphia in 1845 by his famous son, Rev. Thomas H. Stockton, furnishes the materials for a vindication of the reputation of Rev. John Whitehead, M.D., and which is freely borrowed in this synopsis of the facts and arguments, *pro* and *con*, in the case of Coke, Moore, and the Conference *vs.* Dr. Whitehead.

He entered the Methodist itinerancy in 1764 and retired in 1769. He then married and settled in Bristol, and from thence he removed to Wandsworth, in the vicinage of London, and opened a school. He studied physic under Dr. Lettson, and on the recommendation of Mr. Barclay, an eminent member of the Society of Friends, pursued his studies at Leyden, Holland, and was the guardian of his son. He completed his studies and returned to England with his diploma of Doctor of Medicine. He had joined the Friends, and by their influence mainly secured the reputable position of physician to the London Dispensary. After a few years he again joined the Methodists and was received kindly by Wesley. Moore, his unrelenting opponent, living and dead, mentions that Dr. Whitehead applied through him to Wesley to be ordained and made a superintendent, but that Wesley, though "he loved the man, knew his versatility, and would not trust him again with so important an office." A Methodist Episcopal journal, on the authority of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, stated that he was expelled the Connection for alleged unfaithfulness in the trusteeship of Wesley's manuscripts. The charges of Moore are not to Whitehead's discredit and are unsupported by other evidence. As to the expulsion, if true, and it is probable at the time of the bitter controversy over his "Life of the Wesleys," he was soon after received again and remained a member to his decease in 1804.

His literary character received the indorsement of the *British Critic* of 1793, when his first volume appeared, saying that he was sensible and his talents deserved great respect. His moral character was never impeached except in the matter of the controversy with Coke, Moore, and the Conference, to be considered on its merits later. Wesley loved him; and Myles, speaking of the committee appointing him biographer, says, "They had a high opinion of his integrity."

As a physician the positions he held are in proof of his ability, and Wesley said, "I am persuaded there is not such another physician in England."

As a preacher he must have been forceful and learned and eloquent, else he would not have been selected—a local preacher—to deliver the funeral sermon of Wesley. His popularity in London and elsewhere was great.

As a writer his work speaks for him. His reputation must have been very high, or he would not have been unanimously selected as the biographer of Wesley. Its accuracy is not denied; he is censured for the use he made of his trust, and in violation, as his opponents assert, of his obligations.

His trusts were numerous; physician to both the Wesleys and their families to the exclusion of all others; he was made by Wesley's Will, jointly with Dr. Coke and Henry Moore, trustee of all his books and all his manuscripts; the use of the private diary of Charles Wesley and the manuscripts of the Wesley family; the confidence of the preachers, executors, and friends in appointing him preacher at his funeral and writer of his biography.

As to the manner in which he discharged his duty as biographer, let him witness first for himself. "I determined to write not only the life of Mr. Wesley, but a 'History of Methodism,' with the utmost impartiality to describe the things as they have been, and as they are, without the false coloring the spirit of a party will always give a history." The *London Analytical Review* spoke in the highest terms of both the volumes: "The narrative bears the marks of accuracy and fidelity." The *London Critical Review* and the *British Critic* to the same effect. Dr. Adam Clarke says, "Of all these [other biographies] Dr. Whitehead's claims the preference." Watson, Jackson, and Southey all commend it, though it is quite probable that the latter never saw other than the spurious edition issued after Whitehead's decease, printed in Dublin, garbled and expurgated of all the matter objectionable to the Conference party—a proof, however, of its popularity as a biography and the demand for it. It was a great outrage, however, upon a deceased author's rights, not as to copyright only, but the misrepresentation it carried with it of the author's views.

The controversy with Coke, Moore, and the Conference may now be considered. The gist of it is that, by the Will of Wesley, Coke, Whitehead, and Moore were made his literary executors. Coke and Moore deferred to Whitehead in the preparation of the biography, and all the papers were placed in his custody for this purpose. There are three points: the compensation to Whitehead for the work; the right of judgment in the preparation of the work for the press; the right of the possession and use of the manuscripts, when it came out. The parties could not agree as to the second point. As to the first point, much has been asserted by Moore to impugn Whitehead, but it must all be set aside in the face of the fact that Whitehead offered "to give them the whole profits of the work, if they desired it in order to put an end to the difference," but it was declined. As to the second, the Conference party

insisted that they "required" that Whitehead should publish nothing but "what should be approved by a committee of the preachers." Whitehead affirms "that he offered to read the manuscripts to them as friends, and consult them on particular parts of Wesley's life, but insisted on the right to use his own judgment if on any point they could not agree." This difference was, however, irreconcilable. The third point is essentially involved in the second. Whitehead affirms that the manuscripts were "delivered to him unconditionally" for the purpose of the biography. Moore declares that they were delivered "under an express stipulation that they should be examined according to the Will of Wesley, previously to any of them being published." The parties here are at such variance that the veracity of one or the other seems involved. But need it be resorted to? Rather let it be assumed that there was an error for two reasons. First, Whitehead acknowledges that, after the papers were delivered to him unconditionally, Coke and Moore changed their minds on that subject. Did Moore forget this fact? Second, the probability of it. Whitehead's statement was made while the facts were fresh, in the constructive presence of his opponents and without contradiction apparently. Moore's denial was not published until thirty years afterward, when Whitehead had been twenty years in his grave. Deny such an error and the issue is indeterminable. The grave charge is made by Moore in his "Life of Wesley," wherein he resurrects the whole stale controversy with no living Whitehead to confront him, that "the doctor's indelible dishonor was his absolute refusal to suffer the manuscripts to be examined," etc. And yet this is not true. He proposed to the Conference party that the manuscripts should be fairly and impartially examined by Coke, Moore, and himself, and "such portions as they unanimously agreed to be unfit for publication should be burned and the residue left with Whitehead" to complete the biography. The proposals were rejected by the Conference, but, as long as they stand, Whitehead's refusal was conditional only and not absolute.

In looking at the causes of the controversy it will be found that not the Wesley family, nor the Methodist people as such, were aggrieved, but Coke and Moore and the Conference party. It was because after 128 pages of the biography of Charles Wesley had been published, they contained hints that Whitehead intended to tell all he knew and found about the Wesleys and Methodism. Finding that they could not control him for a partisan history, they left nothing undone to hinder him in the work. More than this, the Conference party at once appointed Coke and Moore to write a history. Hampson's had already appeared, and it was severely unfavorable to Wesley and his close friends. Whitehead's would appear and tell the truth between Hampson and the Coke party. Both must be countervailed. Within a year Coke and Moore's History was on the market and largely sold, but finally abandoned by even its friends as unreliable and deficient. Whitehead's "Life of the Wesleys" was considerably delayed, the last volume not appearing until 1796. He explains as reasons two causes: the bitterness of the persecution against him, which sometimes unfitted him for impartial writing, and when he

found his mind so affected he laid aside his pen; the bankruptcy of his printer, for he published the work at his own charges, delayed its appearance. Drew, in his "Life of Coke," repeats much of the story from the Conference view, but thirteen years after Whitehead's decease. But it remained for Moore, in 1823-24, to publish a "Life of Wesley," in which, while he stigmatizes and blackens the memory of Whitehead, he borrows nearly the whole work from his biography. Out of 600 pages making the two volumes of the Stockton edition of 1845, published in Philadelphia, there are but 133 pages of Moore's biography which are free from the pilfering from Whitehead. Large portions of it are appropriated without credit. Whitehead's work is mentioned only when it suits a purpose. It is a shameless plagiarism. Let any impartial reader examine the two page by page. The spurious edition of Whitehead's "Life" was issued in 1805, one year after his decease. The original work was suppressed wherever possible. Its republication in the interests of liberal Methodism in America in 1845, by an enterprising Methodist layman, W. S. Stockton, in two editions, many of which have found their way into public and private libraries, defeated forever the design of his opponents. Dr. Coke, the coadjutor of Moore, does not compare favorably with the man he would have buried in oblivion, as well as the story he tells. T. H. Stockton's Introduction to Whitehead's original work traverses his record in full, and it need not here be produced, as in other connections the same facts must be used. As a plagiarist, however, he out-herods Herod. His Bible Commentary is taken almost bodily from Dr. Dodd's, with Drew as his amanuensis. So with other writings bearing the imprint of Dr. Coke as author. The only apology for such conduct is in the fact that it was a period of loose ideas as to literary property; for, as it has been found, even Wesley's "Christian Library" is a mere compilation without credit, and other instances. All the annalists of Methodism to this day, save Tyerman, join in the old hue and cry against Whitehead. The apology for them is, they were mere echoes of the Coke, Moore, Conference party.

The Introduction to Whitehead, from which this Appendix is mostly quoted, sums up the case as follows: "It is plain that though there were three trustees, there were but two parties. Dr. Whitehead represented one, his associates the other. They wished to destroy; he to save. They to conceal; he to expose. They had given him the materials, without knowing his design and firmness, expecting, it would seem, to control the work; he, understanding their character and purposes, refused to surrender his advantage. His work tells the rest."

To the student of biography there are a number of remarkable coincidental parallels between the life of Rev. John Whitehead, M.D., and that of Rev. Samuel K. Jennings, M.D., the latter a prominent Reformer in American Methodism of 1820-35. Both of them were sound doctrinal Methodists; educated gentlemen; physicians in high standing; local ministers of wonderful popularity; advocates of popular rights in religion; persecuted for their opinions, and expelled from the same from church relations; appointed by unanimity biographers, the one of Wes-

ley, the other of Asbury, and both of them hindered and hampered for identical reasons in the prosecution of their work,—the latter successfully, as his opponents made it impossible for him to complete and publish his work. The memory of both has been amply vindicated from the aspersions of their enemies. These parallels will be farther developed when the life of Jennings is under review in this History.

Since the foregoing was written, Dr. Tigert's "History," 1894, comes under notice. It is altogether a strong work, but there is much information he seems to know nothing about. He has a copy of Whitehead's "Life," and he evidently thinks it relevant to give his readers in a foot-note the opinion of the Methodist preacher who first owned it, then young, but afterward eminent, of this phenomenal man, and it is this, "He was a bull-headed, self-conceited, prejudiced creature." Dr. Buckley, reviewing the work, is struck with the extravagance of these young men, and says: "Translate bull-headed, into firm to obstinacy; self-conceited, into a high opinion of his own abilities and influence; prejudiced, into having his mind made up on many things,—and you will have an excellent description of most men of force. A biography of Whitehead would undoubtedly exhibit many infirmities, but the lower he is placed, the lower Mr. Wesley, as a man of judgment, sinks." This is fair and just. Tigert, the "young man," taking his cue apparently from this other "young man," styles Whitehead, "this venomous physician." These things are in proof that too much space has not been given in this Appendix to a vindication of him. Tigert furnishes a fact, page 163, coupled with a kick he makes at the "dead lion," nowhere else mentioned by historians to the writer's knowledge, another evidence of the disposition to suppress any information redounding to Whitehead's credit—"Poor old Dr. Whitehead, buried though he is in the selfsame grave with Wesley, must be allowed his fling." Whitehead died in 1804, and Tigert does not pause to consider how great must have been the honor in which he was held by Wesleyan Methodists, thirteen years after Wesley's death, as to make this sepulchre deserving. He also furnishes the fact that an unexpurgated edition of Whitehead was published in Boston, 1844, or one year before that of Stockton, who purchased the plates, republished it, and from which these citations are made. One of Wesley's close friends, Rev. John Richardson, was also buried in the same tomb with him, showing that he was held in like honor as Whitehead in that day. Asbury records in his Journal, February 23, 1813, "I have looked into Whitehead's 'Life of Wesley'; he is vilified. O, shame!" No other opinion could be expected of him.

Rev. Dr. Collins Denny, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, furnishes the confirmatory information as to Whitehead's place of sepulchre. "Illustrated Hand-book to City Road Chapel," etc., by Ralph M. Spoor, London, etc., page 53, says, "In the same vault with Wesley are interred his sister, Martha Hall, Revs. Duncan Wright, Thomas Bradshaw, John Richardson, John Newlin, Walter Griffith, and Thomas Olivers; also Dr. Whitehead, physician to the old Bethlehem Hospital, who preached Wesley's funeral sermon to a vast crowd on the morning of the interment."

APPENDIX B

AT SAMUEL HAGUE'S, ESQ., LEEDS, April 14, 1813.

DEAR AND HIGHLY RESPECTED SIR, — A subject which appears to me of great moment lies upon my mind, and yet it is a subject of such a delicate nature, that I cannot venture to open my mind upon it to any one of whose candor, piety, delicacy, and honor I have not the highest opinion. Such a character I do indubitably esteem you, sir, and as such I will run the risk of opening my whole heart to you upon the point.

For at least twelve years, sir, the interests of our Indian empire have lain very near my heart. In several instances I have made attempts to open a way for missions to that country, and even for my going over there myself, but everything proved abortive.

The prominent desire of my soul, even from my infancy (I may almost say), has been to be useful. Even when I was a deist for part of my time at Oxford, (what a miracle of grace!) usefulness was my most darling object. The Lord has been pleased to fix me for about thirty-seven years on a point of great usefulness. My influence in the large Wesleyan connection, the introduction and superintendence of our missions in different parts of the globe, and the wide sphere opened to me for the preaching of the gospel to almost innumerable large and attentive congregations, have opened to me a very extensive field for usefulness. Could I but close my life in being the means of raising a spiritual church in India, it would satisfy the utmost ambition of my soul here below.

I am not so much wanted in our connection at home as I once was. Our "committee of privileges," as we term it, can watch over the interests of the body, in respect to laws and government, as well in my absence as if I was with them. Our missionary committee in London can do the same in respect to missious, and would only make them feel their duty more incumbent upon them. Auxiliary committees through the nation, (which we have now in contemplation,) will amply supply my place in respect to raising money. There is nothing to influence me much against going to India, but my extensive sphere for preaching the gospel. But this I do assure you, sir, sinks considerably in my calculation in comparison of the high honor, (if the Lord was to confer it upon me in his providence and grace,) of beginning or reviving a genuine work of religion in the immense regions of Asia.

Impressed with these views, I wrote a letter about a fortnight ago to the earl of Liverpool. I have either mislaid the copy of it or destroyed it at the time for fear of its falling into improper hands. After an introduction drawn up in the most delicate manner in my power, I took notice of the observations made by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons, concerning a religious establishment in India connected with the established Church at home. I then simply opened my situation in the Wesleyan connection as I have stated to you, sir, above. I enlarged on the earnest desire I had of closing my life in India: observing that if his royal highness the prince regent and the government should think proper

to appoint me their bishop in India, I should most cheerfully and most gratefully accept the offer. I am sorry I have lost the copy of this letter. In my letter to Lord Liverpool I observed that I should, in case of my appointment to the Episcopacy of India, return most fully and faithfully into the bosom of the established Church, and do everything in my power to promote its interest, and would submit to all such restrictions in the fulfilment of my office as the government and bench of bishops at home should think necessary. That my prime motive was to be useful to the Europeans in India; and that my second (though not the least) was to introduce the Christian religion among the Hindoos by the preaching of the gospel and perhaps also by the establishment of schools.

I have not, sir, received an answer. Did I think that the answer was either withheld because Lord Liverpool considered me as acting very improperly by making the request, I should take no farther step in the business. This may be the case, but his lordship's silence may have arisen from other motives: on the one hand because he did not choose to send me an absolute refusal, and on the other hand because he did not see proper, at least just now, to give me any encouragement. When I was in doubt this morning whether I ought to take the liberty of writing to you, my mind became determined on my being informed about three hours ago, that in a letter received from you by Mr. Hey, you observed that the generality of the House of Commons were set against granting anything of an imperative kind to the Dissenters or Methodists in favor of sending missionaries to India. Probably I may err in respect to the exact words which you used.

I am not conscious, my dear respected sir, that the least degree of ambition influences me in this business. I possess a fortune of £1,200 a year, which is sufficient to bear my travelling expenses, and to enable me to make many charitable donations. I have lost two dear wives, and am now a widower. Our leading friends through the connection receive me and treat me with the utmost respect and hospitality. I am quite surrounded with friends who greatly love me: but India still cleaves to my heart. I sincerely believe that my strong inclinations to spend the remainder of my life in India originated in the divine will, whilst I am called upon to use the secondary means to obtain the end.

I have formed an intimate acquaintance with Dr. Buchanan, and have written to him to inform him that I shall make him a visit in a few days, if it be convenient. From his house I intend, *Deo volante*, to return to Leeds for a day, and then set off next week for London. The latter end of last November I visited him before at Moat Hall, his place of residence, and a most pleasant visit it was to me, and also to him I have reason to think. He has been, since I saw him, drinking of the same bitter cup of which I have been drinking, by the loss of a beloved wife.

I would just observe, sir, that a hot climate peculiarly agrees with me. I was never better in my life than when in the West Indies, during the four visits I made to that Archipelago, and should now prefer the torrid zone as a climate to any part of the world. I enjoy in this country, though sixty-five years of age, such an uninterrupted flow of health and strength

as astonishes all my acquaintances. They commonly observe that they have perceived no difference in me for these last twenty years.

I would observe, sir, as I did at the commencement, that I throw myself on your candor, piety, and honor. If I do not succeed in my views of India, and it were known among the preachers that I had been taking the steps I am now taking, (though from a persuasion that I am in the divine will in so doing,) it might more or less affect my usefulness in the vineyard of my Lord, and that would very much afflict me. And yet, notwithstanding this, I cannot satisfy myself without some advances in the business.

I consider, sir, your brother-in-law, Mr. Stephen, to be a man of eminent worth. I have a very high esteem for him. I know that his yea is yea, and what he promises he certainly will perform. Without some promise of confidence he might (if he were unacquainted with the present business) mention it to Mr. —, with whom I know Mr. Stephen is acquainted.

I have reason to believe that Lord Eldon had (indeed I am sure of it) and probably now has an esteem for me. Lord Sidmouth I do think loves me. Lord Castlereagh once expressed to Mr. Alexander Knox, then his private secretary in Ireland, his very high regard for me; since that time I have had one interview with his lordship in London. I have been favored on various occasions with private and public interviews with Lord Bathurst. I shall be glad to have your advice whether I should write letters to those noblemen, particularly to the two first, on the present subject, or whether I had not better suspend everything and have the pleasure of seeing you in London. I hope I shall have that honor. I shall be glad to receive three or four lines from you (don't write unless you think it may be of some immediate importance,) signifying that I may wait on you immediately on my arrival in London. If Mr. — were acquainted with the steps I am taking, he would I am nearly sure call immediately a meeting of our committee of privileges, and the consequences might be unfavorable to my influence and consequently to my usefulness among the Methodists. But my mind must be eased. I must venture this letter and leave the whole to God, and under him, sir, to you.

With very high respect, my dear sir, your very much obliged, very humble, and very faithful servant,

T. COKE.

APPENDIX C

THIS reference of Asbury in his Journal to the letter he wrote Wesley by "desire of the Virginia Conference" is deemed too important to be passed by the Book Agent at New York, who annotated in places the Journal when it was published about 1822. Dr. Bangs was Book Agent from 1816-24, and the foot-note is probably his work. It is so adroit as containing an implication of Episcopacy by regular succession that it must be cited in full with comments. It reads: "The answer to this

letter was made through Dr. Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey, in 1784,¹ who all came to America properly ordained. And here I will take occasion to correct a mistake into which Dr. Whitehead has fallen in his 'Life of Wesley.' It is in that work stated that, had Mr. Wesley obtained the consent of the American preachers and people, he might have sent ministers regularly ordained to the society in that part of the world; the truth is that the American Methodists, both preachers and people, wished to have such ministers among them, that they might partake, like other Christian societies, of the ordinances of the Church of God; and when ministers did thus come, they received them generally and joyfully. I will farther presume that Wesley received few letters from America in which that subject was not pressed upon him." Dr. Bangs correcting Dr. Whitehead, considering their respective opportunities of knowing, is a spectacle. Mr. Wesley himself tells that he besought the Bishop of London to ordain only a few of his preachers, that he might send them to America; but he refused, because as Methodist preachers he could not ordain them without violating the canons of the National Church. When Whitehead asserts that Wesley might have sent "regularly ordained" ministers, he meant clergy of the National Church, some one or more of those who were cooperating with Wesley at the time in England, the fact being that Whitehead always scouted the idea of Wesley ordaining any one as an Episcopalian. It was impossible for Dr. Bangs to know the contrary of Whitehead's assertion. "The truth is," that while the American preachers and people wished the ordinances and ordination, they wished them on a Presbyterian basis; witness the whole controversy now pending between Asbury and the large majority of preachers and people. They were impatient of the whole Episcopal business, and were as much out with it as they were with King George, who represented both the Church and the Crown, and they were repudiating both. Even Asbury did not want "regularly ordained clergy" of the National Church sent over; for, as firmly as he was wedded to the hierarchy as a system of government in the Church, he knew that such a proceeding would supersede him in authority, and thus destroy his primacy in America. What he really wanted was for Wesley to come over in person, ordain him, quell the Presbyterian element among the preachers and people, and leave him as head of the societies in America, as Wesley was head of the societies elsewhere in the world. And Wesley for a time, under the persuasions of

¹ It is true that just one year before Wesley wrote a letter to the Conference, instigated, Tigert thinks, by one Dromgoole who had written to Wesley May 24, 1783. Wesley's answer bore date October 3, 1783, in which this paragraph occurs: "I do not wish our American brethren to receive any who make a difficulty of receiving Francis Ashury as the General Assistant." Dromgoole's letter had plead for the restoration of Asbury. It remains, however, true that Ashury was not re-commissioned as such until 1784. Ashury construed it as a reappointment, and so claimed, as he sets forth in his Journal, Vol. I. p. 468. He was at Pettigrew's, one of the friendly Episcopal clergymen. "Here I received a letter from Mr. Wesley, in which he directs me to act as general assistant," etc. It was, however, addressed to the Conference, Stevens says. Tigert makes much of these points as answering the purpose of his argument. See his "History," pp. 134, 135.

Asbury's letters, entertained the idea of going to America; but he was now seventy-seven years of age, and was deterred from the voyage, as well as by the opposing opinions of the returned missionaries as to Asbury's aspirations. There are but two sentences in this remarkable footnote of Dr. Bangs's that are not false to fact and fallacious in argument: the opening and closing ones.

APPENDIX D

THE ensuing letter of Simon Sommers to Bishop Asbury will be given as literally as types can be made to convey it, noting that in the two copies now before the writer a slight difference of address is made, the one being "Dr. Sir" and the other "Dr. Br." The former is taken as our guide, as being slightly more legible.

August 6th, 1798.

Dr. Sir.

I received your book (containing the articles and rules of discipline of the Methodist Church in America with the Notes) as a mark of friendship. You request me to give you my opinion on the said rules, but as I find the book contains 187 pages, to answer each section and note would lead me beyond the limits of a letter, therefore shall confine myself to one or two sections. Our rules are like the invention of many other good men who have their perfection and imperfection and may be justly compared to a pile of good grain that has so much chaff among it, which renders it unfit for market, for I fear that so soon as the Notes are fully known our church will be in a worse situation than it is at present. There are several things in the rules which have been disputed, and some have been construed differently by the preachers: but now the veil is taken away, or is explained in such a manner as is no way pleasing to the greater part of our judicious members; for in almost every part where the clergy is mentioned from the highest order to the lowest, their authority is asserted in pointed terms.

The Note on the section for the trial of lay members contains about seven pages, which is to be the subject of the present letter. I shall consider it with candor both as to scripture and reason. Your explication on the texts of scripture, brought forward to prove that the clergy have power over the laity, I can in no wise believe to be their true meaning, because the greater part of them certainly condemns the very thing you wish to establish, and I find them explained in a different way by some of the most noted English divines that have wrote upon the subject. In the beginning of your Note on this section, you say, that as we live under the gospel dispensation, we must be confined to the New "Testament." It will be well if some of the preachers find the precepts of the old to be done away, as there are so many severe denunciations against the Priests under the old dispensation for usurping authority over the laity, as this fact is so well known to you, will come to the New Testament.

The first passage you bring forward is the 18th, chapter of Matthew, and believe it to be one of the most awful lessons to both preachers and laymen (but particularly the ministers) that we find in Holy writ, and does most surely secure the laity from the power of the clergy in pointed terms; but as it was then so it is now, who shall be greatest? But our Lord well knew this was Satan's work, and for the purpose of curing this lamentable disorder (the thirst for power) he takes a little child and set him in the midst and plainly told them, except ye be converted and become (as free from pride and ambition) as a little child, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. He then told them the most humble is the greatest in the kingdom; and for the better securing of the little ones (new converts, the laity) from the power of them, and all succeeding preachers, he denounces a dreadful woe to all be they who they may that should offend one of these little ones; and that it might be the deeper rooted in the heart, he warns them again, and then the third time tells them the reason, for "their angels do behold the face of my father which is in heaven." O ye ministers of the gospel, who contend so strenuously for power over the laity, I wonder how you can read our Lord's words, without sinking into the deepest humiliation.

Now it is plain to me our Lord was so far from telling his disciples to cast members out of the church, without the consent of the church, as you tell the preachers now, he has pointed out a different and more pleasing work to every humble minister; forgiving injuries and seeking the lost sheep. "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." Then follows the text you have first quoted, and so strenuously applied, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" etc. You then tell us these words were addressed to the apostles and through them to all the ministers of Christ to the end of the world; this is evident from the words immediately following the question, and which are a continuation of the same paragraph, and would not belong to the private members of the church. So then by the same rule private members are excluded from the promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," as it is a continuation of the same paragraph. Now from your doctrine lay members are not taught by this chapter to be humble, not to forbid one of these little ones, not to tell his brother his fault, though he may trespass against him, not a right to claim the promise of the Lord to be in the midst, though they may meet and pray in Christ's name, not to forgive injuries, all which I can no more believe, than I can that lay members may not receive the Lord's supper, because when first instituted by our Lord, it was first given to the twelve apostles; but contrary to even commentators which I have lately read on this passage, you have excluded laymen from telling his brother his fault, or the church, though he may be personally offended, and has given the power to the minister, and tell us of the first and second reproof given by the ministers, and then ask a question that I believe was never asked by any Christian before; shall these two or three witnesses proceed to exclude him, but why this ques-

tion is asked I know not, as I know of no such precedent in Christendom. Our Lord says tell it to the church, but the church you say has no authority to judge and determine the case, but how is he to hear the church, if the church has no such power? Or, how is the offender to be tried? there is no way if we follow your note on this passage, but the preacher who is the accuser to be both judge and executioner which is contrary to scripture and reason, to all law human and divine, and must be deemed by every humble Christian, an empty show for the most wise and prudent preacher (say nothing of the proud and haughty), to call the church together (as the Nabobs do their slaves) for no other purpose, than to show his authority; from the above it is clear when our Lord speaks of the church, he does not mean Peter, John, James, or Paul, and am sure much less of any single preacher of later times, but most certainly includes ministers and laymembers.

This is evident, the church is to judge and determine, the minister to execute. We find our Lord often reproved the disciples for their disputing and strife, who should be the greatest. He plainly told them the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them, were called benefactors, but ye shall not be so etc. Peter well remembered his Lord's command, when he told the elders not to lord it over God's heritage. Paul appeared to have learned the same lesson, when he writes to Timothy, the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient. I therefore conclude the clergy has not that power you say they have.

Your recorded proof for establishing the power of the clergy is in 5th, chapter, 1st, Cor, but do not find one word to the ministers separate from the church in the whole chapter. The apostle determined what ought to be done himself, which was perfectly right. He an apostle of the Gentiles had planted a church in the idolatrous city of Corinth, the scripture was not compiled at that time as we have it now, and that part of the New Testament that was then wrote in loose sheets, and less known than the old, consequently no regular discipline in the church, it is natural to suppose they were at a loss to know how to proceed, but the apostle writes and gives them a form (but very different from yours) — "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together, and myspirit (concurring) with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to deliver such a one to Satan etc." He then gives the reason, which was "to purge out the old leaven" etc., and also reminds them he had wrote to them before, not to company with fornicators, but now I have written unto you not to keep company; if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat, for what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do ye not judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Wherefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

This is the form our Lord gave his disciples, tell it to the church, worthy of imitation, put away from among yourselves that wicked person, this power the church has and are directed to exercise it both as to cen-

sure and readmission upon true repentance. To prove this point I refer you to 2d, Cor, 2d, chapter, 6th, verse. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment which was inflicted of many" (not one), and so far was the good apostle from asserting his authority as too many do in our day, he beseeches the church to confirm their love toward him that had offended. The above facts are so plain, and are the opinion of so many ancient and modern divines, you will please to excuse me for not agreeing with you when you say, the minister at Corinth was unfaithful, he connived at the enormous crime, either because he did not love the cause of holiness, which is the cause of God, or because he gave way to the evil solicitations of the "people," that "Paul steps into the minister's place and cuts him off." As I cannot find this assertion in the word of God shall leave it as I find it, and proceed to your third proof for establishing the absolute authority of the clergy over the laity, and if there is one passage in the revelation that proves it, I am not the only one that is mistaken, but many able divines have been and are now in ignorance.

In the 1st, chapter of the Revelation, John dedicates his vision to the seven churches, which were under his immediate inspection, the ministry not mentioned which is certainly a warning to all the churches of the world: in the 2d, and 3d, chapter John as a prophet writes to the angel, or minister, say some, and through them to the churches, commending the good and condemning the evil that prevailed in each church, with suitable promises and threats, and their final end, if they did not repent of their evil deeds, both as to doctrine, and works; but contrary to Bishop Newton and several other learned commentators, you apply this epistle to the ministers, and say with what high approbation our Lord does here express himself concerning the determined opposition of the chief minister of the church of Ephesus." Surely you do not attend to the whole epistle, or you would have seen that the chief minister had left his first love, and was fallen, which is far from being a high commendation, but it is plain our Lord did not apply the commendation or reproof to the minister alone but to the church. "Remember then from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works, or else I will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent, but this thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes which I also hate; he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."

From the close of this and the other six epistles it is clear the power is in the church, and not in the ministers alone. The church is exhorted to hear what the spirit saith, the church is to be removed out of its place, if she will not hear and obey what the spirit saith, surely none but the ambitious will say that our dear Lord would remove a church out of its place for a negligent or wicked minister, unless it was for suffering such a minister to remain with them in the church. This is evident from what is said of the church at Smyrna (which you took care to pass over), after commending this church for her poverty (which is the way to become rich) and then to encourage them saith, for none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil will cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried and ye shall have tribulation ten days, "be

thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." I think you will not say that this church had a plurality of ministers; that none was to suffer but themselves, or that Christ who is in the midst of his church did not care so much for the lay members as to give them the promise of a crown of life for their faithfulness, but the contrary is manifest from what is said to John in the first chapter of the book. John was directed to write in a book and send it to the seven churches of Asia, unto Ephesus, unto Smyrna, and Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea, and in the last chapter 16th, verse, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches," etc., the ministry not mentioned.

I therefore conclude the church has the power, including ministers and all the spiritual members. More might be said in answer to your 4th, proof, the epistle of the church of Pergamos and Thyatira, but an answer to one answers the whole with respect to the power, and am sure there is nothing more plain in the word of God than that all the spiritual members that meet together to worship constitute a church be they ministers or lay members; that the power is in the church, whose wisdom must be superior to any ambitious individual on earth.

I come now to your last proof for establishing power over the laity in the last chapter of Paul to the Hebrews, 7th, verse—"remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation—obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls etc." Here Paul exhorts the Hebrews, who were a stiff-necked and disobedient people and much attached to their old form of worship to submit to the godly conversation of their spiritual guides, but not as legislators to give laws to the church of Christ, not as lords to tyrannize over God's heritage, neither as circuit judges, but to submit to the doctrines of the gospel of Christ which they had heard from those that were among them, and whoever will read this epistle with attention will discover that the apostle had nothing in view with respect to power, but to convince the Hebrew converts not to think anything of their old forms of worship in meats and drinks and divers washings, but point them to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. That Paul meant no other subjection is plain from what we read in his first epistle to the Corinthians, last chapter 15th, and 16th, verses. "I beseech you brethren, ye know the house of Stephanus that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with and laboreth." That Stephanus was a layman no one will deny, yet the Christians are exhorted to submit themselves to all such, which can mean no more than the holy conversation of both preacher and laymen respecting the doctrines of the gospel of Christ which ought to be submitted to. I read in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians that the church is subject to Christ, but I cannot find in scripture the church is subject to any human head upon earth, I conclude that all who claim it are usurpers. We read of one in St. John's day, but there appear many in this our day (John

3d, epistle) "I wrote unto the church but Diotrephes who loveth to have the preëminence among them," in casting the brethren out of the church is severely reprovèd by the great apostle. That Diotrephes was a minister and was threatened by the apostle for his ambition, I think no one will deny — "He loveth to have the preëminence among them" (the church) but Christ by his apostle reprovèd, and Christ by his word reprovès all who love to have the preëminence to the end of time; it is clear from scripture neither of the apostles claimed any preëminence over each other, neither had the inferior clergy power over the laity, but the church was invested with the power having Christ for its head, and does by his spirit (when not opposed) guide her into all truth.

I will now consider the subject in the light of reason and as to what you have said under this head appears rather to darken counsel than to enlighten the mind and fly from one extreme to another, but I am of opinion the truth lies between the two extremes: "for the husband to judge in the church his wife, the wife the husband, the parent the child, the child his parent, the brother the sister, the sister her brother, the master the servant, the servant the master," are neither the language of scripture nor reason; but are all the preachers single men? Have they no parents? no children, no relations, no servants, no favorites in the church? Yes, and you have constituted the preachers the sole judge of them all. May I not cry out with the prophet Jeremiah and say "a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by this means, and my people love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?" You have prudently constituted a court for the trial of the preachers, in the first instance the court of inquiry must consist of at least three ministers, and if a presiding elder there must be one of his own grade, and if the offender is found guilty he is only suspended until the ensuing district conference, when he is to be tried before the whole conference composed of ministers, and after this is allowed an appeal to the quarterly conference, but how different is it from the form of trial of a layman, who is brought before one of the circuit judges, he may be a prudent, good man, a proud ambitious tyrant, or one that drinks much spirituous liquors, an adulterer, etc.

It is well known all these characters have been in the travelling connexion (and although you abhor them as much as I do, they must be detected before they can be expelled), whose judgment alone is to determine the trial of a member without the consent of the church — to say the church is obliged to consent to what the preacher does is one of the highest degrees of tyranny; it is true the lay member has an appeal to the next quarterly conference which may be so far distant or poor members cannot attend with their witnesses — but admit they can, from your note, they are a body almost entirely composed of men who are more or less engaged in the ministry of the word, or you could not have allowed an appeal, so that a lay member has not the slightest chance from first to last to be tried by those of his own order. The lay members of the church of Christ, the Lamb's wife, who are thus degraded by a self

created body of legislators who have given the judicial and executive power to each travelling preacher, which are separate branches in the constitution of our country and ought not to exist in the church of Christ, however such proceedings might be received by those under regal authority I know not, but I am sure cannot exist and prosper long in this country being blessed with a constitution superior to any in the world.

Permit me then to give you my light on turning a member out of the church: when a personal offense is given, let the offender follow our Lord's direction, as in the 18th, of Matthew. If the offense is not of a personal nature, but is an offense against the church, let the minister if convenient, if not any other spiritual member, deal with him precisely as our Lord has above directed, but if this does not cure the offender tell it to the church, the society to which he belongs. If there be two or more male members born of God, and known to be spiritual members, in the said society, uncorrupted by blood, marriage or otherwise, as might render them unfit to judge in such a case, and where there are no such members in any of our societies, or where there are a great many in either case, let a select number of like disinterested spiritual members be called upon, let the minister and said members proceed to try the offender, as laid down in our form of discipline, and if equally divided the side, the minister is to determine the case. But if it should so happen that a member was kept in society contrary to the opinion of the minister (which would seldom happen) he cannot be compelled to administer the holy sacrament to such a member until proper humiliation appears (can any one object to this?).

It is plain none but the spiritual members have a right to judge in the church. Women (and all the unconverted members, the catachumens), have no right as appears from Paul's first letter to the Cor, 2d, chapter, 15th, verse, but he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man (that is not spiritual). David, in speaking on this subject 149 Psalm—"This honor have all his saints." See, Whitby's Notes on the 6th, verse, 2d, chapter of 2d, Cor. It is well known that the power claimed by too many of the clergy has been the cause of the greatest contentions and the greatest curse that ever was in the Christian church. It must be the offspring of Hell nourished and trained up in France, and Spain, etc, or we should find the purest religion in those churches where the highest degree of favor was exercised, if favor to the clergy was necessary to promote true religion; but the contrary is manifest, that power in the clergy makes hypocrites, but seldom makes converts to God. Who then is most like Satan? He that is most proud and haughty: who is most like the Son of God? He that is most humble, meek and lowly. Lord hear my earnest prayer and make me one of the most humble, that thou mayest hasten the time when this shall be the only strife in thy church, who shall be the most humble, then we shall see an earnest seeking after these poor, lost sheep that have wandered out of the way on account of the power, then shall we see them returning like the lambs of the flock to their mothers with tokens of the

greatest joy, then poor sinners would fear and tremble and Hell would shake to its centre, then would our church become the praise of all the earth to see all the ministers and laymen in sweet reunion again.

Much more might be said from scripture to prove the church has the power, and it cannot be denied that in all countries where the clergy have power that there were great and good men who cried against it, knowing that power in the clergy was the downfall of true religion. Lord inspire thy church with true wisdom to combine to alter and amend all things that may be most pleasing in thy sight.

I remain as ever yours in love.

S'M. SOMMERS.

Comment by the author. What if this lay-master of Scripture and reason had gone through the whole Discipline of 1796-97? Evidently the good Bishop did not farther seek his criticism. That Sommers should single out the rule for the trial of laymen, with its arbitrary addition, is in proof how offensive it was, so soon as published, to the Church, to all self-respecting laymen. The personal history of Sommers as a layman in the M. E. Church is not much known outside of this letter, except the items furnished by his granddaughter to the author. It is not to be wondered at that he withdrew shortly after; it may be under pressure brought to bear upon him by the Bishop's adherents for his bold and unanswerable objections to the existing law. Rev. W. C. Lipscomb, who knew him personally, says he did not formally unite with O'Kelly, though there was a flourishing society near his residence, but he became an active Reformer from 1820. As bearing perhaps upon the provocatives of this very letter of Sommers to Asbury, even before the stringent enactment of 1796, there is a significant note in Asbury's Journal, under date November 21, 1794, "We had a list of names from Fairfax, who required an explanation of a minute in our form of discipline, relative to the trial of members; inquiring whether the 'select members were as witnesses or judges, and had power to vote members in or out of society' (Sec. 8, p. 5). We answered them." Was Sommers at the head of this list? It would be interesting to know. And was it the inciting cause of a present of the Discipline of 1796, with Notes, as "a token of friendship" to him from the Bishop?

APPENDIX E

BOARD OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

THIS paper is furnished by Rev. C. J. Berrien, Corresponding Secretary. The first reference to any organized or systematic effort to give financial assistance to candidates for the ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church known to the writer of this sketch is found in the minutes of the General Conference of delegates from the northern and western confer-

ences held at Pittsburg, Pa., November 14–19, 1860. The following resolution was adopted, offered by Rev. W. H. Miller of the New York and Vermont Conferences: “Resolved, that we recommend the organization of Educational Societies in all our churches for the purpose of procuring means to assist poor but worthy young men in preparing for the work of the ministry.” Also “Resolved, that Rev. John Scott, D.D., and Rev. William Collier, and Rev. William Reeves be appointed a committee to prepare a uniform plan for the organization and government of said societies.”

There is nothing on record to show that this movement produced anything more than local interest and results until after the formation of the Board of Ministerial Education, when these auxiliary societies in the churches for some years rendered very efficient aid. January 19, 1866, a meeting was held in Springfield, O., of ministers and members of the Church of the city and its vicinity. The “Call” says, “Impressed with the inadequacy and inefficiency of our Annual Conference arrangements to sufficiently advise and assist young men who might desire to enter the ministry, and that there was no channel through which the whole Church could unite in assisting her sons in obtaining an education for the work of the ministry;” and, fully believing that it would meet the unqualified approbation both of the ministry and the laity, they proceeded to organize a Board of Ministerial Education at this and an adjourned meeting. They formed a Constitution and by-laws, and elected the following as members of the Board: Revs. George Brown, D.D., M. B. V. Euans, J. S. Thrap, S. Bartlett, G. H. Binkley, and Alexander Clark, A.M., and Messrs. J. G. Evans, T. J. Finch, T. Douglass, and J. J. Ware.

The Board organized by electing Rev. J. S. Thrap, President; Rev. M. B. V. Euans, Secretary; Rev. J. B. Walker, Corresponding Secretary; and T. J. Finch, Treasurer. It began at once raising funds and receiving applications of properly recommended candidates. Friends in Cincinnati, O., and Pittsburgh, Pa., contributed generously in forming a permanent fund, the interest of which to be used for the purposes of the Board. Of these first contributors James Hicks of Cincinnati gave \$2000, Daniel H. Horne of Cincinnati, \$500, and Dr. John Sargent of New Brighton, Pa., \$200. The Board continued under this management until the General Conference of November 14–20, 1866, in Alleghany, Pa., when its management and assets were tendered to it to become one of “the general interests” of the whole Church. It was accepted after a committee had carefully examined the whole matter. There was in the treasury available for the purposes of the Board at the time \$600, and also a permanent fund of \$2500 invested in United States bonds. The Constitution and by-laws of the Board were adopted, and they have continued substantially the same to the present time. The location of the Board was changed from Springfield, O., to Pittsburgh, Pa., where it has remained ever since. The following Board was elected to serve for the ensuing quadrennium: Revs. James Robison, Valentine Lucas, Alexander Clark, A.M., J. B. Walker (ex-officio), and Messrs. Wm. Rinehart, R. H. Marshall, and J. H. Claney. Rev. J. B. Walker was elected Corresponding Secretary. The new

Board organized by electing Rev. James Robison, President; Wm. Rinehart, Recording Secretary, and John H. Claney, Treasurer. For thirty years the faithful treasurer had been continued, until 1896, when the General Conference merged the office into that of the Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer.

Its first report was issued January 1, 1867, and it showed that seven young men were pursuing their studies under its care, properly recommended by the following annual conferences: New Jersey, one; Onondaga, one; Genesee, one; Pittsburgh, three, and Ohio, one. Since its organization the Board has had upon its roll the names of 262 young men, who have received aid for various periods, from a single term at college to the entire course of six years, and in later years the course also in the theological department. To carry this work to the present, May, 1897, over \$109,000 have been expended. This has been contributed by churches, individuals, interest from invested funds, and return payments by the beneficiaries. The Permanent Fund, including original contributions and the amount already paid of the Rev. J. B. Walker Memorial Fund, now amounts to \$7592.56. Besides this the Board has the mortuary notes of Christopher Link of Paris, Ill., for \$1000, Rev. Tilghman and Clara Bailey of Colfax, Ind., for \$500, and an annuity note of Dr. H. G. S. Fink of Springdale, Pa., for \$500. In addition there are interest-bearing notes and pledges of the Walker Memorial Fund of over \$3000.

Any historical sketch of the work done for Ministerial Education would be imperfect without conspicuous mention of the services of the late Rev. J. B. Walker, who, from its origin, filled the office of Corresponding Secretary until his death, December 23, 1890. The report of his successor, Rev. J. C. Berrien, to the General Conference of 1892 says: "He died in the harness. For nearly twenty-five years he gave continuous and indefatigable labor to this interest. He was a man of thorough consecration to God and to the work. Possessed of boundless enthusiasm, unflinching tact, and unceasing in labor, there is hardly a church in the entire connection he has not visited, hardly a member in all the land who did not know him personally. Their names are legion who in his death sustained a personal loss, and who testify that it was his impassioned appeals to young people to seek that triple education of mind, body, and soul that first awakened in them the mental thirst for knowledge, and enkindled in them a holy ambition to do more in this life than simply live. The wise and successful labors of this servant of God make it possible for the Church to carry on the work he began and sustained so long; but the Church cannot fill his place. He is justly called the 'father of ministerial education in the Methodist Protestant Church.'"

The Board, at a special meeting, March, 1891, elected Rev. J. C. Berrien, then pastor of the church at Beaver Falls, Pa., to fill the unexpired term, and this choice has been indorsed at the General Conferences of 1892 and 1896. The General Conference of 1875 amended the Constitution so that from that time aid given to young men would be in the form of a loan without interest, to be refunded to the Board at the rate of ten per

cent of the salary received after the beneficiary entered the active work of the ministry. In case he leaves the Church, or engages in secular pursuits, he shall refund the whole amount with interest from the time it was received. Applicants for aid must be members of the Church for at least one year before they can receive aid, and must be recommended by the quarterly conference, of the charge of which they are members, to the annual conference, who, if satisfied with the character, attainments, fitness, and motives for entering the ministry, etc., of the applicant, his recommendation is indorsed, and he is commended to the examining committee at one of the official colleges of the Church who are elected by the General Conference. This committee, if satisfied as to the fitness of the candidate, take him under their care, report to the Board his college standing and the amounts of appropriation desired with their recommendation each term while he remains in college under their care.

The experience of those identified with this work in all the denominations demonstrates that, of all the men who believe God has called them to prepare for the work of the ministry, fully one-half must have financial aid to avail themselves of the privileges of the college and seminary. If the conditions of recommendation are faithfully observed by the quarterly and annual conferences, it is believed that the best material of the Church will be secured by these methods. While all the general interests of the Church are vitally important, none can surpass that of giving needed assistance to those carefully selected who are to furnish the working force of the Church, preaching the gospel, and to become wise and devoted leaders; for upon the personnel of the ministry of the Church depends more than any other human factor its success in realizing the end for which it exists.

The Board is constituted at present as follows: John F. Cooper, M.D., President; Rev. B. W. Anthony, Recording Secretary; John H. Claney, J. W. Knott, Rev. J. C. Berrien, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. Examining Committee at Adrian: D. C. Thomas, Ph.D., G. B. McElroy, D.D., J. S. Thrap, D.D., Geo. Shaffer, D.D., W. N. Swift. Examining Committee at Westminster: T. H. Lewis, D.D., H. L. Elderdice, A.M., B.D., Rev. W. R. Graham, D.D., J. W. Hering, M.D., Charles Billingslea.

APPENDIX F

THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

THE data and most of the language of this sketch were furnished by Mrs. Mary A. Miller, except the first and last paragraphs.

The initial, though tentative, work in the direction indicated by the women of the Methodist Protestant Church, so far as is known, was made in Baltimore, through the years 1872-78, under the leadership of Mrs. J. T. Murray and Miss Jane R. Roberts. The effort has been sufficiently noticed in the body of this History. For the lack of organization

of our own they contributed their funds to the Baltimore Society of the M. E. Church, as the women of Pittsburgh did, in 1879, through the Woman's Union Home Missionary Society of New York for the same reason.

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Protestant Church was organized on the fourteenth day of February, 1879. The inspiration which led to the movement was given by Miss Elizabeth M. Guthrie, a missionary from Japan, who had been a teacher in the Woman's Union Home in Yokohama, which Home is under the care of the Woman's Union Home Missionary Society of New York. It was through this society that a few of the ladies of the Pittsburgh and Alleghany M. P. churches did their first foreign missionary work; and it was through it that Rev. Dr. William Collier, stationed then at Connellsville, Pa., sent the first money raised for a scholarship. Afterward the Board of Missions also contributed money, which was sent to sustain scholarships in the Homes of the society in India and Japan; and continued this until after the opening of its mission in Yokohama, in 1880.

It was while money was being sent in this way to the Union Society, that the particular help given by the Church was brought to the notice of Miss Guthrie. Money coming at an opportune time enabled her to receive into the Home two little girls who otherwise would have been sold by their parents. The circumstances so impressed Miss Guthrie that she determined, when she should return to America, to find some of our churches to tell the people of the good being done by their help. The opportunity came to her on this wise. While in attendance at the Woman's Christian Association in Pittsburgh, she lingered at the close of the meeting to talk with some of the members, and was introduced to Mrs. H. B. O'Neil by the President, who remarked, "This is one of our Methodist Protestant sisters." Miss Guthrie was rejoiced to thus providentially meet with a member of the Church which had been instrumental in aiding the Home in a time of great need; and she immediately informed Mrs. O'Neil of the circumstances referred to above.

Her words fell into a heart already warm with zeal for foreign missions, and it was through Mrs. O'Neil that Miss Guthrie was introduced to the preachers of Pittsburgh and vicinity at their Monday meeting. The result of that interview was a notice read from the pulpits for a meeting of women to consider the practicability of forming a woman's society. The outcome was the permanent organization, on February 14, 1879, with the following officers: Mrs. John Scott, President; Mrs. James F. Bennett, Mrs. F. H. Collier, and Mrs. William Wragg, Vice Presidents; Mrs. J. H. Claney, Recording Secretary; Mrs. H. B. O'Neil, Treasurer; and two ladies from each church in the vicinity elected to the Board of Managers. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, pledging the society to work in harmony with the Church's Board of Missions, at the same time reserving the privilege of controlling its own funds. On the treasurer's books the following four named persons have the honor of being the first contributors to the society: Mrs. M. A.

Miller, Mrs. Barnhil, Mrs. A. Aughenbaugh, and Mrs. W. K. Gillespie. The society was advertised through a column in the *Methodist Recorder*; and as the work advanced it was found that the local constitution and by-laws were not adapted to a wider reach so as to include the entire denomination, and amendments were made accordingly. The annual conferences were districted into branches, each branch to include auxiliaries. The administration of the affairs of the Society was committed to an executive committee, or board.

Miss Guthrie having expressed a wish to go to Japan as a missionary of the Society, her application was considered November 20, 1879, but as the Society was young and its funds within \$300 the undertaking seemed too great. Efforts were made to increase the interest, but it grew slowly; so that at the first annual meeting only one auxiliary outside of Pittsburgh had reported, and that was at Franklin, Mich. The Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, being in the city, was invited to attend the anniversary meeting. A conference was had as to the employment of Miss Guthrie, and, as a finality, it was agreed that the Foreign Board and the Woman's Society would undertake it; and soon she was on her way to Japan. Reaching San Francisco, en route, she was stricken with pneumonia and died. This dispensation of Providence fell like a pall on the Church. Soon, however, Miss Brittain, a friend of Miss Guthrie's and a missionary of twenty years' experience in India, offered her services. She was invited to Pittsburgh, at which place the Board of Missions and the General Conference were in session, May, 1888. She was employed, and went to Japan, and in October of the same year a school was opened in Yokohama with four children, which increased to fifty. Assistance was greatly needed, and ere long it came in the person of Gei Nedzer (Martha Collier), one of the first fruits of the seed-sowing of our Church in foreign lands.

At the General Conference of May, 1880, the Society was recognized as one of the permanent agencies of the Church. In the following year it was incorporated under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. Miss Brittain sent encouraging accounts of her work from time to time, and branches were organized in the annual conferences; so that at the second annual meeting the Pittsburgh, Michigan, Ohio, Muskingum, Illinois, Iowa, and Genesee were represented. From Maryland and other conferences contributions of money were sent, and St. John's church of Baltimore became responsible for \$200 annually. The following year the Maryland Branch was organized, with eight auxiliaries.

The receipts of the Society gradually increased from \$318.16 the first year to \$1380.16 the second. At the third annual meeting, in Cambridge, O., the amount was \$1838.48. The "Brick" fund was set on foot with Mrs. John Scott as treasurer, the money to be appropriated for the purchase of property in Yokohama for a Woman's Home. In a little more than a year this fund amounted to \$1303.53. In about ten years it amounted to \$7930, in sums from ten cents to fifty dollars. In 1889-90 the whole amount was expended for the property on the Bluff in Yokohama, which is at present occupied by the missionaries

of the Society and the mission school. In 1882 the time for holding the annual meeting was changed from February to May, and the next meeting was held in Baltimore. At the General Conference of 1884 the Society was made amenable to the Board of Foreign Missions; but, this relation proving unsatisfactory, at the Conference of 1888 its relation as an independent organization was restored with amenability to the General Conference, like the other general Boards. In 1885 the *Methodist Protestant Missionary*, which Rev. C. H. Williams of the Foreign Board had been conducting in its interests and which he had concluded to discontinue, was offered the Woman's Board, and at the meeting held at Adrian, Mich., it was accepted; and thus originated the *Woman's Missionary Record*, Mrs. Mary A. Miller being elected editor. It was published in Pittsburgh, with varying success, for ten years. The editor received no compensation, and its receipts were consumed in publication. Its highest circulation was 1850. In 1895 Mrs. Miller resigned, and the paper was removed to Kansas City, Kan., with Mrs. M. B. M'Bride as editor, and it has since been issued with greatly improved appearance. At present, 1898, Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Huling publish and edit it.

In the years intervening between 1884 and 1890 thirteen more conferences entered branches, in all making twenty-two. But these branches were far from being thoroughly organized, having but few auxiliaries and fewer churches interested in the work. The mission bands, which at one time numbered eighty, have largely given place to the junior Societies of Christian Endeavor. During these years the work in Japan had assumed a more permanent form. The Board of Missions in 1883 sent out Rev. and Mrs. F. C. Klein. In 1884 the Society sent out Misses Brown and Crittenden. The General Conference having assigned the Girls' School to the Society, it was still continued in the Home until a building could be erected, Miss Brittain being assisted by the two ladies and the Society paying its proportion for the use of the building. Early in 1885 Miss Brittain resigned, and the two ladies took charge of the school. In a few months Mr. Klein opened a school for young men, and the Society rented a building in the native part of the city for the Girls' School, which was used until the Woman's Home was ready for use. In a short time Miss Crittenden resigned and Miss Brown continued the school, which numbered about fifty, with the assistance of native teachers, when failing health compelled her to return to America in February, 1887. Under efficient help provided by Mr. Klein the school was continued, and in May of the same year the Society sent out Misses Whetstone and Bonnett. In the meantime Mr. Klein having opened a mission in Nagoya, two hundred miles from Yokohama, early in the spring of 1888, Miss Whetstone was transferred to that point to take charge of a girls' school, which Mrs. Klein had started, and in October, 1889, Miss Forrest was sent to her assistance. Native girls from the school in Yokohama were also sent to Nagoya as helpers. Miss Forrest, besides assisting in the day-school, conducted a meeting in a village near by twice a day on the Sabbath, also on Wednesday evening. The day-school at one time numbered fifty boys and girls, but, owing to untoward

circumstances, the school was closed and the labor of the missionaries was directed chiefly to evangelistic work.

In Yokohama Miss Kimball, a resident missionary, had been employed to take the place of Miss Whetstone and assist Miss Bonnett. The success of the school was gratifying to the Society in the fact that a number of girls were being prepared as Bible readers and teachers in the Sabbath-schools. Mrs. T. H. Colhouer gave valuable assistance to the older girls in Bible study, and with them visited regularly many of the women in their homes. The Rev. T. H. Colhouer, superintendent of the Yokohama mission, gave personal supervision to the erection of the Woman's Home, and in September, 1889, the school was removed to the new building. By a gift of \$500 from Dr. and Mrs. Colhouer the Society was enabled to pay the last debt on the property.

Efforts were then made for the purchase of property in Nagoya for a Mission Home and School, and a building fund was commenced, Mrs. Fornshill of Baltimore being elected treasurer, and the fund at this time, 1896, amounts to nearly \$2000.

In 1892 Miss A. J. Rowe of the Iowa Branch was sent to Yokohama to take the place of some of the missionaries who had returned for rest. In September of the following year Miss Annette Lawrence was sent to Nagoya. In 1894 Miss Margaret Kuhns of the Pittsburgh Branch was sent to Yokohama to take the place of Miss Brown, who returned to America, and in September of the following year Miss Alice Coates was sent to her assistance.

By a resolution of the General Conference of 1892 the missionaries of the Society were granted membership in the Japan Mission Conference, and the reports of work were thereafter included in the statistical tables of the Conference. Whenever able to do so, the Society has furnished interpreters to the missionaries of the Church Board and teachers in the Sunday-schools. There are at present seventeen Sunday-schools connected with the Japan Mission Conference of our Church, nine in Yokohama, three in Nagoya, and five in Shizuoka, and in most of these the missionaries of the Society, with nine of the older girls, give their help. The total number of scholars enrolled is 706. The number of scholars in the boarding-school of the Society is forty, of which ten are day scholars. Seven of the girls do house to house visiting, distributing tracts, holding meetings, and inviting people to church and Sunday-school, and are proving a blessing by increasing the attendance, interest, and membership. A number of the girls educated in the Home have married native Christian ministers and are with their husbands still assisting in our mission work and have given to it years of faithful labor. From the report of Rev. C. H. Vandyke, secretary of the Japan Mission Conference for August 29, 1895, we take the following: "A very hopeful feature of our general work is the direct aggressive and efficient evangelical work now arranged for by the workers of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. If nothing occurs to thwart this work, wisely organized and now being energetically pushed forward, in a very few years we shall have a band of Bible readers or women evan-

gelist of which the whole mission can be proud and for which it has been working and praying. Besides those in connection with the school, seven women are now in training under the very efficient leadership of Miss Lawrence for direct Christian work, some of whom will soon be ready to be sent forth 'two by two.' The field for such workers is fully ripe and well nigh boundless." Christian Endeavor Societies are organized in the churches and Junior Societies in the Sabbath-schools; also a very prosperous circle of King's Daughters is in operation in the Girls' School at Yokohama.

The amount collected by the W. F. M. S., since its organization, sixteen years ago, not including that which will be reported at the close of the fiscal year of 1896, is \$46,923.14 for the general fund, and more than \$10,000 has been collected for building purposes. Also there is collected annually from two to three hundred dollars for current expenses, for it is a law of the Society to use no money for the conduct of the work at home which has been raised for the work abroad. The money is raised principally by small amounts, two cents a week being the requisition on each member. This amount it is understood does not release the giver from the duty of giving to the collections taken in all our churches for the General Board of Missions.

The report of the W. F. M. S. to the General Conference of 1896 says: "At Yokohama, Japan, our school numbers fifty pupils, with two missionaries. The property valuation is \$10,000, clear of any incumbrance. At Nagoya we have one mission, with four native Bible readers. We are engaged mainly at this point in evangelistic work, with the expectation of opening a kindergarten school. The call has come from the workers to build a home in this city, which we contemplate doing, as our building fund amounts at the present time to \$1737.30. The permanent fund from legacies in bank, at interest, amounts to \$2003.80. For the four years intervening between the meetings of this body, our gleanings from various sources amount to \$17,822.34. Our interests in the home field of our work are not as encouraging as we desire. This body has given us the privilege to expect the coöperation of its ministry, but we are sometimes embarrassed by its absence. Of the thirty-seven conferences constituting this body, our work is actively organized in but fourteen. We recommend the following persons as the Executive Committee: Mrs. F. A. Brown, Mrs. M. A. Miller, Mrs. D. S. Stephens, Mrs. J. D. Anderson, Mrs. J. E. Palmer, Mrs. W. K. Gillespie, Mrs. M. A. Colhouer, Mrs. J. J. Murray, Miss S. A. Lipscomb, Mrs. N. R. Seeman, Mrs. M. J. McCaslin, Mrs. A. J. Dotson, Miss Mary Moale."

APPENDIX G

THE BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

THE data for this sketch have been furnished principally by the Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Benj. Stout. The General Conference of the Church in 1834 organized a Board of Foreign Missions, the outlying territories of the United States being then regarded as foreign fields. This general board was located in Baltimore, with Dr. S. K. Jennings as President. A few tentative efforts were made up to 1850, noticed in the body of the "History of Methodist Reform," but nothing practical came of them. At the General Conference of 1850 the Board of Missions was changed to Pittsburgh, Pa., and the following Board elected: Rev. William Collier, President, and W. J. Troth, Secretary; Rev. Charles Avery, George Brown, John Cowl, and John Scott; Laymen, John Macaskey, William Miller, John W. Philips, John L. Sands, Thomas Hanna, and M. W. Langhlin. Frederick Stier was employed as General Travelling Agent, and entered zealously upon his work, though well advanced in years, but in the midst he died at Fremont, O., October 17, 1851. J. W. Rutledge succeeded him. The Board selected two missionaries, Rev. Daniel Bagley for Oregon and Rev. David Wilson for China. The former made an overland journey to his field, and has remained there to this date, faithful in everything and successful as well. The mission to China failed by reason of the final declinature of the missionary. Brother Bagley labored indefatigably, and has lived to see an annual conference organized and a number of churches built principally since the great fire in Seattle, Wash., in 1889, in which the first church was destroyed. A new site was chosen and a fine building erected at a cost of about \$30,000. The second church cost about \$12,000, in which, on the first Sabbath in January, 1891, a church of twenty members was organized. Churches have also been erected at Renton, Elliot, Yesler, Duwamish, Columbia, South Seattle, and other points. The eight churches within the conference, including the first, are estimated to be worth \$43,200.

For the last three years it has been difficult to sustain the missions in Washington, owing to the general depression in business. The second church is closed. During the division of the denomination from 1858 to 1877, nothing was done by the East and South except to continue the Board organization, owing to the Civil War. Meanwhile the brethren West and North removed the Board to Springfield, O., in 1875, and the location continued to 1892. The second annual report for November 1, 1865, exhibits that from 1862-64 the amount collected was \$4146.65, and disbursed \$3323.40. From 1864-65 the following appropriations were paid: Oregon mission, \$1214.47; Nebraska, \$1339.73; Missouri, \$1334.65; Minnesota, \$110.50; Iowa, \$305.50; California, \$29.03; Kansas, \$684.58; Freedmen's, \$63.50. In 1872-75 the following: Lincoln City, Neb., \$1150; Nebraska, \$150; Peru, \$200; East Tennessee and Georgia, \$100;

North Carolina, \$150; Adrian, Mich., \$150. After the reunion of the denomination the foreign and home work being still under one board, the report of the General Conference of 1888 showed appropriations to Mississippi, \$200; Kansas, \$400; Alabama, \$100; Adrian, \$400; Abingdon, Va., \$200; Seattle, Wash., \$200; Atlanta, Ga., \$400. April 1, 1885 to May 1, 1888, \$29,388.46 had been received and expended for home missions.

The General Conference of 1888 divided the foreign from the home work, and established a Board of Home Missions under the following Board: S. A. Fisher, W. M. Strayer, M. L. Barnett, S. K. Spahr, J. W. Hawkins, F. M. Durbin, F. H. Pierpont. Rev. Benj. Stout was elected Corresponding Secretary. The new Board was located at Grafton, W. Va., where it met and organized July 24, 1888, with F. H. Pierpont, President, S. A. Fisher, Secretary, and F. M. Durbin, Treasurer. It was duly incorporated. The treasurer gave bond, though there were no funds on hand, and the new Board received from the old three missions still in need of support, Ottawa, Kan., appropriation \$100; Wichita, Kan., \$300; Adrian, Mich., \$400. Its report made to the General Conference of 1892 showed total receipts for the quadrennium of \$15,098.25; for permanent fund, \$1148.72; amount raised by mission churches, \$4432.09; grand total, \$20,679.06. The Board reported eleven mission churches with 575 members. Sunday-schools, fourteen, scholars, 1096. Value of church property, \$56,700. Debts on it, \$9510 Insurance, \$20,900. A new Board was elected by the General Conference of 1892, and Benj. Stout reelected Corresponding Secretary. The Board has six missions in and near Seattle, Wash.; one in Corsicana, Tex.; one in Des Moines City, Ia.; one in Marion, Ind.; one at Canton, Ill.; four in Kansas City, Kan.; one at Greensboro', N. C.; two in Chicago, Ill., among the Germans. It has also rendered aid to Trinity church, Brooklyn, Greater New York City; also to Dover, Del.; Ashboro', N. C.; High Point, N. C.; Magnolia, Ark.; Spencer, W. Va.; Grafton, W. Va.; Norway, Ind.; Eaton Rapids, Mich., and at other points. The Board owns a fine property on Stewart Avenue, in Kansas City, Kan., six lots in Cameron, Tex., and two lots in Elkins, W. Va.

The Board reported to the General Conference of 1896, that for the quadrennium there had been received, including \$4650 of borrowed money, \$26,242.25. Balance on hand, \$127.48. The sum of \$900 having been paid the Treasurer for his services for the four years, this led to a complete change in the matter, making the Corresponding Secretaries of all the general boards Treasurers as well, under bond, but without increase of compensation. See full report, pp. 94-99, General Conference Minutes. The following board was elected: W. M. Strayer, S. A. Fisher, S. Heininger, J. T. Howell, J. N. Pierpont, F. C. Chambers, and H. G. Reeves. Benj. Stout was reelected Corresponding Secretary. The organization of the Woman's Board of Home Missions promises to be very helpful to this work. It is a great need of the general Church to establish the cause in the centres of population, specially in the West, so that our migrating people shall not be lost in such large numbers for the want of a church of their own preference.

In August, 1897, Secretary Stout tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and F. C. Chambers, a member of the Board, elected the Secretary-Treasurer. He at once displayed unusual ability and industry, with much business invention, so that new life was thrown into the work. A debt of about \$10,664 was reduced to about \$3000, and it is hoped to pay out of debt, meet the new appropriations, and come out square by May 1, 1899. The extraordinary showing made for the past six months is an earnest that this will be done. Mr. Chambers received as compensation \$497.80 from the time of his election, August 19, 1897, to May 1, 1898. A first-class business man, he is filling the position with great acceptance.

APPENDIX H

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

THE facts herewith submitted were compiled by the late Missionary Secretary, Rev. T. B. Coulburn, with supplementary matter furnished from other sources.

The Methodist Protestant Church has had in existence a Board of Missions almost from the beginning of its history. At the first General Conference, in May, 1834, a Board consisting of twelve members was formed, of which Rev. Dr. S. K. Jennings was chairman, and was located in Baltimore, Md. A few tentative efforts were not long after made to effect a location of foreign work, but they failed, as instanced in the body of the "History of Methodist Reform." In 1850 the location of the Board was changed to Pittsburgh, Pa., and finally to Springfield, O. Until about the year 1875, however, nearly all the funds raised were expended in home work, or in such outlying territory as Oregon. Individual churches, notably that of East Baltimore, Md., under the pastorate of Rev. J. T. Murray, D.D., and his devoted wife, had made efforts to assist in foreign missionary work, but the Church as such did not accomplish much or effect any thorough organization for this purpose until after the reunion of the divided Church in 1877. The ensuing General Conference at Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1880, found itself confronted with providential indications that it was time to arouse and enter the foreign field for Christ and the denomination. A new Board of Home and Foreign Missions was formed, consisting of L. W. Bates, C. S. Evans, A. H. Trumbo, R. Rose, S. K. Spahr, W. W. White, W. M. McConkey, J. M. Johnson, and N. A. Jones. Rev. C. H. Williams was elected Corresponding Secretary.

At the same quadrennial session the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, which had been organized in Pittsburgh the previous February, was recognized as one of the permanent agencies of the Church. See Appendix F for full history.

The Board of Home and Foreign Missions was continued under this name for the ensuing eight years, having the oversight of the double

work at home and abroad. In May, 1884, however, the General Conference, then in session in Baltimore, Md., elected nine members of the Board: T. B. Graham, G. B. McElroy, T. H. Colhouer, O. V. W. Chandler, Benjamin Stout, W. W. McCaslin, A. H. Widney, W. Porteus, and T. Douglass. Rev. F. T. Tagg was also chosen Corresponding Secretary. New life was thrown into the work by the diligence and energy of the Secretary, new lines of work were opened, and the interest of the Church in foreign missions so stimulated, that at the ensuing General Conference of May, 1888, at Adrian, Mich., it was found that the cause had gained sufficient prominence as to justify even more aggressive effort in its behalf. Accordingly a new board, designated as the Board of Foreign Missions, was formed, and empowered "to establish missions in foreign lands, employ missionaries, fix their salaries, and change or remove them as the interest of the Church may demand, and to control and apply all the funds in its treasury," etc. The members chosen to compose this Board were: T. B. Graham, L. W. Bates, G. B. McElroy, C. S. Evans, O. V. W. Chandler, T. J. Ogburn, W. W. White, W. W. McCaslin, and C. J. Yingling. F. T. Tagg was unanimously continued as Corresponding Secretary, and entered with renewed zeal upon his successful labors. The Board is regularly incorporated according to the laws of the state of Ohio, and its location continued at Springfield, O. Its nine members, five of whom are designated as the executive committee, are elected for a term of four years.

The receipts of the Board of Foreign Missions since 1888, the date of its organization, including the amounts reported by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society for the same period, are as follows:—

	B. F. M.	W. F. M. S.	TOTAL.
1888-89	\$10,091.89	\$3,483.71	\$13,575.60
1889-90	14,711.82	3,490.07	18,201.89
1890-91	13,322.73	3,897.15	17,219.88
1891-92	13,902.50	3,647.66	17,550.16
1892-93	13,922.21	3,720.42	17,642.63
1893-94	14,588.85	3,628.20	18,217.05

Sufficient progress having been made to justify an increase of its working force, and favorable openings for extending its work appearing, the Board, in the summer of 1882, engaged, for the term of five years, Rev. F. C. Klein, as its first ordained missionary for the foreign field. He remained at home, however, several months afterward, visiting various conferences and churches to solicit funds to purchase suitable property and provide better facilities for the conduct of the mission in Yokohama. In the meantime a commodious building and lot, costing about \$10,000, was secured at 120 A. Bluff by Miss Brittain, which, having been promptly accepted by the Board, he was ordered in July, 1883, to proceed to Japan. On arriving there on the 23d of the ensuing September, he found the school already occupying the new quarters, with an enrolment of forty-seven students.

From this time the work was pressed with new vigor and blessed with increased success. More boys were admitted to the school; the Sunday-school at the "Bluff" commenced to improve; a Sunday-school was organized outside of the "foreign concession," at which fourteen young men were present; preaching services soon followed; a night-school was opened for young men; new quarters were secured to accommodate the growing number of pupils in the Sunday and week-day schools; and so the seeds faithfully sown gradually sprang up and grew, until, having sufficiently ripened, a church—the First Methodist Protestant Church, Yokohama, Japan—was organized, July 11, 1886, with twelve members. A revival a few months later resulted in increasing the membership to forty-nine. Among other organizations, a Y. M. C. A. and a Temperance Society soon followed. In April, 1886, a boarding and day collegiate school for boys was instituted by Mr. Klein at 120 A. Bluff, which, in May, 1887, had an enrolment of 135 students.

The General Conference of 1884, having assigned the work for girls and women to the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, the girls in the "Bluff" school, composed hitherto of both sexes, were, in March, 1886, transferred to the control of that society, and new quarters were opened for the accommodation at Eighty-four Settlement, Yokohama. This school, by direction of the society, was placed in charge of Misses Crittenden and Brown, both of whom had arrived in Japan, October 29, 1884, and who, in the meantime, had been successfully engaged in school and other work. Miss Brittain retired from service at the mission early in 1885, going into the Presbyterian mission in Tokyo.

In May, 1885, operations were begun by Mr. Klein with the view of opening a mission in Nagoya, the fourth city of the empire. Several visits were made, school work was opened, and preaching services were held as often as opportunity was afforded. Rev. T. H. Colhouer, D.D., arriving in Japan May 31, 1887, and being made superintendent of the Yokohama mission, and pastor of the church, Mr. Klein removed to Nagoya, taking up his residence in a Japanese house, 101 Minami Buheicho, June 14, 1887. In less than a month thereafter a day-school, a night-school, and a Sunday-school were organized, and a little later a school for girls and a married ladies' class were formed by Mrs. Klein. In the meantime negotiations were entered into to secure land on which to erect a missionary's residence and other buildings, which, within a few months, resulted in the purchase of one of the best mission sites in the city. On this site there now stands the Nagoya Anglo-Japanese College, a high-grade school for young men and boys, with a theological department, completed and dedicated in 1890; the "Lafayette Cottage," occupied as a missionary's residence, the gift of Lafayette Avenue M. P. Church, Baltimore, Md.; and a College Boarding Hall, built in 1893. These buildings are all of modern design, and are estimated to be worth 20,000 dollars in Japanese money.

Soon after locating in Nagoya, Mr. Klein was requested by the governor of the province to teach in the city high school, which he did for nearly a year, his salary meanwhile going to swell the receipts of the

mission treasury. Owing to increasing duties, however, and the near approach of the expiration of his term, he was compelled to resign.

Three accessions to the missionary force arrived in 1887—Misses Whetstone and Bonnett, under appointment of the W. F. M. S., June 23, and Rev. L. L. Albright, of the Board of Foreign Missions, July 28. The ladies were located at Yokohama; Mr. Albright at Nagoya. On the 27th of November following these arrivals the First Methodist Protestant Church, in Nagoya, was organized with nineteen members. In the spring of 1888 Miss Whetstone was transferred to Nagoya and given charge of the girls' school organized by Mrs. Klein, and in July of the ensuing year Miss Forrest was sent by the Woman's Society as her assistant. The corps of workers at this point was again increased in January, 1890, by the arrival of Rev. E. H. Van Dyke.

The work thus founded in the city of Nagoya, notwithstanding many adverse circumstances, has steadily grown in importance and fruitfulness, and is now the centre of our missionary operations in the empire. Several out-stations have been established, three or four Sunday-schools organized, and five young men are now being educated in the college for the ministry. It may also be of interest to note that at this point was organized the first Junior Christian Endeavor Society in Japan, and the senior society was the first, and so far the only one, that has had a delegate to an international Christian Endeavor convention, Mr. Klein representing it at Montreal in 1893.

While the various enterprises already alluded to were being so successfully inaugurated at Nagoya, the work under the management of brother Colhouer and his associates at Yokohama was making steady progress. Among other evidences of permanent growth a new church, costing \$3000, was built, which still serves the purposes of the mission in that city.

Miss Margaret Brown, who had conducted the girls' school for the Woman's Society after the retirement of Miss Brittain, was compelled to return to America in February, 1887, on account of ill-health. The school, however, was carried on successfully by Miss Crittenden and Mr. Klein, until the departure of the latter to Nagoya, when it was placed in charge of a Mr. Elmer, pending the arrival of new missionaries.

In August, 1889, the missionary force was again recruited by the arrival of Rev. A. R. Morgan. He was stationed at Yokohama, and in the ensuing autumn placed at the head of the boys' school, Miss Crittenden, who for more than two years had served in this position, returning to America, her term having expired. Mr. Morgan's experience as an instructor, acquired during his professorship in Yadkin College, North Carolina, standing him to good purpose, it was not long before the school began to show signs of growth and increased usefulness.

The term of Mr. Klein having expired, and signs of failing health suggesting the need of a brief respite from toil, the work at Nagoya was given temporarily in charge of Mr. Albright and Mr. Maruyama, and he returned, in September, 1888, to his home in Baltimore, Md. He remained in the home land about fifteen months; his visit, however, was turned to good account in several ways for the work to which he had

given five years of faithful service. Early in March, 1890, he returned to Japan under a contract for eight years.

In the following July a meeting of all the missionaries, including native pastors, was called, and an organization, designated as the "Annual Missionaries' Meeting," was effected for the purpose of formulating plans for concerted effort in developing all departments of the work. Plans were made at this meeting for holding monthly business meetings at each of the mission stations, reports of which were to be regularly forwarded to the Board. A Ministerial Education Society was also formed and measures were adopted to raise funds to assist such worthy young men from among the native students as might feel called to the work of the ministry.

At the second annual meeting, in July, 1891, it appearing to all the missionaries that the work had advanced sufficiently to justify the formation of an organization with larger powers, a memorial was prepared and addressed to the General Conference, petitioning for authority to organize an annual conference and for the enactment of suitable regulations for its government. This petition was readily granted in May, 1892, by the General Conference, then in session at Westminster, Md., and on the 15th of the following September the Japan Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church was duly organized, with F. C. Klein as President and A. R. Morgan, Secretary. Owing to the expiration of the terms of Dr. Colhouer and Mr. Albright, and their return to America in the early part of the year, the membership of the Conference at the start was quite small; but the admission and ordination of Rev. G. Maruyama and the accession of five Japanese preachers on probation placed at the disposal of the executive laborers enough before the close of the session to supply nine circuits and missions. The following statistics were reported: churches, 2; members, 225; probationers, 34; Sunday-school scholars, 407; day-schools, 2; scholars enrolled, 230.

A special feature in the proceedings of this session was the emphasis laid upon the need of aggressive evangelistic work and the enterprising measures adopted to open new missions. The territory between Yokohama and Nagoya, a distance of over two hundred miles, was divided into three sub-districts, each under the care of a chairman, with centres fixed at Yokohama, Nagoya, and Shizuoka, from which to broaden out into the regions round about. The Shizuoka district, however, had not been previously occupied; but being about equally distant from the other centres, and the opportunity for opening work seeming favorable, it was selected as a specially desirable point to locate a mission. Mr. Van Dyke was appointed as chairman of this new district. He promptly took up his residence in the city of Shizuoka, and with a hopeful and energetic spirit entered upon his duties. Connecting himself at first with a private school as teacher, he was soon enabled to secure a house for preaching services and a Sunday-school. The work thus begun was pressed with such vigor and success that in less than seven months a church was organized with eighteen members. Six preaching points have

since been opened and four Sunday-schools organized. A new church and parsonage for Japanese pastor, costing \$1000, was built in 1894.

In April, 1893, Mr. Klein's health having broken down, and the treatment of the best physicians available effecting no improvement in his condition, he was forced to return to America. He was succeeded as the executive of the conference, and as president of the Anglo-Japanese College, by Mr. Morgan, who as soon thereafter as the change could be made was transferred to Nagoya, where he still resides, and acceptably occupies the same official positions. In the month of August ensuing, Revs. I. F. Smith and U. G. Murphy were sent out by the Board, each for the term of ten years. They arrived in Yokohama about three weeks later, in time to meet and unite with the Japan Mission Conference, which was then holding its second annual session in that city. Mr. Murphy was, by direction of the Board, stationed at Nagoya, under instructions to devote as much of his time as possible to the study of the Japanese language, and Mr. Smith, under similar instructions, was located at Yokohama, and appointed treasurer of the Board in Japan, a position which had been held by Mr. Morgan prior to his removal to Nagoya.

The officers of the second annual conference were A. R. Morgan, President, and E. H. Van Dyke, Secretary. Two native preachers were admitted into the itinerancy and placed in the first year's course of study, and another, having completed his third year, was ordained elder. Three candidates for the ministry were placed under the care of the Ministerial Education Society. Statistical reports for the year showed: Probationers received, 72; admitted into full membership, 47; baptisms, 50, three of whom were children; new Sunday-schools organized, 4; total enrolment of Sunday-school scholars, 435; collections for current expenses and benevolent purposes, \$713.50.

The third session of the Japan Mission Annual Conference was held in Nagoya, July 16 to 20, 1894. Messrs. Morgan and Van Dyke were re-elected President and Secretary respectively. The following facts, taken from the statistical tables of the minutes of this session, may be regarded as a fair representation of the present condition of the work within the bounds of this district: Churches, 3; preaching places (rented houses used as chapels), 14; total full membership, 312; probationers, 19; Sunday-schools, 14; Sunday-school scholars, 648; day-school, 1; scholars, 34; night-school, 1; scholars, 63; ordained native preachers, 3; unordained native preachers, 4; other native teachers and helpers, 10; theological students, 5; missionaries, 4; contributions for self-support \$297.89; value of mission property, \$35,000. These statistics, however, do not include the missionaries, students in the several schools, and value of property under control of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. This society owns property in Yokohama valued at \$10,000 and has two or three missionaries engaged in teaching in Yokohama and Nagoya. Two more missionaries, Miss Lawrence and Miss Kuhns, have been sent out recently. The society is planning to erect a building for a girls' school in Nagoya, nearly enough money for which has been collected.

Including the wives of missionaries, the representatives of the Wo-

man's Society and a Japanese teacher (Miss Hirati), educated by the Board, there have been sent out by the Church twenty-six missionaries since the first mission was opened in Yokohama in October, 1880. For nearly four years, though, Mr. Klein was the only male missionary in the field. At no time has the number of workers been fully adequate to the demands of the work undertaken, much less to take advantage of favorable opportunities that have been frequently offered for entering new territory. For more than a year the Board has been making repeated and earnest efforts to enlist five more men, which now, from applications received recently, appear about to yield the desired result. Instructions have been sent to President Morgan to purchase a suitable site in Nagoya for a church, to cost about \$5000, most of which amount is already in hand. This church will probably be erected in a few months. As soon as suitable plans are secured, a building to be used for educational and evangelistic purposes, to cost at least \$10,000, will be erected in Yokohama. Sufficient funds for this object (the proceeds of the sale of certain property in Yokohama effected over a year ago) are now in bank to the credit of the Board.

It has doubtless been sufficiently indicated that the plan of work has been to centralize educational work, to train native Japanese workers, and through a conference broaden out by circuits and missions in evangelistic labors, and in all departments to be supplemented by the Bible readers, girls' school, etc., under the control of the Woman's Society. If the results of the operation of this plan have not fully satisfied the Church, it is not because the plan is faulty, or that the missionaries have been deficient in zeal or piety, but because there has never been a sufficient force in the field to properly man the work.

On the 11th of March, 1896, the corresponding secretary, in zealous pursuit of his duties, after a few days' illness, died at Pittston, Pa., leaving the legacy of a triumphant death to the Church and his family. Rev. A. D. Melvin of Maryland was chosen to fill out his unexpired term, and he at once entered upon his duties.

The committee of the General Conference of May, 1896, at Kansas City, Kan., on Foreign Missions reported, and the report was adopted for the new Board of Foreign Missions: T. B. Graham, G. B. McElroy, W. L. Wells, T. H. Lewis, F. T. Tagg, C. J. Yingling, U. S. Fleming, H. J. Heinz, F. F. Brierly. Bequests to the Board from Anna Stephenson of Maryland, and E. J. Hill of Washington, D. C., are acknowledged. Rev. T. J. Ogburn was elected Corresponding Secretary, and within a few months entered diligently upon his duties and has continued to acceptably fill the position to this date of June, 1897. The office of Treasurer of all the general boards having been abolished by the General Conference, and the Secretaries invested with it under bond of \$5000, the change was accordingly made by the Board of Missions. The report of the late Treasurer for the quadrennium shows: receipts, 1892-93, \$13,922.21; 1893-94, \$14,588.85; 1894-95, \$12,365.06; 1895-96, \$11,384.67. Total, \$52,260.79. Disbursed for all purposes, \$52,490.72. The financial depression of the times is apparent from the falling off of receipts, affecting

most of the religious denominations. Renewed efforts are being made to stimulate the Church to higher things for foreign missions.

At the annual meeting of the Board held at Westminster, Md., May 4-5, 1898, the following "Survey of the Work" by Secretary Ogburn and and Dr. F. T. Tagg was submitted.

Committee on survey of the work report first the Japanese Conference is divided into three sub-districts, known as Yokohama, Nagoya, and Shizuoka. Yokohama reports 2 mission stations and 2 circuits, supplied by one foreign and 2 native pastors. There are 2 probationers and 258 members; 2 churches and 9 appointments; 12 Sunday-schools and 330 scholars; one Y. P. S. C. E. with 55 members; value of church property, \$4500. Paid on pastor's salary, 156 yen; for current expenses, 59,049 yen; Sunday-schools, 1395 yen; for all purposes, 420,929 yen. One circuit reports no members; two circuits report no churches. The Bluff building was sold and the money put into a night-school, of which brother Cairns is principal, but of which we have no other information.

Nagoya has one mission station and 4 circuits, served by 2 foreign and 3 native pastors. There are 3 probationers and 62 members; one church, 9 appointments; 7 Sunday-schools, 285 scholars; one Y. P. S. C. E., 15 members; value of church property, \$6600. Paid on pastor's salary, 33.18 yen; current expenses, 39.62 yen; for all purposes, 130,634 yen; 3 circuits report no members; 3 circuits report no churches. Nagoya college day-school, 44; average attendance, 28; night-school, 57; average attendance, 30; college residence. The dean of the seminary reports 4 students; value of college property is about 27,000 yen.

Shizuoka has one mission station and 4 circuits, supplied by one foreign and 2 native pastors. There are 48 probationers and 63 members; 2 churches, 9 appointments; 6 Sunday-schools, 243 scholars; one parsonage; value of church property, \$1330. Paid on current expenses, 21.35 yen; for all purposes, 36.92 yen; one circuit reports no members; 2 circuits report no churches.

The W. F. M. Society have schools at Yokohama, with Miss M. M. Kuhus in charge, and one Bible woman.

A school at Nagoya, with Miss A. L. Coates and Miss A. E. Lawrence in charge, and three Bible readers and one evangelist.

There are two Bible readers and three evangelists at Shizuoka.

RÉSUMÉ AND COMPARISON

	1896.	1897.	GAIN.	Loss.
Probationers	53	38	....	15
Members.....	290	323	33	....
Parsonages.....	1	1	....	....
Churches.....	4	5	1	....
Appointments	31	29	....	2
Sunday-schools	20	25	5	....
Scholars.....	932	916	....	16
Christian Endeavorers....	99	70	....	29
Paid on pastors' salaries..	\$79.85	\$94.59	\$14.74	....
Collected for all expenses.	\$255.85	\$294.23	\$38.38	....

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

EXPLANATORY OF THE REASONS AND PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

REV. HENRY B. BASCOM, AUTHOR. 1830

Article 1st. God, as the common Father of mankind, has created all men free and equal, and the proper equality and social freedom of the great brotherhood of the human race, in view of the gifts and grants of the Creator, are to be inferred from all his dispensations to men. Every man by the charter of his creation, is the equal of his contemporaries;—the essential rights of every generation are the same. Man as the child of God's creation, continues man immutably, under all circumstances;—and the rights of ancestry are those of posterity. Man has claims which it becomes his duty to assert, in right of his existence, such as the indefeasable right of thinking and acting for himself, when thought and action do not infringe the right of another, as they never will, when truth and justice are made the basis of human intercourse. These rights, common to the great family of man, cannot be abolished by concession, statute, precedent, or positive institution; and when wrested or withheld from the multitude of mankind, by their rulers, may be reclaimed by the people, whenever they see proper to do it.

Art. 2d. Man was created for society, his natural rights are adapted to the social state, and under every form of society, constitute properly, the foundation of his civil rights. When man becomes a member of civil society, he submits to a modification of some of his natural rights, but he never does, he never can, relinquish them. He concedes the exercise of these rights, for his own and the general good, but does not, cannot, cast them off. His rights receive a new direction, but do not terminate; and that government which deprives man of rights, justly claimed in virtue of his creation, and interwoven with the constitution of his nature, and the interests of society, denies to him the gifts of his Creator, and must be unjust. God can be the author of no government, contravening the wisdom of his arrangements in the creation of men.

Art. 3d. In every community there is a power, which receives the denomination of sovereignty, a power not subject to control, and that controls all subordinate powers in the government. Now whether this power be in the hands of the many, or a few, it is indubitably certain, that those members only of the community are free, in whom the sovereign power resides. The power of a community, is essential to its freedom, and if this power be confined to a few, freedom is necessarily confined to the same number. All just government must be founded upon the nature of man, and should consult alike the natural rights, civil wants, and moral interests of his being. All rightful authority is founded in power

and law; all just power is founded in right, and as one man's natural right to the character of lawgiver, is to all intents, as good as another's, it follows, that all legitimate law must have its origin in the expressed will of the many.

Art. 4th. As all men are essentially equal, in their rights, wants, and interests, it follows from these, that representative government, is the only legitimate human rule, to which any people can submit. It is the only kind of government that can possibly reconcile, in any consistent way, the claims of authority, with the advantages of liberty. A prescriptive legislative body, making laws without the knowledge or consent of the people to be governed by them, is a despotism. Legislators without constituents, or peers and fellows, deputing them, as their representatives and actors — thus constituting themselves a legislature beyond the control of the people, is an exhibition of tyranny in one of its most dangerous forms. In the momentous affairs of government, nothing should be made the exclusive property of a few, which by right, belongs to all, and may be safely and advantageously used by the rightful proprietors. The justice of every government, depends essentially upon the original consent of the people; — this privilege belongs to every community, in right of the law of nature; and no man or multitude of men, can alter, limit, or diminish it. Constitutional law is an expression of the will of the people, and their concurrence in its formation, either personally, or by representation, is essential to its legitimate authority.

Art. 5th. No community can be said, without mockery, to have a constitution, where there is a consolidation of the different powers of government in the hands of the same men, and the remaining portion are left of course, without any security for their rights. Such a case, presents an absolute government; a government of men not principles. A constitution is not the creature of government; the nature of things renders it impossible that it should be an act of government. In strict propriety, it exists anterior to government; — government is based upon, proceeds from, and is the creature of the constitution. A constitution contains the elements and principles of government, and fixes the nature and limits of its form and operations; but is an instrument distinct from government, and by which government is controlled. It is a preliminary act of the people, in the creation of government. It sustains to government the same relation that laws do to the judiciary; the latter is not the source of law, cannot make laws, or annul them, but is subject to, and governed by law. A constitution recognizes the rights of the people, and provides for their assertion and maintenance. It settles the principles and maxims of government. It fixes the landmarks of legislation. It is the sovereign voice of the people, giving law and limit, to themselves and their representatives.

Art. 6th. A government uniting the legislative, judicial, and executive powers in the hands of the same men, is an absurdity in theory, and in practice, tyranny. The executive power, in every government, should be subordinate to the legislative, and the judicial independent of both. Whenever, therefore, it happens, that these three departments of govern-

ment, are in the hands of the same body of men, and these men not the representatives of the people, first making the laws, then executing them, and finally the sole judges of their own acts, there is no liberty, the people are virtually enslaved, and liable to be ruined at any time. In a government, civil or ecclesiastical, where the same men are legislators, administrators, and judges, in relation to all the laws, and every possible application of them, the people, whether well or ill-treated, are in fact slaves; for the only remedy against such a despotism, is revolt. No constitution can be presumed a good one, embodying the principles of correct government, which does not sufficiently guard against the chances and possibility of mal-administration. All absolute governments owe their character to the manner in which they are administered, whereas, in a representative government, with proper checks and balances, it is the interest, even of the vicious, to promote the general welfare, by conforming to the laws. The greater the equality, established among men by governments, the more virtue and happiness will prevail; for where the voluntary consent of the governed is the basis of government, interest and duty combine to promote the common weal.

Art. 7th. Every community should be the asserter and guardian of its own rights. No government can be administered to the advantage of the governed, for any considerable length of time, unless the people retain sufficient power in their own hands to compel their rulers to act correctly. When a government is so constructed, that its acts are final, and preclude remedy, by appeal to the people, its principles are unjust, and its administration cannot fail to be injurious;—a virtuous administration can never change, or redeem the vicious principles of a government. And whenever the subjects of a government, whose legislative, executive, and judicial functions, pertain to a few, independent of the choice of the people, find themselves aggrieved and oppressed, by the conduct of their rulers, without any constitutional remedy for the redress of existing evils, it *then* becomes the duty, and is the imprescriptible right of that people, to control their rulers, by *extra-judicial* measures.

Art. 8th. Where all the power and forms of government are held and managed by a few, who act without delegated right by consent of the people, the authority of the rulers is absolute, and the people are disfranchised of all right, in the various relations, existing between them, as subjects, and those who hold the reins of government. Such a government must always lead to mental debility, will depress the moral vigour of a people, and necessarily abridge the liberty of reasoning and investigation. In all governments of this kind, right is the creature of fortune, and the slave of caprice. Those who live under a government, which denies to the people the right of representation, blindly engage to submit to the will of others, right or wrong, and must continue to do so, or else deprive themselves, of all the advantages of the community in which they live, in order to get rid of its evils. The enactment of all laws and rules, therefore, should be with and by the consent of the people, and their execution strictly under their control.

Art. 9th. The right to be represented, where law is made to govern, is

not only essential to civil freedom, but is equally the basis of religious liberty. Civil and religious liberty are intimately connected, they usually live and die together; and he who is the friend of the one, cannot consistently be the enemy of the other. If liberty, as is admitted on all hands, is the perfection of civil society, by what right can religious society become despoiled of this crowning excellence of the social state? The New Testament furnishes the principles, but not the forms of church government; and in the adaptation of forms to these principles, Christian bodies should be governed mainly by the few facts and precedents, furnished in the apostolic writings. The will and mind of the Great Head of the church, on this subject, so far as clearly revealed, whether by express statute, or fair implication, cannot be contravened without impiety; but in relation to a variety of topics, connected with the internal police, and external relations of the church, on which the Scriptures are silent, it is left to every Christian community, to adopt its own regulations, and the same is true of nations. Ministers and private Christians, according to the New Testament, are entitled to equal rights and privileges — an identity of interests implies an equality of rights. A monopoly of power, therefore, by the ministry, is a usurpation of the rights of the people. No power on the part of the ministry, can deprive the people legitimately of their elective and representative rights; as the ministry cannot think and act for the people, in matters of principle and conviction, so neither can they legislate for them, except as their authorized representatives.

Art. 10th. The government of every Christian church, should be strictly a government of principle, in relation to the governed; and every private Christian, is as deeply and reasonably interested as the ministry. Dominion over conscience, is the most absurd of all human pretensions. The assumption, that absolute power in the affairs of church government, is a sacred deposit in the hands of the ministry, libels the genius and charities of the New Testament. Whenever a Christian people place themselves under a ministry, who claim the right of thinking and deciding for them, in matters of faith and morality, they are guilty of impiety, however unintentional, to the Great Head of the church, inasmuch, as it is required of every Christian, to reflect and determine for himself, in all such cases, and the duty cannot be performed by another. And those ministers who aim at a principality of this kind, in the personal concerns of faith and practice, are plainly guilty of usurped dominion over the rights and consciences of the people.

Art. 11th. Expedience and right are different things. Nothing is expedient that is unjust. Necessity and convenience, may render a form of government useful and effective for a time, which afterward, under a change of circumstances, and an accumulation of responsibility, may become oppressive and intolerable. That system of things, which cannot be justified by the word of God, and the common sense of mankind, can never be expedient. Submission to power, gradually and insidiously usurped, should seldom or never be received as proof of the legitimate consent of the people, to the peculiar form of government, by which they are oppressed; as such submission may be the result of principles, attach-

ments, and energies, which owe their existence to causes foreign from the government, which is supposed to produce them. Peaceable submission by the people, to a system of government, can never be construed into a proper approval of it, as one of their own choice; for, as men by birth and education, may become the subjects of a form of civil government they do not approve, so thousands may be born into the kingdom of God, and nurtured in his family, under forms of ecclesiastical polity, materially inconsistent with the lights and notices of revelation on this subject. The continued sufferance and submission of the people, so far from proving the divine right of those who govern, does not even furnish proof of any right at all, except the claim which arises from mere forbearance.

Art. 12th. Without insisting upon those portions of the New Testament, which go directly against the right of the ministry, to exclusive rule, the well known indefiniteness of its language, on the subject of church government, should admonish the claimants of such power, that their pretensions cannot be sustained. Nevertheless, in all ages since the apostolic, and in all parts of the world, with but few exceptions, a large majority of those calling themselves Christian ministers, have shown a disposition, both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs, to maintain an influence in matters of government, independent of the people, and to suppress the right of inquiry, and freedom of discussion. And this is readily accounted for, by adverting to the fact, that the liberty of thinking and acting, and especially the free expression of opinion, have always lessened the influence of ministerial pretensions, and abridged the claims of an aspiring ministry, to irresponsible domination. It is lamentably true, that in a thousand instances, in the various divisions of papal and protestant Christendom, oppression has been exercised under pretence of duty, and professed veneration for the dead; and their doings; and an earnest contention for preëxisting customs have been urged, as sufficient reasons, for withholding the rights of the people, and lording it over God's heritage.

Art. 13th. It is true, to a great extent, that throughout all the divisions of the Christian world, intellect has taken but comparatively little hold of the subject of religion, and still less of the subject of church government; and this affords the ministry an opportunity of misleading the people, on the subject of their rights, and in but too many instances, they resign themselves the passive subjects of their religious teachers, without once inquiring, whether in doing so, they do not dishonour the Great Head of the church, in his members. Christian ministers are men of like passions with other men, they are equally liable to err, and become depraved; they should not be watched with an eye of malignant jealousy, but their errors, oppressions, and usurpations, should be met and resisted by the people, with confidence and firmness. The people should teach their rulers, that they will find them alike free from the spirit of faction, and the tameness of servility. They should let them know, that with every disposition to render proper obedience, they are determined not to be oppressed.

Art. 14th. Whenever the members of a church resign the right of suffrage, and of discussing freely and fearlessly the conduct of their rulers,

whether it be done by direct concession, or indirectly by attaching themselves to, and continuing within the pale of a church, where such a system of polity obtains, they renounce to a fearful extent, one of the first principles of the protestant religion, and bring dishonour upon its name. Whenever spiritual rulers, attempt to check a perfectly free communication of thoughts and feelings among the people, — when the lips and the pens of the laity are interdicted, without their oversight and license; — when they attempt to repress honest convictions and free inquiry; — when their disapprobation is shown to all, who do not support them, and their displeasure incurred by the diffusion of intelligence among the people, not calculated to increase their power and reputation; then it becomes the duty of the people, to decline their oversight, as men unworthy to rule the church of God. The rock on which the church has split for ages, is that the sovereign power, to regulate all ecclesiastical matters, (not decided by the Scriptures, and which of right belongs to a Christian community, as such,) has by a most mischievous and unnatural policy, misnamed expediency, been transferred to the hands of a *few* ministers, who have been in part, the patricians of the ministry, and the aristocracy of the church.

Art. 15th. Government, as a fixed and stable cause in the progress of human affairs, is finally productive, of a large amount of good or evil; it is strictly in its operation, a moral cause, in the formation of character; for it necessarily presents circumstances and considerations, in the light of reasons and motives which lead to results in the formation of character, that become habitual and permanent. The good of all concerned, therefore, should be the object proposed in the adoption of any form of government; and when a system of government is adopted, which calls off the attention of the governed, from the general welfare, by depriving them of all control in the enactment and execution of the laws, the natural and unavoidable tendency, of a government of this description, is vicious and demoralizing; and such, are the character and influence, of all non-elective governments. The members of a community, who place themselves under the exclusive control of a few irresponsible persons, as their sole masters, in matters of government, thus tamely depriving themselves of the right of representation, and even of existence, except by expatriation, betray a criminal negligence of their best interests, and great inattention to the general welfare; and all governments recognizing such a distinction, contravene necessarily the influence of enlightened conviction and independent inquiry.

Art. 16th. Any government, that does not allow the people to meet, deliberate, and decide upon matters that concern themselves, is evidently oppressive. For those who are not the representatives of the people, to make laws for them, and then deny them the freedom of candid inquiry and honest animadversion, is a measure, as irrational as it is unjust. The maxim which assumes, that the ministry have a right to rule and dictate exclusively, in the great concerns of religion, is the fruitful source of *implicit faith*, which tamely and without inquiry, receives instruction at the hands of men, as authoritative and final — impiously receiving “for

doctrines, the commandments of men, and perverting the oracles of God." When the ministry judge and determine for the people, without their legitimate concurrence, as matter of right, conformity becomes a question of policy, instead of resulting from conscience and principle. A government which denies to the governed, the right to inquire, remonstrate, and demand withheld justice — which from its structure and operation is calculated to darken the understanding and mislead the judgment — and thus compel obedience to its measures, in the great interests of right and wrong, must be essentially unjust, and ought not to be submitted to.

Art. 17th. No power possesses so fatal a principle of increase and accumulation in itself, as ecclesiastical power. Its facilities for reproduction and multiplication are many and fearful, and should be vigilantly guarded against by all, who consider the image of God, as closely connected with the rights of man. And whenever the growth and manifestation of this power, in any of its innumerable forms and modes of operation, shall clearly amount to an invasion of Christian rights, the injured and oppressed, should resist the encroachment with manly decision and unyielding remonstrance. In every church, where the principle of representation is excluded, in the affairs of its government, the right of private judgment becomes a nullity, and faith and practice, are necessarily, to a great extent, the offspring of prescription. The right of deciding what are the will and mind of God, in matters of faith and discipline, by prescriptive interpretation, is conceded in the scriptures, to no man, or body of men exclusively: of course, the right of judgment belongs to all, equally and inalienably; and when the ministry avail themselves of the indifference, inattention, or ignorance of the people, brought under their charge from time to time, to constitute themselves their legislative masters and executive guardians, they usurp the dominion of conscience, and although never complained of, are *de facto* religious tyrants, because they assume and exercise rights, that do not, and cannot in the nature of things, belong to them. It should not be overlooked, moreover, that when the ministry are considered by the laity, as the sole judges and depositories of faith and discipline, the people lose the only powerful motive, the only direct incentive, they can possibly have, to inquire and decide for themselves, in the infinitely momentous concerns of truth and duty. Such a monopoly of power by the ministry, tends directly to mental debasement, consequent indecision of character, insincerity, and misguided zeal.

Art. 18th. That form of ecclesiastical polity, under which the revenues of the church, proceed from the people when they have no participation in the enactment of its laws, furnishes no proper constitutional balance of power; for the legislative counsel of the church, consisting of the ministry alone, have it in their power, at any time, to render the contributions of the people to an amount sufficient for their competent supply and even their affluence, not a voluntary service, but a condition of membership, when such government ceases to be free, and necessarily becomes tyrannical. Any government which places the public property of the governed, in the hands of its rulers, so that it must proceed from their gift exclusively, without any constitutional negative in its appropri-

ation on the part of the people, is unjust and vicious in its nature. Property, is dominion held in right of power, and if in the hands of a few, the balance of government is destroyed, by enabling them to control the destiny of the whole. As it is the duty of every community, to support those, who are only called to the administration of its affairs, so it is plainly a matter of right, that the will of the people, should determine the necessary amount of supplies, and the mode of their assessment and collection.

Art. 19th. Punishments should never be inflicted in any community, except when strictly necessary, and plainly called for by the public good; and in all cases, the affliction should be according to law. All punishments, proceeding from the regular administration of constitutional law, should be submitted to without resistance.

Art. 20th. The subjects of all governments, have a right to know the official acts and doings of their agents and officers, and to demand their publication accordingly.

Art. 21st. The vindication of an injured people, in a contention for their rights, is furnished by the shameful denial of their existence.

Art. 22d. Any movement by the oppressed, to recover their rights, will be resisted by those who have oppressed them; but suffering and persecution, in a cause, which the love of God and man requires, should be fearlessly met and resolutely borne.

APPENDIX J

LAY DELEGATION *vs.* LAY REPRESENTATION

By REV. T. H. LEWIS, A.M., D.D.

The Methodist Protestant Church continues to exist because no vital change has yet taken place in the government of the Church from which it was separated and there still lies upon it the responsibility of maintaining a representative Methodism, since it is not to be found elsewhere. We use the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, not for denunciation, but to make good the truth of our contention, which none knew better than they, that our forms of government are not alike, and that nearly all the reasons which led to our organization prevail to compel us to maintain and perpetuate it.

Here, then, are some of our reasons:—

a. The item of the Discipline under which the reformers were tried and expelled is still law in the Methodist Episcopal Church. We do not believe any man will ever be tried under it again for reading religious newspapers or for forming societies to discuss improvements in church government; and we believe that the editors and contributors of their periodicals are given to as free discussion as is seen anywhere; but, nevertheless, it is a fact that the law still stands, and the General Confer-

ence has never declared that discussing the government of the Church or publishing or reading such discussions does not come within the scope of that article as it declared it did in 1828.

b. It is still true that there is no provision for lay members to vote as such on any question of government in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the only vote extended to them is to recommend persons for license to exhort or to preach. In this case their vote is only a nomination. In the Methodist Protestant Church no question of government or of administration can be settled except by the vote of lay members direct or of those who have been elected by them. This is the radical difference between the two systems. In one, all power proceeds from the General Conference downwards. In the other, all power proceeds from the lay members upwards. One is determined by official position, the other by the ballot.

c. Lay delegation may or may not mean a representative government. In the Methodist Episcopal Church it cannot mean this, because, although the law of the Church now provides that the General Conference shall consist of an equal number of ministers and laymen, the laymen do not represent the laity because they are elected by a delegated body chosen by the Quarterly Conferences; and no member of any Quarterly Conference is elected by the membership of the Church. Lay delegation in the Methodist Protestant Church is not only equal and in both General and Annual Conferences, but it proceeds directly from the membership of the Church.

d. We want the right to vote upon the reception of members. A private member of the Methodist Episcopal Church can make public objection to the reception of a member, which must be sustained by charges and trial, but he has no other vote. In the Methodist Protestant Church each congregation votes upon the reception of members.

e. We want the right as members of a class to vote upon the selection of class leaders. The Methodist Episcopal Church gives to pastors the right "to appoint all the leaders; to change them when he deems it necessary."

f. As those who build and pay all the expenses of the church, we want the right to vote upon the selection of those who are to hold and manage what we provide. In the Methodist Episcopal Church "the pastor shall have the right to nominate the stewards, but the Quarterly Conference shall confirm or reject such nomination." The same law holds with regard to trustees.

g. When our Quarterly Conferences assemble to direct the affairs of the local church, we want them to be composed of men who represent the church and have been placed there by the church. In the Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church there is no man present elected by the church. In the Methodist Protestant Church every man present except ministers has been elected by the church.

h. We want the right as laymen to be represented in the Annual Conference. This body deals with questions that concern us far more intimately than the deliverances of the General Conference. Here all the

assessments are laid upon the churches, here the boundaries of circuits are arranged, and here the ministers are assigned to the churches. None of these things should be done without the coöperation of laymen, and laymen ought to have a voice in legislating for them. All laymen are excluded from Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the Methodist Protestant Church as many laymen are present as itinerant ministers and with equal prerogatives.

i. As ministers we yield the right to determine our field of labor, but we want the right to appeal to our brethren and peers from an oppressive appointment and the right to retain an appointment until the next Annual Conference. In the Methodist Episcopal Church the bishop appoints, and there is no appeal from his appointment. He can change an appointment during the year or transfer a minister to another Conference without the minister's consent. In the Methodist Protestant Church the President appoints (in Maryland) under authority of the Conference, and every appointment is subject to revision by a committee of appeal. No minister can be transferred without his consent, and no appointment can be changed during the year without the consent of both minister and congregation.

j. We want the right involved in the very idea of representative government of electing our leaders, of changing them when it seems good to us, and of determining their powers. In the Methodist Episcopal Church the General Conference elects the Bishops for life, and Bishops appoint Presiding Elders. Presiding Elders and Bishops appoint pastors, and pastors appoint class-leaders and nominate trustees and stewards. In the Methodist Protestant Church every leader is elected by the members for a specified term and his prerogatives carefully defined.

k. We want the right of peremptory challenge when put on trial. Only a Bishop has this right in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Other accused persons must show cause for challenge. It was this fact, together with the power of the pastor to appoint the committee of trial and preside that made it easy to expel members on the charge herein mentioned. In the Methodist Protestant Church every accused person has the right to peremptory challenge equal to the number of the committee.

l. In fine, we want the right to vote as members of the Church, and not only by virtue of holding some official position in the Church. This sums up, in fact, the difference between our form of Methodism and the form represented by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Our members, by virtue of their membership, have the right recognized and guarded in our organic law to vote on all questions affecting the Church. The members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by virtue of their membership, have no right recognized in their organic law to vote on any question affecting the Church, except to recommend persons to the Quarterly Conference for license to exhort or to preach. Ours is a representative government because our members have the right to vote, and not because we have lay delegates in all our Conferences. The government of the Methodist Episcopal Church cannot be made a representative government by admitting lay delegates into the General Conference or into

the Annual Conference, but only by admitting members of the Church to the right to vote.

If the President of the United States (Bishop) were elected by Congress for life, and if the President appointed the governors of states (Presiding Elders), and if the governors recommended to the President the appointment of county sheriffs (pastors), and if the sheriffs appointed or nominated the county commissioners (Quarterly Conference), and if the legislature (Annual Conference) were composed of the sheriffs and governor and elected one-half of the members of Congress (General Conference), and a convention (Electoral Conference) of delegates chosen by the county commissioners elected the other half of the members of Congress, we would have a civil government exactly like the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But no one would call this a representative government.

END OF VOL. I

